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Journal of Contemporary European Research

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Introduction

Communicating European Integration: A Historical Perspective

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Since the 1990s, the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ of the EU has become an increasingly discussed topic in both academic and political circles. On the one hand, since the ‘Maastricht shock’ in 1992, when in a referendum Danish voters rejected the ratification of the recently signed Treaty on European Union, the idea that the European integration process could be legitimated simply by a ‘permissive consensus’ has lost its plausibility.¹ On the other hand, the low turnouts of the European elections and the persistent lack of identification of European citizens with the EU institutions make clear that this permissive consensus has not (yet) been replaced by a new legitimating paradigm of supranational democracy. Despite the active efforts of the EU to cope with these shortcomings, the current financial crisis and the debates around how to deal with further crises have once more powerfully revealed that the legitimacy deficit of the EU still constitutes a pressing problem for the future of European integration. In this context, the – apparently inadequate – communication of European politics to the citizens of the Union has often been highlighted as a crucial point, and academic research has invested considerable efforts in trying to analyse and explain these problematic relationships.

These lines of research, however, have mainly concentrated on the present situation and especially the examination of public (media) debates about the EU. Among researchers from the social sciences, great importance has been assigned to defining the normative standards of a democratic ‘European public sphere’ and, subsequently, to analysing empirically whether these standards have actually been met in contemporary political debates.² In this context, the probably most common normative conceptualisation of a European public sphere goes back to the German researchers Klaus Eder and Cathleen Kantner. These so-called ‘Eder-Kantner criteria’,³ originally inspired by Jürgen Habermas and first formulated in 2000, state that a (European) public sphere requires debates about ‘the same issues at the same time using the same criteria of relevance’.⁴ As to the empirical findings, the general perspective has moved over time from denying the existence of any such kind of

¹ The notion of a ‘permissive consensus’ was coined by L. Lindberg and S. Scheingold, *Europe’s Would-Be Polity. Patterns of Change in the European Community* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 41. Its end was first stated by K. Reif, ‘Ein Ende des ‘Permissive Consensus’? Zum Wandel europapolitischer Einstellungen in der öffentlichen Meinung der EG-Mitgliedstaaten’, in R. Hrbek and P. Bofinger, eds, *Der Vertrag von Maastricht in der wissenschaftlichen Kontroverse. Beiträge für das Jahreskolloquium des Arbeitskreises Europäische Integration e.V., 12.-14. November 1992 in Bonn* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1993), 23-40. See also L. Hooghe and G. Marks, ‘A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration. From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus’, *British Journal of Political Science*, 39, 1 (2009), 1-23.

² See, for example, J. Gerhards, ‘Westeuropäische Integration und die Schwierigkeiten der Entstehung einer europäischen Öffentlichkeit’, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 22, 2 (1993), 96-110; K. Eder and C. Kantner, ‘Transnationale Resonanzstrukturen in Europa. Eine Kritik der Rede vom Öffentlichkeitsdefizit’, in M. Bach, ed., *Die Europäisierung nationaler Gesellschaften. Sonderheft 40 der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000), 306-331; J. Peter and C. H. de Vreese, ‘In Search of Europe. A Cross-National Comparative Study of the European Union in National Television News’, *Harvard Journal of Press/ Politics*, 9, 4 (2004), 3-24; C. O. Meyer, ‘The Europeanization of Publicised Debates. A Study of Quality Press Coverage of Economic Policy Coordination since Amsterdam’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 43, 1 (2005), 121-148; H.-J. Trenz, *Europa in den Medien. Die europäische Integration im Spiegel nationaler Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt/Main, New York: Campus, 2005); T. Risse, ‘Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Kommunikationsgemeinschaft. Theoretische Überlegungen und empirische Evidenz’, in C. Franzius and U. Preuss, eds, *Europäische Öffentlichkeit* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004), 139-151; T. Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). See also the collaborative research projects ‘EUROPUB – The European Public Space Observatory’, available at <http://www.iccr-international.org/europub/> [last visited 10 January 2013]; ‘EUROSPHERE – Diversity and the European Public Sphere. Towards a Citizens’ Europe’, available at <http://eurospheres.org/> [last visited 10 January 2013] and ‘The Transnationalization of Public Spheres in Europe: Citizens’ (Re)Actions’, available at: <http://www.zemki.uni-bremen.de/index.php?id=167&L=1> [last visited 10 January 2013].

³ T. Risse and M. van de Steeg, ‘The Emergence of a European Community of Communication. Insights from Empirical Research on the Europeanization of Public Spheres’, *KFG Working Paper Series*, 15 (August 2010), available at http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/kfgeu/kfgwp/wpseries/WorkingPaperKFG_15.pdf [last visited 7 January 2013].

⁴ Eder and Kantner, op. cit. n2.

European public sphere to a rather hopeful identification of its slow emergence. For instance, in 2000, the sociologist Jürgen Gerhards, following his earlier claim that the European public sphere is lagging behind the process of economic and political integration,⁵ still came to the conclusion that European topics hardly received any permanent media attention in comparison to other issues.⁶ A decade later, by contrast, Thomas Risse and Marianne van de Steeg summarised their comparative media analysis of the debates surrounding the appointment of Jörg Haider and the EU's Eastern enlargement as follows: 'At a minimum, we can observe the emergence of Europeanized national public spheres, at least when European issues are being discussed'.⁷

At the same time, however, the general analytical focus has increasingly shifted from the European public sphere as an assumed single entity to the examination of multiple public spheres and their Europeanization. Following the widespread post-modernist insight that the public sphere is always segmented and heterogeneous,⁸ theorists of the European public sphere identified a multitude of division lines even inside national publics which, in their turn, produce partial public spheres which may undergo Europeanization processes in different forms and at different speed.⁹ This at least partly explains the different outcomes of the various empirical studies, which often relied on a rather limited set of data sources. Obviously, the existence or non-existence of a (democratic) European public sphere cannot be assessed by a generic examination of a small number of newspapers alone, but requires detailed and differentiated analysis of a multifaceted variety of communication processes.

Moreover, concerning the specific research interests, the various disciplines are motivated by complementary, but far from identical questions. For example, while for most political scientists (and political sociologists) what is at stake in the European public sphere is the democratic legitimacy of the European political system,¹⁰ other sociologists and also linguists are rather interested in the crucial role of discursive negotiations within the collective construction of a desirable European reality.¹¹ Other approaches focus on the change of identities in and identification with the EU.¹² Finally, researchers from the communication sciences mainly concentrate on the Europeanization of media coverage and national public spheres. Hereby, particular attention has been given to the differentiation between the vertical effects of European public communication between the EU and member state-level and horizontal, transnational communication among national public spheres.¹³

Despite the fact that most of these studies concentrate on the comparative analysis of mass media such as TV and newspapers, the actors behind the communications processes (such as, for instance, the correspondents in Brussels) have only very recently received increased attention. Here, political

⁵ Gerhards, op. cit. n2.

⁶ J. Gerhards, 'Europäisierung von Ökonomie und Politik und die Trägheit der Entstehung einer europäischen Öffentlichkeit', in M. Bach, ed., *Die Europäisierung nationaler Gesellschaften. Sonderheft 40 der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000), 277-305, 294.

⁷ Risse and Van de Steeg, op. cit. n3, 22.

⁸ Cf., e.g., J. M. Roberts and N. Crossley, 'Introduction', in: N. Crossley and J. M. Roberts, eds, *After Habermas. New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 1-27, 14-16.

⁹ See S. Mihelj, 'The European and the National in Communication Research', *European Journal of Communication*, 22, 4 (2007), 443-459, 451, identifying 'gender, age, ethnicity, political orientation, religious persuasion, leisure time preferences, etc.' as possible division lines.

¹⁰ E.g. Gerhards, op. cit. n2; Eder and Kantner, op. cit. n2; Risse and Van de Steeg, op. cit. n3.

¹¹ E.g. R. Wodak, 'Communicating Europe'. Analyzing, Interpreting, and Understanding Multilingualism and the Discursive Construction of Transnational Identities', in: A. Duszak, ed., *Globalization, Discourse, Media. A Critical Perspective* (Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, 2010), 17-60.

¹² E.g. M. Bruter, *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); Risse, op. cit. n2.

¹³ See R. Koopmans and J. Erbe, *Towards a European Public Sphere? Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Europeanised Political Communication*. Discussion Paper SP IV 2003-403 (Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, 2003), available at <http://skylia.wzb.eu/pdf/2003/iv03-403.pdf> [last visited 12 January 2013].

scientists¹⁴ and especially researchers from communication and journalism studies¹⁵ in recent years have examined the working conditions of foreign correspondents in the EU capital as well as the changing ideas and identities among these transnational actors. In any case, all of the above-mentioned lines of research within the social sciences have so far mainly concentrated on the *present* situation without examining the long-term structures which might have led to it. The few exceptions where social scientists have indeed analysed the entire period of European integration¹⁶ are mostly based on a very limited amount of data and their results can therefore 'only be treated as indicative'.¹⁷

These shortcomings could at least partly be compensated by historical studies on the development of the public communication of the European integration project from its beginnings to the present day. A historical examination of the actors behind the communication of European integration, and the means and strategies applied by them, could contribute to the understanding and explanation of the findings produced by the social sciences. They could add a notion of both temporal continuity and change in the public debates about Europe and contribute to a validation of the thesis of an 'emerging' transnational public sphere.

Against this background it is rather surprising that historians have started to research the historical foundations of a European public sphere only very recently.¹⁸ In these studies, historians extended the perspective of social sciences by identifying long-term changes in the public perception of and discussions about 'Europe'. However, the historical research in question was interested in a space much more broadly defined than the actual history of the EU: most of the works concentrated on the 19th and early 20th century, without paying too much attention to the specificities of EC/EU integration. This broad research interest rather complicated the exchange with the social sciences. Methodological differences between the disciplines served to increase this gap further. Whereas social sciences mostly focus on (often quantitative) media analysis and surveys, historians tend to disregard such an approach for reasons such as a lack of accessibility to comparable data. At the same time, historians also apply concepts which are hardly used in the social sciences. Recent historical research, for instance, has focused on 'representations' and 'images of Europe' in order to analyse the perception of Europe before and after the beginning of European integration.¹⁹

¹⁴ A.I. Martins, S. Lecheler, and C. H. de Vreese, 'Information Flow and Communication Deficit. Perceptions of Brussels-Based Correspondents and EU Officials', *Journal of European Integration*, 34, 4 (2012), 305-322; E. Siaperas, 'EU Correspondents in Brussels: Between Europe and the Nation-State' in T. Risse, R.K. Herrmann, and Marilyn B. Brewer, eds, *Transnational Identities. Becoming European in the EU* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 129-157.

¹⁵ M. Brüggemann and K. Kleinen-von Königslöw, 'Let's Talk about Europe. Why Europeanization Shows a Different Face in Different Newspapers', *European Journal of Communication*, 24, 1 (2009), 27-48; F. Corcoran and D. Fahy, 'Exploring the European Elite Sphere', *Journalism studies*, 10, 1 (2009), 100-113; K. Raeymaeckers, L. Cosijn, and A. Deprez, 'Reporting the European Union', *Journalism Practice*, 1, 1 (2007), 102-119; R. Kunelius, 'Journalism and the EU. A Relationship in Contexts', *Journalism*, 9, 4 (2008), 371-376; P. Statham, 'Making Europe News. How Journalists View Their Role and Media Performance', *Journalism*, 9, 4 (2008), 398-422.

¹⁶ E.g. Gerhards, op. cit. n6; J. Díez Medrano, *Framing Europe. Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 2003).

¹⁷ J.-H. Meyer, *The European Public Sphere. Media and Transnational Communication in European Integration 1969-1991* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 33.

¹⁸ E.g. M. Brüggemann and H. Schulz-Forberg, 'Becoming Pan-European? Transnational Media and the European Public Sphere', *International Communication Gazette*, 71, 8 (2009), 693-712; H. Schulz-Forberg, 'Europa entzaubert? Öffentlichkeit und Integration Europas', in J. Wienand and C. Winkler, eds, *Die kulturelle Integration Europas* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010), 51-96; H. Kaelble, M. Kirsch, and A. Schmidt-Gering, eds, *Transnationale Öffentlichkeiten und Identitäten im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2002); J. Requate and M. Schulze Wessel, eds, *Europäische Öffentlichkeit. Transnationale Kommunikation seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2002); R. Frank, H. Kaelble, M.-F. Lévy, and L. Passerini, eds, *Building a European Public Sphere. From the 1950s to the Present/Un espace public européen en construction. Des années 1950 à nos jours* (Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2010).

¹⁹ E.g. F. Bösch, A. Brill, and F. Greiner, Florian, eds, *Europabilder im 20. Jahrhundert. Entstehung an der Peripherie* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2012). Cf. also the research done by the sub-project 'Representations of Europe in Comparison' of the Collaborative Research Centre 640 'Changing Representations of Social Order', at the Humboldt University of Berlin, see <http://www.sfb-repraesentationen.de/teilprojekte/a5/english> [last visited 12 January 2013].

Institutional borders further complicated the academic exchange, since historical research still has an arguably weak standing within the general field of European Studies. Thus, historical research that tries to connect itself to debates in the social sciences still remains scarce. The work of the interdisciplinary EMEDIATE project, which examined media discourses on Europe from the Treaty of Rome to the 'War on Terror',²⁰ and the investigation undertaken by Jan-Henrik Meyer²¹ remain notable exceptions. Furthermore, while comprehensive historical research has been done on the content of discourses and representations of Europe,²² the actual structures behind the public communication of European integration were only analysed at the fringe,²³ and examination of the role of specific actors in European communication has been practically non-existent in historical studies.

Thus, with regard to the scholarly debates around the history of communication and mediation of the European integration one can hardly speak of any kind of interdisciplinary consensus. The respective research projects are pushed on in relative isolation from the surrounding disciplines, missing important chances for synergy. This, however, is not only true for (absent) contacts between different disciplines: even inside historical research there are still institutional and national borders.

Besides the obvious necessity to widen the perspective of the social sciences both in terms of the time period analysed as well as the examined sources, two further shortcomings of the existing research should be confronted by historians.

First, stemming from the tradition of understanding the public sphere as a nearly-homogeneous space, the focus of many research projects is still based on the analysis of mass media and surveys. By contrast, the plurality of actual communication processes behind and beside the impact of mass media discourses has until now very rarely been scrutinised. Here, the influence and role of the different political actors involved, as well as the different types of media and strategies applied are still under-researched. For example, there should be more attention to the differences between a bottom-up approach in communication, like the one instituted with the European Ombudsman (see Vogiatzis in this issue), and a top-down communication like that preferred for a long time by the European Commission (see Reinfeldt in this issue). Also, although pressure groups outside the classical political arena have increasingly entered into the focus of academics in recent years, their role in the public communication of the European integration project still constitutes an under-explored field of research.

Second, more scepticism is necessary when considering the declarations of the political actors involved. The agents of the European Union, such as the Ombudsman and the Directorate-General for Communication, but also other actors like national governments, are very keen to explain past and present initiatives in order to communicate the functions and politics of the EU to the citizens of Europe as a success story. These proclamations should be contrasted with specific academic research on the actual results of realised attempts to communicate the process of European integration.

²⁰ 'EMEDIATE: Media and Ethics of a European Public Sphere from the Treaty of Rome to the "War on Terror"', available at <http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Research/EMEDIATE/> [last visited 10 January 2013].

²¹ J.-H. Meyer, 'Tracing Transnational Communication in the European Public Sphere. The Summit of The Hague 1969', in W. Kaiser, B. Leucht, and M. Rasmussen, eds, *The History of the European Union. Origins of a Trans- and Supranational Polity 1950-72* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 110-128; J.-H. Meyer, *The European Public Sphere. Media and Transnational Communication in European Integration 1969-1991* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010).

²² E.g. Díez Medrano, op. cit. n16.

²³ See C. Henrich-Franke, 'From a Supranational Air Authority to the Founding of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)', *Journal of European Integration History*, 13, 1 (2007), 69-90; C. Henrich-Franke, 'Creating Transnationality through an International Organization? The European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) Television Programme Activities', *Media History*, 1 (2010), 67-81.

The contributions to this special issue, written by authors from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, address some of these gaps, complementing the existing research with a specifically historical perspective. In contrast to an earlier issue of the *Journal for Contemporary European Research* on a similar topic,²⁴ the articles assembled here focus mostly on the supranational European level. In order to account for changes in attempts to communicate the process of European integration, the time range covered will include the entire period of European integration, from the precursory debates in the years 1914-45 up to the present day. Besides the diversity of methods, sources and topics, the articles in this special issue therefore will give in chronological order an overview of the historical development of the attempts to communicate the process to integrate Europe. The three main thematic pillars will be the *actors* of European communication, the *strategies* they applied in order to achieve concrete political goals, and the *media or means* of communication they used. However, as will be seen below, there is not always a clear-cut difference between these topics, and most of the articles discuss at least two of them.

Although the role of central political actors in the process of European integration has been the object of historical research for quite some time now, the detailed investigation of specific transnational networks²⁵ as well as the role of societal actors²⁶ has only very recently received increased attention. In this context, however, there is still relatively little research on the respective influence of specific actors in shaping the public discourse about Europe.

Among the most important ‘actors of communication’ were obviously the supranational institutions, whose activities will be addressed in several contributions. Thus, Alexander Reinfeldt looks at the High Authority of the ECSC and the early EEC and Euratom commissions, raising the question of why these elite-driven institutions, which saw their own legitimacy as based on rational functionalism rather than democratic accountability, pursued public information policies at all. As Reinfeldt points out, the actual purpose of these communicative efforts focused more on creating transnational integration and cooperation among decision-makers and experts, rather than addressing public opinion itself.

In contrast, Annelies van Brussels explains the communication policy of the European Commission since 2001 as, for a time, an outward-orientated policy: much more conscious of the need for civic participation in decision-making than in previous times, the Commission not only tried to communicate its politics to a broader public, but also to encourage communicative feedback by the citizens of the Union. However, this approach seems to have been restricted again after 2009.

But it was not only the information policy of the European Commission that changed over time. In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty created the new post of a European Ombudsman, charged with the task of providing citizens with a direct addressee for complaints of maladministration against EU institutions. Nikos Vogiatzis analyses how the subsequent office holders communicated this mandate in their Annual Reports, e.g. trying to spread a certain understanding of ‘good administration’, but also raising public awareness of the limits of their own legal capacity.

However, not only institutional, but also societal actors contributed to the communication of the idea of European unity. Among this second group, the European Movement, and more concretely its federalist activists, played an important role, especially during the early years of the integration

²⁴ See *Media and Communication in Europe. Babel Revisited, Special Issue of the Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4, 4 (2008), available at <http://www.jcer.net/index.php/jcer/issue/view/11> [last visited 11 January 2013].

²⁵ E.g. W. Kaiser, B. Leucht, and M. Gehler, eds, *Transnational Networks in Regional Integration: Governing Europe 1945-83* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²⁶ E.g. W. Kaiser and J.-H. Meyer, eds, *Societal Actors in European Integration. Policy-Building and Policy-Making, 1958-1992* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); W. Kaiser and J.-H. Meyer, ‘Non-State Actors in European Integration in the 1970s. Towards a Polity of Transnational Contestation’, *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung. Special Issue*, 10, 3 (2010).

process. In his article, Eric O'Connor examines how a supranationalist 'suffrage movement' criticised the legitimacy deficit of the European Communities and propagated the idea of pan-European elections – not least as a means to overcome the lack of broad transnational public debates.

In any case, the idea of a united Europe did not emerge only after the Second World War, but was already present in debates of the interwar period. Florian Greiner analyses the discourses that German, English and American quality newspapers raised on the political, economic and cultural integration of Europe between 1914 and 1945. As Greiner argues, in a time of strong political nationalism the journalists of these quality papers began to prepare the ground for integrationist thinking and sometimes even turned themselves into 'political actors'.

As we can see, the actors involved in shaping the discourse of European integration generally did not use communication as an objective in itself, but in order to achieve specific political goals. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse their communicative *strategies*, i.e. the methods by which they tried to reach and possibly convince their addressees. In this context, the articles by Alexander Reinfeldt, Annelies van Brussel and Nikos Vogiatzis address the changing information policies of the supranational institutions. Moreover, Carlos López Gómez highlights the strategic communication of European integration during the democratic transition in post-Francoist Spain. As he argues, the appeal to 'European' political values had been one of the most important discursive tools of the anti-Francoist opposition in order to denounce the regime. This notion of Europe as a symbol of democracy and welfare shaped a cross-party consensus in Spain and legitimised the political reforms undertaken after the death of the dictator, but also fostered a rather uncritical attitude towards European integration as such.

Last but not least, a long-standing objective in European communication has been the active promotion of a common European identity, loaded with a set of specific – and contested – political values. In this context, whereas much of the existing research has concentrated on newspapers as sources, there are several other, and possibly even more powerful *means* of communication which were actively employed in order to convey specific concepts of European integration and identity.

Thus, Anne Bruch and Eugen Pfister study newsreels and information films of the late 1940s and 1950s, which transported images and connotations of European integration across different national contexts. These films pretended to shape a new collective cultural memory. Resorting to old iconographic traditions, they aimed at promoting a consistent picture of 'Europe', based on a symbolism of political community, democracy, open barriers, and economic prosperity.

Finally, Pieter A. Huistra, Marijn Molema and Daniel Wirt examine a more recent intent of fostering a common European identity: the Museum of European History, which was supposed to follow the role model of national historic museums such as the German Haus der Geschichte. This, however, led to sharp conflicts and tensions between experts and politicians, who pursued different objectives with the project: whereas its political sponsors in the European Parliament aimed at the presentation of European integration as a success story of progressing community and democracy, historians and museologists defended a more nuanced and relativising approach.

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Humboldt University of Berlin on 30-31 March 2012.²⁷ We would like to thank all the participants of this conference for the rewarding discussions, and especially Hartmut Kaelble, Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Hans-Jörg Trenz, and Juan Díez Medrano for their inspiring keynote speeches. For their generous support we are grateful to the Berlin representation of the European Commission, the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES), the Collaborative Research Centre 640 'Changing Representations of Social Order', the Instituto Cervantes Berlin, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany, and especially the Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius. Last but not least, we also would like to thank the editors of the Journal of Contemporary European Research, Maxine David and Simona Guerra, for their professional support in putting this special issue together.

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²⁷ The conference programme and a detailed conference report are available at <http://hum.port.ac.uk/heirs/> [last visited 11 February 2014].

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Communicating European Integration in the Age of the World Wars: Print Media Discourses on the Unity of Europe, 1914-1945

Florian Greiner *University of Augsburg*

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Abstract

This paper argues that the communication of European integration by the media did not begin with the European unification process after 1950. It draws upon a broad definition of the term ‘European integration’ favoured by modern historiography, and in so doing shows that in the first half of the 20th century journalists communicated various notions of the unity of Europe to their readers. By linking media history and discourse analysis, the article examines three different facets of mediating European integration in German, British and American newspapers between 1914 and 1945. It traces ‘integrational thinking’ in press coverage in three different sectors in particular, namely politics, economy and culture. Although discourses on continental unity were of course ambivalent and far from pointing straight towards European integration in the sense of a present-day European Union, they played an important role in the age of the World Wars. The article thus conceptualises a long-term historical perspective on communicating European integration.

Keywords

European integration; 1914-1945; Print media; Cartelization; Radio

‘EUROPEAN INTEGRATION’ BEFORE 1945?

The years between 1914 and 1945 in many ways marked an epoch of violent disintegration in Europe and could certainly never be described as the heyday of “European thought”. Be that as it may, the communication of European integration by the media did not begin with the political unification of Europe after 1950. Rather, journalists in European and extra-European countries communicated various notions of the unity of Europe in the first half of the 20th century. By shaping and often “transnationalizing” the political discourse, they sometimes even became “political actors” in their own right.¹

For the purposes of this paper it is necessary to define the term “European integration”, which has been re-evaluated by newer historiography. Studies on European integration developed rapidly after 1945 and were initially shaped by theory debates primarily influenced by historical writing and political science. Traditionally limited to the fields of politics and economics, they were with few exceptions² restricted to developments following the end of World War II. Up to the present day many textbooks on European integration only commence with 1945 and thus categorically ignore the foregoing years.³ After the content- and time-related focus of classic integration concepts had been successively expanded during the last two and a half decades by incorporating the aspect of societal

¹ Cf. F. Bösch and D. Geppert, ‘Journalists as Political Actors: Introduction’, in F. Bösch and D. Geppert, eds., *Journalists as Political Actors. Transfers and Interactions between Britain and Germany since the Late 19th Century* (Augsburg: Wißner, 2008), 7-15.

² E.g. H. Berding, ed., *Wirtschaftliche und politische Integration in Europa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); P. M. R. Stirk, *A History of European Integration since 1914* (London: Pinter, 1996).

³ E.g. B. Kohler-Koch, T. Conzelmann, and M. Knodt, *Europäische Integration – Europäisches Regieren* (Wiesbaden: VS, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004); R. McAllister, *European Union. An Historical and Political Survey*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010).

integration in the form of structural convergences and confluences on the social plane,⁴ more recent European studies have highlighted a further perspective, namely that of culture. This does not refer to those cultural policies pursued within the framework of the European unification process,⁵ but rather to a debate reaching much farther back in history than 1945 about the continent and its essential characteristics, and hence the development of 'collective thought patterns that ascribed a certain identity – of whatever kind – to Europe and thus construed it as a single entity'.⁶

Along with Guido Thieme⁷ this paper will therefore distinguish between three facets of "European integration": First, straightforward political integration, to wit the formal institutionalisation of Europe, marked, e.g., by the founding of European organisations. This process is deeply connected with the founding and development of the European Communities after World War II, though it had – as will be shown – unsuccessful or shorter-lasting predecessors. An economic or social integration of the continent marks the second facet of "European integration", important elements of it being the creation of a common market, the equalisation of lifestyles, the interweavement of European societies, and growing transnational contacts in the realm of civil society. As Hartmut Kaelble and others have shown, historically these developments can only be conceived as long-term processes dating far back into the 19th century.⁸ Thirdly, one must not overlook the cultural dimension of "European integration", which involves how contemporaries thought about, imagined and perceived "Europe" as a common unity, namely the construction of a "European identity". Thieme convincingly argues that, while there are close interconnections between the individual elements of "European integration", it is analytically useful – especially for historians – to draw clear distinctions between them, not least because it enables us to take a long-term perspective on the integration of the continent. Thus defined, the concept of "European integration" for the years preceding 1945 seems not at all anachronistic, as claimed by Wolfgang Burgdorf,⁹ and can thus be referred to in the following to help analyse and interpret not merely current public debates about Europe but also discussions in the print media, which have identified some of the integrative tendencies within Europe that can be discerned in the political, economic and social sectors.¹⁰

Methodologically, this paper aims to link media history and discourse analysis. While conducting a qualitative media content analysis, it treats newspapers as platforms for discourses relevant to society. Drawing on a constructivist approach in terms of cultural history, it will be argued that Europe and thus "European integration" do not exist *per se*, but only as discursive constructs.¹¹ Quality papers provide an ideal source for examination, as the print media were both actors and instruments in the communication of "European integration". By avoiding high literature, political theory and the history of ideas in favour of mass-media sources spanning a broad thematic spectrum, this paper aims to determine the public meaning of "Europe" for contemporaries in a much more thorough manner than was done in previous research. Moreover, newspapers play a particularly significant role with respect to the historical shaping of "European" modes of thought.

⁴ H. Kaelble, *A Social History of Western Europe, 1880-1980* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1990); W. Loth, 'Beiträge der Geschichtswissenschaft zur Deutung der Europäischen Integration', in W. Loth and W. Wessels, eds., *Theorien europäischer Integration* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2001), 87-106, 101-104.

⁵ See C. Shore, *Building Europe. The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁶ G. Thieme, *Europäische Integration. Motive – Prozesse – Strukturen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010), 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-12.

⁸ See H. Kaelble, 'Social Particularities of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe', in H. Kaelble, ed., *The European Way. European Societies during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 276-317.

⁹ W. Burgdorf, *"Chimäre Europa". Antieuropäische Diskurse in Deutschland, 1648-1999* (Bochum: Winkler, 1999), 18-19.

¹⁰ This paper will not directly address any aspects concerning the disintegration of Europe in the interwar years that has been the subject of many studies; regarding the economic sector cf. J. Eloranta and M. Harrison, 'War and disintegration, 1914-1950', in S. Broadberry and K. O'Rourke, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe. Volume II: 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 133-155.

¹¹ W. Schmale, *Geschichte Europas* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), 11-17; B. Stråth, 'Introduction: Europe as a Discourse', in B. Stråth, ed., *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other* (Bruxelles: Lang, 2000), 13-44, 14.

One of the basic insights of recent culture and media history is the recognition that communicative processes and structures have played a decisive role in shaping the construction of social realities and can thus be viewed as essential vehicles for establishing and stabilising collective identities. The media in their turn shape communication, which can then be experienced in large-scale modern societies that do not permit direct interaction among their members.¹² The constitutive, socialising impact of the media, nowadays parleyed with slogans like “media culture” and “media society”,¹³ is the result of a long-term historical process that was catalysed and accelerated by the media revolution taking place during the final decades of the 19th century. The circumstances of gradual media dissemination – which of course occurred at different times in different nations and was accompanied by ambivalent consequences that need not be discussed in detail at present – were to be found mainly in such milestones of technical progress as the invention of the high-speed printing press with subsequent mass newspaper circulation and telegraphy, which significantly expedited the emergence of the modern popular press.¹⁴ The “golden age” of the press, which now dawned in the form of a veritable “newspaper boom” and applied equally – albeit with some slight differences – to all three of the countries analysed (Germany, Great Britain and the USA), was of course also definitively linked to growing press freedom and increasing literacy rates in the respective societies.¹⁵ At the same time the media revolution guaranteed an internationalisation of coverage in the dailies, for example by means of correspondent networks established by many newspapers, and the emergence of news agencies. As a consequence of their increasing cross-border activity, the print media in a sense became a transnational community of discourse in which processes of journalistic dialogue, mutual observations and citations – although not always by consensus – and finally a tendency for national media agendas and news contents to align were the dominant characteristics.¹⁶

This development generated specific conditions that led to a more or less steady consolidation of communication, particularly in Europe. In this context the development of European communication structures facilitated the transfer of knowledge about foreign countries in general and the continent of Europe in particular, allowing Europeans to engage in figurative encounters and contacts.¹⁷ Ultimately the media thus functioned as important agents of cultural translation¹⁸ and allowed individuals to experience the European space. Therefore, if imagined communities are primarily created via their reception of mass media, it was precisely the daily press, as the preeminent basic medium during the first half of the 20th century, that furnished the infrastructure for European

¹² H. J. Kleinsteuber and T. Rossmann, *Europa als Kommunikationsraum. Akteure, Strukturen und Konfliktpotentiale in der europäischen Medienpolitik* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1994), 48-50; N. Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 1-9.

¹³ Cf. A. Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 7-29; U. Saxer, ‘Mediengesellschaft: Verständnisse und Mißverständnisse’, in U. Sarcinelli, ed., *Politikvermittlung und politische Bildung. Beiträge zur politischen Kommunikationskultur* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 1998), 52-73.

¹⁴ F. Bösch, *Mediengeschichte. Vom asiatischen Buchdruck zum Fernsehen* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus-Verlag, 2011), 109-142; J. K. Chalaby, ‘Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention. A Comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s’, *European Journal of Communication*, 11, 3 (1996), 303-326.

¹⁵ F. Bösch, ‘Katalysator der Demokratisierung? Presse, Politik und Gesellschaft vor 1914’, in F. Bösch and N. Frei, eds., *Medialisierung und Demokratie im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 25-47, 26; C. Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany. Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20-33.

¹⁶ Bösch and Geppert, ‘Journalists’, 8-12; J. Wiener and M. Hampton, eds., *Anglo-American Media Interactions, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁷ J. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Beck, 2009), 63-76; J. Requate and M. Schulze Wessel, ‘Europäische Öffentlichkeit. Realität und Imagination einer appellativen Instanz’, in J. Requate and M. Schulze Wessel, eds., *Europäische Öffentlichkeit. Transnationale Kommunikation seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus-Verlag, 2002), 11-39, 22-30.

¹⁸ For that concept see D. Bachmann-Medick, ‘Translation - A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture’, in B. Neumann and A. Nünning, eds., *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 23-43.

discourse and consequently provides an ideal research subject for this paper, for the construct “Europe” is also primarily constituted and stabilised by means of communication and interaction in the media.¹⁹

A digital full-text analysis allows the examination of a very broad spectrum of articles concerning European integration and a quantification of the findings. Several thousand articles conveying European perspectives are included in this investigation. While the paper places emphasis on articles that incorporate the term “Europ*” in the headline, it does not distinguish between the various forms of journalistic presentation. With regard to the discourse-analytical approach it makes no difference whether representations of European integration were articulated in editorials, reports or news dispatches. Rather it is crucial that specific representations appear frequently, as they were printed repeatedly by the newspapers. The countries selected for examination are nations whose position on Europe and the European idea differed and which – not least in the perception of contemporaries – represented the centre of Europe (Germany), its periphery (Great Britain), and finally, the outside view on Europe (USA). Two newspapers which complement each other analytically will be studied per country: The *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Vossische Zeitung*, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

THREE FACETS OF ‘EUROPEAN INTEGRATION’ IN PRINT MEDIA RECEPTION BETWEEN 1914 AND 1945

Communicating the political integration of Europe

German, English and American quality papers partly reflected the political unification discourses of the interwar period, which were strongly led by intellectuals and politicians who argued that Europe could only save itself from downfall through unification.²⁰ As for the contemporary motives of this perceived desire for a political “European integration”, most articles point to peacekeeping and increasing prosperity, which European nations could not achieve individually. Sometimes journalists even became independent actors, they themselves demanding a stronger political cooperation in Europe; this holds true especially for the Berlin-based *Vossische Zeitung*, which was the only quality paper to strongly focus on the unity of Europe in the 1920s; for example by publishing a long and emphatic editorial with the evocative title “Einigt Europa!” in early 1926.²¹

However, the only small time frame in which the daily press was intensely debating the question of a political unification of Europe along democratic and federal lines were the late 1920s and early 1930s, especially in connection with the failed European unification initiative of French politician Aristide Briand in 1929/30.²² The journalists showed basically no interest whatsoever in covering the various European movements²³ in the inter-war years. Most importantly the Pan-European Movement, founded in 1923 by Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi and a favoured object of research

¹⁹ P. Ther, ‘Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks. Toward a Transnational History of Europe’, in H.-G. Haupt and J. Kocka, eds., *Comparative and Transnational History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 204-225, 215.

²⁰ Cf. e.g. ‘Dr. Butler Prophesies “The United States Of Europe”. Certain to Come, Says the Head of Columbia University’, *New York Times*, 18 Oct. 1914, SM3; ‘Für die “Vereinigten Staaten von Europa”’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 369, 7 Aug. 1923, 1-2; ‘The United States of Europe. How to Make War Impossible’, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 May 1924, 4; ‘Wheeler Urges Turning Europe into Federation’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 Mar. 1944, 2.

²¹ ‘Einigt Europa!’ *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 128, 17 Mar. 1926, 1-2.

²² Cf. ‘United Europe Plan Set Forth to 28 Nations’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 Sep. 1929, 1; ‘European Federation. M. Briand’s New Initiative’, *The Times*, 19 Apr. 1930, 10; ‘Briands Vorschlag überreicht. Das Europa-Memorandum’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 232, 17 May 1930, 1; ‘A Federation Of Europe. M. Briand’s Memorandum’, *The Times*, 17 May 1930, 11; ‘Briands Europapakt’, *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 427, 7 Aug. 1930, 1.

²³ See C. H. Pegg, *Evolution of the European Idea, 1914-1932* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

by present-day European historiography, never in fact became more than a side issue in quality press coverage. With the exception of the *Vossische Zeitung*, whose long-time chief editor, Georg Bernhard, was a close friend of Coudenhove, who even contributed articles himself from time to time,²⁴ “Pan-Europe” was notoriously absent from German, English and American newspapers. Neither *The Times* nor the *Manchester Guardian* even mentioned the idea and organisation prior to 1926 (the year of the first congress of the Pan-European Union in Vienna) and only referred to it once in a while in later articles. The unimportance of the Pan-European movement in the eyes of the quality papers is further revealed by the fact that the name “Coudenhove-Kalergi”, in percentage terms, was probably the most misspelled individual name in the daily press of the 1920s.²⁵

Anti-liberal, nationalist-hegemonic, and even more or less violent unification models clearly had more impact on newspaper coverage dealing with the political integration of Europe between 1914 and 1945 than did their liberal counterparts. Until 1945, they posed, in a way, not an alternative path of “European integration” but rather the common one. When for example during World War I German author and politician Friedrich Naumann published his bestselling book “Mitteleuropa” in connection with the question of war aims, a lively debate broke out which was not restricted to Germany. While this plan, which called for a European confederation spanning large parts of Central and Southeast Europe under the relatively informal domination of Germany, was in fact a fairly modest manifestation of German war aims, English and American journalists portrayed “Mitteleuropa” as an immense threat not only for the Allied war efforts, but also for their political system as a whole.²⁶ One reason for this was the apparent lack of a counter concept of their own for the integration of Europe. Thus, the *Times* published a letter to the editor from a businessman who complained that up to that point about 80 per cent of his fellow countrymen were completely indifferent to “European politics” and suggested maps of German “Mitteleuropa” to be hung up at public places to awaken interest in the problem in England.²⁷

This shortcoming revealed itself once again in an even more dramatic way during the first half of World War II, when the military successes of the National Socialists actually “unified” a large part of Europe. The de facto “integration” of the continent was, of course, by no means a “European”, but rather a nationalistic unification, that was to a certain degree conventionalised in German propaganda as the building of a “New Europe” serving as a bulwark against Bolshevism.²⁸ While this propagandist character was regularly emphasised by English and American journalists, they were clearly alarmed by the purported positive reception of the “new European order” by some of the occupied and allied countries.²⁹ A leading article in the *Chicago Tribune* in early 1943 emphasised that ‘Hitler, in creating a European super-government, may be perpetrating a fiction, but he has stumbled upon a device very useful to his purposes’. Through this deception, the National Socialists could secure the loyalties of non-Germans in the name of Europe and thus ‘will have established a legalistic base for conscripting all the labour and troops’ they need: ‘They will be fighting for Europe

²⁴ Cf. ‘Paneuropa’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 541, 15 Nov. 1922, 4.

²⁵ Some examples: ‘Amerika für Pan-Europa’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 11, 7 Jan. 1926, 1 [Coudenhove-Kalergi]; ‘Pan-Europeans Act for Economic Unity’, *New York Times*, 4 Oct. 1926, 23 [Coudenhove-Kalergi]; ‘A United States of Europe’, *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Jan. 1929, 17 [Coudenhove-Kalergi]; ‘U.S. Europe’, *The Times*, 26 Sep. 1929, 13 [Coudenhove-Kalergi].

²⁶ Cf. ‘Central Europe. Scheme for a Teutonic Union’, *Manchester Guardian*, 7 Jan. 1916, 14; ‘Look at the Map’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 Dec. 1917, D5; ‘Mittel-Europa’, *The Times*, 11 Jan. 1918, 5; ‘Mid-Europe Plans Menace Democracy’, *New York Times*, 3 Feb. 1918, 8.

²⁷ Cf. ‘Mittel-Europa’, *The Times*, 4 Feb. 1918, 11.

²⁸ Cf. M. Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire. How the Nazis ruled Europe*. (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 553-575.

²⁹ Cf. ‘Hitler’s Scheme for New Europe Stirs Up Fright. Nations Seek to Please German Dictator’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 Jul. 1940, 4; ‘Hitler’s New Europe’, *The Times*, 16 Jul. 1940, 4; ‘Hitler’s Deceptive Slogans. From “Against Versailles and Marxism” to “New Order”’, *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Jan. 1941, 4; ‘“New Europe” Rises in Nazi World Drive. “New Order” Is Laid Aside as Continent Is Pictured as One, Big, Happy Family with Germany Running It. But Our Radio Replies That It Is “a New Robber Order” Too Inhuman to Succeed’, *New York Times*, 26 Sep. 1942, 6.

– their Europe’.³⁰ Once more the absence of Allied concepts regarding continental unification and the perceived threat of the National Socialists’ “new European order” went hand in hand. Leading articles and commentaries in British and American papers agreed that the Allies needed to demonstrate more precisely that they could offer Europe an alternative to the German “New Europe”.³¹ Thus, the *Manchester Guardian* complained in October 1940 that so far not enough was being done to stimulate “the imagination of Europe” with a democratic plan for the integration of Europe in answer to the proposals of Hitler.³²

Communicating the economic integration of Europe

While mostly sceptical of, or completely uninterested in, any initiative towards political integration of the continent, the newspapers under study broadly covered attempts at transnational economic cooperation in Europe during the interwar period. German and British journalists emphasised the need for stronger economic unity on a regular basis, often stressing close ties between the European national economies that presumably even formed a natural economic entity.³³ In the face of persistent economic problems during the interwar years, newspapers in Germany, England and the USA often occupied themselves with concrete policy initiatives for Europe’s economic, financial and industrial integration.³⁴ Although various attempts undertaken on the political side to effect a stronger economic unification of the European states, especially in the years between 1925 and 1933, were unquestionably tentative and lastly unsuccessful, the daily press devoted a great deal of attention to them and emphatically stressed the importance of international rapprochement in this area. Thus reports on potential accords for reducing customs fees, cooperative measures in questions of agriculture, currency and finance, and fundamental economic negotiations between European states frequently appeared in newspapers as a means of providing a glimmer of hope during the economic crisis.³⁵

Hence in the spring of 1930 and in spite of the trade conflicts plaguing the nations on the continent, the *Vossische Zeitung* expressed the hope that the Geneva tariff conference would at least offer a respite that might further the “economic consolidation of Europe”.³⁶ The *Times* declared the French Tardieu Plan, issued at the beginning of 1932 and providing for a tariff preference system expanded

³⁰ ‘Hitler’s New Europe’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 Mar. 1943, 16.

³¹ Cf. ‘The New Europe’, *The Times*, 1 Jul. 1940, 5; ‘The Unity of Europe. An Alternative to Hitler’s Serf Plan’, *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Jul. 1940, 4; ‘Speed Vital in Defeat of the Axis’, *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Sep. 1942, 7; ‘Toward the Post-War Reconstruction of Europe’, *New York Times*, 21 Feb. 1943, BR10.

³² ‘The War and Democracy’, *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Oct. 1940, 4.

³³ Cf. ‘Europa “eine wirtschaftliche Einheit”’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 115, 3 Mar. 1920, 2; ‘Europe an Economic Entity’, *The Times*, 4 May 1944, 3.

³⁴ On the economic development of Europe during the interwar years as well as the actual integration attempts see M. Kitchen, *Europe Between the Wars. A Political History*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman/Pearson, 2006), 55-89; P. M. R. Stirk, ‘Ideas of Economic Integration in Interwar Mitteleuropa’, in P. M. R. Stirk, ed., *Mitteleuropa. History and Prospects* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1994), 86-111.

³⁵ For example: ‘Ein europäischer Wirtschaftskongreß’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 600, 21 Dec. 1921, 1; ‘Umschau und Ausschau. Deutsche Wirtschaftshilfe. Europäische Verständigungsversuche’, *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 641, 30 Aug. 1925, 1; ‘Open Free Trade Parley. Mid-Europeans at Vienna Talk of a Unified Europe’, *New York Times*, 9 Sep. 1925, 3; ‘Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 326, 13 Jul. 1926, Finanz- und Handelsblatt, 1; ‘International Trade. European Conference in London’, *The Times*, 4 Oct. 1927, 11; ‘Economic Cooperation in Europe’, *The Times*, 7 Apr. 1930, 8; ‘Vorverhandlungen in Genf. Der wirtschaftliche Nichtangriffspakt’, *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 473, 31 Aug. 1931, 2; ‘Tariff Agreements in Europe’, *The Times*, 16 Jan. 1932, 9; ‘Six European Nations Move to Reduce Tariffs; Oslo Protocol Signers Plan to Widen “Truce”’, *New York Times*, 20 Jun. 1932, 1; ‘Tariff Cuts Urged by Eastern Europe. Warsaw Conference of 8 Countries Ends With Call to End Trade Barriers’, *New York Times*, 29 Aug. 1932, 8; ‘European Gold Countries Form Secret Alliance. Plan to Pool Resources to Protect Currencies’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 Jul. 1933, 2.

³⁶ ‘Zweiteilung Europas’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 110, 6 Mar. 1930, 2.

to form a kind of Danube Federation with an array of central European states, to be a first 'experiment in that policy of European solidarity which all good men wish'.³⁷ One year later Ferdinand Kuhn, Jr., chief London correspondent for the *New York Times*, interpreted a wheat commodities accord agreed by 21 European states as a first auspicious defeat for the economic nationalism that had been rife in Europe for some time.³⁸ In fact, despite its having a more or less strong anti-American thrust, even US papers occasionally promoted stronger economic integration for Europe, e.g. in the shape of a pan-European tariff union, in the expectation that it would also be of advantage for the United States in the long term.³⁹

Cartelization

Moreover the daily press repeatedly examined in great detail the *de facto* achievements in economic integration effected by the private sector. Of central significance in this context was the watchword of cartel-building that also shaped the discourse about "Europe", especially during the 1920s and early 1930s, when many international cartels were established. These were generally short-lived and fragile but nevertheless exceedingly numerous.⁴⁰ In fact, as a rule, journalists scrutinised this development very carefully and portrayed agreements and settlements about production rates, prices, import and export quotas as well as the actual establishment of cartels within specific branches of industry in a positive light.⁴¹ Thus in 1926 the Berlin correspondent of *The Times* reported on a forthcoming conference to be held by leaders of the European coal industry for the purpose of abolishing the 'disastrous competition in the coal markets' by forming a continental syndicate.⁴² One year later both the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* published an article identifying the slow post-war recovery of consumption as the cause of the formation of trusts and cartels in Europe, a phenomenon which was now manifesting itself to an unprecedented extent.⁴³ In

³⁷ 'Cooperation in Europe. A New French Proposal', *The Times*, 7 Mar. 1932, 12. On the Tardieu Plan, that was mainly conceived in reaction to the German-Austrian Customs Union project of the previous year and as a counterbalance to the growing influence of Germany in the Danube region, but had to be abandoned in April 1932 at the Four Power Conference in London due to vigorous German and Italian opposition, cf. Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, 132. The *Vossische Zeitung* thus interpreted the integration plan of the French Minister President Tardieu as an attempt at interest-driven nationalist politics and accused France of having missed every opportunity to engage in "constructive common policy" and hence find a way out of the European crisis (cf. 'Zwischeneuropa', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 150-151, 29 Mar. 1932, 1-2; 'Ein halbes Jahr zu spät', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 160, 2 Apr. 1932, 1-2).

³⁸ 'Ebb in Nationalism Seen in Grain Pact. Europe Encouraged by Ability of 21 Nations to Agree on Wheat Regulations', *New York Times*, 27 Aug. 1933, E1.

³⁹ Cf. 'Editorial of the Day. United States of Europe', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 Oct. 1926, 10; 'Pan-Europeans and Anglo-Saxons', *New York Times*, 8 May 1927, E8; 'Three Ideas of Pan-Europa', *New York Times*, 4 May 1930, E2; 'What the United States of Europe Means', *New York Times*, 20 Oct. 1929, XX4.

⁴⁰ Between 1923 and 1928 English industry and trade associations alone participated in the formation of over 40 cartels. On cartelizing in Europe during the interbellum see, e.g., É. Bussière, *La France, la Belgique et l'organisation économique de l'Europe. 1918-1935* (Paris: Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et du Budget, 1992), 377-391.

⁴¹ Some examples: 'Europa A.-G.', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 306, 29 Jun. 1924, Literarische Umschau, 2; 'Europäische Wirtschaftskartelle?', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 439, 16 Sep. 1925, Finanz- und Handelsblatt, 1; 'Aluminium Price Control. European Agreement', *The Times*, 16 Nov. 1926, 9; 'European Coal Cartel?', *Manchester Guardian*, 14 Dec. 1927, 8; 'Zinc Cartel Prolonged. Europeans Extend Scheme Till June', *New York Times*, 12 Dec. 1928, 59; 'European Cartels', *The Times*, 7 Mar. 1929, 9; 'Vor der europäischen Waggenkonferenz. Internationale Kontingentierungsbestrebungen', *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 423, 5 Aug. 1929, Handelsblatt, 1; 'Europe Agrees to Synthetic Nitrate Cartel', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 Aug. 1930, 31; 'Copper Cut ¼c to 7¼c, Equaling June's Low. Export Price Is Unchanged – Report of New Cartel in Europe Firms Zinc Here', *New York Times*, 14 Jul. 1931, 43; 'Vor Gründung eines europäischen Tafelglas-Syndikats?', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 394, 17 Aug. 1932, Finanz- und Handelsblatt, 2; 'Der Stand der europäischen Eisenverständigung', *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 415, 17 Aug. 1935, Wirtschafts- und Handelsblatt, 1; 'Coal Trade of South Wales. European Cartel Suggested', *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1936, 16.

⁴² 'European Coal Markets', *The Times*, 19 Apr. 1926, 14, 16.

⁴³ 'Financial Markets', *New York Times*, 16 May 1927, 27; 'Stabilizing Oil Prices Suggests Europe Cartels', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 May 1927, 29.

the summer of 1929 the *Vossische Zeitung* reprinted an article from the London *Daily Mail* that called for England to affiliate itself with the ever more closely-affiliated European industrial unions because they believed it to be sensible from an economic standpoint.⁴⁴

The fact that cartel formation and agreements made by European industry were often implicitly and sometimes explicitly directed against competition from the USA and hence – like an aluminium cartel founded in 1926 – had some anti-American features, was noted with interest by observant journalists and examined critically by American newspapers in particular. Nevertheless in the mid-1930s the *New York Times* described the work of European cartels now dominating various sectors of industry in a thoroughly positive manner, seeing in them a model for Franklin Roosevelt's *New Deal*, which the paper supported. The reason for this was that Europeans not only tolerated, but indeed welcomed measures similar to the *National Industry Recovery Act*, which was highly controversial in the USA due to its proposed state interventions in industry and economy, as a means 'of organizing individual business in order to avoid the risk of unlimited competition'.⁴⁵

With the founding of the *International Steel Cartel* in the autumn of 1926 the debates surrounding the consolidation and aggregation of a European economic space by means of syndicate formation reached their climax. The print media had already kept a sharp eye on opening negotiations to finalise a European steel pact initiated two years previously, which was highly anticipated.⁴⁶ The *New York Times*, for example, quoted the CEO of the *United States Steel Corporation* as stating that the union of European competitors was by no means necessarily disadvantageous for producers in the USA, and that in fact he hoped that the new syndicate would succeed.⁴⁷ An article in the foreign edition of the *Vossische Zeitung* commented that the transnational economic entanglements in Europe, which had been expedited by the emergence of cartels, not only made financial sense, but represented the best possible security measure for political peace at the same time.⁴⁸ This judgment was also confirmed by the Paris correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung*, who approvingly referred to a French newspaper article arguing that the continent had finally embarked upon the doubtless long road leading to a United States of Europe, and that increasing economic cooperation had finally averted the danger of a Franco-German conflict in particular.⁴⁹

In the wake of the actual conclusion of the *International Steel Cartel*, German, British and American newspapers intensified their coverage, giving in-depth information about the association's activities.⁵⁰ In so doing, the journalists repeatedly highlighted the importance of the syndicate. The

⁴⁴ 'England im Europa-Kartell', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 380, 14 Aug. 1929, 4.

