THE EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION MODEL:

ITS APPLICATION IN THE REFORM OF THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY

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La comunicación es posible por la existencia de un espacio común.

No es otra cosa que lo que llamamos la intersubjetividad: la posibilidad de entendimiento profundo entre dos conciencias.

No es tanto una construcción lingüística como una labor de sedimentación.

Chantal Maillard

(Communication is possible because common space exists.

It is what we call intersubjectivity: the possibility of a deeper understanding between two consciences.

It is not a lingüistic construction but rather a sedimentation process.)

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1. Introduction

1.1. The rationale for this thesis: the communication policy of the European Union, a democratic and legitimising driving force

The communication policy of the European Union is a democratic and legitimising driving force that bridges the gap between the European Union and its citizens. It has been defined by del Río (2008, p. 511)[1] as a "first order European 'legitimising' resource".

Legitimacy is an important concept in this context as it entails the crucial function of guaranteeing stability of political institutions (Scharpf 1999). Several important authors like Eder (2007), Meyer (1999) and Dolghi (2009) point out that communication is an essential mechanism to support the production of democratic legitimacy and governance.

In the light of the above, European leaders have always been and are still concerned about the distance between citizens and the European Union institutions. The European Commission identified "reinforcing the European citizenship and participation" as one of its five priorities for the period 2009-2014 (European Commission, 2009). Therefore, the establishment of direct communications with citizens has always been an issue for prioritising support towards the European project, given that direct participation does not emanate from a "government" or European executive power in the EU institutional setting.

In today´s information age, one of the tools to bridge the gap between European institutions and its citizens is a political communication that connects them through existing channels. The presence of a dense network of civil society organisations and the progress of information and communication technologies derived from a widespread use of Internet and the social media has meant that the complementarity

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[1] Original text reads: "…la comunicación como recurso 'legitimador' europeo de primer orden"

between representative and participatory democracy is especially important today as citizens have more ways than ever to voice their opinions.

EU institutions need to take communication seriously in order to inform citizens about the weight of European policies on their daily lives, and to get them involved in the European project. Europe needs active citizens who, through consultation and empowerment, can get involved in the political future of the institutions. In this line, citizens need to be at the heart of European policies (European Commission, 2009)[2], and thus, communication needs to be the mechanism that facilitates a redefinition of the relationship with citizens, through the establishment of a bidirectional dialogue and not just a unilateral relationship.

Chiara Valentini and Giorgia Nesti (2010) analysed EU communication activities against the backdrop of the input and output legitimacy theory elaborated by Scharpf (1999). This approach offers the possibility of assessing the relationship between communication and democratic legitimacy in the European Union (Valentini & Nesti, 2010, p.5) since legitimacy performs a crucial function for guaranteeing stability of political institutions in liberal democratic systems.

According to Scharpf (2003), legitimacy entails "a socially sanctioned obligation to comply with government policies even if these violate the actor's own interests or normative preferences, and even if official sanctions could be avoided at low costs". In Scharpf's theory, legitimacy is derived from the free will of the people who, through election, grant power to their representatives. Scharpf calls this type of legitimacy "input legitimacy" or "government *by* the people" (pp. 1-2) The second source of legitimacy stems from the capacity of those elected to adopt effective policies, in order to respond to citizens' needs and solve collective problems. Scharpf calls this type of legitimacy "output legitimacy" or "government for the people" (pp. 1-2)

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[2]The European Commission developed a series of actions in this sense during the mandate of Commissioner Wallstrom under the motto "Engaging citizens",https://infoeuropa.eurocid.pt/registo/000042555/documento/0001/

Christopher Meyer (1999) also supports Scharpf's two-folded definition of legitimacy, which states that democratic input is based on the fact that political legitimacy is derived from the will of the people.

Dolgui provides more definitions of legitimacy (2009, p. 55): Generally speaking, legitimacy may be considered as the foundation of governmental power, which is exercised consciously by a government with a right to govern and with some recognition by those governed. Other interpretations of the author suggest that legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for society.

Therefore, the ability to issue commands, which are seen as binding because they are legitimate, is one of the central pillars of a stable political order. The role of input legitimisation should not be underestimated in the European Union. Indeed, Dolgui (2009, p. 56) highlights that many Europeans do not feel that their interests are represented fairly in the EU and consequently do not accept the role and authority of the European institutions. According to the multi-level governance approach, the EU is comprised of different authority levels that interact within a complex system of shared competences. Each level and/or authority has a specific role but they often overlap and bring into question the issue of legitimacy.

Dolgui (2009, p. 57) points out that legitimacy can be considered as enhanced when the EU is identified with solutions that actually achieve certain goals which are otherwise unattainable. Such objectives may include economic growth, peace in Europe, human rights compliance and sustainable environment. However, this impression can actually be the opposite when the EU is not improving the living conditions of its citizens.

The perception by citizens of the legitimacy given to the different EU institutions may vary. Dolgui argues that European citizens have a relatively clear perception of the role and activity of the European Council and of the Council of Ministers, mainly because they recognise and accept the intergovernmental dimension of these institutions. Nevertheless, there are some legitimacy issues that arise with regard to the Commission and the European Parliament (EP) as supranational institutions.

From an input legitimacy perspective, there is the general perception that Commission officials are working behind closed doors in Brussels and consequently they do not take into consideration different national, regional or local preferences. In this regard, Dolgui believes that the actions taken by the Commission were oriented towards the promotion of a large degree of openness and transparency (COM, 2000; COM, 2001) but the communication strategy had a shortfall regarding the use of communication tools. Secondly, he argues that the image of the Commission was strongly affected in 1999 when the Santer Commission resigned due to some allegations regarding fraud, nepotism and mismanagement. Dolgui states that empirical evidence (opinion pools) demonstrates that the EP might be considered as the most legitimate institution of the EU system. His diagnosis is that the EU institutions have failed on the aspect of communication with citizens despite the existence of inter-institutional agreements on transparency and internal procedures (Dolgui, 2009, p.58).

Valentini and Nesti, C (2010, p.6) refer to Eder's conception of communication as an essential mechanism needed to support the production of democratic legitimacy (2007, 46). Communication in public organisations is often referred to as a combination of communication strategies and activities directed at a specific public, aimed at providing information, raising awareness and influencing their attitudes and even behaviour towards specific issues and policies. Therefore, public communication serves the organisation as a means for legitimising itself.

Valentini & Nesti, C (2010, p.7) point out that communication contributes to electoral participation by improving citizens' knowledge of politics, which in turn enables citizen's participation in policy-making and in promoting *responsiveness* of political actors. This is achieved by improving their knowledge of citizens' preferences and fostering elected *accountability* towards citizens, that is, justification and explanation of chosen policies and their main implications.

