JCER

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN RESEARCH

SPECIAL ISSUE

Media and Communication in Europe: Babel Revisited

GUEST EDITED BY:

Agnes Inge Schneeberger
Katharine Sarikakis

JCER EDITORIAL BOARD:

Kenneth Armstrong (UACES)
Eamonn Butler (Editor)
Maria Fletcher
Georgios Karyotis
Anne Sophie Krossa
Nieves Pérez-Solórzano (UACES)
Elizabeth Monaghan (Book Reviews)
Vicki Morris (UACES Student Forum)

PUBLISHED BY:

UACES Student Forum & UACES

EDITORIAL:

Editorial: Media and Communication in Europe: Babel Revisited
Agnes Inge Schneeberger & Katharine Sarikakis

GUEST ARTICLE:

Legitimacy, Euroscepticism & Identity in the European Union: Problems of Measurement, Modelling & Paradoxical Patterns of Influence
Michael Bruter

ARTICLES:

"We have made Europe, now we have to make Europeans": Researching European Identity among Flemish Youths
Petra Huyst

Minority Language Protection in Italy: Linguistic Minorities and the Media
Aline Sierp

Communities, Boundaries and New Neighbours: the Discursive Construction of EU Enlargement
Giuditta Caliendo & Antonella Napolitano

Democracy and New Media in the European Union: Communication or Participation Deficit?
Asimina Michailidou

BOOK REVIEWS:

~ Georgios Terziz (2007). European Media Governance: National and Regional Dimensions

~ Georgios Terziz (2008). European Media Governance: The Brussels Dimension

~ Jackie Harrison & Lorna Woods (2007). European Broadcasting Law and Policy

~ Nico Carpentier et al. (2007). Media technologies and democracy in an enlarged Europe: The intellectual work of the 2007 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School

JCER

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 4 • DEC 2008

JCER JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN RESEARCH
UACES STUDENT FORUM UACES

JCER | Special Issue

December 2008

Media and Communication in Europe: Babel Revisited

Guest edited by:

Agnes I. Schneeberger
Katharine Sarikakis

JCER Editorial Team:

Kenneth Armstrong
Eamonn Butler
Maria Fletcher
Georgios Karyotis
Anne Sophie Krossa
Nieves Pérez-Solórzano
Elizabeth Monaghan
Vicki Morris

UACES

Contents

Contributors 268

Editorial

Media and Communication in Europe: Babel Revisited
~ *Agnes Inge Schneeberger & Katharine Sarikakis* 269

Guest Articles

Legitimacy, Euroscepticism & Identity in the European Union – Problems of Measurement, Modelling & Paradoxical Patterns of Influence
~ *Michael Bruter* 273

Research Articles

"We have made Europe, now we have to make Europeans." Researching European Identity among Flemish Youths
~ *Petra Huyst* 286

Minority Language Protection in Italy: Linguistic Minorities and the Media
~ *Aline Sierp* 303

Communities, Boundaries and New Neighbours: the Discursive Construction of EU Enlargement
~ *Giuditta Caliendo & Antonella Napolitano* 322

Democracy and New Media in the European Union: Communication or Participation Deficit?
~ *Asimina Michailidou* 346

Book Reviews

Georgios Terzis (ed.) (2007) *European Media Governance: National and Regional Dimensions* & Georgios Terzis (ed.) (2008) *European Media Governance: The Brussels Dimension*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
~ *Patrick Bijsmans* 369

Jackie Harrison and Lorna Woods (2007). *European Broadcasting Law and Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
~*Oisín Tobin* 371

Nico Carpentier *et al.* (2007). *Media Technologies and Democracy in an Enlarged Europe: The Intellectual Work of the 2007 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School.* Tartu: Tartu University Press.
~*Asimina Michailidou* 373

Contributors

Patrick Bijsmans
PhD Candidate and Lecturer in European Studies
Department of Political Science
Maastricht University, Netherlands
Email: patrick.bijsmans@politics.unimaas.nl

Giuditta Caliendo
Research Fellow in English Language and Linguistics
Department of Modern Philology
University of Naples- Federico II, Italy
Email: gcaliend@unina.it

Asimina Michailidou
Researcher
International Research Network in European Political Communications
University of Bristol, UK
Email: a.michailidou@googlemail.com

Katharine Sarikakis
Senior Lecturer in Communications Policy
Department of Communication Studies
University of Leeds, UK
Email: k.sarikakis@leeds.ac.uk

Aline Sierp
PhD Candidate
CIRCaP
University of Siena, Italy
Email: sierp@unisi.it

Michael Bruter
Senior Lecturer in European Politics
Department of Government
London School of Economics, UK
Email: M.Bruter@lse.ac.uk

Petra Huyst
PhD Researcher
Centre for EU Studies
University of Ghent, Belgium
Email: petra.huyst@ugent.be

Antonella Napolitano
Research Fellow in English Language and Linguistics
Faculty of Economic Sciences
University of Sannio-Benevento, Italy
Email: antonella.napolitano@unisannio.it

Agnes Igne Schneeberger
PhD Candidate
Institute of Communication Studies
University of Leeds, UK
Email: a.i.schneeberger@leeds.ac.uk

Oisín Tobin
Researcher and Student (BCL)
Merton College
University of Oxford, UK
Email: tobinop@tcd.ie

Editorial

Media and Communication in Europe: Babel Revisited

Agnes Inge Schneeberger
Katharine Sarikakis

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MOMENT IN TIME IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EUROPEANS and the(ir) European Union. It is characterised by renewed attempts of communication, polity building and democratisation, largely located in the realms of institutional politics, but also by scepticism, resistance and counter-reflection by its citizens and even search for identity on behalf of both the EU and its peoples. It is also the appropriate time for students of European affairs and communication studies to re-evaluate, review and ask anew questions around the relationship between institutional structures, elites and their aims and the people of the European Union, their own expectations and self-reflection. This special issue on media and communication in Europe seeks to explore a range of angles through which the understanding and experiencing of the EU is mediated. Communication between citizens and EU institutions has proven significant for the future of Europe: a politicised, cultured and cosmopolitan populace is expecting more or different from its supranational polity than it is receiving. The demands for further transparency and openness are central in the quest for legitimacy of an EU of 27 member states. Although communication is by no means the only remedy to a perceived or real democratic deficit, it is a key factor in building bridges between citizens and the EU through informing and engaging European citizens and fostering a sense of belonging.

The formation of an EU identity is seen as a necessary condition in the development of a political and cultural polity that surpasses its initial economistic raison d'être. Activities of the EU in the cultural field since the mid 1970s have become a catalyst for the creation of a European identity. Examples of these activities include the "Declaration on European Identity" in 1973, the agreement of the European heads of state in 1974 to study the special rights of citizens of the European community and the ad hoc committee on a People's Europe, chaired by the Italian MEP Pietro Adonnino, promoting citizen rights, culture and more factual information for European citizens in 1988. Since then the EU has introduced several EU symbols, such as the EU passport, the Euro currency, Europa day and the EU flag, in order to provide visuals and rituals common for its peoples. These cultural symbols are considered helpful in fostering a European identity.

However, times of alleged crisis have put issues of communication firmly on the agenda of EU institutions. Critical public opinion polls and negative referenda on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in France and the Netherlands in 2005 and recently on the Treaty of Lisbon in Ireland have prompted EU institutions to re-evaluate their communication with the European publics. These "No" votes were a clear statement of citizens' sentiments towards the current pace and direction the EU is taking and have prompted a rethinking of institutional communication strategies. To

ISSN 1815-347X online. Schneeberger, A.I. and Sarikakis, K. (2008). 'Media and Communication in Europe: babel Revisted', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 269-272. Available: http://www.jcer.net/ojs.index.php/jcer/article/view/155/121

many, the voice of the people says no to an elite-driven Babel: a Europe without its peoples is not a people's Europe.

Certainly, communication has become an increasingly important issue within EU institutions in this decade. Measures such as the creation of a General Directorate for Communication and the implementation of an Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union have lead to the development of a professionalised relationship with media and journalists to support the flow of information from institutions to the media and the European public. After the disappointing referenda, an improved information flow has been advanced from informing citizens to engaging them into a dialogue. This turn to reconnect with citizens has found expression in Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate which was introduced to initiate debate about the future of Europe after the negative referenda and marked a starting point for a long-term democratic reform process. Communication technologies, particularly the Internet, have facilitated the access to and dissemination of information from EU institutions. With the advancement of the Internet from accessing information to creating content and participating in online fora, EU institutions are also facing increasing pressure to adjust. The range of possibilities offered by ICTs raises expectations for EU institutions to keep up with the technical opportunities and actively engage with European citizens. While EU decision making processes are complex, lengthy and often incomprehensible to the ordinary citizen, technology demonstrates the possibility for quick input from a large number of people. This contradiction is expressed in attempts by EU institutions to engage citizens through feedback provision, but to fail to process the volume of input and to integrate it in the decision making process. In the case of the EU online discussion forum "Debate Europe", which was set up in the period of reflection after the negative referenda, contributions are merely summarised in an overview. Citizens are left wondering what a dialogue means, who listens to their feedback and what it leads to.

This JCER special issue offers a unique collection of research articles that address key challenges to the issue of 'communicating Europe'. The works in this issue address the role of new communication technologies for democratic processes and institutional legitimacy, the interpretation and status of a European identity and sense of belonging and the realisation of Europe's cultural diversity through minority language protection. They help us understand the mechanisms that connect mass media, identity formation and cultural diversity to the institutional legitimacy and future of the EU.

Guest author Michael Bruter critically examines methodological shortcomings and conceptual challenges to understand and measure European identity and proposes a reinterpretation of popular assumptions about Euroscepticism, democratic fatigue and the EU legitimacy crisis. Bruter argues that a strongly emerging (not the lack of) European identity is responsible for citizens' expressions of dissatisfaction with the EU and should be seen as a critique 'from the inside' that is by those already feeling 'European' enough to care. While this insider perspective accepts European integration as a reality, citizens now judge specific policies and reforms with increased scrutiny - as European citizens. Bruter's analysis proposes new ways of examining the ways in which European citizens relate to the polity. He concludes that revising old instruments to measure European identity is necessary to properly capture and understand what citizens want from a democratic Union.

Petra Huyst explores EU perceptions and the meaning of European identity among young Flemish people. Her qualitative study combines metaphor analyses, focus groups and multiple choice questions, forming a creative approach to counterbalance dominant quantitative mass public opinion surveys and enhances existing theoretical discussions. Animal names attributed to the EU, ranging from beaver, chameleon to butterfly, reveal contrasting perceptions and new ways of expressing images of the EU. Huyst's study results highlight the importance of different contexts for identity constructions, the coexistence of parallel identities and individual interpretations of

perceptions of the EU which illustrate the complex processes involved in European identity formation.

In the third article Aline Sierp picks up the debate about minority language protection and the role of the media for keeping minority languages alive. Her analysis focuses on the Italian case, where twelve officially recognised languages make it the country with the greatest language diversity in Western Europe. The study addresses the tensions resulting from safeguarding Europe's cultural diversity and interests of national integrity by analysing the different legislative tools of language protection on European, national and regional level. A comparison of the cases of Arberesh-, Friulian-, and German-speaking minorities reveal discrepancies between the legal framework and implementation of provisions in the media sector. Sierp's study proposes a greater commitment of state institutions, public broadcasting companies and minorities themselves to help preserve Europe's cultural diversity.

In their work Giuditta Caliendo and Antonella Napolitano explore the EU's communication policy and the ways it is used to foster consensus and create legitimacy to support political actions. The EU enlargement period from 2004 to 2007 serves as a case to illustrate changes in the polity's communication strategy in times of declining public support. An analysis of textual and visual formulations in official EU enlargement documents reveals a shift from informative content to a more promoting communication style as a form of a consensus-building strategy. The study concludes that the EU's communication strategy has been transformed under the pressure of declining public support. It has adopted a counter-strategy that portrays EU enlargement as a necessary, positive and therefore legitimate step. Their findings demonstrate the rising importance of legitimacy in Union-to-citizen communication to justify controversial political actions and strengthen a sense of belonging.

In her contribution, Asimina Michailidou raises important issues about the role of the Internet for citizens' participation and communication with EU institutions. Her study focuses on the impact of new communication technologies on the EU's communication strategy. Her findings, comprising an EU document and website analysis, elite interviews with EU officials and an Internet survey, show that the EU's communication has shifted from simple one-way information to two-way communication between citizens and the EU. Michailidou argues that despite attempts of EU institutions to implement this public dialogue via the Internet, arising problems relating to different inter-institutional conceptions of public communication and the practical handling of citizens' feedback have not been solved yet. She concludes that it is up to the EU institutions to decide how seriously they want to commit to participatory democracy.

The final contribution consists of a review of four recent publications on media and democracy in Europe, by Patrick Bijsmans, Asimina Michailidou and Oisín Tobin. This includes a monograph on European broadcasting law and policy and three edited books, the first one on the role of communication and media technologies in the democratisation of an expanding European Union (Carpentier *et al.* 2007), and the second and third one on European media governance on regional, national and EU level (Terzis 2007; 2008). All three reviewers offer precise overviews and discursive scholarly evaluation of these books, discussing their strong and weak points and identifying the appropriate target audiences.

The origins for this special issue are to be found at the UACES Student Forum Conference in April 2007 at Nottingham University. At this conference the JCER and the UACES Student Forum Specialist Study Group "Media and Communication in Europe" began the production of this special issue. The Specialist Study Group is a UACES funded network bringing together PhD students and young researchers working in interdisciplinary areas relating to media and communication in Europe.

The editorial team would like to thank all participants and contributors of the first editorial meeting and the preparatory workshop who actively participated and enriched discussions and the outcome of both events with their engagement and considerate feedback. We would also like to thank UACES for their generous financial support for the Specialist Study Group, the Institute of Communications Studies at the University of Leeds and the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol. Further we would like to thank Daithí Mac Sithigh for his professional collaboration and competent work as the editor for book reviews. We would also like to thank the referees for their comprehensive reviews and helpful comments on the articles included in this special issue.

Finally, very special thanks goes to Eamonn Butler for his inspiration and constant support to initiate and realise this special issue, for his great advice, and for his exceptional dedication to the editing of this special issue beyond any limits.

***

Legitimacy, Euroscepticism & Identity in the European Union – Problems of Measurement, Modelling & Paradoxical Patterns of Influence

Michael Bruter

Abstract

In the past 10 years, an increasing number of social scientists and communication specialists have tried to understand how political institutions and the mass media attempt to – and often seemingly manage to – influence political identities. This body of literature has resulted in some tremendous progress in our understanding of multiple identities, identity change, and theories of communication, but in the context of European identity, there seems to be a distinct breakdown in communication between specific studies of European identity, and more general analyses of European public opinion and Europeans' political behaviour. This article argues that a strongly emerging European identity may in fact be responsible for a number of recent developments in European public opinion and electoral behaviour that many authors have perceived as paradoxical, or simply chosen to ignore because they seemed to go against our traditional categories of analysis, such as Euroscepticism and democratic fatigue. However, this article suggests that this role of identity has been misevaluated because of some significant problems relating to the measurement, causation analysis, and interpretation of European identity as a concept and as an operational variable. This article focuses on some of these key problems, highlights some critical and often unexplained paradoxes, and proposes a few essential notions when it comes to the conceptualisation and operational measurement of political identities, as well as the evaluations of what affects them.

IN 2005, FRENCH AND DUTCH CITIZENS DEFIED THE ORIGINAL PREDICTIONS OF A vast majority of analysts by voting against a proposed 'Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe' in two popular referenda just a few days apart. These shock results have opened a can of worms of competing interpretations, many of which remain either unsubstantiated or merely backed by some relatively limited data. Using the traditional models of second order votes on European questions (Leduc 2002), a number of analysts predominantly focused on how much a vastly unpopular government cost to the referendum. Others have come to the conclusion that European citizens merely showed an 'obvious' lack of European identity, unprecedented levels of Euroscepticism, or a general sense that integration has gone further politically than what citizens desired as they would prefer a more 'technical' and economic integration. In many ways, such is indeed the doubtful interpretation followed by European institutions themselves as well as the heads of states and governments who thought, for reasons that belong to them alone, that deleting the section on symbols of the European Union (EU) (one of the single most popular aspects

The author would like to thank Sarah Harrison for her help and suggestions on this manuscript

ISSN 1815-347X online. Bruter, M. (2008). 'Legitimacy, Euroscepticism & Identity in the European Union – Problems of Measurement, Modelling & Paradoxical Patterns of Influence', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 273-285. Available: http://www.jcer.net/ojs.index.php/jcer/article/view/153/120

of the dead constitution), they would reconcile citizens with a new, less ambitious text. Regardless of what political science will identify as the ultimate cause, these results and the ensuing crisis have shaken our understanding of whether a mass citizen identity is emerging to mirror the 'ongoing, progressive' identity of the EU (Caporaso 2005) as, in the absence of fully democratic institutional structures, an underlying identity has often been deemed a necessary condition to the legitimacy of an increasingly political and institutionalized project (see discussion in Bruter 2005). Rather than assume some indirect identity meanings and implications of citizens' behaviour without directly measuring it, this article is concerned with how scholars can go about to assess whether Europeans feel European, why some citizens 'feel' more European than others, and what are the attitudinal and behavioural implications of identity, particularly in terms of Euroscepticism and public attitudes towards European integration.

Citizenship and Identity in the European Union

Indeed, the emergence and deepening of an EU citizenship has been a key aspect of integration over the past two decades, and one which seems to have been consistently praised by citizens even in the most Eurosceptic countries. How can we reconcile this with an unprecedented number of 'no' votes in referenda on EU questions in Denmark, Ireland, France, and the Netherlands over the past 15 years? How can we unify the two mirrored debates on what being European means and should mean? The question of who feels European at heart, what it means, and what it implies has tremendous implications for our understanding of complex multiple identities in the EU and beyond but also questions relating to the legitimacy of the European Union as a political system. Within the context of this quest, the excellent progress recently made in terms of analysing problems with the institutional features of the European Union (see for instance Hix 2008) cannot really be connected to in-depth analyses of public perceptions because of the appalling quality of the measures of public opinion on Europe and even more disastrous measures of identity that are easily available. In many ways, from a scholarly perspective, this imbalance should be intellectually unacceptable considering that attitudes towards European integration probably benefit from more survey questions than almost any other public opinion question.

This article revisits some of the key problems faced by scholars specialising in the study of European identity, and attitudes towards integration including Euroscepticism in conceptual terms, in terms of methods and measurement, and in terms of modelling and analysis of causality. The article starts by looking at some of the key progress made by the literature on the notion and nature of European identity and its relationship with citizenship. It then questions the 'common' perception that since Euroscepticism 'seems' to be high, identity must be low by attracting our attention to a number of paradoxical attitudes towards integration in the past few years. The article then evaluates some of the key problems we face in terms of the measurement and characterisation of identity, (very) critically assessing the main measures currently used in mass surveys such as the European Commission's EU-wide public opinion survey Eurobarometer, and proposing some alternatives to these common measures. The article concludes with a look at a number of problems of modelling faced by political scientists when it comes to understanding both the nature of what influences identity, and its implications in terms of attitudes towards integration and questions of behaviour, highlighting how some major paradoxes could be answered by a more critical and rigorous measurement of European identity.

European Identity in Context

In the past 10 years, research on both European citizenship and European identity has accelerated to add much to our knowledge of what it means – both in terms of rights and in terms of perceptions – to be a European and a citizen of the EU. The literature on

EU citizenship has progressed in different directions. Authors such as Meehan (1993), Wiener (1998), Bellamy and Warleigh (2005) and Strudel (2007) have mostly focused on what EU citizenship actually entails, the new rights it grants to citizens, and how it is practiced, sometimes focusing on the implications of very specific ones (for instance, in Strudel's case, the practice of citizens' right to vote in their country of residence). By contrast, Bellamy, Castiglione *et al.* (2006), Mokre, Weiss, Bauböck *et al.* (2003), and Déloye and Bruter (2007) have helped us a lot to progress in our understanding of the philosophical origins, and symbolic and political implications this new citizenship has particularly on national citizenship alongside which it has emerged.

The study of the symbolic and political implications of the development of EU citizenship naturally opened the way to a consequential progress of academic explorations of the world of European identity. On the whole, the social sciences in general and political science in particular were slower to take a rigorous interest in European identity as compared to citizenship, probably because of the difficulties that we will discuss when it comes to empirical studies of identity and in particular to its quantitative measurement. In political science, the first to show an interest in European identity were post-materialists (Inglehart 1997), who, as explained, saw in it a form of cosmopolitanism which would be opposed to national identity. This perspective, however, put political science directly at odds with the findings of social psychologists such as Mummendey and Waldzus (2004) and Breakwell (2004) who suspected that far from being opposed, European and national identities would be part of the same quest for identity definition. Their intuition was confirmed by Duchesne and Frognier (1995), while researchers such as Herrmann *et al.* (2004) tried to relate these psychological theories of identities to models of coexistence of multiple identities, such as Risse's famous distinction between 'marble cake' and 'Russian dolls' models. These have later been empirically confirmed, for instance by Bruter (2009) who finds that on the whole there is a positive correlation between citizens' European and national identities of the order of 0.19 (and similarly high positive correlations between European and regional and local identities respectively).

The link between European and other identities is not the only one that has puzzled social scientists in recent years. A large number of studies have started to look at the extent to which political institutions, history, culture, experience, and the mass media have played a role in shaping an emerging European identity and at the impact that they could have in the future. A smaller but important body of literature is also starting to think about the possible impact this emerging identity has on some patterns of public opinion and patterns of behaviour that might be affected by it over time.

Paradoxes of Popular Legitimacy

There we face an interesting paradox. The bulk of popular elite interpretations – from the mass media to many political parties through to EU institutions themselves, is that EU citizens don't feel European, that Euroscepticism is paradoxically on the rise and has led to a recent string of 'no votes' in referenda on EU questions, that turnout in European Parliament elections keeps declining and betrays a disaffection of citizens for an EU which is, consequently, supposed to face a widespread and dangerous crisis of legitimacy at the moment. In fact, a significant number of quality academic publications accept this interpretation (Cederman 2001; Hix 2008).

While not questioning the fact that European integration is indeed facing a crisis of legitimacy in the sense of a mismatch between public preferences in terms of European integration and what is actually proposed to them by their elites, the assumption that this must mean a rise in anti-EU sentiment and a lack of European identity of citizens is less than obvious. In fact, there are as many signs pointing out to a rise in general support for the European project, civic engagement, and European identity alike as there are signs of dissatisfaction with specific aspects of integration.

Our suggestion here is that European identity is in fact growing, but that because an increasing number of EU citizens precisely feel European, they now judge the various policies and institutional reforms of the EU 'from the inside', as citizens, and thus on their own merits, rather than on the principle of integration. Thus, we would not be witnessing a lack of European identity and rise in Euroscepticism, but an increasing European identity and switch from an 'outside' Euroscepticism that targets the principles of integration to an 'inside' Euroscepticism that takes the principle of durable, continuing integration for granted but targets specific policies and reforms. This would explain some paradoxical evolution in European opinion.

For instance, the turnout in European Parliament elections between 1999 and 2004 among EU member states that voted on both occasions went up, with the overall decline in turnout being fully explained by the enlargement of the EU to a number of countries where turnout was extremely low. Moreover, Franklin (2001) has shown that the decline in overall turnout in European Parliament elections since the 1970s is caused almost solely by structural factors, suggesting that it is not in any way sharper or more worrying than for national level elections in the same countries.

The argument of the recent victory of the 'no' in a number of referenda on questions relating to the European Union is equally weak. The most emblematic of these 'No votes' – that of the French population in May 2005 – occurred at a time when support for European integration was at its peak (European Commission 2005: 93). Similarly, for the first time in the history of French referenda on EU questions, the dominant argument of the 'no' camp, regardless of its (lack of) credibility was based not on a rejection of integration – or a claim for slower integration – but instead, on a claim for faster and more generalised integration that would be increasingly social and political. Indeed, many leaders of the 'no' campaign on the left, such as Laurent Fabius or Benoit Hamon, promised voters that if the 'no' won, the treaty would be renegotiated, with greater emphasis on 'social Europe' and political integration rather than economic integration which they perceived as dominant in the text.

Finally, the question of popular legitimacy is hard to disconnect from the question of institutional trust. There again, the evolution of public opinion when it comes to trust in EU institutions since the early 1980s is highly symptomatic. Twenty-five years ago, there was no EU country where EU institutions were globally more trusted than their national equivalent. By the mid-2000s, however, almost all of the 'old' member states and a large majority of the new ones trust the European Commission more than their national government, and the European Parliament more than their national one (table 1 [page 277] and table 2 [page 278]). The only exceptions tend to be Sweden and, to a lesser extent, Denmark (Parliament only) and Finland (where the scores for national Parliament and the European Commission are tied). For the tenants of wide-spread Euroscepticism, this is a shocking truth. Who would think that in thirteen of the fifteen old member states, including the United Kingdom, the European Commission is in fact significantly more trusted than the national government? And how can we reconcile these findings with suspicion of declining popular legitimacy and never emerging identity?

The simple answer is that most of the models that conclude to widespread Euroscepticism and minimal European identity rely on measures which truly capture neither. When it comes to the evolution of average levels of European identity across the member states since 1971, Bruter (2005) shows that mass European identity has significantly progressed everywhere throughout the period (with the exception of Germany around the unification period and Luxembourg where it was already very high and has remained stable).

The progress of European identity thereby identified is much sharper than using Eurobarometer's Moreno question[1] as done by Duchesne and Frognier (1995) or Citrin and Sides in Herrmann *et al.* (2004).

Table 1: Compared Trust in the European Commission and National Government (%)

COUNTRY	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	NATIONAL GOVERNMENT	DIFFERENCE
Poland	49	7	+42
Italy	63	26	+37
Slovakia	54	17	+37
Belgium	63	34	+29
Hungary	58	31	+27
Slovenia	52	27	+25
France	52	29	+23
Ireland	61	39	+22
Portugal	56	34	+22
Germany	39	23	+16
Netherlands	54	39	+15
Lithuania	45	31	+14
Spain	53	42	+11
Czech Republic	35	25	+10
Greece	63	55	+ 8
Austria	47	39	+ 8
United Kingdom	26	19	+7
Luxembourg	66	61	+ 5
Latvia	32	28	+4
Denmark	47	44	+ 3
Malta	50	49	+1
Sweden	48	48	0
Finland	59	59	0
Estonia	44	45	-1
Cyprus	49	75	-26

Figures in the first two columns correspond to the proportion of citizens who tend to trust the institution. Figures in column 3 correspond to the trust advantage (+) or disadvantage (-) of the European Commission when compared to the national government. Source: Compiled by the author from Eurobarometer 61 data, tables 4.1b and 8.4 (European Commission 2004).

When it comes to individual level models, many authors use questions on support for integration and perceived benefits from integration as a 'proxy' for European identity (the advantage of these two questions is that they are systematically used in every Eurobarometer, thus allowing some consistent time series analysis), or use the above mentioned Moreno question. The problem is that when it comes to understanding what goes on in the minds of people, questions matter – a lot. Retrospectively evaluated, perceived benefits from integration are not the same thing as support for European integration in principle, and neither do they indicate European identity. And in truth, the Moreno question is not a nearly acceptable measure of European identity either.

[1] 'in the near future, do you see yourself as – *Nationality* only, *Nationality* and European, European and *Nationality,* or European only.'

As it happens, we are thus faced with a maelstrom of imprecise or inaccurate measures of European identity, and invalid measures can only lead to biased models. In the next section, I go further in analysing the scope of the problem faced by the literature when using 'standard' measures and proxies for European identity and think about its likely consequences in conceptual and empirical terms.

Table 2: Compared Trust in the European Parliament and National Parliament (%)

COUNTRY	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	NATIONAL PARLIAMENT	DIFFERENCE
Poland	53	8	+45
Slovakia	59	19	+40
Italy	68	32	+36
Hungary	64	29	+35
Slovenia	59	25	+34
Lithuania	52	19	+33
Belgium	64	38	+ 26
Czech Republic	44	18	+26
Ireland	64	40	+24
France	57	35	+22
Germany	51	29	+22
Portugal	58	37	+21
Spain	62	42	+20
Latvia	40	20	+20
Netherlands	57	43	+14
Estonia	49	35	+14
Luxembourg	67	56	+11
Malta	55	47	+8
Greece	70	63	+7
United Kingdom	30	25	+5
Finland	61	58	+3
Austria	43	41	+2
Sweden	55	58	-3
Denmark	55	63	-8
Cyprus	55	74	-19

Figures in the first two columns correspond to the proportion of citizens who tend to trust the institution. Figures in column 3 correspond to the trust advantage (+) or disadvantage (-) of the European Commission when compared to the national government. Source: Compiled by the author from Eurobarometer 61 data, tables 4.1b and 8.4 (European Commission 2004).

Empirically Approaching the Concept of European Identity

In many ways, a number of these conceptual breakthroughs on the relationship between elites, media, citizenship, legitimacy, and identity have been met by a methodological 'wall' because of problems in capturing European identity. In fact, in the past 10 years, an increasing number of works have given rise to parallel efforts to criticise the poor quality of the instruments currently available to measure identity, and to provide some viable alternatives to further investigate how European the Europeans

feel. Most of the first such models were qualitative. Researchers such as Meinhof and Galasinski (2005), Grundy and Jamieson (2007), and Bruter (2004), respectively made border Europeans, young Europeans, and Europeans in general, talk about their identity, reaching complementary results. Meinhof and Galasinski find that without prompting, border citizens seldom mention Europe, but Grundy and Jamieson and Bruter find that their respondents have spontaneous ideas about their Europeanness. These interesting but complex results have reinforced the perceptions of many that better quantitative instruments were needed. This need is pointed out by McLaren (2006 and 2007), Déloye and Bruter (2007), and implicitly in van der Eijk and Franklin (1996) and van der Brug and van der Eijk (2008). Herrmann *et al.* (2004) and Bruter (2005, 2009) discuss various ways in which such quantitative models can be conceptualised and operationalised.

Of course, there is no doubt that political identities are remarkably difficult to measure. We showed that apart from the specific flaws that plague the two main questions used to capture European identity, all self-placement questions will first and foremost face the problem of the 'language prison' identified by Burgess (in Herrmann *et al.* 2004). That is, identity is not naturally thought of in analytical terms, but lived and at best expressed. Bruter (2009) finds that even its expression is contextualised. Indeed, his results show that while many intuitively suspect that the 'real' identity of citizens might be revealed by spontaneous expressions, this is not quite true. Thus, when simply asked 'where do you come from?', respondents' answers are highly contextualised and fully integrate the categories the interlocutor is expected to ask about. Thus, if a Londoner is asked this question by a German, (s/he is likely to answer 'from Britain', if the interviewer is British 'from London', and if the interlocutor is a Londoner her/himself 'from (say) Camden'. Of course, these three different answers correspond in no way whatsoever to sudden changes in the respondent's identity. In this sense, the entire difficulty of measuring identities quantitatively consists of finding some operational variables that 'trap' respondents' answers on directly comparable scales, that correspond to sub-aspects of identity that are meaningful to large numbers of respondents.

The alternative model developed by Bruter (2003 and 2005) thus distinguishes between two conceptually and empirically distinct components of identities: civic and cultural. These pillars correspond to the broad theories used by political scientists over time to define what constitutes a nation or a political community. These are based on the three main perspectives that have been used since the 18th century to characterise the foundations of the legitimacy of political communities. The first, derived from the French Enlightenment and the 1776 American and 1789 French Revolutions, links the legitimacy of political communities to the very existence of political institutions that are implicitly accepted by society through a social contract (Rousseau 1762). The second, developed by German political thinkers such as Fichte (1845) and Herder (1913) links the legitimacy of political communities to a corresponding 'nation', defined by a common culture (and principally, for Fichte and Herder, a common language). Finally, the third conception, formalised by Renan in 1882, leaves the sphere of objective commonalities between members of a nation to associate its legitimacy to the 'common desire to live together' of its members.

From these three theories, it is easy to derive competing interpretations of the identification of individuals to a political community. First, a 'cultural' pillar corresponds to a citizen's sense of belonging to a human community, with which s/he believes s/he shares a certain common culture, social similarities, ethics, values, religion, or even ethnicity, however defined. A second 'civic' pillar corresponds to a citizen's identification with a political system, that is, an acknowledgement that this political system defines some of her/his rights and duties as a political being. Finally, a third overarching aspect of identity is its general or spontaneous self-assessment, that is, whether or not the individual 'feels' European, in a way that could relate to the civic and/or cultural components of identity.

Rather than assuming that political identities are one or the other, the contention made here is that the two components of political identities exist in parallel in citizens' minds and should simply be differentiated conceptually and empirically whenever possible.

A Measurement Problem?

This model contrasts with the logic of the items traditionally used in most mass surveys to measure European identity. Indeed, as explained earlier, a number of authors agree that the problems with these dominant existing measures are and that Eurobarometer and other surveys provide information that is plagued by critical validity problems and fail to offer usable information. Let us now consider these dominant measures.