⁴⁵ 'Europe's Cartels Rule Many Industries', *New York Times*, 18 Jun. 1933, XX1 and (quotation) 'Europe's Cartels', *New York Times*, 28 Jun. 1936, BR14.

⁴⁶ Cf. 'Ein europäischer Stahltrust?', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 326, 11 Jul. 1924, Finanz- und Handelsblatt, 2; 'European Steel Trust Reports', *The Times*, 25 Oct. 1924, 19; 'Europäischer Stahltrust?', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 510, 26 Oct. 1924, Finanz- und Handelsblatt, 2; 'Ein europäischer Stahlverband?', *Die Voss*, no. 44, 1 Nov. 1924, Beilage für den Balkan und Orient, IV; 'Agree in Principle on Huge Steel Trust. French and German Conferees Would Let Other European Nations Participate', *New York Times*, 3 Dec. 1924, 27; 'Der Europa-Trust im Werden. Kongreß der Schwerindustrie', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 593, 14 Dec. 1924, 1.

⁴⁷ 'Gary Not Alarmed by Foreign Trust. European Steel Combination No Menace to American Industry, He Says. Hopes It Will Succeed', *New York Times*, 16 Jul. 1926, 22.

⁴⁸ 'Das europäische Stahlkartell', *Die Post aus Deutschland*, no. 39-40, 2 Oct. 1926, 2.

⁴⁹ 'Das Abkommen der Schwerindustrie', *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 590, 10 Aug. 1926, 1.

⁵⁰ For example: 'European Steel Trust. Agreement Signed', *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1926, 12; 'European Steel Cartel', *Manchester Guardian*, 17 Jan. 1927, 3; 'Westeuropäische Roheisengemeinschaft und Internationaler Roheisenverband', *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 537, 9 Aug. 1927, Handelsblatt, 1; 'Europäischer Stahltrust?', *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 583, 10 Dec. 1927, Finanz- und Handelsblatt, 3; 'International Steel Cartel. European Grouping Project', *The Times*, 28 Jun. 1928, 21; 'Europeans Raise 1929 Steel Quotas. Cartel Adds 2,000,000 Metric Tons to Allotments, Making Total 29,587,000', *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 1929, 5; 'Westeuropäische Roheisengemeinschaft', *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 475, 29 Aug. 1928, Handelsblatt, 1; 'Europe Steel Cartel Holds Conferences', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 22 Oct. 1930, 27; 'European Steel Trade. Reviving the Cartel', *Manchester*

Berlin correspondent of the *Times* reported at the beginning of 1926 that there were voices in Germany claiming that the creation of the European Steel Cartel had been the most important event since the end of the war.⁵¹ Several days later, in a letter to the editor, a reader stated that he “highly welcomed” the creation of cartels, which he viewed as symptomatic of the general tendency towards continental consolidation, and produced a long list of numerous contemporaneous transnational alliances as well as projected ones, even going so far as to mention the “European Association of Bottle Manufacturers”, which purportedly included all of the important producers in this sector.⁵² At the beginning of the 1930s, on the occasion of a meeting held by the syndicate in Paris, the *New York Times* informed its readers, with obvious admiration, about the previous successes of this “powerful industrial combine” and its latest plans ‘for making Europe’s first great achievement in industrial unity the most powerful factor in the world steel trade’.⁵³ Shortly after Great Britain joined the cartel in the middle of the decade, the *Times* quoted a statement made by the chairman of an English steel corporation that the nation’s iron and steel industry was working amicably with the cartel to the benefit of all parties.⁵⁴

Overall, during the interwar years German, British and American newspapers projected various notions of an on-going economic integration of Europe. Despite the economic nationalism of those years the necessity and importance of transnational agreements was often emphasised, and their occasional conclusions were welcomed. In the face of a lasting economic depression in most continental states, cooperation across national boundaries was viewed as a means of solving problems, initiating recovery processes, and increasing prosperity.

Communicating the cultural integration of Europe

The third example of “European integration” coverage focuses on the development and subsequent Europeanization of infrastructure networks which, according to newer historiography, forms an important facet of the *de facto* integration of Europe in the first half of the 20th century.⁵⁵ This process was intensely scrutinised by contemporary journalists, whose reporting implicitly or explicitly reflected the changing “mental maps” of Europe with respect to technical progress and modernization, as can best be illustrated in the field of radio broadcasting. The newspapers especially highlighted the possibility of transnational wireless reception by publishing information about European radio programs, for example, or details about the frequencies and wavelengths of foreign stations.⁵⁶ In 1928, the *New York Times* dedicated a long article to questions of transnational broadcasting in Europe and particularly stressed the “thrill” it represented for Europeans. A map (next page) illustrated the opportunity enjoyed by a London listener ‘[to] travel across Europe from nation to nation’ thanks to the reception of more than 200 European broadcasting stations.⁵⁷ Arguing

Guardian, 22 Jan. 1932, 13; ‘Steel Quotas Are Fixed. European Cartel Sets Up Offices to Regulate Production’, *New York Times*, 2 Apr. 1933, N14.

⁵¹ ‘European Steel Trust’, *The Times*, 2 Oct. 1926, 10.

⁵² ‘International Trusts. New Movements in Europe’, *The Times*, 5 Oct. 1926, 13.

⁵³ ‘5-Year Agreement Steel Cartel Aim. Fixing Production Quota the Chief Problem of Europeans Now Meeting in Paris’, *New York Times*, 14 Mar. 1930, 6 and ‘Europeans Approve World Steel Drive. Paris Cartel Meeting Decides to Organize Five Offices for International Sales’, *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 1930, 20.

⁵⁴ ‘The United Steel Companies. [...] Advantages of Harmonious Working of the European Cartel’, *The Times*, 10 Oct. 1936, 18.

⁵⁵ E. van der Vleuten and A. Kaijser, eds., *Networking Europe. Transnational Infrastructures and the Shaping of Europe, 1850-2000* (Sagamore Beach, Mass.: Science History Publications, 2006).

⁵⁶ Cf. ‘European Stations’, *The Times*, 8 Apr. 1926, 17; ‘Wireless Notes and Programmes. Beethoven from the European Stations’, *Manchester Guardian*, 23 Mar. 1927, 10; ‘Was sendet Europa?’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 446, 21 Sep. 1929, Das Unterhaltungsblatt, 4.

⁵⁷ ‘What Listeners in Europe Hear on the Radio’, *New York Times*, 8 Jan. 1928, 128.

even further, the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out a ‘whole new world of possibilities of European intercourse’ due to radio broadcasting, which in fact could function as a ‘possible cementing influence between nations now becoming dimly conscious of a unity that the foreground of their history seems to deny’. For this reason, radio broadcasting was even foreseen to have direct implications for the international politics of Europe in the medium term.⁵⁸

Figure 1: A Variety of Languages and Music from Foreign Lands Greet the Broadcast Listener in England



Source: New York Times, 8 January 1928

Consequently the radio appeared not only as a communication channel that helped to rapidly overcome wide distances, but also as a contact medium that changed traditional perceptions of space in Europe, and as such was a kind of European cultural mediator. In this vein the *Times* wrote about an international Christmas program broadcast by the BBC that included musical contributions from various European countries. Behind this was the idea of acquainting listeners with ‘the voices of ordinary people on the Continent at Christmas’, in order to highlight commonalities and differences in the way the feast was celebrated throughout Europe.⁵⁹ As early as the summer of 1920 the *Chicago Tribune* and the *London Times* reported on a concert given by the opera singer Nellie Melba in Chelmsford, England, which was broadcasted live to many parts of Europe, including for example Berlin, Warsaw, Madrid and Oslo.⁶⁰ In addition to musical performances,⁶¹ German, British and

⁵⁸ ‘Radio Seen as New Cure for Europe’s Woes. Rapidly Becoming Factor across Atlantic’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 Sep. 1926, G1.

⁵⁹ ‘Christmas over Europe. B.B.C. Programme From Six Countries’, *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1938, 14. Cf. ‘Broadcasting Programmes. Christmas in Europe’, *The Times*, 24 Dec. 1938, 5.

⁶⁰ ‘Wireless Telephone Carries Melba’s Songs Over Europe’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 Jun. 1920, 1; ‘Melba Concert by Wireless. Audience Spread over Europe’, *The Times*, 16 Jun. 1920, 16.

⁶¹ Some examples: ‘Europe Hears Opera Performed in Berlin. Strains of “Madame Butterfly” Carried by Wireless Telephones over Radius of 800 Miles’, *New York Times*, 10 Jun. 1921, 11; ‘Radio in Europe’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 Jul. 1924, D7; ‘Europäisches Konzert im Rundfunk’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 463, 1 Oct. 1931, *Das Unterhaltungsblatt*, 1; ‘Rundfunk: Europäisches Konzert aus Budapest’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 493, 19 Oct. 1931, *Das Unterhaltungsblatt*, 3; ‘Rundfunk: Brüsseler Europäisches Konzert’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 610, 29 Dec. 1931, 3; ‘Wireless Notes & Programmes. European Concert from Turin’, *Manchester Guardian*, 18 Oct. 1937, 2; ‘Broadcasting. Italian European Concert’, *The Times*, 18 Oct. 1937, 24.

American journalists covered traditional dance music, election results, coronation ceremonies and obituary reports that were transmitted transnationally via radio.⁶²

A specific European-ness possessed by the medium of radio was thus, on the whole, perceived by the print media with great appreciation and acknowledgement. Of course radio reports, especially those giving accounts of technological advances, frequently had nationalist overtones such as when the leading role played by some European nations was to be emphasised.⁶³ In this context the *Times* even went so far as to diagnose a “Race for Power” among the nations of the continent, which might lead to problems in the allocation of wavelengths and consequently disturb reception.⁶⁴ Conversely, this argumentation underscored the relevance of the European space as a category of reference not to be ignored in questions of modernisation, which explains why the development of broadcasting and radio during the interwar years nevertheless continued to be viewed from a European vantage point.⁶⁵ In 1925 the *Chicago Tribune* even saw a kind of internal momentum at work in the development of broadcasting in Europe, one that defied attempts by several nations to exercise stricter controls.⁶⁶ Only a few years before the outbreak of the Second World War Orrin Dunlap Jr., the first radio editor of the *New York Times*, stated that even in “war-shadowed Europe” no standstill could be detected in this regard: ‘Politically the Old World may be confused, but in radio it seems to be moving in one direction – ahead, despite barbed-wire frontiers and fortifications’.⁶⁷

The main problem in expanding the continental radio network was seen to lie in the aforementioned question of how to allocate European frequencies. That the confusion in the European network which resulted from numerous transmitters located within a limited area and generating high rates of interference could only be remedied through international cooperation was evident not only to the watching journalists of the *Times* and the *New York Times*.⁶⁸ The *Vossische Zeitung* repeatedly deplored “Europe’s unfortunate broadcasting conditions” and the “difficult radio situation” on the continent and hence also the chaos resulting from the ‘impracticality of European frequency allocation’.⁶⁹ Nevertheless the Berlin newspaper did express sympathy for the requests of smaller

⁶² ‘The Programmes. European Dance Music’, *The Times*, 6 Nov. 1925, 8; ‘Europas Sender sprechen’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 125, 14 Mar. 1932, 3-4; ‘The Days of Sorrow. Wireless Tributes in Europe’, *The Times*, 30 Jan. 1936, 10; ‘Review of Broadcasting. European Broadcast’, *Manchester Guardian*, 6 Jan. 1937, 10; ‘Broadcasting to Europe’, *The Times*, 30 Apr. 1937, 11.

⁶³ Cf. ‘Europa-Sender Zeesen. Heute offizielle Eröffnung – Deutschlands repräsentative Rundfunkstation’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 600, 20 Dec. 1927, Sport/Spiel und Turnen, 1; ‘Die deutsche Rundfunkindustrie’, *Kölnische Zeitung*, no. 473, 30 Aug. 1929, Handelsblatt, 1; ‘Italy Opens Most Powerful Broadcast Station in Europe’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 Jan. 1930, 11; ‘New Wireless Station for Poland. Most Powerful in Europe’, *The Times*, 25 Sep. 1930, 17.

⁶⁴ ‘Foreign Wireless Stations. The European Race for Power. Many New Transmitters’, *The Times*, 21. Oct. 1932, 9.

⁶⁵ Some examples: ‘Radio in Europe’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29. Jun. 1924, H5; ‘New Developments in European Radio’, *New York Times*, 16 Aug. 1925, XX13; ‘Series of Higher Power Radio Stations to Displace Present Weak Ones in Europe’, *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1926, 3; ‘European Broadcasting Transmitters’, *The Times*, 1 Jan. 1932, 4; ‘A Year’s Progress in Broadcasting. 16,000,000 More European Listeners’, *The Times*, 24 Feb. 1936, 19. US newspapers in particular presented Europe as category of reference for American development, which was certainly not always perceived as being more progressive. Cf. ‘Radio Progress in Europe’, *New York Times*, 24 Jul. 1921, 84; ‘Tells of Europe’s Progress in Radio’, *New York Times*, 25 Jun. 1925, 24; ‘Tax Supports European Radio. No Advertising Intrudes on Foreign Ears, Says American Observer’, *New York Times*, 18 Sep. 1927, R21; ‘Why Europeans Miss America. Broadcaster Here Told Their Aerials Are Old-Fashioned’, *New York Times*, 11 Apr. 1937, 184.

⁶⁶ ‘European Radio Grows Despite All the “Don’ts”’, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 Feb. 1925, D9.

⁶⁷ ‘Transocean Flashes. Europe Turns to Broadcasting for Revenues As Armament Expenditures Soar’, *New York Times*, 6 Jun. 1937, 192.

⁶⁸ Cf. ‘To End Confusion on Europe’s Radio. Radiophone Union Meets at Geneva to Redistribute Broadcasting Wave Lengths’, *New York Times*, 7 Jul. 1925, 3; ‘Too Many Stations in Europe. Geneva Plan to Prevent Interference’, *The Times*, 30 Sep. 1925, 17; ‘A Broadcasting Conference. European Wave-Length Problem’, *The Times*, 26 Oct. 1931, 11; ‘New European Wave-Lengths. The Change Over. Plan for Elimination of Interference’, *The Times*, 15 Jan. 1934, 12.

⁶⁹ The separate quotations are taken from the following articles: ‘Der ideale Radioapparat’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 248, 29 May 1931, Erste Beilage, 1; ‘Schau der Klang-Wunder’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 394, 22 Aug. 1931, Erste Beilage, 1; ‘Das ewige Rundfunkchaos’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 438, 17 Sep. 1931, Das Unterhaltungsblatt, 2.

nations for a redistribution of frequencies, even if this was directed against the interests of older and mightier “radio nations”, Germany among them, that had so far secured the best frequencies for themselves.⁷⁰ The *Manchester Guardian* also pointed out the limited continental “Ether Space” in the light of which the tendency towards modern, high-performance transmitters in Europe called for extensive cooperation among European states.⁷¹ Particularly in the decade between 1925 and 1934, German, British and American print media repeatedly reported on international conferences dedicated to solving this problem.⁷² In this way the coordination of radio frequencies in Europe became a symbol for the necessity of Europe-wide cooperation in modern times.

What the more recent history of technology has described as Europe’s “hidden integration”⁷³ thus involved in the field of radio a second component in addition to the technical forms of its infrastructure, namely the transnational cooperation that seemed unavoidable if there was to be continued development. Journalists repeatedly stressed the presumed successes of this kind of Europeanization. When delegates from eight European states met in London in April of 1925 and founded the “International Broadcasting Union” (UIR),⁷⁴ that was later gradually expanded and whose main responsibility was the allocation of transmission frequencies in Europe, it was not only the *Vossische Zeitung* that reflected on the significance of the new “European Radio Headquarters”.⁷⁵ Even in the USA there was a downright euphoric reception for the organisation in particular and of tendencies towards stronger cooperation of the European broadcasting nations in general. Thus the *New York Times* commented that European development in broadcasting was groundbreaking even in comparison with the USA, not so much in respect of technical advances but rather ‘when it comes to establishing order and coherence in the sphere of broadcasting’.⁷⁶ The conferences, wavelength testing and scientific congresses regularly organised by the UIR were reported on exhaustively and with a sense of hope.⁷⁷

Consequently, the watching media mainly portrayed the integration of broadcasting in Europe as a success story. When the UIR celebrated its tenth anniversary in 1935, it was not mere chance that

⁷⁰ ‘Palastrevolution im europäischen Rundfunk. Die Kleinen mucken auf. Hintergründe des neuen Wellenplanes’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 36, 22 Jan. 1929, Erste Beilage, 2.

⁷¹ ‘The High-Power Station. Europe’s Radio Problem’, *Manchester Guardian*, 23 Oct. 1931, 10.

⁷² Some examples: ‘Wave-Lengths for Europe’, *The Times*, 31 Aug. 1925, 6; ‘Wireless Wave-Lengths. Geneva’s Union Decisions’, *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Mar. 1926, 7; ‘The New European Wave-Lengths. Further Adjustments’, *The Times*, 8 Dec. 1926, 10; ‘Die neuen Rundfunkwellen. Ab Sonntag in Kraft. Europas künftige Groß-Sender’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 534, 11 Nov. 1926, Erste Beilage, 2; ‘Radio Change in Europe. New Wave Lengths for Broadcasting Effective Jan. 13’, *New York Times*, 28 Dec. 1928, 26; ‘Programs, News and Comment among Broadcasters. European Wave Plan is Effective June 30’, *New York Times*, 5 May 1929, 137; ‘Wichtige Beschlüsse der Haager Radio-Konferenz’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 469, 4 Oct. 1929, 4; ‘Redistribution of Wave-Lengths?’, *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Feb. 1933, 14; ‘Europe’s Radio Station Test Wave-Length Shift’, *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1934, 28; ‘European Wave-Lengths. Results of Lucerne Plan’, *The Times*, 17 Mar. 1934, 7.

⁷³ T. J. Misa and J. Schot, ‘Inventing Europe. Technology and the Hidden Integration of Europe’, *History and Technology*, 21, 1 (2005), 1-19.

⁷⁴ The original French name of the organisation was “Union Internationale de Radiophonie”. It was the predecessor of the “European Broadcasting Union” (EBU) founded after the Second World War. Cf. R. Gressmann, ‘Some Historical Aspects of Broadcasting Technology’, *EBU Technical Review*, 283, 1 (2000), 1-18, 1-2; E. Eugster, *Television Programming Across National Boundaries. The EBU and OIRT Experience* (Dedham, Mass.: Artech House, 1983), 29-39.

⁷⁵ ‘Europäische Radiozentrale’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 167, 8 Apr. 1925, 2. See also ‘Seek Radio Accord for All Europe. Broadcasting Stations Form a New Union, With Headquarters at Geneva’, *New York Times*, 4 Apr. 1925, 7; ‘European Wave-Length Confusion. Efforts of Geneva Conference to Remedy It’, *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Jul. 1925, 11.

⁷⁶ ‘Europe Achieves Unity in Radio Broadcasting’, *New York Times*, 28 Jun. 1925, XX16.

⁷⁷ Cf. ‘Radio-Ecke’, *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 322, 10 Jul. 1925, Umschau in Technik und Wirtschaft, 2; ‘European Conference’, *The Times*, 11 Feb. 1926, 5; ‘Europeans Study to End Radio Jam. Big Stations Are Engaged in Important Tests as Problem of Interference Grows’, *New York Times*, 13 Apr. 1927, 30; ‘Broadcasting in Europe. Meeting of International Union’, *The Times*, 27 May 1930, 21; ‘European Broadcasting. Meeting of International Union’, *The Times*, 18 Feb. 1931, 4; ‘Europe’s Wave-Length Change. All-Night Tests by 270 Stations in Readiness for Monday’, *Manchester Guardian*, 13 Jan. 1934, 11; ‘European Broadcasting Wave-Lengths’, *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Jun. 1938, 5.

the London *Times* paid it tribute with a lengthy article that recast the goal of the organisation's founding as the desire to save the 'European broadcasting situation from a threatening chaos'. Had the frequencies previously been allocated on purely national grounds, 'although the stations had international spheres of influence', the situation had vastly improved since that time thanks to the efforts of the UIR.⁷⁸ An editorial published a few days later even judged its history to be a 'conspicuous example of the success with which European countries can cooperate when cooperation is essential', an observation given additional weight by the ensuing publication of a letter of thanks sent to the editor by the UIR's General Secretary.⁷⁹

CONCLUSION

All in all, German, British and American newspapers surprisingly reflected and communicated various forms of "European integration" at a time when not many people within and without the continent were concerned with the unification of Europe. Whereas between 1914 and 1945 notions of a political integration of Europe were only marginal issues of newspaper coverage, the quality press kept a keen eye on economic manifestations of continental integration. Most importantly, during the interwar years the cultural side of an ongoing European integration process was emphasised, not least in connection with certain developments of modernity such as radio broadcasting, but also with other processes such as the aggregation of electricity networks in Europe.⁸⁰

While this cultural dimension arguably had the biggest impact on communicating "European integration" during the first half of the 20th century, journalists recognised strong interconnections among the three outlined facets of the integration process. They rarely championed any direct political integration of the continent but rather emphasised the *de facto* existence of European unity and the need for transnational cooperation in the economic sector as well as in connection with the development of radio broadcasting. In this respect they indeed took on the role of political actors because, in the heyday of nationalism, they placed European issues firmly on the public agenda. Their reporting and news coverage showed that the relationship between the "nation" and "Europe" was often not characterised by a rigid antagonism; rather, the omnipresent national objectives were frequently interpreted and discussed within a European framework, which indicates an increasing awareness of the importance of transnational contacts and relations. It can therefore be said that newspapers projected and communicated broad notions of "European integration" at a time where the terms "Europe" and "integration" were separated as widely as one can possibly imagine on an actual historical and political level. Thus they helped to create a common ground for integrative thinking that must be regarded as an important factor in understanding the history of "European integration" in its long-term perspective.

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⁷⁸ 'Broadcasting in Europe. International Union's Ten Years' Work', *The Times*, 3 Apr. 1935, 9.

⁷⁹ 'European Broadcasting', *The Times*, 6 Apr. 1935, 13; 'European Broadcasting', *The Times*, 9 Apr. 1935, 17.

⁸⁰ See T. Kleinschmidt, 'Infrastructure, Networks, (Large) Technical Systems. The "Hidden Integration" of Europe', *Contemporary European History*, 19, 3 (2010), 275-284, 277-278.

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‘What Europeans Saw of Europe’: Medial Construction of European Identity in Information Films and Newsreels in the 1950s

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Abstract

This article examines Austrian, British, French and German newsreels and European information films produced in the period from 1948 to 1958 either by private and semi-private newsreel companies or transnational, supranational and national institutions like the Economic Cooperation Administration, Council of Europe, European Coal and Steel Community. These newsreel items and short films are not only records from the beginning and consolidation of the European integration project but also political instruments in this process. On the one hand, they informed the public about the new institutions, their purposes as well as their decision-making procedures; on the other hand, they were intended to create a European identity by rewriting a collective cultural and historical memory. By means of these films, some of them being part of the public relations campaigns of various European institutions and newsreel companies, a consistent picture of 'Europe' was shaped. This audiovisual representation of Europe as a geographical and historical entity, or, respectively, 'the idea of European integration', was not only a result of a political discourse but also a cultural continuation of a centuries-old iconographic tradition. This article aims at broadening the academic debate on a European identity by analysing the political communication process of the European Integration in the 1950s.

Keywords

Public relations campaigns; European institutions; European identity; European iconography; images of Europe; political communication

Most contemporary historical analysis of European integration still concentrates on international relations and the role of political elites. The (visual) perception of Europe in a European 'public sphere'¹ by contrast is seldom discussed. As the historian Michael Wintle writes: 'When investigating the notion of Europe, one of the less frequented approaches consists of asking what people thought *Europe* looked like'.² Until recently, the question of what people thought Europe looked like was not only a less frequented question, it was hardly ever asked at all. Most studies on the European integration process concentrated solely on political decisions, less often and more recently on the political discourse and the history of political thought. European Integration History has therefore focused on political actors like Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle and Jean Monnet, or on the discourse of political thought, i.e. the struggle between (neo-) functionalism, intergovernmentalism, and federalism. But since its very beginning, the European integration process has also been constructed in images, accompanied by a variety of political public relations campaigns. Their essential purpose was not only to inform the public about the structure and aims of the new institutions and to explain the general decision-making process within the European Communities (European Coal and Steel Community, European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy

¹ Note that the term 'public sphere', not unlike the term 'European identity', is highly problematic. Cf. Hans Jörg Trenz, 'Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers', *European Journal of Communication*, 19 (3) (2004), 291-319; Marianne Van de Steeg, 'Rethinking the Conditions for a Public Sphere in the European Union', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5 (4) (2002), 499-519

² M. Wintle, *The Image of Europe. Visualizing Europe in Cartography and Iconography throughout the Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12.

Community), but also to promote a sense of European identity. Due to its effect on public opinion, the audiovisual medium film played an important role within the European information policy. For this purpose a substantial quantity of films and documentaries (so called ‘information films’) were produced by transatlantic, supranational and national institutions as well as private film companies as early as 1948 to mobilise public support for the process of European integration and for the institutions of the European Communities.³ Furthermore a majority of newsreel reports, while not commissioned by European political actors, still communicated similar if not identical European icons. This congruence demonstrates better than anything else the emergence of a catalogue of ‘images of Europe’, irrespective of the originator.

Against this background, this paper analyses communication processes which were partially used to propagate a European identity through the mass medium of film. Therefore, we will concentrate on the following research questions: firstly, what were the motives of the various press and information divisions of the European institutions or the Economic Cooperation Association (ECA)? Secondly, did these images originate from specific political actors or were they the result of a broader discourse at work? Finally, what kind of visual images, metaphors and narrative strategies did emerge in the discourse on a European identity?

To answer these questions we based our study on newsreels and information films as well as on written sources (e.g. documents, scripts, and official correspondence). We concentrated our research on Austrian, British, French and German newsreels and European information films that were produced in the period between 1948 and 1958 either by private and semi-private newsreel companies or by transnational, supranational and national institutions like the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), Council of Europe, European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). By analysing newsreels from the two initiating countries, France and Western Germany; one country with an ambivalent relation to the integration process, Great Britain; and one country outside of the communities, Austria, we present a comprehensive overview of a common European imagery. The analysis of the film sources itself is founded on a combination of semiotic and iconographic approaches as well as on classic film analysis.⁴

EUROPEAN IDENTITY

When studying European integration it is important to understand that attempts to communicate a sense of European identity can be found not only in written and spoken discourses but also in pictures. Many political rituals, such as the signing of treaties, party rallies, etc. only achieved their purpose through their visual distribution. This means that, for example, a newsreel report of the cast of the ‘first European steel ingot’ acquired political significance only after being shown in cinemas.⁵ European integration implies not only a political and economic process but also the mental process of creating an imagined community.⁶ According to Benedict Anderson, it was the appearance of mass media that made these ‘imagined communities’ possible. When ‘reading a newspaper each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not

³ There were also initiatives to commission newsreel reports. They were, however, very limited in number.

⁴ Helmut Korte, *Einführung in die Systematische Filmanalyse* (Berlin: ESV 2010), Lothar Mikos, *Film- und Fernsehanalyse* (Konstanz: UVK/UTB 2008) und Marion G. Müller, *Grundlagen der visuellen Kommunikation. Theorieansätze und Analysemethoden* (Konstanz: UVK/UTB 2003).

⁵ ‘Erster Gruß des Europäischen Stahls’, *Austria Wochenschau*, no. 20, 1953, Filmarchiv Austria, Vienna; ‘Luxemburg: Jean Monnet eröffnet den Stahlmarkt der Montanunion’, *Neue Deutsche Wochenschau*, no. 171, 3 May 1953, Archiv der Deutschen Wochenschau GmbH, Hamburg.

⁶ V. Öhner, A. Pribersky, W. Schmale, and H. Uhl, eds, *Europabilder* (Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen: Studienverlag, 2005), 7.

the slightest notion'.⁷ The act of watching the same pictures in a newsreel connected millions of Europeans. This does not mean that this alone created a shared feeling of European identity in the audiences, but it was a potent factor at the very least. In contrast to contemporary intellectual discourses, newsreels reached a vast audience and are therefore an indispensable source for the analysis of the construction of a European identity. The catalogue of European images emerging from this analysis is not only an important complement to the current state of research but provides a contrasting account – a 'contre-histoire' – of political communication.

Since 2005, the number of both academic publications and newspaper articles on European identity has increased considerably.⁸ While the term emerged as early as 1973 in an official communiqué of the European Economic Community (EEC)⁹, the first academic debate began after that in the 1980s in West Germany with Werner Weidenfeld's anthology on European Identity.¹⁰ An international debate on European identity came to life with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Most work, whether journalistic or scholarly, shared the view that the European Union was missing an identity, necessary for the legitimization, stability and survival of the European project. More often than not the notion of 'identity' was used without defining its meaning, and therefore lost all significance. Accordingly, Lutz Niethammer employs the expression 'plastic word' to describe the proliferating and often ill-considered use of the concept of collective identity since the 1990s.¹¹ The respective understanding of the term 'identity' depends mostly on the background of the writer and his or her aims, and becomes therefore instrumentalised politically, especially when the extremely ambiguous term 'cultural identity' is employed. While the notion of a cultural identity is established on the idea of a shared collective memory, a political identity is based on the political participation of citizens.¹²

Discourses on identity become a central topic in times of stress and doubt. According to the German political scientist Thomas Meyer, a collective 'political identity' is a prerequisite for the stability of any political entity, especially during crises.¹³ One possibility to communicate or propagate such a political identity is to emphasise the mode of operation of a political community, to show how political decisions are made and, in a democracy, how citizens can influence the politics.¹⁴ Another way, more commonly associated with autocratic systems but in itself not undemocratic, is to emphasise the maintenance of order through symbolic rituals and/or evoking a common myth/history. Both these communication strategies can be found in our audiovisual sources.

The issue of a European identity is primarily connected to the issue of legitimacy, still central to the discourse of European integration nowadays. While simplifying an on-going and exhaustive debate, one could argue that there are more or less two opposing models of collective identity in the

⁷ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 35.

⁸ E.g. G. Datler, 'Das Konzept der 'Europäischen Identität' jenseits der Demos-Fiktion', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 62, 4 (2012), 57-61; T. Meyer and J. Eisenberg, eds, *Europäische Identität als Projekt* (Wiesbaden: Nomos, 2009); J. Nida-Rümelin and W. Weidenfeld, *Europäische Identität: Voraussetzungen und Strategien* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007); A. Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Washington D.C: Cambridge University Press, 2002); E. du Réau, *L'idée d'Europe au XXe siècle. Des mythes aux réalités* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 2008); T. Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). In 2005 the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was rejected by French and Dutch referendums.

⁹ Declaration on European Identity by the Nine Foreign Ministers, Copenhagen, 14 December 1973, C. Hiil and K.E. Smith, *European Foreign Policy. Key Documents* (London: Routledge, 2000), 93-97.

¹⁰ W. Weidenfeld, ed., *Die Identität Europas* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1985). We would like to thank our anonymous referees for this helpful suggestion.

¹¹ L. Niethammer, *Kollektive Identität. Heimliche Quellen einer unheimlichen Konjunktur* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2000), 9-12.

¹² E. Pfister and K. Prager, 'How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Utilize European Lieux de Mémoire as a Historical Instrument', *Donauraum*, 51, 1 (2011), 21-33, 24.

¹³ T. Meyer, *Die Identität Europas* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 20 and 38.

¹⁴ Meyer, 41, *ibid.*

academic discourse: an essentialist approach that searches mainly for a historical cultural European identity, and a constructivist approach that tries to analyse a political identity under construction.¹⁵ Recent research favours a constructivist approach,¹⁶ but when dealing with our film sources we encounter both ideas. While earlier promotional films – in German also known as ‘Kulturfilme’ – concentrated on a perceived common European cultural ground, later information films and newsreel reports focused much more on aspects of a political community. The idea of a political identity thus replaced the idea of a cultural identity as the main argument in the media. This change was in accordance with the founding spirit of the ECSC. Accordingly, Jean Monnet’s policy was to break with the communicative strategies of the European Council, which relied heavily on the evocation of Europe’s glorious past in favour of a functionalist approach. This communicative paradigm shift was reproduced in the media.

Before addressing the different media we have to focus on the question of why the European institutions and other political actors of the integration process of the 1950s were interested in communicating and constructing a collective European identity for their legitimation. A retrospective search for attempts to propagate a collective European identity in the 1950s is by nature problematic. ‘Collective identity’ is a rather novel term and was therefore not used by the politicians and officials of the 1950s. In the files of the Service de Presse et d’Information of the ECSC one finds instead mentions of a ‘European idea’ and ‘Consciousness’. These files bear evidence of a definite will to propagate a sense of European consciousness.¹⁷ We have also to keep in mind that even an organisation like the ECSC, which itself was not democratic per se, needed the consensus of the citizens of the partner states to function. Thus, while not meeting the high standards of a collective political identity, as recently formulated by Thomas Meyer and Jürgen Habermas, newsreels and information films of the 1950s demonstrate a definite attempt to propagate a sense of collective to the cinema audiences. At this point it is important to distinguish newsreels from information films. While information films were financed and produced by conventional European actors and therefore correspond 1:1 to their political views, the same is not true for newsreel reports, which were produced by private enterprises. It is therefore difficult to pin down individual originators of European images in newsreels. The genuine originator of this communication strategy was neither the Service de Presse et d’Information nor the newsreel cameramen, but politicians involved in the integration process like Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gasperi, Robert Schuman and Paul-Henri Spaak. They were at the origins of the European images shown in the cinemas.¹⁸

It is by now common knowledge that, as Ulrich Sarcinelli wrote, ‘everyone who aims at influencing politics and society and intends to legitimate his influence needs a public’.¹⁹ The consensus in the debate of political and social scientists is that, as Jürgen Habermas put it, the European Union is in need of a European public (sphere) where a European political identity can emerge.²⁰ At certain points in the history of European integration sporadic European public spheres did exist.²¹ One such example can be found in the rejection of the European Defence Community by the French Assemblée Nationale 1953, which was reported in all of the European newsreels. We argue that,

¹⁵ W. Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der europäischen Identität* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008), 40.

¹⁶ Datler, ‘Konzept der ‘Europäischen Identität’’, 59.

¹⁷ E. Pfister, ‘Imaging European Integration. The Construction of a European Identity in Austrian, British, French and German Newsreels in the 1950s’, *Zeitgeschichte*, 38, 4 (2011), 215-231, 220, as well as E. Pfister, *Europa im Bild. Imaginationen Europas in Wochenschaun in Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien und Österreich 1948–1959* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Unipress 2014), 136-152.

¹⁸ Meyer, *Identität Europas*, 20; J. Habermas, *Ach Europa* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 136.

¹⁹ U. Sarcinelli, *Politische Kommunikation in Deutschland. Zur Politikvermittlung im demokratischen System* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaft, 2009), 39.

²⁰ J. Habermas, 136.op. cit. n 17.

²¹ See Marianne Van de Steeg, ‘Rethinking the Conditions for a Public Sphere in the European Union’, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5 (4) (2002), 499-519, 507.

notwithstanding the fact that contemporary political actors were not using the term 'European identity', one motive of the political communication of the integration process was to propagate a sense of European solidarity and consciousness that corresponds in part to the modern concept of political identity.

There is still the question left of why the aforementioned political actors were interested in propagating a common European political identity. While international relations belonged to a political space where democratisation never took place,²² all political partners involved in the integration process, i.e. the governments of the democratic partner states, had to justify their politics in front of their respective citizens. In order not to lose the next elections, the French and the German government were, for example, forced to explain their decisions to their population. For this purpose they had to communicate the policy, polity and politics of the new European institutions. Other European political actors, such as the European Movement and the new institutions themselves, were also interested in communicating a political identity. Most of them had no need to justify their politics in front of an electorate, but were pursuing the long-term goal of a political community. The same is true for the press and information service of the ECSC, which mainly focused on political elites and journalists but never forgot the broad public.²³

Whereas the national governments were aiming for a very specific support of their citizens for the European project, the European movement and the institutions themselves were aiming for a more diffuse support. According to David Easton, specific support is the direct result of outputs that satisfy specific demands.²⁴ Diffuse support, by contrast, is not linked directly to specific material rewards and satisfactions. It cannot be understood as a quid pro quo in the fulfilment of demands. Diffuse support is a sense of attachment or loyalty to the authorities, regime, or political community that is more or less independent of specific benefits.²⁵

Finally, we have to take into account the producers of the newsreels themselves. Only a handful of small reports were actually commissioned and paid for by the ECSC and the following institutions.²⁶ The vast majority were part of the newsreels because these topics were perceived as newsworthy. In this sense, newsreel producers responded to a public demand for information on the European integration.²⁷

FILM AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

In light of the different production background it is important to differentiate our two film sources. Even if newsreels and documentaries share many characteristics, there are some important significant differences that demand a separate introduction. Cinema newsreels are a singular mass

²² J. Habermas, *Zur Verfassung Europas* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2011), 45.

²³ EGKS/Hohe Behörde: Fünfter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Gemeinschaft, 09.04.1956- 13.04.1957, Luxemburg 1957, 53ff.; CEAB (Commission des Communautés Européennes Archives, Bruxelles) 1/940 (Microfiche): Note sur l'organisation du Service d'Information de la Haute Autorité, 10.06.1954.

²⁴ D. Easton, 'A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support', *British Journal of Political Science*, 4, 5 (1975), 435-457, 444.

²⁵ D. Fuchs, O. W. Gabriel, and K. Völkl, 'Vertrauen in politische Institutionen und politische Unterstützung', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, 31, 4 (2002), 427-450.

²⁶ E. g. Rapports d'activités 01.08-15.02.1955, CEAB 3-708, Archives historiques de l'Union Européenne, Firenze.

²⁷ Public newsreel companies had an official 'Informationsauftrag' cf. Uta Schwarz, *Wochenschau, Westdeutsche Identität und Geschlecht in den fünfziger Jahren* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus 2002) 81. But even private newsreel companies understood themselves as information media. Nicholas Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930s: Their Policies and Impact', in: Luke McKernan (ed.), *Yesterday's News. The British Cinema Newsreel Reader* (London: British Universities Film and Video Council, 2002), 148-160, 139

medium and provide a unique, and up until now still unexamined, historical source of the beginning of European integration (1949-1958) in the post-war period. For Europeans of that period, newsreels were the only audiovisual medium that provided them on a regular basis with information on, and images of, the European integration process. In the 1950s, cinema attendance was at its historical height for most European countries (except for Great Britain where attendance was at its height in the late forties and has been declining ever since). According to a UNESCO report, in the early 1950s every week 215 million spectators watched films in the world's 100,000 cinemas – about one tenth of the population of the globe. Most of these spectators saw newsreels on a regular basis.²⁸ And every European cinemagoer that decided to watch the latest Western, romantic comedy or *Heimatfilm*²⁹ was likely to see a newsreel before the main picture.³⁰

Newsreel reports on the integration process included reports on conferences, treaties and declarations, but also reports on symbolic political ceremonies.³¹ In addition, there were compilation films that explained the Common Market to a general audience using images of coal trains and opening barriers.³² All of these can be categorised as symbolic political acts, which the newsreel coverage transformed into communicated events. An important aspect of these historical sources is that they were for the most part not produced and commissioned by the political actors involved, but by private and semi-private newsreel companies.³³ Interestingly enough there are no qualitative differences noticeable when comparing public and private newsreels. In contrast to the infamous 'bizarre' items,³⁴ newsreel items covering the European integration process were not mainly aimed at entertaining the public but were motivated by the self-perception of the newsreel companies as an information medium. A note from Max Kohnstamm to the *groupe de travail* 'Presse et Information' of the ECSC helps to understand the logic of the media: 'The newsreels do affect the general public. As they are only interested in major world events, they put us on the agenda.'³⁵

While of singular importance for our analysis, newsreels are at the same time a problematic source because there are almost no written sources documenting the production of a newsreel item; the cameramen worked mostly on their own and only with vague assignments from their editors. The same is true for editing and dubbing. Therefore we lack the material to analyse the influence of particular individuals or company policies on the definite newsreel item. We can on the other hand

²⁸ P. Baechlin and M. Muller-Strauss, *Newsreels across the World* (Paris: Unesco, 1952), 4. Using the data from the UNESCO-report, Scott Althaus calculated the percentage of persons who saw at least one movie per week: 12.5–25 per cent of the population in Austria, 10.5–21 per cent in France, 9–17 per cent in West Germany and 28–56 per cent in the United Kingdom, see S. L. Althaus, 'The Forgotten Role of the Global Newsreel Industry in the Long Transition from Text to Television', *The international Journal of Press/Politics* 15 (2010): 193–218.

²⁹ 'Heimatfilm' is a film genre that was popular from the early 1950s to the early 1970s. Usually the film plot centred around love, friendship, family and rural life. They were typically shot in the Alps, the Black Forest or the Lüneburg Heath and focused on simplistic dichotomies like the 'good' and the 'bad' guy, or rural and urban life.

³⁰ P. Sorlin, *European Cinemas, European Societies: 1939-1990* (London: Routledge, 1991), 90 and 140.

³¹ For example: 'Erster Gruß des Europäischen Stahls', *Austria Wochenschau*, no.20, 1953, Filmarchiv Austria, Vienna; 'Luxemburg: Jean Monnet eröffnet den Stahlmarkt der Montanunion', *Neue Deutsche Wochenschau*, no.171, 3 May 1953, Archiv der Deutschen Wochenschau GmbH, Hamburg.

³² For example: 'Europe. Marché commun européen', *Gaumont Actualités*, no.3, 1958, Gaumont-Pathé Archives, Saint-Ouen.

³³ Newsreels used for this paper: Austria Wochenschau, Fox Tönende Wochenschau (Filmarchiv Austria, Wien, Austria); Éclair Journal, Gaumont Actualités, Pathé Journal (Archives Pathé-Gaumont, Saint Ouen, France); British Pathé (British Pathé Ltd, London, UK), British Movietone News (British Movietone Digital Archive, <http://www.movietone.com>); Neue Deutsche Wochenschau, UFA-Wochenschau Welt im Bild, Welt im Film (Deutsche Wochenschau GmbH Filmarchiv, Hamburg, Deutschland).

³⁴ Like escaped monkeys, flying cars etc. See N. Hiley and L. McKernan, 'Reconstructing the News: British Newsreel Documentation and the British Universities Newsreel Project', *Film History* 13, 2 (2001), 185-199, 189.

³⁵ 'Les actualités touchent le grand public. Comme elles ne s'intéressent qu'aux très grands événements du monde, elles nous situent sur ce plan.' [Translation E.F./A.B.] Max Kohnstamm, Note au groupe de travail 'Presse et Information', 13. July 1955, CEAB 13/68, Archives historiques de l'Union Européenne, Florence.

compare newsreel items of different companies (private and public) with each other. There are, with only one small exception,³⁶ no differences between public and private newsreel companies in the imagery and commentaries. The outcome of this comparison was that the communicated propositions were, for a given national frame, almost always quasi-identical. The communicated images of Europe are therefore significant examples of the discourse on the idea of Europe in the 1950s.

As Pierre Sorlin stated, the cinema produced 'images [that] are not the reality but [...] our only access to reality'.³⁷ Even more than the print media, newsreels affected the perception and the visual memory of the public and over several decades were a central element of the cinema, which they arguably transformed into an information medium. But while the informational character of the newsreel was contested from the beginning,³⁸ its impact on the perception of the public can be seen for instance in its influence on feature films: *Canaris* (Germany 1955) intercuts newsreels with acted scenes and *Battle of Algiers* (Italy 1966), filmed in black and white, attempts to recreate the impression of newsreels, using the aesthetics and style of newsreel reports to suggest authenticity.³⁹ Needless to say, documentary films have used and still use newsreel footage in the form of compilation films.

Newsreel pictures were accessible to a vast audience and, unlike reports in the press and radio, their individual perception, guided by cinematographic codes, differed only slightly from one moviegoer to the other, mainly as a consequence of the use of iconographic traditions. Being of a visual as well as linguistic nature, they reached not only an even larger public than the press, but they created arguably more lasting impressions. Peter Baechlin and Maurice Muller-Strauss write in their report on newsreels:

a picture in itself constitutes a selection, designed to give a comprehensive view of the incident. Thus both by its very nature and by its presentation, which is designed to focus the attention, the picture makes a direct impact on the spectator. [...] Moreover, the picture can immediately be understood by all spectators, irrespective of their language or cultural level.⁴⁰

While the second part of this citation might not withstand modern analysis, since cultural background can influence the way pictures are seen and understood by a public in a given context, the first part alludes to the specific effect of newsreel images on the spectator.

What makes newsreel such interesting media is that they had a singular capacity to create images – images that are still in existence today, decades after the demise of the last newsreel company. Lasting examples are the proclamation of the Austrian State Treaty shown in the *Austria-Wochenschau* in May 1955, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953, or the Berlin Airlift in 1949. Still in use as archive clips in documentary films, these images are more or less present in the minds of young Austrians, Britons and Germans who never saw a single newsreel. These three examples also illustrate the important part newsreels played in the construction of national identities. One has however to keep in mind that collective identities were never constructed by one single political

³⁶ The French *Éclair* Journal initially had a sceptical opinion of German participation but changed this in the course of the early 1950s.

³⁷ Quoted in G. Heiss, 'Film als Quelle', in M. Fuchs, ed., *Geschichte in Bildern?* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag 2006), 99-108, 99.

³⁸ E.g. Newton E. Meltzer, 'Are Newsreel News?', *Hollywood Quarterly* 2 (April 1947/3), 270-272.

³⁹ Sorlin, 61, op. cit. 28. Fake newsreel footage was used in 'Citizen Kane' (US 1941). After the prelude Orson Welles included a ten-minute long mock newsreel 'News on the March' (designed after the existing 'March of Time' Newsreel). A more recent use of the 'newsreel'-style can be found in the science-fiction movie 'Starship Troopers' (1997). In both cases the newsreel-style was however not used to suggest authenticity, but to emphasize the superficiality (Citizen Kane) or propagandistic use (Starship Troopers) of the media.

⁴⁰ Baechlin and Muller-Strauss, *Newsreels*, 11.

actor but were the result of a plethora of social interactions and corresponding dominant political discourse.

DOCUMENTARIES AND INFORMATION FILMS

From the very beginning of their existence, supranational and national institutions as well as European movement groups produced, in addition to newsreels, a substantial quantity of information films and documentaries promoting the idea of European cooperation. In general, these films were shown as part of a youth and adult education syllabus in public halls, political assemblies and cinemas, either on their own or as a section of a programme.

The very first information films on European integration after the war were part of a publicity campaign planned by the coordinators of the European Recovery Programme (ERP). All 16 participating countries of the Marshall Plan were obliged by agreement to propagate information on the ERP through the use of press releases, publications, posters, photos, radio programmes, newsreel stories, documentaries, and exhibits. To be precise, Article Two of the European Cooperation Master Plan obliged them to 'disseminate information' on the ERP, and to 'give Europeans the facts and figures on Marshall Aid [...], to stimulate industrial and agricultural productivity, and to promote the idea of a European community'.⁴¹ The British historian David Ellwood has characterised the information activities that evolved out of Article Two as 'the largest peacetime propaganda effort directed by one country to a group of others ever seen'.⁴² Within these propaganda activities, the Information Division of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) in Paris, as well as its successor the Mutual Security Agency (MSA) commissioned over 260 'Marshall Plan Films'.⁴³ Between 1948 and 1955 these films were produced and screened for a European audience, and were intended to supply background information on the European Recovery Programme. According to a recent evaluation of these documentaries, conducted by the German historian Gabriele Clemens, more than 30 of these films exclusively address the subject of European integration.⁴⁴ They were mainly produced between 1950 and 1952 when the ECA and MSA focused intensively on economic cooperation and tried to make the case against trade restrictions within Western Europe.

The series *Changing Face of Europe* included, for example, six films which were meant to assess the achievements of the ERP and the conditions of Western Europe.⁴⁵ Each film concentrated on a special aspect of European recovery, such as public well-being and health (*The Good Life*), agriculture (*200.000.000 Mouths*), or the state of transport in post-war Europe and the progress made in rebuilding and modernising roads, railways and airports (*Clearing the Lines*). The last film dwells in particular on the idea that borders were artificially created and that burdensome frontier controls slow down commercial exchange in Western Europe. The commentator of the films

⁴¹ A. Hemsing, 'The Marshall Plan's European Film Unit, 1948-1955: A Memoir and Filmography', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 14, 3 (1994), 269-297, 269.

⁴² D. Ellwood, 'The Message of the Marshall Plan', in D. Ellwood, ed., *The Marshall Plan Forty Years After. Lessons for the International System Today* (Bologna: Bologna Center, 1988), 33-39, 33. Here, Ellwood refers to Italy but the same assertion applies to West Germany, Austria and Great Britain. C. Becker-Döring, *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit für den Marshallplan am Beispiel von ECA-Dokumentarfilmen*, M.A.Thesis, University of Hamburg 1998 (unpublished manuscript).

⁴³ Linda Christenson compiled an extensive Marshall Plan filmography including 262 film titles, available at <http://www.marshallfilms.org/> [11 August 2013].

⁴⁴ G. Clemens, 'Europa – nur ein gemeinsamer Markt? Die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit für den europäischen Integrationsprozess am Beispiel der Europawerbefilme zwischen Marshallplan und Römischen Verträgen 1947-1957', in M. Gehler, ed., *Vom Gemeinsamen Markt zur europäischen Unionsbildung. 50 Jahre Römische Verträge 1957-2007* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 45-61, 48.

⁴⁵ The series was made in 13 languages and distributed to European cinemas in 18 countries, primarily by 20th Century Fox.

explained that, in order to assure free trade and free travel, 'surely now we must resolve our conflict and make up our minds, decide for the future and the bold, declare for the single Europe to which our mastery of land and sea and sky evidently points'.⁴⁶ Documentaries like *The Hour of Choice*, *The Council of Europe*, *E comme Europe* and the animation film *The Shoemaker and the Hatter* promote the idea that Europe's future could only be guaranteed by multinational and supranational institutions. The basic message that only economic and political cooperation would assure better living standards, economic prosperity as well as a high level of social security was repeated persistently in these films. The promise of the American Marshall Plan to the Europeans was quite simple: 'You too can be like us'.⁴⁷

During preparatory consultations in which specific content aspects of the information films were to be discussed, two issues occurred. First, there was the question of the geographical boundaries of 'Europe'. Secondly, ECA officials and film directors had to tackle the issue of communication, that is, of how much 'propaganda' could be tolerated in such films. Quite often, the initial sequences, voice-overs and images had to be revised after completion, so that the message could be moderated and cushioned. Most officials, directors and writers involved were aware that the 'use of the 'holzhammer' method'⁴⁸ was not the way to convince sceptical Europeans. In general, they favoured a more subtle approach of indirect persuasion and pursued the strategy that a message had to be conveyed as carefully as possible in order to achieve a long-lasting impact on the audience.⁴⁹ *Let's Be Childish* is an excellent example for this low key approach. This film relates a parable of children who were able to overcome their national disputes in order to play together in harmony. In an Alpine resort, children of various nationalities, on vacation with their parents, engage in national contests in the snow. When a little English girl is accidentally hurt, they cooperate to buy her chocolate as a gesture of reconciliation from the local bakery. The film is quite charming in its simplicity, especially since no grown-up or parent is seen until the very end, and the narrator concludes with the appeal: 'May it be a lesson to the adult world'.⁵⁰

In addition to these pro-European Marshall Plan films which focused on the cooperation between European states as a means to stabilise the continent economically and politically and to create a bulwark against communism from 1948 onwards, the implementation of the Treaty of Brussels Pact in 1948, the creation of the Council of Europe in 1949 as well as the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 all included in some part publicity campaigns. The public relations of each of the three aimed at informing the public about the structure and purpose of the new organisations. In addition, emphasis was placed on the relationship between the new institutions and the citizens in order to promote a genuine European identity.