Communication is a particularly important strategic tool especially for the European Union institutions. Indeed, the number of potential and active publics is extremely large as well as the different types of actors involved in the policy making. Knowing how the EU communicates with its different publics can help ascertain the extent to which it still suffers from a legitimacy deficit, and how communication can help to

solve the problem. In their study, Valentini, C and Nesti, C. looked at important points such as what kind of communication has the EU developed in terms of strategies, content, tools, and activities during the past fifty years, as well as how public communication contributes to EU legitimacy and the role of public communication in the future of the EU.

In this sense, Dorin I. Dolghi (2009, p.55) links the concepts of legitimacy, institutions and the communication strategy in the European Union. This author states that, in order to overcome the voices on "democratic deficit" and to gain legitimacy, the main challenge faced by the EU is that of implementing more coherent communication policies, as a long-term strategy, in order to determine a switch in loyalties and to acquire support from citizens, failing which its integration dynamics will be affected.

Meyer (1999) opines that political communication is a necessary supplement and not just a substitute for direct electoral procedures, and furthermore states that political communication in western democracies occurs primarily, though not exclusively, in and through mass media. However, as shown in chapter five, the weight of social media is of extraordinary importance nowadays. He concludes that there is a communication deficit that is linked to key aspects of the EU's decision-making structures and institutional set-up. At the level of the Commission, this deficit includes fragmentation of political authority, the institution's technocratic mind-set and lack of adequate staffing. His work mentions two particularly significant aspects: the EU's decision making mode and Member States' resistance to more legitimate central institutions. Moreover, the institutional roles and decision-making procedures are fraught with considerable ambiguity and complexity.

Yolanda Martín González (2005) studied the contribution of the EU's information and communication policy to the democratic development of the European Union and opines that this policy favours knowledge about the EU. She affirms that the apathy of citizens towards European political activity is the result of a lack of interest towards politics in general but that there is a growing interest in the EU, reflected by the fact that the European Union website is one of the most visited websites in the world.

Communication can serve to make Europe tangible in our daily lives and furthermore depict that European democracy is compatible with multiple democracy and multiple citizenship; European citizenship (Del Río, 2014, p. 150). According to del Río, citizens are now aware of the presence of the EU in their lives thanks to the progress made in its communication policy and because the economic crisis has shed more light on the EU and has made the European public opinion more visible.

The role of European communication in supporting legitimation and implementation of the European Union policies is indeed undeniable. Moreover, a truly European communication policy has the capacity of being a driving force to connect European Union institutions with its citizens by creating a common space of understanding that can further reinforce political processes. Communication is a mechanism that will reinforce the quality of the participatory democracy of the institutions and will ultimately boost the European integration process reinforced through citizens' legitimation.

1.2. The institutions of the European Union

Generally speaking, citizens are aware of the institutional framework of their governments where the division of competences is as follows: a government that holds executive power, a parliament that holds legislative faculty and a judiciary that holds judicial power. However, the institutional setting of the European Union does not correspond to this division of competences in national governments. Therefore, the functioning of executive, legislative and judicial powers in the European Union has to me made clear and understandable for the person on the street.

Following the principle of Subsidiarity (defined in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union) which ensures that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that action at Union level is justified in the light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level[3],

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[3] The definition in the glossary of the EU reads "Specifically, it is the principle whereby the Union does not take action (except in the areas that fall within its exclusive competence), unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. It is closely bound up with the principle

in the case of the executive power, the implementation of Public Law corresponds to the Member States. Only in some cases, would legislators decide to attribute the execution of power directly to a European institution, either the European Commission or the Council (again Member States) or in concrete cases to the executive agencies. Moreover, there is another institutional feature called Comitology to assume executive tasks.

According to Fuentataja Pastor (2003), the European Commission has a double function (mission and management), which implies having both a vertical and a horizontal structure that allows the Commission to perform interservice coordination. The European Commission also acts as the Guardian of the Treaties and therefore has the capacity to oversee that each Member State is applying EU law properly. Moreover, there are policies of an intergovernmental nature such as the External Policy, Common Security Policy or Military Policy, and the administrative services of these are established within the Council. The above introduction clearly shows that the power execution function in the EU is not carried out by a sole body that can be clearly identified by citizens.

The legislative power of the European Union does not correspond to an upper and a lower house of parliament as we understand at regional or national levels. In the European Union, the monopoly of the Union's initiatives used to be held exclusively by the European Commission (which, as we just mentioned, also holds part of the Executive power). However, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), a democratic tool that allows one million EU citizens to participate directly in the development of EU policies, by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal. It originated with the process of participation by civil society in the Convention drafting the Constitution and entered into force ten years later, in 2012. The ECI is also expected to become a rather prominent tool in political terms. "The ECI is a democratic innovation for the EU, but it relies on a series of firm pre- existing practices that for over a decade have sought to increase the role of civil society and to make the EU more participatory." (Bouza & Del Río, 2012).

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of proportionality, which requires that any action by the Union should not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties." See the following link for more information: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/subsidiarity_en.htm

Legislation is adopted jointly between the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, through the so-called Codecision procedure (the decision making process mostly used since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon), the Consent or the Consultation procedure[4].

Lastly, the judicial power, personalised in the Court of Justice of the European Union, is the one in charge of ensuring uniform interpretation and application of EU law in all EU countries. It also settles legal disputes between EU governments and EU institutions. Individuals, companies or organisations can also bring cases before the Court if they feel their rights have been infringed by an EU institution. It is characterised by its supranational authority[5].

The lack of exact correspondence between players, the division of powers and the diversity of procedures in the decision making process makes it quite difficult for citizens to understand who is who and who does what in the EU. As a matter of fact, the EU institutional setting is different and slightly more complex than the ones citizens are familiar with. Moreover, such complexity exists against a background of a general lack of trust in politicians and governments. Vidal Beneyto (2009) states*:*

> the multiplicity of options, ideologies and policies originating in the society nowadays has fostered the growth of demands addressed to the governing bodies. Due to the complexity of competences" –he furthermore adds- "politicians often do not have the power to rightly address the demands and yet promise to fulfil them. Promising what cannot be offered triggers dissatisfaction among citizens and eventually leads to democratic corruption

Vidal Beneyto identifies a common problem seen nowadays, namely; that the complex policy procedures and the difficult to explain EU governance model lead some politicians to simplify their message and attribute responsibility to the wrong body. This could lead to democratic corruption since the elected politicians would prefer to blame "Brussels" whenever it suits them rather than render accountability to citizens. And when the media echoes this message, the problem gets even bigger.

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[4] More brief descriptions on these procedures can be found in the EU online glossary at the following links: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/assent_procedure_en.htm

[5] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/assent_procedure_en.htm

Authors such as Pau Solanilla (2010, p.74) profess the need for a simpler institutional architecture that citizens can understand, wherein they can identify who is who and how each institution is accountable to citizens. He cites an example on the election of a President of the government, something that everyone understands. The author states that the election of leaders to the EU institutions is still a somewhat rather confusing process. However, the transparency of the process has been improved with the Treaty of Lisbon and the experience in the last European Parliament elections. An in-depth analysis on the European Parliament elections of 2014 is presented in chapter four.