Eurobarometer and most other studies, including the European Value Survey (EVS) primarily try to capture European identity using the 'Moreno' question (see discussion in Deloye and Bruter 2007). The argument suggesting that this question is highly flawed relies on the following elements:

1. The Moreno scale assumes a tension (negative relationship) between national and European identities. Post-materialist theory used to see European identity as a form of cosmopolitanism and, ultimately, a 'non-identity' (Herrmann *et al*. 2004). However, as explained earlier, this has been empirically disproved: Duchesne and Frognier 1995; Bruter 2005 & 2009, and a number of others have all found national and European identities to be positively correlated – in other words, the more Dutch one feels, the *more* European s/he likely feels, not the opposite. Consequently, the assumed tension around which the question is built is not merely hypothetical but actually empirically disproved;

2. Conversely, the scale is purely comparative *between* the two possible identities, and forbids expressions of varying strengths of either identity (of two people who feel 'European only', one could feel very European, one almost not at all);

3. Indeed, the question does not allow for 'neither national nor European' as an answer either. This again goes against what we know of identities based on the social psychology literature (see first section of this article);

4. The scale assumes that seeing oneself as 'Dutch and European' means feeling more Dutch and less European than seeing oneself as 'European and Dutch' despite the conjunction 'and' not specifically implying a comparison or inequality. When piloting the question on a sample of approximately 1200 respondents in six countries (UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, and Sweden) conducting both surveys and follow up focus groups, the findings showed that in focus groups, a majority of respondents claim *not* to think of 'European and national' as meaning more European than national (or the reverse). Even more symptomatically, however, while including the question in a survey with a split sample whereby possible answers are ordered in opposite ways, we find that reversing the order of the proposed answers dramatically changes the distribution[2] of respondents, which severely questions the robustness of the survey item;

[2] With full randomisation of experimental samples, in 6 countries, distributions were as follow (A=answers are proposed from national only to European only, B=answers are proposed in reverse order. N=1104:

	N only	N+E	E+N	E only
A	31	47	16	6
B	24	28	38	10

5. In the same pilot, we show that there are major translation issues for this question. After running a post-pilot focus group in the six countries, it can be noted that in some of them, up to 40% explained that they understood this question (again, phrased in English as 'in the near future, do you see yourself' rather than 'do you feel') to be about 'objectively' predicting the increasing influence of the EU, and *not* about identity.

For all practical purposes, these numerous problems make the Moreno question seriously unusable. Occasionally, EB and other surveys ask, instead, a question on citizens' 'attachment' to Europe, their country, region, and town/village. However, this question is equally problematic. As explained earlier, Burgess thinks of identity as 'prisoner of language'. This makes the quantitative measurement of identity difficult because it is not spontaneously conceived in analytical terms, but at best 'expressed'. It also implies a need to use some questions with labelled scales as opposed to pure self-placement to compare individuals. Moreover, attachment is not identity. The pilot study focus groups show that, in all six countries, 'attachment' to one's village/town is higher than 'attachment' to the nation, whereas, national identity is higher than self-expressed local identity. At best, attachment is a proxy for the 'affective' dimension of identity, which is uncorrelated with other identity components. Indeed, Bruter (2009) and Harrison and Bruter (2009b) show that not only is there no correlation between affective and other 'pillars' of identity, but indeed, that in terms of qualitative narratives, identity was almost as likely to be associated with shame as it is to be associated with pride. He in fact proceeds to cite a Norwegian colleague who once claimed to never feel as Norwegian as when he was on a plane ready to leave Oslo and that all fellow Norwegians on board were 'trying to get drunk before the plane even leaves the tarmac'!

Similarly, this attachment question is indeed most susceptible to Burgess's complaint of the 'language prison'. Indeed, two respondents' '4' on a scale from 1 to 7 might mean completely different things, or indeed, the same respondent's '4' on two of the parallel attachment scales might relate to entirely different forms of identity.

The exact same two reproaches can obviously be addressed to the 'pride' question which has started to be asked occasionally by Eurobarometer since the 1990s. Moreover, to put it simply, conceptually – and empirically, 'identity' and 'pride' are two different things.

In the face of these problems, we experimentally piloted over 30 new items to capture European identity along two sub-dimensions, civic and cultural, to better understand how European people feel, but also what it means to them (Bruter 2005 and 2009; Déloye and Bruter 2007; Meinhof and Galasinski 2000).

The pilot tested the measures, but also their combination to maximise robustness and monitor variance. The validated measures are claimed to make it possible to provide a consistent and realistic radiography of European identity using mass survey components of this project. The pilots were used to model the relationship between the media, symbols of Europe, and the civic and cultural components of European identity, resulting in a more systematic analytical model of the causes and consequences of European identity. The results show that news primarily affects the civic component of European identity, and symbols its cultural component. Bruter (2009) also shows how these effects operate differently over time, and how they interact with ideology, age and education. Finally, identity measured in an electoral context, (Deloye and Bruter 2007; Bruter and Harrison 2009a) seems to affect participation in elections and referenda as well as party choice even though by contrast, we know that support for integration itself has no effect on the likeliness of an individual to participate in European Parliament elections (van der Eijk and Franklin 1996).

The measures proposed by Bruter (2009) first include proposed measures of the general dimension of European identity. General identity measures are self-placement items, using different formulations, scales, and labelling to allow respondents to express how European they feel and compare this to similar formulations of national, regional, and local identities. A typical example asks respondents 'in general, would you say that you consider yourself "a European"?' using a five point scale for proposed answers. Some of the scales are very similar to the Eurobarometer 'attachment' question mentioned earlier but referring to identification rather than attachment.

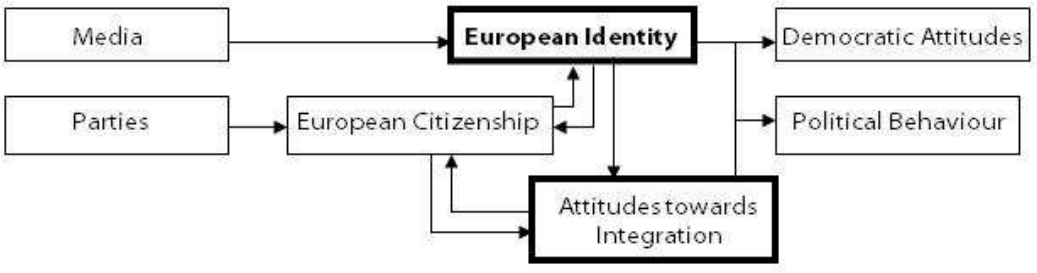
The second type of measures aims at capturing respondents' civic identity using various specific references to evaluate how citizens relate to the EU as a political system. These references range from attitudes towards the mention of 'European Union' on passports to perceptions of the EU flag, European elections, border sovereignty, or the EU anthem be played after the national anthem when an athlete from a member state wins a gold medal. A typical example reads: 'Since 1985, citizens from all the countries of the European Union have had a common 'European' passport on which both the name of their country and 'European Union' is written. Do you think that this is a good thing?' with a 5 point scale for proposed answers.

Finally, the third type of measures targets cultural identity items and measures perceptions of belonging to a European 'human' community, of beliefs in shared European values or heritage, and of relative closeness to fellow Europeans vis-à-vis non-Europeans. A typical example of a cultural identity item would read 'Some say that in spite of their numerous differences, Europeans share a 'common heritage' that makes them slightly closer to one another than they are to, say, Japanese or Chilean people. Do you…?' with a five point scale for proposed answers.

European Identity and the Desired Future of EU Citizenship – Bridging the Legitimacy Gap?

Where does this leave us? Is there any reason to believe that if European identity was properly measured, our understanding of its determinants and effects would indeed be different and open new ways of understanding how European citizens relate to the European Union? After all, as Bruter (2005) notes, all the paradoxes noted earlier that concern (1) European public opinion and (2) Europeans as a voting body might be unrelated to the continuing emergence of a mass European identity. How European identity 'fits' in our more global understanding of citizens politics in the European Union is summarised by the model sketched in figure 1. The model suggests that in a number of cases, we may be wrongly looking for an impact of support for integration where it is identity which should matter.

Figure 1: Modelling European Integration



Even more importantly, we suggest that identity is not only caused by citizenship, but desires for the future of citizenship itself, is caused by – and symptomatic of – citizens' identity (Bruter 2009). Here, the argument is that questions on European Union citizenship perceptions and preferences equally need to be rethought to understand not only what it means for citizens to be 'European' but also what they want it to mean in the future. Questions on the expected and desired future evolution of EU citizenship, on what it should mean to our children to be European in 10, 20, or 50 years from now also bring us some essential insight into people's current identity. When it comes to citizens' current understanding of what Europe and being European mean today, they first and foremost refer to borderlessness and free movement, and to the Euro (Bruter 2005 and European Commission 2004). Perceptions that the EU is a bureaucratic machine simply do not come in their vocabulary any more than the notion that the European Union is a 'peace machine'. Being European is being free to move, travel, and live abroad without borders or limitations within the Union, and being a citizen of a political system with its symbols such as the joint currency. When it comes to the future of European citizenship, citizens insist not only on more of the same but on directly electing an EU president in universal elections, participating in EU-wide referenda, and forecast having children who will feel more European than their parents' generation and grand-children who will feel yet more European than them. And this, really, says something about what they do and do not like about European integration, and about how the bulk of contemporary 'Euroscepticism' is fundamentally different from the bulk of Euroscepticism twenty five years ago or the Eurosceptic line of extremist parties. It gives a sense of its 'inside twist' and of what critical citizens take for granted unlike what was the case two or three decades ago.

Contemporary European public opinion is only paradoxical to the extent that one uses old categories, ineffective instruments, and outdated lenses to look at it. The measures of European identity that dominant mass surveys provide us with are such ineffective instruments, and they result in a complete misrepresentation of the true level of European identity amongst the European Union citizenry. The argument made in this article is that the potential consequences of European identity in terms of public attitudes, electoral behaviour, legitimacy, and the understanding of what citizens really want from their new European political system make it essential that, as a discipline, we endeavour to correct these instruments and properly capture European identity to see whether or not it will clear a varnish of apparent paradoxes and unravel a far more straightforward logic of what European Union citizens really want to get from a democratic Union.

***

References

Bellamy, R., Castiglione, D., Shaw, J. (eds) (2006). *Making European Citizens*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Bellamy, R. and Warleigh, A. (eds) (2005). *Citizenship and Governance in the European Union*. London: Continuum.

Breakwell, G. (2004). 'Identity change in the context of growing influence of European Union institutions' in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational Identities*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brug (van der), W. and van der Eijk, C. (eds) (2007). *European Elections and Domestic Politics*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Bruter, M. (2003). 'Winning Hearts and Minds for Europe: the impact of news and symbols on civic and cultural European identity'. *Comparative Political Studies* , 36 (10), pp. 1148-1179.

Bruter, M. (2004). 'On what citizens mean by feeling European'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 30 (1), pp. 21-41.

Bruter, M. (2005). *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Bruter, M. (2009 forthcoming). 'Time bomb – news, media, and European identity'. In *Comparative Political Studies,* 42 (12).
Bruter, M. and Harrison, S. (2009a forthcoming). 'Tomorrow's leaders?' in *Comparative Political Studies,* 42 (10).
Bruter, M. and Harrison, S. (2009b forthcoming). *The Future of our Democracies?* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Caporaso, J. (2005). 'The possibilities of a European identity.' *Brown Journal of World Affairs,* 12 (1), pp. 65-75.
Cederman, H. (2001). 'Nationalism and bounded integration: what it would take to construct a European demos.' *European Journal of International Relations,* 7 (2), pp. 139-174.
Déloye, Y. and Bruter, M. (eds) (2007). *Encyclopaedia of European Elections.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Duchesne, S., Frognier, A-P. (1995). 'Is There a European Identity?', in *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance*, O. Niedermayer, R. Sinnott (eds). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Eijk (van der), C. and Franklin, M. (1996). *Choosing Europe*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.
European Commission (2004). *Standard Eurobarometer 61, Public Opinion in the European Union*. Brussels: DG press and Communication. Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_en.pdf>, last accessed 12 December 2008.
European Commission, (2005). *Standard Eurobarometer 63, Public Opinion in the European Union*. Brussels: DG Press and Communication. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63_en.pdf>, last accessed 12 December 2008.
Fichte, J. (1845). *Samtliche Werke*. Berlin: Veit Franklin.
Franklin, M. (2001). 'How structural factors cause turnout variations at European Parliament elections' *European Union Politics*, 2 (3), pp. 309-328.
Grundy, S. and Jamieson, L. (2007). 'European Identities: from absent-minded citizens to passionate Europeans', *Sociology* 41 (4), pp. 663-680.
Herder, J. (1913). *Complete Works*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung
Herrmann, R., Risse, T. and Brewer, M. (eds) (2004). *Transnational Identities.* Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield.
Hix, S. (2008). *What's Wrong with the European Union and How to Fix it?*. London: Polity.
Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Post-Modernization*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Leduc, L. (ed.) (2002). *Special issue on referenda – European Journal of Political Research,* 41 (2), pp. 711- 888.
McLaren, L. (2007). 'Explaining mass level euroskepticism: identity, interest, and institutional distrust', *Acta Politica,* 42 (2/3), pp. 233-251.
McLaren, L. (2006). *Identity, Interests, and Attitudes to European Integration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Meehan, E. (1993). *Citizenship and the European Community*. London: Sage
Meinhof, U., Galasinski, D. (2005). *The Language of Belonging*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
Mokre, M., Weiss, G., Bauböck. R. (eds) (2003). *Europas Identitäten: Mythen, Konflikte, Konstruktionen*. Frankfurt: Campus.
Mummendey, A. and Waldzus, S. (2004). 'National Differences and European Plurality: Discrimination or Tolerance between European Countries', in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), Transnational Identities. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 59-74.
Renan, E. (1882). 'Discours de la Sorbonne in *Discours et Conferences*. (Discours du 11 mars 1882).
Rousseau, J-B. (1762). *Le Contrat Social*. Geneve: Rey.
Strudel, S. 2007. 'Citizenship' in Déloye, Y. and Bruter, M. (eds) *Encyclopaedia of European Elections*.

Basingstoke: Palgrave
Wiener, A. (1998). *European Citizenship Practice: Building Institutions of a Non-State.* Boulder: Westview Press.

***

"We have made Europe, now we have to make Europeans": Researching European Identity among Flemish Youths

Petra Huyst

Abstract

After the rejection of the European Constitution in 2005, questions were raised about if and how European citizens feel connected to the European Union (EU). This article examines the image young, Flemish people have of the EU and whether they feel some sense of belonging in the EU. The research draws upon a qualitative study in which Flemish young people were asked how they felt towards the EU and how they perceived it. Using a social-constructionist perspective, the first part of the article concentrates on the concept of European identity and the theoretical divide between a civic and a cultural European political identity, as proposed by Bruter (2004). The second part of the article focuses on the results of a series of focus groups with young people (aged 17 to 19), held in spring 2007. The article argues that no strong European identity is yet present in the hearts and minds of these young people, although contexts and interactions might evoke a limited notion of European identity. This article offers an empirical account of a theoretical debate and presents a critical understanding of the dynamics at play in European identity construction.

A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT INCLUDED THE REJECTION OF THE TREATY ESTABLISHING A Constitution for Europe, the low turnout for the European parliamentary elections in 2004 and a general feeling of apathy towards politics in (especially) western Europe resulted in a European Union (EU)[1] searching for (new) ways to bond with its citizens. The rejection of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, in particular, was considered a slap in the face for Eurocrats in Brussels. A period of reflection followed in which the EU started looking for answers to difficult questions on how to communicate better, how to get citizens more involved and also on how to get citizens to identify with the EU. The issue of identity and identity construction has been a topic not only political scientists struggle with. There has also been discussion among academics from different disciplines (philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology) about the fluid concept of identity. These debates go beyond the EU identity issue and deal with how identity is being defined and how it is constructed in general (Cerulo 1997; Cruz 2000).

Few researchers have explored the concept of European identity both theoretically and empirically (Bruter 2004; Citrin & Sides 2004). This is due to two factors: on the one

[1] For the purpose of this research, this article makes no clear distinction between Europe and the EU although it is clear the two are (still) not the same. People are perfectly capable of feeling a sense of belonging to Europe in general, without feeling an attachment to the EU at all or vice versa. This article follows, however, the line of reasoning of Brigid Laffan, who states that the EU, as an active identity builder, increasingly defines what it means to belong to Europe and to be European. Europe and the EU are thus more and more used interchangeably (Laffan 2004: 76).

ISSN 1815-347X online. Huyst, P. (2008). '"We have made Europe, now we have to make Europeans": Researching European Identity among Flemish Youths', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 286-302. Available: http://www.jcer.net/ojs.index.php/jcer/article/view/127/116

hand, researching European identity has been a new field of study emerging over the past 10 years and, on the other hand, it poses a challenging subject to investigate. Data from the European Commission's EU-wide public opinion survey Eurobarometer provided some quantitative knowledge about the idea of European identity, but failed to give more in-depth knowledge of what it might mean (or might not mean) to feel European. Eurobarometer surveys have also been criticized in terms of measurement and continuity (Sinnot 2005: 216; also see Bruter in this volume). As of today, hardly any other equally elaborated quantitative research exists, hence Eurobarometer results remain an important point of reference in this debate. Therefore, additional qualitative research is necessary (Cerutti 2006: 4).

This article intends to complement earlier, primarily quantitative, research with a qualitative approach based on focus groups. The research design has three objectives. Firstly, the research focuses on the perception and image Flemish young people (between the ages of 17 -19) have of the EU by using a metaphor analysis. The second focus point is on what it means (or does not mean) for these young people to feel European and to identify with the EU. In a final phase these two components and their interaction are analysed.

The first part of this article examines the theoretical background of the identity concept and takes a closer look at what a European identity might constitute. According to Bruter, this European identity consists of two components, a cultural and a civic one (Bruter 2004: 188, 2005: 11). This theoretical differentiation serves as a framework on which the empirical research is built. The second part of the article explores the results from six focus groups with Flemish young people, held in spring 2007. The target group were young people (aged 17 to 19), because they represent the future generation that will have grown up with the EU as a more or less self-evident entity. While the metaphor analysis discerns seven trends in the perception and image of the EU, the focus group discussions, show that no psychological existence of the European community is yet present in the hearts and minds of these young Europeans.

Exploring identity conceptually

Identity as point of departure

The concept of identity is hard to define. In philosophy and psychology, identity is defined as something that closes the gap between one's 'Self' and the outside world (Mummendey, Waldzus 2004: 60). Individuals may be unique and independent, but the way they perceive themselves is constructed in interaction with the outside world. As such, identity can be defined as a web of feelings of belonging to certain groups and feelings of exclusion from other groups. Identity always entails a subjective notion of pre-set ideas and beliefs people have about who they are and where they belong to (Bakke 1995: 2). This definition touches upon a core element in the identity formation process, namely the existence of what we can call 'the Other' or 'the out-group'. A certain identity always implies a notion of what you are not. People arguably identify themselves with a certain gender, religion or age group. All these elements compose a unique identity, but at the same time also define who you are not and to which groups you do not belong (Mummendey, Waldzus 2004: 61).

For political scientists there are certain characteristics of identity that should be taken into account. First, identities are not fixed and rigid phenomena. They are flexible, dynamic and changeable. An identity is not something that is always present, it is actually very much context related (Widdicombe 1998: 193). Second, identity still remains a highly individual issue, which can have general characteristics that most people share, but which will always have a very personal outlook. This, however, does not mean that identity should be perceived as something completely non-committal and loose. It provides a more or less amalgamated symbolic structure that reassures a

certain level of continuity in people's lives. Identity gives meaning and makes sure people can function in their daily lives (Widdicombe 1998: 194). A third characteristic of identities is that they are a product of collective construction over time. They are a result of traditions and aspirations as well as of exchange and reciprocity (Garcia 1993: 10).

Our own national identities are the result of determined efforts to construct a sense of belonging (Hobsbawm *et al.* 1983; Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983). This raises questions about the possibility of a European identity. If national identity could be constructed, then what about its European counterpart?

European identity: fact or fiction?

Researching the EU's expansion and structural development raises the question of European identity. The increasing salience of the issue of a European identity can be attributed to the following reasons. First of all, the EU has chosen a more political course ever since the Treaty of Maastricht on European Union. The EU tries to go beyond a pure economic construction by creating a European citizenship and a (rejected) Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Dinan 2004: 245). Throughout the years the EU has gained more prominence in people's lives because of the growing number of policies it is responsible for. This attempt to become a political unit is unlikely to be sustained without the support of the people. This support is, however, not guaranteed by a solely economic unity. As Delors put it once: "People do not fall in love with a market" (as cited in Castano 2004: 41). A second reason is related to the first one. In search of legitimacy, identity becomes an indispensable element: "The search for new principles of European legitimacy is inextricably bound up with the attempt to create a space in which collective identities can be formed" (Delanty 1995: viii).

Identity is not seen as something that evokes legitimacy all by itself, but as a component that contributes to the strengthening of the EU's legitimacy. A third reason concerns the relationship between national and European identity, as Eurobarometer data indicate. Looking at the level of attachment to the EU, 49 per cent of the respondents say they feel attached to the EU, while up to 91 per cent claim they feel attached to their country (Eurobarometer 2007: 67). There remains a big gap between these two levels. The data indicate that further research concerning this topic would be valuable.

Although these reasons emphasize the need for researching EU-identity, there is no general agreement on the existence or not of a European identity, let alone on what it constitutes one. Some scholars are sceptical about the idea of such an identity form (Höjelid 2001). A majority, however, is rather positive and departs from a more broadly supported idea of multiple identities (Cerutti 1992; Weiler 1999: 344; Risse 2001). At the same time, these scholars have very different ideas on how to define identity and what it is based on. According to the recent work of Ruiz Jiminez *et al.* (2004: 2) the differing views can be categorised into three subdivisions that include cultural, instrumental and civic theories.

Cultural scholars claim that a European identity cannot be created by the same components as a national identity (language, cultural background, symbols, etc.). Europe is too diverse and it is a utopia to think that common, shared characteristics can be found (Smith 1992: 62). These scholars are rather sceptical towards the idea of a European identity but do not completely exclude the possibility of its existence (Siedentop 2001: 86). Their view is that if it does arise, it would most certainly replace national identities. According to Smith (1992: 62):

> "national identifications possess distinct advantages over the idea of a unified European identity. They are vivid, accessible, well established, long popularised, and still widely

> believed, in broad outline at least. In each of these respects, 'Europe' is deficient both as idea and as process. Above all, it lacks a pre-modern past – a 'prehistory' which can provide it with emotional sustenance and historical depth".

Instrumental scholars, on the other hand, state that the existence of a European identity depends on a cost-benefit analysis (Cinnirella 1997; Gabel 1997: 11). Citizens are perceived as rational actors who will base their decision to feel (or not to feel) European on rational arguments. If membership of the community provides them with more advantages than disadvantages, a European identity will be formed (Ruiz Jiminez *et al.* 2004: 3). Kritzinger's research confirms this hypothesis. If European institutions are seen as the most efficient to approach certain issues/problems, a shift in loyalty to the European level will occur. This way, according to 'instrumentalists', a European identity can be created based on instrumental motives (Kritzinger 2005: 53).

A last strand of scholars are the civic scholars, such as Habermas and Bartolini, who support the idea of a shared belief in values and duties of the EU, preferably exemplified in a European constitution. This function of a constitution is being referred to as 'constitutional patriotism' (Karlsson 1999; Baubock 1997; Fossum 2001). This means that the basis of a European identity lies with a shared loyalty towards a constitution. Civic scholars dismiss the need to look for a shared culture, a shared history or a shared ethnical background (Baubock 1997). The ambition is not to create an 'ethnos' but a 'demos'. The goal is to obtain a post national identity form that goes beyond the need for a common ethnic background.

Both instrumental and civic scholars try, each in their own way, to move beyond the pitfalls of ethnic and cultural differences that characterize Europe. According to these scholars there is no need for a European identity based on the same elements as the national counterpart. For civic scholars like Bartolini (2002), "a civic commitment to constitutional values, and civic duties, a citizenship conception of the political community and the development of a 'republican' patriotism, can be enough to define a layer of political community built upon the ethno-cultural differentiation of the European peoples". For instrumental scholars, a rational cost-benefit analysis suffices.

The aforementioned subdivision in three categories represents different theoretical outlooks on the issue of European identity. However, the biggest difference remains that between cultural and civic scholars, with both having very different points of departure in this debate. Bruter surpasses this deadlock by uniting both elements (civic/cultural) in his definition of a European identity (Bruter 2004: 188; 2005: 11). The cultural component hereby refers to feeling closer connected to people belonging to a group than people who don't belong to a group. In a European context this means that people feel a stronger sense of belonging to other Europeans than to non-Europeans. The civic component, on the other hand, refers to the identification of an individual with a certain political structure, in this case the EU. Both elements can be present in one's European identity, but this is not strictly necessary according to Bruter.

Bruter's definition is complemented in this article with a definition by Tajfel (1981: 255), who argues that: "European identity is that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". According to Tajfel, a social and an affective component cannot be lacking and there is a need for what Castano calls a psychological existence of the community (Castano 2004: 41). An often heard witticism is: 'Would you die for Europe?'

To sum up, this article defines European identity as being composed of a civic and/or cultural element and together with a social and affective component. In other words, to be able to speak of a European identity, it should be present in both the hearts and minds of the people.

Young people and the EU

Some studies specifically focus on European identity among young people. An important point of reference in this debate is the European Commission funded project on 'orientations of young men and women to citizenship and European identity' (Jamieson *et al.* 2005). This large-scale research (the six countries involved are: United Kingdom, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Spain, Germany and Austria) took 36 months to complete (Jamieson 2005). The study researches young men and women's orientations to European identity and citizenship. This research, however, is primarily based on quantitative survey analysis. In contrast to that, research on young people and European identity, done by Du Bois-Reymond (1998: 37), suggests that qualitative research and focus groups in particular, are well suited for the task of unfolding the different dimensions of a European identity. This article thus follows Du Bois-Reymond's qualitative research approach to analyse the perceptions of young Flemish people about the EU and whether or not they identify with it.[2]

Young people were chosen as a target group, firstly, because they have grown up with the EU as a given entity that provides them with certain benefits, which stem from free movement, a single EU-wide currency and Erasmus Mundus, the European Commission's academic mobility programme. These experienced benefits stand in sharp contrast to older generations' shared tragic memories of World War II. According to Tsafos one of the main challenges for the EU is to make its youth feel European, since Eurobarometer results show that young people in the EU (aged 15 to 24) do not significantly feel more European than older generations (Tsafos 2006: 181; Eurobarometer 2005). About two thirds of young Europeans feel attached to Europe and about 56 per cent of these youngsters claim they feel connected to their own country and to Europe. These percentages are only slightly higher than what the rest of the EU population states (Eurobarometer 2005).[3] Intuitively, higher percentages could have been expected, since creating a sense of belonging is a long-term process. The EU is thus facing a big challenge in trying to connect with a generation that has grown up with the EU and, presumably, takes the EU for granted (Tsafos 2006: 181).

Secondly, Eurobarometer results also show that only one third of young Europeans (aged 18 to 24) participated in the European parliamentary elections of 2004. This is significantly below the 45.6 per cent average (Eurobarometer 2005: 7). This lack of participation reflects a feeling of apathy and lack of interest in politics, which is also confirmed by this Eurobarometer study (Eurobarometer 2005).

Thirdly, over the last couple of years, the EU has put more effort into connecting with its young citizens. The European Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, for instance, mentions a focus in its communication strategy on young people and the importance of getting them involved (Commission of the European Communities 2006: 7). EU initiatives, such as Spring Day for Europe and the European Youth Forum, are aimed at encouraging debate and getting young people interested in European policies. A framework for cooperation in youth policies, based on an earlier White Paper, was developed in 2001 by the Council of the European Union (Commission of the European Communities 2001). This framework focuses on young people's active citizenship, social and occupational integration and on including a youth dimension in other policies (Commission of the European Communities n.d.). All these recent initiatives show that young people are becoming an increasingly important target group for the EU.

---

[2] For future research, young people from the French speaking part of Belgium could also be asked about their perceptions of the EU and their identities. This would complement the findings of this article. By and large, this research design could be used to analyse the perception and potential European identity of young Europeans in different EU countries.

[3] 66 per cent of the EU population feels connected to the EU; 54 per cent of the EU population feels attached to both their country and the EU

Research design

In an attempt to address the three objectives, set out in the introduction of this article, the research design was based on two intertwining parts. A first part, aimed at tackling the first objective on images and perceptions of the EU, consisted of a short survey that contained one open question. This question prompted the Flemish pupils to compare the EU to an animal and clarify their choice. This comparison approach is based on the logic of metaphor analysis, since this kind of analysis allows a better, more personal and deeper understanding of what image the EU has for these pupils. By letting them come up with metaphors to describe the EU, it is possible to uncover individual patterns of thought and action. Indirectly asking these pupils to compare the EU to an animal and why, can elicit more personal and deeper accounts (Schmitt 2005: 363). The animals they refer to are not important as such, but the reason/motivation behind their choice reveals a great deal.[4] Based on the responses on this question, seven trends in the perception and image of the EU are discerned.

The second part of the research focused on the second objective, namely the potential European identity of these young people. This part is predominantly based on the results and analysis of six focus groups held in six different Flemish schools in the spring of 2007 to explore and deepen the understanding of European identity. Specific questions were asked in relation to the reception and interpretation of certain European civic/cultural symbols (e.g. Euro, European flag, etc.).The European flag, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and a selection of photos of famous European politicians were used as examples of what has been called indicators of civic identity (Bruter 2005: 103). For the cultural component, reference was made to the European anthem since this symbol implies a greater connection with other Europeans.

A qualitative research design was specifically chosen to complement existing quantitative research (e.g. Eurobarometer). Focus groups permit this kind of in-depth research. They also make it possible to find out as much as possible about participants' experiences and feelings on a given topic, in this case European identity (Morgan and Krueger 1993: 7).

The groups consisted of a minimum of eight and a maximum of 13 pupils aged between 17 and 19 years. The six participating schools were randomly chosen and consisted of five catholic schools and one public school.[5] This is entirely coincidental and has furthermore no importance in this research design since it is not the aim to discern any linkages between education systems and identity formation. The participating groups of pupils had to meet two criteria, namely the group couldn't consist of over 13 pupils or less than eight pupils and the pupils had to be in their final year of high school. Based on these criteria, six groups based on six classes were selected. The fact that the chosen groups were actual classes and did not need to be composed created the advantage that all pupils and not just those interested in EU affairs participated. In total 76 pupils were involved. The sum of groups was a good mixture of gender, race and religion, which brought out an interesting mix of opinions and views on the EU. All focus group discussions were film and tape recorded. Afterwards, the discussions were fully transcribed for a thorough analysis.

The region Flanders, in particular, was chosen because of its complex identity structure. Discussing Flemish identity has been on the rise over the last couple of years and Belgian identity seems to be in decline or is at least a point of discussion (Lecours 2001: 53). Flanders is, as such, an interesting case study. First, because no empirical research

[4] In appendix 1 a table has been added, containing a full list of animal names and their frequency

[5] The six participating schools were: Immaculata instituut, De Panne; Vrij Technisch Instituut, Veurne; Sint Bavo, Gent; Sint-Barbara College, Gent; VISO Roeselare; Provinciaal Handels- en Taalinstituut, Gent.

on the European identity of Flemish pupils has been done before and second, because of the different identities at play in the region (Flemish, Belgian).

The results of a multiple choice question, asked in the survey, were used to address the final, third objective, namely the link between the image the EU has for these young people and their level of sense of belonging to the EU. This multiple choice question measured the level of identification with the EU of these young people by asking them to indicate their level of belonging on a scale ranging from one to six.[6] Based on these responses, this article discerns trends between the level of belonging indicated and the image that these young people have of the EU.

Exploring European identity empirically

Image of the EU

To obtain more insights into the perception and image these young people have of the EU, the results of the open survey question were analysed. Based on these responses, seven trends can be discerned that indicate what kind of image the EU has for the respondents.

A first trend is that about one tenth of the participating pupils see the EU as something that has undergone or is undergoing rapid development. It started as something small but is now evolving into something bigger. The EU is presented as something dynamical, something that has not yet reached its final shape.

Another trend is the reference to something small. Some see this as positive thing; others perceive it as a negative aspect. In the positive way, young people refer to the power that lies in the cooperation of many different and small units (countries).

> "Beaver. It is a hard worker and although it might be small, it accomplishes great things." (Charlotte, FG1)

In the negative sense, it refers to the weakness of the EU, especially in an international context. The EU is seen as a small and vulnerable entity that acts/reacts slowly and its power to do something is very limited. The pupils compare the EU to squirrels, microbes and turtles. Directly opposite to this view are the pupils who see the EU as an extremely powerful organization (reference to lions and elephants). The EU presents itself as a strong 'animal' on the world stage and is a serious counterbalance for other 'animals' on that same stage. The EU is being looked up to and has a superior personality.

It is striking how there can be such a contrast in the perceptions of the EU. On the one hand the EU is seen as a powerful player on the global stage, on the other hand it is seen as an entity that is trying hard, but does not succeed.

A fourth trend that can be observed refers to the flexibility and adaptability of the EU and its member states. Here the chameleon is the case *par excellence*. Another aspect often referred to is the versatility and diversity of the EU. The richness of cultures and the diversity of countries and people are considered a big plus for 14 per cent of the respondents. Repeated references are made to the butterfly as a creature that internalises these qualities/characteristics.

Almost one fifth of the pupils compare the EU to some kind of herd animal, which makes it the most frequent comparison. These animals cooperate, need to have faith in

[6] The scale values are: 1 totally no sense of belonging, 2 no sense of belonging, 3 little sense of belonging, 4 sense of belonging, 5 strong sense of belonging, 6 very strong sense of belonging.

each other, are loyal and are mutually dependent. Ants and wolves are also often referred to.