The military alliance of the Western European Union, which resulted from the Treaty of Brussels, for instance, initiated a working group to coordinate a cultural campaign, which also included a cinema subcommittee. Initially, this subdivision was responsible for the exchange of films between the

⁴⁶ See <http://www.dhm.de/filmarchiv/die-filme/clearing-the-lines/>. The comment can be found between minute 15 and minute 16. The other three films are *Power for All*, *Men and Machines*, and *Somewhere to Live*. The films can be consulted on the website of the *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, available at <http://www.dhm.de/filmarchiv/die-filme/changing-face-of-europe/> [11 August 2013]. All films were produced by Ian Dalrymple, Wessex Film Productions, Ltd, London, for ECA/OSR.

⁴⁷ D. Ellwood, 'Italian Modernisation and the Propaganda of the Marshall Plan', in L. Cheles and L. Sponza, eds, *The Art of Persuasion. Political Communication in Italy from 1945 to the 1990s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 23-48, 28.

⁴⁸ Minutes of the Film Officers Conference, 19-21 November 1952. NARA RG 59: Entry 5323, Department of State, International Information Administration, European Field Programs Subject Files, Box 14. The colloquial German term 'Holzhammermethode' refers to a (rhetorical) approach that imparts a message in a very rugged and crude manner.

⁴⁹ R. D. MacCann, 'Film and Foreign Policy. The USIA, 1962-67', *Cinema Journal*, 9, 1 (1969), 23-42, 26.

⁵⁰ *Let's Be Childish* (F 1950), produced and directed by George Freedland for ECA Paris, available at <http://www.dhm.de/filmarchiv/die-filme/lets-be-childish/> [11 August 2013].

different nations, but its members soon agreed on broadening their field of activity. As the proceedings of a film officers' conference show:

if the countries were to be brought yet closer together, it was important that their peoples should know how much they already owed to the historical process of interchange which had been taking place throughout the centuries by less deliberate and conscious methods. There was a need, in both the cultural and educational fields, for films about Europe.⁵¹

For this purpose, it was agreed to produce a film or a series of films that would examine Europe from a genuinely 'European perspective'. After extensive discussions on the financial budget and the theme, the international cinema subcommittee finally agreed on the subject of 'landscape painting'. They argued that landscape painting was an important European contribution to the world cultural heritage and that this should help communicate the shared cultural development of a Western Civilisation, as well as the internal European exchange of ideas, methods and various styles in the visual arts.⁵² The members of the committee were convinced that such a film would stimulate reflection on cultural similarities of the past and enable close cooperation between European states and people in the future, and thus fulfil its political purpose. The result of this shared effort was the film *La Fenêtre ouverte* by the Belgian director Henri Storck.⁵³ It had its premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in August 1952 and was awarded the *Coppa Rotary* at the Salerno Film Festival in 1962.

In response to the visualised presentation of a shared European heritage and culture in *La Fenêtre ouverte*, the Council of Europe commissioned an educational film to propagate European consciousness. The film *Europe, humaine aventure*, released in 1955/56, represents a unique experiment. Fifteen European states jointly attempted to construct a shared European memory by narrating the history of the continent from a European perspective. The intention of this project was, to quote a memorandum, to recall the common history of the European people only by means of iconographic material (pictures, prints), historical relics (regalia, manuscripts, records) and location shots of significant European buildings.⁵⁴ Led by the French film producer Philippe Brunet and in cooperation with the Information Director of the Council of Europe, Paul M. G. Levy, 2000 illustrated history books were evaluated and the selected 450 photos were submitted to various historians for review. After five years of production, a 65 minute long film was released. The length of this film is explained by the fact that each country wanted to see its own national history included. The production process shows how a common European history was constructed. The focus of the film was the development of a joint European culture in four phases: the Christian Middle Ages, the Age of Discoveries (Renaissance, Humanism), the Age of Reason ('la civilisation classique', 17-18th centuries) and the Age of Science. It concluded with the history of the new European institutions. The narrative is interrupted merely by short bits of information on conflicts and wars in Europe. The film was approved by all 15 states involved in the production. The common history of Europe was portrayed as an intersection of all the national histories. Disagreements, armed conflicts and different memories, insofar as they appeared to be problematic, were simply excluded or neutralised by the voice-over. The Franco-German War of 1870-71, for example, was mentioned only briefly and the Holocaust was not addressed at all. The memory of war was mainly a

⁵¹ C.H. Dand and J.A. Harrison, *Educational and Cultural Films: Experiments in European Co-Production* (Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Co-Operation of the Council of Europe, 1965), 12.

⁵² Although Italian *vedutisti* of the 16th and 17th century were an important inspiration for landscape artists in Northern Europe, none was mentioned in the film due to the fact that Italy was not a member of the Western European Union in 1948/49.

⁵³ Fonds Henri Stock, Bruxelles, Films Réalisés: *La Fenêtre Ouverte*, Dossier 31.

⁵⁴ Conseil de l'Europe, Historical Archives, Dossier no. 20620, Vol. I u. II: Films sur l'Europe et les problèmes européens. Vol. I, Committee of Cultural Experts, 4th session, 24 April 1952.

shared commemoration of suffering which was demonstrated by means of images of destroyed buildings, cultural monuments and military cemeteries.⁵⁵

Another film produced by the Council of Europe was *Pionniers de l'Europe* (F 1951). This documentary takes up another leitmotif. It depicts the achievements and the performance of the Council of Europe and deals extensively with the intentions and aims of the European unification process. It is also the only film produced by a European institution that acknowledged the role and influence of the non-governmental European movement. The European movement was at this time still very active and it had organised many events on specific themes during the first decades of the European integration process. The eponymous 'Pioneers of European Integration' were thus not only European politicians or 'European Saints', as Alan Milward defined them, like Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gasperi or Paul-Henri Spaak,⁵⁶ but also Europeans who had learned their lessons from the inglorious past. In these films, they were often described as courageous or industrious.

In the first scene of *Pionniers de l'Europe* the spectator was immediately thrown into the middle of the action, when a group of young people walked directly towards the camera in the opening scene of the film. Only the next image reveals where these adolescents are flocking to: the border between two states in Western Europe. The next shot shows how the barrier is torn down and all official border signs thrown into a bonfire. The image of the torn-down barrier is one of the most significant and consistent symbols in the European information films and newsreels alike. Its emblematic leitmotif takes up the underlying aim that Europe needs to overcome its divisive and conflict-ridden boundaries and merge into a new and harmonious community of European people.

Likewise, the Service de presse et d'information of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community financed and commissioned in cooperation with national newsreel companies short films for newsreels and documentaries.⁵⁷ Films like *Histoire d'un Traité* (1954), *La Comunità Europea* (1955) and *Es geht um 150 Millionen* (1956) were made to inform the audiences about the intentions and tasks of the ECSC. Furthermore, these films were dubbed into all of the national languages, and shown in all six member states of the ECSC. The primary purpose of this approach was to generate not only a kind of European public sphere but also to create a European identity and mutual understanding. The press officers as well as the directors and screenwriters working for the various European institutions were convinced that it was possible to translate the shared European heritage, values, symbols and ideas into audiovisual images.⁵⁸

NEWSREELS

Whereas information films had more time to elaborate and arrange their narrative this was not the case for newsreels. They had to communicate the identity of a political entity as complex as the ECSC or the EEC and notions like the idea of Europe in only 20 seconds to two minutes of screen time, or less than 15 minutes in the case of information films. Such was the range of length of most newsreel reports and documentaries. To be able to communicate the policy of the ECSC, for example, cameramen had to make use of political symbols and political rituals. It is for us imperative to

⁵⁵ A further film produced by the Council of Europe was *Des Lois pour toute l'Europe* (1955/56).

⁵⁶ A. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation State* (London: Routledge, 1992), 281; S. Brown Wells, *Pioneers of European Integration and Peace, 1945-1963. A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2007).

⁵⁷ Communautés Européennes Archives Bruxelles, CEAB 3/653 (18th January 1956); and CEAB 1/10 (report June-August 1954), .Clemens, op. cit. n43, 50.

⁵⁸ Conseil de l'Europe, Historical Archives, EXP/CULT (54) 9: Comité des Experts Culturels, Session Extraordinaire, Strasbourg, 17th March 1954: Programme d'action du Conseil de l'Europe, Section culturelle et scientifique

separate these terms from the deeply negative connotation that accompanied their emergence. According to Murray Edelman, political symbols are means to condense difficult political concepts, and by doing so they make these concepts communicable.⁵⁹ But in Edelman's pessimistic view of the state of affairs, political symbols served mostly to distract the masses from hidden 'real' politics. We would argue for a less negative concept of symbolic politics following those such as Ulrich Sarcinelli and Ute Frevert, to name just two researchers, who championed the thought that all politics have to be in part also symbolic.⁶⁰

European Integration in the 1950s was not only an institutional, bureaucratic or sectorial integration, it also had to be a symbolic one. Contrary to the traditional perception that the founding fathers were not interested in symbols, it is quite clear that Jean Monnet, Jean-Henri Spaak, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, and all the others were not only paying attention to legislative questions and structural developments but also to political symbolism which would 'translate' the challenging regulations of the ECSC, the common Market and Euratom into political rituals and sets of images.

The images we are going to discuss below are not only pictures in the strictest sense of the word; they are sets of images combined with commentary, musical score and cinematic montage. These stringent sets of images are metaphors or arguments for and of a European identity. They tried to explain symbolically the character of these new institutions.

These sets of images allow us, therefore, a first impression of what the Europeans saw of Europe. Like other images, these films and newsreel reports communicated imaginations and conceptions that helped the public to interpret their reality. Concerning European integration, these newsreels give us indications of the perception of the process of integration by the respective national publics. While there are some perceivable national differences in the motivation and argumentation for the integration process in the newsreels items, the images at work were similar, and more often than not even identical. The analysis of newsreels and information films shows that there were common imaginations at work in France, Germany, and Italy and to a lesser extent also in Austria and Great Britain. We should never forget that newsreel reports and documentaries were not so much communicating as constructing and creating these imaginations. And the fact that most of these imaginations are still communicated nowadays can be seen as evidence of their efficiency. These images of Europe were the first components of a European identity under construction; they were conditions for the success of the European project.

Different consolidated sets of European imaginations emerged from this analysis, and even though the following sets are based on the analysis of newsreel reports from 1948 to 1959, they share many characteristics with the images from the documentaries and information films mentioned above.

Of course, the most important images are those of the diplomatic meetings, conferences and signings of treaties, all of which can be summarised under the heading of *imaginations of a political community*. Images of the signature of European treaties are among the most durable and propagated. The best-known newsreel films and probably the most commonly replayed ones are those of the signing of the Rome Treaties in March 1957. Even today, we are quite familiar with these images, they were repeatedly shown in the news commemorating the 50th anniversary of the event, or as illustrations of reports on the European constitution. The signing of the treaties followed (and follows) a precisely given historical ritual and was/is thoroughly staged. The ritual itself was

⁵⁹ M. Edelman, *Politik als Ritual* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2005), 146.

⁶⁰ U. Frevert, 'Neue Politikgeschichte', in J. Eibach and G. Lottes, eds, *Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 152-164, 160.

modelled on the signing of the Schuman Plan in 1951⁶¹ but it shares many traits with previous signings of treaties, the Treaty of Brussels in 1949 being a good example. The location was almost always dignified with a historical ambiance. The statesmen were seated behind nameplates of their respective countries, authenticating them as representatives of their nations. The exposition of the story with an establishing shot of the locality was followed by pictures of the reporters, cameramen and a flurry of camera flashes.

Those were not in any way revolutionary new pictures communicating a new Europe. The depiction of signings of state treaties had quite a long tradition. The iconography is comparable to that of images traditionally used in such contexts. Importance was attached to the idea of the equality of all political actors involved. Personal contact, i.e. the handshake, symbolised the friendship and cooperation not only of the individuals, but of the nations and people they represented. In this context the 'personal' meetings of Konrad Adenauer and Charles De Gaulle gained particular significance. These images stand in the tradition of the long established genre of history painting, such as, for instance, *The swearing of the oath of ratification of the Treaty of Münster in 1648* (Gerard ter Borch, 1648), John Trumbull's *Declaration of Independence of the United States* (1817) or even the signing of the Final Act at the Congress of Vienna by Jean Baptiste Isabey (1815), to give only three of the most widely known examples. The same is true for conferences which followed a long iconographic tradition. Images of a political community were meant to legitimise the European project in front of the audience by demonstrating that the diplomatic rules had been observed. They communicated furthermore that the integration process was being implemented jointly by equal member states. These images of a treaty and a group of equals are one of the central topics in the European iconography.

A slightly different set of images was the collection of reports on parliamentary debates concerning the European treaties in the respective national assemblies, which transmitted the idea of a *potential democratic community*. In view of the recent debate on the democratic deficits of the EU they are of special interest for historians. While they have never been a dominant set of images of European integration, they must not be forgotten. The rejection of the European Defence Community in the French Assemblée Nationale in particular proved to the public that the integration process always had to be justified in front of an electorate.

Images of *opening barriers* were not only central to the staged events of federalists, but also to the iconography of the European institutions.⁶² Some of the most effective images in the history of the European construction are pictures of opening barriers at the inner European frontiers. These pictures visualise the end of toll barriers and imply that in the long term there will be no border controls at all; such images have potential to exercise a powerful and lasting effect on the imagination of the European audiences.⁶³ Frontiers are shown as something purely negative and detrimental to commerce and development. They are depicted as ancient remnants of a darker past. They also go back to a long iconographic tradition. Most of them are directly linked to political upheavals and revolutions, such as the French Revolution or the German unification in the 19th century.

⁶¹ 'Les représentants des 6 nations ont signés Schuman', *Pathé Journal*, no. 17, 25 Apr. 1951, Gaumont-Pathé Archives, Saint-Ouen; 'Paris: Unterzeichnung des Schumanplans', *Welt im Film*, no. 308, 27 Apr. 1951, Archiv der Deutschen Wochenschau GmbH, Hamburg.

⁶² The two best known events are the charging of the toll barriers by students at the German-French borders in St. Germanshof (06.08.1950) and Hirschthal (24.11.1950). The information film *Pionniers de l'Europe* (F 1951) addresses the episode in August 1950. As a student, the former German Bundeskanzler Helmut Kohl participated in a similar event.

⁶³ See for example P. Deger, 'Grenzen', in P. den Boer, H. Duchhardt, G. Kreis, W. Schmale, eds, *Europäische Erinnerungsorte 1. Mythen und Grundbegriffe des europäischen Selbstverständnisses* (München: Oldenburg, 2012), 247-256; and our forthcoming publication G. Clemens, A. Bruch, J. Goergen, T. Tode, *Werben für Europa. Die mediale Konstruktion europäischer Identität durch Filme im Rahmen europäischer Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*, 2014.

From images of borders it is only a small conceptual step to *European maps*, where the European integration has been constructed from its beginning. Maps depicting the European continent are in fact an old topic: from the allegoric maps of the Renaissance (for example, Sebastian Münster's *Europa Regina*) up to the first political maps of the 17th century. Even before the ECSC was established, geographical depictions of Europe had been at the core of the political communication of the European Recovery Programme, and before that, they were used in the project for Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Paneuropa Union. Politics were made with the aid of maps. Boundaries and frontiers, invisible to the naked eye, became solid and official in maps. Boundaries, that which separates us from others, are a central aspect of identity building, so it should not come as a surprise that maps were of central importance for most of the newsreel reports that tried to propagate the idea of a European community. In contrast to maps of Europe in newspapers and books, newsreels offered animated maps, where countries changed colours, grew together and boundaries vanished. While maps can also be understood as going back to an essential cultural identity of the continent, the fact that these maps were animated illustrates the European integration as a construction in process.

Last but definitely not least comes arguably the most successful set of images of Europe showing that the European integration would lead to an *economic community that would result in industrial and economic prosperity*. In the period of the ECSC's activity, the first half of the 1950s, images of coalmines and miners, of gigantic steel mills, visual impressive flying sparks and molten steel were especially popular, together with images of a developing infrastructure, mainly of railroad networks and infinitely long freight trains. These depictions stood in the tradition of early industrial paintings and photographs. Then, with the creation of the Common Market, pictures of newly constructed highways, apartment buildings and especially consumer products, varying from German cameras to Dutch cheese, gained more and more importance. Images of the manufacturing process illustrated the recovery of the European economy. The origin of this visual policy lay in the staged rituals of the European integration: the cast of the first European steel ingot, the first European coal train etc. The visual paradigm which tried to communicate economic prosperity was taken over by the national newsreel companies and supranational as well as national information films; it continued to be used up until the late 1960s with only some slight variations.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INFORMATION FILMS AND NEWSREELS

Newsreels and information films shared many of these 'images of Europe', which made it possible to take them as a joint subject for this paper. While different in length, both newsreel and information films used for the most part the same images and the same arguments to communicate the integration process to a general public. Both brought pictures of industrial development, especially of steel and coal, of opening barriers and animated maps to give reasons for, and bestow meaning upon, this political endeavour. Mainly, however, the motivation for the production of newsreel and information films differed considerably. While the information films were commissioned by European political actors to promote European integration, newsreels obeyed the logic of the producing companies. The vast majority of reports were not commissioned by a political agent but tried to satisfy a perceived demand for information and entertainment.⁶⁴ Concerning this

⁶⁴ Attempts of the Service de Presse et Information of the ECSC to provide first-hand newsreel footage failed because of a lack of financial and professional background: a project to finance at least 6 specific 'European' newsreel items per year and per newsreel company mentioned in Max Kohnstamm, Note au groupe de travail "Presse et Information", 13. Juli 1955, CEAB 13-68, Archives historiques de l'Union Européenne, Firenze was no longer mentioned in the 18th session, Tagesordnung, 10. Oktober 1957, CEAB 13-187, Archives historiques de l'Union Européenne, Firenze.

fundamental difference in the motivation of the production, this congruence of images might surprise at first glance, but is in fact evidence of a Pan-European political discourse.

There were, however, some considerable differences between newsreel reports and information films. On the one hand, information films did not focus on political legitimacy. The political rituals of the integration process, i.e. conferences, treaties etc. played far less a role in information films than in newsreel reports.⁶⁵ On the other hand, while the invocation of a shared European cultural history was of central importance for the argumentation of the information films, a positive lack of any allusions to a cultural European identity characterised the newsreel reports of the 1950s. It is possible that these differences were caused by the different format of these two audio-visual sources. While commissioned information films adopted the political rationale of European actors, like the European Movement, the Council of Europe, the ECSC etc., national newsreel reports assumed the point of view of national political actors, for whom a political and diplomatic legitimacy was of a central importance.

CONCLUSION

From the very beginning, the public relations campaigns of the various European institutions aimed at developing a consistent picture of 'Europe'. For one part, officials, media experts as well as film directors were involved in the discussion of how to define, legitimise and portray the idea of Europe. For the other part, these images as well as those from newsreels were a result of a political discourse and a centuries-old iconographic tradition. In the early production of information films, Europe was mainly based on cultural and historical elements. But with the development of concrete European institutions, and the increasing need to report on them on a regular basis, actual content and policies had to be communicated and transformed into audio-visual images.

By means of film as a medium with a powerful potential for awakening feelings of identification, empathy and parasocial interaction, the coordinators tried to propagate solidarity among the people of Europe. The constant repetition of identical images, combined with informative commentaries in the films was meant to communicate common values and norms to the Europeans. Images of Europe that tried to explain the new European institutions and make the process of integration more understandable to the European public were based on a specific arrangement of master narratives and visualised visions of a better future. This composition included not only images of reason confronting the inglorious and belligerent past with a present that consisted of a harmonious cooperation between the European states as well as of a prosperous European society, but, in the case of the information films, also metaphors and tropes of a common culture and history.

Therefore, analysis of the newsreel productions and public relations campaigns of the European institutions and their European information films breaks with the traditional analysis of European integration, which has so far concentrated mainly on the history of its institutions and international relations.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Clemens, op.cit. n43, 59.

⁶⁶ P. Pichler, 'Identity through History? European Integration History as a Protagonist in the Construction of a European Identity', in M. Beers and J. Raflik, eds, *Cultures nationales et identité communautaire. Un défi pour l'Europe?/ National Cultures and Common Identity. A Challenge for Europe* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2010), available at <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/98121207/Peter-Pichler-Karl-Franzens-Universit-Graz-Austria-Identity> [11 August 2013]; S. Berger, 'History and National Identity. Why They Should Remain Divorced', 2007, available at <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-66.html> [11 August 2013].

Those national governments participating in the integration process had to tackle the difficult question of how to inform the audience about the loss of national sovereignty, which would inevitably be the price that would need to be paid. The visualisation of this complex balance between European and national interests was hindered by the constant risk that European communication strategies could be perceived by the audiences as mere propaganda. It can in fact be misleading to use the term propaganda for these promotional films, as they were lacking the political machinery involved that characterised for example the fascist or communist propaganda. While the informational films discussed above had a definite political aim, most of them had neither the financial nor the political background to finance psychological surveys comparable to the denazification process.⁶⁷ The same is true for newsreel items. What is more, there were no specific exit-polls with information on the reception of the different items. Therefore, it is impossible to gauge the direct impact of newsreel items or documentary films on national audiences. A synchronal and diachronal analysis of the European images on the other hand gives evidence of its penetration of a European discourse. In this context, it is of utmost importance that images, metaphors and visualised master narratives be included in extensive analyses of the history of the European integration processes as well as the strategies that were used to define and communicate a European identity.

A comparison of promotional films and newsreel can also help to elucidate further the integration process and the different political agendas at work: whereas promotional films of the European institutions were often exceedingly idealistic, the news reported in newsreels tended to be more down to earth and concentrated far more on the economic and social consequences. Concerning the newsreel coverage of the integration process it is crucial to understand that, first, all newsreel companies of one country, regardless of their political background and financial structure, presented their audience with one consistent catalogue of European images. Second, the same is true for a comparison of the different national newsreels and European information films. While the European policies of the different nations were motivated by diverging national agendas, these never affected the common catalogue of European images in newsreels. National differences came down to a different frequency of news coverage. While French and German newsreels covered more or less all of the European conferences, treaties, etc., Austrian and British newsreel reports on the European communities were far less frequent. This does not mean that the newsreel reports shown in four different countries were exactly the same and there are sometimes perceptible differences in the commentary: the quest for sovereignty of Western Germany compared to the nostalgia of a 'Grande Nation' in France, and the Italian endeavours to become an equal partner within the Western world through the process of European integration, to give only a few examples. In light of the actual fragmentation of the European media landscape⁶⁸ it might be surprising that national deviations never affected the common imagery or goals in newsreels but only provided a different rationale for the national involvement. This is partly due to the medium itself. Most international newsreel companies had signed agreements to exchange newsreel footage to economise camera teams. Another reason for the similarity of images was the international 'film language' with its iconographic traditions used by camera operators across the globe. Last but not least, the 'European actors' themselves, i.e. the institutions and politicians, were responsible for a transnational catalogue of images by initiating the political rituals at the origin of the presented European

⁶⁷ To a certain extent the ECA controlled the production process of the Marshall Plan films and carried out some surveys. In Rome, for example, the Italian ECA officials monitored all measures concerning Marshall Plan information activities. David W. Ellwood: E.R.P. Propaganda in Italy: Its History and Impact in an Official Survey, in E. Krippendorff, ed., *The Role of the United States in the Reconstruction of Italy and West Germany, 1943-1949* (Berlin: John F. Kennedy Institut für Nordamerikastudien – Freie Universität Berlin 1980), 274-302.

⁶⁸ H.-J. Trenz, *'In search of popular subjecthood: constitution-making and the democratic consolidation of the EU'*, unpublished manuscript, (Oslo: ARENA 2008), 8.

imaginations. These rituals were not an invention of the post-war era but were in fact the result of centuries of diplomatic and symbolic traditions.

What stands out is the fact that even the few Austrian and British reports that exist (which are around twenty compared to over 200 in France or Germany) were composed after the same logic and used the same iconography as the French and German imaginations. A common catalogue of European Imaginations has emerged and solidified across Western Europe and became the nucleus of our contemporary European iconography. Concerning the question of a political identity of the European integration, it is impossible to assess the success of such political communication retrospectively. However, we would argue that there were some potent propositions of a political identity.

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Communicating European Integration – Information vs. Integration?

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Abstract

This article deals with the apparent contradiction between elite-driven supranational European integration and public information efforts by supranational political actors from the early 1950s. Supranational European integration relied on rational governance by independent experts which provoked a structural democratic deficit. Until the early 1970s public participation had never been the main preoccupation of supranational political actors who instead considered the 'permissive consensus' to be a precondition for progress towards further European integration. And yet, from the very beginning European supranational political actors pursued information policies. At first, the article reconsiders the rationale of supranational European integration and outlines the basic features of supranational information policies. Then, the article empirically analyses the purposes that guided supranational political actors like the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the Commissions of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Community (EURATOM) in pursuing information policies at all by discussing two significant examples: the EC information efforts directed at young audiences and the participation of the EC in fairs and exhibitions. It is argued that information policies were only in part pursued to communicate European integration to the public or to influence public opinion on European integration issues. In fact, the main intention and impact of supranational information efforts was to foster transnational European integration and co-operation, for example between member state governments and administrations, non-governmental actors or associations.

Keywords

European Communities (EC); Information policy; European integration theory; Supranationality; Communication theory

SUPRANATIONAL INFORMATION VS. SUPRANATIONAL INTEGRATION – WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

The study of the beginnings of supranational European information policies is still a desideratum for historical research, not least due to the persistent distance between the European institutions and the citizens.¹ This article is about European information policies as pursued by supranational European political actors such as the Commission of the European Communities (EC) and its various predecessors since 1952, i.e. the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the Commissions of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Community (commonly referred to as EURATOM). But essentially, it is about what might be called the contradiction between the rationale of integrating Europe and the rationale of informing Europeans. The main argument here is that communicating European integration only partially meant informing European citizens on issues of European integration in order to generate public support for it – not to mention instigating a dialogue with the citizens. Communicating European integration was rather a means to integrate Europe much more directly by establishing transgovernmental and transnational links between EC institutions, national administrations, social

¹ See, for example, C. Valentini and G. Nesti, eds, *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

actors or the media. This somewhat puzzling finding holds true at least for the period under consideration here: the formative period of supranational European integration – ‘Gründungsphase der europäischen Integration’² – from the early 1950s to the early 1970s. Firstly, the article reconsiders the rationale of supranational European integration and highlights some basic features of supranational information policies. Secondly, it turns to an empirical analysis of the main argument by discussing two significant examples for this: the EC information efforts directed at young audiences and the Communities’ participation in fairs and exhibitions. The empirical findings in the paper are based on archival sources from the Historical Archives of the European Commission (HAEC): the archives of the ECSC High Authority (fonds CEAB – Commission des Communautés Européennes Archives Bruxelles) and the archives of the EEC/EURATOM Commissions and the European Commission (fonds BAC – Bruxelles Archives Commission).

THE RATIONALE OF SUPRANATIONAL EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

To understand the main argument of the article it is necessary to reconsider the rationale of integration in the formative period of supranational European integration. Supranational European integration since the early 1950s has been an elite process,³ governed by political and economic elites.⁴ Supranationality, as specified in the Schuman Plan and operationalised in the ECSC, and later also by the EEC and EURATOM, was conceived to overcome the functional deficiencies of the European nation-states after the Second World War.⁵ Supranationality was considered a means to allow for rational decision-making by independent experts on the European level, whereas in the political system of the nation-states rational decision-making was considered to be threatened by powerful vested interests, such as those of sectoral economic interest groups, to the detriment of ‘good governance’ (to use an anachronistic phrase). As a consequence, from the beginning, the supranational European integration process was geared towards *output* legitimacy rather than democratic *input* legitimacy.⁶ Democratic features like the representation of the people in the early Assembly of the EC, and later in the European Parliament (EP), remained underdeveloped in the EC political system. Public participation has never been the main preoccupation. Democratic input by member state governments in the Council of Ministers was insignificant. Thus, the concept of supranationality and its inherent functionalist reliance on rational governance by independent experts caused a structural democratic deficit in the European integration project from the very beginning.⁷ Public opinion on European integration issues was not fully neglected, but from a supranationalist perspective general support of European integration was considered sufficient. Public participation in the developing process of European integration, knowledge of the EC or

² J. Elvert, *Die europäische Integration* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 1-2.

³ Cf. M. Haller, *European Integration as an Elite Process. The Failure of a Dream?* (New York, London: Routledge, 2008).

⁴ Cf. R. Dwan, ‘Un outil puissant. Les théories de l’élite et l’étude de la construction européenne’, in E. du Réau, ed., *Europe des élites? Europe des peuples? La construction de l’espace européen, 1945-1960* (Paris: Presse de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1998), 27-39.

⁵ Cf. W. Loth, ‘Beiträge der Geschichtswissenschaft zur Deutung der Europäischen Integration’, in W. Loth and W. Wessels, eds, *Theorien europäischer Integration* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2001), 96-98; G. Thiemeyer, ‘Supranationalität als Novum in der Geschichte der Internationalen Politik der fünfziger Jahre’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 4, 2 (1998), 5-21. For early examples of supranationality in the 19th century, see G. Thiemeyer and I. Tölle, ‘Supranationalität im 19. Jahrhundert? Die Beispiele der Zentralkommission für die Rheinschifffahrt und des Octroivertrages 1804-1832’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 17, 2 (2011), 177-196.

⁶ F.W. Scharpf, *Regieren in Europa. Effektiv und demokratisch?* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1999), 17-28.

⁷ Cf. G. Thiemeyer, ‘Das Demokratiedefizit der Europäischen Union. Geschichtswissenschaftliche Perspektiven’, *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte*, 2008, available at <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2008/Article=292> [last visited 11 February 2014]; G. Thiemeyer, ‘Die Ursachen des ‘Demokratiedefizits’ der Europäischen Union aus geschichtswissenschaftlicher Perspektive’, in W. Loth, ed., *Das europäische Projekt zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2001), 44-46.

interest in EC issues were not on top of the agenda at that time. Until the early 1970s, what Lindberg and Scheingold called the ‘permissive consensus’⁸ on European integration was considered sufficient for the future prospect of European integration. Permissive consensus as a concept describes the widespread public affirmation of the general idea of European integration, or rather European unity, combined with considerable public ignorance of the actual integration processes under way, as realised most prominently in the EC. Such a permissive consensus was enough as long as the *output* of European integration, and especially of the EC, satisfied a majority of people in Europe or in the EC member states respectively.⁹ Even more: the permissive consensus was not only considered sufficient for European integration in its formative period, it was considered *decisive* for integrationist room to manoeuvre. Only if the implications of planned integration steps could be withheld from public discourse (and the permissive consensus enabled political actors to do so) could progress in European integration be realised and integration driven forward by European political and economic elites unimpeded by public concern.¹⁰ Democratic feedback, stronger participation of the EP or national parliaments and ardent public debates on European integration were then considered to hamper rather than forward decision-making on the European level.¹¹

This was fully in line with the then prevailing theory of European integration: neo-functionalism. Ernst B. Haas stated in his influential neo-functionalist study of the ECSC in 1958:

It is as impracticable as it is unnecessary to have recourse to general public opinion and attitude surveys, or even to surveys of specific interested groups, such as business or labour. It suffices to single out and define the political elites in the participating countries, to study their reactions to integration and to assess changes in attitude on their part.¹²

Thus, from a neo-functionalist perspective it was most important ‘to create new identities and to change the loyalties of elite groups’,¹³ i.e. to shift elite loyalties from the national to the European level.

Haas’s study was first published in 1958, but Haas had had close links within the ECSC High Authority before. Haas, or at least neo-functionalist integration theory, also had a decisive impact on members of the EEC Commission and its President Walter Hallstein during the 1960s.¹⁴ Historians of European integration hold different opinions as to whether Walter Hallstein’s own stance on European integration was more or less neo-functionalist. According to Laurent Warloutzet, for example, the French Vice-President of the Hallstein Commission, Robert Marjolin, was much more influenced by neo-functionalist thinking than Hallstein himself.¹⁵ In contrast, Jonathan P.J. White emphasises the strong links between Hallstein and his staff on the one hand, and neo-functionalist academics like Leon Lindberg or Stuart Scheingold on the other hand, with these last two figures apparently viewed

⁸ L.N. Lindberg and S.A. Scheingold, *Europe’s Would-Be Polity. Patterns of Change in the European Community* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970), 41.

⁹ Cf. B. Kohler-Koch, T. Conzelmann and M. Knodt, *Europäische Integration – Europäisches Regieren* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage, 2004), 207; F. Brettschneider, J. van Deth, and E. Roller, ‘Europäische Integration in der öffentlichen Meinung. Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven’, in F. Brettschneider, J. van Deth, and E. Roller, eds, *Europäische Integration in der öffentlichen Meinung* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003), 9-26.

¹⁰ Cf. Loth, ‘Beiträge der Geschichtswissenschaft’.

¹¹ Cf. W. Merkel, ‘Die Europäische Integration und das Elend der Theorie’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 25 (2009), 325-326.

¹² E. B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950-1957* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004) [first published: Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1958], 17.

¹³ J.P.J. White, ‘Theory Guiding Practice. The Neofunctionalists and the Hallstein EEC Commission’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 9, 1 (2003), 12.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*; L. Warloutzet, ‘Relancer la CEE avant la Chaise vide. Néo-fonctionnalistes vs. fédéralistes au sein de la Commission européenne (1964-1965)’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 14, 1 (2008), 69-86.

¹⁵ Cf. Warloutzet, *op.cit.* N14

by Karl-Heinz Narjes, Hallstein's *chef de cabinet*, 'as 'consultants' on European integration'.¹⁶ For White, this relationship reinforces the argument that Hallstein's conception of European integration had been strongly influenced by the neo-functionalist approach.¹⁷ Even without settling this controversial matter, it can be reasonably assumed that neo-functionalist thoughts were prominent among leading figures within the EEC Commission at that time.

Given this neo-functionalist, elite-orientated stance of the supranational actors, the question must be asked as to the purposes that guided the supranational European political actors under consideration here – the ECSC High Authority, the EEC/EURATOM Commissions and later the merged EC Commission – in pursuing communication, or rather information policies at all, as they had done from the very beginning of the process of supranational European integration. The contradiction between elite-driven supranational European integration and public information efforts is only seemingly insoluble: as mentioned above, the supranational information policies were only partially pursued to communicate European integration in EC member and non-member states. In fact, the main intention – and the main impact, too – of supranational information efforts was not communicating European integration to the people or influencing public opinion on European integration issues (which, of course, was one intention among others), but fostering transgovernmental and transnational European integration or co-operation.

SUPRANATIONAL INFORMATION POLICIES – A BRIEF SURVEY OF THEORY IN PRACTICE

As early as 1952, when the ECSC was set up, the High Authority began to install a press and information service in Luxembourg. The service grew fast, and a few years later it consisted of a range of sectors and units, all located in Luxembourg: a) regional services (called *sectors*) for the member states, for Britain and the U.S., b) specific services (*sectors*), for example, for information efforts directed at trade unions, c) units of a rather technical nature, for example, for the production of written information and publications, d) the secretariat, responsible inter alia for organising the Community's participation in fairs and exhibitions. In addition, press and information offices were established in most member state capitals as well as in London and Washington. Responsibilities varied between these units over time. The High Authority's press and information service, however, became the nucleus for the later Common Press and Information Service of the EC and the Directorate-General Press and Information (DG X) respectively, whose administrative structure, of course, had become more differentiated over time.¹⁸ It is interesting to note in this context that the ECSC High Authority, as well as the EEC and EURATOM Commissions and the merged EC Commission used the term 'information policy' – instead of 'communication policy' – for their political public relations efforts over the whole period under consideration here. The right to pursue an independent information policy was not, in general, contested by the other EC institutions or by the governments of the EC member states, with the exception of finally unsuccessful attempts by the French government to monitor strictly the information policy of the EC Commission during the course of the Empty Chair crisis in 1965/66.

In general, the supranational information policies in EC member and non-member states in the formative period of European integration comprised similar tasks and had similar objectives. These objectives were rather multi-layered: presenting the structure, institutions and aims of the EC, explaining the EC decision-making process as well as specific decisions, establishing a permanent

¹⁶ White, op.cit. N13, 117.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸ Cf. for further references A. Reinfeldt, *Unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit? Akteure und Strategien supranationaler Informationspolitik in der Gründungsphase der europäischen Integration, 1952-1972* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014).

dialogue with the public¹⁹ to make the European Communities and their institutions known and thus acquiring reputation and mobilising support for European integration in general and for the EC in particular. Regarding countries applying for EC membership, since the 1960s the supranational political actors have tried to provide the elites and the general public in these countries with essential knowledge of the EC in order to facilitate the transition process after an eventual accession to the Communities.²⁰ On the whole, the intention was to create acceptance for supranational European integration and to ensure the functioning of the EC.

It would go far beyond the scope of the argument of this article to claim that appealing to public opinion was not a motive behind the supranational information policies. But at best it was only one motive among others, and moreover, appealing to public opinion meant first and foremost appealing to those circles that were considered relevant for the prospect of European integration from a neo-functionalist perspective. The above-mentioned 'permanent dialogue' was, in fact, a dialogue with those already interested in European integration and EC issues. Consequently, supranational information policies were primarily aimed at decision-making and opinion-forming elites: politicians and representatives of political associations, trade unions, economic and business organisations, journalists and academic circles. Throughout the period under consideration here, the general public was not the main target audience. Still, in 1971 the EC Commission decided 'to focus information activities on distributors of information in all interested milieus [...], giving priority in this regard to trade unionist, agricultural, university and consumer milieus, as well as to the youth'.²¹

This explicit focus on decision-makers, opinion leaders, information distributors and expert audiences is partly due to the contemporary rationale of supranational European integration and its general focus on political, economic and bureaucratic elites as sketched above. However, given restricted financial and staff resources for information policies,²² and given the available media in the formative period of European integration, this focus on opinion leaders also seems to have been the only way to achieve information policy objectives. Still, in the early 1970s, the only information media by which the EC Commission could have directly addressed a broader audience and which could have had mass appeal were radio broadcasts, television and films as well as fairs and exhibitions. With the exception of radio broadcasts, all of these means were extremely expensive and, therefore, only sporadically used. However, it was not just that communicating with the broader public was difficult at that time, from a political-strategic perspective it was also unnecessary. It was considered to be sufficient to address opinion leaders, who were believed, in turn, to have a certain impact on a broader public.

The term 'opinion leader' (or its German and French equivalent - 'Meinungsführer' / 'leaders d'opinion' respectively) was frequently used in the archival documents concerning European information policies from that period.²³ And this, as well as the actual focus on decision-makers,

¹⁹ For example, according to CEAB (Commission des Communautés Européennes Archives Bruxelles) 2/2345: Mémoire sur la politique des Communautés en matière d'information à l'attention des Conseils, 26 Jun. 1963, the information offices in several member and non-member state capitals were meant to be 'a kind of receiving and broadcasting "antennae"' ('en quelque sorte des "antennes" réceptrices et émettrices') informing the public about the EC as well as informing EC institutions about the public opinion.

²⁰ Cf. BAC (Bruxelles Archives Commission) 173/1995/232: Orientations sur la politique d'information de la Commission pour 1970 – Annexe: Information dans les pays tiers, 19 Jun. 1969.

²¹ BAC 12/1992/283: Programme d'activité d'information pour 1971, 21 Sep. 1971: 'de concentrer l'action d'information sur les multiplicateurs d'information de tous les milieux intéressés [...], donnant à cet égard une certaine priorité aux milieux syndicaux, agricoles, universitaires et des consommateurs, ainsi qu'à la jeunesse.'

²² Cf., for example, CEAB 13/185: Aufzeichnung fuer die Herren Mitglieder der Arbeitsgruppe 'Presse und Information' über den Haushaltsvoranschlag fuer 1957/58, 7 Jan. 1957, and CEAB 2/1383: Commentaires sur l'avant-projet de budget pour l'exercice 1967, 27 Jul. 1966.

²³ See, for example, CEAB 2/2345: Mémoire sur la Politique des Communautés en matière d'Information à l'attention des Conseils, 26 Jun. 1963

opinion leaders, distributors of information and expert audiences, was due to findings in contemporary communication theory which influenced the supranational political actors under consideration here. Particularly influential in this regard was the study *The People's Choice* by Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet published for the first time in 1944.²⁴ This work considerably influenced the information strategies of the EC Commission and its predecessors in the formative period of European integration.²⁵ According to the 'opinion leader' concept developed by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, opinion leaders are exceedingly interested and engaged in a specific issue and advance their opinions on this issue within their respective social environment. Opinion leaders supply patterns of interpretation to their audience and exert a significant influence, especially in interpersonal communication settings, on forming the opinions of the so-called 'opinion followers'.²⁶ Thus, in addition to neo-functionalist interpretations of supranational European integration, the focus on opinion leaders and functional elites in European information policies also originated from contemporary communication theory.

INFORMATION POLICIES AS INTEGRATION POLICIES

That said, the main reason why functional elites and opinion leaders were the main addressees was not that they were expected to communicate European integration to the public or to influence public opinion on European integration issues. The main intention and the main impact of this supranational information approach was to promote directly European integration by fostering transnational European co-operation. In doing so, the supranational political actors were especially interested in co-operating with member state administrations and non-governmental actors; as stated in a document from the Common Press and Information Service of the EC in the mid-1960s:

Of course, this action can neither be conceived nor carried out by a single institution, nor by the Community institutions themselves, but requires very close co-operation with all services, all public or private associations which can be led to pursue the same objective: the objective which is stated in the preamble to the Treaties and which gives them their meaning.²⁷

And this gives further reason to the elite-focussed approach in supranational information policies. In the following section, two examples for this information policy approach will be given: the first example shows how supranational information policies fostered transnational co-operation among national administrations and social actors in the field of youth information; the second example is from the field of fairs and exhibitions, in which the supranational actors tried by similar means to make European unity literally tangible for the fairgoers.²⁸

²⁴ P. F. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson and H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice. How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944).

²⁵ Cf. P. Aldrin, 'L'invention de l'opinion publique européenne. Genèse intellectuelle et politique de l'Eurobaromètre (1950-1973)', *Politix – Revue des sciences sociales du politique*, 23, 89 (2010), 79-101, 89.

²⁶ Cf. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, op.cit. N24. See also: W. Schulz, *Politische Kommunikation. Theoretische Ansätze und Ergebnisse empirischer Forschung*, 2nd edn (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage, 2008), 286-289.

²⁷ CEAB 12/1076: Programme d'Activité pour 1966, undated [1965]: 'Bien entendu, cette action ne peut être conçue ni menée par un seul organe, ni par les seules institutions communautaires, mais exige une coopération très poussée avec tous les services, toutes les organisations publiques ou privées qui peuvent être amenés à poursuivre le même objectif: celui qui est inscrit dans la préambule des traités et leur donne leur signification.'

²⁸ For the following cf. Reinfeldt, op.cit. N18.

Informing the Youth

Informing the youth was one of the priorities of supranational information policies. The EC Commission and its predecessors had established close links with universities and international youth movements since the 1950s. Information for the younger audience comprised two distinct but complementary lines of action: 1. informing university milieux; 2. information in youth milieux in general (as well as adult education). Informing university milieux comprised higher education, whereas the information addressed at youth milieux in general comprised pedagogic and educational organisations as a whole (extracurricular education, youth movements, advanced vocational training and adult education).²⁹ Once again, these information efforts were primarily directed at those young Europeans who were already politically engaged. The ECSC High Authority, for example, provided intellectual and technical assistance for the European Youth Campaign (EYC), founded in 1951 on the initiative of the European Movement and the CIA-led American Committee on United Europe (ACUE) to counter-balance communist youth movements. In most cases, however, the High Authority refrained from substantial financial aid for the EYC – even when the ACUE withdrew their massive financial support of the EYC at the end of the 1950s, finally leading to the dissolution of the EYC.

At that time, information efforts aimed at young people gained momentum due to an annually renewed special grant for youth information and public education in EC member states awarded on the basis of a resolution of the European Parliamentary Assembly in 1959;³⁰ the latter basically being the principal supporter of a better budgetary funding for the supranational information policies. The grant was, in fact, used for explaining to young people the aims of the EC, the functioning of their institutions and their achievements with an emphasis on issues of labour mobility, freedom of establishment, social policy or the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Prime target audiences were: the teaching staff at schools, universities³¹ and in civic education; leaders of youth movements, student and labour associations as well as rural, political or confessional associations. The EC information service provided them with informational material (geographic maps, graphical material, publications etc.), sent delegates to numerous seminars and conferences or organised lectures on European integration issues. Close links with youth leaders were of prime importance for the supranational political actors concerned with information policies, as becomes apparent from a note on the principal information activities in 1965/66: ‘Establishing such direct contacts with leaders of cultural associations might be the most effective means to impart to young people substantial knowledge on the vast field of integration’.³² In the same note it is also emphasised that closer co-operation between the EC information service, national governmental departments concerned with youth issues and leaders of teachers’ and youth associations was a prerequisite *as well as* a result of the supranational information efforts in this field. Numerous secretariats, liaison committees and working groups were set up on the European level serving as permanent liaison bodies for officials and experts on the European, governmental and non-governmental levels. For the supranational political actors, these bodies were very useful in co-ordinating information efforts directed at young people and for the gradual, increasingly systematic evolution of a true European

²⁹ Cf. BAC 51/1986/575: Avant-Projet de Programme d’Activité pour 1967, 31 Jan. 1967.

³⁰ Cf. Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, Kommission, Zehnter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Gemeinschaft (1. April 1966 – 31. März 1967), [Brussels] 1967, 403.

³¹ Individual and collective research about European integration issues and the EC was also supported through the regular ‘information universitaire’ of the EC information service; cf. CEAB 2/2345: Mémoire sur la Politique des Communautés en matière d’Information à l’attention des Conseils, 26 Jun. 1963.

³² BAC 173/1995/228: Arbeitsunterlage über die vorrangigen Informationstätigkeiten für 1965-1966, 9 Apr. 1965, Anlage III: Information der Jugend und Erwachsenenbildung: ‘Mit der Aufnahme solcher direkter Kontakte mit den Führungskräften der Kulturverbände dürfte das wirksamste Mittel gefunden worden sein, um der Jugend ein echtes Wissen auf dem weitläufigen Gebiet der Integration zu vermitteln’.

education ('einer echten europäischen Bildung') in EC member states – despite the initially diverging opinions and interests of the various national associations.³³

It becomes clear that most of these information efforts were an attempt on the part of the supranational political actors to foster closer transnational co-operation between youth movements, between actors in the educational and academic system as well as among national administrations in EC member states.

Fairs and Exhibitions

Participation in fairs and exhibitions was a means of promoting supranational information efforts and was used by the supranational actors throughout the whole period under consideration here. It was a very auspicious one, too, and this for various reasons. Firstly, participation in fairs and exhibitions offered a rare opportunity to address people with no special interest in the EC directly. Secondly, it offered various opportunities for collateral information efforts, such as press conferences, interviews, colloquia and lectures.³⁴ Finally, it offered an opportunity to 'build Europe' in the most literal sense and to make European unity tangible for visitors.

After the Brussels World's Fair in 1958 (Expo 58), in which the ECSC had participated with a pavilion on behalf of all three European Communities, the idea was developed in the EC information service 'to group the stands of the six member states of the European Community on the same plot at important international fairs'.³⁵ Visitors should be able to get a physical impression of European unity within the EC. At the International Fair in New York in 1959 the stands were grouped in this manner for the first time, and for the second half of the same year it was intended to develop guidelines for a regular coordination of participation in fairs and exhibitions between the EC and the responsible administrative services in the member states. The EC information service suggested grouping the member states' stands around the EC stand in the centre 'in order to present to the public, both inside and outside of the Community, the face of a diverse and active Europe whose unity becomes a reality a bit more every day'.³⁶

But subsequent efforts to establish regular and official contacts, instead of rather informal meetings, between national administrations and the EC services were only in part successful. At the international agricultural exhibition Grüne Woche (International Green Week) in Berlin in 1960, at least, all the member states' stands were visibly labelled 'European Community'.³⁷ And in 1961 progress was made under the aegis of the Permanent Representatives of the EC member states and the Secretariat-General of the EC Council of Ministers.³⁸ The participation in the Seattle World's Fair in 1962 (The Century 21 Exposition) was, to cite a document from the Fairs and Exhibitions Division

³³ BAC 173/1995/228: Arbeitsunterlage über die vorrangigen Informationstätigkeiten für 1965-1966, 09 Apr. 1965, Anlage III: Information der Jugend und Erwachsenenbildung. Cf. also CEAB 2/2345: Mémorandum sur la Politique des Communautés en matière d'Information à l'attention des Conseils, 26 Jun. 1963; CEAB 13/360: Programmes d'activité pour 1961, 18 Jan. 1961.

³⁴ Cf. CEAB 13/118: Tätigkeit der Presse- und Informationsstelle 1955/56 und Vorschau für 1956/57, 24 Sep. 1956.

³⁵ CEAB 2/2346: Participation des Communautés Européennes aux Foires et Expositions: Rapport de rendement, 24 Sep. 1963: 'De grouper en un même périmètre dans les foires internationales importantes les stands des Six Pays membres de la Communauté européenne'.

³⁶ CEAB 13/322: Note à l'attention de Messieurs les Membres du Groupe de travail interexécutif *Information*, Objet: Programme de participation des Communautés européennes aux foires et expositions en 1960, 9 Feb. 1960: 'De façon à présenter au public, tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur de la Communauté, le visage d'une Europe diverse et active, dont l'unité se réalise un peu plus chaque jour'.

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

³⁸ Cf. CEAB 13/360: Programmes d'activité pour 1961, 18 Jan. 1961.

in the Common Press and Information Service, a ‘first experience of integration’:³⁹ for the first time, the European Communities were charged with the installation of a ‘shared stand’ for the EC *and* the six member states.⁴⁰ The Seattle experience was considered to be far from perfect due to lack of time in the preparation phase;⁴¹ but a decisive step towards integrating participation in fairs and exhibitions and, thus, towards integration in the field of information policies had been made.

However, the making of decisions on participation in major fairs and exhibitions remained a highly political issue for the supranational political actors as well as for the EC member states’ governments.⁴² As a matter of principle, the member states still decided autonomously on their respective participation depending on political or trading interests. Nevertheless, in 1963/64 it was decided to hold regular, at least biannual, meetings between national experts for fairs and exhibitions and representatives of the EC Common Press and Information Service in order to co-ordinate participation in fairs and exhibitions. A common, or at least concerted, approach remained the objective of the supranational political actors. As stated in a document of the Information Service from April 1964: ‘The moment seems to have come, for the Member states as well as for the European institutions themselves, to set forth the broad outlines of a common – or at least concerted – policy in this field’.⁴³ Even if a coherent policy in the field of fairs and exhibitions remained a long way off in the period under consideration here,⁴⁴ the ambition of the supranational political actors to establish regular and official contacts between the member states administrations, national experts for fairs and exhibitions and the EC Information Service is evident.