Successive institutional reforms have transformed institutions to now have more simple processes. The Treaty of Lisbon introduced a number of new elements to make these bodies more effective, consistent and transparent, with greater use of a majority vote instead of the unanimity vote. The double majority voting was subsequently introduced. This will reflect the legitimacy of the EU as a union of both peoples and nations.

The treaty boosted the powers of the European Parliament (the only institution with representatives elected directly by citizens) as regards to law making, the EU budget and approval of international agreements. The composition of the parliament was also changed - the number of MEPs is capped at 751 (750 plus the president of the parliament) and seats are distributed among countries according to "degressive proportionality", i.e. MEPs from more populous countries will each represent more people than those from smaller countries. This empowering from the European Parliament reinforces the decision-making capacity of the citizens.

The European Council, which has the role of driving EU policy-making, now becomes a full EU institution and is chaired by a newly created position of a president elected by the European Council for 2½ years.

With regard to the European Commission, the Treaty offers the possibility of having a representative from each Member State as Commissioner. A major change is that there is now a direct link between the results of the European elections and the

choice of candidate for president of the Commission[6].

It can now be truly said that with the Treaty of Lisbon "the EU now meets all the procedural requirements to be considered as a democratic polity" (Hix 2008, p.77). Hix argues that the EU is indeed fully democratic in procedural terms since a basic requirement of the treaties is that Member States must be representative democracies, have free and fair elections, and promote freedom of expression and association. Moreover, in the EU institutions, citizens are represented directly in the European Parliament and indirectly in the Council and Commission. However he also remarks that the EU falls short of substantive requirements since there is no electoral contest for political leadership at the European level or over the direction of the EU policy agenda.

As a matter of fact this last premise could have changed with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. New treaty provisions introduce the fact that EU leaders have to "take into account" election results when selecting the European Commission president and thereby give more democratic legitimacy to the EU's executive arm. However, Hix also sees threats in the new rules for electing the Commission, since it now means that the same coalition government in the Council and in the European Parliament can elect "their" agenda-setter and pass his or her legislative proposals. In this sense, the author defends more open EU policies that would encourage citizens to understand the different options, identify the positions of the leaders on the different issues and take sides (pp. 89-109). He also believes that citizens who perceive that they gain new economic opportunities from market integration in Europe tend to support the EU, while citizens who perceive that market integration threatens their economic interests tend to oppose the EU. Moreover, citizens who feel that EU policies (such as social and environmental regulations) are closer to their personal political views than their current national policies are likely to support the EU, while citizens who feel that EU policies are distant from their personal political views than their current national policies are likely to oppose the EU.

This premise would for example explain the declining support in the European Union from countries such as Spain, which were supportive of the European Union as long

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[6] More information on the Treaty of Lisbon can be found at: http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/

as they were economic beneficiaries but their support decreased after being hit by the economic crisis.

The long financial crisis has led to a period of instability and uncertainty in the European Union. The European Federalists (Union of European Federalists, 2013) have analysed issues that have arisen regarding the design of the Economic and Monetary Union, the weakness of EU institutions and the lack of commitment to European integration by EU states. Consequently, the European Union has lost the trust of many citizens who feel that rather than improve their living standards "Brussels" and the European Union are the ones to blame for the increasing unemployment rates and household indebtedness in many countries. The Union of European Federalists calls for stronger European democratic institutions as the only way to overcome this situation.

The Union of European Federalists asserts that a constitutional Convention is needed in order to recast and renew the European Union. Its tasks would consist of drafting a new fundamental law to provide a sustainable settlement of the system of governance of the Union. The main new feature of the fundamental law would be the installation of a federal government, for fiscal and economic union. The eurozone would have its own fiscal capacity. The new treaty would further enhance the capacity of the Union to act both at home and abroad, permit progressive mutualisation of a portion of sovereign debt within the eurozone, subject to strict conditionality. European public space should also be strengthened, with citizens fully engaged at every stage of the constitutional process.

The Union of European Federalists is not the only pointing to the need for a new Convention. Jaume Duch, Spokesperson of the European Parliament, mentions it in the preface of Susana del Río's book (2014, p.26): "Now that a future convention aimed at once more reforming the Treaty of the European Union is being spoken of, those who decide to set in motion a process as complex and unpredictable as this one will have to take into account that citizen participation can now take place though channels that are easier and more immediate than those available during previous years". Del Río, Carnero and Bouza (2015) indicate the need for a third Convention in a joint article: "Citizens distrusting the EU today will only accept transfer of sovereignty to a political union (that guarantees a federal and democratic

governance) if the reforms of the treaty that this project imply are subject to a wide, transparent and representative debate which would guarantee a third convention[7]".

Federalists also ask for a shift in powers in institutions for this new governance. They advocate transfer to the European Commission of most of the residual executive powers now held by the Council, a reduction in size of the Commission, that the two legislative chambers of the European Parliament and the Council be put on equal footing and that a certain number of MEPs be elected in a pan-European constituency from transnational lists. A new category of membership would be available to states that choose not to be part of this federal Union.

From a theoretical point of view, these ideas seem to help make the European Union more understandable to citizens. Nevertheless, reconciliation of the interests and will of the 28 Member States seems to be a long and arduous task.

1.3. The distance between the European Union institutions and its citizens

Desmond Dinan, one of the most important authors in European studies, claims that the European Union is "one of the most interesting and important developments –not only regionally but also globally- since the end of World War II" (2005, p.13). Indeed, the history of the European Union from its origins: the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, composed of six Member States, to the current union made of 28 Member States, covering 36 policy areas, is one of an organisation that has very significantly increased in importance and scope. The rapid development of its economic integration, followed by its political one, is unquestionable.

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[7] Translated by the author of this thesis. Original text: "Pero la única manera de que los ciudadanos que hoy desconfían de la UE acepten las transferencias de soberanía a una unión política que garantice una gobernanza federal y democrática es que las reformas del tratado que implica este proyecto sean objeto del debate amplio, transparente y representativo que aseguraría una tercera Convención." The full article can be read on http://blogs.elpais.com/alternativas/2015/05/del-referéndum-británico-a-una-iii-convención-europea.html

"There is a surfeit of information on the EU but a deficit of knowledge" (Dinan, 2005, p.6). The author builds on this concept and on the concern of European leaders for a better connection between citizens and institutions. The complexity of its political system does not enable easy communication of its achievements.