In the last trend some pupils point out the unknown and distant character of the EU by the choice of their animals. The invisibility and the (seemingly) absence of the EU in their lives is a recurrent factor in all the focus groups.

> "An octopus. With its arms it can put a lot of things in motion but it is often hidden in holes." (Arnout, FG 4)

> "A spider. It has a lot of opportunities, with a web of opportunities. But it is very difficult to get in contact with it." (Brecht, FG 5)

References to the EU are rarely entirely negative. Only four pupils out of 76 described the EU in a negative way. The EU was, for example, compared to a monkey, because people working in politics are stupid.

Based on the metaphor analysis, it seems as if most pupils have a fairly positive image of the EU. It must be pointed out however that this rather positive attitude might partly stem from a lack of knowledge of the EU. This is also indicated by the pupils themselves.

> "We do not know enough about it, frankly." (Lieke, FG6)

It is also important to highlight the rather high level of missing data in form of blank responses. Over one tenth of the pupils did not fill in the question to compare the EU to an animal. A potential explanation can be that these pupils feel that they do not know enough about the EU to make a comparison. Or that they are simply not interested enough in the EU to think about a comparison.

Image and identity

By using a multiple choice question, the level of sense of belonging to the EU of each respondent, was measured. This multiple choice question had a six divided scale, ranging from 'totally no sense of belonging to the EU' to 'very strong sense of belonging to the EU'. These responses were then linked to the image respondents had of the EU[7]. Based on this analysis, the results show that over 40 per cent of the respondents' state that they feel "a little sense of belonging to the EU." As this was the most chosen response, this indicates a low, but present level of belonging for a big part of the respondents. About a quarter of the respondents feels no sense of belonging whatsoever (no sense of belonging - totally no sense of belonging). This can also be seen as about three quarters of the respondents claiming they have some sense of belonging to the EU (ranging from a little sense to a very strong sense of belonging).

The analysis also shows that particularly those people who see the EU as a powerful and big entity claim to feel a sense of belonging to the EU[8]. The pupils seeing the EU as a cooperative entity also show a higher level of sense of belonging than the other trends[9]. The pupils who did not fill in the comparison question do not significantly indicate a lower sense of belonging than the other trends. There is about a half-half divide between no sense of belonging and a sense of belonging. Surprisingly, the only 'very strong sense of belonging' indicated, is to be found in this category.

[7] In appendix 2 a table has been added containing the results of this analysis.
[8] 12 out of 13 respondents who see the EU as a powerful entity, claim they feel at least a little sense of belonging to the EU.
[9] 12 out of 14 respondents indicate at least a little sense of belonging to the EU.

National identities, European identities and context

In the following section this article elaborates on the second part of the empirical analysis which deals with the results of the focus groups and goes into detail about the idea of identity. The first phase of the focus groups concentrated on how these young people perceive their other, non-European political identities (nation, region, city/village). The question was asked whether they ascribe any meaning to being Belgian. For most of the respondents being Belgian implies a number of characteristics (often referring to stereotypes such as Belgian fries and chocolate). People can relate to it and have more or less an idea of what 'a Belgian' is, even abroad. Many pupils, however, say they do not really feel a deeper emotional connection by being Belgian.

> "You feel Belgian because your passport says so. Automatically you are Belgian but otherwise..." (Sylvie, FG6)

A Belgian identity is seen as evident, something you receive automatically because you were born in Belgium. It seems like there is no deeper emotional attachment for many of the respondents. This, however, is not entirely true. The focus groups show that this Belgian identity is indeed not present all the time but arises/becomes stronger in certain contexts/interactions (e.g. sporting events). This confirms the theoretical hypothesis of the importance of context mentioned earlier (Bruter 2005). Most respondents claim to have some sort of attachment to being Belgian, although it is often mentioned that their Flemish identity is even stronger. It can be stated that their Belgian civic identity is thus considered as evident and obvious, while their cultural identity seems more context related. The pride in feeling connected with other Belgians only seems to come forward in certain situations/contexts.

The second phase of the focus groups concentrated on European identity and on how these young people perceive it. At the beginning of the focus group discussions, most of them stated they do not feel European. This may put the earlier survey findings in perspective. Although our quantitative analysis shows that 75 per cent of the pupils feel at least a small sense of belonging to the EU, the qualitative analysis shows that this does not mean the pupils spontaneously and openly present themselves as European when asked.

The pupils wonder what unites them as Europeans. And what is a European? They point out that these questions are very difficult to answer and thus make it more difficult to identify with the EU. Several pupils refer to the (mental) gap that still seems to exist with Eastern Europe as a first tripping block for identity formation. Some pupils even feel that Eastern Europe does not belong to Europe, it is too distant, too unknown. Following Mummendy and Waldzus' definitions, it can even be said that Eastern Europe is seen as the out group or 'the other' for some of the pupils (Mummendy and Waldzus 2004: 60).

Second, they feel that there is very little that really unites Europeans. Some joke that apart from the Eurovision song contest and the Champions League, there is nothing that could make them feel united. The EU is perceived as too distant from their daily lives and they hardly ever feel like citizens of the EU precisely because of its distant and unknown character. On the other hand, most pupils have a more or less clear idea of what 'a Belgian' is (even though this might be based on stereotypes). These kind of pre-set ideas seem completely absent on the European level.

Third, many respondents see the benefits of the EU (e.g. Euro, open borders) as evident but do not (explicitly) link this to the EU. This illustrates the limits of the instrumental theories that claim that more EU benefits will automatically result in more people identifying with the EU. These three observations also show that there are still many hurdles on the path of identity formation. This does not imply that there are no signs of

a European identity to be found in the discourses of the pupils. Again context and situation play an important role (like in the context of a Belgian identity).

> "It depends on the circumstances. If you travel through different countries, for instance, if you go to Spain via France, then you feel part of Europe. You can simply continue driving. If you get in contact with different nationalities from outside of Europe, it is also easier to say that you are European." (Thijs, FG5)

> "It depends on who you are talking to. When I am talking to a Walloon, I'll say I'm Flemish. To a Frenchman I'll say I'm Belgian, but to an American I'll say I'm European." (Hannah, FG3)

These observations illustrate that context may evoke a culturally inspired identity. It also shows that looking at European identity is not so much a matter of answering the question whether it exists or not, but more a matter of what it constitutes and when or where it might arise.

Civic and cultural symbols

By using civic/cultural symbols insight was gained into what these symbols mean to the pupils and if they can relate (and potentially identify) to them in any way. It quickly became clear, however, that the civic/cultural distinction could not be strictly interpreted. Bruter defines certain symbols as civic or cultural, but the interpretation the respondents gave, did not always coincide with that vision. Bruter himself has already indicated the double role symbols can play. This is illustrated by the fact, that the as civic defined Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, is sometimes given a cultural interpretation by the respondents. The same thing can be said of the interpretation of the (civic) European flag. The added value of these focus groups is, however, that they show what specific contexts, within which these young people give meaning to these symbols on both the cultural and civic level, are at play.

For a first indication of a civic identity component, the pictures of José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission and Javier Solana, the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, were shown to the respondents. The results clearly show that these politicians are fairly unknown which indicates the invisibility and the lack of familiar faces of the EU. This makes it harder for them to identify with the EU and hinders the creation of a civic political identity. The second civic symbol presented, is the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. This can be regarded as the civic symbol par excellence since it defines the core of the EU. Most pupils are positive towards the idea of a constitution but interpret its potential role differently. The majority of the respondents give the civic intended symbol indeed a more civic definition. It is seen as a next step towards more political unity, a way of getting more security and certainty and it could enable the EU to play a bigger role on the world stage, but this civic symbol sometimes also gets a cultural interpretation. It would be something that could unite us, Europeans, according to several pupils. Some pupils even give a culturally based argumentation to reject the notion of a European constitution, saying that this would only lead to cultural loss. The European anthem is used as an indicator of a cultural identity component. A lot of the pupils did not know the EU had an anthem, let alone they knew which one. The idea of a European anthem is, however, not completely rejected; the respondents see it as a symbol that could increase feelings of unity. A European anthem seems to receive its more cultural intended meaning.

European and national/regional counterparts: compatible or in competition?

In the last phase of the focus groups, the relation between European identity and its non-European counterparts was discussed. The analysis shows that non-European

identities are stronger present in the minds of our respondents than its European counterpart. This feeling can be illustrated by the following quote (a response on how they would feel if the EU flag was set on fire): "It would be shocking, but it would have more impact if it would be a Belgian or a Flemish flag." A second example can be found in their response to the idea of a European anthem. The anthem, as such, is being positively perceived, but it remains a delicate thing to play such a song after the Belgian anthem (e.g. on a sporting event). This indicates a more emotional attachment to being Belgian than these pupils stated earlier. Other events with a clear European context were found more appropriate (e.g. official gatherings of the Council of the European Union, or big European events, such as '50 years Treaty of Rome') to play this song.

The pupils also think in layers when it comes to their identity. Most of them feel foremost Flemish or Belgian (often first Flemish and then Belgian) and then European. Feeling European is mostly seen as the most distant identity form. It is important to point out that identities are compatible and should not be seen as in competition with one another.

The pupils do acknowledge the possibility of multiple identities. An idea also supported in many theoretical writings (Cerutti 1992; Weiler 1999; Risse 2001). European identity and its national/regional counterparts are not a matter of one *or* the other, but a matter of the one *and* the other. Both identities can exist side by side. That one might be stronger than the other is a theoretical idea (identities are nested) that is thus supported by the findings of other research studies (Risse 2004: 250; Ruiz Jiminez *et al.* 2004: 10).

Conclusion

The main aim of this article is to examine how Flemish young people perceive the EU, if they potentially identify themselves with it and if there is any relation between image of the EU and feelings of belonging to the EU. Although the theoretical literature on identity and identity formation is extensive, its empirical back-up remains rather rare. Therefore, this article aims to shed further empirical light on a predominantly theoretical discussion.

A combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches is, ideally, required to research European identity. This research article has tried to meet those requirements by using a primarily qualitative research design, complemented with a basic quantitative approach, based on a short survey, to study this topic. In further research, however, the research survey could be more comprehensive by, for example, using more questions, a larger sample size, and different countries. This would further broaden the understanding of European identity.

The findings confirm several theoretical principles. First, they underline the importance of contexts and situations in the arising of identities. A European identity is not always present, but rather arises in certain contexts or situations and receives mostly a more cultural interpretation.

Second, this article confirms the theoretical thesis of multiple identities. It is not about choosing one or the other. It is possible for different identities to exist side by side. This does, however, not mean that both identities are equally strong. The students expressed their preferences and hereby confirmed the thesis of nestedness/concentric circles (the inner circle is the strongest identity form, the outer circle is the weakest one) (Risse 2004: 250). European identity constitutes for most of the respondents the outer circle.

Third, this article states that the division between a cultural and civic identity component, as used by Bruter, is not absolute. It is hard and almost impossible to see one element without the other. This was illustrated by the meaning given to cultural/civic symbols by these young people. Their interpretation was clearly not unanimously cultural *or* civic and shows how symbols can play a double role. Based on these findings, it is also clear that there is no such thing as one European identity shared by all, just as there is no single national identity shared by everyone. The identity form is given its own interpretation by each individual (rather civic or cultural or both).

This article sheds a critical light on the conceptualization of European identity, more specifically the idea that one should distinguish a civic and cultural component of European identity. Although the study underlines the value of this divide on a theoretical level, as it makes it possible to surpass the deadlock of cultural versus civic theories, it also shows that the two components are not easily researchable and that further research is needed on how to translate the concept empirically.

On a more empirical level, this research has three focus points. First, it gives more insight into the image the EU has for Flemish young people by using a metaphor analysis. The pupils were asked to compare the EU to an animal and explain why. On the basis of their responses, seven trends can be discerned that give an overview of the different images existing of the EU. These images are fairly positive, with only few comparisons that are fully negative. The trends found, refer to the EU's cooperative nature, its diversity or its flexibility.

Second, the article also looks at what links can be found between images of the EU on the one hand and the level of sense of belonging on the other hand. It was found that particularly the pupils who see the EU as something big and powerful and the ones who pride the EU for its cooperative nature, are the ones claiming to have the highest level of sense of belonging. Almost 75 per cent of the respondents state they feel at least a little sense of belonging. This high percentage has to be put into perspective, however, since the qualitative analysis shows that pupils are not very keen on presenting themselves as European when asked directly. Looking back at the definition of European identity employed by this article, this indicates a rather low psychological existence of the community.

Third, this article distinguishes, based on the focus group discussions, several pitfalls that complicate the process of European identity formation. First of all, there still seems to exist a (mental) gap with Eastern Europe which supports the idea of Mummendey and Waldzus (2004) of the importance of out-group and in-group referencing. Eastern Europe is hereby seen as belonging to the out-group for several respondents. Second, the lack of knowledge and the distant, unknown character of the EU render the identity process more difficult. Third, it is apparently very hard for the respondents to get an idea of what 'being a European' should mean. And fourth, for several students different benefits of the EU (e.g. Euro, open borders) are seen as self-evident and are no longer explicitly linked to the EU, This research finding puts the basic principles of instrumental theories into question. Overall, the results of this article suggest that there is still a long way to go for the EU to find its place in the hearts and minds of young Europeans.

***

References

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities*. London: Verso.

Antaki, C. and S. Widdicombe (1998). *Identity in talk*. London: Sage publications.

Bakke, E. (1995). *Towards a European identity?* Website of the University of Oslo. Available at: http://folk.uio.no/stveb1/Towards_a_European_Identity.pdf, last accessed 29 October 2008.

Bartolini, S. (2002). 'Institutional democratisation and political structuring in the EU. Lessons from the nation-state development', in H. Cavanna (ed.), *Governance, Globalization and the European Union: Which Europe for Tomorrow?* Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Baubock, R. (1997). *Citizenship and national identities in the European Union*. Website of Jean Monnet Papers. Available at: http://www.jeanmonnetprogram.org/papers/97/97-04-.html, last accessed 29 October 2008.

Bruter, M. (2004). 'Civic and Cultural Components of a European Identity: A Pilot Model of Measurement of Citizens' levels of European identity,' in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bruter, M. (2005). *Citizens of Europe? The emergence of a mass European identity*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Castano, E. (2004). 'European identity: a social-psychological perspective,' in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Cerulo, K. (1997). 'Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions', *Annual Review of Sociology,* 23, pp.385-409.

Cerutti, F. (1992). 'Can there be a SupraNational Identity?', *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* 18 (2), pp.147-162.

Cerutti, F. (2006). *Why legitimacy and political identity are connected to each other, especially in the case of the European Union*. Website of ECPR Joint Session of Workshops. Available at: http://www3.unifi.it/dpfilo/upload/sub/Garnet/PaperCeruttiforfinconfSept06.rtf last accessed 28 October 2008.

Cinnirella, M. (1997). 'Towards a European identity? Interactions between the national and European social identities manifested by university students in Britain and Italy', *British Journal of Social Psychology,* 36(1), pp. 19-31.

Citrin, J. and J. Sides (2004). 'More than Nationals: How identity choice matters in the new Europe', in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Commission of the European Communities (2006). *White Paper on a European Communication Policy*. COM (2006) 35 final. Website of DG Communication. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:35:FIN:EN:PDF, last accessed 19 December 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2006). *Communication from the Commission to the Council. The Period of Reflection and Plan D*. COM (2006) 212 final. Website of DG Communication. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0212en01.pdf, last accessed 28 October 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2001). *European Commission White Paper. A new impetus for European Youth*. COM (2001) 681 final. Website of DG for Education and Culture. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2001/com2001_0681en01.pdf, last accessed 19 December 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (n.d.). *Youth policies*. Website of the European Commission. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc23_en.htm, last accessed 28 October 2008.

Cruz, C. (2000). 'Identity and persuasion. How nations remember their pasts and make their futures', *World Politics,* 52, pp. 275-312.
Delanty, G. (1995). *Inventing Europe: Idea, Reality*. London: Macmillan.
Dinan, D. (2004). *Europe Recast. A History of European Union*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Du Bois-Reymond, M. (1998). 'European identity in the Young and Dutch Students' Images of Germany and the Germans', *Comparative Education,* 34 (1), pp.27-40.
Eurobarometer (2005). *Youth takes the floor. Young Europeans' concerns and expectations as to the development of the European Union. Background note based on relevant findings from Eurobarometer data,* Eurobarometer website. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/notes/back_note_en.pdf, last accessed 28 October 2008.
Eurobarometer 68 (2007). *Public Opinion in the European Union*, Eurobarometer website, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb_68_en.pdf, last accessed 18 November 2008.
Fossum, J. E. (2001). *Identity-politics i the European Union*. Website of ARENA working papers, available at: http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/working-papers2001/papers/wp01_17.htm, last accessed 18 November 2008.
Gabel, M. (1997). *Interests and Integration: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion and European Union*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
Garcia, S. (1993). *European identity and the search for legitimacy*. London: Pinter.
Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Herrmann, R. K., T. Risse and M.B. Brewer (2004). *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
Hobsbawm, E. and T. Ranger (1983). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Höjelid, S. (2001). 'European integration and the idea of European identity. Obstacles and possibilities,' in A. Haglund, *Political Change and the European Union*. Lodz: Lodz University Press.
Jamieson, L., *et al* (2005). *Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity*. Website of the university of Edinburg, Sociology department. Available at: http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/youth/, last accessed 31 October 2008.
Karlsson, I. (1999). 'How to define the European identity today and in the future?' in
T. Jansen, *Reflections on European Identity*. n.p.: European Commission.
Kritzinger, S. (2005). 'European identity building under the perspective of efficiency. A multiple identity approach,' *Comparative European Politics,* 3 (1), pp. 50-75.
Laffan, B. (2004). 'The European Union and Its Institutions as "Identity Builders" ', in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
Lecours, A. (2001). 'Political institutions, elites and territorial identity formation in Belgium', *National identities*, 3 (1), pp.51-68.
Morgan, D. and R. Krueger (1993). 'When to use focus groups and why.' in D. Morgan (ed.), *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. London: Sage Publications.
Morgan, D. (1993). *Successful focus groups. Advancing the State of the Art*. London: Sage Publications.
Mummendey, A. and S. Waldzus (2004). 'National Differences and European Plurality: Discrimination or Tolerance between European Countries,' in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
Risse, T. (2001). 'A European identity? Europeanization and the Evolution of Nation-State identities,' in M. Cowles, J. Caparaso and T. Risse (eds), *Transforming Europe. Europeanization and domestic change*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Risse, T. (2004). 'European Institutions and Identity Change: What Have We Learned?', in R. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. Brewer (eds), *Transnational identities. Becoming European in the EU.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Ruiz Jiminez, A. and J. Gorniak and A. Kosic, *et al.* (2004). 'European and national identities in EU's old and new member states: ethnic, civic, instrumental and symbolic components'. *European Integration online papers* (Elop). Available at: http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-011a.htm, last accessed 19 November 2008.

Schmitt, R. (2005). 'Systematic Metaphor Analysis as a Method of Qualitative Research', *The Qualitative Report,* 10 (2), pp.358-394.

Siedentop, L. (2001). *Democracy In Europe.* London: Penguin Books.

Sinnot, R. (2005). 'An evaluation of the measurement of national, subnational and supranational identity in crossnational surveys', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 18 (2), pp.211-223.

Smith, A. D. (1992). 'National identity and the idea of European Unity', *International affairs*, 68 (1), pp.55-76.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and Intergroup Relations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

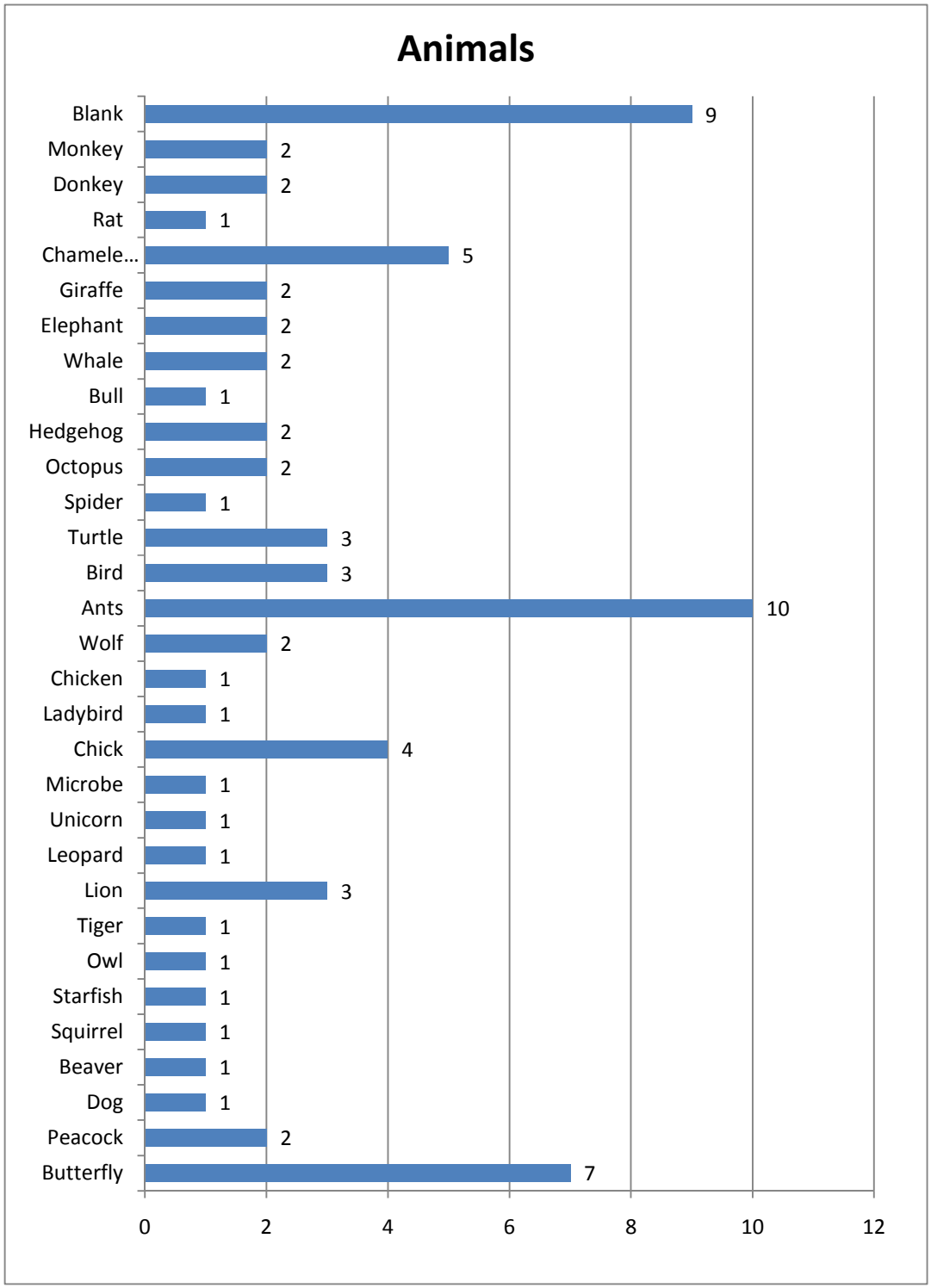
Tsafos, N. (2006). 'Growing up a European?', *Sais Review,* XXVI (2), pp.181.

Weiler, J.H.H. (1999). *The Constitution of Europe. "Do the New Clothes have an Emperor?" and other essays on European integration.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widdicombe, S. (1998). 'Identity as an Analysts' and a Participants' Resource,' in Ch. Antaki & S. Widdicombe (eds), *Identity in talk.* London: Sage Publications.

***

Annex 1: List of animal names used in short survey



***

Annex 2: sense of belonging - image of the EU

Sense of belonging **Image EU**	TNSB*	NSB	LSB	SB	SSB	VSB	Blank	**Total (N)**
Trend Diversity	0	3	5	0	2	0		10
Trend Development	0	2	4	1	0	0		7
Trend Little	1	2	2	4	1	0		10
Trend Big	1	0	6	4	2	0		13
Trend Flexible	0	2	1	2	0	0		5
Trend Cooperation	0	2	8	3	1	0		14
Trend Unknown	0	1	3	0	0	0		4
Negative	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
Blank/Missing Data	2	2	3	0	1	1		9
Total	**5**	**15**	**33**	**14**	**7**	**1**	**1**	**76**

* Abbreviations are used. TNSB = Totally no sense of belonging; NSB = No sense of belonging; LSB = Little sense of belonging; SB = Sense of belonging; SSB = Strong sense of belonging; VSB = Very strong sense of belonging

***

Minority Language Protection in Italy: Linguistic Minorities and the Media

Aline Sierp

Abstract

This article deals with the Italian case of minority language protection in the media. After providing a general introduction to the development of the protection of minority languages in Europe in general and of minority language broadcast media in Italy in particular, the article focuses on the role that mass media can play in the preservation or weakening of minority languages. By comparing different measures of protection adopted by national and regional authorities in Italy, the article aims to illustrate how these measures can be translated into different levels of development of broadcast media provisions for linguistic minorities. The article explores some of the effects different protective measures can have on the survival, status and economic conditions of the linguistic minority on the one hand, and the relationship with the state and the majority group on the other.

AT LEAST 40 MILLION CITIZENS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) REGULARLY use a regional and lesser-used language,[1] accounting for more than 60 European regional or lesser-used language communities. Their recognition has come a long way. In the past, regional languages were seen as a threat to national integrity, were discouraged and even suppressed. During the 18th and 19th centuries in particular, the establishment of standardised national languages and universal education, the press and publication of books in these languages, followed the idea of the French Revolution "one state = one nation = one language" (Trim 2001: 53). In more recent times language has often been used as an instrument for enforcing nationalism and is seen as the cause for ethnic disputes resulting in intolerance and conflict. Policy makers often see multilingualism as a divisive, inefficient, useless and expensive force. Nevertheless, the idea that regional and minority languages spoken in European regions are an integral part of and enrich the European cultural heritage as a whole, is slowly starting to gain more ground.

[1] There is considerable debate about the politically correct term to be used for minority languages. Regional and lesser-used language is the term preferred by the European Parliament. In this article the terms 'linguistic minority', 'minority language' and 'regional or lesser-used language' will be used interchangeably.

ISSN 1815-347X online. Sierp, A. (2008). 'Minority Language Protection in Italy: Linguistic Minorities and the Media', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 303-321. Available: http://www.jcer.net/ojs.index.php/jcer/article/view/120/117

However, minority language protection is not always guaranteed. Legislation relating to minorities varies considerably among different European states. Even within states legislation concerning different minorities might not always be coherent across different regions, provinces or federal states. The latter is particularly evident in Italy.

With twelve languages officially recognised by the Italian state, Italy can boast the greatest diversity of regional and minority languages in Western Europe.[2] Its legal framework of protection is, however, poorly developed and changes significantly from region to region. This article discusses these differences by analysing the various legislative tools at European, national and regional levels concerning one particular aspect of minority language protection: access to the representation in and the production of broadcast media. It evaluates the application of the legal framework concerning the protection of linguistic rights relating to the media sector, which has been drawn up by the EU and the Council of Europe. The legal framework is then tested by juxtaposing it with the actual situation of three different linguistic minorities in Italy, namely the Arberesh-, the Friulian-, and the German-speaking minority. These three languages have been selected because they represent three different levels of protection which the Italian state accords to its linguistic minorities. The overall purpose of the article is to shed light on the questions: (1) are linguistic minorities in Italy are adequately represented in the media? and (2) are their rights sufficiently protected by the proper application of European, national and regional legal provisions?

Minority languages and the mass media

According to the Council of Europe,[3] mass media plays a key role in the dynamic process of defining, preserving or weakening minority languages. It can contribute to ethnic cohesion and cultural preservation within a state by fostering the development of a spirit of tolerance and receptiveness towards linguistic pluralism. The media is, however, a two-edged sword. On the one hand its diffusion and the cultural homogenisation accompanying it, leads to the weakening of cultural plurality. On the other hand, it offers minorities an important tool for expression since mass media belongs to one of the key sectors of contemporary society and is important for the social and cultural reproduction of a community (see Cuatrecasas 2002).

The media allows minorities to bring their cause to the attention of the public by direct recourse to a medium reaching a big group of people of

[2] These 12 officially recognised languages are: French (120,000 speakers), Occitan (50,000 speakers), Franco-Provençal (70,000 speakers), German (295,000 speakers), Ladin (28,000 speakers), Friulian (526,000 speakers), Slovene (85,000 speakers), Sardinian (175,000 speakers), Catalan (18,000 speakers), Arberesh (a variant of contemporary Albanian) (100,000 speakers), Greek (3,900 speakers) and Croatian (1,700 speakers); all languages are protected by national law - 482/1999 'Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche' (Law governing the protection of historical linguistic minorities) , adopted on 15 December 1999 and published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana* n. 297 on 20 December 1999.

[3] See Council of Europe, *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Explanatory Report*, ETS No. 148, available at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Reports/Html/148.htm, last accessed 20 December 2008.

different backgrounds in a very short time. The media helps to reconnect speakers to their language and culture. Media use can improve the skills of imperfect speakers, languages can be modernized by the addition of new technical vocabulary related to contemporary life and a standardization of language use can take place. Furthermore, the public presence and validation of minority languages used in the media has a considerable symbolic significance and is important for their survival. The use of minority languages in the media adds credence and importance to the minority community and may contribute in a subtle way to its determination to resist further assimilation to the majority group. Some scholars argue that it can even become a democratic tool by encouraging people to play an active role in the future of their region and their locality (Riggins 1992: 283-284). Furthermore, majority groups can use minority media to communicate directly with minority groups. Representing a minority community from within and through the medium of their language can prevent the emergence and spread of prejudices and stereotypes and might foster the identification of the majority group with the minority one. The media, therefore, can contribute to increased cultural dialogue through increasing awareness of the existing common roots and heritage of different communities living in the same territory (Cormack 2003).

The effects for the nation state might also be positive. Subsidizing minority media does not necessarily fragment the nation state but can help to better integrate minorities into national life. A positive attitude by the government might encourage minorities to perceive the state as a benevolent institution and prevent reactions in form of a violent secession (Jokovcic 2002: 7).

The right to minority language media access must be understood as part of a broader right, namely the right to participate in cultural life, a right that is part of the Universal Human Rights canon.[4] The right to plurality of information on the one hand and the right to equal representation of different groups in society on the other should not be an issue of contestation in democratic societies, which guarantee equality for all their citizens. It should be the democratic responsibility of policy makers, media corporations and journalists in charge of news and information in the media to provide a true reflection of the diversity of the society concerned (Frachon & Vargaftig 1995: 9). Legal provisions for the protection of linguistic minorities in the media are consequently expected to be fairly well developed. The reality, however, looks different.

The European level

Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the cornerstones of the EU, enshrined in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000), which states "The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity". European institutions have confirmed in numerous instances the

[4] See especially Article 1 of the 1992 United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, adopted by General Assembly Resolution 47/135, available at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm, last accessed 20 December 2008 .

importance the EU attaches to the media's role in this respect. A European Parliament report on languages of minorities in the EU states that "[…] the media play an important role in safeguarding and promoting the knowledge and use of regional and lesser-used languages" (European Parliament 2003: 7). A similar thought is expressed in the Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union (1997), which states in the Protocol on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States that "…the system of public broadcasting in the member states is directly related to the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society and to the need to preserve media pluralism".[5] Of further importance in this respect are the two resolutions on the Arfé reports in 1981 and 1983,[6] and the resolution on the Kuijpers report of 1987,[7] entailing detailed requests regarding the mass media and paving the way for action to be taken in support of minority languages at EU level.

The EU, however, is not the only supranational body expressing support for minority language media. On 26 October 1994 the European Broadcasting Union, the largest association of national broadcasters in the world, adopted an important declaration stating: "It (the service) must serve the entire population, offering programming for all sections of the population, including minorities. Therefore, it is essential that we make every effort to reflect the cultural, racial and linguistically diverse character of our societies accurately in our programmes and the workforce" (European Broadcasting Union 1994). Another example of the growing concern about minority languages in Europe is the publication of guidelines on the use of minority languages in the broadcast media by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (2003). In addition to that, the Council of Europe passed numerous recommendations regarding minority media provisions.[8] Most of them relate access to minority language media directly to the main principles of the Council of Europe which include human rights, democracy and equality. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe stipulates in a recommendation on *The Media and the Promotion of a Culture of Tolerance* that "…while public service broadcasters have a special commitment to promote a culture of tolerance and understanding, the broadcasting media as a whole are a potent force for creating an atmosphere in which intolerance can be challenged" (Council of Europe 1997: 111).