THE CHANGING RATIONALE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION SINCE THE 1970s

It becomes clear that the seemingly aporetic contradiction between the rationale of supranational European integration and the rationale behind public information policy in the formative period of European integration can be reconciled. The supranational information policies of the EC Commission and its predecessors since the early 1950s were only partially pursued to communicate European integration to the people or to influence public opinion on European integration issues. As the examples quoted above show, these information policies were a – more or less successful – means to foster transgovernmental and transnational European integration or co-operation between EC institutions, national governments and administrations as well as non-governmental actors in hitherto non-integrated policy areas like youth, educational or cultural policies. Thus, information policies were a means to deepen supranational integration directly in the formative period of European integration.

In subsequent years, the rationale of European integration gradually changed, culminating, on the one hand, in the decay of neo-functionalism as the prevailing integration theory in the course of the 1960s,⁴⁵ and on the other hand (and more importantly in the context of this article), in the erosion of the permissive consensus – a development, by the way, forecast by Lindberg and Scheingold

³⁹ CEAB 2/2346: Participation des Communautés Européennes aux Foires et Expositions: Rapport de rendement, 24 Sep. 1963: ‘Première expérience d’intégration’.

⁴⁰ Cf. CEAB 2/2121: Entwurf des Haushaltsplans des gemeinsamen Informationsdienstes, Haushaltsjahr 1962, *undated*.

⁴¹ Cf. CEAB 2/2346: Participation des Communautés Européennes aux Foires et Expositions: Rapport de rendement, 24 Sep. 1963.

⁴² Cf. CEAB 13/360: Programmes d’activité pour 1961, 18 Jan. 1961.

⁴³ CEAB 2/2908: Communication du Service commun de Presse et d’Information sur une politique à définir dans le domaine des foires et expositions, 8 Apr. 1964: ‘Le moment semble venu, pour les Etats membres comme pour les Institutions européennes elles-mêmes, d’esquisser les grandes lignes d’une politique commune – ou du moins concertée – en ce domaine’.

⁴⁴ Cf. BAC 1/1980/26: Projet de Programme d’Activité pour 1968 du Service de Presse et d’Information, *undated*.

⁴⁵ Cf. B. Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

themselves. Since the 1970s, the EC institutions, at least in principle, have begun to align their policies with the citizens in EC member states, as is apparent from the Tindemans Report in 1975/76. Given the increasing gap between citizens' expectations and the output of European policies, the Tindemans Report explicitly linked the realisation of 'a citizen's Europe', conceived as a combination of European civic rights and citizenship, to the realisation of a 'European Union'. According to Jürgen Nielsen-Sikora, the Tindemans Report was a decisive stimulus for a citizens' Europe and 'a milestone of European integration history',⁴⁶ even if the basic contradiction between the (neo-) functionalist approach towards European integration, focusing on output and efficiency, and public responsiveness could not finally be reconciled in the Report.

As regards supranational information policies, quite apart from tendencies towards professionalisation like establishing regular opinion surveys⁴⁷ (the later Eurobarometer surveys), and attempts to measure systematically achievements of information efforts, since the late 1960s the focus has begun to shift in order to align the information policies with the changing political and social environment in Europe. Several factors were decisive for this re-orientation of supranational information policies. In a time of détente in world politics, European integration was no longer considered as self-evident as before. Information policies, therefore, had to be directed at explaining the necessity of European integration to the European citizens in much more detail than before: 'More arguments, fewer appeals',⁴⁸ was the order of the day for the Commission's DG Press and Information. For the first time, the goal of the information policies should be 'to convince the sceptical and the undecided'.⁴⁹ In addition, consumers began to question EEC policies due to rising consumer prices, especially food prices. Concerning the objective of increasing welfare, the EEC seemed to be off target for the first time since its creation. The CAP became the main target of criticism. Consequently, the main focus of European information policies at the time became consumer information. European workers were becoming increasingly critical of social integration which, they felt, did not keep pace with the process of economic integration. Consequently, the supranational European actors also had to engage with social issues in their information efforts in the 1970s. Ultimately, the European Communities were increasingly criticised for the lack of democratic control of the decision-making process on the European level. This became a serious problem given what the public saw as a lack of results for European integration and the EC; now, unlike in the 1950s and early 1960s, when the economic output of European integration made the lack of public participation less noticeable, the structural democratic deficit began to impinge on the future of European integration. Against this background, the information policies of the EC Commission had to analyse public opinion in more detail than before and adjust their information efforts to the new challenges.⁵⁰

The beginning of the 1970s thus not only marked a new period in European integration, as symbolised by 'entering the second-generation Europe'⁵¹ as a result of the Hague Summit of the Heads of State and Government of EC member states in 1969 and their commitment to completion, enlargement and the deepening of European integration. It also marked a new period in the

⁴⁶ 'Meilenstein der Integrationsgeschichte'. See J. Nielsen-Sikora, *Europa der Bürger? Anspruch und Wirklichkeit der europäischen Einigung – eine Spurensuche* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2009), 232.

⁴⁷ BAC 1/1980/29: COM(70) PV 146, 9 Dec. 1970; Objectifs et Priorités du Programme d'Information pour 1971, 26 Nov. 1970. See also Europäische Gemeinschaft für Kohle und Stahl/Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft/Europäische Atomgemeinschaft, Kommission, Vierter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Gemeinschaften 1970, Brüssel, Luxemburg (February) 1971, 428.

⁴⁸ BAC 12/1992/205: Planning für das Programm 1972. Vorbereitung der Besprechung mit Botschafter Borschette, 2 Oct. 1971: 'Mehr Argumente als Appelle'.

⁴⁹ 'Die Skeptiker und die Unschlüssigen zu überzeugen' (ibid.).

⁵⁰ Cf. ibid.

⁵¹ F. Knipping and M. Schönwald, eds, *Aufbruch zum Europa der zweiten Generation. Die europäische Einigung 1969-1984* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2004).

European information policies as pursued by the EC Commission. This re-orientation of supranational information efforts has not always been implemented with success in subsequent years. But since then it has become customary to formulate the general aim of including the European citizens in the process of European integration more explicitly and more regularly. However, the EC Commission considered this shift in focus unlikely to succeed over a short period of time. In the information programme for 1973, it is conceded that a 'European public opinion' ('europäische öffentliche Meinung') did not exist yet and that there was reason to fear that the broader public would become even more disinterested in European issues.⁵² Among the possible causes for this were named, for example, an increasing political radicalisation in EC member states, the crisis of the European institutions which were publicly held responsible for difficulties, for example, in the finance markets, as well as the lack of democratic control of EC institutions and decision-making.⁵³

However, particularly significant in the context of this article is that from the early 1970s the supranational political actors under consideration here became increasingly aware of the inadequacy of an approach to European integration *and* information policies primarily relying on functional elites, opinion leaders and on *output* legitimacy instead of public and democratic participation or *input* legitimacy respectively. Even if this awareness did not immediately result in a fundamental change of the information approach, and even if articulating this awareness was, of course, in part a rhetorical strategy as well,⁵⁴ the European citizens have, nonetheless, gradually found their way into the rationale of European integration since then. This is best illustrated in the re-naming of the former 'information policies' as 'communication policies' in recent years, symbolising a more dialogue-orientated approach towards the public.⁵⁵ The increasing orientation towards the 'citizen' since the early 1970s is not limited to EC information policies, but can also be witnessed in contemporary attempts to supplement the European market integration by adding a social and societal dimension or a European consumer protection policy to European integration.⁵⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the whole, it can be stated that information policies were not atypical in the process of European integration and that the shift in focus from the 1970s onwards was only partially a policy change; rather, it was a change in communication and rhetorical strategy. Still, a fundamental and lasting revision of the elite-orientated integration concept remained unrealised – despite the changing rationale of European integration. Given the persistent distance between the European institutions and the citizens, the question arises whether current challenges for European communication policies are still a legacy from the information policy approach in the formative period of European integration and a possible manifestation of a path-dependent development⁵⁷ in the field of communication policies. This remains a rewarding field of research. However, as argued in this article, it has to be kept in mind that the supranational information policies of the EC Commission

⁵² BAC 12/1992/280: Presse und Information. Programm 1973 – Planning I, 24 May 1972.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ For recent examples see B. Kohler-Koch and C. Quittkat, *Die Entzauberung partizipativer Demokratie. Zur Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft bei der Demokratisierung von EU-Governance* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2011); E. Monaghan, "'Communicating Europe". The Role of Organised Civil Society', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4, 1 (2008), 18-31.

⁵⁵ Cf. M. Brüggemann, *Europäische Öffentlichkeit durch Öffentlichkeitsarbeit? Die Informationspolitik der Europäischen Kommission* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage, 2008), 17.

⁵⁶ Cf. A. Bauerkämper and H. Kaelble, eds, *Gesellschaft in der europäischen Integration seit den 1950er Jahren. Migration – Konsum – Sozialpolitik – Repräsentationen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012).

⁵⁷ Cf. P. Pierson, 'The Path to European Integration. A Historical Institutional Analysis', *Comparative Political Studies*, 29, 2 (1996), 123-163.

and its predecessors until the 1970s were only partially pursued to communicate European integration to the people, but were rather conceptualised as a means to foster transgovernmental and transnational European integration or co-operation between EC institutions, national governments and administrations as well as non-governmental actors. This could be seen in the field of youth information where numerous permanent liaison bodies were set up to this end, as well as concerning the highly emblematic issue of common participations in fairs and exhibitions. In this respect, information policies have always been integration policies.

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A Salutary Shock: The European Suffrage Movement and Democracy in the European Community, 1948-1973

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Abstract

This article examines the experience of democratic participation during the European Community's most undemocratic era, 1948-1973. An important segment of European activists, a suffrage movement of sorts, considered European-wide elections as the most effective technique of communicating European unity and establishing the EC's democratic credentials. Going beyond strictly information dissemination, direct elections would engage citizens in ways pamphlets, protests, and petitions could not. Other political elites, however, preferred popular democracy in the form of national referendums, if at all. This article examines the origins and implications of incorporating the two democratic procedures (national referendums and direct elections) into the EC by the end of the 1970s. It also identifies a perceived deficit in democracy as a spectre that has haunted European activists since the first post-war European institutions of the late 1940s, a spectre that has always been closely related to an information deficit. Based on archival research across Western Europe, this article touches upon the larger historiographical issues of European democratization, political communication, and the role of elections in European unity.

Keywords

European Community; European Parliament; Democratization; Political Communication; Direct Elections; Referendum; European Movement

Since European Parliament (EP) direct elections began in 1979, voters and commentators have noted an "information deficit"¹ among the ever-growing list of deficits, figurative or monetary, that afflict the European Union's (EU) reputation. Elections provide an opportunity for increased communication on EU issues, but polls show that despite the blitz of information that immediately precedes EP elections, voters still feel that they lack sufficient information and are unenthusiastic about EP elections.² Those who advocated the implementation of EP elections in the decades preceding the inaugural election in 1979 did so partly in the belief that supranational elections would provide essential moments of widespread communication on European issues and habituate voters toward casting a ballot at the European level. These activists also believed that elections could help remedy the emerging, perceived deficit of democratic legitimacy confronting the European Community (EC)³ for the first time on a large-scale basis in the 1970s. Elections could cure the information and democratic deficits that some believed the Community faced. We know now that EP direct elections were not the panacea that activists envisioned – EP election turnout hit its lowest level in 2009 and the notion of a democratic deficit is as powerful as ever in contemporary EU

¹ K. Brants, P. van Praag Jr., and M.-C. Noël-Aranda, 'The Campaign Communicators' Commitments. Enthusiasm, duty or indifference?', in J.G. Blumler, ed., *Communicating to Voters. Television in the first European Parliamentary elections* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), 125-151; L. L. Kaid, 'European Parliamentary Elections. Communicating a shared vision for Europe', in L. L. Kaid, ed., *The EU Expansion. Communicating shared sovereignty in the parliamentary elections* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 3-10; R. Upson, *Connecting with Citizens. Does the EU have the will to tackle its information deficit?*, Report by the European Citizens Action Service (Brussels: ECAS, 2006), available at http://www.ezd.si/fileadmin/doc/4_AKTIVNO_DRZAVLJANSTVO/Viri/Connecting_with_citizens_ecas.pdf. Accessed on 1 January 2014.

² Upson, 'Connecting'.

³ I use the terms European Community and European Parliament to refer to political bodies that did not always bear those titles but were in essence those institutions by another name.

discourse.⁴ Yet examining the movement for direct elections provides a window through which we can witness European activists grappling for the first time with issues that would later come to harm the EU's reputation among the people it claims to represent.

The article takes as its guide what I call the supranational suffrage movement from 1948-1973. Like all suffrage movements, the point was to expand political participation into a new realm. The movement's common goal was voter participation in European unity, but its members did not form a single, cohesive campaign. Its disparate roster consisted of mostly federal activists from the umbrella organisation the Union of European Federalists and its splinter groups across Western Europe. Federalists that reflected the often-contrasting views of Jean Monnet (though not Monnet himself) and Altiero Spinelli both advocated for supranational democracy at times, but in general, those of Spinelli's ilk pushed for more immediate, radical solutions. The federal suffragists periodically fought each other, while at other times they were united in their criticism of the European Community's lack of popular political participation. In general those in the supranational suffrage movement advocated for greater popular participation in European integration by supporting direct elections to the European Parliament, increasing the Parliament's powers relative to EC's other branches, and discouraging national referendums. This article analyses the historical trajectory of the supranational suffrage movement, offers explanations for some of the key moments when it did not succeed, and explores how notions of supranational democracy became central to both supporters and opponents of the European Community.

Scholars often dismiss the federal movement, and in turn those that advocated for popular political participation at the European level.⁵ If one is purely concerned with its impact on the development of the European Community's institutions, then European federalism was not an overwhelming success. One of the federal movement's proudest moments was the European Council's decision in 1976 to hold direct EP elections, for which it can take only partial credit.⁶ Although federalists did not achieve many of their goals, they were not inconsequential.⁷ Dismissing federalist goals as unrealistic or unviable overlooks the contested nature of supranational democracy and the contingency of their failures. At every step in the uniting of Europe those in the supranational suffrage movement challenged what they considered was the undemocratic status quo. This article confronts the development of the European Parliament,⁸ but its main focus is on exploring broader notions of supranational democracy from primarily an empirical perspective. In order to understand supranational democracy, and by extension today's so-called democratic deficit, we must first historicise it. There are exceptionally few historical studies drawn from archives that significantly

⁴ A. Follesdal and S. Hix, 'Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU. A response to Majone and Moravcsik', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44, 3 (2006), 533-62.

⁵ Since Walter Lipgen's death in 1984, much of the scholarship that explains European integration dismisses federalist influence. Most notably see A. S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1992); A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). For a recent example see H. Schulz-Forberg and B. Str  th, *The Political History of European Integration. The Hypocrisy of Democracy-Through-Market* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁶ J. Smith, *Europe's Elected Parliament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); J. Fitzmaurice, 'Direct Elections and the Future of the European Parliament', *West European Politics*, 1, 2 (1978), 208-225; V. Herman and J. Lodge, *The European Parliament and the European Community* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978).

⁷ M. Burgess, *Federalism and European Union. The Building of Europe, 1950-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁸ B. Rittberger, 'The creation and empowerment of the European Parliament', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41, 2 (2003), 203-225; B. Rittberger, *Building Europe's Parliament. Democratic Representation Beyond the Nation-State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); P. Scalingi, *The European Parliament. The Three-Decade Search for a United Europe* (London: Greenwood Press, 1980); A.-M. Houdbine and J.-R. Verg  s, *Le Parlement europ  en dans la construction de l'Europe des Six* (Paris: PUF, 1966).

address, rather than dismiss, the potential for any type of popular political participation that would transcend national borders before 1980.⁹

Researching supranational democracy before 1979 necessarily entails justifying it as a valuable research topic. Why research something that did not yet exist? Simply put, it is valuable because it is prominent in the historical sources on European integration. It is also a worthwhile pursuit because it helps expose some of the ideological fault lines among elites' conceptions of a united Europe that they communicated to the public. Purposely left unsettled was what type of polity elites were creating in Western Europe. Was the EC a burgeoning European government, or was it an intergovernmental organization primarily controlled by its member states? Was it in need of its own direct legitimation, or would the indirect legitimacy conferred on it by its member states suffice? How one characterized the EC polity has largely determined one's view of supranational democracy. As we will see, those most committed to supranational democracy tended to view the EC in a state of becoming, while those more ambivalent or opposed to supranational democracy saw the EC in its limited state of being. Did the EC only consist of strict areas of economic cooperation, or was it an infinitely expandable proto-government that required direct elections to justify its governing? Almost immediately after WWII European suffragists hoped that supranational democracy could be an essential element to the uniting of Europe, but the continually unfinished functional integration process relegated supranational democracy to a remote goal, or a faraway component to a perpetually incomplete polity.¹⁰ In addition, we know today that a *demos* of the type found in national democracies never formed.¹¹

Why did the suffrage movement consider it an imperative to introduce voter participation into the EC? It was hardly a winning electoral strategy for national politicians. Citizens regularly elected representatives based on criteria that excluded a candidate's positions on European integration. The notion of permissive consensus captures the *carte blanche* freedom political elites enjoyed in building, or not building, the EC's institutions due in part to the public's limited understanding of the integration project.¹² Activists' justifications for supranational suffrage changed as the movement evolved.¹³ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, federalists wanted to take advantage of what they perceived as the ripest period of positive public opinion on European unity in Europe's history. Activists set about creating circumstances where European citizens could cast a ballot in favour of European integration, thereby demonstrating in an era of rudimentary public opinion surveys that the public at large desired more European unity. Proposals for Council of Europe direct elections and European Movement (EM) referendums in a handful of Western European cities in the early 1950s reflected this goal. After the failure of the European Defence Community in 1954, federal activists advocated with greater urgency for supranational democracy as a technique of embracing – and creating – European citizens. Allowing people to vote at the supranational level, they believed, would force citizens to pay attention, and could do more for communicating European integration than any pamphlet, protest or petition. It would also necessitate the creation of European political parties and force political leaders to incorporate European unity more thoroughly into party platforms. As

⁹ Exceptions include: H. Kaelble, *Wege zur Demokratie. Von der Französischen Revolution zur Europäischen Union* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001); Rittberger, *Europe's Parliament*; Smith, *Europe's Elected Parliament*; W. Wallace and J. Smith, 'Democracy or Technocracy? European Integration and the Problem of Popular Consent', *West European Politics*, 18, 3 (1995), 137-157.

¹⁰ K. Featherstone, 'Jean Monnet and the "Democratic Deficit" in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32, 2 (1994), 149-70.

¹¹ J.H.H. Weiler, U. Haltern, and F. Mayer, 'European Democracy and its Critique', in J. Hayward, ed., *The Crisis of Representation in Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 4-39.

¹² L. Lindberg and S. Scheingold, *Europe's Would-Be-Polity. Patterns of Change in the European Community* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970); R. Inglehart, 'Public Opinion and Regional Integration', *International Organization*, 24, 2 (1970), 764-795.

¹³ Smith, *Europe's Elected Parliament*, 46.

Belgian Socialist and EP member Fernand Dehousse often said, European elections could deliver the “salutary shock” that captured the full attention of the European people.¹⁴

Much to the chagrin of federal activists, it was not the first EP election in 1979 that shook people out of their ignorance and indifference, but rather accession and referendums. The inclusion of less enthusiastic nations into the EC in the early 1970s brought organised dissent and national referendums into the Community for the first time. And one of the primary themes of dissent, particularly among the British, was a loss of sovereignty to a consortium of capricious, unelected Eurocrats. Previously, federal activists had pushed for supranational democratization in order to strengthen the Community’s legitimacy and bring it closer to the public at large. But in the 1970s, EC opponents highlighted the lack of democracy at the European level to oppose their country’s entry into the EC. Anti-Marketters like MP Michael Foot criticised the EC’s undemocratic nature not to improve the Community, but to undermine it. Accession in the early 1970s also produced the first wave of national referendums regarding European unity in France, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, and Great Britain, which mobilised significant anti-EC forces in each country. Suffragists hoped that elections would help create a European mentality and collective political identity for Europeans. Referendums served the opposite purpose. Although at the time they may have been the simplest and fairest decision-making method on EC accession, national referendums perpetuated the historical impression, and contemporary reality, that voting mattered primarily at the national level.

Democracy and democratic legitimacy can exist in a multitude of forms. Before 1979 and the first European Parliament elections, the EC could claim to be democratic because national parliaments and courts had sanctioned it, or because of its corporatist elements. There is a wide field of literature on democratic legitimacy that de-emphasizes the ballot box and shows how elections increasingly became in the post-war period just one of many cogs in the machinery of democracies.¹⁵ The EC could also plausibly claim to unite and preserve the precarious existence of parliamentary democracy during the Cold War, which strengthened the bonds between Western European elites.¹⁶ The EC could declare itself legitimate because it was an essential tool for nation states, or because it produced desirable results.¹⁷ For the federal suffragists, however, only European-wide elections satisfied their conceptions of both democracy and legitimacy. They believed that democracy must entail popular political participation via casting a ballot directly relating to the European Community in a discrete process from national politics. They were the first to realise that the Community’s political exclusion of the public at large during its founding would eventually damage its reputation in the eyes of the citizens it today claims to represent. Initially, in the late 1940s and 1950s, only a small number of more radical federalists addressed the issue. But as the EC increasingly constrained the actions of democratically elected governments, and as its profile and membership expanded in the 1970s, the democratic concern that some federalists expressed in the EC’s earliest days became more widely recognised and contributed today to what many identify as the democratic deficit. The democratic deficit has grown into a voluminous academic field, but the essence of the phenomenon

¹⁴ F. Dehousse, ‘Rapport général de Fernand Dehousse, membre de l’Assemblée parlementaire européenne’, 30 April 1960, CVCE, available at

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/general_report_by_fernand_dehousse_member_of_the_european_parliamentary_assembly_30_april_1960-en-89c2a74e-fb16-4b7f-b796-d3759876ddfe.html. Accessed on 1 January 2014.

¹⁵ W. Hogan, *Representative Government and European Integration* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967); P. Rosanvallon, *Counter-Democracy. Politics in an Age of Distrust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); P. Rosanvallon, *Democratic Legitimacy. Impartiality, Reflexivity, Proximity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

¹⁶ Achim Trunk, *Europa, ein Ausweg? Politische Eliten und europäische Identität in den 1950er Jahren* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2007), 75.

¹⁷ C. Schrag, ‘Languages of Legitimacy. Imagining the European Communities at the Times of “Permissive Consensus”’, European Research Group: ‘European Democracies’, Joint Doctoral Seminar in International Relations 2006: ‘European Governance, Global Governance’, available at

http://oxpo.politics.ox.ac.uk/projects/joint_doctoral_seminar/jds06_schrag_paper.pdf. Accessed on 1 January 2014.

had already provoked lively debate both inside and to a lesser extent outside of the EC long before the explosion of social science literature on the topic started in the early 1990s.¹⁸

One can roughly divide into three eras the trajectory of inchoate European democratization from the 1948 Hague Conference to the 1973 accession of Great Britain. The first period, from 1948 until about 1960, marked the years when activists worked both inside and outside the nascent institutions of Europe to make the uniting of Europe a process that included popular political participation. During the second period throughout the 1960s activists channelled all their energy into the institutions of the European Community. There existed credible plans starting in 1960 to democratize the EC that did not come to fruition, primarily because of Gaullist opposition. In the third era, beginning in the early 1970s, national governments began holding nationwide referendums regarding European integration. These referendums ran contrary to the goals of the supranational suffrage movement. They were national, not supranational, political phenomena, and they introduced the referendum as the preferred democratic instrument of national governments on the topic of European unity. The vastly different democratic procedures – elections and referendums – have co-existed since the 1970s, but referendums have been utilised significantly more often: between 1972 and 2009 there were 43 referendums in Europe regarding European integration, and seven European Parliament elections.¹⁹

PHASE 1: COUNCIL OF EUROPE, CITIWIDE REFERENDUMS AND THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

European suffragists saw in the Council of Europe's creation in 1949 their first chance for democratic participation at the European level. The powerless component of this already weak organization was its Consultative Assembly. Early federalists, such as Paul Reynaud, René Courtin, Hendrik (Henri) Brugmans, and André Philip drafted proposals for direct elections to the assembly that failed to advance. 'If it [the Consultative Assembly] were to raise the interests of Europe above those of the different nations it was necessary to give a psychological shock to public opinion in those nations,' former French Prime Minister Reynaud wrote in 1951. 'So it is to the people themselves, I argued, that we must talk by the democratic means of an election.'²⁰ In this early period we see many of the arguments in favor of European direct elections that suffragists would advance for the next three decades: to transfer the democratic center of European unity from national parliaments to a European parliament, to force national political parties to create a strong European dimension, and, as Reynaud wrote, to deliver a "psychological shock" to the people.²¹ Most importantly, elections would stimulate democratic politics at the European level in ways other forms of political communication could not. There was no consensus among the ten original member states, however, especially among the British and Scandinavian countries, that democratic politics needed stimulation, or even origination, at the European level. Although there existed a strong core of Western European continental countries that may have endorsed direct elections to the Consultative Assembly, opposition by the Council of Europe's other members ensured that no such democratic experiments would take place in the council.

¹⁸ Rittberger makes a similar argument. He argues that the necessary effects of pooling sovereignty had since the beginning of post-war European integration prompted elites to search for strategies of alleviating a perceived deficit in legitimacy in the European institutions: see Rittberger, *Europe's Parliament*.

¹⁹ S. Hobolt, *Europe in Question. Referendums on European Integration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁰ Paul Reynaud, *Unite or Perish. A Dynamic Program for a United Europe* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 192-93.

²¹ W. Birke, *European Elections by Direct Suffrage. A Comparative Study of the Electoral Systems Used in Western Europe and Their Utility for the Direct Election of a European Parliament*, European Aspects No. 5 (Leyden: A.W. Sythoff, 1961), 18-24.

If citizens could not elect European representatives, then perhaps they could vote in a different form. European voters first cast ballots regarding European unity in the European Movement referendums of the early 1950s. The controversial cousin of elections, the referendum, emerged in the early 1950s as a tool of some pro-unity factions. Under the banner of the European Movement, an umbrella organisation of pro-unity organisations, activists held at least six successful referendums in selected cities in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Supranational suffragists looked suspiciously upon referendums in general, but for the moment, however, those most committed to European-wide elections supported these early referendums as a technique of expressing popular support for European unity. Even among national governments, referendums were contentious forms of political expression, especially in the years immediately following WWII.²² They often brought to mind a less democratic era in Europe. The national referendum had been the democratic instrument of the modern dictator since at least Napoleon III, with roots tracing back through his uncle. But it had become a tool for liberal democracies, too, such as Switzerland. National referendums rarely occurred in Western Europe in the first few decades after WWII given the practice's stigma and the consensus of the parliamentary democracy model. The French Fourth Republic, which came into being following a series of elections and referendums in 1946, did not use it again until it dissolved itself by referendum in 1958. The Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands banned them for nearly all issues at the national level. Italy abolished its monarchy by national referendum in 1946 but did not call another one for almost 30 years; its constitution, while allowing for referendums on domestic issues, bans the practice for international treaties. Belgium held a referendum on its own monarchy in 1950, nearly resulting in a civil war, and it has not held one since. In Britain, the consensus of the parliamentary model had created a political culture in which there had never been any UK-wide referendums. Referendums occurred more often overall at the local level in the immediate post-war period, but were still not common.

Although the local referendums were generally successful, they merely constituted democratic theatre. Their small scale and non-binding character ensured that they would have no meaningful impact on the process of European integration. In the summer of 1950, the EM organised referendums in two small West German towns: Breisach, and Castrop-Rauxel. About 95 per cent of voters approved of the proposition, which asked people if they supported the abolition of economic and political borders among European nations. Turnout of more than 73 per cent exceeded the turnout of the previous elections to the regional parliaments (Landtage).²³ The Dutch EM referendums in 1952 in Bolsward and Delft were even more successful. Voters overwhelmingly approved of the proposition for greater European unity; between the two cities, about 30,500 voted in favour of European unity versus 2,100 against, mostly Communists.²⁴ The international media took notice. Dutch national media reported that the top 28 American broadcasters covered the referendums.²⁵ Contemporary reports recognised that hometown citizens showed off a little for the international media during the "test vote for Europe." Those who wore typical Dutch clothing like wooden shoes and earrings ended up on camera more than nondescript locals, illustrating that foreign media took pains to portray local citizens as Dutch rather than European.²⁶ Regardless, the referendums' success made international headlines and drew positive attention toward European unity and in particular to favourable popular sentiment.

²² See the contributions in David Butler and Austin Ranney, eds., *Referendums. A Comparative Study of Practice and Theory* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1978).

²³ French Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany André François-Poncet internal French foreign ministry memo, 17 July 1950, French Diplomatic Archives, La Courneuve, Conseil de l'Europe files, folder 16.

²⁴ 'Federal Europe Backed by Dutch in Referendums in Two Towns', *The New York Times*, 18 Dec. 1952, 1.

²⁵ Geschiedenis 24, *Referendum in Bolsward en Delft over Europa. Steden mochten stemmen in 1952*, 12 December 2011, available at <http://www.geschiedenis24.nl/nieuws/2011/December/Referendum-in-Bolsward-en-Delft-over-Europa.html>. Accessed on 1 January 2014.

²⁶ 'Federal Europe Backed by Dutch in Referendums in Two Towns'.

The final EM referendums, in Roeselare and Verviers, Belgium, in 1953, marked the end of the EM voting experiments. These occasions mimicked full-scale, governmental elections. There was a three-week campaign period, the police and elections offices were on full election duty, ballots were sealed, elections officials made voter registration rolls available to both sides of the issue, and the state television and radio stations granted time to both sides of the question.²⁷ These elections differed from official state elections only in that voting was not compulsory. The question put to voters was: 'Are you of the opinion that the European peoples should henceforth manage certain of their political and economic interests on a common basis, and do you agree with Belgian integration in a United Europe with a European Authority and democratic representation guaranteed by a European constitution?'²⁸ Belgian ministers Paul-Henry Spaak, Jean Rey, and P.W. Segers led the "yes" campaigns. Voters approved the referendums' question by strong majorities. But more so than the German and Dutch referendums, European Movement leaders found the number of abstentions troubling. In Roeselare, of the 20,000 registered voters, a little more than 65 per cent of voters showed up; in Verviers, of the 27,000 registered voters, slightly less than 65 per cent participated.²⁹ Bundled together, the number of "no" votes and abstentions in Verviers outnumbered the "yes" votes. According to a French official in Belgium, the French-language newspaper *La Cité* wrote, 'The average Belgian citizen is not lacking in political maturity or common sense. He is willing to engage in Europe, but wants to know where it leads, toward which structure, and under what conditions. He perhaps did not have enough information. One had wanted to convince him, but it would have been better to inform him.'³⁰ We see here one of the earliest acknowledgments of an information deficit among European voters; we also see that the mere existence of Europe-related balloting did not necessarily foster the requisite communication of information that voters desired.

And with that, the referendums experiment ended. How could the suffragists "inform" the public? How could they communicate European unity? Referendums would not suffice. Suffragists believed that nothing short of elections could force Europeans to make an informed choice, not between approving or rejecting a proposition, but between multiple representatives with competing visions for European unity within a European parliament. The referendums were meant to demonstrate support for a united Europe, and in that they largely succeeded. But many in the movement recognised that voting would have more impact if the campaigns took on a more informative role and if the act of casting a ballot absorbed the voter into the election's political system. Almost a decade later in the early 1960s, as politicians and scholars debated direct elections to the European Parliament, some commentators made the dubious contention that European voters possessed the requisite political maturity for direct elections because of the practice citizens received during the European Movement referendums.³¹ As we have seen, however, the referendums more accurately represented an affirmation of positive opinion toward a united Europe rather than any meaningful democratic practice at the European level. Voters need to know what they are voting for, and they need to see results from their action. Neither occurred in the early EM referendums.

Altiero Spinelli believed he could accomplish those goals in a single, dramatic *coup de grâce* of the nation-state system. Spinelli, a founder of modern European federalism and the supranational suffrage movement, embarked in 1956 on a radical, ultimately failed course to establish European unity and supranational democratic participation in one swoop. His Congress of the European People

²⁷ Memo titled 'Consultation populaire sur l'intégration de l'Europe' by M. Daniel Lamaziere, France's consul general in Liege, to French Foreign Affairs Minister Georges Bidault, 27 Nov. 1953, French Diplomatic Archives, La Courneuve, Conseil de l'Europe files, folder 16.

²⁸ 'Two Belgian Cities Vote to Bind European Ties', *The New York Times*, 21 Dec. 1953, 12.

²⁹ Memo titled 'Référéndum du "Mouvement Européen"' by M. Pierre de Vaucelles, French charge d'affaires in Belgium, to French Foreign Affairs Minister Georges Bidault, 23 Dec. 1953, French Diplomatic Archives, La Courneuve, Conseil de l'Europe files, folder 16.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Birke, *European Elections by Direct Suffrage*, 23.

(CEP) was the pinnacle of participatory politics in the first thirty years of European integration. From 1957 to 1962, across seven countries, more than 630,000 people voted for 611 representatives who were charged with writing a purely federal constitution for Europe.³² National governments could not be entrusted to negotiate a supranational Europe, Spinelli believed, so the CEP would bypass them by setting up its own elections in European cities for membership in a European constituent assembly. The Congress stemmed from the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1954. European suffragists had pinned their hopes to a potential European Political Community articulated within the EDC treaty that called for the creation of democratic supranational institutions and potential advancement toward a European federal structure. But the treaty's failure severely divided federalists, and caused a significant rift in the suffrage movement.³³ Some, such as Europa-Union Deutschland in West Germany, wanted to continue to work within national governments and the nascent European institutions of the new European Coal and Steel Community. More radical activists, like the Italian Spinelli, desired to bypass nation states altogether. At their first conference, in Turin in December 1957, Spinelli's group declared that their path to existence had been 'strewn with obstacles by the often open hostility of many so-called "Europeans" who are terrified to speak to the European people and understand their claims.'³⁴ It pronounced itself a "European front" in opposition to the nation state.³⁵

The effective end of the Congress by 1962 after five plenary sessions and without a finished constitution reinforced what other pro-unity organisations had insisted to the congress all along: that nation states were a necessary political reality and they represented a natural political ecosystem for the vast majority of European voters. The Congress of the European People could simply not organise elections on a large enough scale, nor could they attract the requisite public attention to incite political revolution against national governments. Spinelli's correspondence during the congress's tenure revealed chronic financing shortages and insufficient support.³⁶ Spinelli himself did not seem to think much of the Congress in hindsight. In 1966 he wrote that the experiment 'showed the popularity of the European idea but also the difficulty of transforming this general consensus into a living, popular political force in a situation lacking the institutions of a democratic Europe.' The best he could muster was an admission that the congress 'was probably not useless.'³⁷

It was clear from the Council of Europe's elites-only structure, the inconsequential citywide EM referendums, and the failed Congress of the European People that the nation state was still the most viable crucible of European-wide democracy. And without the acquiescence of the nation state, which essentially held a monopoly on the mechanisms of democracy and electoral communication, extra-national formulations would simply not work. Spinelli's "big bang" conception of democracy reflected his overall conception of how European unity should begin (rather than end): a full-scale European democratic government. Here we see how one's notion of a united Europe directly affected one's conviction in the appropriate threshold of democracy at the European level. Spinelli believed in a maximalist federal Europe, therefore he advocated for a extremely high levels of democratic participation: election of a constituent assembly to create a federal constitution that would then be put to voters, similar to some national constitutional processes after WWII. But

³² S. Pistone, *The Union of European Federalists. From the Foundation to the Decision on Direct Election to the European Parliament 1946-1974* (Milan: Giuffr  Editore, 2008), 118.

³³ In 1956 the Union of European Federalists split into the Mouvement F d raliste Europ en and Action Europ enne F d raliste.

³⁴ Founding document of the Congress of the European People, 'Actes et Documents du Premier Congr s du Peuple Europ en', French Diplomatic Archives, La Courneuve, Questions Internationales, microfilm P07527; Pistone, *Union of European Federalists*, 87-122.

³⁵ E. B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 26.

³⁶ See Altiero Spinelli files (AS) in the Historical Archives of the European Union, Florence, Italy.

³⁷ A. Spinelli, *The Eurocrats. Conflict and Crisis in the European Community* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 193.

Spinelli's group was undeniably an outlier. So were earlier federalist proposals for direct elections to the Council of Europe Consultative Assembly. Since it was clear that most political elites could not subscribe to the "big bang" federal explosion, and therefore its conception of instant, European-wide democracy, then suffragists would have to work within the emerging functionalist model of European unity, exemplified by the Treaty of Rome. As leading suffragist Reynaud said in the early 1950s even before the Treaty of Rome, 'we have now retreated to the functionalist approach.'³⁸ It appeared evermore likely that as functionalism deferred integration, it also deferred popular participation and the political communication that elections could provide. European elections would become a goal of European unity, rather than one of its means.

PHASE 2: DEHOUSSE AND DE GAULLE

The second era of supranational democratization, unlike the first, occurred strictly within the bounds of the European Community and the purview of the nation state. The 1950s witnessed strong popular support for a vague notion of European unity, without strong supranational institutions. Conversely, in the 1960s we see a slight drop in popular interest, but in this decade the institutions of European integration matured. The supranational suffragists channelled all of their energy into the new European Community, which from the 1958 Treaty of Rome onward became the only viable setting of meaningful political and economic European integration. By working strictly within the bounds of established diplomatic and transnational channels, the suffrage movement became further institutionalised and removed from popular politics. Their strategy was not to communicate integration directly to voters, but to construct an apparatus of elections that would necessitate broader information campaigns by the media and political parties. After Spinelli's grand failure, the suffrage movement concentrated almost exclusively on official negotiation and institutional reform from within. Despite a low public profile, the suffrage movement was poised to succeed in this era. Plans for European direct elections garnered significant support within the EC. But given the EC's insistence in this era on consensus, French President Charles de Gaulle effectively torpedoed all blueprints designed to bring elections into the EC.

Suffragist testimony in this period makes clear that direct elections would serve a number of purposes. They would habituate voters to casting a ballot at the supranational level, normalise supranational elections within European political processes, necessitate information dissemination, and increase the EC's democratic legitimacy. The first significant proposal for direct elections after the Treaty of Rome emanated from Belgian socialist and federal activist Fernand Dehousse starting in 1958. Dehousse, as president of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and a member of the new European Parliament attached to the European Community, led a working group that composed proposals for supranational direct elections, which the Treaty of Rome explicitly approved. Some political elites wanted to focus first on increasing the power of the European Parliament, by far the EC's weakest institution, before committing to direct elections. The Parliament, after all, enjoyed very little practical power compared the vastly more powerful Commission and Council of Ministers. Would citizens bother to vote for an impotent parliament? Similar to Reynaud's plan for direct elections to the Council of Europe Consultative Assembly, suffragists endorsed immediate Europe-wide elections not as a reflection of what the European Parliament was at that moment (powerless), but what it could grow into. Dehousse and his team, backed by less radical – by Spinelli standards – suffragists such as Walter Hallstein, Robert Marjolin, Heinrich von Brentano, André François-Poncet, Robert Schuman, and Henri Brugmans among others decided that the immediate establishment of European-wide voting was critical toward habituating voters to European elections and enhancing the democratic credentials of the new supranational community. The powers of the Parliament

³⁸ Reynaud, *Unite or Perish*, 209.

should be increased, Dehousse believed, but direct suffrage cannot wait. 'The election is justified because the Europe that's necessary to build has always been known as a democratic Europe, and by definition democracy implies the direct participation of the people. For this reason the argument of legitimacy occupies a place of equal importance to the argument of (the parliament's) effectiveness,' he wrote.³⁹

Elections were not intended to undermine nation states, Dehousse said in a veiled reference to Spinelli's CEP, but rather to pinch citizens out of their ignorance or indifference and to embrace citizens who until now had been kept at arm's reach in the building of Europe. 'The Communities have been the domain of a few hundred specialists, politicians and officials' Dehousse's working group wrote in 1960. 'The public has only the scrappiest knowledge... Some have held this to be a perfectly normal state of affairs, given the general public's inability to grasp the subject matter.'⁴⁰ Dehousse's group emphasised the wide reach of the new European Community and its imminent effect on European life. 'It is high time therefore that the peoples be drawn into this venture, that they grasp what is at stake and its attendant risks and make known their will.'⁴¹ International relations were no longer the strict prerogative of diplomats, but rather now a matter for domestic scrutiny by an informed electorate, Dehousse wrote. Above all, he believed, the Community needed an "injection" of democracy. 'European elections would not only arouse public opinion, it would also reinforce the integral democratic character of our institutions.'⁴²

General de Gaulle rejected the Dehousse Plan and any other circumstance that would accord the European Community direct democratic legitimacy. De Gaulle insisted on an intergovernmental Europe with a permanent political secretary at the service of the member states, sanctioned by a European referendum. Referendums were central to de Gaulle's governing strategy. In fact, French Fourth Republic Gaullists pioneered a strategy in the early 1950s that others all over the continent would later adopt: they called for popular referendums on items related to European integration that they opposed.⁴³ In the early 1960s, with Gaullists no longer an opposition party, de Gaulle considered referendums instead to legitimise his conception of European unity rather than prevent proposals he loathed. De Gaulle detested parliamentary democracy, which put him at odds with most EC member state political elites, and could not envisage transposing that cacophony of inaction to the European level. Gaullists and European Movement officials agreed to a compromise in November 1960 that fused parts of the Fouchet and Dehousse plans, which would have instituted direct European Parliament elections in exchange for implementing de Gaulle's reforms spelled out in the Fouchet Plan and the possibility of referendums on de Gaulle's European blueprint.⁴⁴ Many federal suffragists opposed the deal because the Fouchet Plan envisioned a European polity antithetical to a federation, but the point was moot when it soon became clear that de Gaulle could not countenance even a powerless directly elected EP in a strict intergovernmental European design.

European Parliament direct election debates in the 1960s reveal that the European Community and nearly all member states were prepared to move toward representative democracy except French Gaullists, particularly de Gaulle, whose opposition could not be overcome. French parliamentarians Maurice-René Simonnet and André Rossi separately introduced bills into the French National

³⁹ F. Dehousse, 'Des Élections Européennes en 1962?', *Communes d'Europe*, magazine of the Conseil des Communes d'Europe, March 1960, 11.

⁴⁰ K. Kyle, 'The European Parliament', *The World Today*, 28, 12 (1972), 530-537, 532.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 533.

⁴² F. Dehousse, 'Etat des travaux concernant les élections européennes au suffrage universel direct', 14 Apr. 1960, Historical Archives of the European Union, Florence, Dehousse files: FD 286.

⁴³ See for instance the *Rassemblement du Peuple Français* calls for a referendum on the European Defense Community: 'Pas d'armée européenne sans recours au référendum', *Le Monde*, 13 November 1952.

⁴⁴ European Movement resolution titled 'Conference Internationales en faveur d l'élection au suffrage universel direct de l'assemblée parlementaire Européenne, Luxembourg, 11-12 novembre 1960', 12 Nov. 1960, French Diplomatic Archives, La Courneuve, Maurice Couve de Murville files, box 346.

Assembly on behalf of a majority of parliamentarians who endorsed direct elections in 1962 and 1963.⁴⁵ German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer continued to voice his support for direct elections in January 1963, followed by SPD Bundestag member Karl Mommer's proposal in 1965 that West Germany hold popular elections for their own European Parliament members regardless of the other EC member states.⁴⁶ Although it was not an issue of high salience, member-state citizens approved of European elections as well. By 1970, 60 per cent of European Community member-state citizens agreed with the concept of direct elections.⁴⁷ In an insightful book, historian Hartmut Kaelble generally argues that national democratic models were not transposed to the European level because national democratization followed a bloody, arduous process that the European political body had not endured.⁴⁸ More specifically, Kaelble argues that any hope for European democratization that may have come from the 1950s dissipated in the 1960s for myriad reasons: elites turned their attention from European unity toward the Cold War, the EC had failed to unite diverse, transnational sections of society, national democracies had re-established their supremacy, and general interest in European integration waned in the 1960s. Yet despite all of the hindering forces that Kaelble identified, the Dehousse Plan could have succeeded. European-wide elections would not have fully constituted European democracy in the federalists' sense, but it would have been a significant early step. Kaelble accurately captures the era's democratic dilemma, but a simpler explanation for supranational democracy's obstruction may in fact be more powerful: de Gaulle prevented it. While there is legitimate debate on the General's legacy toward the European Community,⁴⁹ there can be no doubt that he severely stunted the institutional development of the European Parliament. The Benelux countries had significant concerns about their voting power in a changing EP, and other elites were relieved to use de Gaulle's intransigence to cover their own apprehensions, but it is highly likely that without de Gaulle's opposition the European Parliament would have instituted direct elections and perhaps increased its powers fifteen years or more before these developments actually occurred.

PHASE 3: THE CHANGED DYNAMICS OF DISSENT

Community enlargement and a series of national referendums in the early/mid 1970s forever changed the way the public engaged European unity. Most prominently, the EC encountered an unprecedented level of dissent. Previously, member-state citizens who opposed European unity had been certain national Communist parties, economic protectionists, and a tiny cadre of uncompromising xenophobes. Referendums and enlargement brought opposition to European unity further into the mainstream. People who had never given the subject much thought were now asked to develop an opinion. Referendum campaigns in France, Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Ireland to a lesser degree, generated formidable anti-EC propaganda, and the inclusion of less-enthusiastic Europeans, especially Britons, incorporated organised dissent into the Community on a scale previously unknown.

Central to the Community's newfound dissenters was the EC's undemocratic structure. In many ways the issues raised in the 1970s were the sorts of problems European suffragists had hoped to remedy from the start. Suffragists were no longer the only group noting the Community's political insulation

⁴⁵ Pistone, *Union of European Federalists*, 142.

⁴⁶ The Bundesarchiv in Koblenz contains a lengthy record of the Federal Republic's internal maneuvering in favor of direct EP elections. See B136/8511 European Parliament Bundeskanzleramt. The Federal Republic eventually decided against directly electing their EP representatives ahead of the other member states.

⁴⁷ Europa-Union Deutschland press release that quoted a *Paris-Match* poll, 15 May 1970, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Archive of Social Democracy, Bonn, Europa-Union Deutschland files, box 287.

⁴⁸ Kaelble, *Wege zur Demokratie*.

⁴⁹ M. Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

from its member states' citizens. For decades, the federal suffragists had been the Community's biggest critics (other than Communists), and its lack of participatory democracy and the weakness of the European Parliament had been some of their strongest critiques. The Community had the luxury of having the most enthusiastic advocates for European unity as one of its most focused critics. The arrival of the British into the European supranational family changed the dynamic of dissent. Those that opposed British membership honed in on the undemocratic decision making of the Community as a technique for expressing their desire to keep their country out of the EC. Criticism changed from how to improve the Community to attacking its fundamental political design and its reason for being.

Calls for democratization, for a decade sealed within diplomatic channels and the EC institutions, entered popular political life little by little in the 1970s. European integration was also increasingly communicated to the public in the language of criticism and dissent. The French referendum in April 1972 on the proposed enlargement of the European Community allowed for more than a month of energetic campaigning by political parties and interest groups on all sides. Communists like Georges Marchais found more platforms than usual to oppose integration on capitalist terms and called for greater "democratization" of Europe's institutions, by which he meant more Communist representation.⁵⁰ The French referendum, however, was a cynical exercise in Fifth Republic power politics that had very little to do with competing visions of a united Europe.⁵¹ Additionally, in October 1972 the EC heads of state held a highly publicised summit in Paris. The referendum and the summit each attracted popular demonstrations by both advocates of European unity and an increasing number of opponents, manifesting a strange twist in the European sage: those most supportive of European unity had become outsiders to the process and had become vocal critics. The strongest supporters of European unity lined up in protest with the EC's fiercest opponents, each protesting (for different reasons) the Community's lack of popular political input.

In Britain, the all-encompassing issue of British sovereignty transcended all the other complaints of potential membership. Anti-Marketeers were distraught that Britain's leaders would even consider subjecting the British Parliament – in their eyes Europe's most stable democratic institution – to the whims of continental volatility. 'To join the Common Market would mean transferring many of the powers of the Westminster Parliament to untried and undemocratic institutions outside this country, beyond our control, and not answerable to us,' wrote anti-Marketeer Ron Leighton.⁵² He continued: 'The striking feature of the institutional structure of the Common Market is the complete lack of democracy... In the strictest meaning of the word, the Common Market is a bureaucracy not a democracy.' Michael Foot, a Labour MP who had attended the 1948 Hague Congress became in the late 1960s through the 1970s one of the spokesmen for Britain's democratic superiority. 'The British parliamentary system has been made farcical and unworkable by... the semi-secret law-making process of the Council of Ministers,' he wrote in May 1975.⁵³ And of the European Parliament, he wrote, 'This last unique and ineffable invention – dumb legislature – must surely have been the touch of some Laputan satirist.'⁵⁴

United Kingdom popular consultation on the EC first arrived not in the 1975 national referendum, but during local test referendums in 1971. Similar to the European Movement's democratic theater of referendums in the early 1950s, these votes held little political weight and carried few political consequences. As the debate whether to join the EC reached its climax in Parliament in the late

⁵⁰ G. Marchais, *Le Défi Démocratique* (Paris: Bernard, 1973).

⁵¹ See *Tracts et papillons de propagande en vue du référendum approuvant la ratification du traité relatif à l'adhésion de la Grande-Bretagne, de l'Irlande et du Danemark aux Communautés Européennes du 23 avril 1972*, pieces collected by the French National Library, 1972.

⁵² R. Leighton, *The Labour Case Against Entry into the Common Market* (Manchester: Labour Committee for Safeguards on the Common Market, 1971), 13.

⁵³ Michael Foot editorial in *The Times*, 23 May 1975; reprinted in M. Jones, *Michael Foot* (London: V. Gollancz, 1994), 378.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

summer and fall of 1971, pro-and anti-integration organisations staged public referendums in at least 16 British cities, ten of which were organised by Keep Britain Out.⁵⁵ Members of Parliament and local groups produced the other six against the wishes of the leadership of the three main parties, who all opposed referendums in principle. The referendum question asked citizens if they favoured British entry into the European Community, and voting was primarily conducted through mail-in ballots in all but two cities. Only one of the 16 referendums produced a result in favor of British entry. Overall, more than 160,000 electors voted to stay out, and slightly less than 85,000 voted to enter the Common Market.⁵⁶ Turnout ranged from one-quarter to one-half of the electorate, a far cry from the 65 to 80 per cent participation in the European Movement referendums of the 1950s. Opinion polls during the summer of 1971 appeared to show a majority of Britons opposed to entry, but the polls were prone to swings at that time. A very small number of MPs, such as Philip Goodhart of Beckenham, endorsed the local referendums because they truly wanted constituent feedback on the divisive issue. But it was clear that Keep Britain Out chose some of the referendum cities precisely because they would produce negative outcomes.⁵⁷

The European Movement was once again involved in these local referendums, but the circumstances were tremendously different than the organisation's mini-referendums in the early 1950s. The British EM supported entry into the EC, and enthusiastically proclaimed so publicly. But like all major British political parties, and unlike Gaullists in the 1960s and 1970s, the European Movement did not consider the national referendum an appropriate method for determining European issues. 'It [The British EM] believes... that a referendum, which is not a British method of sounding public opinion, would be a misleading mechanism for guiding Parliament in coming to such a decision,' the British EM responded in a letter to Keep Britain Out.⁵⁸ Suffragists on the continent who once utilised local referendums decades ago had long since focused exclusively on European-wide elections. European activists undoubtedly noticed that Keep Britain Out intended to wield public opinion, expressed democratically, as an uncomfortable obstacle to the increasingly likely accession of Great Britain into the EC. Richard Crossman, editor of *The New Statesman*, wrote in 1970 what became evermore obvious in the ensuing five years: 'The campaign for a referendum is in fact a campaign against joining the Common Market.'⁵⁹ The early EM referendums of the 1950s hoped to broadcast people's assent for European unity, but that time had long passed. Opponents of the EC communicated to the public in the language of democracy just as often and energetically as supporters of the EC. In any event, the only vote that mattered in 1971, the vote in Parliament, assured Britain's inclusion into the EC.