However, a certain European "engineering" is what facilitates agreements and consensus between the 28 Member States with their respective agendas and priorities. This same complexity prevents citizens from knowing who is responsible for what and consequently "Brussels" or Europe as a whole (as an unidentifiable entity) is blamed for most of the negative facts afflicting the continent. Therefore "Brussels" was the one to blame for the economic crisis or for the difficulties in the shipbuilding and fisheries sectors. National politicians therefore take credit for the right choices but blame Europe for anything that does not work. This has a double consequence. On the one hand, it fosters the lack of knowledge of the citizens about the different institutions, thereby alienating the citizens from them, and on the other hand, there is increasing detachment and rejection towards the European Union.

What is interesting though about the European Union, as Hix (2010, p.66) exemplifies, is that if a citizen is affected by a particular policy or suffers economic hardship, he/she hardly blames the political system as a whole, but rather blames the government of the day. In the EU, in contrast, those who lose from economic integration or from policy reforms simply blame the EU system as a whole, as they do not perceive a governing coalition at the European level who they can replace.

Politicians from Member States and national media simplify the way Europe is portrayed (Europe as guilty and Member State as benefactor) thereby often altering the truth. A recent example is the case of the tragic deaths of immigrants trying to access the European Union. Several reports blame the inactivity on "Brussels"[8]. However, migration is a competence of each Member State and most States are unwilling to transfer powers to the European Union. Therefore, it is one of the policies in which "Brussels" has the least say.

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[8] A recent example on blaming "Brussels" as a whole for a Migration policy which is the competence of Member States, is a report by Miguel Angel Murado, a journalist with vast international experience: http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/internacional/2015/08/28/problema-largamente-aplazado/0003_201508G28P20993.htm

The number of languages within the European Union furthermore adds complexity to the communication situation in Europe. The European Union needs to communicate in twenty-four official languages for 28 Member States. In 2004, ten countries from Eastern Europe joined the European family. Romania and Bulgaria joined in 2007 and Croatia in 2013. This enlargement has surely meant new challenges for the European identity and communication but it has also led to enrichment. The EU communication policy needs to be flexible and diverse, in order to be able to reach this multicultural citizenship.

Moreover, citizens are traditionally familiar with how their national governments work, which have a long-standing institutional tradition that dates back to the creation of nation-states. The huge progress made by the European Union has somehow not become embodied into the daily life of its citizens. The person on the street finds it difficult to understand the functioning of the European Union. In the national system, people talk the same language, read the same newspaper and share common cultural traits. In contrast, the European Union is distant, impersonal and works in twenty-four different official languages.

Scharpf (1998, p. 20) noted that some authors are too fatalistic in implying that ethnic and linguistic homogeneity should be a necessary precondition for democratic legitimacy and that the European democratic deficit could never be overcome. However, as shown in chapter four, modern and cosmopolitan theories of citizenship recognise European citizenship as a plural citizenship that shares a common code of values and rules.

Likewise, communication barriers seem to exist not only between languages but also within a language. Felipe González (2010) pointed out that the sheer amount of translations and the essential ambiguity sometimes required by decisions in order to obtain consensus among the 28 Member States, means that the decisions of the European Union are communicated in an indecipherable language, which is a result of the diplomacy effort of trying to reach a compromise with everyone.

The physical location of the European institutions in Brussels, thousands of kilometres away from most European homes, can sometimes also be a psychological

distance for the citizens. Distances are less of a problem nowadays, thanks to information systems and new technologies.

Arguments such as "the distance to the European Union institutions can lead to opaque decision making" are not valid anymore since information, as Hix contends (2008, p. 74), is more accessible and it is much more transparent than the one offered by most governments. The public, the mass media and national politicians can easily access EU documentation nowadays. Documentation and legislation are available through the website and they are a 'gold standard' for many governments and international organisations.

Hix (2008, p. 51) also points out that there has been a dramatic change in public attitude towards the European Union in the last decade. Fifteen years ago, European citizens believed that their governments would represent their interests in Brussels. Today, most citizens in all Member States do not commit themselves to the "European project." There has been an important decline of public support towards the European Union. The level of public support is extremely low, currently at around 50% of the population. Even citizens from the six founding Member States are becoming more and more anti-European. This is paradoxical since the participation of citizens has actually increased, thanks to: the debate model about the future of the European Union, a more open communication policy and, especially, through the changes introduced in the Lisbon Treaty.

Moreover, the economic crises, as the Federalists also mentioned, have shown the down side of the European Union for many citizens who have now seen how their living conditions have deteriorated and how the European Union is the one to blame for that. In countries such as Greece, Portugal or Spain where the crisis has affected especially young people and with increasing youth unemployment rates, protests campaigns and popular movements have emerged against the political class in general and the European Union in particular, and some slogans have denounced the lack of a democracy in Europe. For instance, the Spanish movement "15M" complained that Europe does not represent people anymore but markets, the Portuguese "Que se lixe a troika" also received vast backing from citizens against the austerity measures taken by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the Greek "Indignant Citizens

Movement" or Direct Democracy Now that emerged when the Greek government rejected the bailout package offered. Social media and Internet were great amplifiers of this message.

To sum up, politicians who do not transmit from a European perspective and the mass media that are often unfamiliar with the European version of the news are relevant intermediaries that hinder communication "in European". As del Río (2014, p. 158) points out: "The media must move synchronically to be able to add something extra to its communication capacity: succeed in having citizens perceive Europe coherently and collectively. How can this be achieved? – by transmitting *in European*".

1.4. The European Public Sphere

Habermas defined the concept of public sphere as "an intermediary system of communication between formal organised and informal face-to-face deliberations in arenas at both the top and the bottom of the political system" (2006, p. 415). Political power by definition requires legitimation. According to the deliberative model of democracy, the legitimation process must pass through a public sphere that has the capacity to foster considered public opinions.

This German thinker believes that political communication in the public sphere can facilitate deliberative legitimation. This will only happen if media is independent from its social environment, and if audiences can give feedback between an informed elite and a responsive civil society. He opines that the institutional design of modern democracies brings together three elements: equal protection of individual members of civil society by rule of law, political participation of as many interested citizens as possible and a political-public contribution to formation of public opinion through the separation of a (tax-based) state from a (market-based) society (2006, p. 412).

Habermas' paradigm is based on democratic process, which is supposed to generate legitimacy through a procedure of opinion and will formation which in turn grants publicity and transparency for the deliberative process, inclusion and equal

opportunity for participation, and a justified assumption that outcomes will be reasonable. However, Habermas also claims that contemporary Western societies display an impressive increase in the volume of political communication but that the political-public sphere is at the same time dominated by a kind of mediated communication that lacks the defining features of deliberation. Shortcomings in this regard are the lack of face-to-face interaction in a shared practice of collective decision-making and the lack of reciprocity and equality between the roles of speakers and addressees.

In the case of European dynamics, we could consider that there is no reciprocity in the roles of public opinion between one country and another. For example, within the framework of the economic crisis, there was no egalitarian exchange of opinions between the public opinion of countries like Germany and Portugal (or any other of the so called "PIGS" countries). Instead, the media of each country voiced their messages ignoring the public opinion of the others.