The EU, the Council of Europe and the European Broadcasting Union clearly support minority language production as illustrated by the selection of declarations, recommendations and resolutions cited above. The generally positive attitude of different European institutions towards minority language media has been equally translated into the funding of several

[5] See 'Protocol on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States' *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and related acts*, published in the Official Journal C 340, 10 November 1997, available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11997D/htm/11997D.html, last accessed 20 December 2008 .
[6] See European Parliament (1981). *Resolution on a Community Charter of regional languages and cultures and on a Charter of rights of ethnic minorities*, adopted by the European Parliament on 16 October 1981
[7] See European Parliament (1987). *Resolution on the languages and cultures of regional and ethnic minorities in the European Community*, adopted by the European Parliament on 30 October 1987
[8] See list of recommendations passed by the Council of Europe in Annex 2

activities promoting minority media production. The development of the EU support programme for the European audiovisual industry MEDIA Programme, the setting up of the European initiative Public Broadcasting for a Multicultural Europe (PBME), the approval of the "Television Without Frontiers" Directive (TVWF Directive) (European Economic Community 1989) and the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (Council of Europe 1989), which enshrined the principle of cross-border-broadcasting, are just some examples illustrating support on European level. At present however, there is no legal framework on EU level relating to regional and lesser-used languages. Following the principle of subsidiarity, the responsibility for the substantive implementation of minority language rights is considered to reside at member state level in the first instance (Nic Shuibhne 2002: 293). Another problem in this context is that even though the protection of minorities is one of the conditions for economic co-operation and membership, the effectiveness of EU policies is significantly hampered by the absence of a permanent monitoring mechanism and a lack of clarity with regard to the standards a given country is supposed to respect in this field (European Parliament 2003). Most states have taken legal precautions to ensure that the multilingual policy of the European institutions do not translate into multilingual obligations at state level.[9] Italy is a good example for illustrating this problem as the following analysis will show.

The reluctance of many member states to develop comprehensive measures for the legal protection of minority languages becomes evident when looking at two of the most important instruments for the protection of minority languages in Europe provided by the Council of Europe: the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Charter) (Council of Europe 1992)[10] and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Convention) (Council of Europe 1995).[11] Both texts dedicate several articles to media provisions in minority languages, which should offer the base for protection of linguistic minorities in Europe. The scope of both instruments, however, is limited for several reasons.

The objectives and principles in both Council of Europe Charter and Convention are too broadly defined in order to allow for the creation of different policies to address individual minority situations on national level. Consequently, it lies within the jurisdiction of nation states to translate these guiding principles into concrete provisions. As a result, the extent of a country's commitment tends to vary significantly since this technical, non-confrontational approach offers too much leeway for nation states that are reluctant to implement the Charter or the Convention into national law. This

[9] One prominent example is France where a strict interpretation of the principles of equality and national sovereignty prevented the Legislator from granting any form of legal protection to linguistic minorities. In 1992 a clause was added to Article 2 of the Constitution stating that the language of the Republic shall be French. On the basis of this disposition, the Constitutional Council decided in 1999 (decision n. 99-412, 15 June 1999) that the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages could not be ratified by France, because of its incompatibility with the French Constitution (see Benoît Romer 2001).

[10] It was adopted by the Council of Europe on 25 June 1992 and opened for signature by the Member States in Strasbourg, on 05 November 1992 and entered into force on 1 March 1998.

[11] It was signed on 1 February 1995 and came into effect in February 1998 after its ratification by twelve countries.

room for interpretation is illustrated by the following example which is focused on provisions regarding the media: "The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media …" (Council of Europe 1992: 13).

Another problem is that the lack of a reporting system does not provide for any enforcement mechanisms in the case of non-compliance by the nation states either. Clearer guidelines and enforcement measures are needed though to ensure the functioning of both instruments and to transform them into a reference legal standard for nation states. According to Snežana Trifunovska (2004), vaguely formulated provisions and little-developed monitoring mechanisms are the result of (1) the complexity of the problems related to the protection of minorities and the impossibility of formulating norms which would be applicable to all situations, and (2) the fact that most state parties perceive a certain danger in having clearly formulated standards. This might explain why many states have signed the Charter but have not ratified it yet despite being in the position to do so. One of these countries is Italy (Council of Europe 2002a). Before turning to the reasons for this, the policy analysis addresses the situation on the national and regional level. The case of Italy represents an example for a situation that could also be applied to other European countries.

The national level

In Italy there are a number of important laws governing the introduction of minority languages in the mass media. The main law in this context is Law n. 482/1999 'Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche' (Law governing the protection of historical linguistic minorities)[12] stating in Article 12 that the state assures the protection of minorities and stipulates that regions and local authorities can draw up special conventions with the Italian public service broadcaster Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) for the production of programmes in minority languages. The other main legislative text is the Contratto di servizio (Service contract)[13] between the Ministry of Communication and RAI, spelled out on 14 February 2003, in which RAI underlines its commitment regarding the protection of minorities (Ministero della Giustizia 2003). Furthermore, there is Article 6 of the Public Radio and Television Broadcasting Service Act n. 103/1975 which states that a certain percentage of television and radio broadcasting time must be reserved for ethnic and linguistic groups,[14] and Article 1 of the Communications Act n. 249/1997 laying down the conventions whereby the minority programmes were to be funded. Of importance is also the Act n. 112/2004 confirming

[12] This is the main law protecting Italy's minority languages. It was promulgated on 15 December 1999 and published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana* n. 297 on 20 December 1999.
[13] A special contract drawn up between a governmental institution and an operator who is asked to provide a public service.
[14] See Public Radio and Television Broadcasting Service Act of 14 April 1975, n. 103 'Nuove norme in materia di diffusione radiofonica e televisiva', *Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 102,* published on 17 April 1975.

that the general public radio and television service guarantees access to programmes for minorities.[15]

A majority of these laws, however, have only been fully applied to the Province of Bolzano for programmes in German and Ladin, the Region of Valle d'Aosta for programmes in French and in the Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia for programmes in Slovenian and Italian. The other eight linguistic minorities in Italy still do not have any programmes in their mother-tongue, confirming that current media provisions do not always reflect the size of a minority language group, but rather its strength in the political, cultural and social life of the region concerned. Another important factor is the relationship to neighbouring states in which the minority language in question is the national language of the state. The geographical proximity to France, Germany and Slovenia results in better media services due to greater control by the kin-state on the one hand and the possibility to receive broadcasting directly from the neighbouring state on the other (McGonagle *et al.* 2003).

It is surprising that both the Italian government and RAI exclusively make reference to provisions regarding the Slovenian-, French-, German- and Ladin-speaking minorities only and never mention their obligations concerning other minority language groups. It is also interesting to note that no obligations to broadcast specific programming aimed at the protection of minority languages have ever bound other broadcasters besides RAI (McGonagle *et al.* 2003). According to the Club dei Giornalisti Arbëreshë[16], RAI has never implemented law n. 482/1999 'Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche' (Law governing the protection of historical linguistic minorities), which obliges it to transmit programmes in all minority languages. In addition to this failed adaptation, Article 12 of the Contratto di servizio (Service contract), which states that RAI has to draw up conventions allowing regions and municipalities to decide on the language of programming, has also never been applied.

One of the reasons for this voluntary negligence might be the fact that the wording of the different legislative texts is kept very vague. Article 12 of the Contratto di servizio between the Ministry of Communication and RAI limits itself by saying that it would determine the seat of production responsible for activities related to the protection of minority languages within 90 days (instead of determining directly the seat and amount of protection as has been asked for in the Lettera del Regolamento[17] 345/2001) (Ministero della Giustizia 2001). Furthermore the so-called Commissione mista,[18] which was set up on 5 May 2003 and is composed of members of the Ministry of Communication and RAI, has yet not come up with concrete solutions on how to introduce minority language media into the mainstream media.

[15] See Act of 03 May 2004, n. 112, 'Basic rules on the arrangement of the radio and television system and the RAI-Radiotelevisione italiana Spa, as well as delegation to the Government of the enactment of a consolidation act on radio and television', *Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 104*, published on 5 May 2004 – Ordinary Supplement n. 82.
[16] An association of Arberesh-speaking journalists promoting the use and diffusion of the Arberesh language especially in the media.
[17] Document stating laws and regulations.
[18] A commission meeting regularly to discuss the implementation of the Contratto di servizio.

Minorities are effectively excluded from a right conferred to them by Article 6 of the Italian Constitution (Camera dei Deputati 1984: 2). According to Domenico Morelli, the fact that so little has moved so far is again related to the "political unwillingness of the government" (Morelli 2005). The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention[19] noted this attitude of the Italian government as well, asking it "to make full use of the new legal possibilities afforded by Law n. 482/1999, in consultation with the minorities and the franchise holder concerned" (Council of Europe 2002b: 13) .

There seem to be two main problems: One of them concerns funding. Even though the RAI received over 14 million Euros from the government to fund programmes in minority languages, the regional offices are starved of funding (Trebo 1999). There is also a point of divergence concerning funding: while the minorities contend that broadcasting of programmes in minority languages is embodied in the public service obligation of the RAI, the latter bases its position on the idea that it is only required to produce and broadcast programmes in minority languages when such programmes are financed under specific agreements with the state or the regions concerned. The second problem is that there is nobody responsible in the RAI head office in Rome for the existing RAI minority language programmes. The minority language radio and TV production departments seem to be largely just appendages to the main departments (Mayr 2000).

Since the RAI is a public institution with public duties regarding all citizens, it should have the duty to inform all Italian citizens. It should also have the duty to support the communication exchange between majority and minority groups. A majority of Italians are not aware of the diversity of languages and cultures of different minority groups in Italy. This could be changed by a serious commitment of the state and the public broadcaster. It is quite worrying to note that many minorities are excluded from a right which should not even be contested in a political system based on Universal Human Rights and equality of its citizens.

At least theoretically the RAI seems to be aware about its role in this context. Ennio Chiodi, who was the director of the news programmes TG3 (Telegiornale 3) and TGR (Telegiornale Regionale)[20] between 1998 and 2002, said: "The commitment of the state is an unquestionable democratic duty, which is furthermore provided for by Article six of our Constitution. I believe that by contributing to the protection of different histories, languages and cultures, by fully respecting the rights of those populations, by [promoting] mutual knowledge and tolerance, we can demonstrate advanced civilised attitudes, that provide an enrichment to all of us" (Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker 1999, author's own translation). This interpretation, however, has not been fully translated into Italian politics regarding minority language provisions in the media. This can be seen in an exemplary way when looking at the situation of three different linguistic minorities in Italy: the Arberesh-

[19] The Advisory Committee is composed of 18 independent and impartial experts appointed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and evaluates the adequacy of the implementation of the Framework Convention by national governments.
[20] TG3 is one of the main national news programmes. TGR is the regional news programme. Both are transmitted via RAI.

speaking minority, the Friulian-speaking minority and the German-speaking minority. These three languages represent three different states of affairs when it comes to minority language protection.

The regional level

The Arberesh-speaking minority is an example of Italy's smaller minorities, which is afforded very little protection. Because the different communities are spread out over a wide area covering different regions,[21] they fall under different regional legislation, which renders its active protection extremely difficult. Furthermore, the mainly oral tradition and the existence of several varieties of the language hamper its written use and its diffusion in everyday life. In such a context the development of minority language media would be especially advantageous. Greater diffusion of mass media could constitute a very important tool in the fight against the impoverishment of the language and could foster its standardization and official recognition (Haf Gruffydd Jones 1998). The Arberesh-speaking minority, however, is almost non-existent in the national media sector. Traditionally, its presence in the mass media is limited to private initiatives by cultural organisations that receive a small subsidy from local authorities. There is no daily newspaper and no television programme in Arberesh for example and only two private radio stations broadcast some programmes in the minority language (Euromosaic 2005).

The Friulian-speaking minority[22] is in a slightly better situation because it has more speakers and fights actively for its social and political rights. However, national legislation has not yet been fully applied on regional level. This is especially true regarding media provisions in Friulian, which are kept to a minimum. More space dedicated to the Friulian language and culture in the media would have - like in the Arberesh case - a standardizing effect and could strengthen the existing language. In a region, where 95 per cent of speakers of Friulian are illiterate in their own language, the media could play a very important role in this respect (Haf Gruffydd Jones 1998). Initiatives have been very rare up to now though, despite the fact that the legal base for the setting up of minority language media does exist. It is constituted by the regional law n. 15/1996, 'Norme per la tutela e la promozione della lingua e della cultura friulane e istituzione del servizio per le lingue regionali e minoritarie' (Law governing the protection and the promotion of the Friulian language and culture and the arrangement of services for regional and minority languages), Titolo I, Capo I, Art. 10 lettera(b) and Titolo II, Art. 19 lettera(b) and especially Titolo III, Art. 29 1 and 2.

[21] It is spoken in about 49 towns and villages in seven regions (Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicilia) by around 100,000 people.
[22] It is spoken in the provinces of Gorizia, Pordenone and Udine in the Autonomous Region Friuli – Venezia Giulia and of the province of Venice in the Veneto region by around 526,000 people.

The German-speaking minority[23] is a good example of a minority that is protected only in certain provinces and regions of Italy. The German-speaking minority in the province of Bolzano for example is one of the best-protected minority languages in Italy and in Europe since it can count on the support of neighbouring states speaking the same language. It boasts several laws designed especially for its protection and possesses a well-developed media landscape (Alcock 1991; Feiler 1996: 290). The German-speaking minorities in the province of Trento, in the Valle d'Aosta, in Piedmont, in Friuli-Venezia Giulia and in the Veneto Region, however, are not protected and have hardly any presence in the media. Since the German minority has access to programming from Germany and Austria, Italian authorities might not see the need to establish an Italian channel broadcasting in German even though this right has been laid down clearly in the Oslo Recommendations of February 1998 regarding the linguistic rights of national minorities: "…access to programming in the language of persons belonging to a national minority, transmitted from another State or from the 'kin-State', should not justify a diminution of programme time allotted to the minority on the public media of the State in which its members live" (OSCE 1998: 15).

The way forward: some ideas

The three-levelled policy analysis of this article demonstrates that the legal framework for the protection of linguistic minority media is in place but that there are still huge problems in the actual implementation of provisions regulating the media sector in particular. The question arising is therefore: what is needed to effectively put the legal framework into practice, not only in Italy but also in other European countries?

First of all, to improve the situation for linguistic minorities in the mass media, there needs to be a greater commitment by the state on the one hand and by the public broadcasting companies on the other. In Italy, in particular, the legal framework has to be improved and the existing one respected and properly implemented. Only if the Italian government translates the provisions of Law n. 482/1999 'Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche' (Law governing the protection of historical linguistic minorities) into action and fully implements Article 6 of the Italian Constitution, will all language minorities get access to RAI programmes in their own language.

Besides improving the legal framework, there are several other areas in which national and local authorities could take action to improve the

[23] The majority of the German-speaking minority lives in the Autonomous Region of Trentino-Alto Adige. Linguistic islands speaking a Germanic variety can also be found in the whole Alpine area, usually located in isolated valleys (in Valle d'Aosta and Piedmont: Walser) and in the regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto (Cimbrian, Mocheni and various Carinthian communities). The number of German speakers in South Tyrol lies at around 287,503, accounting for approximately 68 per cent of the population. In the province of Trento about 1,370 people speak a German variety, in the province of Udine about 2,000, in the Veneto region 1,680 and in Valle d'Aosta and the province of Vercelli 1,850.

situation of minority language protection in the media. For example, financial pressure on the regional offices could be somewhat alleviated through the improvement of a transmitter network of multi-lingual border areas to enable them to receive foreign media programmes. Public broadcasters could also try to operate more across regional boundaries within the country, drawing on the wealth of regional issues and contributing to the richness of the media landscape in general. If local stations formed networks, they would also have a nation-wide impact (Noël 1993: 20). Another idea is the transformation of one of the television networks into a local service network, without jeopardizing the unitary nature of the public service. In this context existing regional production sites could serve as examples for the setting up of new regional stations (Trebo 1999).

At the same time there should be more involvement of minorities in the production of programmes and more attention should be paid to the allocation of timeslots for programming at reasonable times of the day. Mechanisms could be put in place to ensure that the public media programming developed by or on behalf of national minorities reflects the interests and desires of the community's members and is seen by them as independent. A first step into this direction could be made by appointing a member of staff in the public broadcast head office, who is exclusively responsible for minority language programmes. The non-discriminatory hiring of persons belonging to national minorities to work in the media could contribute to the representation and objectivity of the media (Mayr 2000). The training of media professionals with knowledge of minority languages is important in this context. Minority language media is often run by volunteers who do not possess any specific skills in this field. To be able to produce the same variety and quality of national programmes in the majority language, members of minority groups must have the possibility to get adequate training (Vargaftig 1997: 21).

But it is not only the public broadcasting company that could improve its service. Also local entities, regional and provincial administrations working in this area should become more involved. The state has a duty in this respect since minority languages usually do not attract much interest from private operators. They have to be able to count on state support if they do not want to be left at the mercy of market forces (Jones 2004). Because minority media produce for a smaller market in comparison to the national producers, the state has to counterbalance the disadvantages resulting from this with financial help.

New forms of electronic media (Internet radio for example or the World Wide Web in general) offer new possibilities for the active participation of minorities as well. They are largely unfettered at present by the sort of controls that govern the conventional media, reach wide audiences and offer, especially to minorities living scattered in different regions, the possibility to produce programmes at low cost which can then be received in the whole territory (Vargaftig 1997: 32).

The way forward: limitations

What remains to be asked is where the limitations of those measures lie. While the positive effects of support for minority language media are evident (see paragraph on "Minority languages and the mass media"), its negative side-effects are much more present in public opinion. This partly explains the reasons why minority language protection has not yet made much progress. There is still the widespread opinion among political elites that acting against public opinion can pose risks to public support and re-election. The reason for liberal opposition to the demands of ethnic and national minorities lies in a very practical concern for the stability of liberal states. The fear of losing national sovereignty to a European institution is another reason for nation states not to implement the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Cuatrecasas 2002: 21).

Another reason is the apparent disinterest many states display when it comes to the protection of minority languages. During the UniDem Seminar Self-Government, Territorial Integrity and Protection of Minorities held in Lausanne from 25 to 27 April 1996, Sergio Bartole affirmed that "Linguistic minorities are not a main problem for the Italian society. They exist only in some border regions of Italy" (Bartole 1996: 23) At the same time the Italian government interpreted the protection of minorities as being the exclusive responsibility of the state and refused any type of initiative taken up by the regions, hampering an effective application of the principle of subsidiarity (Cisilino 2001: 12).

The negative attitude of the state towards minority language protection often coincides with public opinion within society.[24] In most European countries with minority populations, being able to speak the majority language was associated with modernity and development whereas speaking a dialect or a minority language was regarded as an expression of backwardness and poverty. Those prejudices are still prevailing in most societies and result in very centralized linguistic politics.

Legal measures such as the ones described above, cannot solve the problem of prevailing prejudices. Willingness to apply rules and regulations already existing on European, national or regional level and the propensity to push forward the development of new ones, depends largely on the attitude speakers of minority languages have towards their culture and on the approach the surrounding society adopts towards them. Social and political recognition emanates from intercultural understanding and dialogue, to which the media in turn could contribute constructively. And here the circle closes: The development of minority language media is dependent on the effective application of legal measures, which, in turn, are dependent on public support. Public support, again, is dependent on a positive attitude of the public, which could be fostered by the development of minority language media.

[24] See studies carried out within the Euromosaic project, available at http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/

Conclusions

Following the results of the analysis said the conclusion can be drawn that even though the idea that regional and minority languages spoken in Europe are an integral part of the European cultural heritage, effective protection still has a long way to go. This is especially true regarding the representation and active participation of minorities in the media. Mass media play a decisive role in preserving minority languages offering an important tool of expression and constituting a fundamental component of the human right to equal participation in public discourse.

In a world where globalisation and the expansion of technology create standardised social models, the preservation of minority languages is one important aspect of the protection of a rich European heritage. This idea, however, has not yet been fully translated into concrete measures of legal protection on national level. Even though respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the cornerstones of the EU and has been addressed in various resolutions and recommendations by EU institutions and other European bodies, a common European standard for minority language protection is still lacking. This can be attributed to the fact that the EU does not have the necessary force of law and that its member states have been very reluctant to translate EU policies into national laws and obligations. The role the EU currently plays is clearly not adequate if it is truly committed to upholding Europe's linguistic diversity.

Nevertheless, there are some effective instruments of protection on European level. One of them is the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Council of Europe 1999) drawn up by the Council of Europe. It is quite broad in scope but contains detailed obligations concerning the representation and participation of minorities in public life and in particular in the mass media. The other important instrument of protection is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe 1992). It is a tool at the disposal of states designed to pave the way for the better preservation of linguistic diversity in Europe and provides states with a legal framework within which media can work. Many European states, however, have not yet ratified the Charter even though they are in the position to do so, among them Italy.

The protection of minority languages has always been a difficult topic in Italy.[25] Relatively few legislative texts relate to its numerous linguistic minorities. Political opposition to the drawing up of a set of comprehensive laws or the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe 1992) has always been very high and concrete application of existing laws minimal. Also, the Framework

[25] Having one national language was a very important aspect of the unification of Italy. Standard Italian has always been presented as a unifying force even though one has to keep in mind that only at the end of the 19th century a standard form (deriving from the Tuscan-Florentine dialect) started to diffuse throughout the whole peninsula as a result of the influence of education and the media. To be able to speak Italian was associated with modernity and development whereas speaking one of the numerous Italian dialects was an expression of poverty. Those prejudices are still prevailing in Italian society and are the result of very centralized linguistic politics.

Convention (Council of Europe 1999) has only been implemented to a certain extent. Protective measures usually concern only the French-, German-, Slovene-, and Ladin-speaking minorities who benefit from support from neighbouring countries. The protection of other minority languages is hampered by a general lack of subsidiarity on a regional level and missing financial resources on a national level. This is especially true for provisions in the media sector. Laws governing broadcasting in minority languages have been fully applied only in the Province of Bolzano, in the Valle d'Aosta and in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (for the Slovene minority).

To improve the situation of linguistic minorities in the mass media there needs to be more commitment from the state and the regional authorities on the one hand and public broadcasting companies on the other. Media in minority languages cannot replace or substitute language use within the family and the community. Its use in the mass media is not a sufficient condition in itself to change the precarious situation in which some linguistic minorities find themselves, but it is part of the range of means that could help them conquer a wider audience and to escape marginalization. The ultimate purpose of minority language media is the peaceful preservation of the linguistic and cultural identity of a population that has been put in a threatened position by political and economic factors. European governments should see the existence of minorities on their territory as a perfectly normal expression of Europe's cultural diversity, which constitutes an enrichment of, and not a threat to, a nation's integrity.

***

References

Alcock, A. (1991). 'Italy - The South Tyrol' in C. Palley (ed), *Minorities and autonomy in Western Europe. A Minority Rights Group Report*. Manchester: Manchester Free Press.

Bartole, S.. (1996). *Territorial Autonomy and Protection of Minorities. The Situation in Italy Local,* paper presented during the UniDem Seminar 'Self-Government, Territorial Integrity and Protection of Minorities' from 25. - 27.04.1996 in Lausanne. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Document, Restricted, CDL-UDLAU (96) 5rev.

Benoît Romer, F. (2001). 'Les langues officieuses de la France', *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, 45.

Brezigar, B. (2004). 'Linguistic Diversity, Minority Languages and Minorities in the new EU Constitutional Treaty', *Journal of Ethnic Studies,* 44, pp.18-29.

Camera dei Deputati, *Costituzione italiana*. Available at: http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/99482l.htm, accessed on 22 February 2008.

Cisilino, W. (2001). *La Tutela delle Minoranze Linguistiche, Analisi della normativa statale e regionale, con particolare riguardo alla lingua friulana*. Udine: Consorzio Universitario del Friuli.

Club dei Giornalisti Arbëreshë (2005). *Il servizio pubblico radiotelevisivo e l'emittenza privata per la salvaguardia delle minoranze linguistiche storiche, attuazione legge 482/99 – idee, proposte, progetti*, presented during the conference on 5 February 2005 in Lungro. Available at: http://www.arbitalia.it/stampa/klubi_gazetarvet_arbereshe/2005/febbraio05.htm, accessed on 03 March 2008.

Coluzzi, P. (2004). *Regional and Minority Languages in Italy. A General Introduction on the Present Situation and a Comparison of Two Case Studies: Language Planning for Milanese (Western Lombard) and Friulian,* Ciemen Barcelona Working Paper 14, available at: http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/pdf/wp14-def-ang.pdf, last accessed 10 December 2008.

Coluzzi, P. (2006). 'Minority Language Planning and Micronationalism in Italy: the Cases of Lombardy and Friuli', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 27 (6).

Cormack, M. (2003). *Developing Minority Language Media Studies,* paper presented on 8 April 2003 during the Mercator International Symposium held in Aberystwyth. Available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/general/papers/mercSym_03-04-08/CormackText.rtf , accessed on 24 February 2008.

Council of Europe (1989). *European Convention on Transfrontier Television*, available at http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/132.htm, accessed on 20 February 2008

Council of Europe (1992). *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. Available at http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm.

Council of Europe (1995). *Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities. Strasbourg*, 1.II.1995. Available at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/157.htm, accessed 10 December 2008.

Council of Europe (1999). *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Collected Texts*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. Also available at http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/157.htm.

Council of Europe (2000). *1st Biennial Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Parliamentary Assembly on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, presented on 18 October 2000, Council of Europe Document Doc. 8879.

Council of Europe (2002a). *2nd Biennial Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Parliamentary Assembly on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, presented on 11 September 2002, Council of Europe Document Doc. 9540.

Council of Europe (2002b). *Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Opinion on Italy*, adopted on 14 September 2001, Council of Europe Document ACFC/INF/OP/I(2002)007.

Council of Europe (n.d.), *Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe*. Available at: http://www.coe.int/T/CM/WCD/advSearch_en.asp#, accessed on 2 February 2008.

Council of Europe (n.d.), *Resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly*. Available at: http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/ATListing_E.asp , accessed on 2 February 2008.

Council of Europe (n.d.), *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Explanatory Report*, ETS No. 148. Available at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Reports/Html/148.htm, accessed on 02 February 2008

Cuatrecasas, L. (2002). *Linguistic Diversity: a Challenge for European Cities and Regions*, *Studies and texts No.74*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing,

Euromosaic, *Albanian*. Available at: http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/homean/index1.html, accessed on 5 March 2008.

European Broadcasting Union (1994). *Declaration on the role of public service broadcasters in a multiracial, multicultural and multifaith Europe*, adopted by the EBU Television Programme Committee at its sixty-sixth meeting in Geneva, 25-26 October 1994

European Economic Community (1989) *Television Without Frontiers Directive 89/552/EEC*. Available at http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l24101.htm, accessed 10 February 2008.

European Parliament (2003). *Report with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser-used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity* (2003/2057(INI)), Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport, Rapporteur: Michl Ebner, published on 14 July 2003, A5-0271/2003.

European Parliament, *Resolutions of the European Parliament*. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/search/ta/perform.do?query=Resolutions&language=EN, accessed on 10 February 2008.

European Union, *EU Language Policies*. Available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/policy/index_en.html, accessed on 12 February 2008.

Feiler, M. (1996). 'Südtirol – Lösungsmodell für Minderheitenkonflikte?', *Aussenpolitik,* 47 (3), pp.288-299.

Frachon, C. and M. Vargaftig (1995). *European Television, Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities*. London: John Libbey & Company Ltd.

Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, *Dichiarazione di Ennio Chiodi, direttore della Testata Unificata TG3-TGR*. Available at: http://www.gfbv.it/3dossier/rai3-99/rai-a.html, accessed on 27 February 2008.

Gjellerod, H. (2001). *Rights of national minorities. Opinion,* DOC.8939. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Haf Gruffydd Jones, E. (1998). *Mass media, cultural activities and regional or minority languages,* paper presented during the International Conference on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages organized in Strasbourg on 26. – 27 March 1998.

Jokovcic, I. (2002). *Linguistic Diversity: a Challenge for European Cities and Regions*, proceedings, Rovinj (Croatia), 22. – 23 March 2001, Studies and Texts No.74. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Jones, G. (2004). *Minority-Language Audiovisual Media in Europe*, paper presented at the First Congress on Basque Journalism in Bilbao, 09. – 12 November 2004. Available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/Papers/Bilbao.htm, accessed on 17 February 2008.

Mayr, W. (2000). *Ethnic and national minorities and electronic media. The RAI - radio televisione italiana - not only Italian. An example, a laboratory for multilingual broadcasting?*, paper presented at the international conference 'Ethnic and national minorities and electronic media', Bialystock, Poland, 16. – 17 November 2000. Available at: http://www.gfbv.it/3dossier/rai-en.html, accessed on 22 February 2008.

Mercator Media, *Media Italy*. Available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/cgi-bin/user/merwww/index.pl?rm=b_media_detail;id=34;lang=1, accessed on 27 February 2008.

McGonagle, T. *et al.* (2003). *Minority-Language related broadcasting and legislation in the OSCE*. Geneva: OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Ministero della Giustizia (2 May 2001). 'Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica n. 345, Regolamento di attuazione della Legge 15 Dicembre 1999, N. 482, Recante norme di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche', *Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 213,* published on 13 Septembre 2001. Also available at: http://www.giustizia.it/cassazione/leggi/dpr345_01.html, last accessed 10 December 2008 .

Ministero della Giustizia (2003). 'Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica, Approvazione del contratto di servizio tra il ministero delle comunicazioni e la RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana S.P.A. per il triennio 2003-2005', *Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 59,* 14 February, published on 12 March 2003.

Morelli, D. (2005). *Strumenti normative a tutela dei medi e minoranze linguistiche*, paper presented during the first meeting of the Club dei Giornalisti Albëreshë in Lungro on 05 February 2005. Available at: http://www.arbitalia.it/stampa/klubi_gazetarvet_arbereshe/2005/febbraio05.htm, accessed on 2 March 2008.

Nic Shuibhne, N. (2002). *EC Law and Minority Language Policy: Culture, Citizenship and Fundamental Rights*. London: Kluwer Law International.

Noël, P. (1993). *Mass media and minority cultural expression for joint vocational training courses*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press.

OCSE (1998). The Oslo Recommendations regarding the linguistic rights of National Minorities & Explanatory Note. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/hcnm/1998/02/2699_en.pdf, accessed on 2 March 2008.

OSCE (2003). *Guidelines on the use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media*. The Hague: Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Provincia di Trento (n.d.), *Forme di tutela delle minoranze riconosciute dallo stato*. Available at: http://www.consiglio.provincia.tn.it/consiglio/quadro_sintesi_autonomia/tutela_minoranze_linguistiche/tutela_minoranze.it.asp, accessed on 15 February 2008.

Regione Basilicata (n.d.), *Tutela minoranze linguistiche: Fondi alle Regioni, 273 Mila Euro alla Basilicata.* Available at: http://www.basilicatanet.it/news/article.asp?Id=50517, accessed on 27 February 2008.

Riggins S.H. (1992). *Ethnic Minority Media*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park.

Trebo, L. (1999). *Per una RAI multilingue. Un futuro tutto da costruire,* Dossier presented during the conference in Bolzano on 18. – 20 March 1999. Available at: http://www.gfbv.it/3dossier/rai3-99/rai-a.html, accessed on 8 February 2008.

Trifunovska, S. (2004). *Monitoring of Linguistic Rights of Minorities under the European Charter and the Framework Convention,* paper presented during the II Mercator International Symposium: 'Europe 2004: A new framework for all languages?' in Tarragona, 27. – 28 February 2004.

Trim, J. (2002). *Linguistic Diversity: a Challenge for European Cities and Regions*, proceedings, Rovinj (Croatia), 22. – 23 March 2001, Studies and Texts No.74. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (18 December 1992). *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, adopted by General Assembly Resolution 47/135. Available at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm, accessed on 2 February 2008.

Università di Udine - Centro Internazionale sul Plurilinguismo, *Arbëresh*. Available at: http://www.uniud.it/cip/min_tutelate_scheda.htm#4, accessed on 20 February 2008.

Vargaftig, M. (1997). *Cultural rights, the media and minorities,* Report of the Seminar held in Strasbourg, 27. – 29 September 1995. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press.

Wilson, C.C. and F. Gutiérrez (1995). *Race, Multiculturalism and the Media. From Mass to Class Communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Wright, S. (2000). *Community and Communication: The Role of Language in Nation State Building and European Integration*. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.

***

ANNEX 1

Map: The Regions of Italy

Source: http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/italieetat.htm, last accessed 20 December 2008.

1) Piemonte
2) Valle-d'Aosta (statuto speciale)
3) Lombardia
4) Trentino-Alto Adige (statuto speciale)
5) Veneto
6) Friuli-Venezia Giulia (statuto speciale)
7) Liguria
8) Emilia-Romagna
9) Toscana
10) Umbria
11) Marche
12) Lazio
13) Abruzzo
14) Molise
15) Campania
16) Puglia
17) Basilicata
18) Calabria
19) Sicilia (statuto speciale)
20) Sardegna (statuto speciale)

***

ANNEX 2

Recommendations of the Council of Europe

- Recommendation 1623 (2003) On the rights of national minorities
- Recommendation 1589 (2003) On freedom of expression in the media
- Recommendation 1492 (2001) On the rights of national minorities
- Recommendation 1383 (1998) On linguistic diversification
- Recommendation 1345 (1997) On the protection of national minorities
- Recommendation 1300 (1996) On the protection of the rights of minorities
- Order No. 513 (1996) On the rights of national minorities
- Recommendation 1285 (1996) On the rights of national minorities
- Recommendation 1277 (1995) On migrants, ethnic minorities and media
- Recommendation 1275 (1995) On the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance
- Order No. 501 (1995) On the protection of the rights of national minorities
- Recommendation 1255 (1995) On the protection of the rights of national minorities
- Recommendation 1231 (1994) On the follow-up to the Council of Europe Vienna Summit
- Order No. 484 (1993) On an additional protocol on the rights of national minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights
- Recommendation 1201 (1993) On the additional protocol on the rights of minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights
- Order No. 474 (1992) On the rights of minorities
- Recommendation 1177 (1992) On the rights of minorities
- Order No. 456 (1990) On the rights of minorities
- Recommendation 1134 (1990) On the rights of minorities
- Opinion No. 142 (1988) On Resolution 192 (1988) on regional or minority languages in Europe, adopted by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe
- Recommendation 1089 (1988) On improving community relations (European Days 'Enjoying our diversity', Strasbourg 25-27 November 1987)
- Recommendation 1067 (1987) On the cultural dimension of broadcasting in Europe
- Recommendation 1043 (1986) On Europe's linguistic and literary heritage
- Declaration on the Freedom of Expression and Information (1982)
- Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R 99(1) On measures to promote media pluralism
- Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R 98(6) On modern languages
- Committee of Ministers Recommendation no. R 97(21) On the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance
- Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R 96(10) On the guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting
- Parliamentary Assembly Doc.6294 REPORT on the rights of minorities (Rapporteur : Mr BRINCAT, Malta, Socialist) 24 September 1990
- Parliamentary Assembly Doc.6302 OPINION on the rights of minorities (1) (Rapporteur : Mr BAUMEL, France, RPR

Source: http://www.coe.int/T/CM/WCD/advSearch_en.asp# and http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?Link=/asp/doc/EDocMenu(SQL).asp?Language=E (both last accessed 20 December 2008).