European Commission President Sicco Mansholt recognised that the dynamics of dissent had been dramatically altered by Britain's accession into the EC. He spent his last few days as Commission president in January 1973 in England welcoming them to the Community in a somewhat apologetic manner: 'I do not think I am going too far when I say that what we have done so far has not come up to the European public's expectation,' he said.⁶⁰ Mansholt was days away from ending his eight-month tenure as Commission president, capping a 15-year career in the Commission. He dubbed his nothing-to-lose strategy 'verbal radicalism to shock people out of their lethargy' partly in an attempt to combat the significant opposition that accompanied Britain's accession.⁶¹ 'They [the European

⁵⁵ H. Noyes, 'Party Leaders Keep a Wary Eye on Market Referendums', *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1971, 5.

⁵⁶ P. Goodhart, *Full-Hearted Consent. The Story of the Referendum Campaign – and the Campaign for the Referendum* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1976), 31.

⁵⁷ U. Kitzinger, *Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 249-50.

⁵⁸ Tim Jones, 'Anti-Marketeers to hold referenda on entry', *The Times*, 28 June 1971, 4.

⁵⁹ Goodhart, *Full-Hearted Consent*, 22.

⁶⁰ Sicco Mansholt speech titled 'A Time of Hope and Promise – and of Forewarning', 2 January 1973, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Sicco Mansholt files, 227: Fanfare for Europe.

⁶¹ J. van Merriënboer, *Mansholt. A Biography* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 547.

public, especially Britain] complain for instance that the Community is undemocratic. And it is a fact that the Community has developed a network of “official channels” which the man in the street can make nothing of. He knows that important decisions, which affect his own immediate affairs, are being taken at the European level, but he does not know exactly who takes them, or who has to carry them out, or how.⁶² The European Community had never before encountered such a strong degree of dissent, and in the early 1970s many of its leaders recognised that it faced a legitimacy and communication problem among the people whose lives they increasingly governed.

Accession and referendums in the early 1970s provided the salutary shock that Dehousse had hoped for in 1960. But by then, it was too late to prevent the EC's lack of popular political input from becoming a detriment to its public perception. Furthermore, the stream of referendums in the early 1970s, including an unsuccessful referendum in Norway, ran contrary to the goals of the federal suffrage movement. National referendums asked citizens to think like national actors and consider their national interests. Is it in France's national interest to allow England to join the European Community? Is it in Ireland's national interest to join the European Community? The referendums were national phenomena that mobilised a nation's entire political spectrum toward answering a question as a nation of individuals. European suffrage activists hoped that elections would change European mentalities so that they thought like Europeans. EP elections would hopefully initiate a stronger realisation of a European collective entity. National referendums reinforce one's national identity. One needs only to identify some of the proponents of national referendums – British anti-Marketters and Gaullists – to recognise that referendums were not meant to endear citizens to the EC or popularly sanction the EC. In the words of intellectual historian Frank R. Ankersmit, a referendum forces one to think only as a “political primitive”.⁶³

Yet one could also describe democracy in the EC before 1979 as “primitive.” In the absence of a European-wide *demos*, how else other than referendums could elites gain consent from the public for EC accession? The necessity of national referendums reflected the failure of the suffrage movement to effect the uniting of Europe in a way that transcended national democracy. Suffragists envisioned a democratic, united European polity in the making, while referendum advocates for the most part strictly considered the EC a collection of sovereign states. The proliferation of referendums demonstrated the undeniable contemporary reality that even for European-wide issues, the nation-state was still the ultimate crucible of democracy.

CONCLUSION

Burgeoning national referendums, coupled with the creation of the European Council in 1974-75, appeared to complete the Gaullist vision of Europe and the defeat of the suffragists. Representative democracy eventually became entrenched within EC, but the continuation of national referendums as the most common method of popular consultation perpetuated the political mentality that elections matter first and foremost at the national level. The supranational suffrage movement enjoyed only partial success. Direct elections occurred, but once citizens began voting in the EP, the legislature's powerlessness became painfully obvious. Commentators after the first EP elections also noted the strong “national flavour” of the 1979 elections.⁶⁴ It has taken thirty years to strengthen the EP's powers to match the Commission and Council. European federalists, who reunited in the early

⁶² Mansholt, ‘A Time of Hope and Promise – and of Forewarning’.

⁶³ F. R. Ankersmit, ‘Representative Democracy. Rosanvallon on the French Experience’, in K. Palonen, Tuija Pulkkinen, and José María Rosales, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Politics of Democratization in Europe: Concepts and Histories* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 34.

⁶⁴ J. Lodge and V. Herman, ‘Direct Elections to the European Parliament. A Supranational Perspective’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 8, 1 (1980), 45-62.

1970s under their original name Union of European Federalists, did not celebrate for long after their decades-long struggle for direct EP elections: 'The European means for action – the European elections, the European political parties – are not enough to attract the press and public opinion,' federalist leader Mario Albertini wrote in a letter to UEF members in December 1976.⁶⁵ He continued: 'By way of our actions to obtain the decision on having the European elections take place, we gained a new influence. There has been a change of situation. At first it was only to obtain European elections. Now it concerns the problem of what to obtain from it.'⁶⁶ Based on the previous three decades of activism, suffragists in the 1970s realised that elections without accompanying reforms that further connected the EC to citizens and commanded the public's attention would not fully succeed.

Despite elections' inability to instantly transform the Community, the federal suffragists succeeded in anticipating some of the most severe problems the EC and EU have endured for many decades. The political distance between elites and the public that suffragists identified in the earliest days of European integration – partly the result of the functionalist process that delayed creating a polity that would indisputably require democracy via elections – has become one of the most significant issues the Community faces. Some scholars believe that the permissive consensus, the European people's political apathy toward European integration, shattered during the contentious referendums surrounding the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s.⁶⁷ That period also witnessed the first debates about a democratic deficit. But we have seen in this article that referendums and accession stirred up a significant number of European Community member-state citizens, who, whether EC friend or foe, derided the EC's absence of elections or popular political participation. The Community has spent the last few decades working toward achieving at least a parallel degree of allegiance as its member states, but most likely the best the EC can hope for is a dual allegiance from "dual democracy."⁶⁸

In this article we have also seen the mixed effect of elections as a form of political communication. Elections help transform people into political actors, but casting a vote for a political system does not always ensure the voter's loyalty to that system. The federalists were mistaken that elections would systematically and immediately organise politics on the supranational level in comprehensible ways to citizens. Had supranational elections begun in the early 1960s, perhaps they would have habituated voters sooner to that style of participation, rather than referendums, which is now the dominant democratic method of voter expression in EU member states. They may have also helped define the EC as a democratic polity, rather than the characterization it has since earned: a polity with a deficit of democracy. Regardless, despite its failure to achieve its ultimate goals in this period, the federal supranational suffrage movement reveals that notions of supranational democracy were continually contested and often linked with aspects of European communication. Exceptional solutions to the information deficit would likely go a long way toward addressing the democratic deficit.

⁶⁵ Open letter from Mario Albertini to Union of European Federalists members dated 3 December 1976, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Archive of Social Democracy, Bonn, Europa-Union Deutschland files, box 262B.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ M. Franklin, M. Marsh, and L. McLaren, 'Uncorking the Bottle. Popular Opposition to European Unification in the Wake of Maastricht', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32, 4 (1994), 455-472.

⁶⁸ T. Snyder, 'How Democracy Can Save Europe', *New York Review of Books Blog*, 7 Feb. 2012, available at <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/feb/07/we-people-how-save-european-democracy>. Accessed on 1 January 2014. But Weiler, Haltern, and Mayer show that "double loyalty" is highly contested: 'European Democracy and its Critique'.

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Europe as a Symbol: The Struggle for Democracy and the Meaning of European Integration in Post-Franco Spain

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Abstract

This paper analyses the effect that some political actors' behaviours had on the image of the European integration process in Spain during General Franco's dictatorship and its influence on the country's European policy during the democratic transition and the adhesion to the European Economic Community (hereafter EEC). The EEC's condemnation of the Spanish political regime and the pro-European stances assumed by the democratic opposition created a strong bond between the ideas of European integration and democratization in the eyes of the Spanish public. After Franco's death in 1975, joining the EEC was seen as a natural move of the transition to democracy by all political actors and received an overwhelming support from civil society. Consequently, between 1977 and 1985, Spain negotiated its adhesion. Yet, the decision to join the EEC was not just a rational choice in political or economic terms; it was understood as a means to fulfil recognition of the democratization of the country.

Keywords

Spain; European Movement; Public opinion; Civil society; Democratization

Over the last years, research on the history of European integration has increasingly focused on topics relating to public opinion, political consensus, images and stereotypes, reflecting the concern over the *democratic deficit* that has been traditionally attributed to the process of European integration.¹ Such studies have targeted issues related to historical debates among political parties concerning European integration or the roles of societal actors and pro-European entities, to quote just a few.² Within this context, the Spanish experience is somewhat peculiar. As we shall see in the following pages, the vision of European integration was biased in Spain by the fact that the beginning of the process coincided with the existence of a national authoritarian regime. Further, the regime's relations with the rest of Western Europe were hampered by the disparity of political systems and deeply conditioned the Spanish vision of European integration and the way *Europe* was communicated to society. This applies to the Spanish public opinion as well as to Franco's successive governments and particularly to the period of transition to democracy. Historically, the Spaniards' self-perception in relation with Europe has questioned in many occasions the *Europeanness* of Spain. This fact is due to some historical peculiarities of the Iberian country such as the American dimension of the Spanish Monarchy in the past centuries or its historical decline through a series of conflicts, where Spain demonstrated some specific religious or cultural characteristics, signalling a partition with the rest of the continent. This was already handled by the literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, giving rise to a romantic image of Spain, on one side, and the so-called *black legend* on the other (both originated in Europe and later exported to Spain itself). By 1898, the loss of the remaining colonies in America and the Pacific motivated a self-conscience crisis where Spanish

1 This article is presented as a partial result of the work carried out by the Research Group on History of International Relations of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, GHistRI, available at <http://www.ucm.es/info/ghistri>.

2 A recent compilation of works on this topic can be found in D. Pasquinucci and D. Preda, eds., *The Evolution of the Consensus to European Integration, 1950-2005* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2012). See also S. Pistone, ed., *I movimenti per l'unità europea, 1954-1969* (Pavia: Università di Pavia, 1996), and A. Landuyt and D. Preda, eds., *I movimenti per l'unità europea, 1970-1986* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

intellectuals asked themselves about the very “essence” of the country.³ Since then, progressive thinkers have identified the approach to Europe with the necessary modernisation of the country’s political, social and economic structures. As philosopher José Ortega y Gasset famously put it in 1910, if Spain was the problem Europe was the solution.⁴

The Spain-Europe dichotomy has been therefore present all throughout the 20th century, as Europe (actually the main powers of Western Europe) has been the reference for progress, modernization and normalization for most of Spanish progressive thinkers. Notwithstanding, the triumph of the insurgents in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 and the following imposition of General Franco’s dictatorship accentuated such dichotomy and filled it with a political meaning: the Spanish regime was condemned and rejected by its neighbours and the main powers after the Second World War. In spite of the international acceptance demonstrated by the agreements signed with the United States and the Vatican in 1953,⁵ the country was excluded from the process of European integration from its very beginning and the regime’s first response was a fierce nationalist discourse against the ‘decaying European democracies’.⁶ Later on, as the EEC advanced in the implementation of its policies (especially the Common Agricultural Policy, which endangered the Spanish agricultural exports), Franco’s government pointed that it was mandatory in economic terms to get closer to the Community and that there was also a political need to overcome the years of isolation.⁷ Nevertheless, the Spanish attempt to join the EEC in 1962 collided against the opposition of the European Parliament and several member states who would not admit a dictatorial regime.⁸

Thus, the Spanish government’s perception of the process of European integration during Franco’s dictatorship was marked by the contradiction between two opposed necessities: on one side, to establish contacts with the member States of the EEC in order to get the crucial investments for the modernisation of the Spanish industry (the same countries whose tourists gained more and more importance for the Spanish economy); on the other, the defence of the authoritarian regime against any attempts to let EEC countries exercise political influence in the relations with Spain.⁹ Within this context, the attitude of the anti-Francoist opposition, in conjunction with the EEC institutions, the pro-European entities and other political actors, stressed the importance of the political obstacles - i.e. the dictatorship - that kept Spain apart from Europe. This created a strong bond between *democracy* and *Europe*. This was helpful for the opposition since Europeanism could be used sometimes as a semi-tolerated discourse to denounce the regime, given the value of relations with Europe for Franco’s government (especially in economic terms).

3 About the Spanish people’s self-perception in the 19th century, see J. Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001).

4 J. Ortega y Gasset, ‘Nueva Revista’, in J. Ortega y Gasset, *Obras Completas*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1961), 104, quoted in J. L. Neila Hernández, ‘Europa como paradigma en los procesos de transición política en España. Dos momentos y un mismo desafío’, in Á. Soto, J. M. Marín, J. R. Díaz Gijón, P. Martínez Lillo and J. Pan-Montojo, eds., *Historia de la transición y consolidación democrática en España, 1975-1986*, vol. 2 (Madrid: UNED, UAM, 1995), 213-233, 227.

5 P. Preston, *Franco. Caudillo de España* (Barcelona, Mondadori, 1999). Á. Viñas, *Los Pactos secretos de Franco con Estados Unidos* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1981). J. Gil Pecharromán, *La política exterior del franquismo. Entre Hendaya y El Aaiún* (Barcelona: Flor del Viento, 2008).

6 F. Guirao, *Spain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-1957. Challenge and Response* (London, New York: Macmillan Press, 1998).

7 R. Martín de la Guardia, ‘In Search of Lost Europe. Spain’, in W. Kaiser and J. Elvert, eds., *European Union Enlargement. A Comparative History* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 99-118, 103.

8 Mainly Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, whereas Germany supported the Spanish introduction into the EEC. See C. Sanz Díaz, ‘España y la República Federal de Alemania (1949-1966): política, economía y emigración, entre la Guerra Fría y la distensión’, Ph.D. Thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2005, 624-733, and B. Aschmann, ‘The Reliable Ally. Germany Supports Spain’s European Integration Efforts, 1957-1967’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 7, 1 (2001), 37-51.

9 J. C. Pereira Castañares, ‘Europeización de España / Españolaización de Europa. El dilema histórico resuelto’, *Documentación Social*, 111 (1998), 39-58.

As we will see, such identification persisted after the death of the dictator in 1975 at the core of public opinion and political parties' discourses on European policy. Therefore, democracy, political and economic modernization and the end of international isolation were the keynotes of the Spanish thought on the European process in the immediate post-Franco era. When Spain negotiated the terms of its adhesion to the EEC theoretical considerations about the different ways of political integration or the limits of sovereignty transfers, which were at the core of the European debate in other countries, did not appear on the agenda. Political parties, social partners, media and Europeanist organisations played an important role at communicating a vague idea of Europe connected to democratization and welfare. This helps us understand the overwhelming support Spanish public opinion expressed concerning European integration as an abstract concept -and especially the participation of Spain in it-, whereas general knowledge of, or interest regarding, the Treaties and institutions that shaped the European integration process remained scarce.

THE FRANCO REGIME AND THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION BEFORE THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

From the Foundation of the Communities to the Munich Meeting (1951-1962)

The international community expressed its rejection of Francoist Spain in 1946 through the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 32 (I) and 39 (I) and the consequent withdrawal of most foreign ambassadors from the country. This rejection resulted in the non-invitation of Francoist authorities to the organisations preceding the unification process in Europe, such as the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) or the Council of Europe. Yet, representatives of the different opposition groups were invited to attend important meetings such as the Congress of London in 1947, where the Socialist Movement for the United States for Europe was created, or the Congress of The Hague in 1948, where the International European Movement was officially established.¹⁰ Anti-Francoist leaders soon realised that taking part in Europeanist groups and activities could be a powerful strategy for several purposes: on one hand it allowed them to spread their criticism of the lack of political freedom in Spain; on the other, they appeared as a democratic alternative to the Franco regime before the democratic countries. Thus, in 1949 the exiled Salvador de Madariaga (liberal), Julio Just (republican), Rodolfo Llopis (socialist) and Manuel de Irujo (Basque nationalist) founded in Paris the Spanish Federal Council of the European Movement (*Consejo Federal Español del Movimiento Europeo*, CFEME), which became the strongest voice of the opposition's pro-European trend. The CFEME provided a space for a varied range of anti-Francoist ideologies and the contacts between the opposition and the European institutions. It was also a channel that allowed the opposition to express its desire to join the European integration process once Franco was out of power, turning back to the idea of Europe as a future solution to Spain's problems.¹¹

At the same time, inside Spain, several groups interested in European integration arose with a variety of interests: from economic approaches based on academic research to merely cultural. Among the most prominent ones one has to mention the Society for Spanish and European Economic Studies, founded in 1950 by José Larraz, a former member of government, and the Institutes for European Studies created in Zaragoza and Barcelona. Other groups had a more demanding political character,

10 Mouvement Socialiste pour les États Unis d'Europe, 'Résolution sur le problème espagnol', June 1947, DO 35/2, Centre d'Estudis Històrics Internacionals, Barcelona.

11 'Bases de la constitution du Conseil Federal Espagnol du Mouvement Européen', 1949, ME-2195, Historical Archives of the European Union, Florence. M. E. Cavallaro, *Los orígenes de la integración de España en Europa. Desde el franquismo hasta los años de la transición* (Madrid: Sílex, 2009), 152-158.

like the Association for the Functional Unity of Europe, created in Salamanca in 1955 by professor Enrique Tierno Galván, whose activities would last just a few years due to the government's pressure. Yet, the most relevant pro-European entity was the Spanish Association for European Co-Operation (*Asociación Española de Cooperación Europea*, AECE).¹² Founded in 1954 by members of the National Catholic Association of Propagandists under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it quickly evolved to pro-democratic stances under the leadership of representatives of Christian democracy such as José Yanguas Messía, José María Gil-Robles or Fernando Álvarez de Miranda. By the late 1950s the AECE was already a leading organisation within the domestic opposition to Francoism, adopting Europeanism as the basic reference for all changes Spain needed to face in order to overcome dictatorship and isolation.¹³

Political parties also endeavoured to promote themselves in the framework of Europeanism. Beyond their presence in the CFEME (and later in the AECE as well), democratic forces tried to come up to their European partners and the EEC institutions in order to get their moral, economic and logistic support for their fight against Francoism. By doing so they also sought to ensure a good position in the scenario of a post-Francoist democratic Spain, anticipating the role that European countries could possibly play in it. For such purpose, the main leftist force from before the war, the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, PSOE), then in exile or secrecy, took advantage of its links with other European socialist parties and the contacts made by its exiled leaders in France.¹⁴ Basque and Catalan nationalist groups promoted the creation of their own regional pro-European entities: the Basque Council and the Catalan Council of the European Movement, both integrated in the CFEME and located in Paris.¹⁵ Moreover, the Basque Nationalist Party (*Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, PNV) - almost hegemonic among Basque anti-Francoist trends - and the Catalan party Democratic Union of Catalonia (*Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*, UDC) - the most pro-European among Catalan forces - joined in 1965 the European Christian Democratic Union together with other Spanish parties through the so-called Christian Democratic Spanish Team.¹⁶ The only significant exception to this trend was the Spanish Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de España*, PCE), which, following instructions from Moscow, kept itself separate from this Europeanist spirit and condemned the European Community as an imposition abiding only by American interests - a position that would change in the 1970s.¹⁷

The Francoist government's first reaction to the creation of the European Communities was suspicious and reluctant. The Spanish press, under strict control by the government, did not pay much attention to the Treaties of Paris and Rome, and the European integration project was presented as a mere chimera.¹⁸ Notwithstanding, some figures within the regime realised the convenience of developing their own version of Europeanism -a conservative and Catholic one,

12 Asociación Española de Cooperación Europea, *Estatutos*, 1954, Fondo AECE-1, Archivo del Consejo Federal Español del Movimiento Europeo, Madrid.

13 C. López Gómez, 'El europeísmo en España. La sociedad civil ante el proceso de construcción europea', *Circunstancia*, 9, 25 (2011), available at <http://www.ortegaygasset.edu/fog/ver/1177/circunstancia/ano-ix---n--25---mayo-2011/articulos/el-europeismo-en-espana--la-sociedad-civil-ante-el-proceso-de-construccion-europea>. Accessed on 4 January 2013.

14 B. Vargas, 'El movimiento socialista español en el exilio y la construcción de Europa (1946-1972)', in A. Puerta, J.-F. Berdah, B. Vargas, J. C. Gibaja and J. F. Fuentes, eds., *El socialismo español en el exilio y la construcción europea* (Madrid: Fundación Indalecio Prieto, 2003), 41-62.

15 P. De Pedro and Q. Solé, *30 anys d'història d'europeisme català, 1948-1978. El 'contuberni' de Munic* (Barcelona: Mediterrània, 1999); L. Arrieta Alberdi, *Estación Europa. La política europeísta del PNV en el exilio, 1945-1977* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2007); A. Ugalde Zubiri, *El Consejo Vasco del Movimiento Europeo (1951-2001). La aportación vasca al federalismo europeo* (Vitoria: Consejo Vasco del Movimiento Europeo, 2001).

16 D. Barba, *La oposición durante el franquismo. 1. La democracia cristiana* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2001), 128-138.

17 R. Martín de la Guardia, *La URSS contra las Comunidades Europeas: la percepción soviética del mercado común (1957-1962)* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2005).

18 A. Moreno Juste, *Franquismo y construcción europea (1951-1962). Anhelo, necesidad y realidad de la aproximación a Europa* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1998).

adapted to the Francoist principles- and established links with groups and associations in other countries that had similar standards.¹⁹ Thus, in 1952 a European Centre for Documentation and Information (*Centro Europeo de Documentación e Información*, CEDI) was founded within the structures of the Institute of Hispanic Culture -created in 1946 for the international promotion of Spanish culture-.²⁰ Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the CEDI collaborated with other conservative groups in Europe, such as the Office International of Laussane, the Lerins group in France, Wilton Park in Britain or the Academy of International Law of Brussels, holding meetings and conferences and publishing their proposals for a European construction based on Christianity and traditional values.²¹

Moreover, in 1957, after the signature of the Treaty of Rome, Franco appointed Pedro Gual Villalbí Minister for the observation of the European integration process, with the task of assessing how the EEC and the EFTA would affect Spanish interests.²² Other new members of the government, such as the ministers of Commerce and the Treasury, Alberto Ullastres and Mariano Navarro Rubio respectively, managed to convince Franco that the autarkical policies applied since the end of the Civil War impeded the recuperation of the Spanish economy and that external aid was indispensable. This led to the entry of Spain in the Organisation for European Economic Co-Operation (OEEC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 1958 and to design a plan for the stabilization of the Spanish economy, where priority was given to the introduction of Spain in the international market and the promotion of foreign investments.²³ At last, in February 1962, fearing a breakdown of the Spanish exports after the implementation of the EEC Common Agricultural Policy, Franco finally made up his mind and Spain officially applied for association with the EEC. In the letter addressed to the President of the Council of Ministers of the EEC, Mr. Couve de Murville, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando María Castiella, stressed the “European vocation” of Spain and insinuated that full adhesion should be possible once the economic obstacles were solved, obviating the political distance between the Spanish regime and the EEC.²⁴

In this context, Europeanist groups from the opposition took the initiative with the double aim of appearing before the Spanish and international public opinion as a unified front against Francoism, and preventing any temptation from the EEC to accept the Spanish application. In the previous years there had been several attempts to co-ordinate the opposition’s Europeanist efforts: in 1961 the Council of Europe invited some representatives of these groups to speak at the Parliamentary Assembly in the framework of the elaboration of a report on the political situation in Spain; also in 1961 the AECE projected a “pro-European week” that was to be held in Majorca, gathering representatives of political forces from various European countries but it was cancelled by the government just few days before. In June 1962, four months after the Spanish application for the EEC, a new attempt was made in connection with the celebration in Munich of the 4th Congress of the International European Movement. 118 representatives of different organisations from inside Spain and from exile attended the congress. After two days of debates, a common declaration was approved by the Spanish group demanding the EEC to reject Spain’s application as long as democratic and representative institutions did not exist in the country, freedom of speech and strike

19 M. Á. Ruiz Carnicer, ‘La idea de Europa en la cultura franquista, 1939-1962’, *Hispania*, 199 (1998), 679-701.

20 ‘Lo que es. Lo que hace. Cómo funciona’, CEDI, 1956. Fondo CEDI - 3842, e. 38, Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (Renovado), Madrid.

21 P. M. Weber, ‘El CEDI, promotor de occidente cristiano y de las relaciones hispano-alemanas en los cincuenta’, *Hispania*, 188 (1994), 1077-1103.

22 H. C. Senante Berendes, ‘La política europea de Franco. La indefinición ante Europa’, in Archivo Histórico Provincial de Guadalajara, ed., *El franquismo. El régimen y la oposición* (Guadalajara: Cuadernos de Archivos y Bibliotecas de Castilla-La Mancha, 1999).

23 J. M. Zaratiegui, *Una Europa para dos Españas. Primeros pasos hacia la integración, 1957-1963* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 2010).

24 M. T. La Porte, *La política europea del régimen de Franco, 1957-1962* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 1992).

were not recognised, political parties were not permitted, and the rights of the regional communities were not respected.²⁵

The symbolic hug in Munich between Salvador de Madariaga, leading figure of the exiled group, and José María Gil Robles, the Catholic monarchist who had led the conservative right before the Civil War, represented the unity of the opposition in its rejection to Franco and their plans for the participation of Spain in the European Communities once the dictator had been left behind.²⁶ Such unity - comprising conservative elements - appeared as the most worrying feature of the gathering to the regime's eyes. Thus, the Spanish government mobilised its propaganda machinery in order to denounce the congress as a *contubernio* (an old fashioned word meaning "plot" that was recovered for this occasion), and to present the participants as enemies of the national interest (the Spanish application was anyway neglected after the European Parliament approved the Birkelbach Report, which established that associated countries should have democratic regimes). Personal reprisals were administered against some of the participants in the *contubernio* who were forced to choose between the exile and the compulsory confinement on the isle of Fuerteventura as they tried to get back to Spain²⁷.

Munich's *contubernio* was a fundamental event in the history of anti-Francoist opposition for several reasons. Firstly, the Francoist propaganda had the paradoxical effect of publicising the existence of groups and personalities that had yet remained unknown to the majority of Spaniards as they worked underground or were subject to censorship. Secondly, the *contubernio* unified most of the opposition groups around the idea of Europeanism and the fight against dictatorship (even the communist party sent two unofficial delegates to Munich). Thirdly, it showed the Spanish people that the EEC's rejection of Spain was exclusively due to political reasons. It became evident that, though the Spanish government had already understood the economic necessity of joining the Community, this would not be possible as long as Franco remained in power but it could be attained as soon as democracy was re-established. In the following years (and especially after the Press Act of 1966 that allowed some scope for freedom of expression), the growing liberal media focused on this contradiction. Thus, the communication policy of the government unwillingly linked *Europe* to *democracy*, and the identification between both concepts, which had been assumed by the opposition since the 1940s, became now evident for a large part of the population. Lastly, the above mentioned unity of the diverse anti-Francoist trends has been interpreted by historians as the historical closing of the political polarisation that led to the Civil War and, at the same time, as an essential step towards the national reconciliation that would make democratic transition possible in the future.²⁸

THE SPAIN-EEC RELATIONS AND THE SPANISH OPPOSITION'S EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS IN THE LATE FRANCOISM (1962-1975)

In spite of the setback experienced in 1962, the Spanish government did not desist from approaching the EEC in economic terms. A second letter was sent to the EEC in 1964 requesting the opening of talks for a commercial agreement. Thus, after a long period of bargains, the EEC and Spain signed a preferential commercial agreement in 1970. It established a mutual reduction of tariffs, especially for industrial products, as part of the commercial policy of the EEC towards its neighbouring countries.

25 F. Álvarez de Miranda, *Del 'contubernio' al consenso* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985); J. Vidal-Beneyto, *Memoria democrática* (Madrid: Foca, 2007), 27-47.

26 J. Tusell, *La oposición democrática al franquismo* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977), 394-398.

27 'Decreto Ley 17/1962, de 8 de junio, por el que se suspende en todo el territorio nacional y por el plazo de dos años, el artículo 14 del Fuero de los Españoles', *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 138, 9 Jun. 1962, 7909.

28 J. Satrustegui, ed., *Cuando la transición se hizo posible. El 'contubernio de Múnich'* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1993).

The agreement proved to be highly beneficial for Spain as the tariff concessions the EEC made favouring Spain were larger than those the EEC was granted, so during the time the agreement was in effect (until 1986) it favoured the development of the Spanish industrial sector (which had been growing since the 1960s).²⁹ Besides, the regime sought to present the agreement as a political success and a proof of international acceptance, despite the fact that the EEC authorities insisted that the agreement completely lacked political content and dealt only with commercial issues.³⁰ Nonetheless, Europeanist organisations such as the CFEME and the AECE declared that the agreement did not mark the end of the Spanish problem regarding relations with the EEC and that this problem would be fixed only after the end of the dictatorship.³¹

During the regime's final years, the susceptibility of Spain to European influence and the presence of EEC issues in political and economic debates increased. The relative openness of the regime and the influx of capital from France and the Federal Republic of Germany into Spanish industry favoured more and more the inflows of ideas and cultural references challenging some of the conservative principles of the Francoist regime. The rise of tourism, which would become the driving force of the Spanish economy, also had a powerful impact in this sense. On the other side, the relative liberalisation of the press after the Press Act of 1966, which among other changes abolished prior censorship, permitted the publication of liberal journals such as *Madrid* and magazines such as *Cuadernos para el diálogo*, *Arbor* or *El Ciervo*, where references to European democracies were frequent.³² Thus, since a direct denouncement of the Spanish regime's anachronism was impossible, more and more news about the European Communities appeared in the journals, with articles and reports about democratic regimes and economic welfare, showing indirectly that it was the dictatorship that prevented Spain from joining them. As Manuel Müller pointed out, whilst the regime's discourse still saw *Europe* in the context of economic modernisation, the press had expanded the notion that *Europe* also implied democratization.³³ Even a part of the catholic and conservative press took part in this process, like the *Tácito* group, composed of intellectuals and politicians belonging to the Francoist administration whose political thoughts had already evolved to democratic positions; in their articles - published in the catholic journal *Ya* - they defended the necessity of reforms in order to come closer together with European democracies.³⁴

In fact, as the end of the dictatorship approached, the interest of the EEC in the political situation in Spain increased, as well as the efforts made by the democratic opposition to get political, economic and media support from European partners, aiming at promoting their roles in the post-Francoist Spain scenario. After the enlargement to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark in 1973, the EEC had to negotiate with Spain the conditions of implementation of the 1970 agreement to the new member states. Moreover, following the requirements of the General Agreement on Tariffs and

29 A. Alonso, *España en el Mercado Común. Del acuerdo del 70 a la Comunidad de Doce* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985), 44-73.

30 R. Bassols, *España en Europa. Historia de la adhesión a la CE, 1957-85* (Madrid: Estudios de Política Exterior, 1995), 46-52.

31 Declaración de la AECE sobre el acuerdo España-CEE, 9 March 1970. ACFEME, Fondo AECE - 3.4.

32 Censorship continued to be applied anyway after publication, and journals were under the threat of seizures and economic penalties as the article no. 2 of the Act restricted the freedom of press to the limits of the regime's Fundamental Principles. About the role of the Spanish press in the late Francoism and the Transition to democracy, see C. Castro Torres, *La prensa en la transición española, 1966-1978* (Madrid: Alianza, 2010); I. Renaudet, *Un parlement de papier. La presse d'opposition au Franquisme durant la dernière décennie de la dictature et la transition démocratique* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2003); K. Maxwell, ed., *The Press and the Rebirth of Iberian Democracy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983); M. Á. Aguilar, ed., *Los medios de comunicación en la frontera democrática* (Madrid: Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, 1982).

33 M. Müller, *Von der 'Modernisierung' zur 'Demokratisierung'. Spanien und die europäische Integration im Pressediskurs des Spätfranquismus, 1957-1976* (Saarbrücken: VDM, 2008).

34 J. Tusell, *La transición española a la democracia* (Madrid: Historia 16, 1999), 54. Grupo Tácito, *Tácito* (Madrid: Ibérico Europea de Ediciones, 1975).

Trade, the agreement had been signed for a period of six years and it had to be upgraded no later than 1976, so delegates from both sides continued to negotiate. At the same time, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe renewed their interest in the situation of Spain, sending delegations and approving declarations about the lack of freedom in the country.³⁵

The main political organisations, such as the PSOE or the PCE, published their manifestos and declarations in the foreign press or at meetings organised by European institutions, aware of the fact that the relative freedom of the press existing in Spain would allow their words to cross the borders. In July 1974 the PCE announced at a press conference in Paris the creation of the Democratic Board (*Junta Democrática*), with the participation of the Socialist Party of the Interior - a leftist party rivalling the PSOE -, the formerly traditionalist *Partido Carlista* and the labour organisation Workers' Commissions (*Comisiones Obreras*, CCOO), together with some individual figures connected with pro-European groups, such as José Vidal-Beneyto, a high-ranking official at the Council of Europe.³⁶ In June 1975, the PSOE presented also in Paris the Platform for Democratic Convergence (*Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática*), together with several Christian democratic parties, Basque nationalists, Catalan republicans, some minor communist groups and the trade union General Union of Workers (*Unión General de Trabajadores*, UGT)³⁷.

The role played by European political forces in the promotion and organisation of Spanish parties in the final stage of the dictatorship was crucial, especially in the consolidation of a strong social-democratic alternative that could prevent the risk of a de-stabilisation of the country after Franco's death. Since the PCE seemed to be the strongest anti-Francoist force not only in exile but also inside the country -where it counted on a wide network of cells and also CCOO's support-, in the 1970s the PSOE endeavoured to get media, political and financial support from European partners.³⁸ European socialists - and especially the Socialist Group in the European Parliament - had been at the core of many initiatives denouncing the dictatorship in Spain and supporting the anti-Francoist opposition which had reinforced the pro-European character of the PSOE.³⁹ The German Social-Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) assumed a major role in providing economic support to the PSOE through the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Liberals and Christian democrats from the FRG also understood the importance of sponsoring their partners in Spain and used their foundations as a channel to implement their influence in the democratic transition.⁴⁰

In the end, the last days of Franco's life coincided with a worsening of relations with Western Europe that eventually placed Spain again in a position of isolation similar to the one it suffered in 1945. In September 1975 eleven death sentences were pronounced against members of the organisations Basque Country for Freedom (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, ETA, Basque separatist) and Anti-Fascist and Patriotic Revolutionary Front (*Frente Revolucionario Antifascista y Patriota*, FRAP, Marxist-Leninist). Five of them were confirmed by General Franco in spite of petitions for clemency arriving from governments and institutions from around the world - including the Vatican -, and on the 26 September they were executed. A wave of protests arose in many countries, including boycotts against Spanish enterprises, refusal to unload merchandise from Spanish ships or the assault on the

35 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Report on Spain*, Doc. 3466, 25 Aug. 1974.

36 F. Jáuregui and P. Vega, *Crónica del antifranquismo* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2007), 874-887.

37 V. Prego, *Así se hizo la transición* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1995), 225-226.

38 P. Ortuño Anaya, *Los socialistas europeos y la transición española, 1959-1977* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005).

39 In 1975 a delegation of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament visited Madrid and met some members of the PSOE, which was recognised as its official counterpart in Spain. After this visit, Ludwig Fellermeier, president of the Socialist Group, expressed in the European Parliament his rejection of Franco's attempts to display an image of democratization towards the outside. See P. Ortuño Anaya, 'The EEC, the Franco Regime, and the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, 1962-1977', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 14, 1 (2001), 26-39, 34.

40 A. Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán. El SPD y el PSOE de la dictadura a la democracia* (Barcelona: RBA, 2012).

Spanish Embassy in Lisbon. The Council of Ministers of the EEC decided to cancel the negotiations in process and to freeze all relations with Spain, and the EEC countries (with the only exception of Ireland) withdrew their ambassadors from Madrid. Less than two months later, on 20 November, Francisco Franco passed away at the age of 83.⁴¹

THE IDEA OF EUROPE IN POST-FRANCO SPAIN: THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY AND THE ADHESION TO THE EEC (1975-1986)

After his coronation as King of Spain, Juan Carlos I stated in his first speech to the *Cortes* - the non-democratic parliament established by Franco -:

‘The idea of Europe would not be complete without a reference to the Spanish people and the consideration of the work carried out by many of my predecessors. Europe must count on Spain and we Spaniards are Europeans. It is a necessity of this moment that both sides understand this, and that all of us draw consequences from it.’⁴²

The reference to “Europe” - which in this case must be understood as a synonym of the EEC - sought to be meaningful in a moment when relations with Spain were temporarily frozen but a new era started with the decease of the dictator. All parts involved in the transition to democracy - government, political parties, social organisations - understood the importance of getting support from the European Communities for the development of the political reforms but also their acceptance of the Spanish democratic system once it was fulfilled, as a condition for the admission to the EEC. Thus, this hazy concept of *Europe* was recurrent in the public discourses in the year and a half that passed between Franco’s death and the first democratic elections in June 1977. Relations with the EEC countries were a priority for the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, José María de Areilza, who visited all capital cities of the States of the EEC in order to convey the idea that things were changing and a democratic Spain would soon knock at the Community’s door.⁴³ The European Parliament kept a watchful eye on what was going on in Spain: in May 1976 a Resolution based on the Report provided by the French member Maurice Faure declared that the admittance of Spain to the Community was preconditioned upon the success of its political reforms.⁴⁴ Simultaneously, the Spanish press, less restricted then, increased its interest in the European Communities in the belief that once the political obstacles were surmounted, the Spanish accession would meet no trouble.⁴⁵

Political scientists and historians have insisted on the fact that the Spanish transition to democracy was built upon the “consensus” of the different forces that took part in it. Although the remaining structures from the Francoist regime, such as the Army, the *Movimiento* (the official party under Franco regime) and part of the administration, were reluctant to introduce any reforms whatsoever, and some members of the leftist opposition refused to accept any pact with the Francoist elites, the “negotiated reform” was finally the triumphant way that allowed the gradual transformation of the dictatorship into a democratic system through legal changes designed by the government and the

41 J. Crespo MacLennan, *España en Europa, 1945-2000. Del ostracismo a la modernidad* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2004), 111-158.

42 ‘Mensaje del Rey’, *ABC*, 23 Nov. 1975, 3.

43 J. M. de Areilza, *Diario de un ministro de la monarquía* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977).

44 *Journal Officiel des Communautés européennes*, no.C 125, 8 Jun. 1975, 25-26.

45 An example of the importance that the communications about Europe had in the media during the transition was the first issue of *El País* (which appeared in May 1976 and became a newspaper of record in the following years), where the front page presented an article about the European Parliament’s demand of recognition of political parties in Spain. R. Vilaró, ‘El reconocimiento de los partidos políticos, condición esencial para la integración en Europa’, *El País*, 4 May 1976, 1. Interview of Ramón Vilaró with the GHistRI (Research Group on History of International Relations of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid), 4 July 2012.

main political parties (“from Law to Law” according to the expression coined by Torcuato Fernández Miranda, one of the leading figures of this process). The idea of *Europe* -that could be filled with different meanings as we will see- was fundamental for this consensus in several ways. First of all, from a political standpoint all groups shared a not very well defined target of *homologación* (equalisation) with Western Europe, i.e. the construction of a political system akin to those of Spain’s closest neighbours, so as to finish the irregularity that Francoist Spain had represented in recent history. Secondly, political forces shared the goal of joining the EEC, which in turn demanded such political transformation and remained vigilant with it.⁴⁶ In this sense, the admission of Spain to the Council of Europe on November 1977 - before the promulgation of the Constitution - bore a great symbolic value, expressing the acknowledgment of Spain as a democracy.⁴⁷ Finally, the involvement of European personalities, parties and foundations in the Spanish transition aiming to influence its results or privilege some actors (for example, the German SPD in favour of PSOE), contributed to strengthen links between the new Spanish elites and the EEC countries.

The Spanish application to the EEC was officially presented on 28 July 1977, just six weeks after the first democratic elections -won by the Union of Democratic Centre (*Unión de Centro Democrático*, UCD) led by prime minister Adolfo Suárez. Although no debate was held in the Parliament before the application, it counted on the unanimous support of the chamber. Indeed, all parties had included in their electoral manifestos the adhesion to the EEC as the most important target in foreign policy. This made Spain the first country to apply for accession to the EEC counting on the support of all parliamentary forces - which had not been the case, for example, for the two other candidate countries in the same years, Greece and Portugal, where communists and eventually socialists objected to it.

According to B. Álvarez Miranda, three reasons explain this unanimity. First, adhesion to the EEC would mean the end of the (relative) international isolation Spain had suffered under Franco. Second, it would weaken reactionary stances and temptations to reverse the democratic process (mainly from the Army), anchoring the country to democracy. Third, all parties understood that adhesion to the EEC would have beneficial consequences for the Spanish economy, due to the importance of commercial exchanges already practised with the member States.⁴⁸ Other studies have interpreted the pro-European unanimity as a *coincidence* rather than as a consensus. Some scholars outline the different meanings the European integration process had for the Spanish political forces during the transition, in accordance with their ideologies. Thus, the socialists would have seen the EEC as the space for the construction of a ‘Europe of workers’, a goal shared by other European socialist parties. For the Communist Party (which only since 1972 had declared itself in favour of a democratic Spain joining the EEC), Europeanism would be a means to distance themselves from Moscow in the context of the Eurocommunist strategy developed in those years together with the communist parties from Italy and France. The political centre and the right would have seen European integration as an opportunity for economic growth and the expansion of enterprises. Finally, nationalist parties from Catalonia and the Basque Country would have pinned

46 J. C. Pereira Castañares and A. Moreno Juste, ‘España ante el proceso de integración europea desde una perspectiva histórica. Panorama historiográfico y líneas de investigación’, *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea*, 9 (1991), 129-152.

47 E. Muñoz Alemany, *El proceso de integración de España en el Consejo de Europa* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1989); J. L. Messía, *Por palabra de honor. La entrada de España en el Consejo de Europa, 24-11-1977. Un largo recorrido desde el Congreso de Munich de 1962* (Madrid: Parteluz, 1995).

48 B. Álvarez Miranda, *El sur de Europa y la adhesión a la Comunidad. Los debates políticos* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1996).

their hopes of a progressive disintegration of the centralist State on the ideal of the “Europe of the peoples”.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, when we analyse the parties’ political discourses we see that, above all other considerations, the main value European integration was given in their communication strategies was *symbolical*. If we take a look at the motivations the parties put forward to defend their Europeanism in election manifestos, parliamentary debates or appearances in the media, we find that economic or strategic arguments were not as frequently used as cultural or historical considerations. We could say that the main parties stuck to a common discourse, basically asserting that Spain *being* a European country was enough to justify all efforts to join the EEC, above the economic or political benefits. By getting acceptance within the EEC, Spain’s *Europeanness* would be at last recognised; the secular questioning of the Spanish identity would be finally solved. Thus, apart from offering solutions to specific problems relating to economic development and consolidation of democratic institutions, joining the EEC was seen as the end of the Spanish search for its own identity. The King’s pronouncement mentioned above (“we Spaniards are Europeans”) was somehow the core idea shared by all political trends. This has led some scholars to conclude that the debate on Europe was banal, if it existed at all, for accession to the EEC was not seen as a way to take part in an active integration process but as a recognition that Spaniards were as European as Italians or Germans.⁵⁰

We can find numerous examples of these attitudes in the documents of the parties during the period of negotiations with the EEC.⁵¹ The UCD, which held the government between 1977 and 1982, never did define a concrete strategy in its policy regarding the EEC beyond the will to fulfil the adhesion. Statements of its leaders on European integration were always vague and often contradictory. Interviewed about European policy, prime minister Adolfo Suárez declared that the determination of the Spanish government to join the EEC was grounded in the conviction of “forming part of Europe”, and the member of the government Ignacio Camuñas went as far as to say in Parliament that opposing the adhesion to the EEC would be “reactionary”.⁵² Unlike the UCD, the other party in power during the period of negotiations, the PSOE (which held the government from 1982 on) had a background of dealing with European integration in its political programmes, since it took part in the Europeanist groups during the dictatorship. Reviewing the articles and notes on the EEC that appeared in the official journal of the party, *El Socialista*, one perceives an interesting evolution from the years of Francoism, when the EEC was seen as a “Europe of merchants” that needed a radical transformation in order to serve to the working class’ needs, to the democratic period, when the EEC was saluted as a signifier of “freedom, progress and democracy”.⁵³ The PSOE’s positions regarding the negotiations for adhesion were not free of contradictions either: from 1977 to 1982 the PSOE accused the UCD of neglecting the national interest and hastening to conclude the Treaty of

49 M. Á. Quintanilla Navarro, *La integración europea y el sistema político español. Los partidos políticos españoles ante el proceso de integración europea, 1979-1999* (Madrid: Congreso de los Diputados, 2001); M. Á. Quintanilla Navarro, *El misterio del europeísmo español. Enjambres y avisperos* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2005).

50 P. Jáuregui, ‘Spain. Europe as a Symbol of Modernity, Democracy and Renewed International Prestige’, in B. Stråth and A. Trianda Fyllidou, eds., *Representations of Europe and the Nation in Current and Prospective Member States: Media, Elites and Civil Society. The Collective State of the Art and Historical Reports* (Brussels: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003), 284-319; M. Trouvé, *L’Espagne et l’Europe. De la dictature de Franco à l’Union Européenne* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 271-312; D. Montalto Cessi, ‘Il lungo percorso della Spagna verso l’Europa’, *Spagna Contemporanea*, 5 (1994), 145-156, 151.

51 C. López Gómez, ‘Spanish Political Parties and the Accession to the European Community. Consensus or Coincidence?’, in D. Preda and D. Pasquinnucci, eds., *Consensus and European Integration. An Historical Perspective. Consensus et intégration européenne. Une perspective historique* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2012), 181-195.

52 Declarations to *Financial Times*, 22 Feb. 1978, quoted in A. Suárez, *Un nuevo horizonte para España. Discursos del Presidente del Gobierno, 1976-1978* (Madrid: Presidencia del Gobierno, Servicio Central de Publicaciones, 1978), 175. *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso (DSC)*, Sesiones Plenarias, 21, I Legislatura, 1100.

53 ‘Editorial’, *El Socialista*, 383 (15 Jun 1985)

Accession in order to take advantage of it in electoral terms. After 1982, the PSOE government was accused by the opposition exactly in the same terms, especially since Prime Minister Felipe González committed himself to achieve the adhesion before 1986, and the Treaty finally signed in 1985 was deemed severely detrimental by economic sectors like farmers or fishermen.⁵⁴

The conservative Popular Alliance (*Alianza Popular*, AP, renamed Popular Party, PP, in 1989), a minor force in the parliament between 1977 and 1982, the main opposition party after 1982, also changed its discourse on the EEC according to circumstances. By 1976-77 its foundational texts and first electoral manifesto interpreted joining the EEC a consequence of “our European condition” and a “policy of prestige” for Spain, giving prominence to cultural and historical considerations over the economic ones.⁵⁵ Yet, as the negotiations went on, the AP became the champion of the national interest, backing the employers’ associations in their protests against whatsoever concessions the Spanish government could make to the EEC regarding industrial exports. At the end of the process, the AP was extremely critical about the conditions of the Treaty: the party’s official journal foresaw an “economic disaster” for the northern coast of Spain, affected by the reduction of milk and bovine production, and the loss of 75.000 jobs in the Canary Islands, among other harmful consequences.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the AP never questioned its posture favouring adhesion to the EEC: the furthest it reached in its critical stances was the insinuation of a future renegotiation of the conditions once Spain had fully entered the Community.⁵⁷ As a matter of fact, the AP supported the ratification of the Treaty of Adhesion in Parliament and its leaders stressed that their criticism referred only to the way the government had negotiated the adhesion, not to the adhesion itself.⁵⁸

The communists of the PCE had begun to accept the idea of Spain joining the EEC only in the 1970s, as a part of their strategy to get autonomy from the Soviet Union and also as a means to meet the rest of the democratic opposition in a common space in the last years of the dictatorship. After 1975 the PCE kept supporting the accession to the EEC, which, according to secretary general Santiago Carrillo, could be used as an instrument for the international awareness of the working class.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, during the negotiations the PCE met other opposition parties in their demand of the defence of national interests, mainly the right of Spanish workers to move to other EEC countries without a transitory period. But the value the EEC had for the communists was also primarily symbolical: in 1983, when Felipe González quitted the idea of leaving NATO, ambiguously arguing that NATO membership would be helpful in the negotiations with the EEC, some members of the PCE Central Committee proposed to withdraw the party’s support to joining the EEC.⁶⁰ After voting, the Central Committee refused to do so, on the grounds that such change of position would be seen by

54 A further development of the PSOE’s stakes regarding the Spain-EEC relations in C. López Gómez, ‘Visiones de Europa. Cambio y continuidad en el discurso europeísta del PSOE (1976-1985)’, in A. Mateos and Á. Soto, eds., *Historia de la época socialista, España, 1982-1996* (Madrid: UNED, UAM, 2011).

55 Acción Regional, *Programa Político*. VI: Política exterior (February 1977). AP’s Electoral Manifesto (1977).

56 ‘Desastre en la cornisa cantábrica’, *Alianza*, 18 (15 Jun 1985), 12-14. ‘Consecuencias negativas del ingreso en la CEE’, *Alianza*, 19 (1 Jul 1985), 14-15.

57 Documents of the Third Congress of Alianza Popular (1980). Motions, Programmes, Statutes, 47 and 56.

58 The evolution of AP’s discourse in relation with the EEC in C. López Gómez, ‘Europeísmo y oposición. Alianza Popular y la adhesión de España a la CEE (1976-1985)’, *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 29 (2007), 279-296.

59 J. Estruch, *Historia oculta del PCE* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2000), 224. *VIII Congreso del PCE* (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1972), 18-24.