Moreover, the mass media communication dynamics are driven by their power to select and shape the presentation of messages and by the strategic use of political power to influence agendas and to frame public issues. For Habermas, political communication in the public sphere can contribute to a deliberative legitimation process and public communication has a key role in legitimising the deliberative process. Habermas believes that political power by definition requires legitimation. According to the deliberative model of democracy, the legitimation process must pass through a public sphere that has the capacity to foster considered public opinions. The mass media constitute yet another source of power because they select and process politically relevant content and thus intervene in both formation of public opinions and distribution of interests.

Habermas writes about two types of public actors that need to be put to work: politicians and journalists. Indeed, it is through them that communications between institutions and citizens take place and they have the capacity to shape opinions. He distinguishes five more types of intervening actors: lobbyists, advocates, experts, moral entrepreneurs and intellectuals (2006, p. 416). Together with journalists, these actors join in the construction of the so-called "public opinion". Actors from civil society articulate political interests and confront the state with demands from various

groups. However, votes and opinions arise from both everyday talk and mediated communication. In addition, an inclusive civil society must empower citizens to participate in and respond to a public discourse.

The author also highlights that the literature on "public ignorance" portraying the average citizen as a largely uninformed and disinterested person has been changed by studies that suggest that in the long term, readers, listeners, and viewers can definitely form reasonable attitudes towards public affairs, even unconsciously (2006, p. 420). Citizens can build these attitudes by aggregating their bits and pieces of information. This capacity for aggregating information steadily now seems even more important with the exposure that most citizens have information just a click away through internet and the spontaneous fora that emerge through the social media. The role of Internet and social media in forming opinions is thoroughly analysed in chapter five, since it may also question Habermas' paradigm of deliberative mediated communication.

Habermas rightly points out that the political public sphere needs input from citizens who voice society's problems and who respond to the issues articulated in elite discourse. For Susana del Río (2009, p. 6) citizens are also at the core of the democratic process. Del Río (2009, 6) also highlights the importance of active citizenship for a politically ambitious and socially inclusive European project. Therefore, citizens have a fundamental integrative power in building a citizens' Europe[9].

This study analyses how citizens take part in the public sphere, and in particular, in the European public sphere. Scholars have approached this concept from a range of angles. Koopmans and Erbe firstly analysed the extent to which political communication in the European Union is "Europeanized". Indeed, Koopmans and Erbe (2004, p. 114) conclude that there are three forms of Europeanization of public-political communication: (1) supranationally Europeanized communication, where

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[9] Her original text reads: "La comunicación es un catalizador en la reactivación de la ciudadanía europea y un resorte para la formulación de un concepto renovado de ciudadano en la UE del siglo XXI. En el ejercicio de la ciudadanía, el hecho de sentirse ciudadano e identificarse con esta 'cualidad' conlleva una motivación de los ciudadanos para interesarse por su comunidad, trabajar ejerciendo su ciudadanía y fortalecer la democratización de los procesos. La ciudadanía activa es un elemento clave para conseguir un proyecto europeo políticamente ambicioso y socialmente integrador. En este sentido, hay que tener muy en cuenta que los ciudadanos tienen un poder integrador fundamental en la construcción de una Europa ciudadana".

European-level institutions and collective actors interact around European themes, (2) vertical Europeanization through communicative linkages between the national and the European level and (3) horizontal Europeanization through communicative linkages between different Member States, either in a weak variant where media in one country simply cover debates and contestation in another Member State, or in a strong variant where actors from one country explicitly address actors or policies in another Member State.

Koopmans and Erbe write about the emergence of a supranational European public sphere to the extent that they find claims that link European claimants to European addressees in the name of European interests, without referring to any other level of political space. Regarding vertical Europeanization, it takes place when national actors directly address European institutions. The top-down variant of vertical Europeanization occurs when European actors address national actors, usually regarding common European issues and interests. Horizontal Europeanization occurs when there are direct communication linkages between two Member States' political spaces.

These three forms of Europeanization could respond to the voices that think that linguistic and cultural boundaries are an insurmountable barrier to the Europeanization of public debates, collective identities, and collective action. Koopmans and Erbe point out that high degrees of cultural and linguistic homogeneity cannot be found in many well-functioning democratic nation states. They conclude that the levels of Europeanization of public communication depend on the actual competencies of the European Union. There is strong EU influence in those areas where the EU has an important remit (monetary politics, agriculture), intermediate influence in areas where the EU holds less competences (immigration, military troop deployment), and weak influence in areas where the EU almost has no competences (education, pensions) (2004, p. 99).

Koopmans and Erbe (2004) refer to Gerhard who rightly emphasized that the more realistic scenario is not one of a genuinely supranational European public sphere in singular, but the Europeanization of the various national public spheres. Nationally based media are there to stay but will increasingly include a European perspective and an increased proportion of coverage of European themes and actors. Finally,

Koopmans and Erbe (2004) list two types of communicative linkages that are competitors to Europeanized political communication. The first is communication which bypasses the European level and links an EU Member State to non-European countries or supranational institutions. The second is when foreign political coverage takes place between a Member State and a supranational institution, or among supranational institutions (2004, p. 105).

While Koopmans and Erbe find three forms of Europeanization, Michael Brüggeman (2005, 2) writes about three schools of thought that can be distinguished. Firstly, the "impossibility school" which applies the model of a unitary public sphere to the European arena: A European Public Sphere cannot exist due to a lack of common language, European media, European civil society, European identity and demos. A concept already criticised by Koopmans and Erbe since this homogeneity does not exist in many well-functioning states. A second group of researchers attacked the conditionality (common language, etc.) and –borrowing from Habermas – demanded the European Public Sphere to fulfil the following conditions: communication in different countries on the same topics, at the same time and with the same frame of reference. A third group of researchers did not feel comfortable with this public sphere light. They stressed that a close analysis of the explicit links between national public spheres is needed to show that transnational communication actually takes place, for example, in the form of direct references to speakers from abroad and propose the Europeanization of public spheres as a "multidimensional process".

For Brüggerman (2005), communication policies and all policies related to culture are closely related to the public sphere, including the ones that foster knowledge of foreign languages and those that regulate the media or communication technologies. Yet, information policy is explicitly linked to the public sphere as it concerns the aims and means of institutional information. According to the author, there are seven information policy strategies and the European Union has passed through all the different models and is on its way to achieve the last stage that Habermas defines as "Dialogue". These strategies would pass from a persuasive kind of communication that silences the public sphere to an information policy based on transparency with direct access to comprehensive information. Examples of these strategies are Propaganda, Marketing, Justification, Agenda Setting and finally Dialogue. A dialogue, such as discourse, in the way Habermas defines it, would also demand

certain normative standards on how to communicate (e.g. giving rational justifications).