***

Communities, Boundaries and New Neighbours: the Discursive Construction of EU Enlargement

Giuditta Caliendo & Antonella Napolitano

Abstract

The institutional discourse of the European Union (EU) is undergoing important changes that are also reflected by new initiatives in its communication policy. Against a background of widespread scepticism towards EU enlargement among the public, this change is driven by the need to promote the widening of its borders in a more effective way in order to prompt popular endorsement. Through the use of its textual and visual communicative strategies, the EU is thus finding new ways to buttress its legitimacy and raise consensus around its political actions. The node of interaction between citizens and institutions is represented by the informative publications of the EU (also made available on the EUROPA website), which become a constitutive element in building Union-to-citizen communication. The analysis of textual and visual formulations of the European Commission's key booklets on EU enlargement in the period from 2004 to 2007 - in terms of their content and pragmatic aims - reveals the emergence of new consensus-building strategies. Results show that a sense of allegiance and belonging attributed to a deepening of European integration is now increasingly linked to the practical advantages of EU enlargement, as expressed through the use of 'promotional' and strategic discursive practices. Moving away from a merely informative content, communication modes 'migrate' towards a more direct and 'commodified' type of message, while an increase in visual elements plays a complementing role in promoting legitimacy and a feeling of mutual belonging between 'old' and 'new' members of the European family.

AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF GROWING PUBLIC SCEPTICISM TOWARDS FURTHER EU enlargement, this article sets out to investigate the discursive practices enacted by EU institutions to foster consensus among EU citizens. Through a case-study based on the selection of the European Commission's informative publications, a linguistic and semiotic analysis explores the ways enlargement is presented and 'promoted' via the institutional channels of Union-to-citizen communication.

Within the framework of EU enlargement, mapping out both geographical and symbolic boundaries becomes a parallel process. The extension of geographical frontiers necessarily implies the inclusion of new peoples in the European community, and a subsequent 're-assessment' of the newly co-existing communities. In the process of widening its frontiers, the discursive strategies deployed by the EU to gain consensus are informative in nature, as they focus mainly on disseminating complete and transparent information on EU policies. However, they are also grounded on persuasive discursive practices designed to foreground the benefits that enlargement brings about. This strategic synergy is aimed at gaining legitimacy, which represents an important constituent of any successful policy, as also suggested by Weber (1964: 325):

The authors discussed and conceived the article together. Namely, Giuditta Caliendo is responsible for the sections: Corpus and aims, Methodological framework, Debating enlargement, Legitimising a "fast", "costly" and "dangerous" enlargement process, Conclusions; Antonella Napolitano is responsible for the sections: Introduction, Promoting enlargement, An ever closer and visual Europe.

ISSN 1815-347X online. Caliendo, G. and Napolitano, A. (2008). 'Communities, Boundaries and New Neighbours: the Discursive Construction of EU Enlargement', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 322-345. Available: http://www.jcer.net/ojs.index.php/jcer/article/view/128/115

"Every system of authority attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy".

The EU has long understood the growing need to strengthen its legitimacy and public endorsement[1]. Hence, the efforts to promote a sense of aggregation which finds expression in the dissemination of information through a wide range of channels, including traditional media and new communication technologies, such as the Internet. All informative publications on EU enlargement which constitute the corpus of this study are made available to the public both in paper and electronic versions through the EU's official EUROPA website[2].

Guaranteeing up to date and transparent communication is linked directly to the idea of fostering citizens' involvement in EU affairs and policies, as also stressed by the White Paper on a European Communication Policy (European Commission 2006b) whose adage goes "Debating Europe, *Involving* Europe":

> Over the last two decades, the European Union has been transformed. It has taken on a wide range of tasks touching citizens' lives in many different ways. But Europe's communication with its citizens has not kept pace. The gap between the European Union and its citizens is widely recognised. In Eurobarometer opinion polls carried out in recent years, many of the people interviewed say they know little about the EU and feel they have little say in its decision-making process. *Communication is essential to a healthy democracy. It is a two-way street. Democracy can flourish only if citizens know what is going on, and are able to participate fully.* (European Commission 2006b: 2) [italics added]

In the case of EU enlargement, Union-to-citizen communication is instrumental to the achievement of consensus and citizens' participation, especially against a backdrop of widespread distrust about the process. The research work thus sets out to explore the legitimating role played by language in this respect: "Language is more than a medium of expression, it forms reality, including political reality in the sense of both positive and negative images, norms, and evaluations" (Karklins 2001).

Corpus and aims

The full range of publications available in the enlargement section of the EUROPA website[3] consists of the documents listed in Table 1 (see page 324):

The documents display a varied level of technicality, evidently as a communication strategy aimed at reaching the audience at all possible levels of interaction. They can be largely divided into two main categories:

- simple informative leaflets, consisting of one single sheet of paper folded but not stitched;
- booklets, consisting of small-sized brochures of up to 15-25 pages. These can be further divided into: specialised booklets, aimed at the technically-minded; more general and reader-friendly booklets of a popularizing nature, relying on a wider use of visuals as much as on a more direct and dialogic communication strategy.

[1] The European Commission clearly outlined the problem of democratic deficit in its White Paper on a European Communication Policy (European Commission 2006b: 2). In this respect, one of the numerous initiatives undertaken to tackle the issue is represented by the establishment of the DEBATE EUROPE online forum, available at: http://europa.eu/debateeurope/index_en.htm, last accessed 22 December 2008).
[2] The EU's official online portal, www.europa.eu last accessed 22 December 2008.
[3] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/index_en.htm, last accessed July 2008.

Table 1: EU publications on Enlargement in order of publication date

Title of publication	Text type
Understanding enlargement. Explaining EU policy on enlargement for the general public (2007)	Booklet
Studying in Europe. EU Scholarships for Western Balkan Students (2007)	Leaflet
20 Myths and Facts about the Enlargement (2006)	Booklet
Regional cooperation in the western Balkans. A policy priority for the European Union (2006)	Booklet
Where to find information on the Acceding States, Candidate and Potential Candidates Countries (2006)	Leaflet
Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean for us? (2005)	Booklet
Twinning (2005)	Booklet
European Union Enlargement - An historic opportunity (2003)	Booklet
EU support for Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe (2003)	Booklet
What can enterprises in the new Member States expect? Questions and answers (2003)	Booklet
Free movement of persons / Practical guide for an enlarged EU (2003)	Booklet
Dialogue and Information Newsletter Nr. 4/2004, Nr. 3/2004, Nr. 2/2003, Nr. 1/2003	Booklet
European Union Enlargement - An historic opportunity (2002)	Booklet

Source: European Commission website. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/publications/index_en.htm, last accessed July 2008.

The selection of the corpus of documents for the analysis was based on some 'exclusion' criteria, omitting the following types of publications:

- Leaflets, as they provide an information load which is insufficient for the purpose of linguistic analysis. These texts often represent a mere list of information concerning specific documentation centres operating at national level (e.g. "Where to find information on the Acceding States, Candidate and Potential Candidates Countries" 2006), or specific EU programmes and scholarship schemes (e.g. "Studying in Europe. EU Scholarships for Western Balkan Students" 2007).
- Booklets specifically focusing on issues pertaining to: individual acceding or aspiring countries (e.g. "EU support for Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe" 2003; "Regional cooperation in the western Balkans. A policy priority for the European Union" 2006); restricted addressees, such as enterprises (e.g. "What can enterprises in the new Member States expect? Questions and answers" 2003).
- Booklets consisting of practical guides on specific policies (e.g. workers' mobility rights in the publication "Free movement of persons / Pratical guide for an enlarged EU" 2003), or on financial assistance programmes aimed at preparing candidate countries for accession (e.g. "Twinning" 2005).
- Booklets centred on more technical aspects of the enlargement policy (i.e. Europe agreements, association agreements, budgetary arrangements, co-financing with the EIB, trade and export/import with candidate countries, foreign direct investment, etc.), supported by detailed and specialised data, charts and information, and aimed at a more specialised readership (e.g. "European Union Enlargement - An historic opportunity" 2002).
- The four "Dialogue and Information Newsletters" (European Commission Nr. 4/2004, Nr. 3/2004, Nr. 2/2003, Nr. 1/2003), as they are a set of publications which fall within The Phare Networking Facility Programme. Each newsletter specifically addresses social issues such as drugs, disabled citizens and disadvantaged minorities.

For the purpose of this study, the selected corpus of documents is thus limited to the three EU official publications on enlargement aimed at a general readership:

Table 2 : Description of selected EU documents used for linguistic analysis

	Title	Date of publication	Number of tokens[4]
1.	Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean to us?	2004	1,095
2.	20 Myths and Facts about the Enlargement	2006	3,462
3.	Understanding enlargement. Explaining EU policy on enlargement for the general public	2007	3,486

Source: European Commission website. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/publications/index_en.htm, last accessed July 2008

These texts provide an interesting insight into EU discourse on the *status quo* of the enlargement process. The diachronic investigation is aimed at demonstrating short-term changes in 'communicating enlargement' to the general public, to the extent that each of the above documents was issued after an important date in the recent history of the EU and has affected the public perception of its widening process, respectively:

1. the 2004 "Big Bang" enlargement (European Commission 2006a: 2), when ten new countries from central Europe and the Mediterranean joined[5];
2. the 2005 failure of the national referenda on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in France and the Netherlands;
3. the EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007.

The above events are therefore considered within the social and political frame in which they are embedded, and analysed discursively in this paper. Taking into account the contrasting feelings that citizens hold about these events, as well as the different historical and socio-political contexts of reference, the documents are investigated to detect and unveil the linguistic strategies deployed by the institutions to construct enlargement as a positive, fruitful and 'legitimate' move towards closer integration of the peoples of Europe. In pursuing this aim, the construction of legitimation in discourse is critically analysed, also drawing upon the categories explored by critical discourse analysts.

Methodological framework

The study draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to investigate the linguistic elements contributing to the discursive construction of EU enlargement as a necessary and legitimate process. As maintained by Fairclough (1992: 8), institutional and social structures are shaped by discourse, which does not just reflect or represent society, but also "helps to constitute (and change) knowledge and its objects, social relations and social identity". In particular, this article refers to the constructive, perpetuating and transformational macrofunctions of discourse, i.e. the way discursive acts play a decisive role in generating, reproducing and transforming a given *status quo* (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999).

[4] In Corpus Linguistics, every token is represented by the individual occurrence of a linguistic unit.
[5] The Member States which joined the EU in May 2004 are: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta.

Furthermore, CDA literature provides an inspiring framework with reference to instances of legitimation for social practices in public communication. In their approach to political discourse, Chilton and Schäffner (1997: 211-215) list legitimation among the four "strategic functions" that linguistic expressions may be used for. These include (1) coercion; (2) resistance/opposition/ protest; (3) dissimulation; and (4) legitimisation/delegitimisation. According to Chilton (2004: 47), legitimation is oriented towards acts of self-representation and self-praise as a source of "authority, reason, vision and sanity, where the self is either an individual or the group with which an individual identifies or wishes to identify". This concept is further enriched by Cap (2005: 4-5):

> Drawing on the Habermasian epistemological framework and his account of rationality and 'rightness' (*Richtigkeit*) in particular (cf. Habermas 1981), this definition takes up both the socio-political and the linguistic aspect of the speaker's performance. The claim to rightness and the resulting enactment of legitimization means that the performing of speech acts is grounded in an implicit claim, on the part of the speaker, to inhabit a particular social or political role, and to possess a particular authority.

Legitimation and consensus-building strategies in the area of EU discourse have been dealt with by previous scholars, with reference to various aspects of EU policy and government, from negotiations of the EU Constitution (Krzyżanowski and Oberhuber 2007) to EU identity and representation (Wodak and Weiss 2004, 2005). The present article contributes to this field of study by focusing on legitimation *vis-à-vis* EU enlargement. In doing so, the analysis particularly refers to the work of Van Leeuwen (1996; 2007) who, drawing on Habermas (1976), Weber (1964) and Berger and Luckmann (1967), develops a set of legitimation categories (and relevant sub-types), which elucidate the various textual strategies used to claim rightness and authority. Van Leeuwen's perspective is applied here to reveal and discuss the discursive structures enacted by the EU in promoting enlargement to its citizens.

The analysis of visual elements also plays a key role in the study. Starting from the theory according to which "discourse reaches out further than language itself" (Jaworski and Coupland 2006: 7), CDA extends its analysis to include other semiotic systems and dimensions. Investigating non-verbal discourse and visual images in particular, therefore becomes part and parcel of the linguistic analysis itself. As Phillips and Jorgensen (2002: 61) point out: "within critical discourse analysis (as discourse analysis in general) there is a tendency to analyse pictures as if they were linguistic texts". Since the informative content of the EU brochures under investigation is conveyed both by verbal formulations and visual images, this article also draws on the methodological framework on multimodal representation and visual grammar to produce a comprehensive analysis. All visual media compositions are devised to communicate intended meaning and create a desired effect. This results in a visual language which can be analysed in the light of the theory of multimodality. The grammar of visual design thus explores the way in which people, places and things are depicted and combined into a meaningful whole, with a view to investigating and interpreting the important role played by 'visual statements' in contemporary institutional discourse: "Just as grammars of language describe how words combine in clauses, sentences and texts, so our visual grammar will describe the way in which depicted people, places and things combine in 'visual statements' of greater or lesser complexity and extension" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996: 1).

With reference to images, the qualitative analysis also pays great attention to the contribution of metaphors in the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckman 1967), be it social, political or economic. Our conceptual system is considered to be "fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3). Metaphors thus operate on a cognitive level in revealing mechanisms of social change, as argued by Charteris-Black (2004: 251): metaphor is a way of creating cognitive meaning, "by changing the metaphor we may change the way that we think and feel about something". In this respect, metaphorical images and visual associations relating to the

process of enlargement are also explored in the analysis, together with discursive practices aimed at conveying the idea of enlargement as an ongoing, open-ended and necessary process, though democratically endorsed by all EU actors through the mechanisms of EU conditionality and requirements for accession of applicant countries.

This contribution also takes into consideration studies in the field of sociology since "the complex interrelations between discourse and society cannot be analysed adequately unless linguistic and sociological approaches are combined" (Wodak and Weiss 2005: 124). The EU is therefore conceived "in a sociological sense", i.e. "characterised as an institution, a polity, operating at a macrosocietal level" (Laffan 2004: 76; 78).

Promoting enlargement

The publication of the first document under investigation, "Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean to us?" (European Commission 2004), followed the biggest enlargement round in the history of the European Union. This first document opens with a short introductory paragraph followed by five other descriptive ones, each based on a question-answer format. Information about the repercussions and consequences of the enlargement process is given in response to an imaginary 'input': direct questions posed by a hypothetical inquisitive reader, who becomes an interlocutor in the dialogue with the institutions in order to find out what enlargement will eventually lead to.

This first document is developed entirely around six key questions, including the title of the publication itself:

- Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean to us?
- What does enlargement mean for the 'former' Member States (EU 15)?
- What is the impact of enlargement on daily life?
- What effect will enlargement have on the EU institutions?
- Are there limits to enlargement?
- What about the new neighbours of the enlarged Union?

In spite of the overall informative tone of this booklet, the question form employed here is a recurring pattern in promotional discourse: it immediately suggests inclusion and dialogic interaction with the reader, whose questions and doubts are being answered by the presentation of precise data.

The incursion of a discourse type typical of advertising and of seller/customer practices into institutional discourse can be related to the linguistic processes of "interdiscursivity" and "commodification" explored by Fairclough (1992: 10-11): "Commodification is the colonization of institutional orders of discourse, and more broadly of the societal order of discourse, by discourse types associated with commodity production" (Fairclough 1992: 207).

The so called 'big-bang' enlargement in 2004 was an utterly remarkable event that aroused curiosity and reservations among citizens as to its potential consequences. Against this historical background, the document centres mainly on the descriptions of the *status quo*, contributing to the belief that enlargement has so far represented a unique and indisputable success. More specifically, the description of enlargement in the 2004 text is celebratory in tone and overtly 'promoting' an unprecedented achievement:

(1) This enlargement is a *unique achievement*.[6] (European Commission 2004: 1)

(2) The first of May 2004 represents an *historic and unprecedented milestone in the development of the European Union* (EU). (European Commission 2004: 1)

Constant reference to facts, data and percentages throughout the document increases the 'evidentiality' of EU enlargement's concrete and positive results:

(3) With a population of *450 million*, the Union now represents the largest internal market in the world; this enlarged Single Market accounts for some *19% of world trade*. (European Commission 2004: 1)

(4) The accession of 10 new countries is expected to lead to an increase of the *EU25's overall gross domestic product (GDP) by 4-5%,* while at the same time reducing the average *GDP per capita to 92% of the former EU15*. (European Commission 2004: 1)

The self-praising tone is also achieved by the use of comparatives and superlatives, stressing the exceptional and unparalleled results that have become a reality through enlargement:

(5) The new Member States will enrich the EU with their wealth of different cultures, traditions, heritage and languages. So *the Union is bigger and better* for their joining us. (European Commission 2004: 2)

(6) Increased competition should also be positive for European consumers in terms of prices, variety and quality of supply of goods and services, while also ensuring a consistent, *higher degree of consumer protection*. (European Commission 2004: 1)

(7) There will also be a *better quality of life* through common EU policies for the protection of the environment, and more security for all European citizens through joint efforts in the fight against crime, drugs and illegal immigration. (European Commission 2004: 2)

(8) From now on, all EU citizens will be able to live, travel, work and study with *greater ease* throughout a territory that stretches from the Baltic Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean (European Commission 2004: 3)

The overall style of the publication recalls the discourse of advertising for the promotion of products which "require a certain level of explanation"; this style, referred to as "advermation" (Shortis 2001: 24), is defined as a blend of information and persuasion. The evaluative claims of "advermation" often relate to the desirable aspects of the items being promoted and accomplish the double aim of encouraging 'purchase' and disseminating information. Like a promotional text, the document also abounds in expressions which echo promotional catch phrases, according to which EU Enlargement represents:

- an "unprecedented milestone" (European Commission 2004: 1)
- a "unique achievement" (European Commission 2004: 1)
- a "commitment to promoting the prosperity of our continent through peace, security, solidarity and stability for all its citizens" (European Commission 2004: 1)
- an "end to the division of our continent" (European Commission 2004: 1)
- a "safer legal environment" (European Commission 2004: 1)

[6] All italics used in examples 1-57 have been added by the authors.

- the possibility to "live, travel, work and study with greater ease throughout a territory that stretches from the Baltic to the Eastern Mediterranean" (European Commission 2004: 2).

Nouns, adjectives and verbs used in the booklet all contribute to the description of enlargement as a 'captivating product' that everybody would wish for and aspire to. The enlargement will provide for whatever priority European citizens might have: freedom, human rights, mobility of workers, equal opportunities, safer food, safer environment and better quality of life. In particular, the verbs used in the booklet give voice to the "transformative power" of this unprecedented and unique enlargement (Caliendo and Balirano [forthcoming]), which will enhance, improve, strengthen or enrich any possible field of work of the European Commission, from competition to global governance:

(9) The extension of the zone of peace, stability and prosperity that the EU has brought to Europe *will enhance the security of all its peoples*. (European Commission 2004: 1)

(10) However, this loss in GDP should quickly be compensated for by the implementation of the Single Market rules and *improved market access for business*, which are expected to lead to *increased efficiencies* through greater competition. (European Commission 2004: 1)

(11) The Union's role in world affairs – in foreign policy, citizen protection, trade policy, and other fields of global governance – *will be strengthened*. The new Member States *will enrich the EU with their wealth of different cultures, traditions, heritage and languages*. (European Commission 2004: 2)

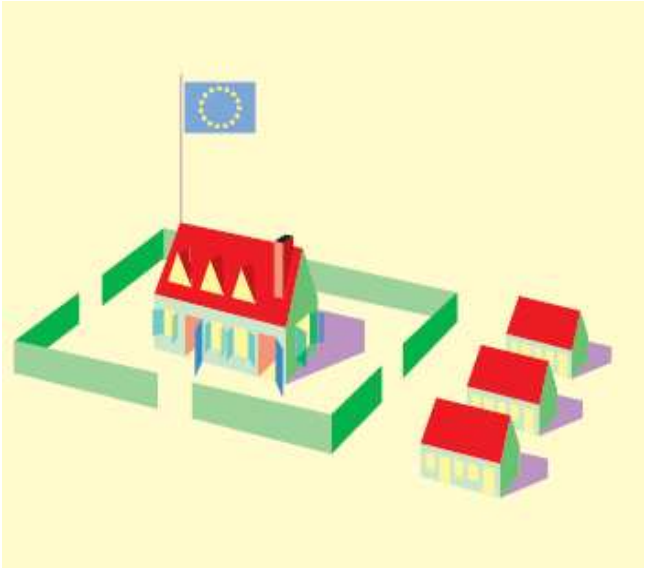
(12) At the end of the transitional period (see below) on freedom of movement of workers, people from across Europe will be able to reap the benefit of *improved employment policies* by *increasing labour skills*, labour market flexibility, mobility of workers, business climate, adaptation to new technologies and equal opportunities. (European Commission 2004: 2)

In the 2004 brochure, the presence of visual images extends the meaning of the verbal text and confirms the 'promotional' inclination of the document. In describing how the language of advertising, pervaded by visual imagery, is spreading to many public domains, Fairclough (1989; 1992) highlights the incursion of the visual into various fields of public and institutional communication, where verbal language used to be the sole and dominant mode.

In relation to the four images in the booklet, the house represents the overall dominant visual metaphor. The EU is symbolised by a large, spacious house with windows and doors wide open and encircled by an open fence, all of which evokes willingness to enlargement and dialogue with neighbouring countries

As shown in Figure 1, some smaller houses are lined up along the outer limits of the fence, clearly hinting at the EU's neighbourhood policy, which is aimed at creating a political and social framework to share "the EU's fundamental values and objectives". (European Commission 2004: 4).

Figure 1: "A European neighbourhood policy to share the EU fundamental values and objectives"



Source: "Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean for us?" (European Commission 2004: 4).

In Figure 2 the EU house is portrayed with its windows and doors wide open and placed at a crossroad, which evidently represents openness and the opportunities being offered to any acceding country. Next to the house there is nothing but the EU flag, which stresses the idea of a single unifying emblem and, as the caption of the 2004 booklet reads, the compliance with "EU standards applied in all 25 Member States for a better quality of life". (European Commission 2004: 2).

Figure 2: "EU standards applied in all 25 Member States for a better quality of life"

Source: "Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean for us?" (European Commission 2004: 2).

On the whole, text and images both aim at stressing the *in fieri* nature of the EU project, which is also evident from the very first picture chosen for the booklet cover: a long row of houses, each with the flag representing a member state; at the end of the line lies a symbolic house under construction, alluding to the ongoing work that is leading to a larger EU:

Figure 3: Front cover

Source: "Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean for us?" (European Commission 2004: front cover).

At the dawn of the first big enlargement round, the EU was seeking to establish a trusting relationship with its citizens. The need to inform them, as well as to infuse enthusiasm, is conveyed through discursive practices which are both informative and promotional and which also encompass other forms of semiosis, such as visuals. The EU reconstructs its readers as consumers (Fairclough 1994) and adopts linguistic strategies typical of advertising discourse. This process, known as commodification, has been thoroughly explored by Fairclough (1994: 253), who defines it as the "weakening of boundaries between, on the one hand, the discursive practices of the market in the more traditional sense, and on the other hand the discursive practices of politics, public services, […] government and other forms of public information […]".

Debating enlargement

In 2006, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enlargement commissioned a poll on EU citizens' perception of enlargement and its relevant advantages/disadvantages (European Commission 2006c: 2). Although the picture varied from country to country, the opinion poll showed that attitudes towards further enlargement had become significantly more negative after the 2004 accessions[7]:

Table 3: Growing negative attitudes towards further EU enlargement (2004-2006)

	Autumn 2004	Autumn 2005	Autumn 2006
Against EU enlargement	35%	39%	42%

Source: Eurobarometer, Full report 62 of Autumn 2004 (European Commission 2005c: 152), Full report 64 of Autumn 2005 (European Commission 2006d: 134), Full report 66 of Autumn 2006 (European Commission 2007b: 218).

[7] Data available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/standard_en.htm (last accessed November 2008).

Following the failure of the referendum on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in France and the Netherlands in 2005, people started to question the EU enlargement policy and express perplexities as to the future expansion of EU borders. The 2006 and 2007 documents under investigation - respectively, "20 Myths and Facts about Enlargement" (European Commission 2006a) and "Understanding Enlargement" (European Commission 2007a) - can be viewed as a reaction to those public concerns. They also reflect changes in the EU communication strategy: the more defensively explicative language of the 2006 publication seems to be aimed deliberately at countering criticism and misconceptions about the enlargement process. The former 'promotional' tone of the 2004 document is thus marginalised in favour of linguistic choices which are more typical of an 'after sales' discourse.

In the opening statement of the brochure, the European Commission directly acknowledges a deficit in public endorsement *vis-à-vis* enlargement. The stated aim of the communication initiative itself is to address citizens' concerns with appropriate reasons and motivations:

(13) A carefully managed enlargement process extends peace, democracy, the rule of law and prosperity across Europe. However, *many EU citizens now question the grounds of enlargement*. While addressing the citizens' concerns with appropriate policies, myths should be countered by facts, which is the aim of this note. (European Commission 2006a: 1)

(14) For any of its policies, including enlargement, *the EU has to win the support of its citizens*. Both the member states and the EU institutions need to communicate the successes and challenges of enlargement better. (European Commission 2006a: 3)

The whole 2006 document is built around twenty questions grouped into six main thematic areas: (i) rapidity, (ii) weakness, (iii) expensiveness and (iv) dangerousness of the enlargement process; (v) excessive number of the countries involved; (vi) potential benefits. As in the previous publication, the questions are posed by an 'imaginary' interlocutor. The communicative exchange is based on a dichotomised framing: a negative claim in the form of a question (expressing citizens' doubts and suspicions) *versus* a counterclaim (the assertions put forward by the institutional reply).

Table 4: Question-answer patterns in "20 Myths and Facts about Enlargement"

Questions	Counterclaims
Too fast?	The 2004 enlargement was the best prepared in the history of the EU.
Too weak?	The history of the EU proves that there is no contradiction between widening the Union and deepening its integration. The EU has managed to do both.
Too costly?	A cup of coffee a month is the price that each citizen of the old member states has paid for helping to reunite Europe […]The money spent to help develop these economies creates new business opportunities in old and new member states alike.
Too dangerous?	Enlargement enables the EU to extend its police and justice cooperation to the new member states, thus making the fight against crime and terrorism more effective.
Too many?	The EU Treaty says that any European country which respects the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law may apply for EU membership. However, this does not mean that all European countries must apply […] The EU's borders are defined by decisions taken unanimously at the highest political level.
Even some benefit?	First and foremost, we all benefit from the increased stability and peaceful development to which the successive enlargements of the EU have contributed over the years […] Citizens can benefit from enlargement in many other ways, such as by easier travel, better chances to study abroad, and better business conditions.

Source: "20 Myths and Facts about Enlargement" (European Commission 2006a: 2-15).

As displayed in table 4 (see above), every single negative element contained in the introductory elliptic questions of the six thematic areas is counterbalanced by a defensive answer, which is aimed at reassuring citizens on all the possible negative repercussions that they fear enlargement may trigger.

The twenty main questions which constitute the structure of this booklet are no longer enquiring in nature, but critical, straightforward and implicitly disapproving of the enlargement process:

(15) When will it all stop? Shouldn't we fix the borders of the EU once and for all? (European Commission 2006a: 12)

(16) Will there be another big bang enlargement soon? (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(17) Why should we take in a non-Christian country? (European Commission 2006a: 13)

The majority of the questions are in the negative question form "*Hasn't…?*", "*Isn't…?*", "*Won't…?*", so as to acknowledge citizens' criticism and widespread concern about the possible negative consequences of enlargement, such as illegal immigration, instability, social dumping, and paralysis of EU functioning:

(18) *Isn't* it undemocratic and *shouldn't* the EU listen to the public opinion? (European Commission 2006a: 3)

(19) *Hasn't* enlargement paralysed the functioning of the EU? (European Commission 2006a: 4)

(20) *Hasn't* enlargement brought a flood of workers to the old Member States? (European Commission 2006a: 6)

(21) *Won't* enlargement prevent further deepening of the EU? (European Commission 2006a: 4)

Their tinge of discontent highlights all the possible (economic, social, political) risks that the enlargement could entail. Though the question-answer format recalls the structure of the 2004 booklet, the answers here abound in negative statements (viz. use of negative verb forms and negative prefixes), aimed at refuting and playing down the catastrophic scenario put forward in the questions:

(22) Did the 2004 enlargement go too fast?
Ten new members entered simultaneously in May 2004, but the reunification of Europe *did not happen* overnight. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(23) Will there be another big bang enlargement soon?
There is no new 'big bang' on the horizon. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(24) Hasn't enlargement paralysed the functioning of the EU?
The accession of ten new members *has not slowed down* decision-making. (European Commission 2006a: 4)

(25) Won't enlargement prevent further deepening of the EU?
The history of the EU proves that *there is no contradiction* between widening the Union and deepening its integration. (European Commission 2006a: 4)

(26) Hasn't enlargement brought a flood of workers to the old Member States?

> *The doomsday predictions* of a flood of workers from Central and Eastern Europe *have proved to be unfounded*. (European Commission 2006a: 6)

The wording of the 2006 text presupposes that enlargement is not a top-down imposition, but rather an indispensable achievement, a "*nécessité historique*" (see Krzyżanowski 2005). It is indeed portrayed as an unavoidable and 'consequential' evolution due to the 'centripetal force' of the EU and to an extraordinary process of historical, democratic and economic transformation:

(27) Over the last fifteen years, the *gravitational pull of the EU has helped transform* Central and Eastern Europe from communist regimes to modern, well-functioning democracies. (European Commission 2006a: 1)

(28) The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and Malta joined a decade and a half after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Over those 15 years, these countries *achieved a profound democratic and economic transformation*, which made them fit for EU membership and made Europe better off. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(29) *The history of the EU proves* that there is no contradiction between widening the Union and deepening its integration. The EU has managed to do both. (European Commission 2006a: 4)

The visual aspect plays a less important role in this booklet. The distinctive sober style of the document strongly clashes with that of the previous one and its use of brightly coloured drawings. The focus here is mainly on the 'verbal dialogue' with the citizens and on the reasons why misconceptions about EU enlargement should be considered unfounded. The small number of images is limited to simple outline maps of Europe in three main chromatic nuances. The geographical names on the maps - be they EU members or aspiring candidate countries – are written in their original language. This may represent a visual hint to the EU motto "United in diversity", which first came into use around the year 2000. The motto was officially mentioned for the first time in the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (European Union 2004: 3). Its meaning is effective and straightforward, underlining the fact that joining the EU does not necessarily imply the loss of Member States' individual identity.

Legitimising a "fast", "costly" and "dangerous" enlargement process

As shown in Table 3 with reference to the Eurobarometer data, in 2006 public opinion did not appear particularly favourable to the EU enlargement process. The publication "20 Myths and Facts about the Enlargement" thus marks a decisive passage from a descriptive and informative voice (as expressed in the 2004 booklet) to the discursive enactment of legitimation practices.

As anticipated in the methodology section, the strategies used by the EU in order to support and 'promote' the process of enlargement and to provide 'reasons to be listened to' are here analysed also in the light of some of the categories outlined by critical discourse analysts (Van Leeuwen 1996; Wodak and Weiss 2005). In Van Leeuwen's words, "discourses construct legitimation for social practices in public communication as well as in everyday interaction" (1996: 91).

