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Communicating European Integration – Information vs. Integration?

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Abstract

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

Keywords

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

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

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

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

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

THE RATIONALE OF SUPRANATIONAL EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁰ Cf. Loth, ‘Beiträge der Geschichtswissenschaft’.

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

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

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

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

¹⁵ Cf. Warloutzet, *op.cit.* N14

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

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

SUPRANATIONAL INFORMATION POLICIES – A BRIEF SURVEY OF THEORY IN PRACTICE

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

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

¹⁶ White, op.cit. N13, 117.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INFORMATION POLICIES AS INTEGRATION POLICIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Informing the Youth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fairs and Exhibitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

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

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

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

THE CHANGING RATIONALE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION SINCE THE 1970s

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁵⁰ Cf. ibid.

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

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

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS

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

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

⁵³ Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

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