Valentini and Nesti (2010) analysed the EU's communication activities against the backdrop of the theory of input and output legitimacy. The authors consider that the greater part of the scientific literature developed on EU communication is focused on the concept of public sphere and they group the research on the European Public Sphere into three streams. The first comprises studies in political philosophy that discuss theoretical issues concerning the EU's democratic deficit and the way communication processes could solve it while promoting the creation of a supranational public sphere. A second stream of literature tries to empirically assess the existence of a transnational public sphere, as it emerges from the experiences of transnational media. A third conceptualisation of public sphere revolves on the idea of Europeanization of national public spheres. Empirical research carried out in this field therefore measures the degree of Europeanization of national public spheres, that is, how frequently European issues are covered by national media and in what terms. Valentini and Nesti (2010, p. 4) conclude that a definitive assessment of the presence of a European(ised) public sphere is far from being reached, since empirical outputs produced in this field have not always been consistent.

Indeed, it is the literature on the public sphere that has actually tackled the issue of the EU democratic legitimacy by taking the communicative dimension into particular consideration. Yet, for Valentini and Nesti the theory of the public sphere suffers some limitations. First of all, the theory of the public sphere has an intrinsic bias towards the nation state model. Moreover, empirical research aimed at assessing the presence of a European public sphere has mainly concentrated on press coverage and therefore ignored the role of other (new) types of communicative tools and strategies, both on- and off-line, in fostering democracy. This last aspect on how the development of social media has changed the communication process will be further developed in chapter five.

1.5. Hypothesis

From the general hypothesis elaborating on the legitimising role of European communication, specific hypothesis have been formulated. Each specific hypothesis corresponds to each of the six chapters of the thesis. Respectively, at the end of the thesis, they will be answered with specific conclusions that will lead to a general conclusion.

General Hypothesis

Communication between EU institutions and citizens is a driving force that supports the democratic legitimacy of European Union policies. Prioritising effective, strategic and inclusive communication in the EU institutions contributes to legitimising EU policies and ultimately strengthening the European project. The latest Common Fisheries Policy reform critically illustrates the requirements of the proposed communication model.

Within the theoretical framework of the concept of European Public Sphere developed by Habermas and his successors, the author first reviews the models of communication theory and then proposes one for this specific study. This model is composed of four main elements: a) the senders or transmitters of the message: EU institutions through their communication strategy, b) the publics: European citizens and civil society, c) the channels, traditional and social media and d) the message, with a case study of Common Fisheries Policy reform.

Hypothesis one

Even though the European Union has increased its competences and increasingly affects the lives of its citizens by becoming a fully democratic polity, it is still complex and finds it difficult to bridge the distance between its institutions and its

citizens. In today's information age and network society, communication is a driving force that connects the European Union institutions with its citizens, thereby supporting the democratic legitimacy of European Union policies.

Hypothesis two

A review of the diverse communication models within Habermas' theoretical framework of the European Public Space provides the right methodology to identify elements that explain the characteristics required by European communication to properly transmit a European message, address the right stakeholders through inclusive channels (using both traditional media and new technologies) and contribute to the legitimisation of European Union policies.

Hypothesis three

EU institutions which are the transmitters of the EU message have managed communication initiatives and strategies adapted to the EU institutional development. Even though communication has become more and more important, its strategy and approach that has varied depending on the different historical moments, socioeconomic circumstances, political leadership and organisational changes. In reciprocity, mass media, national politicians and citizens have also adapted to communicate with EU institutions and to the EU institutional communication structure.

Hypothesis four

European citizenship is a multiple citizenship, with rights and obligations, in which citizens enjoy common European cohabiting values. It has evolved and has been adapted to the provisions established in subsequent treaties (Del Río, 2003, 2008, p. 476) and a new kind of polity that is closely connected to its development as a communicative space (Eriksen, 2004). Even though the economic and social

environment affects citizens' views of the European Union institutions, their replies in the Eurobarometer, vote in European Parliament elections and their active and decisive participation in civil society demonstrates their willingness to participate in the construction of the European Union.

Hypothesis five

Developments in Internet, Web 2.0 and the social media permit citizens to generate information themselves and communicate directly with institutions, question the prevailing paradigms of mass communication and offer new opportunities to communicate "in European" (Del Río, 2014), a truly European dimension recognisable by citizens. Media landscape today is characterised by cohabitation between the traditional mass media (radio, television and newspaper) and the new online media (websites, blogs and social media), and has affected political participation and access to information by citizens and civil society in Europe. The European Union had to adapt and respond to this new reality by using these channels to ensure an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders involved in its policies, in a courageous, innovative and multilevel approach.

Hypothesis six

The communication process of the latest reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, a key policy in the Sustainable Development framework and one of the six exclusive competences of the European Union as included in the Treaty of Lisbon, illustrates the characteristics of the European Union's communication model on a given policy, with its strengths and weaknesses. By critically examining this reform with the model proposed in this thesis, the study analyses whether inclusive and transparent communication has been prioritised from the beginning of the political process, whether communication in partnership with inter-institutional coordination has taken place, whether civil society has been consulted and taken into consideration, whether the addressed target audiences are the most relevant stakeholders of the policy, and whether traditional and online channels have been used to ensure that all relevant

stakeholders have access to the right information. By analysing these elements, the proposed model will help ensure that the Common Fisheries Policy communication will accompany the political process and contribute to legitimise and reinforce its understanding and implementation as a very relevant European Union policy.

As it was described in the general hypothesis, this thesis has used a communication model to articulate its structure and method. Therefore, each chapter responds to each of the hypothesis. Chapter one provides the theoretical framework, chapter two provides the methodological approach and chapters three, four, five and six respond to each of the four elements of the proposed communication model respectively. In section 2.2, the communication model used and the explanation of each of the elements, therefore describing the whole structure of the thesis, is thoroughly explained.

1.6. Chapter conclusions

This introductory chapter highlights the gap between the development of the European Union and an increase in its competences, which increasingly affect the lives of its citizens, and the situation of the European communicative space between the EU institutions and its citizens. The importance of communication in legitimising the EU project has been a subject of study over the years. Del Río (2008, p.511) states that the communication policy is a "first order European 'legitimising' resource", Valentini and Nesti (2010, p.6) refer to Eder's concept of communication and claim that it is an essential mechanism for supporting the production of democratic legitimacy and other scholars such as Meyer (1999) and Dolgui (2009) write about the connection between communication and legitimacy. According to Scharpf (1999), the latter is essential to guarantee the stability of the political institutions.

The institutional setting of the European Union is analysed in this light, i.e., the division of competences within the EU does not correspond to the division of

competences in national governments that citizens know best. Moreover, this institutional complexity exists against a background of a general lack of trust in politicians and governments. Yet, as Hix (2008) contends, successive institutional reforms have transformed the institutions to streamline the process and become a fully democratic polity.