In its 2006 publication, the European Commission portrays enlargement not as a top-down process initiated and imposed from above, but rather as a result that is democratically arrived at and which involves the active and joint participation of all political stakeholders in the decision-making process. In this respect, both enlargement and the political construction of the EU are connected to what Wodak and Weiss (2005:

131) define as "legitimation through procedure", mainly centred on the presence of legitimizing elements, such as participation, inclusiveness and democracy:

(30) *Any decision on the accession of a country has to be taken unanimously* by all member states. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(31) *Every major decision leading to a country's accession is taken unanimously by the democratically elected governments* of the EU member states. National parliaments have to ratify the decision. (European Commission 2006a: 3)

(32) The Members of the European Parliament, who are directly elected, have to give their assent. Thus, *all the key decisions are taken by all the relevant democratically elected bodies in each member state and in the Union*. (European Commission 2006a: 3)

EU enlargement is also legitimised on the basis of a set of conditions that have determined, from the outset, the history of the EU widening process. The first requirement to join the EU was set out in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome, which simply stated that "any European State may apply to become a member of the Community" (Art 237). However, increasingly, candidate countries have been subject to more and stricter membership conditions (Caliendo and Venuti 2008). In 1978, before the EU accession of Greece, Portugal and Spain - which were making a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy - the Declaration on Democracy included in the conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council established that "respect for and maintenance of representative democracy and human rights in each Member State are essential elements of membership in the European Communities" (European Council of Copenhagen 1978: 5). After the Cold War, the growing number of applicant states from Central and Eastern Europe led the EU to set out more explicit requirements for membership. This resulted in the 1993 Copenhagen European Council stating that "Membership requires stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, a functioning market economy" (European Council of Copenhagen 1993: 13). Decisions concerning EU enlargement today are thus not random or arbitrary: the access of new countries is regulated by strict economic, democratic and political principles of conditionality which find concrete and legal groundings in EU official texts. In line with the category of "authorization" (Van Leeuwen 1996), the EU thus legitimates its enlargement policy by means of constant reference to the EU conditionality norms that regulate, endorse and 'authorise' the accession of new members:

(33) The Commission is carefully managing the accession process, ensuring that it is gradual and that countries are well prepared, over many years, to *meet the EU's stringent conditions*. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(34) In 1993, the EU defined *precise accession criteria*. In order to join the EU, a country must be a stable democracy with the rule of law, able to respect human and minority rights, and have a competitive market economy, as well as the ability to fully implement EU law. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

(35) Bulgaria and Romania will enter in 2007 or 2008, *once they meet the criteria*. Croatia will follow some time later, *once it fulfils all the conditions*. (European Commission 2006a: 2)

Legitimation is also achieved through "rationalisation", whereby practices are justified "by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action" (Van Leeuwen 2007: 92). The EU thus refers to the "utility" of its institutional practices, i.e. "to the purpose or function they serve, or the needs they fill, or the positive effect they will have" (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999: 105). Throughout the text, enlargement is

constantly promoted and supported as the source of positive change, prosperity and reforms in a wide range of fields, from higher employment opportunities to increased environmental security:

(36) Recently, it [enlargement] *has inspired tremendous reforms* in Turkey, Croatia and the other Western Balkans countries. (European Commission 2006a: 1)

(37) A carefully managed enlargement process *extends peace, democracy, the rule of law and prosperity across Europe*. (European Commission 2006a: 1)

(38) *By opening up opportunities for legal work* in the old member states, the 2004 enlargement *has helped to reduce the grey economy (and the black labour market)*. (European Commission 2006a: 6)

(39) *Enlargement helps the EU* to meet the challenge of globalisation by *increasing internal and external trade and thus keeping and creating jobs*. (European Commission 2006a: 7)

(40) By opening up a market of 75 million consumers to companies from the old member states, enlargement *has strengthened competition* in the internal market […] (European Commission 2006a: 7)

(41) Therefore, enlargement *gives us more control over the problem of clandestine migration*. (European Commission 2006a: 14)

(42) Enlargement *means more environmental security*, not less. (European Commission 2006a: 11)

To conclude, the overall question/answer pattern adopted in the booklet "20 Myths and Facts about Enlargement" (European Commission 2006a) enhances dialogism and "multivocality" (Bakhtin cited in De Fina *et al*. 2006: 12) and enables to compare different interpretations of the same experience: citizens' view vs. EU stance *vis-à-vis* enlargement. In particular, this discourse approach can be ascribed to what Van Dijk (1992) describes as the linguistic strategy of 'denial'. In order to counteract citizens' negative attitude towards the process, the question/answer format is instrumental to the argumentative denial of the implicit accusations as a way to express distance or non-acceptance of statements or accusations by others (Van Dijk 1992). Multivocality is in fact used by the European Commission to separate two different positions and distance itself from the indirect allegations on the catastrophic aftermath that citizens' questions may allude to (see examples 15-21). At the same time, this simulated 'face-to-face' dialogue (Fairclough 1992: 98) is a way for the European Commission to 'control' the exchange and persuasively formulate its own opinion through a 'reversal of strategy' move: the negative scenario emerging from the questions is not only proven wrong, but also completely reversed by stating the exact opposite. Besides all the examples presented thus far, example number 43 below represents further evidence of a "reversal move" (Van Dijk 1992: 550). The negative scenario framed within the question (*distorted* competition) is overturned in the answer and exploited as a starting point to introduce an utterly positive situation (*reinforced* competition):

(43) Hasn't enlargement *distorted the functioning of the internal market*?
[…] By opening up a market of 75 million consumers to companies from the old member states, *enlargement has strengthened competition in the internal market, which in turn also makes European companies more competitive on world markets*. (European Commission 2006a: 7)

This reversal strategy also emerges from the booklet's title itself, in which citizens' "myths" are contrasted with the European Commission's "facts". This kind of move contributes to the overall strategy of legitimation and positive self-representation on the part of the institution. Implied accusations are rebutted through valid and self-

evident claims, which are grounded on precise data and legitimated by the existence of a democratic and representative decision-making framework of reference.

An ever closer and visual Europe

The third document of the corpus of analysis, "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a), issued in 2007 after Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, is distinctly different from the previous two in terms of general tone and visual impact.

The question-answer format which characterised the previous two booklets is here limited to two questions. Furthermore, the overall tone of the text reflects a more balanced Union-citizens relationship as it is seems to address a more informed and aware readership. The promotional function of the language used aims at reassuring the audience and highlighting the benefits that EU enlargement has and will bring about with the accession of new members:

(44) The 2004/2007 enlargement to countries from Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean has proven a *great success*. (European Commission 2007a: 1)

(45) […] today's EU with 27 Member States today's EU with 27 Member States and a population of close to 500 million people is *much safer*, *more prosperous, stronger and more influential* than the original European Economic Community of 50 years ago, with its 6 members and population of less than 200 million. (European Commission 2007a: 2)

(46) The EU has brought *huge advantages* to all Europeans. (European Commission 2007a: 5)

(47) But the EU is not just about *wealth* and *improved standards of living*. The EU is a community of values. We are a family of democratic European countries committed to working together for *peace and freedom, prosperity and social justice*. (European Commission 2007a: 4)

(48) The EU enlargement policy ensures a well managed accession process, so that *enlargement brings benefits simultaneously* to the EU and to the countries joining. (European Commission 2007a: 9)

The need to reassure citizens about further EU enlargement is pursued by underlining the importance of the principles of conditionality, which again reinforce the strategy of "legitimation through procedure" (Wodak and Weiss 2005) enacted in the previous document. In linguistic terms, conditionality is conveyed by locutions such as "*If only*", "*only*", "*only after*", "*only when*", "*depend/s*". In addition, the booklet encourages the idea that citizens are actively responsible for EU decisions through the voice of their elected political representatives:

(49) Membership will *only* happen *when* each one of them meets the necessary requirements. (European Commission 2007a: 1)

(50) In addition, the EU must be able to integrate new members, so it *reserves the right to decide when* it is ready to accept them. (European Commission 2007a: 6)

(51) New members are *admitted with unanimous consent* of the democratically elected governments of the EU Member States. (European Commission 2007a: 8)

(52) […] candidate country's progress towards the EU *depends on* how well it implements reforms needed to fulfil the accession criteria. (European Commission 2007a: 14)

(53) The EU should continue to grow at a pace to be *determined by its own citizens* and the progress of candidate countries in fulfilling the requirements. (European Commission 2007a: 16)

(54) *Agreements* with the countries of the Western Balkans or the Customs Union with Turkey – *are reached only after the EU Member States have given their approval.* (European Commission 2007a: 8)

(55) *If* the Commission delivers a positive opinion, and the Council *unanimously agrees* on a negotiating mandate, negotiations are formally opened between the candidate and all the Member States. (European Commission 2007a: 9)

The discursive strategies employed by the EU to build consensus and legitimacy around the enlargement process are here both verbal and visual. Indeed, out of the three documents being analysed, "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a) predominantly relies on the use of images to convey the institutional message and establish a communicative interaction with the citizens.
The foreword to the document by EU Commissioner for enlargement, Olli Rehn, is highly significant in this respect. The introductory text summarises the key issues being addressed in the document: historical overview of EU enlargement, description of the *status quo* and future perspectives of accepting new members. Interestingly enough, the EU Commissioner's words are accompanied by a close-up picture of him and his signature, both vouching for his personal commitment and conferring authoritativeness to what is being claimed. By doing so, legitimation strategies are once again deployed by the institutions and centred on the principle of "authorisation" (Van Leeuwen 2007: 91). In particular, when describing his "authorisation" category, Van Leeuwen (2007: 94) refers to "personal authority": "legitimate authority is vested in a person because of their status or role in a particular institution". Legitimation by reference to the authority and to "the persons in whom the institutional authority is vested" (Van Leeuwen 2007: 91) can again be found in the booklet with reference to the picture portraying all the democratically elected representatives of all EU governments:

Figure 4: Political representatives of EU Member States

Source: "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a: 8).

Though crucial to the purpose of legitimation, authorities are not the only subjects being visually represented in the brochure. Among the pictures that complement and 'extend' the verbal text, there is a vast range of pictures depicting flags, countries and, above all, people. In analysing the semiotic value of these images, as well as the way the EU is representing its citizens, the analysis draws from Kress and Van Leeuwen's definition of "represented participants" (1996: 46): "participants who are the subject of the communication, that is, the people, places and things (including abstract 'things') represented in or by the speech or writing or image […]".

The emphasis on the human factor is an effective way to enhance readers' participation and identification with the choices made at a higher political level. Particularly significant is the picture of a very young girl (Figure 5) who is drawing the EU flag on the ground. The unfinished drawing suggests a message of 'futurity'. The image of the girl's feet, which still retain the blue colour for having walked over the drawing, hints at the possibility for citizens of moving easily throughout an enlarged Europe without barriers, as well as at the unfinished journey towards European integration.

Figure 5: Table of content image

Source: "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a: 3).

People depicted in the brochure serve communicational purposes and are invested with the task of establishing a direct interaction with the reader. The dialogic and relational function played in the first two brochures by the question-answer format is here undertaken by the use of images: readers are being addressed by pictures of real individuals. The emerging 'human component' represents an attempt to step closer to the citizens and encourage their identification process. The photos are always close-ups of the participants who are all portrayed at eye level angle, and so in a position of equality with the viewer they are addressing. According to the principles of visual grammar (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996: 122):

> […] the producer uses the image to do something to the viewer. It is for this reason that we have called this kind of image a 'demand': the participant's gaze (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her. Exactly what kind of relation is then signified by other means, for instance by the facial expression of the represented participants. They may smile, in which case the viewer is asked to enter into a relation of social affinity with them.

This device creates a projection and establishes an imaginary symmetrical relation between information givers and the audience. The EU delegates the delivery of its message to real people, soliciting a feeling of solidarity with the characters represented and so enhancing the 'credibility' of its final message.

The children's smiling faces (Figure 5 and 6), as well as the other faces that fill the brochure, are not geographically connoted. The reader's identification with these 'vectors' is also encouraged by the fact that they are representative of various social classes and age groups which makes them 'universally European', such as the little girl drawing the EU flag, the schoolboy, or other subjects being depicted in the booklet,

like university students or factory workers. These people are the ones who have benefited and will benefit from EU enlargement and whose consent is fundamental for the admission of aspiring members. Citizens are thus active players in the development of European integration by sharing its values and accepting new members who, in turn, are prepared to work for a common future and fulfil the EU's requirements.

Figure 6: The Future

Source: "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a: 16).

In terms of visual metaphors, the image of the house which dominated the first booklet in 2004 is now replaced by recurring images recalling the semantic area of the family (Figure 7): children playing with their grandparents, children at school, elderly people and young couples. The ongoing journey of EU enlargement is here represented in its constant evolution, which calls into play the various generations of actors:

Figure 7: Front cover

Source: "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a: front cover).

On the booklet cover (Figure 7), images of EU citizens alternate with the geographical outline of EU countries. Member States are portrayed as if they were 'personified' and given a face within the wide and growing EU family and community. These ideas are also complemented by the verbal content of the brochure:

(56) The EU is a *community* of values. (European Commission 2007a: 5)

(57) We are *a family of democratic European countries* committed to working together for peace and freedom, prosperity and social justice. And we defend these values. We seek to *foster cooperation among the peoples of Europe*, while respecting and preserving our diversity. (European Commission 2007a: 5)

The diachronic evolution in the use of metaphors is particularly interesting in terms of the conceptualization of meaning. Laffan (2004: 83) underlines the salient role played by symbols and metaphors in the configuration of the cognitive dimension of the EU: "symbols constitute an important way in which new frames of meaning are constructed. Symbols connect individuals to the social and political order by providing orientations for interpreting the world". This idea is also stressed by Fairclough (1992: 194) in relation to discourse:

> […] metaphors are not just superficial stylistic adornments of discourse. When we signify things through one metaphor rather than another, we are constructing our reality in one way rather than another. Metaphors structure the way we think and the way we act, and our system of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way.

The passage from the static image of the house to the "motion metaphor" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) of the family is aimed here at denoting the EU as a dynamic organism in constant evolution. The circular shape of the family is employed to suggest the idea of flexibility and openness. This association is also developed in sociological studies with reference to the idea of the EU as a network state that has nodes, not a centre: "The future, enlarged European Union must be less uniform and more flexible…It is possible that the organigram of such an institution will be closer to a network than to a tree, and political theory still does not have a simple term adequate to this kind of configuration, but it is not an obstacle to building it. However, it will not be enough that enlightened bureaucrats conceive this institution: it will also be necessary for the citizens to accept it" (Zaldivar, in Castells 2000: 362).

Conclusion

Public opinion and findings emerging from Eurobarometer polls have undoubtedly affected EU communication policies. In the light of widespread dissatisfaction on the part of the citizens regarding their role in influencing EU decisions, a number of official documents[8] have recently highlighted the importance of adopting different strategies of dialogue.

It was in the wake of the first wave of EU enlargement that the institutions saw the need for a more direct contact with their citizens through the enactment of a series of new discursive practices. The EU thus came alive as a tangible entity willing to explain itself to Europeans with the precise intent of achieving legitimacy and consensus in relation to the enlargement process.

[8] Among the most significant ones: European Commission (2006b), White Paper on a European Communication Policy. COM(2006) 35final; European Commission (2005a), Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission. Brussels; European Commission (2005b), The Commission's Contribution to the Period of Reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate. COM(2005) 494final.

Our study has focussed on the linguistic, visual and pragmatic elements of EU communication in order to investigate the way in which enlargement is portrayed as an unprecedented and necessary political step which, for the good of 'us, Europeans', is crucial, positive as well as legitimate.

The analysis also suggests that, in describing and 'constructing' enlargement through discourse, the EU gradually moves away from a merely descriptive and informative stance and steadily veers towards 'authorisation' of its practices through a language which can be defined both as informative and strategic in Habermas' terms (1981), i.e. oriented towards an effective achievement of results. Indeed, all the publications examined feature varying traits of advertising discourse.

The first publication with the title "Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean to us?" (European Commission 2004) employs linguistic strategies which are typical of promotional discourse, mainly foregrounding the advantages of the enlargement and offering an optimistic and enthusiastic portrait of a 'bigger' and more integrated EU. The study also confirms Fairclough's theory on interdiscursivity (1995: 133-135), by which he refers to the "constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres", and more specifically to the colonization of professional and public service orders of discourse by the genre of consumer advertising.

After the negative findings which emerged from the Eurobarometer polls undertaken in 2006, the EU communication with its citizens acquires a tone which is more typical of 'after sales' discourse. The question/answer format of the second booklet with the title "20 Myths and Facts about the Enlargement" (European Commission 2006a) proves an interesting linguistic device to give voice to citizens' concerns while effectively asserting and legitimating the EU voice, also through a more constant reference to the principle of conditionality.

In the third publication titled "Understanding enlargement" (European Commission 2007a), the discursive strategies of the EU acquire a new balance. In the booklet the EU resumes a more promotional discourse orientation, but also appears increasingly aware of the fact that its readership is more conscious both of the enlargement process and of their rights. The self-defensive tone of the second booklet gives way to a discourse aimed at gaining legitimation through procedure (Van Dijk 1997), while the presence of visuals becomes increasingly significant in the overall consensus-building process.

The analysis of the three publications confirms the CDA theory according to which discourse cannot be analysed in isolation from a wider social context as discourse practices construct (and are constructed) by social practices. The discursive construal of institutional reality thus does not obey top-down trends but rather serves the audience's needs for clarification, reassurance and involvement.

The process of change, especially in a shared social and institutional context, is inextricably related to the idea of acceptance. Legitimation thus plays a pivotal role in Union-to-citizen communication in order to reach a common understanding of what 'a new, enlarged Europe' is all about, which is paramount to the present and future coexistence of citizens. Consequently, with reference to the legitimation categories explored by critical discourse analysts, this study has not overlooked the way "receivers are managed into acceptance of the existing social [institutional] order as legitimate and even mobilized to actively support it" (Hamelink 1985: 152). In this respect, language plays a vehicular role in institutional discourse in order to legitimise controversial political actions and reinforce a common sense of belonging.

This contribution has also shown the ways in which visual images acquire increasing salience in institutional discourse. The small number of simple drawings in the first publication is replaced by a wider use of photographs portraying 'real Europeans', who are invested with the task of establishing a more authentic and direct relationship with

the reader. Through their visual representation, citizens are given a face, and therefore a role, in the overall process. This fosters involvement and encourages identification with the 'human vectors' portrayed in the informative brochures.

Clearly, since the new neighbours have "entered the gate" (Caliendo and Balirano [forthcoming]) public interest and concerns need to be taken into account in re-framing communities and boundaries. This delicate process necessarily implies re-thinking the communicative instruments through which discourse creates and shapes a new reality. Inclusiveness and participation in the public sphere are also sought by means of new communication technologies, which play a major role in our case-study. The diffusion of informative material both in printed form and via the Internet testifies the rising interest and commitment on the part of the EU to gain consensus by reaching the greatest possible number of Europeans.

***

References

Berger, P. and Luckman, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane the Penguin Press.

Caliendo, G. and Venuti, M. (2008). 'EU Discourse on Enlargement: the Negotiation of Meaning', in V. J. Bhatia *et al.* (eds.), *The Formulation of Legal Concepts across Systems and Cultures*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 207-221.

Caliendo, G. and Balirano, G. (forthcoming). 'Redrawing the Map of an Enlarged European Id-Entity: New Margins Stretching the Centre', in G. Di Martino *et al.* (eds.), *Identity and Culture in English Domain-Specific Discourse: Practical and Methodological Issues*. Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane.

Cap, P. (2005). 'Language and Legitimization: Developments in the Proximization Model of Political Discourse Analysis', *Łódz Papers in Pragmatics*, 1, pp. 7-36.

Castells, M. (2000). *End of Millennium: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Politicians and Rhetoric. The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chilton, P. and Schäffner C. (1997). 'Discourse and Politics', in T. J. Van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse as Social Interaction. Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, volume 2, pp. 206-230.

Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.

DEBATE EUROPE online forum. Available at: http://europa.eu/debateeurope/index_en.htm , last accessed December 2008.

De Fina, A., Schiffrin, D. and Bamberg, M. (2006). 'Introduction', in A. De Fina *et al.* (eds.) *Discourse and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-23.

EUROPA website. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/index_en.htm, last accessed July 2008.

European Commission (2004). *Enlarging the European Union: from 15 to 25, what does it mean to us?* Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/press_corner/publications/key_issues_from15_to_25_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.

European Commission (2005a). *Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission*. Brussels, 20 July 2005, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf, last accessed: December 2008.

European Commission (2005b). *The Commission's Contribution to the Period of Reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*. COM(2005) 494final. Brussels, 13 October 2005. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/pdf/communication_planD_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2005c). *Eurobarometer 62. Public Opinion in the European Union*. Full Report. Fieldwork: October-November 2004. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb_62_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2006a). *20 Myths and Facts about the Enlargement*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/questions_and_answers/myths_en.htm, last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2006b). *White Paper on Communication Policy*. COM (2006) 35 final. Brussels. Available at: http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/pdf/com2006_35_en.pdf , last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2006c). *Special Eurobarometer. Attitudes Towards the European Union Enlargement*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2006d). *Eurobarometer 64. Public Opinion in the European Union*. Full Report. Fieldwork: October-November 2005. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2007a). *Understanding Enlargement*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/publication/enl-understand_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.
European Commission (2007b). *Eurobarometer 66. Public Opinion in the European Union*. Full Report. Fieldwork: October-November 2006. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb66/eb66_en.pdf, last accessed December 2008.
European Council of Copenhagen (1978). *European Council Conclusions. Declaration on Democracy*, 11 EC Bulletin No. 3 (8 April 1978).
European Council of Copenhagen (1993). *European Council Conclusions*, EC Bulletin No. 6 (21-22 June 1993).
European Union (2004). *Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe*, Official Journal of the European Union, C 310, volume 47 (16 December 2004).
Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Fairclough, N. (1994). 'Conversationalization of public discourse and the authority of the consumer', in R. Keat *et al.* (eds.), *The Authority of the Consumer*. Routledge. New York, pp 253-268.
Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study* of *language*. London, Longman.
Habermas, J. (1976). *Legitimation Crisis*. London: Heinemann.
Habermas, J. (1981). *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, Band 1: Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung Band 2: Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag.
Hamelink, C. J. (1985). 'International Communication', in T. J. Van Dijk, *Discourse and Communication. New Approaches to the Analysis of Mass Media Discourse and Communication*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 143-155.
Jaworski, A. and Coupland, N. (2006). 'Perspectives on Discourse Analysis', in A. Jaworski and N. Coupland (eds.), *The Discourse Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-44.
Karklins, R. (2001). 'The Concept of Collective Identity', in *Proceedings of the Colloquy of the Council of Europe "The Concept of Identity"*, 17-18 April 2001. Strasbourg, available at: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/Identity/e_disc_karklins.asp, last accessed: December 2008.
Kress, G. and Van Leeuwen, T. J. (1996). *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.

Krzyżanowski, M. (2005). '"European identity wanted!" On discursive dimensions of the European Convention', in R. Wodak and P. Chilton (eds.), *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Methodology and Interdisciplinarity*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 137-163.

Krzyzanowski, M. and Oberhuber, F. (2007). *(Un)doing Europe: discourses and practices of negotiating the EU constitution*. Bern: P.I.E. Peter Lang.

Laffan, B. (2004). 'The European Union and Its Institutions as "Identity Builders"', in R. K. Herrmann *et al*., *Transnational Identities*. *Becoming European in the EU*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 75-96.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Phillips, L. and Jorgensen, M. W. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage.

Shortis, T. (2001). *The Language of ICT*. London: Routledge.

Treaty establishing the European Economic Community. (1957), available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/index.htm#founding, last accessed: December 2008.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1992). 'Discourse and the Denial of Racism', *Discourse & Society* 3(1), pp. 87-118.

Van Dijk, T. A. (ed.) (1997). *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction*. London: Sage Publications.

Van Leeuwen, T. J. (1996). 'The Representation of Social Actors', in C. R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds.), *Texts and Practices – Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge, pp. 32-70.

Van Leeuwen, T. J. (2007). 'Legitimation in discourse and communication', *Discourse & Communication*, Vol. 1, pp. 91-112.

Van Leeuwen, T. J. and Wodak, R. (1999). 'Legitimizing Immigration Control: A Discourse-Historical Analysis', *Discourse Studies* 1, pp. 83-118.

Weber, M. (1964). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: The Free Press.

Wodak, R. and Weiss, G. (2004). 'Visions, Ideologies and Utopias in the Discursive Construction of European Identities: Organizing, Representing and Legitimizing Europe', in M. Pütz *et al*. (eds.), *Communicating Ideologies. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Language, Discourse, and Social Practice*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, pp. 225-252.

Wodak, R. and Weiss, G. (2005). 'Analyzing European Union discourses: theories and applications', in R. Wodak and P. Chilton (eds.), *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 121-136.

***

Democracy and New Media in the European Union: Communication or Participation Deficit?

Asimina Michailidou

Abstract

At the heart of most academic and political debates regarding the future of the European Union lie three key ideas: openness and transparency; citizens' participation in the decision-making process; and democratic legitimacy. Scholars and EU policy-makers have advocated the use of new media, particularly the Internet, in the democratising process of the EU. This article focuses on the top-down aspect of the online European public dialogue and the opportunities that the EU's public communication strategy offers to citizens for involvement in shaping the Union's political nature. Following a 'multi-method' approach for the gathering of empirical data, the Internet's role in the EU's public communication strategy is examined here from four aspects: the European Commission's public communication policies (document analysis); the Commission's implementation of its online policies (website analysis); their impact on key Internet audiences (user survey); and the views of policy-makers (semi-structured interviews with senior Commission officials).

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN BUILDING THE political identity of the European Union (EU) has never featured more prominently in public debates regarding the future of the EU than during the "period of reflection" (2005-2007) that followed the rejection of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe by the French and Dutch citizens. The negative referenda spurred the EU institutions into action, with the Commission notably producing Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate only months after the 'No' vote in France (COM(2005)494, final). This document marked a new era in EU governance and public communication policy reforms that aim to increase the EU's democratic legitimacy through increased openness and transparency of the Union's decision-making processes.

Specifically with regard to the EU's public communication, the Commission's new, and widely publicised, strategy has at its heart the strengthening of communicative and collaborative linkages with civil society and the public, in an effort to enhance informed debates on EU issues and widen participation in the consultation stages of decision-making. The ultimate goal, however, appears to be far more challenging: The creation

The present article draws on data collected as part of my doctoral thesis (Michailidou 2008b) and of my research within the ESRC-funded "CONSTITUTION" project (Michailidou 2008a; 2007). Funding support from the ESRC for the CONSTITUTION project (RES-000-23-0866; EurPolCom 2008) is gratefully acknowledged. I would also like to thank colleagues working on this project.

The ESRC Constitution project is part of the ESF (European Science Foundation) Project "Building the EU´s Social Constituency: Exploring the Dynamics of Public Claims-Making and Collective Representation in Europe". The British study (Paul Statham, PI, Julie Firmstone and Asimina Michailidou) is conducted in collaboration with partners in Norway (Hans-Jörg Trenz, ARENA Oslo), Germany (Klaus Eder, Humboldt University) and Spain (Agustín José Menéndez, Universidad de León). See also http://www2.hu-berlin.de/struktur/constituency/Startseite/home.htm.

ISSN 1815-347X online. Michailidou, A. (2008). 'Democracy and New Media in the European Union: Communication or Participation Deficit?', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 346-368. Available: http://www.jcer.net/ojs.index.php/jcer/article/view/129/118

of a European public sphere, where citizens not only debate EU issues but participate in a constant and direct open dialogue with EU officials and policy-makers (see COM(2006)211, final; COM(2006)212, provisional version; COM(2006)35; COM(2007)568, final; SEC(2006)1553). This is a clear shift from the previously information-oriented policy, with Internet-enabled interactive communication featuring at the core of the Commission's line of action.

As the Commission's efforts to reconnect with the European public have coincided with the Constitutional process, there seems to be an obvious link between the shock the EU establishment experienced by the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the French and Dutch publics and the turn in the EU's public communication strategy towards more dialogue-oriented actions. But is the failed Constitutional Treaty the only cause of change in the EU's communicative processes, or are there other, less obvious, factors that need to be considered? What exactly does citizens' participation mean in terms of the Commission's official rhetoric and for EU officials? How is the role of Internet-enabled communication in the EU's decision-making process understood and defined in policy documents and by EU policy-makers alike? What do the recipients of the policy (i.e. online EU publics) think of the Commission's efforts? Crucially, can the analysis of the Commission's public communication strategy offer an insight into the reasons that have led the EU, three years after the Constitutional crisis, to a similar ‚dead-end' situation, this time caused by the Irish 'No' vote to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, despite the Commission's well-documented commitment to bridge the gap between Europeans and the EU institutions?[1] These questions are at the heart of this article, which maps the impact of new communication technologies on the Commission's public communication strategy in the 21st century.

New media and democracy: A theoretical model

This article draws on and seeks to advance strands of governance and democratic theories related to the case of the EU polity (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2007; Richardson 2006) by combining these with an approach that outlines new communication technologies as a key factor for change in international politics (see Chadwick 2006). In particular, the theoretical framework that underpins this paper is concerned with aspects of democratic legitimacy of EU governance and its connection with the concept of the European public sphere(s). Scholars by and large agree that a European public sphere or a network of Europeanised, interrelated national public spheres is needed in order for the EU to achieve the desired democratic legitimation (for example, Eriksen and Fossum 2002; Habermas 2004; Pfetsch 2004; Weiler 1996), although there is no consensus on whether the EU's democratic deficit is the cause or result of an absent/deficient European public sphere (Michailidou 2008b).

The correlation of the EU's democratic deficit with European public sphere(s) is instrumental in contextualising the role of public communication in democratising EU governance: The "*chain of communication linkages*" between political institutions (EU, trans-European, foreign EU, national, regional) and their citizens is prerequisite for increased visibility of the decisions taken by political actors (Statham et al 2005). Public visibility is, in turn, necessary for rendering political actors more accountable to the public (ibid.). For Beetham and Lord it is precisely the degree, level and type of participation by civil society actors within a communicated field of politics, for example when compared to the involvement of elites, that gives important empirical

[1] The Irish public rejected the Treaty of Lisbon by referendum on 12 June 2008. Unlike the Constitutional Treaty, this time around Ireland was the only EU member-state to hold a referendum for the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. All other member-states have/are following a parliamentary vote ratification process. At the time of the Irish referendum, 19 other member-states had already ratified the Treaty, while the UK was the first country to proceed with the ratification of the Treaty after the negative Irish referendum. For more information on the Treaty of Lisbon, see The European Union 2008.

information on the scale, nature and location of the "*democratic deficit*" (Beetham and Lord 1998 in Statham et al 2005). Defined within this context, accountability and openness then become core preconditions of democratic legitimacy (ibid.): Communicative linkages among political actors not only indicate the degree of emergence of a European demos, but also act as safeguards of accountability and democratic legitimacy. Consequently, for the EU institutions a first step towards democratic legitimation is to establish public dialogue between the EU decision-makers and the public, with the latter's feedback incorporated in the decision-making process (Michailidou 2008b). This is the role that public communication strategies by definition fulfil (Michailidou 2008b).

Building on this definition of public communication as a facilitator of democratisation, this paper aims to verify the following hypothesis: the Internet can have a democratising effect on the public sphere. Because of the Internet's ability to bypass ethno-cultural, linguistic and geographical boundaries that several scholars have argued in favour of the democratising potential of this communication medium (Coleman and Gøtze 2001; Smith 2004) and have envisaged an all-inclusive online public sphere, based on the Habermasian normative model (Jordan 2000; Poster 1995). Undeniably, there is a gap between this optimism of early theorists who heralded the coming of a new era in politics and communication upon the Internet's arrival, and today's online reality, regarding which most data suggests that it is mainly Western, male and young users who are benefiting from this new medium so far (Michailidou 2008b). Nevertheless, there is also evidence that this gap between theory and reality online is closing more quickly than anticipated and the fact remains that the Internet does offer the possibility of an all-inclusive, democratic public sphere: The unprecedented speed with which this communication medium has become an integral part of the economic and social infrastructure for the majority of its users allows for such optimism today see (De Rosa *et al* 2007). Crucially, today's Web community has migrated from using the Internet to building it (the so-called Web 2.0 era) (De Rosa *et al*. 2007). Within five years from first appearing online, the number of active weblogs had risen to over 70 million in March 2007 (Sifry 2007). Internet users today are not just looking for information; they "make" information and actively participate in social networks and online forums (Sifry 2007).

In the case of the EU, the Internet offers a viable alternative to an offline, more conventional media-regulated communicative platform. Its key characteristics of identity fluidity, ability to bypass communication obstacles, as well as geographical and time-related barriers, render it an accessible medium of communication for a densely-populated, multi-cultural, multi-lingual polity with a complex institutional structure, such as the EU (Michailidou 2008b). For the same reasons, the Internet is considered instrumental in decision-making at a European level, for it enables deliberative democracy and broader citizens' participation (see Engström 2002; Leonard and Arbuthnott 2001; Weiler 1999). Moreover, regarding the more practical issue of Internet accessibility, the Commission is taking direct action in order to cover the divide between Internet-haves and Internet-have-nots with the i2010 initiative, a Lisbon Agenda package of policies aimed at harnessing the potential of ICT to drive innovation and productivity in Europe (Commission of the European Communities 2008k).[2] In terms of infrastructure and service availability, broadband penetration, for example, stands at 99.2 million lines in the EU, ahead of US and Canada (81.6 million) and Japan and Korea (43.1 million) (Commission of the European Communities 2008: 5).