60 Spain joined the NATO in 1982 by decision of prime minister Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo and against the position of left parties, especially PSOE. Opposition leader Felipe González promised then that he would organise a referendum to leave the organisation once he got to the government. However, after the PSOE’s victory in the elections in October 1982 González progressively changed his view, understanding the benefits Spain obtained from its presence in the NATO, and finally opted for staying in the organisation. This was seen as a betrayal by the PCE, which remained the main anti-NATO force in Spain in a time when, according to opinion studies, most of the population still rejected the Atlantic Alliance. See C. del Val Cid, *Opinión pública y opinión publicada. Los españoles y el referéndum de la OTAN* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1996).

the electorate as “a weakening of our Europeanism”.⁶¹ At last, although the Treaty of Adhesion did not match the PCE’s demands on social issues and rights of workers, the PCE ratified it anyway outlining its “symbolical value” (in the words of parliamentary spokesman Pérez Royo) for the recognition of the *Europeanness* of Spain.⁶²

All these issues show how parties adapted to a situation where Spanish public opinion was overwhelmingly favourable to adhesion to the EEC, but where specific details of the consequences of the adhesion remained obscure and unattractive to the public. Opinion surveys carried out by the Institute for Public Opinion show a wide support to adhesion throughout this period. The percentage for and against joining the EEC evolved as follows: 74-4 in 1976; 56-4 in 1978; 67-7 in 1979; 65-4 in 1980; 65-11 in 1983; 70-6 in 1984; 66-7 in 1985. In some cases surveys inquired the concrete reasons for this support. For example, in 1979, 52 per cent of the interviewed answered that joining the Common Market would benefit the Spanish industry (10 per cent expressed the opposite); 55 per cent agriculture (9 per cent disagreed); 53 per cent employment; 58 per cent trade relations; and 52 per cent tourism. Yet, in a similar survey the same year only 17 per cent of the interviewed considered themselves ‘well informed about the pros and cons of joining the Common Market’ (68 per cent did not). In 1980 the same question yielded a result of 1 per cent feeling ‘very well informed’, 14 per cent who felt ‘quite informed’, 46 per cent ‘little informed’ and 28 per cent ‘not informed at all’. In other words, there was a feeble understanding of the implications of joining the Communities, which the same surveys put down to a lack of interest of the interviewed in the technical issues relating to the EEC.⁶³

But this neglecting of technical or political aspects of European integration was parallel to a massive enthusiasm on the recognition of the *Europeanness* of Spain through the admittance to the EEC. There was a “European fashion” expressed for example through the indiscriminate use of the prefix *euro-* as a means to embellish or increase the appeal of any product or service.⁶⁴ All the same, there was in these years a boom of pro-European organisations in the political as well as the professional fields. After the legalisation of the European Movement in Spain in 1978, all relevant political parties and trade unions adhered to the CFEME, and so did numerous cultural and professional associations. New pro-European groups appeared between 1978 and 1985 within the CFEME or outside of it, such as the European Federalist Youth of Catalonia, the Association for European Integration, the Democratic Association of Women for Europe, or the Spanish sections of the Association of European Journalists, the Council of Municipalities of Europe and the European Association of Teachers, to quote just a few.⁶⁵ Europeanism, which during the dictatorship had been a flag of anti-Francoist opposition, had now become a universal attitude, shared by all of the political actors from left to right and including peripheral nationalist parties, trade unions and employers’ organisations.

61 PCE, *Central Committee Meeting*, 28 Jun 1983, Minutes.

62 ‘El PCE ante el acuerdo de Bruselas’, *Mundo Obrero*, 327 (April 1985). ‘Nuestro europeísmo’, *Mundo Obrero*, 338 (June 1985). DSC, Sesiones Plenarias, 221, II Legislatura, 10212. A wider account of the PCE’s positions regarding adhesion to the EEC in C. López Gómez, ‘Comunismo y europeísmo: el PCE ante la adhesión de España a la Comunidad Económica Europea’ in R. Quirosa-Cheyrouze Muñoz, L. C. Navarro Pérez and M. Fernández Amador, eds., *Historia de la Transición en España. Las organizaciones políticas* (Almería: Universidad de Almería, 2011), 583-592.

63 Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, ‘La opinión pública española ante la Comunidad Económica Europea, 1968-1985’, *Revista de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 29 (1985), 289-396.

64 The examples range from the *Euro-residencias* (a group of retirement homes that had no connection with Europe nor the EEC) to *eurocola*, a cola drink designed by the company Pascual to compete with Coca-Cola in the Spanish market. This spontaneous wave of popular *Europeanness* was satirised by the theatre company *Els Joglars* in the TV show *Ya semos europeos* (broadcasted in 1989), which depicted an old and traditional Spain where all efforts to *europeanize* its image were a mere disguise.

65 In some cases the emergence of these pro-European entities was ephemeral. Their historic records are housed at the Archives of the CFEME. See C. López Gómez, ‘El Archivo del Consejo Federal Español del Movimiento Europeo’, in Á. Barrio Alonso, J. de Hoyos Puente and R. Saavedra Arias, eds., *Nuevos horizontes del pasado. Culturas políticas, identidades y formas de representación* (Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2011).

Moreover, given the public value *Europeanness* had acquired as a signifier of democracy and modernisation, many parties and institutions struggled to get hold of an Europeanist image by joining supranational (European) organisations. In some cases they even endeavoured to appear “more European” than others: thus, the UGT, one of the founding members of the European Trade Unions Confederation (ETUC), vetoed CCOO access to the ETUC until 1990. Although this veto was officially based on the communist ideology of CCOO, UGT secretary for international relations would admit later that its real purpose was to retain exclusively for UGT the prestige of being the only Spanish partner of ETUC.⁶⁶ A similar controversy existed around the accession of the Spanish agrarian syndicates to the European Committee of Professional Agrarian Organisations (COPA in its French acronym): in 1986 the conservative Spanish Union of Agrarian Federations (*Unión de Federaciones Agrarias de España*, UFADE) and National Confederation of Farmers and Ranchers (*Confederación Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos*, CNAG) temporarily vetoed the pro-communist Co-ordinator of Farmers’ and Ranchers’ Associations (*Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos*, COAG) access to the COPA.⁶⁷ Also in the framework of the European Movement there was a struggle between several organisations to get official recognition: thus, there were two rivaling Spanish women’s sections of the European Movement -that eventually reunited in 1985-; several attempts to create Spanish sections of the Young European Federalists (with which the already existing Catalan section was reluctant to collaborate) and even two federations of municipalities contended for being recognised as the Spanish section of the Council of Municipalities of Europe (CME).⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the integration of unions, employers groups and professional associations in Europeanist organisations responded to a logical concern for the defence of their interests at the EEC level, through the participation in the position making of the Community social partners such as ETUC, COPA or the Union of Industries of the European Communities (UNICE). But, regarding the internal debate in Spain on the EEC and European integration, the meaning of this massive pro-European involvement was virtually nil, since no party nor group could really prove that its stances on European integration topics were significantly different (not to say more or less European) than any other’s. Hence, the Europeanism of political parties and social actors was in general terms as hazy and undefined as surveys proved support of public opinion was to European integration: massive but -paradoxically- irrelevant.

CONCLUSION

Political speeches and press articles about the signature of the Treaty of Adhesion of Spain to the EEC on 12 June 1985 presented this fact as the most relevant historical event of contemporary Spain, insisting - again - more on its symbolic value than on the real content of the text endorsed. This

66 Fundación Largo Caballero (FLC), UGT-AO, 3643/1, interview with Manuel Simón, Madrid, 10 and 16 Nov, 2, 7, 9 and 10 Dec 2010, 63-66. On the same topic, see C. López Gómez, ‘Transición española y sindicalismo internacional. UGT y CCOO ante la Confederación Europea de Sindicatos (1973-1990)’, in A. Ibarra Aguirregabiria, ed., *No es país para jóvenes* (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Universidad del País Vasco, 2012). J. Moreno Preciados, *Sindicatos sin fronteras. La Confederación Europea de Sindicatos (1973-1999) y la afiliación de CC.OO.* (Madrid: GPS, 1999).

67 ‘Todos en el COPA’, *La tierra del agricultor y del ganadero*, 30-31 (Aug-Sept 1986), 4-5.

68 About the split of the feminine section of the CFEME, see Asociación de Mujeres Europeístas, Proceedings, meeting 27 May 1982, Fondo Movimiento Europeo - Movimientos Femeninos, ACFEME. ‘Elegida la junta directiva de Mujeres por Europa’, *El País*, 1 Jun. 1982. About the variety of unofficial sections of the Youth European Federalists in Spain, see Proceedings of the Meeting of all Spanish Groups in contact with JEF-Europe, April 1979, HAEU, JEF-22. As to the municipalities, in 1979 several mayors from Catalan towns and villages addressed to the Secretary General of the CME, Thomas Phlippovich, asking for the acceptance of a Catalan association of municipalities as the Catalan section of the CME. The CME promoted then the creation of a section representing the whole of Spain, but several Catalan municipalities refused to participate: ‘Constitució de l’Associació Catalana de Corporacions Locals - Secció Catalana del Conseil des Communes d’Europe’, October 1979, HAEU, CCRE-185.

assertion has been repeated by the historiography, which has even adopted the year 1986 (when the accession came into force) as the final milestone of the political transition.⁶⁹ That same year, the *Eurobarometer* ranked Spain as one of the countries with a higher level of satisfaction about the participation in the EEC and support to the ideal of an integrated Europe.⁷⁰ Yet, in a study published by the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, CIS) in 1989, F. Moral concluded that the views the Spanish public opinion had of the EEC were still under the influence of strong stereotypes linking *Europe* to democracy and modernity.⁷¹

These stereotypes were deeply rooted in the history of the mutual perceptions between Spain and Europe and also in the self-perception of the Spaniards in past times. But the relations between Spain and the EEC during Franco's regime had a profound impact on the Spaniards' vision of Europe after 1975, as J. Díez Medrano has pointed out.⁷² Specifically, the pro-European strategy developed by the democratic opposition since the 1940s, together with the refusal of the EEC to admit Spain in 1962 and the impact obtained by the Munich meeting, shaped a scenario where identification between Europeanism and democracy deeply marked the role of the EEC in the political debate during the transition and the first years of democracy.

This identification favoured an overwhelming support for accession to the EEC by the public opinion and the unanimity of political parties, but hindered the existence of a genuine debate in which different vision or ideologies on European integration were confronted. Similarly, the public opinion did not perceive European integration as a project to achieve but rather as a point of arrival, and interpreted accession to the EEC as the ultimate recognition of overcoming Francoism. Political parties, meanwhile, deliberately avoided any temptation of questioning too harshly the European policy of the successive governments, fearing that this meant a loss of their pro-European image. Instead, parties and other organisations, such as trade unions, tried to associate their image to pro-European entities such as the European Movement. They adapted to the prevailing Europeanism in post-Franco Spanish society: a widespread and transversal Europeanism, but intellectually uncritical.

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69 J. C. Pereira Castañares, 'El factor internacional en la Transición española. La influencia del contexto internacional y el papel de las potencias centrales', *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea*, 82 (2004), 185-224.

70 *Eurobarometer*, 25 (Spring 1986), 58, available at

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb25/eb25_en.pdf. Accessed on 25 December 2013.

71 F. Moral, *La opinión pública española ante Europa y los europeos* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1989). Still in 1992 a CIS survey included the question 'With which of the following words do you identify Europe?', and the most repeated answer (ahead of *free market*, *prosperity*, *concurrence*, *freedom*, *welfare*, *employment*, and others) was *democracy*. Cfr. I. Szmolka, *Opiniones y actitudes de los españoles ante el proceso de integración europea* (Madrid: CIS, 1999), 16.

72 J. Díez Medrano, *Framing Europe. Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 159-178.

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From Informing to Interacting? Exploring the European Commission's Communication Strategy "to be all ears"

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Abstract

Since 2001 the European Commission has paid increasing attention to two-way communication in its institutional communication strategy. Besides informing the public, the Commission's strategy has become orientated towards listening to and engaging in a dialogue with citizens. This article explores the rhetoric of the Commission regarding its institutional communication strategy from 2001 to the present time and studies in depth the dialogic dimension of this strategy. This contribution extends the study of the Commission's communication strategy by offering new insights into the development of the dialogic approach and the Commission's current understanding of communication. Furthermore, defining institutional two-way communication as a means to facilitate a link between decision making and public opinion, I contribute to the debate on the European public sphere. The data used for the analysis originate from document analysis and semi-structured elite interviews with Commission officials. The analysis indicates the gradual nature of the shift between 2001 and 2009 from a one-way informing approach to a two-way communicating approach. The dialogic dimension in the Commission's communication strategy is found to be more restricted in terms of subjects for discussion and facilitation. There are indications that engaging in a dialogue and interaction have been played down and are being managed through other means outside the formal communication strategy.

Keywords

EU; public sphere; communication policy; European Commission

The European Commission had never given its communication policy and strategy as much overt attention as it did during the first decade of this century. In view of a number of (interdependent) institutional developments,¹ the Commission has seemingly become determined to put communication high on its agenda. Moreover, the importance of communication has been explicitly linked to key questions of legitimacy, democratic governance and the responsiveness of the European Union and its institutions.² This contribution examines the development of the Commission's rhetoric regarding its institutional communication strategy from 2001 until 2013 and looks at the dialogical dimension which has recently been introduced in this strategy. By doing so, I

¹ Such as the appointment of the first-ever European Commissioner explicitly in charge of Communication Strategy, the establishment of a Directorate-General Communication, the growing number of policy documents on communication, an inter-institutional partnership with other EU institutions to communicate the EU jointly.

² C. Bee, 'The "Institutionally Constructed" European Identity. Citizenship and Public Sphere Narrated by the Commission', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 9, 4 (2008), 431-450; C. Bee, 'Understanding the EU's Institutional Communication. Principles and Structure of a Contested Policy', in C. Bee and E. Bozzini, eds., *Mapping the European Public Sphere. Institutions, Media and Civil Society* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 65-82; M. Brüggemann, 'How the EU Constructs the European Public Sphere. Seven Strategies of Information Policy', *The Public*, 12, 2 (2005), 57-73; C. H. de Vreese, 'The EU as a Public Sphere', *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 2, 3 (2007), available at <http://europeangovernance.livingreviews.org/Articles/lreg-2007-3/> [last visited 13 January 2014]; J. Harrison, 'European Social Purpose and Public Service Communication', in Bee and Bozzini, *Mapping the European Public Sphere*, 99-116; A. Michailidou, 'Vertical Europeanisation of Online Public Dialogue: EU Public Communication Policy and Online Implementation' in Bee and Bozzini, *Mapping the European Public Sphere*, 65-82; C. Meyer, 'Political Legitimacy and the Invisibility of Politics: Exploring the European Union's Communication Deficit', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37, 4 (1999), 617-639.

address the question of the extent to which the European Commission has become orientated towards interaction with the European public sphere through its institutional communication policy. I expand upon the existing research in the field and deliver a first insight into the approach of the second Barroso Commission (2010-2014), which no longer had a Commissioner explicitly in charge of Communication Strategy and did not draft new policy documents on communication.

The circumstances urging the Commission's upgrading of the importance of institutional communication and its interest in tackling the gap between Brussels and its citizens are quite evident. Events often cited in this connection are, for instance, the problematic ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), the Santer Commission's resignation (1999) indicating dormant deficiencies in the Commission's communication approach,³ the French *Non* and the Dutch *Nee* against a Constitution for Europe (2005) and the Irish referenda on the Lisbon Treaty (2008-2009). Furthermore, the continual decline in voter turnout for the European parliamentary elections indicates that the general public has gradually been losing interest in the European integration process and it has been established that the permissive consensus has been crumbling.⁴ Notwithstanding earlier (isolated) efforts to design a communication strategy,⁵ in 2005 the Commission declared it had 'made communication one of the strategic objectives (...), recognizing it fully as a policy in its own right'.⁶

Thereafter, the various communication tools, new approaches and initiatives introduced by the Commission have been studied more and more often. A number of scholars have pointed to an uncertain change of paradigm in the Commission's communication strategy.⁷ Whereas the strategy up to 2002-2004 is generally described as one-way informing (including justification, persuasive communication and marketing), characterised by gradual transparency and openness, research has shown that from 2004 onwards the Commission has shown interest in developing two-way (online) communication and a structured dialogue with its citizens and civil society. The idea of increasing civic participation and involving individual (active) citizens in the EU's decision-making processes,⁸ a suggestion put forward in the 2001 White Paper on European Governance, was finally being taken into account.

None of the studies that reported this trend towards dialogue and civic participation in the formal communication policy, however, refrained from casting doubts on this change and its

³ C. Meyer, op. cit. n2; D. Georgakakis, 'Was It Really Just Poor Communication? A Socio-Political Reading of the Santer Commission's Resignation', in A. Smith, ed., *Politics and the European Commission. Actors, Interdependence, Legitimacy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 119-133.

⁴ L. Hooghe and G. Marks, 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration. From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus', *British Journal of Political Science*, 39, 1 (2009), 1-23.

⁵ These previous efforts include, for instance, the ad hoc committee 'On a People's Europe' and the associated Adonnino report (1985), the controversial De Clercq report (1993), the Priority Information Programs for the Citizens of Europe (PRINCE) in the nineties.

⁶ Commission of the European Communities, *Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission*, SEC(2005) 985 final, 2.

⁷ J. Mak, 'Publicizing the Euro. A Case of Interest Maximization and Internal Fragmentation of the Commission', in A. Smith, op.cit n3, 170-185; M. Brüggemann, op. cit. n2; A. Michailidou, *The Impact of 'Constitutionalisation' on the EU Public Communication Strategy. EU Official Rhetoric and Civil Society*, European Political Communication, Working Paper Series 14/07, 2007, available at http://www.eurpolcom.eu/exhibits/paper_14.pdf [last visited 2 January 2013]; A. Michailidou, 'Democracy and New Media in the European Union. Communication or Participation deficit?', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4, 4 (2008), 346-368; A. Michailidou, 'Vertical Europeanisation of Online Public Dialogue: EU Public Communication Policy and Online Implementation', op. cit. n2; C. Bee, 'The "Institutionally Constructed" European Identity. op. cit. n2; C. Bee, 'Understanding the EU's Institutional Communication, op. cit. n1.

⁸ B. Kohler-Koch and B. Finke, 'The Institutional Shaping of EU-Society Relations. A Contribution to Democracy Via Participation?', *Journal of Civil Society*, 3, 3 (2007), 205-221, 209-212; P. Maignette, 'European Governance and Civic Participation. Beyond Elitist Citizenship?', *Political Studies*, 51, 1 (2003), 144-160.

implementation. Scholars called it a mere ‘dialogue on a dialogue’,⁹ still overly structured from the top-down and focused on building consensus and burnishing the perception of legitimacy.¹⁰ Taking this into account, this article explores the communication policy of the Commission and offers insights into the rise and current development of the dialogic approach. As a consequence, this research takes on the conception of the Commission’s communication policy designed to develop to a certain extent a dialogue with the public and goes one step further by exploring profoundly the actual design of that dialogic approach. The study reported in this article specifically brings into focus the objectives, actors, target audiences, subject matters and tools that have been put forward in the Commission’s rhetoric with regard to its two-way communication strategy from 2001 to date.

This article offers an assessment firstly of how the dialogic dimension in the communication policy of the Commission was initially launched. Secondly, it considers the extent to which the second Barroso Commission (2010-2014) consistently put communication and, in particular, the dialogic and participatory dimension high on its agenda. Thirdly, researching recent rhetoric of the Commission, the more recent design (if any) of the dialogic dimension is also explored. As a result, this study questions whether the Commission is taking the communication dossier one step further by consolidating and implementing it as a dialogic process or whether communication is (again) narrowed to a one-way process of informing and justifying EU policy output and results.

The article is structured as follows. In the first section, the theoretical concepts on which this study draws are explained and it is here that the concept of the European public sphere (EPS) is introduced. Although it is held that, by definition, such a public sphere must in essence be distinguished by an unprompted, non-organised flow of communication and interaction between private people, free from far-reaching interference by authorities and institutionalisation,¹¹ the focus is on the potential role the Commission plays in respect of the EPS. The core research problem of this study is based on the idea of the EPS forming part of a continuous process delivering input for EU policymaking and on the role EU policymakers can consequently play in connecting to and interacting with the EPS. The subsequent section reports on the results of the research based on document analysis and elite interviews, in order to address the three areas presented above. Finally, this article concludes by reflecting on these findings, with reference to the theoretical conceptualisation presented earlier, and suggests guidelines for further research.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The rationale behind this study originates from the definition of institutional communication formulated and applied by scholars such as Michailidou and Bee. Bee conceptualises institutional communication as

the set of activities organised by public institutions to address questions of public concern. It necessitates: 1) an awareness (on the part of the institutions) of what needs to be communicated 2) the possibility (for the citizens) to interact with policy makers 3) continuous feedback on the activities of public bodies 4) the possibility to influence and

⁹ J. Mak, op. cit. n7.

¹⁰ Michailidou, ‘Democracy and New Media’, op cit. n7; Bee, ‘Understanding the EU’s Institutional Communication’, op cit. n7, 96-98.

¹¹ J. Habermas, ‘Further Reflections on the Public Sphere’, in C. Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 451-452; J. Cohen and C. Sabel, ‘Directly-Deliberative Polyarchy’, *European Law Journal*, 3, 4 (1997), 313-342, 339.

change institutional activities through feedback.¹²

Accordingly, institutional communication, defined as facilitation of an ongoing open process of dialogue between policy makers/institutions and the general public, links up with the concept of the European public sphere (EPS). The link between the EPS and EU policymaking is now discussed in order to clarify the importance of institutional communication.

The European Public Sphere and the Next Step

The public sphere is generally defined as an open and independent communicative space(s) or arena(s) for unconstrained and rational debate, interaction and social integration, a forum where public concerns can be raised, publicly discussed and accounted for politically.¹³ Habermas's ideal type described the public sphere as 'a forum in which the private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion'.¹⁴ At first sight, this suggests that this communicative process of public opinion formation develops spontaneously and independently from decision making or administrative power. However, the linkage with institutional settings and decision making bodies cannot be disregarded since the public sphere is there, on the one hand, to legitimise decisions and proposals (a posteriori), and on the other hand, is supposed to set issues on the political agenda (a priori). The public sphere is said to 'besiege the parliamentary system without conquering it'.¹⁵ But how can the public sphere as an unstructured, anything but clear-cut entity have an impact on institutions and their procedures and structures? As Cohen and Sabel have noted,

Habermas' view seems to be that the democratic public can not [sic] be just and effective because to be just it must be informal in the sense of constituted freedom of institutions, while to be effective, it must be institutionalised in forms that constrain discussion and hinder pursuit of justice.¹⁶

Fraser's (1992) distinction between strong and weak public spheres offers to a certain extent an escape hatch for this discord. Strong public spheres stand for institutionalised instances where deliberation can result in will formation and decision making (e.g. parliaments), whereas weak or general public spheres are characterised by discourse outside the political system and restricted to mere opinion formation.¹⁷ However, these two types of spheres, again, do not operate in strict isolation; in order to reach legitimate binding decisions (which are formally decided with the involvement of the strong public sphere), these 'must be steered by communication flows that start at the periphery and pass through the sluices of democratic and constitutional procedures'.¹⁸

¹² Bee, 'Understanding the EU's Institutional Communication', op. cit. n2, 85.

¹³ E.g. C. H. de Vreese, op. cit. n2; E. O. Eriksen, 'Deliberative Supranationalism in the EU', in E. O. Eriksen and J. E. Fossum, eds., *Democracy in the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2000), 42-64, 52; J. E. Fossum and P. Schlesinger, 'The European Union and the Public Sphere. A Communicative Space in the Making?', in J. E. Fossum and P. Schlesinger, eds., *The European Union and the Public Sphere. A Communicative Space in the Making?* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1-20, 1; J. Gerhards and M. S. Schäfer, 'Is the Internet a Better Public Sphere? Comparing Old and New Media in the USA and Germany', *New Media & Society*, 12, 1 (2010), 143-160, 144.

¹⁴ J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 25-26.

¹⁵ E. O. Eriksen, 'Conceptualising European Public Spheres. General, Segmented and Strong Publics', in Fossum and Schlesinger, *The European Union and the Public Sphere*, 23-43, 27-31.

¹⁶ Cohen and Sabel, op. cit. n11, 339-340.

¹⁷ E. O. Eriksen, op. cit. n13, 54; E. O. Eriksen, op. cit. n15, 28.

¹⁸ J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 356.

Consequently, this article focuses on the mechanisms which the European Commission has developed and is offering through its institutional communication policy in order to facilitate connection and interaction between the spheres of decision making and public opinion. From a political scientific perspective, this (technical) part of the EPS is one of the substantive aspects of the EPS. Eriksen argued that

it is not the public sphere alone that bears the burden of legitimation. Rather, it is the interplay between free and open debate in non-institutionalised (weak) publics and institutionalised debates – strong publics – in the political system that together secure the presumption of rational opinion and will formation.¹⁹

The European Commission as the Only Stepping Stone?

Research has relied to an important extent on media content analysis in order to examine the communication flow in the EPS. That should not be surprising since media are commonly seen as one of the main gateways between opinion formation and decision making in the traditional model of Habermas's circulation of political power.²⁰ Koopmans and Erbe assessed the dependence of the communication flow between Europe and the public on mass media as being even greater than at the national level.²¹ As Gerhards and Schäfer pointed out, compared to other fora within the public sphere (i.e. everyday encounters and public events), mass media do indeed have a high impact because of their extensive reach and their traditional role and image as a tool and representative of public opinion.²²

Nonetheless, considering the role and performance of media as EPS gatekeepers and mediators, a number of observations must be made. First of all, scholars draw attention to possible external (e.g. perceptions of readerships, information supply and sources) and internal (e.g. experience and knowledge, resources, editorial procedures) elements influencing EU news coverage in national media.²³ Secondly, regarding important media related trends such as agenda setting, news selection and framing, media are said to 'privilege powerful and institutionalised actors'²⁴ and to be 'particularly open to active participation by the strong public, which already has access to power'.²⁵ Fuchs puts it somewhat bluntly:

And something like a discussion occurs here [i.e. in the mass media]. But it is not a discussion among citizens but advocacy discussion among journalists and representatives that is conducted in public and, perhaps, for the public. Through this type of political

¹⁹ E. O. Eriksen, op. cit. n13, 55.

²⁰ J. Habermas, op. cit. n18, 341-359.

²¹ R. Koopmans and J. Erbe, 'Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Europeanized Political Communication', *Innovation*, 17, 2 (2004), 97-118, 98.

²² J. Gerhards and M. S. Schäfer, op cit. n13, 144-146.

²³ Ibid.; R. Koopmans and B. Pfetsch, *Towards a Europeanised Public Sphere? Comparing Political Actors and the Media in Germany* (Oslo: Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, 2003); K. Raeymaeckers, L. Cosijn and A. Deprez, 'Reporting the European Union. An Analysis of the Brussels Press Corps and the Mechanisms Influencing the News Flow', *Journalism Practice*, 1, 1 (2007), 102-119; P. Statham, 'Media Performance and Europe's "Communication Deficit". A Study of Journalists' Perceptions', in Bee and Bozzini, *Mapping the European Public Sphere*, 117-140.

²⁴ Gerhards and Schäfer, op. cit. n13, 145.

²⁵ M. van de Steeg, 'Theoretical Reflections on the Public Sphere in the European Union. A Network of Communication or a Political Community?', in Bee and Bozzini, *Mapping the European Public Sphere*, 31-46, 35. Even Euronews, the 24-hour television news channel funded by the EU and launched in 1993 to shape an inclusive European identity and promote a European perspective, does not live up to the requirement to give a voice to citizens as they are marginalised in its news coverage; I. Garcia-Blanco and S. Cushion, 'A Partial Europe without Citizens or EU-level Political Institutions', *Journalism Studies*, 11, 3 (2010), 393-411.

opinion-building, anything resembling a deliberatively constituted will of the demos can scarcely come into being.²⁶

Moreover, the internet as a new and promising medium in terms of open participation in communication has not (yet) proved itself a solace in this regard, as Wright, Gerhards and Schäfer, as well as Koopmans and Zimmerman have shown.²⁷

Besides media, another (evident) category of actors presents itself as a possible gateway between opinion formation and decision making. In liberal democracies, political parties and representatives act by definition as legitimate channels and spokespeople of the public sphere in decision making. Whereas liberal, representative conceptions of democracy settle for indirect and occasional civic participation through elections and representation, other normative views on democracy go beyond that thin definition of the public sphere.²⁸ The latter assign more value to supplementary citizens' involvement, going beyond traditional mechanisms and actors of representation. Consequently, being attentive and responsive to the public sphere against that background becomes a concern for representatives as well as executives. As far as the EPS is concerned, it has been established that the European Commission has a formally developed interest in direct citizens' participation.²⁹ Furthermore, the provision on democratic principles in the Treaty of the European Union states that the EU is founded on representative democracy, and consolidates the citizens' right to participate.³⁰

To summarise, nowadays, the EPS is generally described as an open, multiform forum for citizens to interact with each other and debate various issues and events,³¹ across European borders. The linkage that the EPS has with institutional settings and EU decision making bodies, aimed at legitimisation of political choices and agenda setting, can be facilitated by different actors and by different means (e.g. media, representatives, polity reforms). Through its communication strategy, the European Commission can serve as a stepping stone to connect the EPS and EU decision making.

ANALYSING THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

To explore the European Commission's rhetoric regarding the dialogic and participatory dimension of its public communication strategy from 2001 onwards, a twofold qualitative method is used. Firstly, relevant policy documents of the Commission concerning its communication strategy have been coded and analysed in order to explore the dialogic dimension in the Commission's communication policy from 2001 until 2009. The documents were divided into two time frames. The first group of documents refers to the 2001-2004 period, when Romano Prodi was Commission president, and the second group includes policy documents that were drawn up during the first Barroso term (2004-2009). This subdivision is made because of the aforementioned caesura indicated in previous research and literature and because of the appointment in 2004 of the first-ever European Commissioner explicitly in charge of Communication Strategy, and the establishment of the Directorate-General Communication. The overall design of the dialogic dimension of the

²⁶ D. Fuchs, 'Participatory, Liberal and Electronic Democracy', in T. Zittel and D. Fuchs, eds, *Participatory Democracy and Political Participation. Can Participatory Engineering Bring Citizens Back In?* (London: Routledge, 2007), 29-52, 35.

²⁷ J. Gerhards and M. S. Schäfer, op cit. n13; R. Koopmans and A. Zimmerman, *Internet. A New Potential for European Political Communication?* (Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, 2003); S. Wright, 'A Virtual European Public Sphere? The Futurum Discussion Forum', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14, 8 (2007), 1167-1185.

²⁸ V. Kaina and I. P. Karolewski, 'EU Governance and European Identity', *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 4, 2 (2009), available at <http://europeangovernance.livingreviews.org/Articles/lreg-2009-2/> [last visited 10 February 2014], 11.

²⁹ C. Bee, 'The "Institutionally Constructed" European Identity', op. cit. n2; B. Kohler-Koch and B. Finke, op. cit. n8.

³⁰ See in particular Article 11(4) TEU.

³¹ See, e.g., S. Lingenberg, 'The Citizen Audience and European Transcultural Public Spheres. Exploring Civic Engagement in European Political Communication', *Communications*, 34, 1 (2009), 45-72; E. O. Eriksen, op. cit. n15.

Commission's communication policy is mapped out, based on five questions/data clusters:

- Objectives: Why did the European Commission seek to establish a dialogue with citizens?
- Actors: Who did the European Commission consider to be eligible to conduct a dialogue with citizens?
- Target audiences: With whom did the European Commission want to enter into a dialogue?
- Subject matter: On what kind of topics did the European Commission want to conduct a dialogue?
- Tools: How did the European Commission set up a dialogue?

Secondly, in order to gather data on the more recent development of the communication policy of the Commission (since 2009), semi-structured interviews with Commission officials were conducted, in the absence of new policy documents on the communication and information strategy. In the Barroso II Commission, no Commissioner was explicitly in charge of the Communication Strategy. Instead, the Vice-President and Commissioner responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Viviane Reding, was in charge of the Directorate-General (DG) Communication. Hence, questions arise as to whether the communication strategy and the related dialogic and participatory dimension are high on the Commission agenda, as well as about the principles on the basis of which institutional communication is designed. Besides analysing the interview data with reference to the five questions with regard to two-way communication listed above, the general importance attributed to institutional communication is also considered. The research involved coding and analysing the interviews in order to study the main principles of the Commission's institutional communication strategy.

The interviewees for this study were Commission officials working in the DG Communication and in the communication units of four other DGs.³² By exploring the rhetoric on institutional communication of other DGs, the article offers new insights and broadens the scope of research in this field. Working on the basis that communication is an activity that works by definition in a horizontal, decentralised way (i.e. its implementation is not restricted to the DG Communication), the need to study the position of DGs other than the DG Communication regarding two way communication is evident. Moreover, possible discrepancies between the different DGs over the importance attributed to public opinion have been highlighted.³³ However, this study does not apply a comparative case study approach; the four DGs were added to the research in order to complete and illustrate the DG Communication's rhetoric about the Commission's dialogic communication approach. The six semi-structured elite interviews (with one Director General and five heads of the communication units in four DGs of the Commission) took place from December 2011-January 2012 on Commission premises in Brussels. In the following section, on the basis of an analysis of policy documents and interview transcripts, I explore how the Commission has gone about setting up a dialogue with citizens in the EPS. For all three periods (2001-2004, 2004-2009, 2009-2013), the five aforementioned questions are addressed.

Before 2004: from Informing ...

Although the dialogic and participatory dimension made its proper entry into the Commission's communication policy in 2004, a number of references to this can already be found in the

³² I.e. DG Internal Market and Services, DG Justice, DG Information Society & Media, DG Research and Innovation.

³³ Mak, op. cit. n7, 183.

communication policy documents issued by the Commission between 2001 and 2004. By including the 2001 White Paper on European Governance,³⁴ the analysis presented in this article may have been skewed to some extent since one of the five principles presented as underpinning European governance is precisely labelled 'participation' and an important part of the paper refers to involvement and openness towards citizens. However, the three other genuine communication policy documents from this time span certainly delivered relevant data as well.

By examining the objectives that the Commission had been striving to reach before 2004 by facilitating dialogue between the EU and the European public, it can be seen that this dialogue was mainly useful for preparing and evaluating information campaigns. For instance, findings of public opinion surveys are supposed to be 'used to prepare and evaluate information actions with a view to calibrating campaigns and as general information for the public'.³⁵ The Commission's main interests lay in stimulating debate and gaining insight into public debates and opinion, primarily in order to gear its one-way information strategy. The document analysis showed that debate was considered valuable in order to improve perceptions of the EU and boost general awareness and generate feedback for information campaigns. Only in the White Paper on European Governance and the report published subsequently in 2002, were dialogue and citizens' input framed as substantive sources for the policymaking process.³⁶

Concerning the actors considered responsible, the analysis demonstrated that the European Commission regarded itself and the European Parliament as the main European institutions in charge of putting up two-way communication with citizens.³⁷ However, more than the European level, the Commission stressed the importance of the member states and regional and local governments. In one of its communication policy documents the Commission stated:

[I]t goes without saying that, even acting collectively, the Union institutions do not have the capacity to engage directly with the man in the street. So the success of this strategy will depend directly on the degree of support afforded it by the Member States.³⁸

Civil society organisations were also taken into account as third parties with a responsibility to engage in a dialogue with citizens in the EU.

Looking at the target audiences before 2004, the Commission saw the general public as potential partners in dialogue. The Commission wanted discussion to take place beyond 'the narrow circle of specialists'³⁹ and aimed at involving 'as broad a section of the general public as possible in the European debate'.⁴⁰ In line with the principle of subsidiarity, regional and local governmental actors were cited as target audiences for dialogue as well.

Regarding the tools for two-way communication indicated by the Commission, the internet was predominantly considered to be the channel for interaction and genuine dialogue. The Your Voice in

³⁴ The 2001 White Paper on European Governance (Commission of the European Communities, *European Governance. A White Paper*, COM(2001) 428 final) (together with the corresponding report from the Commission on European Governance issued in 2002 (Commission of the European Communities, *Report from the Commission on European Governance*, COM(2002) 750 final)) is included because of the explicit references made to this paper in other communication policy documents.

³⁵ Commission of the European Communities, A New Framework for Co-operation on Activities Concerning the Information and Communication Policy of the European Union, COM(2001) 354 final, 21, 32

³⁶ Commission of the European Communities, *European Governance. A White Paper*, COM(2001) 428 final, 13-16.

³⁷ See for instance Commission, op. cit. n36.

³⁸ Commission of the European Communities, An Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union, COM(2002) 350 final/2, 17, 17.

³⁹ Commission, op. cit. n35, 21.

⁴⁰ Commission, op. cit. n38, 8.

Europe, Futurum, Convention and EUROPA websites were referred to as tools offering the ‘opportunity to play an active part in the process of shaping Commission policy’.⁴¹ How input arising from this kind of online two-way communication will thereupon be processed and channelled into policymaking is not explained in the documents. (Interview data discussed below indicate that concerning social media, for instance, this question is still unanswered.) Two other tools – public hearings and public opinion surveys – were framed as tools used for gaining additional insights into previously selected issues and for testing receptiveness (e.g. in the policy documents, these tools are framed as instruments to ‘offer additional insight into public perception of and reaction to information from the institutions’⁴²).

After 2004: ... to Interacting?

2004-2009

Judging by the increase in the absolute number of references to them found in the documents analysed for this period, the second dimension of dialogue and citizens’ involvement in the communication policy of the Commission was evidently given more consideration. In the first policy document published during this time span, it was clearly stated that ‘[c]ommunication is more than information: it establishes a relationship and initiates a dialogue with European citizens, it listens carefully and it connects to people’.⁴³ Moreover, the appointment of the first-ever Commissioner for Communication Strategy, Margot Wallström, suggested an additional push for this communication approach.

The main emphasis shifted towards generating substantive inputs for the EU policymaking process, notwithstanding some references to dialogue as an instrument for the design of communication plans and information campaigns. Debates were predominantly considered to be fora where citizens could express their opinions and consequently influence EU decision making.⁴⁴ In the opinion of the Commission, ‘Europe’s citizens want to make their voices in Europe heard and their democratic participation should have a direct bearing on EU policy formulation and output’.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Commission did not shy away from linking this process with abstract and ambitious targets such as improving democracy and active European citizenship. In the 2004-2009 communication policy documents, explicit references to the EPS concept were found, specified as a space ‘where citizens are given the information and the tools to actively participate in the decision making process and gain ownership of the European project’.⁴⁶ However, my document analysis confirmed the finding of Michailidou⁴⁷ that one of the important aims still embedded in the Commission’s rhetoric on two-way communication is improving ‘the *perceived* lack of legitimacy’.⁴⁸ Moreover, it is also said to offer the opportunity to showcase the EU’s relevance and added value by improving the ‘perception of the European Union and its Institutions and their legitimacy’⁴⁹.

⁴¹ Commission of the European Communities, Report from the Commission on European Governance, COM(2002) 750 final, 8.

⁴² Commission, op cit. n35, 33.

⁴³ Commission, op. cit. n6, 2.

⁴⁴ Commission of the European Communities, *Communicating Europe in Partnership*, COM(2007) 568 final, 6.

⁴⁵ Commission, op. cit. n6, 4.

⁴⁶ Commission of the European Communities, *The Commission’s Contribution to the Period of Reflection and Beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*, COM(2005) 494 final, 3.

⁴⁷ A. Michailidou, op. cit. n7.

⁴⁸ Commission, op. cit. n46, 9 (emphasis added by the author).

⁴⁹ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on implementing the

The key actors assigned with the task of developing dialogue continued to be the European Commission and the European Parliament, and their respective individual members. The Commission, however, took a back seat since it envisaged more of a supporting role, while the responsibility of the member states and national, regional and local political actors was raised. It was proclaimed that maintaining public discussion on Europe

is first and foremost the responsibility of the public authorities in the Member States. It is the responsibility of government, at national, regional and local level, to consult and inform citizens about public policy – including European policies and their impact on people's daily lives – and to put in place the forums to give this debate life'.⁵⁰

Moreover, since many European policies and programmes are implemented at regional and local levels, 'local and regional authorities are well placed to engage in a dialogue with citizens and to actively involve local communities in EU issues'.⁵¹ Civil society organisations were again referred to, as well.

In contrast with the previous period, the documents analysed for this term did hint at the possible content of the dialogue with citizens. Specific policy issues and areas were suggested, e.g. employment, the environment, the fight against terrorism, Europe's borders and the EU's role in the world. To a lesser degree, the debates were said to deal with broad issues such as the future of Europe. This finding accords with the shift observed by Quittkat concerning the Commission's online consultations; since their introduction, these consultations have become more standardised and less open, leaving less opportunity for unrestrained and spontaneous input.⁵²

The general public continued to constitute one of the main official target audiences, though media were now included in the category of target audiences as well. Occasionally, young people, minority groups and women were explicitly specified as particular target groups for dialogue.

When it comes to tools for two-way communication in this period, a more differentiated set-up becomes obvious on the basis of the document analysis. Public consultations, public opinion surveys (e.g. Eurobarometer) and media monitoring made up the main pillars of this multi-method approach for gaining insight into public opinion and for identifying citizens' expectations and concerns. Besides the internet, new tools and methods were briefly presented, e.g. citizens' conferences, focus groups and panels and programmes such as 'Europe for the Citizens' and 'Youth in Action'. The Representations of the European Commission in the member states made an especially notable entry as intermediaries that could report to Brussels on citizens' concerns on European issues.

Post-2009

As explained above, the scope of the analysis for this time span was wider to allow examination of the general importance attributed to communication and the dialogic and participatory dimension within.

Data from the semi-structured elite interviews at DG Communication and communication with the four other DGs showed that, in general, institutional communication is still very much advocated.

information and communication strategy of the European Union, COM (2004)196, p. 3

⁵⁰ Commission of the European Communities, *White Paper on a European Communication Policy (presented by the Commission)*, COM (2006) 35, 5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵² C. Quittkat, 'The European Commission's Online Consultations. A Success Story?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49, 3 (2011), 653-674, 661-662.

The fact that, at present, the Communication Strategy is not a fully-fledged policy area in a Commissioner's portfolio and that no new policy documents are being issued, is brushed aside. One of the interviewees (DG Internal Market and Services) explained that:

There is less emphasis on the strategy building, but that does not mean that communication is less important. There is just more emphasis on operational delivery of good communication rather than on discussing with member states and Parliament how we communicate with each other better.

References were also made to the newly introduced Communication Steering Board⁵³ and to a Commissioners' seminar on communication in August 2011 to argue that communication is probably placed even higher up the agenda. However, the attention paid to communication is not self-evident and consistent within the Commission as a whole, given the different attitudes and varying top-down support of senior management, Directors-General and Commissioners regarding communication. The interviewees from the DGs indeed collectively stressed the importance of their communication-minded working environment.

Other elements related to the main principles of the current communication policy are the need for one global EU narrative (e.g. the long-term Europe 2020 strategy) and streamlined content, and the wish to make communication part and parcel of the policymaking process. Looking at the general communication content and subjects, the emphasis is clearly put on explaining the EU's added value to people's daily lives (e.g. their rights as EU citizens) and 'showcasing what is going on with their money', as one interviewee (DG Research and Innovation) aptly put it. Nevertheless, the plea for this kind of persuasive communication, entailing elements of justification and propaganda,⁵⁴ was accompanied by warnings not to deceive citizens by implanting false hopes concerning the EU's (limited) powers. Hence, most of the interviewees argued for a communication strategy that would also focus on explaining on a basic level the (different) roles of the EU institutions.

In respect of the recent rhetoric regarding the dialogic dimension of institutional communication, the Commission seems to blow hot and cold on this. On the one hand, analysis of the interviews shows a general support for increasingly listening to, communicating with and systematically involving citizens and local policy stakeholders. However, limited resources restrict what can be done in practice. Interaction and participation are no longer facilitated through communication channels, but through affiliated programmes such as 'Europe for Citizens'.⁵⁵

On the other hand, this opening up vis-à-vis the public is at the same time restricted in two other important ways. Firstly, the dialogue occurs on the Commission's terms with regard to the topics of discussion. Broad discussions with the purpose of gaining insights into topics of general concern or browsing through suggestions is traded in for more structured consultations based on concrete policymaking processes. This is not a fundamental deviation from the approach applied in the previous periods. However, the initiative for this dialogue is put to a great extent in the hands of the citizens. As argued in the previous sections of this article, the very idea of having discussions and debates in the EPS presupposes that they have to take place freely, but top-down facilitation is an essential part of the next step towards consolidation of the EPS output. Nonetheless, our

⁵³ The Commission's Secretary General, Commission President Barroso's Cabinet, Vice-President Reding's Cabinet, DG Communication, the Spokesperson's Service and the Bureau of European Policy Advisers are represented in the Communication Steering Board.

⁵⁴ M. Brüggemann (2005), op. cit. n2.

⁵⁵ The programme was set up in order to facilitate transnational cooperation and exchanges between citizens and organisations in Europe. It is managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (under the supervision of DG Communication, DG Education and Culture and DG Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection). Since 2004 it has been supporting projects such as town-twinning, citizens' meetings and various kinds of remembrances projects.

interviewees in the DG Communication as well in the other DGs clearly indicated that this facilitation is not systematically implemented: 'We don't facilitate the dialogue as such', and: 'I don't think it is up to us to tell people to get involved. I think people get involved if they think it is in their interest'. This exercise of institutional restraint was, once again, explained by the risk of causing frustration:

I think that the listening process is potentially dangerous because if you give the impression that you are really listening, then you have to act on what is said. (...) You listen, but in the end you do what you want to do as a public authority; it might generate frustration. (Interviewee in DG Communication.)

Although the differences between the approach of Commissioner Wallström (2004-2009) and that of Commissioner Reding (2009-2014) are at first glance minimised as being a mere matter of different tools serving the same goals, the analysis of the interviews points to an important shift; in the Barroso II Commission, legitimacy is mostly defined on the basis of output and results, whereas former Commissioner Wallström emphasised the need for stimulating input and active involvement. The following analysis indeed shows the shift towards more emphasis on delivery, impact and return on investment through one-way communication.

Whereas the main objectives of the dialogic dimension characteristic for this period remain more or less the same compared to the previous period (i.e., generating input for better policymaking and convincing the public of the EU's relevance), the responsible actors differ. Although the need for an inter-institutional partnership was mentioned, it is the role of the Commission's DGs that is mainly highlighted. Since dialogues and consultations are meant to focus on concrete pieces of legislation, they are considered to be the actors responsible first and foremost for maintaining the dialogic dimension of communication (particularly targeted towards policy stakeholders). However, the communication units themselves drew attention to decentralisation and 'the natural trend of the DGs is to act on their own and for their own benefit', as one of the interviewees (DG Justice) explained. The responsibility of the DG Communication covers primarily contacts with media and the general public, and offering other DGs communication tools (e.g. audiovisual services), all interviewees confirmed. Nevertheless, the prime responsibility of member states and national politicians to engage in a dialogue with the public is still underlined.⁵⁶

The main target audiences in this period are the general public and stakeholders. As I have already mentioned, in this context there is a rather clear division of labour between DG Communication (responsible for the former) and the other DGs (responsible for the latter). Media are targeted by both, but especially by DG Communication in an effort to reach the citizens. It has to be noted that since the initiative for dialogue is increasingly put in the hands of the citizens themselves, their role is no longer that of a public waiting to be addressed. As a result, one can state that in the Commission's understanding of communication, the link between EU policy making and the EPS does not (anymore) have to be facilitated in a top-down way. Instead, it is the turn of the citizens in the EPS to reach out and search for connection.

The new tools for the two-way communication dimension introduced during the previous period appear to remain relevant. Public consultations are still mentioned as one of the key tools, as long as they are complemented with publicity and the support of the Representations of the European Commission in the member states and conferences. The importance of more involvement of the Representations is also stressed with reference to the drawing up of communication plans adapted to national settings. In addition to their role as target audience, media are put in the tools category as well, since the dialogue with the public is currently becoming less direct. By using media, the Commission aims to 'directly reach the citizens, covering this gap [between the EU institutions and

⁵⁶ A. Michailidou, op. cit. n7.

the general public] which we couldn't do with just a few meetings'. As this quote from one of the interviewees (DG Communication) illustrates and as I have argued above, communication actions are increasingly weighed against their impact and visible effectiveness. Using mass media guarantees a quantitatively better impact, the Commission's argument goes. A striking finding is the Commission's reluctance to use social media. It is true that online communication and social media are still welcomed as tools of facilitating involvement and input but the question of how the outcome of this direct online dialogue will be dealt with raises uncertainty. As one of the interviewees (DG Justice) put it: 'We are still thinking about how we are going to do this when we get all these people talking back to us on social media'.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Taking a departure from the uncertain paradigm shift in the Commission's communication policy previously reported by scholars, this contribution has brought into focus the development of the dialogic and participatory dimension in this policy area from 2001 to 2013. Referring to the three areas I set out to assess, I can state that (1) it is only since 2004 that the concept of two-way communication has gained proper recognition from the Commission. Whereas before 2004 two-way communication was predominantly aimed at preparing and evaluating information campaigns, the listening process explicitly put forward in the 2004-2009 documents was linked to generating input for EU policymaking. Referring to the conceptual framework of this paper, by 'being all ears', the European Commission facilitated (through its communication policy) the role of the EPS as a communicative process of public opinion formation to legitimise (a posteriori) and instigate (a priori) EU policymaking. However, findings from earlier research were validated in the sense that analysis also confirmed that the Commission's rhetoric still reflects the aim of improving citizens' perception and appreciation of the EU. Moreover, the responsibility to enter into a dialogue with the general public that basically makes up the EPS, which was indicated as the main target audience in this context, was passed on to an important extent to member states and national, regional and local political actors. The analysis indicates that from 2004 to 2009 the dialogic dimension in the institutional communication strategy of the Commission was increasingly concretised, but as an evaluation for the Commission of Plan D and Debate Europe consultation projects⁵⁷ made clear, a lot of room for improvement was left, for example, for connecting the results of the consultations to the EU decision making process. That said, from 2001 to 2009 a shift, however gradual, was observed from informing to facilitating interaction and dialogue.

Regarding the Commission's more recent interpretation of communication, (2) the research found that a formal step was taken forward in what concerns the informing dimension (e.g. the constitution of the Communication Steering Board). Concerning the role of the EPS, the focus is now placed on its (a posteriori) legitimising capacity. The need for more evidence-driven communication (based, for example, on media monitoring) dominates the rhetoric. The dialogic dimension is rationalised as well. In this respect, it was demonstrated that the dialogic dimension (3) is played down in the sense that the subjects of the dialogue with citizens are defined in a top-down manner, whereas the initiative for dialogue is expected to arise from the bottom. Metaphorically speaking, whereas up to 2009 the Commission had been gradually developing a general interest in 'becoming all ears', citizens in the EPS nowadays have 'to catch the Commission's eye' to make their voices heard. Professional and specialised stakeholders, by contrast, are still target audiences and interlocutors invited to contribute actively.

⁵⁷ Euréval, Rambøll-Management, and Matrix, *Evaluation of the Plan D / Debate Europe citizen consultation projects*, 2009, available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/about/evaluation/documents/2009-debate-europe_en.pdf [last visited 12 February 2014].

Based on this analysis of the institutional communication strategy of the Commission, one could conclude that the Commission has become less involved in facilitating the link between the unstructured, general EPS and policymaking. However, less can be more. Although the Commission's reticence to step up to the European public and to 'be all ears' vis-à-vis citizens can be considered detrimental, more goal-orientated initiatives can in the end deliver improved results for the benefit of the EPS. To put it bluntly, trading in broad listening operations without (direct) connection to EU policymaking for limited consultation procedures with more direct policy relevance, could at least partly solve the problem of frustration on the part of the participants. With regard to the increased effort expected from the public, as Aars pointed out,⁵⁸ public participation predominantly steered by political elites runs the risk of reducing involvement and participation to a means for gathering support instead of input. Further research is needed to explore the thesis that less institutionalised and broader facilitation of the next step between EPS output and EU policymaking input is accompanied by an increase in the substantial incorporation of EPS output.

Consequently, it is suggested that further research could look beyond the policy area of institutional communication and study the next step or link between the EPS output and EU policymaking input facilitated through, for instance, the European Citizens' Initiative instrument, which was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (2008-2009). Although the efforts required by citizens to organise such a transnational initiative are rather disproportional compared to the possible outcome (i.e. agenda setting), citizens can put on the table their own proposals and subject matters. Moreover, if a citizens' initiative is successful, policymakers are obliged by regulation to listen to the organisers during a public hearing and to give formal consideration to this bottom-up initiative for policymaking. As a consequence, future research will also be able to explore further the Commission's receptiveness towards a more formalised way of engaging in a dialogue with the EPS, which bypasses its institutional public communication strategy.