The economic crisis has revealed the down side of the European Union for many citizens who have seen their living standards deteriorate. Even though information is more accessible today than ever, there seems to be a decline in public support for the European Union project, and this is further analysed in chapter four. Dinan states that (2005, p.6), "there is a surfeit of information on the EU but a deficit of knowledge". Indeed, some politicians who do not transmit from a European perspective and mass media that are often unfamiliar with the European version of the news are relevant intermediaries that eclipse communication "in European" (Del Río, 2014). The lack of a healthy sustainable communicative space and of a good understanding on the functioning of the European Union has made citizens more prone to blaming the European Union as a whole for the situation (instead of a particular governing body).

Several scholars have analysed the situation of the European Public Sphere defined by Habermas as the communication system between formally organised and informal face-to-face deliberations in political systems. For Habermas, the deliberative paradigm that should take place in the European Union would generate legitimacy through a procedure of opinion and will formation, thus granting transparency, inclusion and equal opportunity for participation, and a justified presumption for reasonable outcomes. The input from citizens is critical to voice society's problems and to respond to the issues articulated in the elite discourse.

The next chapters of this thesis will discuss the role of political communication in the public sphere and analyse how European communication is contributing and acting as a catalyser for legitimation of the European project, through the creation of inclusive and multilevel channels to connect with citizens in a dialogue. This analysis will take into consideration the potential change of elements that contributed to mediated political communication in the light of the emergence of the Internet and the social media.

By analysing the concepts and dynamics on which the European Union is building its communication model, the thesis aims at identifying the traits that characterise European communication so that the integrating power of communication can be used to converge onto the several spheres that the European Union embraces: citizens, national authorities and European Union institutions. Finally, the communication campaigns of the Common Fisheries Policy reform will be analysed as a case study.

2. European Union communication analysed through a communication model

2.1. Introduction: A communication model as methodology to study EU communication

This thesis studies the main models from communication theory to determine which core elements best serve the purpose of analysing communications of the European Union. Assessment of the EU communication processes using a model from communication theory will permit an in-depth analysis within this discipline.

Finding a unified concept of communication is difficult, opines professor and researcher on Communication Theory, Martín Algarra (2003). It may be the reason why Communication theory has often used models. He assumes that models can be considered as simplified theories or representations of the real world. A model tries to determine the main elements of any structure or process, and the relations between these elements. In communication, models have often been identified to explain communication theory.

Rodrigo Alsina (1989, p.20) writes that models are constructed by researchers and aim at representing the described reality. Alsina points out that throughout history, researchers have established different models that adjust to the different theoretical needs of the time as well as to the predominant scientific model paradigms, since the development of communication theory is very dynamic.

The abundance of theoretical inputs in communication theory can lead to problems in its study (Martín Algarra, 2009). He states that although the study of communication is important, what is even more essential is the knowledge about the reality of communication. Therefore, this thesis uses the theoretical elements to better explain the communication process of the European institutions and its citizens, so that they do not remain as abstract theory.

A review of the theoretical models permits the identification of the right elements to explain the necessary characteristics that European communication requires, in order to adequately transmit a European message that contributes to and boosts legitimisation of the European Union's policies, as stated in chapter one.

2.2. The proposed model: A revision of the transmission model

Mc Quail (2010), one of the important references in Communication theory, lists four communication models for mass communication: the transmission model, the expressive or ritual model, the publicity model and the reception model. According to Mc Quail, the transmission model is largely taken from older institutional contexts –education, religion, and government– and is appropriate to activities, which are instructional, informational, or propagandist. The expressive or ritual model is designed for elements related to art, drama or entertainment. The publicity model reflects the media goal of attracting audiences for either prestige or income and covers the media activity sector engaged in advertising or public relations. The reception model reminds us of the power of the audience (p. 84). McQuail states that one should not simply choose one model and ignore others because they may be relevant for different purposes.

Given that the analysis of the European Union communication can be classified as an institutional communication, the model that seems more appropriate for its analysis is the transmission model. The transmission model is at the core of the dominant paradigm. It considers communication as a process of transmission of an amount of information and the message as determined by the sender. Simple definitions of mass communication follow Lasswell's (1948) observation that the study of mass communication is an attempt to answer the question "Who says what to whom, through what channel and with what effect?" This represents the linear sequence already mentioned.

Yet, the precedents of Lasswell's formula could date back to Ancient Greece and Aristotle. The Greek philosopher in his work *Rhetoric* pointed out three components in communication: the orator, the speech and the listener. This means that the three

necessary elements for communication are the person who speaks the spoken words and the person who listens (Berlo, 1999, p.17). The virtue of Lasswell's model is that it achieved a first and necessary delimitation of the components of the communication process.

According to Alsina, Harold Lasswell can be considered one of the founders of the study of mass communication. Yet, his theory needs to be enshrined in the right context, within behaviourism. For Lasswell, the main functions of communication in society were surveillance of the environment, correlation of parts of society in response to its environment, and the transmission of cultural heritage.

Mc Quail (2010) refers to the improvement of the transmission model offered by Westley and MacLean in 1957 with a revised version that takes into account the fact that mass communicators are not usually the creators of the messages but rather selectors or transmitters, providing access to the views and voices of some of those (such as advocates of opinions, advertisers, performers and writers) who want to reach a wider public. There are three important features in this improved model: the emphasis on the selection role of mass communicators; the fact that selection is undertaken by assessment of what the audiences will find interesting; and that communication is not purposive. Lasswell's effect is somehow put into question (pp. 81-82). In this new version, the process will not be linear anymore but will be strongly shaped by feedback from the audience both to the mass media and to the original communicators.

In the new version of the model introduced by Westley and MacLean, the communication process can no longer be viewed as sequential, as it is strongly affected by "feedback". Indeed, as Martín Algarra (2009) points out, the most frequent criticism of Lasswell´s model is its linear and unidirectional nature, that is very characteristic of propaganda. Yet, the importance of this model cannot be disregarded as its approach reminds us of the traditional formula used in communication like the five W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why, in what way, by what means) or the questions that the classical rhetoric poses.

Mac Quail writes that during the 1960s and 1970s an alternative paradigm took form, under the influence of the "ideas of 1968", combining anti-war and liberation

movements of various kinds as well as neo-Marxism. The main features of the alternative paradigm are a critical view of society and rejection of the value of neutrality and of the transmission model of communication, non-deterministic view of media technology and messages, adoption of an interpretative and constructionist perspective, qualitative methodology, preference for cultural or political-economic theories and wide concern with inequality and sources of opposition in society.

It is important to highlight that of the five elements from Lasswell's model, there are two that are not included in Aristotle's Rethoric: channel and effect. In addition, even though the transmission model used for institutional context will be a good framework for this analysis, aspects from other models should also be taken in consideration since they reflect other important aspects of the communication process.