[2] In 2000 the Commission first introduced a set of measures and actions that aimed to transform the EU in the world's most dynamic and competitive economy by 2010, known as the Lisbon strategy. In 2005 the Commission simplified and relaunched the strategy as the Lisbon Agenda, refocusing it on jobs and growth (Commission of the European Communities 2008h). i2010 was formed within the framework of the Lisbon Agenda. With this the Commission aims to '1) establish a European information space, 2) reinforce innovation and investment in ICT research; and 3) promote inclusion, public services and quality of life' (Commission of the European Communities 2008k: 3). See also Commission of the European Communities 2008i.

Overall, 24 member states have reached and surpassed the Lisbon Agenda targets aimed at making the region the world's most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy by 2010, while the remaining three (Greece, Romania, Bulgaria) are closing in the gap rapidly too (Eurostat 2008).

From an "Information policy for the EU" to "Communicating Europe in partnership"

In this context, I have used a multi-method approach to gather original data on four aspects of the Internet's role in the EU's public communication strategy: the European Commission's public communication policies (document analysis); the Commission's implementation of its online policies (website analysis); their impact on key Internet audiences (user survey); and the "organisational culture" for policy-making (semi-structured interviews with senior Commission officials).[3]

With regard to the official Commission rhetoric regarding the role of the Internet, this article examines the EU's Online Public Communication Strategy as it is set out in the wider EU Information and Communication Strategy documents, produced by the Commission from 2001 (when the first such document was published) onwards (Michailidou 2008b). Relevant documents produced by the Council of the European Union (Council), the European Parliament (EP), the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) were also consulted to identify the other EU institutions' position on the Commission's proposed strategy (Michailidou 2007). The documents can be divided in three distinct periods, namely 2001-2004, 2004-2007 and 2007 to date, which reflect the three stages in the Commission's strategy development from information- to communication-orientated. A list of all Commission documents reviewed can be found in the Annex.[4]

2001-2004: An Information strategy for the EU

In the early days of EU public communication policy-making, the Commission focused primarily on improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of information on EU issues. Subsequently, it proposed synergies and cooperation with national media, national governments and civil society actors, who would act as credible mediators between the EU and the general public. While recognising that there are issues of transparency, openness and accountability of EU institutions and a need for greater citizens' participation in the EU decision-making process (Commission of the European Communities 2001b; 2002), the documents of this period are based on the argument that the public's lack of information or misinformation about the role and actions of the EU institutions lie at the heart of the public's suspicion towards the EU (see Commission of the European Communities 2001a: 18; 2001b: 3 and 7; 2002: 6).

Consequently, improved democratic governance and increased transparency and openness of the EU decision-making process are directly linked with an increased flow of information regarding EU actions. The Internet, particularly the EU's main online portal, EUROPA (Commission of the European Communities 2008e),[5] is seen as an integral tool in this process, with the Commission using terms such as "e-Commission", "e-Europe" and "e-governance" to define the institution's passage to 21st century public

[3] The data was collected as part of my doctoral thesis (Michailidou 2008b) and of my research within the ESRC-funded "CONSTITUTION" project (Michailidou 2008a; 2007).
[4] For a full list of all EU documents reviewed see Michailidou 2007 and 2008b.
[5] EUROPA was initially launched on the Commission's initiative in 1995. Following a suggestion from the European Parliament, the Secretaries-General of all institutions set up a Task Force in 1997 which subsequently developed into the Inter-institutional Internet Editorial Committee, with the Commission providing the chair.

communication, always with a focus on information provision rather than dialogue (for example, Commission of the European Communities 2001a).

2004-2007: Going local

A change in the direction of the Commission's public communication strategy can already be detected in 2004. Less obviously in the *Communication from the Commission on Implementing the Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union* (Commission of the European Communities 2004), more clearly and extensively in *The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* (Commission of the European Communities 2005b), the Commission turned to two-way communication with the public, in an attempt to bring EU institutions closer to the public. The focus on direct interaction with the EU public was established in 2005, when "going local" became the Commission's new public communication motto (see Commission of the European Communities 2005a; 2005b; 2006d).

Civil society, national media and member states are still identified as key partners in the implementation of the Commission's communication strategy, but the White Paper on Communication (Commission of the European Communities 2006d) also focused on matching the EU's communication policy to the EU public's concerns and expectations of 'prosperity, solidarity and security in the face of globalisation' (ibid.: 2). Addressing the issues that concern citizens is a crucial prerequisite, according to Leonard and Arbuthnott (2001), if the EU's institutions are to become more democratic. Also, the Commission's Plan D had earlier identified the promotion of citizens' participation in the democratic process as one of the four broad areas of action required to help regain the EU citizens' trust towards the EU institutions and address issues of democratic legitimation, accountability and openness within the EU (Commission of the European Communities 2005b: 18).

Within the post-Constitution policy framework, the Internet is once more identified as one of the key facilitators of two-way communication between citizens and the EU, as opposed to the previously proposed top-down information flow. For example, in addition to the proposed actions regarding the enhancement of the EU's online portal EUROPA, the White Paper on Communication recommends that all EU institutions should complement their websites with online forums and hold joint open debates similar to the EP debates, where officials will accept comments and questions from the public and journalists (Commission of the European Communities 2006d: 6-8). Despite these actions, and in spite of recognising that further citizen participation in EU matters and greater openness of the decision-making process are necessary to restore the public's trust in the EU institutions, the Commission still does not acknowledge the democratic deficit attributed to the EU institutions as real. Instead, all public communication documents examined here refer to it as a "perceived" deficit caused by citizens' complete lack of or limited information on what the EU does (indicatively see Commission of the European Communities 2008a: 1; 2006d: 1 and 4; 2005b: 9; 2002: 4).

It is necessary here to also note that the impact of the Constitutional process on the Commission proposals of the period 2004-2007 is evident: Several of the documents of this period were produced specifically in response to the failed ratification process, in an effort to identify and address the causes of the citizens' distrust towards attempts for EU institutional reform. At the same time, structural changes within the Commission (establishment of a separate Directorate-General Communication in 2004) and a new College of Commissioners that took on its duties in late 2004 have also contributed to the shift of the Commission's public communication strategy. Margot Wallström was appointed Commission Vice President with responsibility for Inter-institutional Relations and Communication and has since driven these changes in the policy direction from the start.

2007-to date: Communication in partnership

More recently, in 2007-2008, the Commission's "going local" strategy has been reinforced and expanded to introduce a new era of "Communicating Europe in partnership" (Commission of the European Communities 2007b). With the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (The European Union 2004) amended and re-packaged as the Treaty of Lisbon (The European Union 2007), the Commission is now focusing on the concept of active citizenship. This is understood as a series of actions, such as public-dialogue forums open to all citizens and more possibilities for citizens to give feedback in all stages of the policy-making process, which have as primary aim the strengthening of the European Union's democratic processes (see Commission of the European Communities 2007a; 2007b; 2008c). The end result that the Commission seems to be aiming for is the development of a democratic European public sphere through the creation and nurturing of "exchanges, debates and understanding between European institutions, the general public, organised civil society and specialised audiences at European, national, regional and local levels". (Commission of the European Communities 2007b: 6). Nevertheless, no explicit reference is made to the "democratic deficit" argument, and the main responsibility for "communicating Europe" to its citizens is still left with the member states.

Upon closer inspection, however, the Commission's strategy of "active citizenship" in all its post-Constitution versions remains anchored on the principle that increased information about the EU amounts to greater understanding of the Union and, consequently, to a more democratic debate about the future of the EU. No other document illustrates this more clearly than the Citizen's Summary of the Commission's re-launched Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate:

> The Commission wants to:
>
> - create a citizens' ownership of EU policies, to make them understandable and relevant, and to make EU institutions accountable and reliable to those they serve;
> - stimulate a wide and permanent debate on the future of the European Union between the democratic institutions in the EU and people from all walks of life, both at country and EU level;
> - empower citizens by giving them access to information so that they may be in a position to hold an informed debate on EU affairs" (Commission of the European Communities 2008a: 1).

The Commission's belief in the effectiveness of such a public communication strategy is certainly not new and is rooted in the association of citizens' disinterest and disengagement from politics with the lack of information and understanding of how the EU works (Commission of the European Communities 2008a: 1).

The above Citizens' Summary also highlights the one crucial new element that the Commission introduces in its Lisbon Treaty-era strategy: "Citizens who are consulted by the EU institutions should be able to debate with policy makers. It should be easy to trace the impact of their views throughout the EU decision-making process" (Commission of the European Communities 2008a: 1).

The Commission thus indicates that it has taken into consideration a widely-expressed criticism on its post-Constitution public communication proposals: Engaging in public dialogue with civil society the general public cannot have any meaningful impact on the EU's democratic legitimacy unless the outcomes of this dialogue are somehow formally incorporated in the decision-making process.

In this context, the Internet becomes "a tool of involvement" (Commission of the European Communities 2007a: 4). For the first time a Commission consultation document is dedicated to the potential of the Internet as a means of *democratisation* (Commission of the European Communities 2007a: 4) and proposes actions not only in

relation to the improvement of the EU's online portal EUROPA but also with regard to the latest possibilities of online interaction, the so-called Web 2.0 functions, such as media sharing and blogs. Despite this, what remains unspecified in this latest era of the Commission's public communication strategy are the exact ways in which the feedback from civil society organizations and citizens will impact on the *modus operandi* of the Union.

From an "Information policy" to…even more information for the EU: Online implementation

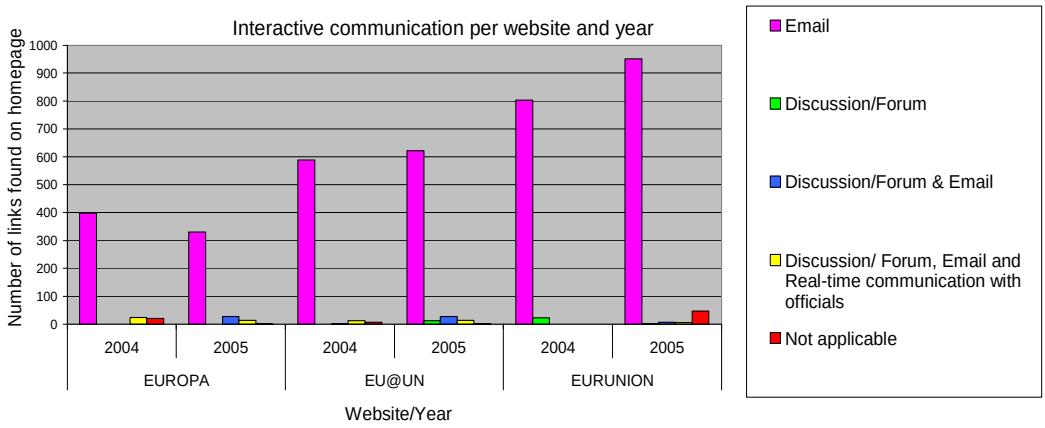
Using the main points of the Commission's proposed Information and Communication Strategy described above as a guide for analysis, three official Commission websites were monitored for a period of twenty four weeks in 2004-2005, namely EUROPA,[6] European Union @ United Nations,[7] and European Union- The Delegation of the European Union to the USA[8] (Michailidou 2008b). EUROPA is the EU's official portal, linking the websites of all its institutions, delegations, committees and so on, as well as providing access to legal documentation, general information on the EU and specialised information targeting specific groups (for example, young people and women). The website was therefore chosen for this study as it is the EU's main online public communication tool. On the other hand, EURUNION is a website targeted at a non-EU general audience, i.e. the US public, and was therefore chosen as a sample of the EU's external public communication strategy online. Finally the EU@UN website is a sample of targeted online communication, aimed at a specialised audience (UN diplomats, state representatives etc) and it was chosen as a control website (Michailidou 2008b).

Here, the focus of the findings concerns the EU's main portal, EUROPA. The other two websites fall under the umbrella of external public communication/public diplomacy and they do not directly contribute to or facilitate the European public sphere(s), not have they been identified by the Commission as tools for the democratisation of the EU's governance processes.[9] What emerged from the analysis of the EUROPA data was a) the Commission's adherence to its commitment of providing detailed information on all aspects of EU institutions and actions; and b) at the same time, a gap between policy and online implementation regarding interaction and facilitation of public dialogue (Michailidou 2008b).

Specifically, when it came to implementing the Commission's commitment to enhancing public dialogue and encouraging the emergence of a European public sphere, interaction with EU officials was only available in the form of generic email addresses, as Figure 1 illustrates below. As a result, despite the Commission's commitment in all its EU Information and Communication documents discussed earlier (see Annex, for a full list of documents reviewed), the Internet was not found to be given a key role in enhancing and facilitating the public dialogue between EU institutions in its practical implementation (Michailidou 2008b).

[6] http://europa.eu
[7] http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/home/index_en.htm
[8] http://www.eurunion.org/eu/
[9] The other two Commission websites monitored during the same period, in order to allow for comparative analysis of the EUROPA findings, were EURUNION (Commission of the European Communities 2008f) and EU@UN (Commission of the European Communities 2008g).
The monitoring took place for twelve weeks in 2004 and twelve weeks in 2005. During the period 13 March 2004 to 10 June 2004 **442** links were coded on the EUROPA homepage, **979** links on the EURUNION homepage and **609** links on the EU@UN homepage. During the period 3 May 2005 to 20 July 2005 there were **372** links found and coded on the EUROPA homepage, **1011** on the EURUNION one and **658** on the EU@UN homepage.

Figure 1: Types of interactive communication found on EUROPA, EU@UN and EURUNION homepages (Michailidou 2008b: 134).



More specifically, during the 2004-2005 monitoring period, online public dialogue was only recorded in 2004 via the permanent online discussion forum called "Futurum" (Futurum public forum) on the EUROPA website. Futurum reached a total of 2,343 contributions to its two political debates regarding the EU's Convention on the future of Europe by the end of the twelve-week monitoring period in 2004, averaging approximately 100 contributions per topic per week.[10]

Besides this, the analysis of EUROPA's homepage found that the EU's online public communication was focused on politics than financial and social issues, as Table 1 below shows. In contrast to that, recent Eurobarometer surveys show that social issues such as unemployment and social security concern Europeans the most, as the majority believes these issues have direct impact on their everyday life but that the EU is not doing enough in these areas (Eurobarometer 2006b; Eurobarometer 2006c). The Commission has also identified such social issues as "priority" ones in most of its EU Information and Communication documents (see Commission of the European Communities 2008b; 2007b; 2006. In this respect, the EU's online public communication also failed to meet the Commission's aim to match its messages to the public's priorities during the crucial 2004-2005 period, as these were identified by the relevant Eurobarometer surveys (Eurobarometer 2006b; Eurobarometer 2006c).

Table 1: Most frequently covered categories of permanently available information linked to the homepage of EUROPA (Data source: Michailidou 2008b).

Most frequently covered topics found on permanent links to EUROPA's homepage		
Categories	**2004**	**2005**
Political issues	EU internal affairs 296 links	EU internal affairs 207 links
Financial issues	EU internal trade/ development 180 links	EU internal trade/ development 122 links
Social issues	Work-related issues 200 links	Work-related issues 147 links
Total number N of links examined[11]	442	372

[10] This number does not include contributions from EU officials, which were clearly indicated on the forum by stating the name of the official and his/her position.

[11] The total sum of links covering each subcategory of issues is higher than the total number N of links examined, as in most occasions a link was found to provide information on more than one subcategory of issues.

After this study was completed, the Commission launched a new online discussion forum on EUROPA in March 2006, entitled "Debate Europe" (Commission of the European Communities 2008b). This forum is proving to be far more popular than its predecessor (Futurum) as within six months of its launch it received one million hits, while contributions averaged 153 per day in March 2008. In addition, there is clear evidence that the Commission is actively embracing the new generation of Internet communications, such as social networking and social media: Following the example of Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström, six more Commissioners and five European Representations now have their own blogs,[12] while the EU now also has a dedicated YouTube channel (Commission of the European Communities 2008d).

Nevertheless, these actions have not yet been followed by a formal framework outlining the exact ways in which the public's feedback will be incorporated in the decision-making process. Similarly, less transparent aspects of the EU legislative process, such as the committee-based consultation process preceding the proposal of EU legislation (Comitology), have yet to be opened up or made available online.

It is clear from the above that the EU's Information and Communication Strategy is not yet fully implemented online. While further study is required in order to assess the success of the Commission's latest actions regarding the EU's Online Public Communication Strategy, it is important to gain an insight in the current views of the recipients of the Commission's online communication efforts. Is access to information as important for the online public as it is for the Commission or do online users value two-way communication more? Do online audiences link two-way communication with EU officials with democratic legitimation of the EU institutions?

E-communication or e-information? The online audiences' perspective

In order to address these questions, an EU website online user survey was conducted over a period of four months (October 2005-January 2006) among 221 Internet users, comprising twenty seven questions, both closed-response and open-end (Michailidou 2008b). The size of the sample was determined by practical constraints, namely the methodological problems of selecting a sample representative of both the global Internet population and offline demographic groups and the enormity of the financial and time-related costs that would arise from pursuing a large-scale online survey. Consequently, a small, specialised sample of individuals who would statistically be more likely to have visited EU official websites and/or online discussion fora (EU or non-EU alike) was deemed more appropriate. The method chosen was that of a non-probability, 'snowball' type sample.

[12] The six Commissioners who have their own blog, apart from Margot Wallström, are:

- Stavros Dimas, Commissioner for Environment;
- Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Science and Research;
- Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development;
- Vladimir Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;
- Andris Piebalgs, Energy Commissioner;
- Meglena Kuneva, Commissioner for Consumer Affairs.

The five Representations with blogs are the following:

- Belgium (Head: Willy Hélin);
- Finland (Head: Marjatta Hautala);
- Malta (Head: Joanna Drake);
- Netherlands (Head: Ludolf van Hasselt); and
- Spain (Head: José Luis Gonzalez Vallvé).

All of the above blogs can be accessed from http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/

The survey focused on what the Commission has invariably defined as "key", "priority" or "silent majority" audiences, such as women and young people. According to the special Eurobarometer surveys on the Future of Europe, it appears that young people and women remain most sceptical about the EU while women are also less likely to participate in an online debate (Eurobarometer 2006b; Eurobarometer 2006c). Furthermore, several Commission documents of the period 2001-2006 emphasise the importance of maintaining and enhancing communication with specialist audiences, for example individuals who may already have a knowledge and/or interest in EU issues (for example, Commission of the European Communities 2001a; 2002; 2004; 2005b; 2006b; 2006c). At the same time, the average Internet user profile, particularly in the EU, is that of a young and educated individual.[13]

The individuals initially contacted regarding the survey were chosen from all of the following categories:

- Individuals with a professional interest/expertise in EU issues and/or within an organisation/institution of EU specialists;
- Individuals with no professional interest in EU issues and/or within an organisation/institution of non-EU specialists;
- Individuals within an organisation/institution or group with a Pro-EU stance;
- Individuals within an organisation/institution or group with an EU-neutral stance;
- Individuals within an organisation/institution or group with an anti-EU stance.

This distinction was necessary in order to obtain as balanced an outcome as possible. In addition to these criteria, an email address was a prerequisite for an individual to be included in the sample.

72 per cent of the respondents were 20-34 years of age, 82 per cent in academic or other professional/managerial positions, 92 per cent were of EU or EU-related/acceding countries and 86 per cent held a university degree. An unexpected 11 per cent of the respondents were either economically inactive or employed in manual/skilled labour and did not fit the profile of economically affluent and/or highly educated Internet users (Michailidou 2008b).[14] Cross-tabulations revealed that these respondents were among the most proactive in terms of accessing political websites and online forums regarding EU issues. Overall, gender, education, nationality and age were statistically found to have no effect on the respondents' views on the EU websites and the role of the Internet in eliminating the EU's democratic deficit (Michailidou 2008b).

The majority of the respondents were frequent Internet users (96 per cent access the Internet every day), who also visit political/governmental websites on a regular basis (83 per cent of the respondents) with 70 per cent of the male and 39 per cent of the

[13] Determining the gender or age of participants in online debates is quite difficult, since identity fluidity is one of the inherent characteristics of the online public sphere, as discussed earlier. However, young and educated individuals fit the average Internet user's profile, thus being amongst the individuals most likely to access the official EU websites and/or participate in an online debate. More specifically, in the case of the EU25, students are proportionally the most regular users of the Internet (78 per cent of total number of individuals). In terms of access any disparities are more due to lack of interest for the medium (45 per cent of EU27 citizens) than to socio-economic inequalities (25 per cent of EU27 citizens) according to the latest statistics (Ottens 2006: 3; Eurobarometer 2007: 15-24).

[14] Respondents were asked to determine their level of education choosing among six categories (non completed compulsory education; completed compulsory education; vocational qualification; BA; MA; PhD) and their work position (open-end question; answers were re-grouped under Public Officials EU ; Public Officials Non-EU ; IT; Professional/Managerial ; Skilled Manual/Manual; Unemployed/Economically inactive; Education Professionals; Education: Students; Health. Data was then cross-tabulated in order to determine correlation between education and occupation.

female respondents claiming to access such websites frequently. Of the 221 respondents, 97 claimed that they access online discussion forums frequently, with the majority of those (38 per cent) preferring political public forums (Michailidou 2008b).

Nevertheless, the frequency with which the interviewees normally access EUROPA is very low: On a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Every day), the average frequency with which the respondents access this website was 2.7 degrees. The results are unsatisfactory considering this website is the EU's official voice online and meant to address as wide an audience as possible. These ratings appear even poorer when further contrasted with the 40.3 per cent of all respondents who confirmed that they access other EU websites except for EUROPA, such as the European Parliament website, and the 19 per cent who access weblogs regarding EU issues (Michailidou 2008b).

When asked to evaluate EUROPA in terms of quality of information and accessibility, the respondents gave the website mediocre ratings: On a scale of 1 (poor quality) to 5 (excellent quality) it was rated an average 2.9 for accessibility and 3.4 for the information provided on its homepage (Michailidou 2008b: 157). Further analysis of the data showed that 57 per cent of the respondents based their evaluation on the degree of accessibility of the websites; 41 per cent on how interesting the content of the websites was; 16 per cent on the clarity of the message; 14 per cent on how credible they thought the source to be; and 7 per cent on whether the contents had any relevance to them (Michailidou 2008b: 161).

The survey results further highlighted the poor implementation of the strategy online, in terms of the Commission's commitment to deploy the Internet in its efforts to engage in dialogue with the public and support the emerging European public sphere. Only 12 per cent of the respondents thought EUROPA provided adequate opportunities for interaction with EU officials (Michailidou 2008b: 158).

Despite this, the survey data also show that the Commission's public communication policy design is moving in the right direction in terms of acknowledging the EU's democratic deficit and associating this with the need for increased accessibility, transparency, accountability and two-way communication with the public. More specifically, 96 per cent of the respondents agreed that there is a democratic deficit within the EU institutions (Michailidou 2008b: 164). Of particular significance is the finding that the respondents' views justify the Commission's decision to give the Internet a central role in the implementation of the EU's Information and Communication Strategy: 56 per cent of the respondents thought the Internet can play a productive role in eliminating this deficit as opposed to 40 per cent (eighty eight out of 221 respondents) who disagreed with this statement (Michailidou 2008b: 164).

These results are very close to both the Commission's official public communication strategy and the theoretical concept discussed in the beginning of this chapter. Openness, transparency and widened participation in the decision-making process are seen by several scholars as viable possibilities which the Internet offers because of its core characteristics of identity fluidity, endless flow of information and ability to override censorship and physical space and time barriers. Moreover, similarly to the scholars who point to offline socio-economic inequalities functioning as barriers to a truly all-inclusive online public sphere, a significant number of respondents also pointed to inequalities in access as the main factor blocking the Internet's potential to help eliminate the EU's democratic deficit.

EU public communication strategy: Enhancing or undermining democratic structures? The EU officials' view

Although the online EU website user survey helped to further highlight the gap between the EU's official Online Public Communication Strategy and implementation

through its main official portal, EUROPA, it produced no evidence of the reasons behind this gap between policy and online implementation. This issue was further investigated through semi-structured interviews with EU officials, conducted over a period of three years (2004-2007).[15] In total, 20 interviews were conducted with senior EU officials in key public communication policy-making and policy-implementation positions in:

- The Commission Directorate-General Communication (DG Comm) [9 interviewees];
- The Commission Directorate-General External Relations (DG Relex) [2 interviewees];
- The European Parliament [2 MEPs and 1 MEP advisor interviewed];
- The European Parliament Secretariat-General [1 interviewee];
- The Committee of the Regions [1 interviewee];
- The European Economic and Social Committee [3 interviewees];and
- The Secretariat-General of the Council of the European Union [1 interviewee].[16]

What emerged from these interviews is that the gap between policy and implementation, insofar as the EU's Online Public Communication Strategy is concerned, can be attributed to two factors: Firstly, practical/technical obstacles and secondly, a contradictory understanding of the concept of public communication within the Commission as well as among the other institutions (Michailidou 2008a; Michailidou 2008b).

More specifically, the Directorate-General Communication has undergone four restructuring exercises since 2001- a process which all Commission interviewees agreed has disrupted the implementation of the EU's public communication strategy. Furthermore, the officials working on the EU's Information and Communication Strategy are in their majority "non-experts in the field of public communication" as one interviewee put it, while another one further explained that "hiring communication experts is not an option" as there is the danger of the Commission being accused of creating a propaganda machine (Michailidou 2008b).[17] This situation partly explains the reasons for the very slow embrace of new communication technologies and in particular of the Internet in the implementation of the EU's public communication strategy, despite policy-makers constantly underlining in every EU Information and Communication document the importance of this medium in reaching target audiences.

Furthermore, there is a difference of perception between officials on policy-making level and officials who are charged with implementing the policy with regard to the aims, online target audiences and role of the Internet in the EU public communication strategy. On the one hand, the policy-makers firmly support the concept of target audiences, and feel strongly about the need to approach "difficult" audiences, such as young people and women, online. On the other hand, policy-implementation officials think that the Internet is mainly a tool of communication with EU specialists and individuals and/or institutions with an interest in the EU and its actions. They are, therefore, not convinced that approaching so-called "vulnerable" target audiences, that is disinterested or sceptical audiences, is worth the effort or that it can be successful.

[15] As part of my doctoral thesis (Michailidou 2008b) and in the context of my empirical research for the "CONSTITUTION" project (Michailidou 2008a).
[16] The interviews were conducted in 'semi-structured' format. Because of the senior positions held by the interviewees, they are not identified here by name. Where they are directly quoted in this chapter, they are identified as Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, etc.
[17] In the context of my doctoral thesis, 6 senior Commission officials were interviewed in 2004-2005 in the Commission's Directorate-General Communication and the Commission's Delegation in Washington DC, US.

Besides this, there is reluctance within the Commission to take the lead from the member-states in the implementation of the EU's Information and Communication Strategy.

Interviews with key EU officials as part of the ESRC-funded "CONSTITUTION" project reaffirmed this divide of opinions regarding the role of the Internet (Michailidou 2008a). When asked to evaluate the importance of improving access to information and documents about the EU on the Internet as a factor for improving the EU's legitimacy, Commission officials gave this an average ranking of 2.6 on a scale of 0 (not at all important) to 4 (very important), with the overall average rating of all EU officials interviewed only marginally lower, at 2.5 (Michailidou 2008a: 7), as Table 2 (below) illustrates.[18]

Table 2: Factors for improving EU's legitimacy (Michailidou 2008a)[19]

Factors for improving EU's legitimacy	Rank	Average value[20]	Total valid answers [21]
Quality coverage of the EU in national media	**1**	***3.4***	*13*
Improving communications between EU organisations and the media	**2**	***2.8***	*13*
Promoting the benefits of the EU to its citizens	**3**	***2.8***	*13*
Promote specific EU policies to citizens	**4**	***2.8***	*13*
Reform the EU budget	**5**	***2.6***	*13*
Simplifying decision making processes to make them more transparent	**6**	***2.5***	*13*
Strengthening European level civil society	**7**	***2.5***	*13*
Improving access to information and documents about the EU on the Internet	**8**	***2.5***	*13*
Strengthening nationally based civil society over Europe	**9**	***2.2***	*13*
Giving citizens more access to EU organisations	**10**	***2.2***	*13*
Extend the power of the EU Parliament	**11**	***2.3***	*12*
Hold EU Council meetings in public	**12**	***2.2***	*13*
Improving access to decision making for civil society groups	**13**	***2.2***	*13*
Make the Commission more efficient	**14**	***1.8***	*13*
Make the Commission more accountable	**15**	***1.8***	*13*
Extend the power of national parliaments in the EU	**16**	***1.9***	*12*
Have a President of the Council/establish clear political leaders of the EU	**17**	***1.7***	*13*
Establishing an EU Constitution	**18**	***1.6***	*13*
Promoting a European identity among citizens	**19**	***1.5***	*13*
Establishing an EU wide media	**20**	***1.3***	*13*
Holding national referenda to ratify treaties/a Constitution	**21**	***0.9***	*13*
Holding EU wide referenda to ratify treaties/a Constitution	**22**	***0.8***	*13*

The results also confirm, at first glance, the impact that the Constitutional process, and particularly the negative referenda in France and the Netherlands, has had on the EU

[18] In the context of the 'CONSTITUTION' project, 14 senior officials in key decision-making and policy-implementing positions in the Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions were interviewed during the period April-July 2007. Five of the interviewees were senior officials in the Directorate-General Communication and Directorate-General External Relations of the Commission. During the interviews, officials were asked to evaluate 22 factors that could potentially improve the legitimacy of the EU and rank them in order of importance (Michailidou 2008a).

[19] The table is based on aspects of legitimacy using definitions by Lord (2003) and as discussed by Neuhold and Versluis (2004) with regard to the Constitution, as found in Statham *et al* 2005.

[20] Numbers are rounded to the first decimal digit.

[21] Although the total number of interviewees was 14, one interviewee did not complete this part of the questionnaire and another chose not to respond to two questions on the basis that he did not feel equipped to do so.

institutions. The factors that were considered least important in the legitimation process of the EU by the majority of respondents were the holding of national or EU-wide referenda to ratify treaties or a constitution and establishing EU-wide media (Table 2). However, this link between the failed Constitutional process and the officials' views on direct democracy becomes less clear-cut when we look at how the respondents justified their responses.

Starting with public communication and its apparent link with democratic legitimacy, the majority of the interviewees accepted that there is an issue of legitimacy at the EU level which needs to be addressed (10 out of 12 interviewees). At the same time, the majority of EU officials, whether they accept the EU's democratic deficit or not, agreed that better communication with the public is a key factor of improving legitimacy (5 interviewees, EP, 3 Commission, EESC) or at least people's perception of legitimacy (2 interviewees, Commission and CoR), but gave different examples of how they understand improved communication.[22] For example, Interviewee 10 (EP) pointed to the recently-launched webTV project, for which the EP Secretariat General is responsible and which will be transmitting parliamentary debates and the activities of MEPs and other EU officials online. In contrast to this, another interviewee explained better communication as improving interaction with national parliaments and strengthening the role and activities of the Commission's Representations (Interviewee 3, Commission) (Michailidou 2008a).

Considering the importance that all interviewed EU officials attributed to public communication, one would expect that they would value two-way communication with the public equally highly, particularly as this has had such a central role in all EU public communication documents since 2004 discussed earlier (see Annex for a full list of Commission documents examined). Indeed, nearly all Commission officials were in favour of two-way communication with the public and civil society (four out of five Commission officials interviewed). Nevertheless, the majority of the officials from the other EU institutions remained sceptical of the feasibility and indeed of the legitimacy of such a concept, as Table 3 (below) illustrates.

Table 3: EU officials' views on two-way communication

Institution	In favour of two-way communication with civil society and the public	Sceptical towards two-way communication with civil society and the public
Commission	4	1
CoR	1	-
Council	-	1
EESC	1	2
EP/MEP	1	2
Total	**7**	**6**

The officials supportive of the two-way communication strategy based their views on the democratising potential that incorporating feedback from collective actors and individual citizens can have on the decision making process. One interviewee (Secretariat-General, Council of the European Union) used the Commission's Green Paper on Climate Change, the first of its kind, as an example of how civil society consultation can result to beneficial, if not groundbreaking, EU legislation.[23]

[22] From the remaining 7 respondents, three referred to structural reform and four gave varied answers, ranging from strengthening the process of participatory democracy and simplifying the EU procedures to putting more emphasis on social issues and reforming the political elites in the member-states.

[23] On 29 June 2007 the European Commission adopted its Green Paper on adapting to the impacts of climate change (Commission of the European Communities 2007c), building upon the work and findings of the European Climate Change Programme (Commission of the European Communities 2008j).

Some saw the process as fraught with difficulties yet inevitably moving towards two-way communication. More specifically, interviewees expressed the view that it is not always possible to guarantee citizens' participation or the quality of the opinions brought forward. As Interviewee 3 put it:

> one thing that we did was to introduce minimum standards for consultation which means that, for example, the representations in the member states are now involved in the consultations and doing outreach to actually encourage people of all sides of an issue nationally […] to get involved, to have some kind of impact on what legislative proposals will end up putting forward for that. You can never guarantee that they will use that thing but] you can set up structures and then either, like with the Convention, if you set it up, people have the ability to [have opinions on it], whether people end up doing that, you can't control but you can try and make it easier or more possible for people to do that.

It is also worth noting that the two EESC and CoR officials in favour of the strategy expressed the view that two-way communication can be legitimised provided that the role of their institutions in the decision-making process is strengthened.