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⁵⁸ J. Aars, 'Democratic Renewal in Local Government? Top-Down Strategies for Bottom-Up Involvement', in Zittel and Fuchs, *Participatory Democracy and Political Participation*, 202-222.

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Communicating the European Ombudsman's Mandate: An Overview of the Annual Reports

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the communication strategy of the European Ombudsman (EO), focusing on the evolution of the Annual Reports (ARs) of the office from 1995 to 2010. The EO was created to bridge the gap between citizens and the EU Institutions; therefore the EO office may be seen, *inter alia*, as a vehicle of European communication per se. The ARs are the Ombudsman's main instrument of political pressure and an opportunity to communicate the outcomes of the preceding year to a broad audience. It is shown that the ARs have improved significantly in terms of layout and structure, while the EO now uses a dynamic logo and website. The various communicative activities presented in the ARs are proof of the EO's efforts to improve the office's public image, thereby strengthening the Ombudsman's so-called 'moral authority' in the context of a rather limited mandate. In terms of the legal and political messages of the ARs, the article focuses particularly on the evolution of the notion of maladministration, inter-institutional relations and the creation of a European Network of Ombudsmen. Another section addresses the similarities and differences of the two office-holders of the period under examination regarding their perception of the mandate. The article generally assesses the EO's efforts in the communication field positively. However, from a communication-policy perspective, it is doubtful that the EO could respond to the possible preference of some citizens to contact him/her on issues which concern a national entity implementing EU law when such matters are excluded from the EO's jurisdictional ambit.

Keywords

European Ombudsman; Annual Report; Communication; Transparency; Networks; Good Administration; Charter of Fundamental Rights

The purpose of this paper is to explore the communication strategy of the European Ombudsman (EO), focusing on the evolution of the Annual Reports (ARs) of the office from 1995 to 2010, both in terms of presentation and content, as well as in terms of communication and rhetoric strategies, using a combination of content analysis techniques from a historical and legal perspective.

The EO office was created by the Maastricht Treaty as part of the provisions on EU citizenship and became operational in 1995. The first EO, Jacob Söderman, was succeeded by Nikiforos Diamandouros on 1 April 2003.¹ Elected by the European Parliament, the EO investigates complaints of maladministration of EU institutions, bodies and agencies, but also benefits from the power to activate own-initiative inquiries when appropriate. Indeed, the Treaties (now Art. 228 TFEU) and the Court of Justice of the European Union in *Lamberts*² confirmed the extensive discretionary powers of the EO. When possible, the EO makes every effort to reach a friendly solution between the citizen/legal person and the institution concerned; otherwise, he/she possesses a series of non-binding instruments. These instruments may be listed as follows, according to their gravity: further

¹ Since the EO signs the 'Overview' (previously the 'Foreword' or 'Introduction') of the Annual Report and on numerous occasions declares authorship of the document, this paper attributes each AR to the respective Ombudsman in charge at the time of publication. After Diamandouros's decision to resign in 2013, Parliament has elected a new Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, who assumed office on 1 October 2013. This paper, however, examines the period between 1995 and 2010 only.

² Case 234/02 P, *European Ombudsman v Frank Lamberts*, [2004] ECR I-2803.

remark (where no maladministration is found but the institution can still improve), critical remark, draft recommendation and a special report to the European Parliament. From a pragmatic point of view, the EO is an institution with rather limited resources and personnel.³

The EU has invested time and resources in augmenting its communication strategy. Michailidou stresses how 'new media' are now increasingly perceived as a participatory or democratising factor, but maintains that the Commission has yet to develop the full potential of new media so as to implement in practice a more 'dialogue-oriented' participatory communication scheme.⁴ The emergence (or strengthening) of the European public sphere⁵ presupposes an intensive communication among the different levels of the EU's multilevel system of governance.

The EO is particularly relevant when discussing communication in the EU, since it was precisely the creation of the EO which served, among others, the purpose of bridging the distance between the citizens and the EU to begin with.⁶ In other words, the existence of the EO as such, beyond his/her function directed at improving the EU's administrative framework, may be seen as an instrument of communication. Among the communicative activities of the EO, the Annual Reports are of particular relevance. In fact, the EO has consistently stated that the ARs are 'the Ombudsman's most important publication',⁷ and that readers⁸ rely upon the reports so as to understand the institutional role of the EO and the limits of his/her mandate. The ARs can also be seen as the EU institutions' opportunity 'for self-regulation', since 'problematic areas within the administration' are highlighted therein.⁹ Consequently, the ARs are the EO's main instrument of political pressure and an opportunity to communicate the outcomes of the preceding year to a broad audience. Furthermore, while the reports of several EU entities do not differ substantially over the years, the EO has developed the presentation and content of their own reports, being one of the few examples of Union institutions or bodies actually investing time and resources to eventually turn the report, as the title of the following section suggests, from a Union *document* to an attractive *publication*. This evolution is reflected, for example, in the front covers and the length (in terms of pages) of the reports. During the first years of operation especially, the EO included in the reports almost every communication or media activity, providing details, pictures and feedback received. As the reports started to become more succinct, a selective exposition of communication activities replaced the initial form of presentation. Indeed, the EO has endorsed the principle that the reports submitted to Parliament ensure an ombudsman's accountability.¹⁰

It could be argued that the ARs serve a dual purpose: first, they are communication instruments as such and, second, they are the vehicle through which the EO has communicated information

³ For more on the mandate of the EO see, for example, K. Heede, *European Ombudsman. Redress and Control at Union Level* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000); P. Magnette, 'Between Parliamentary Control and the Rule of Law. The Political Role of the Ombudsman in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10 (2003), 677-694; A. Tsadiras, 'The Ombudsman', in P. Graig, ed., *EU Administrative Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 739-762.

⁴ A. Michailidou, 'Democracy and New Media in the European Union. Communication or Participation Deficit?', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4 (2008), 346-368.

⁵ See, for example, T. Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); K. Eder and H.-J. Trenz, 'Prerequisites of Transnational Democracy and Mechanisms for Sustaining It. The Case of the European Union', in B. Kohler-Koch and B. Rittberger, eds, *Debating the Democratic Legitimacy of the European Union* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 165-181.

⁶ See Annual Report 1995, p. 22. The Annual Reports are available at <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/activities/annualreports.faces> [last visited 10 November 2012].

⁷ See, for example, Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 18; Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 4.

⁸ Readers, according to the EO, are: 'fellow ombudsmen, politicians, public officials, professionals, academics, interest groups, non-governmental organizations, journalists and citizens alike at the European, national, regional and local levels' (Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, p. 123).

⁹ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 18.

¹⁰ Ibid.; Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 97; T. Buck, R. Kirkham and B. Thompson, *The Ombudsman Enterprise and Administrative Justice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 178.

campaigns, visits to member states and beyond, activities during the Open Days, etc. By addressing both functions of the reports and with a view to evaluating the communication policy of the EO, this paper will attempt to take into consideration, on the one hand, how the two EOs in the time period under consideration presented themselves and, on the other, what they did communication-wise beyond the ARs (in this latter case it has to be acknowledged, of course, that it was up to the EO to decide which activities and initiatives would be included in the publication). For the above reasons, the 16 ARs, available on the website of the EO,¹¹ served as the principal sources of this study and have been assessed from a historical and comparative perspective.

One issue merits particular attention. As will be demonstrated below, the communication strategy of the EO should be evaluated in the light of his/her rather limited mandate and, in particular, his/her lack of competence to supervise national entities even when they implement EU law. Efforts to find the appropriate balance in this issue are evident in almost every report, most notably during the first period of the EO's operation.

This article firstly presents the evolution of the ARs in terms of the presentation and content of their political and legal messages. A separate section deals with the highlights of other communication activities. Additionally, given that the EO is an institution endorsing a 'personal dimension to the office',¹² a feature which enhances inter alia his/her 'moral authority',¹³ the question of how each of the two office holders of the period under examination perceived his mandate will be examined. It will be argued that the ARs and the communication policy of the EO in general are close to reaching their full potential. As a final remark, it will be suggested that a future research agenda on the EO could arguably focus on the limits of the mandate.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORTS: FROM AN EU 'DOCUMENT' TO AN ATTRACTIVE 'PUBLICATION'

Between 1995 and 2010, the ARs were significantly transformed in terms of layout; the last ARs especially are modern, succinct and user-friendly publications. Four indicators substantiate this claim.

Firstly, from the record-high 321 pages in 1997 the AR now numbers just 77 pages (see Figure 1). It can easily be deduced that further to the arrival of Diamandouros in 2003, a progressive effort to reduce the length of the reports took place. Perhaps the most ambitious of these efforts occurred in 2008, when Diamandouros emphasised that changes to the AR were made 'with the end-user in mind'.¹⁴ The new, shorter version of the report had to strike a balance between being sufficiently informative and user-friendly at the same time; it is argued that the AR succeeds in this respect.

Secondly, given that, as previously stated, the EO is a personal institution, it is understood why significant efforts were eventually made to produce a logo that would help citizens identify the institution and encourage them to comprehend its mission.

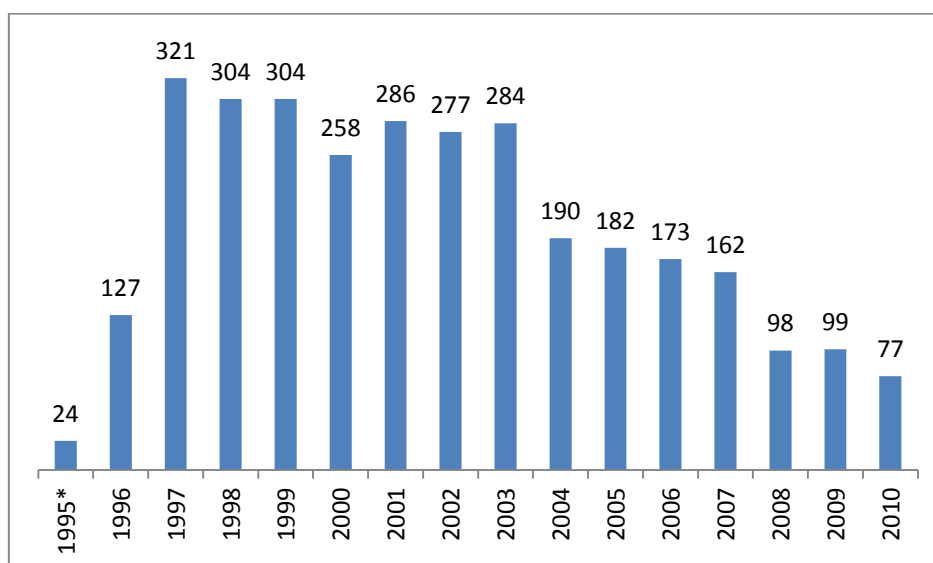
¹¹ See <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/activities/annualreports.faces> [last visited 10 November 2012].

¹² C. Harlow and R. Rawlings, *Law and Administration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 529.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 530; see also N. Diamandouros, 'Ethics and the Ombudsman', Speech by the European Ombudsman at the 27th Plenary meeting of the ERC Scientific Council, available at <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/activities/speech.faces/en/5468/html.bookmark> [last visited 10 November 2012].

¹⁴ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 4.

Figure 1: The gradual reduction of the length of the Annual Reports (number of pages).



*The 1995 Annual Report only covers the period from 27 September to 31 December 1995.

The EO has produced two logos, or ‘visual identities’. The first logo, used from 1996 to 2007, delivered a rather arcane message. By contrast, the new, dynamic logo featured on the front cover of the 2010 AR and figuring also on the EO’s website, does deliver more obviously messages of ‘equality’, ‘dialogue’ and a link to citizens (see Figure 2).¹⁵

Figure 2: The old and the new logo of the European Ombudsman.

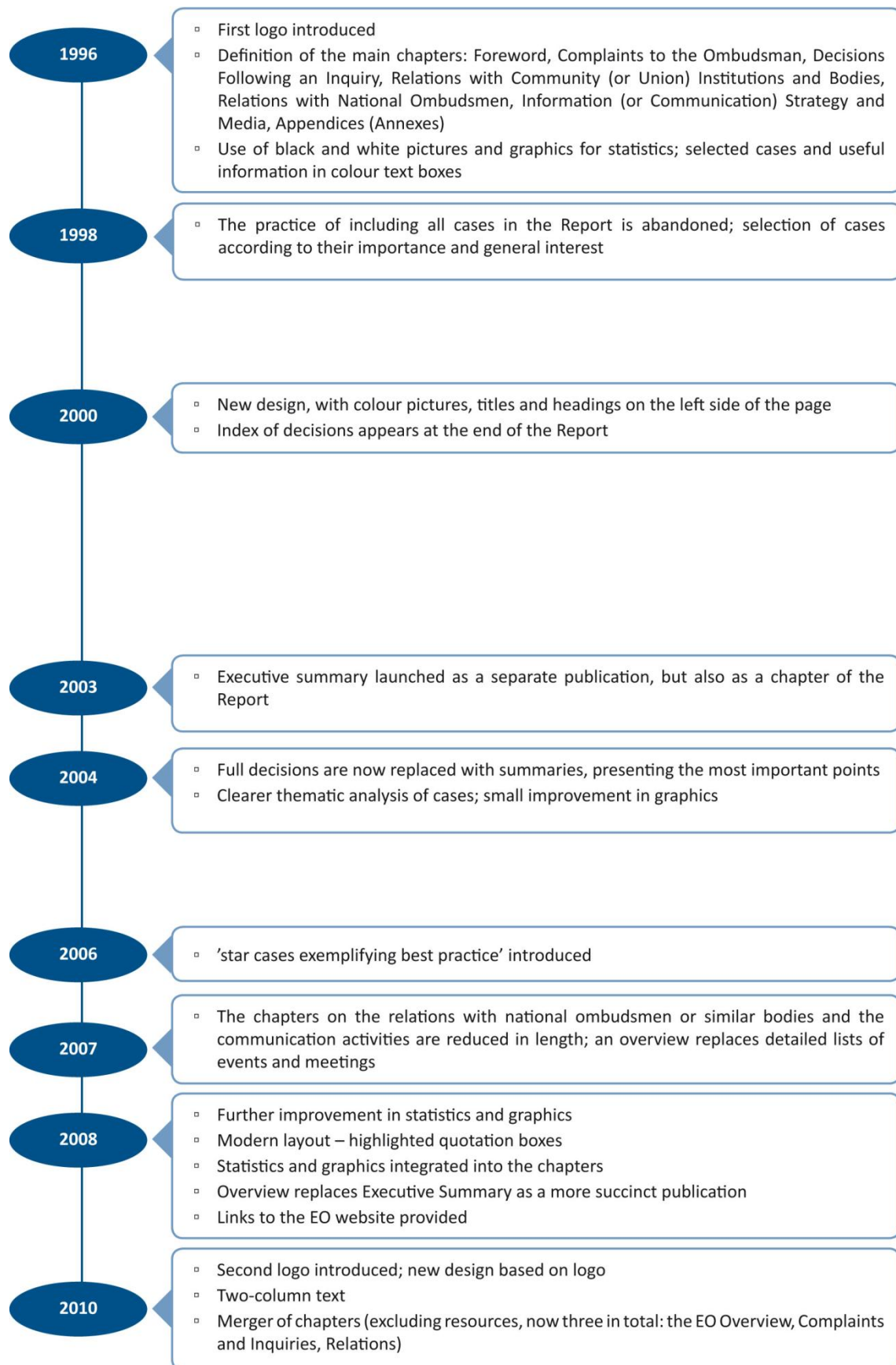


Thirdly, the evolution of the AR front covers is also of a certain interest. Again, Diamandouros’s ARs offer the most differentiated versions, before ending up with the new logo in 2010.¹⁶ Under Söderman, the front cover presented the EO as receiving awards twice (2001, 2002),¹⁷ perhaps in an effort to enhance the public image of the institution, whereas Diamandouros produced rather neutral or abstract messages for three years (2005-2007) before deciding to change drastically the layout of the AR in 2008, including the front cover.

¹⁵ Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 9.

¹⁶ The front covers can be seen on the EO’s website. Compare op. cit. n6.

¹⁷ In 2001 he received the Alexis de Tocqueville Prize of the European Institute of Public Administration (Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 239), whereas in 2002 the Ombudsman ‘was nominated to the rank of Chevalier in the Legion of Honour’ by the President of France (Annual Report 2002, op. cit. n6, p. 233).

Figure 3: Synoptic presentation of changes to the Annual Reports (1995-2010)

Lastly, the structure and layout of the AR has changed considerably as well (see Figure 3). For instance, one may observe the presentation of cases: the initial decision to include all cases in 1996 was first replaced by a selection of them, then by summaries of decisions. Finally, alongside the summaries, ‘star cases exemplifying best practice’ were included, usually fewer than ten in total. Moreover, in 2003 Diamandouros introduced an Executive Summary, initially numbering 20 pages, reduced to between 6 (2008 and 2009) and 8 pages (2010) in total. The title of the publication has been changed to ‘Overview’.

THE CONTENT OF THE ANNUAL REPORTS: LEGAL AND POLITICAL MESSAGES

As a preliminary remark, it should be noted that the ARs display a variety of elements demonstrating consistency with and continuation of the first EO’s work. Cross-references to previous reports, acknowledgments of the work of the first EO by Diamandouros, pictures of meetings between Diamandouros and Söderman, repetition of legal passages concerning the legal basis of the EO or the delimitation of his mandate – all serve the purpose of continuity and contribute to the stabilisation of the institutional position of the EO. The second EO often pays tribute to the first: he is the ‘founding’ EO.¹⁸ Elsewhere, Diamandouros comments: ‘For these accomplishments and, indeed, for many others, we, as citizens of the Union, are forever indebted to Jacob Söderman’.¹⁹ Besides, both office holders took advantage of the ‘Foreword’, later to be renamed ‘Introduction’ and ‘Overview’, in order to express more personal views and reflections on the previous year. This is a typical practice of ombudsmen around the world.²⁰ In what follows, the parts of the ARs composed solely of cases are not covered, given that they mostly concern the strictly legal work of the EO; instead, this article focuses on specific legal and political messages deduced from the remaining parts of the reports.

One central aspect of several of the ARs is the notion of ‘maladministration’. The Treaty establishing the European Community (now Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) empowered the EO to act upon ‘instances of maladministration in the activities of the Community institutions and bodies’,²¹ but did not further define this notion. Therefore, in 1995, the EO was preoccupied with adopting the broadest possible definition, given that ‘the open ended nature of the term is one of the things that distinguishes the role of the Ombudsman from that of a judge’.²² The 1997 AR is often cited for the classic and somewhat more precise definition of maladministration, which was adopted at the request of the European Parliament: ‘maladministration occurs when a public body fails to act in accordance with a rule or principle which is binding upon it’.²³ More specifically, these rules and principles, while depending on the legal and political context, certainly include the observance of the rule of law.²⁴ The Parliament confirmed the above definition with a Resolution and in 1999 the Commission finally subscribed to it as well.²⁵ More interestingly, in 2001 the EO attempted to

¹⁸ Annual Report 2003, op. cit. n6, p. 19.

¹⁹ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 17.

²⁰ See, for example, Ombudsman of Ireland, ‘Annual Report 2011’, available at <http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/Publications/Annual-Reports/2011-Annual-Report> [last visited 13 February 2014]; Ontario Ombudsman, ‘Annual Report 2012’, available at <http://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Resources/Reports/2011-2012-Annual-Report.aspx> [last visited 13 February 2014].

²¹ Art. 138e TEC. Art. 228 TFEU extends the ambit of the EO’s mandate to ‘instances of maladministration in the activities of the Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies’.

²² Annual Report 1995, pp. 8-9. The Ombudsman provided a list of possible instances of maladministration, but explained that ‘[t]his list is not intended to be exhaustive. The experience of national ombudsmen shows that it is better not to attempt a rigid definition of what may constitute maladministration’ (ibid).

²³ Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, p. 23.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁵ Annual Report 1998, op. cit. n6, p. 18; Annual Report 1999, op. cit. n6, p. 17.

expand the subject-matter scope of maladministration to the ‘rules and principles contained in the Code’ (i.e. the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour).²⁶ The second EO continued working on the expansion of the notion, stating in 2004 – that is, a few years after the proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights containing a right to good administration – that ‘maladministration and good administration are two sides of the same coin’.²⁷ Finally, in the subsequent AR, a clarification was provided, repeated ever since: maladministration is broader than illegality. ‘While illegality necessarily implies maladministration, maladministration does not automatically entail illegality’.²⁸ As the EO explains, this clarification could be read inversely, meaning that whenever an institution has committed maladministration, according to the EO’s findings, this does not automatically entail that the Court of Justice will find ‘illegality’; the findings of the EO might eventually be rejected by the Court of Justice.²⁹

The main types of maladministration have remained almost unchanged over the years, led by transparency or refusal of information issues. Other types include abuse of power/unfairness, negligence, delays, discrimination, or the role of the Commission as the ‘guardian of the Treaties’.

Besides the notion of maladministration, the developments in relation to two of the most important instruments of the EO, namely the own-initiative inquiries and the submission of special reports to the European Parliament, are of particular importance. According to the EO, neither should ‘be used too frequently’.³⁰ In fact, a special report is ‘of inestimable value’ but absent from the arsenal of many national ombudsmen; this probably explains why the first special report was only submitted in 1997.³¹ Besides, the submission of a special report presupposes that Parliament can actually pursue the case further,³² but this is up to its ‘political judgment’.³³ Accordingly, Diamandouros went as far as characterising a special report as ‘the Ombudsman’s *ultimate weapon* and [...] the last substantive step he takes in dealing with a case’.³⁴ Regarding own-initiative inquiries, shortly after he assumed office, he declared his intention to augment the use of this instrument.³⁵ More importantly, he institutionalised its use when a ‘non-authorized person’ (non-citizen or resident of the EU) submits a complaint: ‘No complaint has yet been rejected solely because the complainant is not an authorised person’.³⁶ Evidence of a practical application of this position can be found in 2006 when the EO stated his clear intention to supervise the actions of the European Investment Bank in its external lending activities, even by the use of an own-initiative inquiry when the *locus standi* requirements (that is, the submission of a complaint by an EU citizen or an EU resident) are not fulfilled.³⁷ It has nonetheless been argued that ‘complaints regarding projects carried out outside of the EU, rais[e]

²⁶ Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 19.

²⁷ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 37.

²⁸ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 39.

²⁹ This was confirmed by the Court in the *Komninou* case, where it was stated that the Court is not bound or confined by the EO’s findings on maladministration. See Case C-167/06, *Komninou v Commission*, [2007] ECR I-141, paras 43-46. Put differently, if the EO finds maladministration (which is broader than illegality), the Court will not necessarily agree that the EU institution has acted unlawfully – and the Court is confined to the examination of legality. If the EU institution has acted legally (although in breach of principles of good administration), the Court would generally be satisfied.

³⁰ See, respectively, Annual Report 1995, op. cit. n6, p. 11; Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, p. 32.

³¹ Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, p. 32.

³² Ibid.

³³ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 28.

³⁴ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 27 (emphasis added by the author).

³⁵ Ibid., p. 19. The own-initiative inquiry is generally related to the Ombudsman’s proactive role. One Advocate General went as far as suggesting that ‘the optimisation of the Community administration and not individual legal protection is the focus for the Ombudsman’s efforts’. See Opinion of Advocate General Trstenjak in Case C-331/05, *Internationaler Hilfsfonds eV v Commission* [2007] ECR I-5475, paras 58 and 61-63.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 28, 36.

³⁷ Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, p. 36.

the most concern' and sometimes access to the EO might be counterweighted by 'cost or distance' considerations.³⁸

From the very early years of the office's inception, the EO particularly stressed the value of transparency in the EU. Söderman opined that the Union was 'commit[ted] to open, democratic and accountable forms of administration';³⁹ he conducted an own-initiative inquiry on this subject;⁴⁰ he considered obstacles to his broad powers of inquiry as contradicting the principles of the Union being based on democracy and transparency;⁴¹ and eventually he increased his criticism after the resignation of the Santer Commission, arguing that 'confidentiality' might often be used as a cover-up for wrongly conducted administration:

I find it disturbing that those who oppose the increasing demands for more openness overlook this important point. Whatever their arguments and reasons may be, the fact remains that their stubborn opposition to the necessary opening up of the Union administration in a modern way obscures the details of European Union funding.⁴²

In the 2001 AR, the Regulation on access to documents⁴³ was warmly welcomed and optimism was expressed.⁴⁴ In his final AR, Söderman used a metaphor: the Union is 'a castle that should reform and open up'; 'more light' could be let in if 'old traditions and ways of working' are abandoned.⁴⁵ Leading scholars have commented that the first EO's 'contribution to the cause of transparency' was made 'typically in advance of the European Court of Justice'.⁴⁶ Similarly, Diamandouros declared the commitment of the office to transparency and accessibility vis-à-vis the media, for the purposes of a broad public awareness.⁴⁷ Transparency also encompasses the fight against corruption, and the EO had a crucial role to undertake in this respect.⁴⁸ In 2008, the EO appeared as the 'guardian of transparency' and drew inspiration from a comparative study in various member states so as to propose amendments to the Regulation on access to documents.⁴⁹ The adoption of such rhetoric should be analysed alongside the statement that the EO is 'the guardian of good administration' and in light of the Commission's role as the 'guardian of the Treaties'.⁵⁰ In other words, while the Commission safeguards the implementation of EU law, the EO described himself as safeguarding transparency and good administration, including the activities of the Commission. Last but not least, transparency features in the 'mission statement' of the EO (see also below).⁵¹

³⁸ N. Hachez and J. Wouters, 'A Responsible Lender? The European Investment Bank's Environmental, Social and Human Rights Accountability' *Common Market Law Review*, 49 (2012) 47-96, 87.

³⁹ Annual Report 1996, op. cit. n6, p. 96.

⁴⁰ Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, p. 12.

⁴¹ Annual Report 1998, op. cit. n6, p. 32.

⁴² Annual Report 1999, op. cit. n6, p. 13.

⁴³ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, OJEC L 145/43.

⁴⁴ Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Annual Report 2002, op. cit. n6, p. 13.

⁴⁶ C. Harlow and R. Rawlings, 'Promoting Accountability in Multilevel Governance. A Network Approach', *European Law Journal*, 13 (2007), 542-562, 557.

⁴⁷ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 127.

⁴⁸ Compare the speech 'The European Ombudsman as promoter of transparency and contributor to the fight against corruption' (2005), available at: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/activities/speech.faces/en/333/html.bookmark> [last visited 30 December 2013], where he also delineated the EO's mission vis-à-vis the European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF).

⁴⁹ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, pp. 10-11, 74.

⁵⁰ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 20.

⁵¹ Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 2. For the EO's contribution to the reform of Regulation 1049 on access to documents see I. Harden, 'The Revision of Regulation 1049/2001 on Public Access to Documents', *European Public Law*, 15 (2009), 239-256.

Taking into consideration Tsadiras's account⁵² on the relations between the EO and the Parliament, it is interesting to note that the ARs consistently refer to a 'constructive', 'fruitful' and 'special' relationship with the Parliament,⁵³ not only in the sense that Parliament provides accountability for the EO (see above), but also in the sense that this 'privileged relationship'⁵⁴ is beneficial to the EO in that it helps him/her to convince the institutions to comply. In return, the Committee on Petitions, often referred to as a 'complementary institution',⁵⁵ decided to join the European Network of Ombudsmen,⁵⁶ a step which may be viewed as an achievement of the EO. Oftentimes, Parliament commended the work of the EO, notably when presenting the AR. In 2009, for instance, the EO was praised for 'his public profile' as well as 'his new website and interactive guide'.⁵⁷

By contrast, the EO's approach vis-à-vis the Commission was less harmonious. The two office holders employed rather different modes of rhetoric here. In the beginning, Söderman used a reserved tone, noting that the EO 'maintains a regular dialogue and cooperation'.⁵⁸ However, relations with the Commission reached a record-low level in 1999; a 'time-consuming dispute' was one of the terms used by the EO as regards his right to inspect documents.⁵⁹ He issued the following warning:

There was an attempt by the services of the Commission to raise once again the idea that questions concerning the Commission's interpretation of Community law can be dealt with only by the Court of Justice and not the European Ombudsman. [...] Let me only say, hoping this is the last time I have to underline it, that it is never good administration not to follow the law; that is rules or principles, that are binding upon a Community institution or body.⁶⁰

In the same AR, the EO blamed the Commission for presenting 'bizarre arguments' before agreeing to the inspection of documents and declared himself 'surprised' with the Commission's stance on the mandate of the EO in 'cases in which the complainant has a possible remedy before a court or a tribunal'.⁶¹ Two years later, strong criticism was targeted against both the Commission and the Parliament, this time regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights:

In last year's Annual Report, I described the Charter as a step forward for European citizens. Much to my regret, I have now to state that, apart from the progress mentioned above, the three institutions that proclaimed the Charter have not yet shown themselves to be serious about applying it in practice. On the level of words, both the President of the European Commission, Mr Romano PRODI and the Commissioner responsible for human rights, Mr António VITORINO, as well as the political authorities of the Parliament have declared that the Charter should be followed. In real life, this has not yet been followed by deeds. The European Parliament and the Commission have both continued, for example, to use the old

⁵² A. Tsadiras, 'Of Celestial Motions and Gravitational Attractions. The Institutional Symbiosis between the European Ombudsman and the European Parliament', *Yearbook of European Law*, 28 (2009), 435-457.

⁵³ Tsadiras's main argument is that the EO over the years has managed to achieve institutional detachment from the Parliament, building a distinctive role of his own. Regarding the use of terms such as 'fruitful collaboration', his view is that they 'had admittedly a rather descriptive and generic character and were virtually void of any formative content, capable of affecting the existing institutional equilibrium'. See *ibid.*, 442-443.

⁵⁴ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 97.

⁵⁵ Annual Report 1996, op. cit. n6, p. 88.

⁵⁶ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, pp. 107-108.

⁵⁷ Annual Report 2009, op. cit. n6, p. 74; see more in detail below for the website and the interactive guide.

⁵⁸ Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, p. 277.

⁵⁹ Annual Report 1999, op. cit. n6, p. 12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 19.

rules about discrimination in their recruitment notices, neglecting the fact that the Charter also identified age as a prohibited form of discrimination.⁶²

These remarks were in accordance with his continuous efforts to promote the Charter and also the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.⁶³

On the other hand, Diamandouros, supportive of a more inclusive approach (see below), used more diplomatic techniques to deliver his messages. In 2004, the EO invited the Parliament to 'encourage' the Commission to extend its 'very positive co-operation' 'to all cases'.⁶⁴ The Commission was praised for 'introducing a new internal procedure for responding to the Ombudsman's inquiries'.⁶⁵ The EO organised 'bilateral meetings' with Commissioners, during which he affirmed that he identified a 'commitment to promoting a culture of service',⁶⁶ whilst the next year brought the involvement of 'civil servants from all levels within the European Commission'.⁶⁷ Regarding the fact that most complaints were directed against the Commission, the EO noted: 'Given that the Commission is the main Community institution that makes decisions having a direct impact on citizens, it is logical that it should be the principal object of citizens' complaints'.⁶⁸ Interestingly, in this 2004 pronouncement the slightly more neutral word *logical* replaces the word *natural*, previously, since 1996, consistently used in identical contexts. The same year, the EO officially intensified the supervision of the Commission's 'behaviour' (therefore not its *decisions*) in infringement procedures to include 'both procedural and substantive aspects'. Concerning the substantive aspects, the EO examines whether 'the conclusions reached by the Commission are reasonable and [...] well argued and thoroughly explained to complainants'.⁶⁹ This was a rather bold step to take.⁷⁰

Beyond relations with the EU institutions, the ARs record the story of the creation of a European Network of Ombudsmen. The idea was put forth by the first EO, and was implemented in a more robust and recognisable institution under the lead of the second EO. As early as 1996, Söderman put into practice a network of 'liaison officers from each of the national ombudsmen' so as to 'promote a free flow of information about Community law and its implementation and to make possible the transfer of complaints'.⁷¹ These two pivotal goals of the network have remained unchanged and are repeated throughout all the ARs. One year later, the network qualified as a 'flexible system of cooperation' which can produce newsletters and organise seminars while offering the possibility to its members of directing queries on EU law to the EO.⁷² These projects materialised immediately. Thus, the network gradually became 'an effective collaboration tool'.⁷³ It produced a very successful and participatory 'Ombudsman Daily News' section, its members 'share[d] experiences and best practice' and 'in particular, matters relating to the implementation of Community law at the

⁶² Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 11.

⁶³ See the speech by the European Ombudsman, Mr Jacob Söderman, Round Table on the Future of Europe, (2002), available at <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/speeches/en/2002-11-18.htm> [last visited 30 December 2013].

⁶⁴ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 20.

⁶⁵ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 18. This procedure entailed 'individual Commissioners taking strong political ownership of each case, while maintaining the valuable role of the Secretariat-General' and aimed to 'enhance the consistency and quality of the Commission's replies' (ibid).

⁶⁶ Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, p. 105.

⁶⁷ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 97.

⁶⁸ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁷⁰ See also M. Smith, 'Enforcement, Monitoring, Verification, Outsourcing. The Decline and Decline of the Infringement Process', *European Law Review*, 33 (2008), 777-802.

⁷¹ Annual Report 1996, op. cit. n6, p. 92.

⁷² Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, pp. 281-282.

⁷³ Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 233. Diamandouros used the phrase 'powerful collaboration tool'; see, for instance, Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 113.

Member State level'.⁷⁴ Diamandouros foresaw the potential of the network and clearly decided to raise its visibility. The network was viewed as an excellent opportunity for 'mutual learning' which was eventually translated into a better service to citizens.⁷⁵ Besides, the EO 'argued that the Network needs to make the added value that citizens derive from co-operation more visible, both to citizens themselves and to policy-makers at all levels in the Union'.⁷⁶

Of particular relevance is the joint statement adopted by the network in 2007. The EO had already highlighted the importance of a 'clearer public identity' and the need to present 'to citizens what they can expect if they turn to an ombudsman in the Network'.⁷⁷ What was not explained further was the position of the EO, who was 'fully aware of just how carefully such a statement would need to be drafted'.⁷⁸ In any case, in 2007, a consensually adopted statement declared inter alia that: accession to the network is voluntary and candidate countries are included; national ombudsmen can deal with complaints involving EU law at the national level; the principles of impartiality, fairness and effectiveness apply to them all and they all respect the values of the EU.⁷⁹ Diamandouros went even further by creating a proper 'visual identity' in the form of a logo for the network, which should symbolise the 'diversity' and the spirit of 'communication, partnership and unity' of its members.⁸⁰ This was arguably further evidence of his belief in the capacity of carefully designed images (in the form of logos) to bring citizens somewhat closer to the EU entity concerned. Another project currently running sets out 'to map the competences' of each member of the network, so that citizens clearly comprehend what a national ombudsman is able to deal with.⁸¹

In general, Diamandouros's presence marked an intensification of collaboration with other EU institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as with redress mechanisms, notably SOLVIT, an entity composed of centres dealing with problems in cross-border situations.⁸² In this respect, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the European Data Protection Supervisor in 2006, so as to facilitate the transfer of complaints and to 'avoid unnecessary duplication'.⁸³ Accordingly, in 2008 a MoU was agreed with the European Investment Bank, which benefits from an internal complaints mechanism.⁸⁴

OTHER COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES: RAISING AWARENESS IN THE CONTEXT OF A RATHER LIMITED MANDATE

It is critical to underline that from the very beginning the EO realised that he would receive an 'unusually high proportion' of 'inadmissible complaints' in comparison to national ombudsmen and

⁷⁴ Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 233.

⁷⁵ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 115.

⁷⁶ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n. 6, p. 110.

⁸⁰ Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n. 6, p. 9.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 64. For a comprehensive account of the inter-institutional relations between the EO and the national ombudsmen see further A. Tsadiras, 'Rules of institutional 'flat-sharing'. The European Ombudsman and his national peers', *European Law Review*, 33 (2008), 101-115.

⁸² See http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index_en.htm [last visited 13 December 2012]. As Lottini underlines, nonetheless, this collaboration comes with the following limitation: the EO has reached the conclusion that SOLVIT centres form part of the national administration and are therefore excluded from the EO's supervisory ambit. See M. Lottini, 'Correct Application of EU Law by National Public Administrations and Effective Individual Protection: the SOLVIT Network', *Review of European Administrative Law*, 3 (2010), 3-24, 20.

⁸³ Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, p. 106.

⁸⁴ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 75.

that most of these complaints would concern ‘maladministration by *national* authorities’.⁸⁵ Later on, this type of complaints was reclassified as complaints falling ‘outside the mandate’. So, even back in 1996, the EO understood that a balance had to be struck between an active information (or communication) strategy and the need ‘to take steps to prevent false expectations that might simply result in an increase in complaints that are outside the mandate’.⁸⁶ This phrase was repeated several times. Before leaving office, Söderman emphatically noted that ‘there is no point in campaigning so loudly that the first thing citizens think about when they wake up in the morning is the European Ombudsman’.⁸⁷ Diamandouros argued along similar lines whilst ‘promoting subsidiarity in remedies’.⁸⁸ It is in the light of this balancing dilemma that what follows should be viewed.

As has been observed, all ombudsmen ‘put considerable energy into promoting their respective offices through lectures, articles and regular communication with public officials’.⁸⁹ The EO fulfilled these expectations, and in addition endeavoured to secure coverage by, and interviews with, national and Europe-wide media. The EO declared in 2008 that ‘a proactive media policy constitutes a central component of his activities’.⁹⁰

In principle, Söderman and Diamandouros followed a ‘twin approach’: they considered it essential, firstly, to inform the ‘wider European public’ about the activities of the EO,⁹¹ and, secondly, to dedicate more effort to targeting audiences, i.e. entities or citizens who regularly contact the EU institutions and may therefore be seen as ‘potential complainants’.⁹² It is not possible to cover in this account the entirety of communication activities throughout a period of 15 years. What can be offered instead is a brief overview and a few highlights.

During the first years of the office’s existence, the foundations for an active strategy were laid: the EO engaged in a series of information visits to member states, participated in conferences and meetings with the press. These activities were usually covered in detail in the first ARs. The first guide was published in 1995 and additional informative publications (leaflets or brochures) were soon to follow. The prominent increase in press releases⁹³ enhanced the opportunities for political pressure exercised by the EO upon the EU institutions.

From 1996 to 1997 the internet was seen as ‘an addition to and not a substitute for conventional forms of publication’, because citizens could not easily access the internet. This approach was abandoned from 1998 onwards and ‘the year 2000’ was described as ‘the year in which Internet communication with citizens has truly come of age’.⁹⁴ A significant amount of complaints was now received by e-mail, but the quality of complaints could be better, according to the EO. Hence the idea to launch a complaint form on the website,⁹⁵ which became a reality in 2001. Simultaneously, the EO felt the need to respond in a personal way (‘I must repeat to these critics’) to criticism of the

⁸⁵ Annual Report 1995, op. cit. n6, p. 9 (emphasis in the original). In 2010, the overall registered number of complaints was 2667, out of which 744 fell inside the mandate (see Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 19). For an explanation of this development, compare the analysis in the subsequent paragraphs.

⁸⁶ Annual Report 1996, op. cit. n6, p. 101.

⁸⁷ Annual Report 2002, op. cit. n6, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, pp. 16-17. The principle of subsidiarity entails that ‘in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level’. See Art. 5.3 TEU.

⁸⁹ Buck, Kirkham and Thompson, *The Ombudsman*, op. cit. n10, 50.

⁹⁰ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 83.

⁹¹ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 127.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ In many ARs, one can find a calculation of press releases per working days; see, for example, Annual Report 2002, op. cit. n6, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Annual Report 2000, op. cit. n6, p. 12.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

information campaigns, stressing that the EO cannot deal with national entities.⁹⁶ The following statement expresses a similar message:

In fact, I do not know of any ombudsman office in the world that does more to inform the citizens about the right to complain and there is no other office that has to do it in 15 Member States and in 12 Treaty languages. [...] Any advice on how it should be done better would be truly appreciated. Any practical help and cooperation in doing it would be even more welcome. Demands to act in a more populist and noisy way will not be met, as they might *damage the profile* of the Ombudsman as a *professional and serious actor* within the European Union.⁹⁷

Diamandouros built on the activity of his predecessor, adding an extra-European dimension to the office (discussed in more detail below). One of the first challenges the second EO faced was the enlargement of the Union and, in particular, the handling of the increase in complaints and, naturally, the addition of new official languages. This led him to pay particular attention to enlargement-related issues and subsequently to organise visits to all ten accession countries before their accession⁹⁸ while publishing the AR in 20 languages, an initiative viewed by the EO as an opportunity to 'greatly enhance [...] the accessibility' of the AR.⁹⁹

The EO continued campaigning actively during the Open Days in Strasbourg. Celebrations of the ten-year anniversary of the institution provided a suitable headline for the 2005 AR and 'raise[d] awareness'.¹⁰⁰ Among other initiatives, a 'Commemorative Volume' for the tenth anniversary¹⁰¹ and a new version of the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour were produced.¹⁰² Furthermore, one of Diamandouros's innovations regarding the strengthening of communication among the members of the office was the 'staff retreat', i.e. 'an exercise in self-reflection' where every member expressed views on a series of matters, including communication strategies.¹⁰³ Still, probably the most visible contribution of Diamandouros is the new, dynamic and easily accessible EO website launched in January 2009. One of its most important parts was and is its 'interactive guide', aiming to direct virtually complainants to the most appropriate mechanism for redress, often to a national or regional ombudsman.¹⁰⁴ And it has turned out to be a success story: the guide led to a 'significant reduction in information requests'¹⁰⁵ and also to a reduction in complaints outside the mandate.¹⁰⁶ In addition, in 2010 the EO adopted a 'Strategy for the Mandate', accompanied by a 'mission statement' quoted inside the front cover.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, he sought 'to raise awareness about the right to complain' in 'myriad ways'.¹⁰⁸ Of additional help are the media, which, in publicising important cases of the EO, serve to increase public pressure.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁶ Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 12-13 (emphasis added by the author).

⁹⁸ Annual Report 2003, op. cit. n6, p. 16.

⁹⁹ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 129.

¹⁰⁰ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 152.

¹⁰¹ 'The European Ombudsman: Origins, Establishment, Evolution – Commemorative Volume Published on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Institution', (2005), available at:

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/resources/historicaldocument.faces/en/10122/html.bookmark> [last visited 30 December 2013].

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, pp. 165-166.

¹⁰⁴ Annual Report 2009, op. cit. n6, p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁰⁶ Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ The full document may be found at: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/resources/strategy/strategy.faces> [last visited 30 December 2013].

¹⁰⁸ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 151.

The ARs explain that both office-holders participated in conferences on fundamental rights, Union citizenship,¹¹⁰ democracy, good administration and openness, to name only a few. In particular, certain recurrent keywords and themes of conferences, events and meetings pointed to the core message regarding citizens being the focal point not only of the EO but of the EU as well: 'Citizens' rights under Community law' should become 'a living reality';¹¹¹ 'reaching out' to citizens should be a priority; 'the way an institution reacts to complaints is a key indicator of how citizen-centred it is'.¹¹² The reduction of the length of the AR is also part of the effort to serve the citizen in the best way possible: 'A constant concern for the Ombudsman!'¹¹³ Finally, a message of almost all the ARs was that the EO promotes 'a culture of service'¹¹⁴ in the EU.

It was clearly acknowledged in the ARs that the European Parliament, or specific MEPs interested in the work of the EO, should be credited with providing motivation and ideas to the EO so as to further improve his communication strategy. From internet developments to the presentation of statistics, but also in the context of the signing of the abovementioned Memorandum of Understanding with the European Investment Bank and, more importantly, with relation to the proposal for a European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour, the Parliament or specific MEPs were referred to in the ARs as being of crucial assistance to the EO in connecting with citizens.

THE TWO OFFICE HOLDERS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE MANDATE

It has been observed that the second EO advanced 'a more pluralistic conception of the ombudsman role'.¹¹⁵ Having examined the ARs and taking into consideration the previous sections of this paper, it is worth understanding how both office holders perceived their mandate and, consequently, how they viewed their roles.

Söderman's period in office coincided with a generally challenging period: on the one hand, the Maastricht enthusiasm combined with the open discussion about the democratic deficit could provide a supportive basis to build on; on the other hand, it was unknown at the time what the reactions of other EU actors would be. Yet it appears that Söderman never ceased to be concerned about the limits of his mandate. In 1995, while discussing the high number of inadmissible complaints, he posed the question: 'Does this mean that the mandate of the Ombudsman as set out in the Treaty is too narrow?'¹¹⁶ In 1997, he found that his mandate was 'rather limited',¹¹⁷ whereas in 1998 he opened up the discussion on the boundaries of the mandate of the EO, the latter being seen as 'one of the most important achievements of the Maastricht Treaty in relation to the citizenship of the Union'.¹¹⁸ In the same AR he clearly stated that he was in favour of the principle of subsidiarity, but that it was also plausible to interpret the text as advocating the possibility of a different approach (that is, an approach departing from subsidiarity considerations) if 'cooperation with national or regional bodies' would at some point become problematic.¹¹⁹ Thus, one of the reasons

¹¹⁰ For an analysis on the EO's link to Union citizenship and EU rights see, for example, R. Gregory and P. Giddings, 'Citizenship, Rights and the EU Ombudsman' in Bellamy, R. and Warleigh, A., eds, *Citizenship and Governance in the European Union* (London: Continuum 2001).

¹¹¹ See, for instance, Annual Report 2001, op. cit. n6, p. 230 or Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 18 – in the second case, EU residents are also mentioned.

¹¹² Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 10 – previous versions used the term 'citizen-focused' instead.

¹¹³ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ See, for instance, Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, p. 15; Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 57.

¹¹⁵ Harlow and Rawlings, 'Promoting Accountability', op. cit. n46, 557.

¹¹⁶ Annual Report 1995, op. cit. n6, p. 18.

¹¹⁷ Annual Report 1997, op. cit. n6, p. 12.

¹¹⁸ Annual Report 1998, op. cit. n6, p. 9.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

behind the creation of the Network of Ombudsmen could be that Söderman knew that the Treaties clearly excluded the possibility of supervising national authorities implementing EU law from the EO's mandate; given the objections based on the principle of subsidiarity that would have arisen if the EO had opted for discussing a possible extension of the mandate, the network constituted an easily defensible alternative. There have been accounts defending this claim, albeit in a more cautious fashion.¹²⁰ Söderman's position in this respect can be compared with his views on problems concerning the free movement of persons, where national authorities were experiencing difficulties in assessing the complexities of EU law: 'Community and national bodies could combine their efforts towards a rapid solution of individual problems' and 'new mechanisms' could be 'design[ed]'.¹²¹ Consider another example of how the EO presented his position with the use of the abovementioned arguments:

There have been many proposals debated about the future development of the European Ombudsman institution. Dealing only with complaints concerning possible maladministration by the institutions and bodies of the EU is indeed a limited mandate. [...] In order to deal with this situation, my Office has established a close co-operation with the national ombudsmen and similar bodies in the Member States. [...] All these measures have been taken to achieve an efficient handling of complaints concerning Community law in the Member States. The institutions in the Member States have shown a good spirit of co-operation. It is my view that more can be achieved by this kind of co-operation than by extending the mandate of the European Ombudsman to all administrative levels of the Union where Community law is applied. [...] We have to put the important principle of subsidiarity into practice whenever possible and must respect it, not just talk about it.¹²²

Accordingly, Söderman contributed to the European Convention by suggesting an expansion of the EO's mandate¹²³ and by pressing for 'the inclusion in the Treaty of a chapter on remedies',¹²⁴ this would constitutionalise the role of national ombudsmen at the EU level.

Diamandouros appears to follow a more *inclusive* approach in the ARs. The message to the EU institutions could be briefly codified as follows: it is to the benefit of everyone, i.e. citizens, institutions and the EU in general if the EU institutions follow his recommendations. Otherwise, there is a risk of damaging the EU's legitimacy. This approach probably led him to accept the mandate as such and to try to identify other ways of improving the EO's results. There is one exception: in 2004, he referred to the possibility of 'joint inquiries' with national ombudsmen and, echoing his predecessor, he also mentioned the possibility of contacting the Court concerning violations of fundamental rights.¹²⁵ These proposals were not repeated in the ARs.

The above claim can be explained through a close reading of the ARs. Diamandouros's rhetoric consistently refers to the capacity of the administration to propose a solution; this approach 'credits the institution with solving the problem, increases its legitimacy in the eyes of the complainant and

¹²⁰ Thus Peters opines that the first EO's 'reliance on and improvement of the network of national ombudsmen [was] important [...] because of his limited mandate' (A. Peters, 'The European Ombudsman and the European Constitution', *Common Market Law Review*, 42 (2005), 697-743, 724). Accordingly, Harlow and Rawlings suggest that 'the jurisdictional limitation has special resonance, since the EO has been pressed from the outset to promote an accountability network [i.e. the European Network of Ombudsmen]' (Harlow and Rawlings, 'Promoting Accountability', op. cit. n46, 556-557).

¹²¹ Annual Report 1998, op. cit. n6, p. 23.

¹²² Annual Report 2000, op. cit. n6, p. 13.

¹²³ Söderman had proposed the possibility 'for the European Ombudsman to refer a case involving fundamental rights to the Court of Justice, if it could not be solved through a normal ombudsman inquiry'. See Annual Report 2002, op. cit. n6, p. 223.

¹²⁴ Annual Report 2002, op. cit. n6, pp. 222-223; see also Peters, 'The European Ombudsman', op. cit. n120.

¹²⁵ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 19.

ensures a win-win outcome for all concerned'.¹²⁶ Elsewhere, he refers to a 'positive-sum' outcome which 'enhance[s] relations between the institutions and citizens and can avoid the need for expensive and time consuming litigation'; therefore, '[w]henver possible, the Ombudsman tries to achieve a positive-sum outcome that satisfies both the complainant and the institution complained against'.¹²⁷ Besides, the ombudsman's role, unlike that of the courts, 'includes mediation'.¹²⁸ In this context, another technique used in friendly solutions which might indeed satisfy the complainant is the agreement for compensation *ex gratia*, i.e. 'without admission of legal liability and without creating a legal precedent'.¹²⁹ Of particular attention are also the follow-up studies introduced by the second EO, that is, analyses of responses of the institutions concerned to further or critical remarks. The publication of these studies in the ARs is another way of exercising pressure over the institutions to comply. Inversely, when an institution complies, it is awarded with a 'star case exemplifying best practice' in the Annual Report and automatically becomes 'a model for all EU institutions'.¹³⁰

Regarding the network, Diamandouros adopted another interesting approach. The cases successfully transferred via the network now count as successful outcomes for the complainants, increasing the percentage of overall success of the EO: 'In over 70% of cases processed, we were able to help the complainant by opening an inquiry into the case, transferring it to a competent body, or giving advice on where to turn'.¹³¹ The slightly more restrained rhetoric when criticising the institutions (see above) might serve as further evidence of the aforementioned inclusive approach. A characteristic phrase used in order to depict the hesitation of some institutions to take advantage of the EO's recommendations is 'missed opportunities'.¹³² Elsewhere, these missed opportunities are a 'defensive approach' which 'risks damaging the image of the Union'.¹³³ This means that the EO implies that he safeguards or even promotes the image of the EU and its legitimacy vis-à-vis the citizens. According to Diamandouros, the use of more 'informal procedures' is producing more and more tangible results: 'We have now reached a stage where our relations with the institutions are such that we can solve a growing number of cases rapidly, avoiding the need for a lengthy inquiry'.¹³⁴

However, a somewhat ambiguous phrase appears in the last three ARs, where the EO suggests that he might close the case on the basis of no grounds when there is no 'reasonable prospect that an inquiry will lead to a useful result', because the EO does not wish to raise 'unjustifiable expectations among complainants' while trying to use resources properly.¹³⁵ It would be in the interest of a potential complainant to see a further clarification of the aforementioned position, in particular of the terms 'useful result' or 'unjustifiable expectations', because the complaints rejected on the basis of no grounds still fall *inside* the mandate of the EO.