On the other hand, the officials who appeared sceptical of this shift in public communication strategy mainly focused on the democratic legitimacy of the initiative. In particular, it is the lack of quality guarantee from public/civil society input that concerns EU officials. Respondents pinpointed the lack of representativeness of civil society organisations, and therefore, to their lack of democratic mandate. For this reason, Interviewee 6 (Commission), for example, expressed concerns that:

> The concept of direct democracy is slightly demagogical, in my opinion, because we have the institutions, elected, and therefore there exists a legality, which we then question with an opinion which may be coming from lobbies or organised minorities, which are not representative. Representative is the government. Direct democracy is interesting but it cannot guarantee representativeness. So, when we create communication channels we need to take into consideration that these channels may not represent the majority of Europeans. Direct democracy is very fashionable but it should exist avec moderation.

Discussion

Over the last seven years the Commission has repeatedly expressed its commitment to promoting dialogue with the general public and civil society and recognises that public communication is a key factor for improving openness, transparency and citizens' participation in the EU decision-making process, directly linking these with the democratic legitimacy of the Union. The Internet, in particular, potentially constitutes an important public communication tool, which allows for the official EU voice to reach the public directly, bypassing national/regional media and participating in a potentially all-inclusive European public sphere.

Nevertheless, the review of official EU public communication documents has shown that the actions proposed to address the issue of the EU's democratic legitimacy are focused on public perception rather than institutional reform. Following this gap in official rhetoric between public communication aims and proposed actions, EUROPA was found not to offer many opportunities for online public dialogue in 2004-2005, with the only interactive debate forum available at the time (Futurum) attracting limited interest and also being suspended during the critical period of Constitutional debates. The Commission's more recent online initiatives are more debate-orientated but a formal framework outlining the way citizens' feedback is incorporated in the decision-making process is unlikely to be produced in the foreseeable future. Viewed under this light, the Commission's proposals for increased Internet-facilitated citizens' participation in the EU decision-making procedures appear more relevant to perception management than democratic legitimation.

Despite this, the Commission is not alone in its belief that online public dialogue and increased access to information about EU are directly linked with the Union's democratic legitimacy. Online audiences that fall under the umbrella of the Commission's 'priority' or 'vulnerable' communication target groups also believe that the Internet can help eliminate the EU's democratic deficit, mainly through increased access to information about the EU. For the participants of the survey, access to information is vital as it facilitates transparency of the decision-making process and enables citizens to make informed choices regarding their governance system.

From the perspective of the senior Commission officials directly involved with the design and implementation of the EU's public communication strategy, the key findings from the interviews conducted from 2004-2007 suggest that far from trying to introduce a new propaganda machine, this focus on the public's perception of the EU stems from a deep-rooted understanding of democratic legitimacy as directly depending on informed public dialogue. For most interviewees, increased and factual information regarding the EU institutions and the decisions taken at EU level, as opposed to occasional 'tabloid' type of reporting on EU issues, can have a two-fold effect: Firstly, it will help dispel the myth of 'the Brussels bureaucrats' trying to suffocate national sovereignty and will enable EU citizens make informed decisions regarding the future of the Union. Secondly, the increased reporting on EU issues will also increase transparency of the EU decision-making process and will allow for *deliberative processes* to emerge in the future regarding the EU polity.

On a theoretical level, the views of the EU officials are very close to the scholarly approaches which see in the national media discourses on EU issues the potential 'Europeanisation' of the national public spheres, and consequently, the potential for emergence of a European public sphere (for example, Koopmans *et al* 2004; van de Steeg and Risse 2007). The assumption laid out in the European Commission's official public communication strategy and among other officials alike is that an increase in positive/accurate media reporting of EU issues would lead to an increased visibility of the issues surrounding European governance in national public debates, i.e. to "intensified communication about European governance" (Latzer and Sauerwein 2006: 17 cited in Trenz 2007: 15). Since public debate of EU issues is closely linked to the legitimacy of EU governance, a common hypothesis among scholars is that increased coverage in national media will allow for greater/closer public scrutiny of the EU institutions, and thus contribute to the legitimization of the Union (Trenz 2007).

However close this approach may be to the Habermasian model of the bourgeois public sphere, where the media contribute to the rational critical debate (Habermas 1989), It does not take into account a fundamental characteristic of the media: They are autonomous organisations that operate under their own institutional rules and culture-which means that national media will not always provide information on EU issues within the timeframe and context that the EU institutions want. As Trenz points out, "such a linear relationship between growing competencies of the EU and growing public attentiveness to European integration has so far not been corroborated by empirical analysis" (Trenz 2007: 15). For example, the Constitutional process did not generate national and transnational public debates on the future of the EU nor did it increase the opportunities for citizens' views to be heard in the public sphere, to the extent that EU officials had initially hoped (see Firmstone and Statham 2007).

The analysis of the interview data indicates that, rather than having an empirically substantiated basis, the EU officials' belief in the legitimizing potential of the media stems from their understanding of public communication: Whether sceptical or in favour of two-way communication with the public and civil society, interviewees thought that such a process raises issues of representativeness and legitimacy of the EU decision-making procedures and can potentially undermine parliamentary procedures.

The link between information, communication and democratic legitimacy casts new light on the term "participatory democracy", which is frequently used in EU documents of the post-Constitutional period (see Commission of the European Communities 2008b; 2007b; The European Union 2004; 2008). Referring to the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe,[24] Smismans has already pointed out that the whole debate regarding direct citizen participation in the decision-making process on an EU level has mainly focused on an alternative form of representation (i.e. representation via associations and interest groups) rather than direct participation (Smismans 2004: 128-129). The review of the EU's Online Public Communication Strategy and interviews with EU officials corroborate this observation: Holding referenda (a key element of direct democracy) to ratify EU treaties, for example, is not highly rated by EU officials as a democratic legitimacy factor. At the same time, the Commission's proposals for two-way communication with the public focus mainly on providing accurate information on EU actions and increasing information about the profile of EU actors, rather than outlining how the public's input is going to be formally embedded in the EU's decision-making process.

New media communication and the Internet in particular have certainly facilitated the shift of the EU's public communication strategy from information to dialogue-oriented actions. Nevertheless, the Commission still appears to vacillate between an informational and a participatory line of action. This inevitably impacts not only on the implementation of the EU's public communication strategy but also on the conceptual framework that shapes the Commission's political outlook on the future of the Union (representative *vs.* participatory democracy). Whether the informational or the participatory type of Online Public Communication Strategy will supersede in the coming years will also determine whether the Commission is aiming to cultivate public debate or merely to achieve public consensus over the future of the EU.

***

References

Chadwick, A. (2006). *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coleman, S. and J. Gøtze (2001). *Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation,* London: Hansard Society. Available at: http://bowlingtogether.net/, accessed 25 January 2004.

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

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

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

Commission of the European Communities (2004). *Implementing the Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union,* COM(2004)196, final.

Commission of the European Communities (2005a). *Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission*. Vice-President Margot Wallström website. Available at:

[24] The EU Constitutional Treaty itself clearly identifies both representative ***and*** participatory democracy as fundamental principles of the democratic life in the EU (The European Union 2004: 34-35, articles I-46 and I-47).

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/press_communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf, accessed 14 February 2006.

Commission of the European Communities (2005b). *The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate,* COM(2005)494, final.

Commission of the European Communities (2006a). *European policies concerning youth participation and information: Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth: Implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship {SEC(2006)1006},* COM(2006)417, final.

Commission of the European Communities (2006b). *Information note from Vice President Wallström to the Commission: Plan D- Wider and deeper Debate on Europe,* SEC(2006)1553.

Commission of the European Communities (2006c). *The Period of Reflection and Plan D,* COM(2006)212, provisional version.

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

Commission of the European Communities (2007a). *Communicating about Europe via the Internet- Engaging the citizens,* SEC(2007)1742.

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

Commission of the European Communities (2007c). *Green Paper- Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action,* COM(2007)354 final.

Commission of the European Communities (2008a). *Citizens' Summary: Debate Europe- Building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate.* Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/pdf/com_2008_158-4-summary_en.pdf, accessed 30 April 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008b). *Debate Europe.* Available at: http://europa.eu/debateeurope/index_en.htm, accessed 25 September 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008c). *Debate Europe- building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate,* COM(2008)158/4.

Commission of the European Communities (2008d). *EU Tube,* Available at: http://www.youtube.com/eutube, accessed 29 March 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008e). *EUROPA- Gateway to the European Union.* Available at: http://europa.eu/index_en.htm, accessed 14 August 2006.

Commission of the European Communities (2008f). *European Union- Delegation of the European Commission to the USA.* Available at: http://www.eurunion.org/, accessed 14 August 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008g). *European Union @ United Nations.* Available at: http://www.europa-eu-un.org/home/index_en.htm, accessed 14 August 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008h). Growth and Jobs. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm, accessed 15 March 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008i). i2010- A European Information Society for growth and employment. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm, accessed 15 March 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008j). *Living with climate change in Europe.* Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/index_en.htm, accessed 14 January 2008.

Commission of the European Communities (2008k). *Preparing Europe's digital future: i2010 Mid-Term Review*, COM(2008) 199 final.

De Rosa, C., Cantrell, J., Havens, A., Hawk, J., Jenkins, L. (2007). *Sharing, privacy and trust in our networked world.* OCLC Online Computer Library Center. Available at: http://www.oclc.org/reports/pdfs/sharing.pdf, accessed 12 February 2008.

Engström, M. (2002). *Rebooting Europe: Digital Deliberation and European Democracy* (Report 4). Brussels: The Foreign Policy Centre in association with the British Council.

Eriksen, E. O. and J. E., Fossum (2002). Democracy through strong publics in the European Union? *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 40(3), pp.401-424.

Eurobarometer (2006b). *The European citizens and the future of Europe: Qualitative study in the 25 Member-States* (Report). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/quali/ql_futur_en.pdf, accessed 14 June 2006.

Eurobarometer (2006c). *The Future of Europe* (Special Eurobarometer 251/Wave 65.1/TNS Opinion & Social). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_251_en.pdf, accessed 14 July 2006.

Eurobarometer (2007). *E-Communications Household Survey- Summary*. Special Eurobarometer 274/Wave 66.3/TNS Opinion & Social. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_274_sum_en.pdf, accessed 15 July 2008.

Eurostat (2008). *Innovation and research: Level of Internet access- Households (EU and candidate countries)*. Eurostat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/QueenPortletized/display.do?screen=graphicref&output=PNG&language=en&product=STRIND_INNORE&root=STRIND_INNORE/innore/ir031, accessed 3 April 2008.

EurPolCom (2008). *The impact of EU 'Constitutionalisation on public claims-making over Europe (ESRC Award Ref. RES-000-23-0886)*. Available at: http://www.eurpolcom.eu/research_projects_const.cfm, accessed 27 March 2008.

Firmstone, J. and P., Statham (2007). *Mediated debates about the EU and ratification of the European Constitution in the British Public Sphere*. EurPolCom Working Paper Series 15/07. Available at: http://www.eurpolcom.eu/exhibits/paper_15.pdf, accessed 4 October 2008.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Great Britain: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (2004). Does Europe need a Constitution? Response to Dieter Grimm. In: E. O. Eriksen, A. J. Menendez and J. E. Fossum (eds). *Developing a Constitution for Europe,* Oxon/New York: Routledge, pp.19-34.

Jordan, T. (2000). *Cyberpower: The Culture and Politics in Cyberspace and the Internet*. London/ New York: Routledge.

Kohler-Koch, B. and B. Rittberger (eds) (2007). *Debating the Democratic Legitimacy of the European Union*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Koopmans, R., Statham, P., Kriesi, H., Della Porta, D., de Beus, J., Guiraudon, V., Medrano, J., Diez, Pfetsch, B. (2004). *EUROPUB.com: The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres.* Available at: http://europub.wz-berlin.de/Default.htm, accessing 5 March 2006.

Leonard, M. and T., Arbuthnott (2001). *Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe- A framework document* (Report 1). The Foreign Policy Centre. Available at: http://fpc.org.uk/publications/, accessed 3 February 2004.

Michailidou, A. (2007). *The impact of "Constitutionalisation" on the EU public communication strategy: EU official rhetoric and civil society*. EurPolCom Working Paper Series 14/07. Available at: http://www.eurpolcom.eu/exhibits/paper_14.pdf, accessed 25 March 2008.

Michailidou, A. (2008a). *"Constitutionalisation" of the European public sphere- EU public communication, institutional culture and civil society*. EurPolCom Working Paper Series 16/08. Available at: http://www.eurpolcom.eu/exhibits/paper_16.pdf, accessed 25 March 2008.

Michailidou, A. (2008b). *The European Union online*. Berlin: VDM-Verlag Dr Müller.

Ottens, M. (2006). *Statistics in Focus: Use of the Internet among individuals and enterprises*. Eurostat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NP-06-012/EN/KS-NP-06-012-EN.PDF, accessed 14 July 2007.

Poster, M. (1995). *Cyberdemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere*. School of Humanities, University of California Irvine. Available at: http://www.hnet.uci.edu/mposter/writings/democ.html, accessed 23 March 2006.

Richardson, J. J. (2006). *European Union: power and policy-making*, 3rd ed., Abingdon: Routledge.

Sifry, D. (2007). *The state of the live Web (Technorati)*- April 2007. Sifry's Alerts- David Sifry's musings. Available at: http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000493.html, accessed 3 April 2008.

Smismans, S. (2004). The Constitutional labelling of "The democratic life of the EU". In: L. Dobson and A. Föllesdal, (eds). *Political theory and the European constitution,* London: Routledge, pp.122-138.

Smith, G. (2004). *The politics of deceit: saving freedom and democracy from extinction*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley.

The European Union (2004).. Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, *the Official Journal of the European Union*, C 310, pp. 1-474, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2004:310:0011:0040:EN:PDF>, accessed 3 March 2006.

The European Union (2008). *Treaty of Lisbon*. Available at: http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm, accessed 29 March 2008.

Trenz, H. (2007). *Measuring Europeanisation of Public Communication- The question of standards*. Reconstituting democracy in Europe (RECON) Online Working Paper 2007/12. Available at: http://www.reconproject.eu/main.php/RECON_wp_0712.pdf?fileitem=5882287, accessed 28 November 2007.

van de Steeg, M. and T., Risse (2007). *The Emergence of a European Community of Communication: Insights from Empirical Research on the Europeanization of Public Spheres*. Centre for transnational relations, foreign and security policy. Available at: http://www.atasp.de/downloads/eps_vandesteeg_risse_070513.pdf, accessed 7 September 2007.

Weiler, J.H.H. (1996). *European Union: democracy without a demos?* Falmer: International Relations and Politics Subject Group, University of Sussex.

Weiler, J.H.H. (1999). *The constitution of Europe: "Do the new clothes have an emperor?" and other essays on European integration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

***

Annex

EU public communication official documents reviewed

COM and SEC documents

COM(2000)154, final. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions- Strategic Objectives 2000-2005*.

COM(2001)0727, final. *Communication from the Commission on the future of the European Union: European Governance- Renewing the Community method.*

COM(2001)428, final. *European Governance- A White Paper.*

COM(2001)354, final. *Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions on A New Framework for Co-operation on Activities Concerning the Information and Communication Policy of the European Union*.

COM(2002)350, final/2. *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union.*

COM(2002)705, final. *Report from the Commission on European Governance.*

COM(2003)0216, final. *Report from the Commission on the application in 2002 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.*

COM(2003)0276, final- CNS 2003/0116. *Commission of the European Communities proposal for a Council Decision establishing a Community action programme to promote active European citizenship (civic participation).*

COM(2004)154, final. *Communication from the Commission: Making citizenship work: fostering European culture and diversity through programmes for youth, culture, audiovisual and civic participation.*

COM(2004)196, final. *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 Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union*.

COM(2004)0552, final. *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of an information and communication strategy on the Euro and Economic and Monetary Union.*

COM(2004)695, final. *Report from the Commission: Fourth report on citizenship of the Union (1 May 2001 – 30 April 2004).*

COM(2005)229, final. *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment"*.

COM(2005)494, final. *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate.*

COM(2006)417, final. *European policies concerning youth participation and information Follow-up to the White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth: Implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship {SEC(2006) 1006}.*

COM(2006)211, final. *Communication from the Commission to the European Council: A Citizen's Agenda- Delivering results for Europe.*

COM(2006)212, provisional version. *Communication*

from the Commission to the European Council: The Period of Reflection and Plan D.

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

COM(2007)568, final. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions- Communicating Europe in Partnership.*

SEC(2006)1553. *Information note from Vice President Wallström to the Commission: Plan D- Wider and deeper Debate on Europe.*

SEC(2007)1742. *Communication to the Commission: Communicating about Europe Via the Internet- Engaging the Citizens.*

Other Commission public communication documents and sources

Carvounis, P. (2007). Partnerships- How do they work? Workshop 2 "Partnerships between the EU and national authorities: structures, means and tools". *Communicating Europe together,* 18-19 January 2007, Berlin. Retrieved 4 February 2007, from Vice-president Margot Wallström website, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/communicating/berlin_post_en.htm

Commission of the European Communities (2005a). *Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission*. Retrieved 14 February 2008, from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf

Commission of the European Communities (2005b). *Annex regarding the Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission*. Retrieved 14 February 2006, from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_annex_en.pdf

Commission of the European Communities (2005c). *Digital Divide Forum Report: Broadband access and public support in under-served areas*. Retrieved 15 July 2008, from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/digital_divide/index_en.htm

Commission of the European Communities (2006b). *The cost of the non-Constitution* (Commission staff working paper). Retrieved 9 January 2007, from Vice-president Margot Wallström website, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/pdf/final_report_21112006_en.pdf

Commission of the European Communities, Directorate General Communication (2006). Retrieved 27 August 2006, from *White Paper on a European Communication policy: Have your say! Website,* http://ec.europa.eu/communication_white_paper/index_en.htm

Commission of the European Communities, Press and Communication Service (2001). *Communication by the President to the Commission in agreement with Vice-President Neil Kinnock and Mr. Erkki Liikanen: Towards the e-Commission, EUROPA 2nd Generation/ Advanced web services to citizens, businesses and other professional users, D(2000)*. Retrieved 3 April 2006, from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/e2g_en.pdf

EUROPA (2008a). *Glossary: Democratic Deficit*. Retrieved 18 July 2008, from http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/democratic_deficit_en.htm

EUROPA (2008b). *The EU at a glance*. Retrieved 14 April 2008, from http://europa.eu/abc/index_en.htm

Wallström, M. (2005). *Information note from Vice-President: Communicating the Constitution- 10 Concrete Actions by the Commission*. Retrieved 23 April 2008, from Vice-President Margot Wallström website,

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/pdf/communicating_constitution_en.pdf

Wallström, M. (2008). *The EU is strengthening its democracy*. Article in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*. *Retrieve*d 1 April 2008, from http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/pdf/article_20080218_en.pdf

***

Book Review

Terzis, Georgios (ed.)
European Media Governance: National and Regional Dimensions
Bristol: Intellect Books (2007)
&
European Media Governance: The Brussels Dimension
Bristol: Intellect Books (2008)

Patrick Bijsmans
Maastricht University

Media policy is an important issue in terms of economic and technological developments, cultural diversity and the democratic legitimacy of political systems. Our lives are shaped by newspapers, television, the internet, etcetera, all of which provide information about lifestyle, culture and politics. Perhaps most importantly, a plural media landscape and freedom of the press are vital conditions for enabling people from all walks of life to express their views in a public arena and to form an opinion on matters important to them. Consequently changes in media markets as well as technological progress provide new opportunities but also new challenges for media companies, policy makers and citizens alike. The two books on European media governance edited by Georgios Terzis (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) on the occasion of the 15th birthday of the Maastricht-based European Journalism Centre (EJC) attempt to illustrate how such issues are affected by national and European policies.

European Media Governance: National and Regional Dimensions discusses the media landscapes and policies of 32 European countries. Though this is by no means the first volume to bring together chapters on media and politics in various European states, it stands out in two ways. First, the book is structured around the three models (Polarised Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist and Liberal) developed by Dan Hallin and Paolo Mancini in their book *Comparing Media Systems* (OUP, 2004), which makes the volume more coherent than comparable publications lacking such a framework. Second, it includes chapters on countries ranging from Finland to Turkey, the result of which the reader gets an overview of broad developments across Europe.

While it would be unfeasible to provide detailed information on all 32 countries, each chapter discusses the media market, state policies, civil society organisation and trends. Consequently these chapters tend to mainly focus on data and facts rather than reflecting upon the reasons behind certain developments. Nonetheless, each section starts with an introductory contribution explaining the corresponding model of Hallin and Mancini. Interestingly, the former communist countries are discussed in a separate section ('The Eastern European/Post-Communist Media Model Countries'). Karol Jakubowicz explains that this has been done in order to find out "… whether Central and Eastern European media systems can be compared to any of Hallin and Mancini's systems" (p.303). The overall conclusion seems to be that the media environments in these countries are still in a state of flux, which makes any conclusion premature, despite similarities to, for instance, the Polarised Pluralist model.

In his contribution Denis McQuail (pp.20-1) notes that while all 32 countries experience similar developments, such as privatisation and globalisation, differences do persist. Interesting deviations from more general developments are, for instance, the rise of newspaper sales in Ireland (p.34) and the continuously dominant position of public broadcaster SRG SSR in

Switzerland (p.184). What is more, the introductions to the models, as well as the country chapters, typically stress that despite many similarities there are also differences between countries grouped according to each model. For example, the partisan stance of the British press is not in line with the more neutral approach of the press in the other Liberal countries. Considering these and other differences discussed in this volume, one may question Johannes Bardoel's proposal for another possible division: that between old and young democracies (p.455). Such a distinction might be more practical, but it could conceal important differences between European states.

European Media Governance: The Brussels Dimension examines EU media policies from the perspectives of various organised interests, the European Commission and European Parliament. The overview of the operations of these stakeholders and institutions sometimes tends to be quite sketchy. Also, the format of the chapters differ with some more informative than others. Nevertheless, most contributions do provide hands-on information about a variety of interests such as the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC). Chapters give overviews of their positions, sometimes including lists of position papers, as well as an outline of the main policies devised at the European level and their importance for the organisations. Particularly useful in the latter respect is Annex A of the book, which consists of a list of EU directives, programmes, etcetera which have an impact on the media.

The diverse set of EU policy fields that have impacted upon the functioning of the media is striking. In addition to well-known major directives and programmes such as the Television Without Frontiers Directive (amended late 2007 and renamed the Audiovisual Media Services Directive) and the MEDIA Programme, it appears that copyright laws, internal market legislation, programmes in the field of culture and even environmental policy all play a role in shaping the media environment. The contributors note that they pursue their own specific interests at certain times, while cooperating in joint endeavours to lobby the EU institutions at others. As the chapters are written by representatives of interest groups and institutions it is no surprise that preferences are clearly stated and authors are not shy about expressing strong opinions. For example, Aidan White of the EFJ calls the 2006 Commission Green Paper on labour law "a funeral oration for the European social model" (p.144). Yet, it is somewhat uncomfortable to read that Jean-Eric de Cockborne and Harald Trettenbrein of the European Commission call a regulatory framework on electronic communications "a world-class legal framework" (p.33).

Terzis' second volume presents a great deal of information on organisations, opinions, etcetera, but regrettably there are no *thorough* attempts to present the reader with a synthesis or to reflect on broader questions. For example, to what extent are lobbying activities actually influential in shaping EU media policy? What does EU media policy mean in terms of freedom of speech, media pluralism and so on? In this respect, Alison Harcourt's introductory comments on the nature of media governance are quite unsatisfactory, as is Bettina Peters' concluding discussion of the uneven balance between market and culture in EU media policy. Ultimately, most contributions only refer to changes in the media market, whereas other issues are only addressed superficially.

In sum, while *European Media Governance: National and Regional Dimensions* provides a more analytical dimension both volumes will be particularly useful to researchers and practitioners wishing to acquire a factual knowledge into media governance in the EU and its Member States. Readers interested in more detailed analytical reflections on issues such as the impact of media polices on the freedom of speech should probably look elsewhere.

***

Book Review

Harrison, Jackie & Woods, Lorna
European Broadcasting Law and Policy
Cambridge University Press (2007)

Oisín Tobin
University of Oxford

Push a button and the screen lights up. For the average viewer, the television is a simple device, one that provides entertaining, enjoyable and often enlightening content without much thought or effort. If, however, we peel back this veneer of calm simplicity and ask how or why certain content appears on the screen, or why some content is free to air when other content must be purchased, we quickly find ourselves in a world of complex and vague laws, vested interests and murky political compromises.

Harrison and Woods' recent publication "European Broadcasting Law and Policy", seeks to probe this world from the perspective of the average viewer and to determine if the current regime adequately protects his or her interest. The verdict is not positive.

The authors' central contention is that current European policy is premised on a conception of the viewers as consumers of commoditised information. It follows from this understanding that broadcasting is an industry like every other, whose relevance should be judged by its economic importance. Consumers are rational agents able to make purchasing decisions in their own best interest.

This understanding, the authors argue, is fundamentally misguided and incomplete. Broadcasting has an influence and role beyond the merely commercial. Its influence plays a key role in fostering norms, promoting belonging, encouraging civic participation and promoting the cultural fabric of the society. Thus, they suggest, viewers should be understood as *citizens* rather than merely consumers.

This book can be best understood as attempt to evaluate the current regulatory regime from the position of the "citizen viewer".

Part I seeks to introduce overarching themes that influence policy generally in this field. It begins by considering this distinction between "citizens" and "consumers" (Chapter 1). Attention is then turned to the broader importance of broadcasting. It is suggested that the broadcast media's ability to cause and prevent harm, to set the national agenda and to influence social change make it a unique asset worthy of special regulation (Chapter II). Chapters 3 to 5 consider how the current regime came to focus on the "consumer" at the expense of the "citizen". Chapter 3 provides an illuminating history of the development of broadcasting. Two trends, the increased commercialisation of the broadcasting sector and the development of new technologies, are highlighted as having encouraged a consumer-centric approach. Chapters 4 and 5, arguably the highlights of the book, seek to place broadcasting policy within the overall constitutional framework of the EU. Attention is drawn to the fact that the Treaties do not give the Union any direct power (or competency) to regulate broadcasting, thus this issue has traditionally fallen "across a number of fault lines within the terrain of the Union relating to its purposes and powers". This, the authors suggest, has had two key consequences. First, because the constitutional

arrangement of the Treaties requires that broadcasting policy be based on market building provisions of the Treaty (such as the four freedoms or competition policy), economic considerations necessarily come to the fore of such a regulatory regime, to the expense of social objectives. Second, the lack of certain legal base for aspects of the regime renders EU legislators fearful that these rules will be challenged in litigation by broadcasting operators. This in turn leads to such regimes being favorable to industry and often being introduced through "soft law" rather than traditional binding rules.

Having described the key factors underpinning policy making in this area, the authors, in Part Two of the book, turn their attention to certain aspects of the current regime. Restrictions, both financial and technological, to consumer access to broadcasts are highlighted and criticised (Chapter 6). The area of media mergers, which has the potential to reduce the amount of choice available to viewers by eliminating media operators is carefully scrutinised. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that the EU has conflicting objectives in this area; it seeks to promote diversity of content at the same time as encouraging the development of European media conglomerates capable of tackling American media giants.

Chapters 8 to 11 carefully analyze the Television Without Frontiers Directive ("TWFD") and will be of considerable interest to both policy experts and practicing lawyers seeking to apply this somewhat ambiguous document. Questions of jurisdiction (Chapter 8), advertising (Chapter 9), censorship (Chapter 10) and mandatory broadcasting quotas (Chapter 11) are all addressed. The numerous difficulties highlighted in the application of this directive are such as to call into question its continuing utility as a harmonisation measure.

Chapter 12 addresses the controversial area of the privatisation of sporting events. The authors stress that popular sports have a particular significance to the citizen-viewer. The communal nature of watching such events, and their inherently social character, means that they encourage a sense of national identity and culture. However, these very same attributes make such events an immensely valuable commodity for a private broadcaster. Chapter 13 considers the nature of public service broadcasting and how European state aids rules force member states to justify their support of such services.

Harrison and Woods' book is an excellent resource for all policy makers or lawyers who need to peer into complex nature of broadcasting regulation. By focusing the spotlight on the needs of viewer they have successfully highlighted a number of key weakness in the current regulatory regime. Apparently abstract legal problems such as uncertain community competence and vagueness in the TWFD are not merely the concern of the academic or practicing lawyer, rather they impinge directly on how millions of Europeans enjoy broadcast media. Although this reviewer would strongly caution against a rash departure from the market based approach which has encouraged the rapid development of the European broadcasting sector, Harrison and Woods are to be commended for starting a new debate about the proper scope of broadcasting law and policy, based upon the needs of the viewer.

***

Book Review

Nico Carpentier, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Maren Hartmann, Peeter Vihalemm, Bart Cammaerts, Hannu Nieminen

Media Technologies and Democracy in an Enlarged Europe: The Intellectual Work of the 2007 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School

Tartu University Press (2007)

Available at:
http://www.researchingcommunication.eu/reco_book3.pdf

Asimina Michailidou
University of Bristol

The book is organised in three parts, with the empirical chapters presented in Parts One and Two, while Part Three includes the research abstracts of all the doctoral students who participated in the 2007 European Media and Communication doctoral summer school. The empirical parts of the book are thematically arranged in sections and chapters are similar in length. Despite their rich and interesting content and their clear thematic classification, the chapters vary in quality, mainly due to the style of writing of the authors.

Section One puts the topic of the book in a wider context and addresses theoretical issues related to technology, democracy and policy. Denis McQuail gives an insightful theoretical overview of the relationship between communication and technology and proposes an analytical model that moves beyond technological determinism. Jo Bardoel offers a concise account of public service broadcasting (PSB) in Europe, while Hannu Nieminen focuses in particular on the EU's communication policies, proposing '*a democratic regulatory framework for European media and communication*' (p.56). Very concise and to-the-point, this section offers a good starting point not only for specialists in the field of communication studies, but also for readers unfamiliar to the topic.

In Section Two the focus shifts to journalism, and particularly the democratising potential of online public communication and reporting. Auksė Balčytienė investigates the advantages that online information may offer in terms of improving the coverage of the EU by examining the relationship between journalists and EU spokespersons. Bertrand

Cabedoche maintains the focus on online communication, but shifts the analysis to the relationship between journalism and local authorities, by examining online municipal bulletins and proposing a 'four-logics' framework for public communication analysis (p.98).

The issue of participatory public communication is the focus of the next two sessions. Nico Carpentier proposes two theoretical approaches for the analysis of participatory media organizations, allowing for the complexity and diversity of such organizations to be factored in the analytical framework. Following this, three authors offer empirical insights into the role of participatory media organizations across different national contexts. Specifically, Andréa Medrado highlights the gap between normative approaches of conventional participatory media organizations and the actual service these offer, by examining the case of community television in a Brazilian favela. Bart Cammaerts evaluates the participatory potential of new media by focusing on blogs and their use as platforms for racist discourses in Belgium. Section Three closes with Tobias Olsson's research into the internet's political and civic implications, or 'Web 3.0', through the case study of an online network which 'remakes or removes advertisements from public spaces' (p.156).

Continuing with the theme of communication and participation, Section Four expands on the issue of participation and citizenship. The chapters included in this section are a mix of theoretical approaches (Turnšek; Sujon) and empirical research (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt; Kleinen-v.Königslöw). The theoretical chapters in this section offer a concise account of the conceptual/normative debates that have developed in the area of participatory communication and citizenship over the past decade. The two empirical chapters contextualize some of the normative issues examined in this section, thus helping the reader to put abstract notions into a more practical context. Overall, this is a very good starting point for those unfamiliar with new media communication theories and public sphere discourses.

The concluding section of Part One of this book (Section Five) draws on empirical enquiry into media representations at cross-national/comparative and European levels. Looking at the issues of *European cultural identity* (Parés i Maicas); *consumption of imported cultural products and identity-building at national level* (Goban-Klas); *and building public consent over foreign policy issues through media reporting* (Halttu), the chapters in this section introduce the factors of culture and representation in the debate of media, communication and democracy.

Part 2 of the book moves beyond theoretical and empirical considerations onto methodological and meta-research issues of communication research.

All chapters in Section Six draw heavily on methodological issues covered during the Summer School's workshops. In addition to topics such as fieldwork research (Xin), discourse analysis (Phillips) and interviewing techniques (Kilborn), Section Six also covers more topical issues in

contemporary communication research methodology, namely internet research ethics (Jankowski and van Selm) and network analyses (Petrič).

The final section (Section Seven) moves in the area of meta-research, offering some theoretical considerations and practical insights into the role of communication researchers, in terms of interpersonal skills development (Laajalahti); research identity (Heinderyckx) and research organisation in Europe (Boddin *et al.*).

Although the aim of the book is to bring together different strands of research on the role of media in democratic processes, it is not very clear who the target audience(s) for this publication is/are, i.e. academics, policy-makers, policy advisors, other doctoral researchers in the field of media and communication studies. This is because a significant part of the book is devoted to the Summer School, its processes, outcomes and aims. As a result, the book vacillates between a report and a scholarly publication. Nevertheless, the clear thematic structure allows for readers to follow the issues examined here with relative ease, as it helps maintain a flow throughout the book and cohesion between the media and political communication theories examined here, the relevant empirical findings and the methodological issues concerning communications research. The extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter provides a great source for further reading in the areas of political communication and media-enabled democratic governance and participation.

***