Moreover, it is worth noting that Diamandouros appears very often as a global actor, promoting 'ombudsmanship' and expanding the profile of the office beyond the EU. 'Active' membership in 'an array of ombudsman organisations' is an indicator of this policy.¹³⁶ To this end, in 2007, the EO met and exchanged views with the ombudsmen of East Timor, Morocco and Ontario, Canada.¹³⁷ In 2009,

¹²⁶ Annual Report 2005, op. cit. n6, p. 15.

¹²⁷ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 19.

¹²⁸ Annual Report 2003, op. cit. n6, p. 14.

¹²⁹ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 47.

¹³⁰ See, for instance, Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 35.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹³² See for instance Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, pp. 15-16.

¹³³ Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 6.

¹³⁴ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 11.

¹³⁵ Annual Report 2008, op. cit. n6, p. 32; also Annual Reports 2009 and 2010.

¹³⁶ Annual Report 2006, op. cit. n6, p. 118.

¹³⁷ Annual Report 2007, op. cit. n6, p. 115.

he attended the Independent and Accountability Mechanisms Annual Meeting in Tokyo.¹³⁸ These are just two non-exhaustive examples.

CONCLUSIONS

‘And we got results!’ Diamandouros proclaimed with enthusiasm in 2004.¹³⁹ Indeed, as the overview of the ARs has demonstrated, the communication strategy of the office, both in terms of ARs and other communication activities, is close to reaching its full potential and could be an example of how an EU entity with limited resources and personnel can continuously reflect upon its strategy and eventually achieve measurable results. In short, it has been shown how the second EO boosted the user-friendliness of the AR and why he is perceived to have increased the overall ‘communication product’ of the institution, not least since he invested in the public image of the EO, thereby creating an EO of considerable ‘moral authority’ in Europe. However, the first EO should be equally credited for preparing the ground, notably by organising visits to member states and by conceiving and launching the European Network of Ombudsmen, as it is called now. ‘An 85% increase in media coverage’ recorded in 2009¹⁴⁰ might serve as tangible proof of the above conclusion and indeed proves that the mandate of the EO now matters more. Accordingly, it is understandable why Söderman felt the need to respond openly to critics. On the basis of this groundwork, Diamandouros was able to combine new ideas with pre-existing practices, offering a communicative outcome which probably surpasses the boundaries of the actual mandate.

Additionally, notwithstanding the fact that the two office holders often differed in practices, vocabulary and perhaps perception of the mandate, at least according to the ARs and based on the interpretation provided here, they still managed to expand the inter-institutional relations beyond the most prominent EU actors and, what is more, in so far as the EU institutions were concerned, they did avoid serious conflicts, despite occasionally being considerably critical of the latter.

As a final observation one could refer to a recent Special Eurobarometer survey which has shown that half of European citizens are interested in knowing more about the responsibilities of the EO.¹⁴¹ It is therefore possible to see the glass as half full, rather than half empty. In accordance with the findings of this article, the successful communication policy has increased the ‘moral authority’ of the office, but what remains to be answered is to what extent the EO can respond – from a communication-policy perspective – to the phenomenon that many citizens might still prefer to contact the EO for cases involving a national entity implementing EU law. In these cases, the EO simply cannot examine the complaint. In this context, the EO could consider *cautious* proposals vis-à-vis his/her institutional position and the existing limitations of the mandate at the national level, in order to remedy this irreconcilable contradiction.

¹³⁸ Annual Report 2010, op. cit. n6, p. 67.

¹³⁹ Annual Report 2004, op. cit. n6, p. 17.

¹⁴⁰ Annual Report 2009, op. cit. n6, p. 9.

¹⁴¹ Special Eurobarometer conducted by TNS Opinion & Social at the request of the European Parliament and the European Ombudsman (2011), available at http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/press/statistics/eb751_eb_report.faces [last visited 10 November 2012], 10.

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Political Values in a European Museum

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Abstract

The last decades have seen the rise of a European politic of cultural identity. One of the most recent initiatives in this respect, dating from 2007, is the House of European History that is due to open its doors in 2015. In this article, we investigate the recent history of the House, in particular through an analysis of the *Conceptual Basis* that was meant to be its foundation. We analyse the two narrative strategies that are employed in the formation of a shared European past and cultural identity. The first is that of continuity, in which Europe's deep roots are traced. The second is that of a shared European destiny. Finally, we investigate the criticism these plans have received.

Keywords

House of European History; History Museums; Narrative Analysis; Identity

In 2007 the European Parliament launched an initiative to build a museum, the so called 'House of European History'.¹ Like the introduction of the European flag and anthem in the mid-1980s, and the presentation of a (rejected) European Constitution twenty years later, this project can be seen as an instrument of identity politics. As Cris Shore made crystal clear, the cultural dimension of the European integration process has been stressed more and more over the last few decades.² Officials and politicians operating on a European scale strive for the construction of a European identity.³ Their concern is driven by, according to Shore, 'political imperatives, particularly the need to endow the EU's institutions and emerging system of transnational governance with legitimacy'.⁴ This stress on cultural identity thus serves as a way of legitimising the European integration process.

As a consequence of political attention and the societal debate, scholars from the social sciences and humanities have put the theme of European identity on their research agendas. Exemplary contributions focus on icons, rituals and discursive taboos such as mottos and texts.⁵ Other studies try to conceptualise and measure European identities.⁶ Innovative research has been done on European memories and politics of remembrance.⁷ These studies all have a strong relationship with history, because history plays a crucial role in research on European identities. History can give a sense of belonging and provides answers to questions of group identity, such as 'who are we, where

¹ We would like to thank Manuel Müller, Tobias Reckling, Andreas Weiß and two anonymous reviewers for their stimulating comments on earlier versions of this article.

² C. Shore, *Building Europe. The cultural politics of European integration* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

³ See, for example: H. Mahony, 'We need to invest in a European identity', *EUobserver*, 30 March 2012, available at <http://euobserver.com/843/115759>, accessed on 10 August 2013, and the European Heritage Label initiative: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc2519_en.htm, accessed on 10 August 2013.

⁴ Shore, *Building Europe*, p. 1.

⁵ I. Manners, 'Symbolism in European integration', *Comparative European Politics*, 9, 3 (2011), 243-268.

⁶ P. Huyst, "'We Have Made Europe, Now We Have to Make Europeans". Researching European Identity among Flemish Youths', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4, 4 (2008), 286-302; K. Eder, 'A Theory of Collective Identity. Making Sense of the Debate on "European Identity"', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 12, 4 (2009), 427-447.

⁷ C. Bottici and B. Challand, *Imagining Europe: Myth, Memory and Identity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); A. Sierp, 'Integrating Europe – integrating memories. The EU's politics of memory since 1945', in L. Bond and J. Rapson, eds., *The transcultural turn: interrogating memory between and beyond borders*, (Berlin; De Gruyter, forthcoming); M. Pakier and B. Stråth, *A European memory?: Contested histories and politics of remembrance* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010).

do we come from?⁸ Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in recent years, European politicians have taken an interest in history as a means of identity formation, and another strategy underpinning the legitimisation of the integration process.⁹

The House of European History is one of the instruments within this process. It was launched by the then president of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, in 2007 and should serve as a medium that communicates European history through exhibiting objects and historical relics. After its political birth, the infant years of the museum revolved around the so called *Conceptual Basis for a House of European History*.¹⁰ This document was published in 2008 and written by a team of experts, with the goal of formulating the scope of the museum. Because research on European identity politics still leaves space for studies on *direct* usages of the past by EU-officials, we believe the *Conceptual Basis* is an ideal case-study for scrutinising political values in identity politics. After an explanation of our methodological approach in the second section, we will analyse the *Conceptual Basis* itself. Our aims are twofold. On the one hand, we want to record the early phase of setting up a European museum which - almost entirely – took place away from any public scrutiny or debate. Therefore, a description of the important steps made towards the House of European History in 2007 and 2008 will be given in the third section ('The House of European History and its *Conceptual Basis*'). Who is responsible for the museum and which route led to proposals for its content? Meanwhile, on the other hand we want to reveal political ideologies in the *Conceptual Basis*. How is history being used for the construction of a European identity in the House of European History? The historical narrative proposed in the *Conceptual Basis* is, according to the fourth section, structured by two discursive strategies; that is, invoking continuity, and constructing a shared European destiny. We think it is important that hidden political imperatives in the museum's original concept are made explicit, so that they can be subject to intellectual criticism and debate. In the last paragraph we will briefly look at the reception of the museum document and its aftermath.

POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN MUSEUM NARRATIVES

Museums as instruments of identity politics

Thirty years ago, Benedict Anderson published his *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. This book has been very influential over the past decades, both in the social sciences and the humanities. Its strength lies in the mechanisms Anderson indicated behind the formation of collective identities. Collective identities are instigated by ideas which are spread through the media such as newspapers and magazines. Ideas, thoughts and symbols are incorporated by many individuals at the same time and, as a result, these individuals feel part of the same "imagined" community.¹¹ Newspapers and magazines are media that reach out to a large audience, influencing society itself, and thus a whole nation. There are other media through which collective identities are communicated that have a fixed place, such as monuments and national museums, though national museums also manage to reach a large audience and thus contribute to (national) identity formation.

⁸ H. Lübke, *Geschichtsbegriff und Geschichtsinteresse. Analytik und Pragmatik der Historie* (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1977), 145.

⁹ F. Larat, 'Present-ing the Past: Political Narratives on European History and the Justification of EU Integration', *German Law Journal, Special Issue: Confronting Memories – Reflecting History*, 6, 2 (2005), 274-290.

¹⁰ The *Conceptual Basis for a House of European History* can be found at:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721_en.pdf. Accessed on 12 August 2013. From here on it will be referred to as *Conceptual Basis*.

¹¹ B. Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London; Verso Editions, 1983).

National *historical* museums are especially invested with this quality. They offer a more or less official representation of the past that evokes identification with the nation. The nineteenth century was preoccupied with history as well as nation-building. Almost every single European nation saw the creation of a national history museum.¹² Recently, national history museums have been on the rise again. The past decade has seen initiatives in the Netherlands and France, both with the clear goal of identity formation. In France, Nicolas Sarkozy initiated a Maison de l'Histoire de France that was due to open in 2015. It was scrapped by his socialist successor François Hollande. In 2011, a Dutch centre-right government threw out a national museum plan for the Netherlands – a plan instigated by a socialist politician.¹³ The French and Dutch plans have both been abandoned because of budget cuts and disagreement over the content of the museum.

These cases illustrate that museums are not neutral spaces: they convey a message and instruct an audience. In other words they are, as has been shown by Tony Bennett's seminal study *The Birth of the Museum*, instruments of ideology. Bennett clearly took his inspiration from the work of Michel Foucault and put the museum in line with other disciplining institutions such as the prison or the clinic, that were characteristically "born" in the 19th century.¹⁴ This top-down view of the museum has been criticised and replaced with a view in which the audience regained some of its independence: a museum can offer a message through the objects it displays and the texts it shows, but it is still up to the audience to find its own interpretation.

The same is true for history museums: they offer a representation of the past which are value-laden. Of course, it is up to the visitors of history museums to interpret and appropriate these representations, but there does still exist an "author's intention" that can be traced, and this is true in the case of the House of European History. The use of the term "author" serves very well in the case of a history museum, for the representation of the past in museums does not differ fundamentally from other representations of the past and can be read as a text. Although they consist of objects, historical relics *and* texts, history museums are - as Ilaria Porciani wrote - 'crucial workshops for the construction of historical master narratives'.¹⁵ In the planned Dutch national history museum, for example, the narrative even received an architectural form.¹⁶ In 2005, the Dutch government had asked a committee of "wise men and women" to establish a Canon of the History of the Netherlands in order to fill a shortcoming in Dutch cultural identity. In order to fulfil its assignment, the committee placed Dutch history into fifty "windows", with each window representing an event or person of national importance from the past. The national history museum would contain a Canon Tower in which all of these windows were to be displayed. Thereby, even the building itself would become an instrument of narrative.

European integration in museum narratives

Recent contributions show that museums make space for a more European perspective.¹⁷ As observed by a research team working on the ambitious project *Exhibiting Europe*, the perception of

¹² I. Porciani, 'Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe', in: I. Porciani and J. Tollebeek, eds., *Setting the Standards. Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 130-151.

¹³ P. Huistra and M. Molema, 'In de steigers. Het Huis voor Europese Geschiedenis', *Internationale Spectator*, 66, 6 (2012), 313-316.

¹⁴ T. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum. History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁵ Porciani, 'Nations on Display'.

¹⁶ For this Canon, see: www.entoen.nu. Accessed on 12 August 2013.

¹⁷ L. Eilertsen and A. B. Amundsen, eds., 'Museum Policies in Europe 1990-2010. Negotiating Professional and Political Utopia', EuNaMus Report, no. 3 (2012), available at: <http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:557284/FULLTEXT01>. Accessed on 11 August 2013.

this European perspective follows in two ways.¹⁸ On the one hand, the museum sector shows a shift towards it: existing (national) museums display new narratives that clearly connect to a European context. On the other hand, new exhibitions and museums are created which present the story of Europe as a whole. Together, both developments illustrate the difficulties that have confronted the House of European History from its inception. These difficulties are rooted in the question about the relationship of the sum total to its parts: how should a European past be represented without dissolving the national particularities of history?

Several answers have been proposed. The first solution is cumulation: European history is the sum of national histories. As Stuart Woolf reminds us, the 'grand collective histories of Europe [...] are conceived and structured as the histories of Europe's nation states'.¹⁹ One can also reject the idea of "European" history altogether, because there is only a history of nation states.²⁰ A third option is a multi-layered identity, one that 'combines regional, national and European elements'.²¹ Tension between national and European histories can be overcome by being part of both histories. A fourth position in this debate underlines the pluralistic character of identities too, and places the cultural ideal of citizenship as a normative guidepost in European identity formation.²² National histories form the cultural background of a communicative process in which the ongoing construction of the European identity takes place.²³

Narrative analysis of the Conceptual Basis

The *Conceptual Basis* is the analytical object which informs us upon how these issues were being dealt with in the (early) phase of the House of European History. Our approach towards the *Conceptual Basis* is influenced by critical discourse analysis. We hypothesise that this 26 page text is both constituted by and constitutive of a political ideology in favour of EU integration. The text itself is thus a product of a political discourse, with the aim of reproducing and strengthening this political discourse. The discourse can be analysed by close scrutiny and empirical analysis of the language that is being used.²⁴ As a collection of 116 paragraphs, each containing a statement about the House of European History or its content, the *Conceptual Basis* encompasses a mixture of genres. On the one hand, it is an outline of central topics which should be part of the historical exhibition, presented in 87 statements. Each statement contains one or more historical processes and/or events. The statements are divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents the "origins and developments" of Europe until the end of the 19th century. The second chapter is dedicated to the two World Wars. The subject of the last chapter is the period after 1945 up until the present. On the other hand, the *Conceptual Basis* takes the form of a policy document. A foreword of six statements outlines the context and political origin of the museum initiative. After the foreword, twenty

¹⁸ See the projects website: <http://www.ntnu.edu/ifs/research/exhibiting>. Accessed on 10 August 2013. Exemplary for its rich output, among others, is: S. Krankenhagen, 'Exhibiting Europe. The Development of European Narratives in Museums, Collections, and Exhibitions', *Culture Unbound*, 3 (2011), 269-278; W. Kaiser, S. Krankenhagen and K. Poehls, *Europa ausstellen. Das Museum als Praxisfeld der Europäisierung* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2012).

¹⁹ S. Woolf, 'Europe and its Historians', *Contemporary European History*, 12, 3 (2003), 324.

²⁰ R. Speth, 'Europäische Geschichtsbilder heute', in P. Bock et. al., eds., *Umkämpfte Vergangenheit. Geschichtsbilder, Erinnerung und Vergangenheitspolitik im internationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

²¹ W. Loth, 'Identity and statehood in the process of European integration', *Journal of European Integration History*, 6, 3 (2000), 31.

²² G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 1995); L. Cram, 'Identity and European integration: diversity as a source of integration', *Nations and Nationalism*, 15, 1 (2009), 109-128.

²³ T. Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010).

²⁴ M. Jørgensen and L. Phillips, *Discourse analysis as theory and method* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2002), 67; N. Fairclough, *Analysing discourse. Textual analysis for social research* (London: Routledge, 2003), 67-68.

statements on the basic principles and goals of the museum are explained. The *Conceptual Basis* ends with questions for Europe's future (two statements,) followed by an outlook (two statements).

The *Conceptual Basis* is not "objective" in at least three ways. First, because of the selection of events and episodes: a *Conceptual Basis* of 26 pages can never contain a complete history, therefore it must contain a selection of events which is inevitably a reflection of the preferences of those who made the selection. Second, there is always a perspective in the way these events or episodes are related. Even the most neutral choice of words could not conceal a particular view on history. Third, and most important, is what follows: every historical text has a narrative structure. Ever since Hayden White's famous *Metahistory* in which he made an analysis of the textual structures and the plots and tropes in historical texts, historians of historiography have paid attention to the narrative structuring of texts.²⁵ Recent studies on (European) museums also focus on the narratives that are displayed.²⁶ They have been depicted as "macrostructures" which can be traced by searching for recurring words and arguments, and the inclusion of certain elements while excluding others.²⁷ They are not so traceable in the representation of single events, but in the way in which all the events in a historical text are related to each other. What kind of macrostructures can be found in the *Conceptual Basis* for the House of European History?

THE HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY AND ITS *CONCEPTUAL BASIS*

Hans-Gert Pöttering, the newly elected President of the European Parliament, made the following statement on 13 February 2007: 'I should like to create a "locus" for history and for the future where the concept of the European idea can continue to grow. I would like to suggest the founding of a "House of European History". It should [be] a place where a memory of European history and the work of European unification is jointly cultivated, and which at the same time is available as a "locus" for the European identity to go on being shaped by present and future citizens of the European Union'.²⁸ Pöttering, a German conservative and member of the European Parliament since 1979, made no secret of the purpose behind his museum project. A staunch Euro federalist, gravely disappointed by the failure of the 2004 European Constitution, he firmly believed in a Pan-European identity based on a common history, heritage, culture and, ultimately, destiny. At a recent press conference, Pöttering again clearly indicated what – according to himself – the goal of the House should be: 'We want to make clear to young people that European unification is no coincidence, that we have made a long journey together'.²⁹ This quote reveals that Pöttering's intentions did not differ so much from other founders of historical museums: a European identity should be reinforced through its history.

Amongst his peers, Pöttering's plan was well received. It was the Bureau of the European Parliament that unanimously approved this new strategy of communicating a European identity. In early November 2007, the Bureau kicked off the project by appointing a Committee of Experts. The Committee was to draw up a detailed concept of the planned museum, which could serve as the basis for further steps towards the realisation of the project. It consisted of nine professional historians and museum experts and was chaired by the German professor Hans Walter Hütter,

²⁵ H. White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in 19th-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1973).

²⁶ B. Snelders, *Narratives for Europe. Not the Art of the State but a State of the Art* (2011), available at (http://www.ecflabs.org/sites/www.ecflabs.org/files/3653/narratives_state_of_the_art_0.pdf). Accessed on 11 August 2013.

²⁷ A. Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2008), 115.

²⁸ European Parliament, 'Conceptual Basis for a House of European History', (2008), available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721_en.pdf. Accessed on 10 September 2012.

²⁹ G. Sels, 'Museum voor Europa krijgt een gezicht', *De Standaard*, 2 Feb. 2012.

president of the German historical museum Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. The other members included the Polish historian Włodzimierz Borodziej, a specialist in the history of the European idea; Giorgio Cracco, an Italian specialist of ecclesiastical and medieval history; Michel Dumoulin, a Belgian historian and author of numerous works on European integration history; Marie-Hélène Joly, a French museum expert and curator; Matti Klinge, a Finnish professor emeritus whose main focus lies on Nordic history; Ronald de Leeuw, a renowned Dutch museologist and former General Director of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; António Reis, a Portuguese contemporary historian, and Mária Schmidt, a Hungarian museologist and director of the House of Terror Museum in Budapest. The reasoning behind the exact formation of the Committee of Experts was not made public. Members were selected in a top-down process by Pöttering's administration, based on their nationality and curriculum.

Reaching a consensus on the portrayal of European history proved to be a challenging task for the Committee of Experts. Debates mainly revolved around several core issues: When does European history start? Are there one or several European cultures? Is there a European identity, and how does one define it? There were strong disagreements within the Committee, fuelled by the different professional and national backgrounds of its members. After only three meetings, the sole expert on European integration history, Michel Dumoulin, resigned over disagreements on the general historical orientation of the project. He was nonetheless mentioned as an author in the *Conceptual Basis*. On the executive level there was also disharmony. The initial proposal for the House of European History was inspired by the 2006-2007 "It's our History!" exhibition by the Musée de l'Europe.³⁰ Initiated in 1997, the Musée had pioneered the concept of a European history museum but, unlike the House today, it was never firmly anchored in the European institutional framework. Pöttering, who had visited the exposition and was very enthusiastic about it, wanted the House to take a similar form. His vision was at odds with the committee of Expert's chairman Hans-Walter Hütter, who had previously been involved with the Haus der Geschichte and who wanted to use this German template rather than Pöttering's concept. In the Haus der Geschichte, the post-war history of Germany is presented in an attractive, chronological way. It was founded on the initiative of Helmut Kohl, who launched the plan in 1982 during his first term as Chancellor of the German Government.³¹ Kohl opened the museum, still in his position as Chancellor, in 1994.

In spite of these internal struggles, the Committee of Experts finally agreed on the *Conceptual Basis* in October 2008. It offered a detailed outline of the museum's envisioned functions and philosophy as well as a summary of the European history that the museum was to present. The *Conceptual Basis* was presented to and approved by the Bureau and the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament, the latter of which proposed some amendments, in November 2008. From then on, the *Conceptual Basis* served as the foundation for the future House of European History.

REPRODUCING EUROPEAN IDEOLOGIES

Invoking continuity

The *Conceptual Basis* reflects the difficult negotiating processes involved in defining a *European* history, because this is exactly what the House of European History should present to its visitors, as was explicitly stated in the *Conceptual Basis*: 'The permanent exhibition will not portray the individual histories of Europe's states and regions one after another, but will instead focus on *European phenomena*' (p. 8). However, what exactly European phenomena were aroused much

³⁰ See Website of the Museum of Europe, 'Realisations of the Museum of Europe', 2009, available at <http://www.expo-europe.be/content/view/60/82/lang,en/>. Accessed on 12 August 2013.

³¹ Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 'Entstehung des Hauses der Geschichte', 2012, available at <http://www.hdg.de/stiftung/geschichte-und-organisation/entstehung/>. Accessed on 12 August 2013.

discussion amongst the Committee of Experts. Here, the discussion over what European history is seems to reproduce aspects of the on-going debate about what Europe itself should be. On the one hand, Europe should be an entity of its own, not a set of nation states. On the other hand, there often seems no other way to define Europe, or to let it function, than to see it as a sum of nation states. That is made clear by the constitution of EU institutions such as the European Commission or the European Parliament: seats in Parliament are given proportionally to each member state, and every member state has the right to one position in the Commission. The make-up of the Committee of Experts mirrors these selection processes: the members were neatly divided into different member states of the European Union, a mix of old and new members, from East and West.

In European identity politics, the same problem seems to return. Europe as a geographical identity does not arouse much discussion, although one could debate its outer limits. Yet, it is hard to find cultural phenomena in Europe which can be defined as European. Rather, every aspect of culture seems to be national or regional. This is reflected in the Brussels' theme park, Mini-Europe, which has as its goal a strengthening of European identity. Mini-Europe consists of around 350 miniature models of buildings from member states of the European Union, of national symbols. The theme park, however, tries to present these buildings as a common European heritage and override their functions as national symbols through using them as markers of a European identity.³² The same is true for European history. All of Europe's history has been firmly claimed by national historians from the 19th (and 20th) century, who saw nation-building as their task. Their task resembled that of European historians today: they had to create a national subject out of what was a rather diverse collection of regional, local, monastical and all other kind of histories. Precisely because these nation-building historians have been so successful over the past two centuries, defining Europe as a subject for history is rendered extra difficult.³³

One of the strategies to overcome this historiographical tradition is to give Europe firm roots in ancient, medieval and early modern history. The intention is to create a sense of continuity throughout history.³⁴ Starting at point A and chronologically making its way up to the present (point B), the notion of continuity aids in the "plotting" of the story of Europe.³⁵ As Berger puts it, 'Creating and constructing long-term continuities is [...] one of the most important tasks of national historians'.³⁶ The longer the continuity is stretched out in time the deeper the roots, the more its present-day existence seems to be justified. At least, this is what is suggested at the starting point of the *Conceptual Basis*. Unaffected by any fear of anachronism, the beginning of European history is situated a few thousand years ago: 'Forms of higher culture which can already be described as "European" grew up around trading routes near the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea [...]' (p. 11). No exact date is provided, but the text is clearly referring to Mesopotamian times, where certain unspecified cultures are seen as (proto-) European in the modern sense of the word. We find other seeds of Europe subtly planted in other parts of the world: 'The riches of India and China and the routes leading to those countries have always attracted the interest of Europeans, from the time of Alexander the Great, through the Roman Empire several centuries later [...]' (p. 11) The idea of Europe, in one form or another, is firmly anchored in the cradles of civilisation which have been chosen as the beginning of the narrative. This civilisation is presented as a "higher culture" which evokes a subtle positive and sustained quality of European culture.

³² T. Lähdesmäki, 'Politics of Cultural Marking in Mini-Europe: Anchoring European Cultural Identity in a Theme Park in: *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 20 (2012), 29-40.

³³ Woolf, 'Europe and its Historians', 333.

³⁴ M. Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans. Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 22.

³⁵ J. Ifversen, 'Myth in the Writing of European History', in S. Berger and C. Lorenz, eds., *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p. 458.

³⁶ S. Berger, 'On the role of myths and history in the construction of national identity in modern Europe', *European History Quarterly*, 39 (2009), 494.

It is no wonder that the main focus of the first chapter of the *Conceptual Basis* is on culture. The notion of continuity rests on the stability of Europe. This stability is most easily found in some kind of a substrate underlying European history, namely European culture. Much attention therefore is paid to cultural phenomena, that have even retained their relevance up to the present day: Greco-Roman 'philosophy, literature, law making and statecraft' are 'central to present day European culture', and 'Greek and Latin form the grammatical, lexical and semantic basis for almost all other European languages' (pp. 11-12). The position of Latin as a unifying force is stressed by referring to its "key role" in the intellectual domain and the educational system. Education as such is seen as an important continuous factor to 'European cultural unity' (p.11). Migration and colonisation are presented as 'the key driving forces in European history', influencing ancient city-states and imperialist modern Europe alike (p. 11).

Further references to the Hanseatic League, the unity of the Roman church, the specifically European education system, all enforce the continuity of European culture. The stress on continuity makes the story of Europe rather static: if one stresses continuity, one is not so occupied with change. Of course, grand upheavals such as the Reformation are mentioned, but the first chapter of the *Conceptual Basis* often describes rather the *state* than the *history* of Europe; Europe is more or less timeless. This is also reflected by the few statements that offer a prefiguration of the destination that Europe would head towards. The Peace of Westphalia and the Congress of Vienna form the birthplace of modern diplomacy, and the nineteenth century is described as 'a long period of peace and economic, social and cultural development' (p. 14). In this sense, the first chapter offers not only 'the origins and development of Europe', what Europe *was*, but also what it *should be*. However, with the commencement of the twentieth century, the story changes.

United through common values

In an important article on the writing of European history, Jan Ifversen discerned two "myths" which had emerged throughout European historiographical discourse. One of them was that of 'the emergence of Europe from a long pan-European history dating back to antiquity', whilst the second was that of a myth in which European history centred upon the Second World War, and which represents an ending amid total chaos. From the ashes of the old, a new Europe rises, vowing to never again repeat the mistakes of the past. The enduring peace after the war is then attributed to the integration process and its economic success is emphasised. Thus, this "classic" narrative is structured around the triple foundation of breakdown, rebirth and progress. According to Ifversen, these myths are easily discerned in texts that come from the European institutions and therefore represent an "official" view on history. In academic forms of history writing, these myths are harder to find, but traces of them are still there.³⁷ The *Conceptual Basis* is situated somewhere between official and academic historiography: commissioned and validated by EU institutions, but written by academic historians and museum professionals. To use the term "myth" for this historiography is an overstatement: it has a connotation of falseness on purpose. The storylines in the *Conceptual Basis* are reminiscent of these so-called Euro myths. The deep roots in the first chapter are succeeded by two chapters on the twentieth century in which Europe breaks down and rises again. This means a serious change of tone. The narrative is no longer centred on culture, but on the political aspects of history, and the static nature of pre-1900 history is traded for dynamism and change.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe is brutally derailed from the destiny displayed by its common history. The first decades of the twentieth century are riddled with failure: the failure of democracy and the failure of capitalism. The First World War, the Great Depression, and the League of Nations serve as examples of this failure. Pacifist and pro-European ideas like the Briand-

³⁷ Ifversen, 'Myth in the Writing of European History'.

Kellogg Pact and the Pan-European movement ‘were confined to Europe’s elite and found no support in the population as a whole’ (p. 16). The failure to combine democracy and capitalism during the interwar period led to Communist and Fascist governments, to poverty and, finally, to the Second World War. This war serves as an absolute low-point in European history, yet at the same time it is presented as a turning point. The war, acting as a catharsis, led to the creation of the Declaration of Human Rights and ‘also formed the basis for building a new Europe’ (p. 18). The post-war development of Europe is nevertheless presented as unsteady. The *Conceptual Basis* emphasises the consequences of the war, the problems of decolonisation, and the new East-West division. The creation of the European institutions is subordinated to the international context and their importance is put into perspective. This brings us to the role of the European institutions in achieving and maintaining the ultimate goals that are the plot of the narrative: democracy, peace and prosperity. ‘In a narrative of European history, the crucial question is what role *Europe* is granted in this move towards progress’.³⁸

In “official” historiography, European institutions form the alpha and omega of this development. In the *Conceptual Basis* their overall role in post-war history is depicted as strangely passive. Until the 1990s, they appear to be isolated from the world, undergoing international developments without any involvement. Only with the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam, which represent ‘a step towards parliamentarization in the European Union’, is the goal of democracy explicitly advanced by the EU (p. 24). Thus, the European integration that the House of European History itself was to promote is not a prominent subject in the history it should display. The reason for this is that the story wishes to leave enough space for a fundamental element in the narrative structures: the common values of Europe. Post-war Europe became successful because, contrary to the interwar period, it is based on popular democratic support and combines a healthy form of capitalism with fundamentally democratic principles. Or, looking at it from another side, a failure of the democratic-capitalist European institutions would inevitably lead to conflict. More broadly, the entire interwar period and its culmination in the Second World War mirror another part of the narrative. There, the emphasis lies on the enduring peace which is created through European unity. The narrative demonstrates that Europe was meant to be united, suffered greatly when it failed to be so, and now enjoys prosperity and relative peace as a result of finally acknowledging its destiny. This common destiny consists of a set of shared values.

One set of values is centred on the concept of diversity. This diversity refers to the democratic pluralism of ideas that existed in post-war (western) Europe, but is also reflected in the way the *Conceptual Basis* is written. The statements offer a variety of events and developments, most of which are traceable to at least one European country. In this way, European history in the *Conceptual Basis* reproduces the cumulative nature of the European cultural identity as presented in mini-Europe, or the European institutions in general. At the same time, the diversity of values is only relative. The core values of peace, prosperity and democracy are opposed to “other” parts and systems of Europe. In the narrative of post-war Europe there is clear opposition between the East and West, and the perspective is definitively western: the developments in the East form a “stark contrast” to what happened in the west (p. 20). This narrative strategy fits into a longer tradition in which European politicians construct an identity of the West-European self, as opposed to the East-European other.³⁹ It also bears similarities to Tony Judt’s popular and influential book *Postwar* on Europe after the Second World War. In Judt’s account too, Europe is passive and under the control of the superpowers. It is the Cold War that structures his narrative, the main contrast he sees is between East and West, rather than between before and after the Second World War.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ifversen, ‘Myth in the Writing of European History’, 469 (emphasis in original).

³⁹ E. de Angelis, ‘The European Parliament’s identity discourse and Eastern Europe, 1974-2004’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 17, 1 (2011), 103-115

⁴⁰ Ifversen, ‘Myth in the Writing of History’, 474-479.

The endings of stories can be revealing. For Judt, 1989 serves as an endpoint of the postwar period. It is no coincidence that from that point onwards, the *Conceptual Basis* attributes a greater role to the European institutions. The Yugoslav wars notably interrupt the plot: 'the European institutions played a shameful role' in them (p. 24). The end of the *Conceptual Basis* is reached when East and West meet in one European Union: the great enlargement of 2004 and the admission of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 form the end of the great divide of the continent during the 20th century: 'The division of the continent had finally been overcome' (p. 24). It seemed as if Europe had reached its destination.

RECEPTION AND AFTERMATH

The end of the *Conceptual Basis* - quite unusual as normal stories go, but in accordance with the continuous state of development of the European institutions - is followed by another, open ending. Europe faces several challenges: prosperity may seem secure through the Euro (the *Conceptual Basis* predates the financial crisis), but the American war on terror is "dividing the continent" and resistance towards the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 stirs up fears of a "renationalisation of European politics" (p. 25). In short, the open ending of the narrative presents a series of challenges to be overcome: it is as if Europe needs an opposition to its project as a *raison d'être*.

The *Conceptual Basis* itself also faced some serious criticism, highlighting the most controversial aspect of its depiction of European history. There are protests by those who feel underrepresented; they feel that their national, regional or particular history deserves more attention in the House of European History. These critics agree with the framework of the *Conceptual Basis*, in which everyone receives his or her fair share, but they do not agree on the selections made. In December 2008, twelve MEPs protested against the "serious omissions and misinterpretations" of the *Conceptual Basis*, ranging from very abstract ('the House of European History should pay a special attention to the historical sensitivity of the smaller nations of Europe') to very specific ('the presentation of "Austria and Hungary's wars against Turkey" must include the Battle of Vienna, as well as the contribution made by Poland-Lithuania, which had also fought against Turkey for two centuries').⁴¹ Most of the criticism remained internal, but the united protest of some Polish MEPs against the assumption that 'the last Polish resistance was finally snuffed out in early October 1939' was picked up by the press.⁴² Other groups also protested directly. For instance, in a letter to Pöttering, the COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community) welcomed the project as 'a unique opportunity to present the history of our continent, *from the very beginnings of Christianity* [...]'. The COMECE then continued to propose some amendments to accentuate the 'contribution of Christianity' to European history.⁴³

Criticism also pointed towards other issues involved, much of it directed at the budgetary provisions for the project (which have almost doubled compared to initial estimates). Also, the Eurosceptic — mostly British — press was quick to reject the *Conceptual Basis* account of history. British reports were particularly vitriolic with regards to proposals to refer to the Second World War as "European Civil War" (this was not actually mentioned in the *Conceptual Basis*, but emerged from later debates).⁴⁴ The main point of concern is that the House of European History may override the internal divisions and diversity of European history and devote itself to 'the celebration of empty

⁴¹ Private documentation, 5 December 2008; Private documentation, 15 December 2008.

⁴² 'Row Brewing as Cost of New Brussels History Museum Soars', *The Daily Mail*, 6 Apr. 2011.

⁴³ Private documentation, 8 January 2009; emphasis added.

⁴⁴ See 'A £7m TV Channel in 22 Languages and the Second World War Airbrushed', *The Daily Mail*, 17 Apr. 2012; 'Anger at Plans for "Official" European History', *The Telegraph*, 2 Jan. 2009.

values like diversity, difference, and sustainability'.⁴⁵ Here, the critics seem to reject the attempts to find a frank "European" history, whether it is based on a long shared history or a common destiny, as the *Conceptual Basis* had proposed.

CONCLUSION

Since the House of European History was commissioned by politicians, that is the Bureau of the European Parliament, and will be located in the Eastman building very close to other European institutions, the new museum has the appearance of a political project. Appointing a Committee of Experts was a strategic decision that should safeguard the House from reproaches of too much partisanship. The experts themselves stressed the integrity of the future museum in the *Conceptual Basis*: 'Academic independence and the objective portrayal of history have top priority.' (p. 7) Unfortunately, there is no such thing as 'the objective portrayal of history', since there are as many histories as there are historians - to state the obvious. This is all the more true for historical museums.

The *Conceptual Basis* shows, along with its critics, that the House of European History was envisioned as an instrument in European cultural identity politics. Since the House is a history museum, it is no surprise that this cultural identity is sought in a shared past – although not everyone is convinced that there is a thing called *European* history. As we have shown in our analysis of the *Conceptual Basis*, the formation of a European identity is attempted through the use of two narrative structures. The first is the macrostructure of continuity. Europe is given a past that stretches back into ancient history and thus Europe receives a common substrate of European culture. The second macrostructure concerns the common destiny of Europe that the continent strayed from in the twentieth century, but that it regained after the Second World War. This destiny is formulated mostly in terms of common values, such as diversity, peace and prosperity.

The *Conceptual Basis* has thus sought to override existing national narratives in the new, *European* past that should be presented in the House of European History. This attempt has met with criticism. In this respect, the *Conceptual Basis* has also attained its goal, since it stipulated that debate should be generated by the museum. Since the inception of the House of European History and the completion of the *Conceptual Basis*, much has changed. Since January 2011, an "Academic Project Team" has been working full-time on the presentation of European history. The *Conceptual Basis* has turned out to be exactly what it originally implied - simply a basis - and the website of the House of European History suggests some fundamental changes. The focus on the twentieth century has become even firmer than it was previously and, as the museum's website today states, it should also serve as 'a place for debate on European history'.⁴⁶ And in generating debate, it has certainly succeeded.

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⁴⁵ M. Roach, 'European Union: Manipulating History with Tax Payer Dollars', 2011, available at <http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2011/04/14/european-union-manipulating-history-with-tax-payer-dollars>. Accessed on 23 May 2012.

⁴⁶ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/visits/historyhouse.html>. Accessed on 12 August 2013.

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Note from the Editor

Daniel Wirt contributed to this article, whilst working on his research for his masters' thesis, 'Narrating Europe: A Review of the House of European History as a Work in Progress', during his MA in European Studies at the KU Leuven, 2011-2012.

Book Review

Didem Buhari Gulmez, *Oxford Brookes University*

ENACTING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

by Engin F Isin and Michael Saward (eds)

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It has been 20 years since the introduction of EU citizenship by the Maastricht Treaty. Marking this anniversary, the year 2013 was announced as the 'European Year of Citizens' by the European Commission which looks determined to continue its activities during 2014, the year of the European Elections. During the closing conference of the European Year of Citizens 2013 in Vilnius, the European Ombudsman acknowledged that 'EU citizenship is now in crisis' and that:

The EU has been going through not only an economic crisis but an identity and legitimacy crisis over the past few years. This is a time therefore when we need to keep foremost in our minds those values and principles on which the EU was founded [...].¹

The Eurozone crisis and the rise of nationalistic and Eurosceptic political campaigns in many EU member countries, coupled with increasing public indifference towards European integration ring alarm bells about the European project. On the other hand, such crises may strengthen the EU by motivating self-criticism, problem-solving and creativity. Ultimately the EU-led integration processes can be credited for the ongoing peace and improved living standards on the continent. Whether EU citizenship has succeeded in forging a common identity and loyalty at the European level is another question. However, it is important to remember that the EU opposes a trade-off between national and European identity and insists that EU citizenship is complementary to national citizenship.

In this context, the edited volume *Enacting European Citizenship* by Engin Isin and Michael Saward seeks to correct several misleading tendencies that prevail in the relevant literature. First, it suggests studying Europe as a broader category (or 'assemblage') involving not only the EU but also other European institutions such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe. Second, it defines citizenship as more than a formal arrangement or legal status granted by institutions. By petitioning European Courts, contacting European politicians, invoking European documents and norms, and attributing political and moral responsibility to European institutions, individuals 'enact' themselves as European citizens (p. 66). 'Enacting' is an uncommon term in European and citizenship studies but following the 'performative turn' in political and social theory, it puts forward a dynamic and relational understanding of European citizenship. This allows individuals who are not recognised by law as 'citizens' to break the existing institutional scripts (defined as 'rupture' in the book) and claim the right to take up rights as if they were European citizens (p.21). In other words: 'Acts of European citizenship are committed many times, in many

¹ Official website of European Ombudsman, 2013
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/activities/speech.faces/en/52763/html.bookmark>

places (in and outside the formal borders of the EU), by a great variety of groups and people (citizens and non-citizens, elites and the powerless)' (p. 231).

In this context, the book brings to the fore controversies arising from the complex interplays between the EU and its internal and external 'Others' in Europe, i.e. formal citizens of the EU who are marginalised from formal politics, and those who are not EU citizens but claim a European right to have rights (p.55). While mainstream literature assumes that these groups are merely passive 'objects of state acts', this book suggests taking the claims of these marginalised groups more seriously: those who become 'visible' in order to claim further rights and recognition are also enacting themselves as European citizens (p.195).

Chapters 1 and 2 set out the conceptual framework and tools (such as scripts or the difference between active and activist citizenship) that help to understand the innovative and critical thinking underlying this research. This conceptual framework is applied consistently to analysis in each of the following chapters. This may present a challenge to those readers who are unfamiliar with the performativity literature (based, for instance, on Jacques Rancière and Alain Badiou) and the previous works of project leaders, Engin Isin and Michael Saward. For example, for the uninitiated, the difference between act and action (p. 24-25) or the difference between polity-activating and polity-constituting (p. 221) may look complicated. However, it is worth persevering. The volume covers the key debates on European citizenship but with a special emphasis on the need for methodological innovation. This is in line with the book's main theme: 'Enacting' implies that rather than starting with the question 'Who is the citizen?', researchers should focus on 'What makes the citizen?' and start with accounts of marginalised groups.

On this basis, the authors examine various cases, including sex workers in Italy (chapter 3), the Kurds and religious minorities of Turkey (chapter 4), an LGBT organisation based in Latvia (chapter 5), the stateless (chapter 6), the Roma and Sinti in Western Europe (chapters 7-9), and asylum-seekers in Hungary (chapter 10). The Turkish case stands out as the only chapter that deals with the case of people who are both non-citizens and non-residents but whose claims to European rights transform European citizenship. It explains how the thesis of European citizenship can be valid in the Turkish case, which is probably the least likely case given the high uncertainty about Turkey's future in Europe. Defining Europe in a broad sense, the chapter introduces the cases of Kurds and non-Muslims in Turkey as a case of 'Enacting European citizenship' through the European Court of Human Rights, informal networks and references to Europe. Chapter 8 provides a useful comparison of those Roma who are legally EU citizens (holding Bulgarian and Romanian passports) and those Roma communities who sought asylum in Europe after the Kosovo war and have been resident in European member countries for more than a decade. The deportation of Roma has violated EU law and customary international law. This chapter also discusses the national government's efforts to frame this deportation as 'voluntary repatriation' reinforced by the EU's approach to Kosovo. Both chapter 9 on Roma and chapter 10 on asylum-seeking stress the dualistic impact of the EU on European citizenship: it is simultaneously facilitating and hindering European citizenship. It helps non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professionals (for example the judiciary) to expand rights and the scope of European citizenship even while it serves as a platform for national governments to 'securitise' and restrict these (p. 191, 203). In the final chapter, Michael Saward extends the debate to include the question of the 'democratic deficit' within the EU by providing a critical review of the European Citizens' Initiative introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

On a more critical note, the book could have treated the terms 'legitimacy' and 'global' more seriously. It is possible to read this book as a contestation of the EU's legitimacy (and its 'scripted citizenship') in representing the whole set of the formal and informal processes underlying European citizenship. Also, claims for the 'European right to claim rights' can be defined as a quest for being recognised as legitimate actors in the European system. Many chapters emphasise the 'universal' character of European standards and the cross-national solidarity, but they often exclude the global

from the set of 'scales' underlying the multi-layered citizenship. Additionally, *Enacting European Citizenship* demonstrates that European citizenship is not limited to activities in courts and governments. Accordingly, case selection could have better reflected this and included more cases that go beyond the courts and state institutions. Finally, there needed to be more visual materials, especially for chapter 8, to supplement its photograph of Romani children escaping deportation (p. 155).

The main strength of this book lies in its empirically rich cases based on interview findings, which uncover first the tensions between national governments and EU institutions, including the EU's criticisms against French deportation of Roma (chapter 9) and the EU's contestations over states' right to take away citizenship (chapter 6). It also brings to the fore the competition between different national institutions. For instance, chapter 10 reveals the competition between the judiciary and the immigration office in Hungary. Finally, the authors identified the need to posit the idea of an interesting competition between the different visions of European citizenship. Chapters 5 and 8 criticise those narrow, technical and depoliticised visions of European citizenship that pervade the literature and suggest a more humanistic vision that acknowledges the role of politics in legal processes and prioritises individual freedoms more than state security.

As a challenging but conceptually and empirically rich volume of work, this book is highly recommended to advanced students of European citizenship, minority rights, migration, and democracy.

Book Review

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POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN EUROPE: THE CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL LIMITS OF THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE

by Francisco Seoane Pérez

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Scholars and politicians have regularly identified the issue of the democratic deficit as one of the main challenges for the European Union (EU). The body of literature on this matter has steadily grown, addressing several important topics, such as the paradoxical situation of an increasingly powerful European Parliament that attracts ever fewer citizens to the ballot box. Meanwhile, the perceived gap between citizens and the European level of governance has been highlighted in several referenda, as well as by the current economic crisis, which, some have argued, has resulted in an upsurge of Euroscepticism. Commentators predict that this may lead to major gains for Eurosceptic parties in the 2014 European elections.

A related topic that has gained prominence concerns the European public sphere and the apparent communication deficit. Here, the focus is usually on media coverage of EU affairs or the communication strategies of supranational and national institutions and political actors. However, in his book *Political Communication in Europe: The Cultural and Structural Limits of the European Public Sphere* Francisco Seoane Pérez argues that the problem is not one of deficient media coverage of EU affairs or poor communication, but rather of cultural and structural limitations. Seoane Pérez, assistant professor in Political Communication at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, calls the EU 'distant and apolitical' (p.3). This, he argues, cannot be solved by lofty press releases, twitter accounts and increased media coverage.

Seoane Pérez builds his arguments on the work of Jürgen Habermas, Carl Schmitt, and Chantal Mouffe. He contends that the Habermasian idea of a refeudalisation of the public sphere, i.e. when public and private merge, media are commercialised and democracy is dominated by interest group representation instead of citizen participation, applies to the EU. From Schmitt he borrows the ideas that democracy needs identification and that the advent of liberalism leads to technocratic government. Instead of refuting democracy altogether, as Schmitt ultimately did, Seoane Pérez argues that the EU requires agnostic politics along left-right divisions. Here, he refers to Mouffe's distinction between antagonistic (hostile) and agonistic (moderate) political contest. Pulling these different theoretical strands together, Seoane Pérez contends that the virtually absent identification between those who govern and those who are governed (the lack of a European demos), on the one hand, and a tendency towards consensus, corporatism and technocratic arrangements, on the other hand, prevent the EU from becoming truly democratic. In other words, the EU suffers from two deficits, a lack of 'domesticisation' and a lack of 'politicisation' respectively; deficits, Seoane Pérez maintains, that are not sufficiently addressed by the main integration theories.

Seoane Pérez illustrates his arguments with a substantial body of empirical data, based on the analysis of newspaper articles, interviews and 'observation sessions'. This empirical work is backed up by a 50-page long methodological annex. The focus of his research was on two regions, the mostly pro-European Galicia and largely Eurosceptic Yorkshire. Newspaper articles from two regional newspapers were coded based on the concepts 'domesticisation' and 'politicisation' and, hence, were used to present an insight into how the EU is approached at the regional level. In addition, the newspapers were also used to determine the key players in the debates. The latter were approached for interviews – interviewees themselves were also asked for other potentially interesting interview partners. Seoane Pérez particularly refers to these interviews, conducted at the regional, national and European level, in chapter 5 on the lack of domesticisation and chapter 6 on the lack of politicisation. He concludes that the EU is, to some extent, domesticised in Galicia, yet there is still no politicisation. In contrast, politicisation does occur in Yorkshire, but is of the antagonistic kind, and domesticisation is virtually absent.

All in all, Seoane Pérez's account of the EU's democratic deficit and the related communication challenges is an interesting and thought-provoking read. Yet, there are also a few shortcomings. As far as analysis is concerned, Seoane Pérez has a point when he stresses the importance of community for democratic debate and the public sphere, just as he has when reminding his readers about the impact of the EU's institutional design and practices in this respect. However, sometimes he seems all too easily to disregard work by scholars who discuss the possibility of and present evidence for EU democracy and a European public sphere based on Europeanised national public spheres and a post-national community. Tellingly, Seoane Pérez calls Thomas Risse's work 'the main exception to [the] "no-demos" trend' (p. 100). In addition, considering Seoane Pérez's emphasis on a perceived lack of politicisation, and despite references to the Hix-Bartolini debate, recent literature on politicisation is strangely largely absent from this book. What's more, Seoane Pérez regularly refers to the ongoing Eurozone crisis, but does not really discuss its possible consequences for the politicisation of EU affairs. Even though most of the empirical work was done in the years preceding the crisis, more reflection on this matter would have been welcome, especially now that some scholars have argued that the financial crisis may lead to increased politicisation.

When turning to methodology, it is once again worth noting the substantial body of data gathered by the author. However, there are some issues that would have benefited from a more thorough explanation. One concerns the focus on regions. While valid in itself, the reasons Seoane Pérez puts forward – the importance of cohesion policies, the democratic potential of regions and their importance in implementing EU policies – could have been developed better. In addition, while the arguments put forward for opting for *La Voz de Galicia* and *The Yorkshire Post* make sense, the actual selection of articles as described in the methodological annex raises a question. Namely, is it really possible that within the set period of research (10 June 2004 – 9 June 2009) the keyword search for *The Yorkshire Post* yielded 127 documents, as compared to 245,364 for *La Voz de Galicia*? The latter comes down to more than 49,000 articles per year – or more than 940 per week. That seems a rather unlikely amount of articles, yet Seoane Pérez does not present a clear explanation of these widely divergent figures. Lastly, one wonders why part of the methodical framework *and* some of the empirical results (including a number of interesting figures) are only presented in the methodological annex. This, unfortunately, also leads to certain limitations being addressed in a somewhat unsatisfactory manner.

Despite these shortcomings, Seoane Pérez presents his readers with an interesting and quite original account of the EU's democratic deficit and the related communication challenges, focussing on the regional level of European governance and based on the analysis of a substantial body of empirical data. *Political Communication in Europe: The Cultural and Structural Limits of the European Public Sphere* may appeal to readers who are interested in the EU's democratic deficit, in general, and the European public sphere, in particular. More work in these fields is certainly still needed and Seoane

Pérez raises some important questions that may help us to understand better the challenges the EU would have to overcome to decrease the feelings of distance and misunderstanding among its citizens.