Indeed, the predominance of the element "effect" in Lasswell is the one most criticised as it manifests the behaviourist conception of that time. Indeed, as Alsina (1989) highlights, it shows a teleological conception of communication, i.e., overbearingness of the transmitter and impotency of the receiver (p. 41). This has been overcome, for instance, through the introduction of the element of "purpose" by Burke (Martín Algarra, 2003) referring to the will of the transmitter, at the beginning of the process, as against the effect produced on the receiver, regardless of the wish of the transmitter. For Burke, the purpose is the objective, the goal, and the result that the subject actor wishes to achieve. It is not just a simple effect: it is the desired effect. This study intends to reflect on the effect EU institutions wish to achieve, i.e., the "objective". Indeed, based on the analysis provided in chapter one, this analysis could consider that the purpose of EU communications is to contribute to the legitimisation of the European project.

Martín-Algarra (2009) also reflects on the circumstances (or what Burke identifies as the "scene"): the coordinates in time and space that give a concrete sense to each communication process. This is crucial in the European project because the economic and political crises are definitively affecting the way European institutions communicate with their citizens or how citizens perceive these institutions (and even, the other way around, a possible reflection is to what extent the lack of communication can lead to a political or social crisis.). Other communication

elements that can help in the analysis of the communication process derived from the "decoder-encoder" model are for example the concepts of "fidelity" and "noise" as interference with the decoding of messages sent over a channel by an encoder.

All the above-mentioned concepts have been taken into consideration in this study to determine the best methodology for the same. Therefore, following a thorough examination, since this thesis is enshrined in the field of institutional communication, the transmission model (McQuail, 2010) is the one chosen to for this study. However, its sequential conception will not be considered: the unidirectional approach to communication is obsolete since Westley and McLean introduced the idea of "feedback". As the linear and unidirectional sequence of the model will not be respected, the analysis of the audience, and with it, the feedback, will play an important role. The Transmission model is based on Lasswell's formula —and it is close to Aristotle too—. Therefore, the four elements used in analysing the European Union are the ones taken from ancient Greece plus the channel element (already mentioned by Lasswell). The study of channels becomes all the more relevant given the widespread use of new technologies, Internet and social media and their cohabitation with traditional media.

All in all, there are four elements that articulate this study: a) the senders or transmitters of the message: EU institutions through their communication strategy, which is developed in chapter three, b) the audience: European citizens and civil society, which is fully described in chapter four, c) the channels: traditional media and social media, examined in chapter five; and d) the message: a case study of the Common Fisheries Policy Reform, described in chapter six. Other different elements and proposals will be discussed whenever they are found to serve the purpose of a better explanation of a concept or idea but the analysis will be structured around these four main elements.

In this second chapter we will be matching the elements of the selected model to the case of the EU communication process and try to understand how the model works and how the elements relate to each other in the specific case of the European Union's communication. Subsequent chapters will address and explore in detail, the communication of the European Union and the case study of the Common Fisheries Policy articulated through the four identified elements.

2.3. The transmitters of the message: EU institutions through their communication strategy

In this analysis, the transmitters of the information are the EU institutions, which are establishing a dialogue with citizens. In this section, analysis will focus on the institutions that are issuing European information and specifically on who, or which department within each institution is involved. A deeper look will be taken at the transmitters of genuine European messages, i.e., the initiators of this communicative process.

This section describes the way in which communication is organised internally and the role of the main institutions transmitting EU messages as communicators. This will help to delve further into the analysis in the next chapter (chapter three), which is dedicated to the strategy and management of EU institutions dedicated to communication with citizens.

Even though each institution has its own objectives and ways of communication, all of them participate in the overarching objective of providing genuine European communication. The European Commission is one of the main institutions of the European Union. It represents and defends the interests of the European Union as a whole by drafting proposals for new European laws and by managing the implementation of EU policies. It is the EU executive body. A College of 28 Commissioners, one from each EU country, leads the European Commission during their five-year term. The President assigns a portfolio to each Commissioner.

The European Commission's 2014-2019 communication depends directly on the European Commission President, Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker. The aim of the Directorate-General for Communication, DG COMM, as it is officially called on its corporate website, is to "bring Europe closer to its citizens" 10. Its role is to communicate with the media, stakeholders and citizens about issues of European

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[10] It can be more read in detail on its website:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/about/what_we_do/index_en.htm

interest, including EU policies and actions. It seeks partnerships with other institutions and bodies as well as with Member States for communication in Europe.

DG COMM is responsible for undertaking the following tasks: defining and monitoring the Commission's corporate image; proposing, planning and implementing the Commission's communication priorities for the general public; undertaking communication on other topics of political importance and/or public interest; providing corporate communication tools and expertise to other Directorate Generals for their communication strategies and activities; advising on the use of communication resources across the Commission; managing common communication tools or projects in partnership with other institutions and Member States as appropriate; informing the Commission about public opinion and reputational risks in the Member States and providing political reporting on developments across the EU; and helping to evaluate the Communication activities of the Commission.

Moreover, there exists a Spokesperson Service that works under the political authority of the President of the Commission, in cooperation with the representations of the European Commission. This is the official voice of the European Commission that informs and responds to the mass media, coordinates press lines, rebuts stories containing errors and develops the media strategy of the European Commission.

Besides having the Spokesperson Service and the Director General and Deputy Director General, DG COMM is further organised around four directorates: Directorate A: Strategy and Corporate Communications, Directorate B: Representations, Directorate C: Communication with Citizens and Directorate D: Resources.

The External Communication Network (ECN) was created in 2002 and is composed of DGs from all Information and Communication Heads of Unit. It was re-launched through the "Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission (European Commission, 2005)". Members of the ECN are the Heads of the DG Communication Units as described in the Action Plan. However, representatives from other DGs may attend ECN meetings and working groups, if the agenda so requires. The main mission of the ECN is to exchange best practices on preparation

and implementation of communication plans and other communication practices. It also aims at facilitating DG COMM's assistance to other DGs on technical issues and strives towards a more effective and cost-efficient use of tools (audiovisual, Internet, citizens' help-lines, etc.) and evaluation methods. The ECN meets approximately 5-6 times a year on the basis of established agendas. The meetings of the ECN are organised and chaired by DG COMM.

The European Parliament is another key institution of the European Union. The European Parliament represents the people of the European Union, as it is the only supranational institution whose members are directly elected by EU voters every five years in universal suffrage. It is one of the EU's main law-making institutions along with the Council of the European Union ('the Council'). The European Parliament has three main roles: debating and passing European laws, with the Council, scrutinising other EU institutions, particularly the Commission, to make sure they are working democratically and debating and adopting the EU's budget, with the Council. Each review of the treaties has conferred more power to the European Parliament in relation to the other institutions[11].

In the European Parliament, there is a Directorate-General for Communication which works to ensure that information is circulated to the public, the media and opinion leaders on a wide range of Parliamentary activities. There are information offices in each EU Member State to provide information to the public on its operation and activities. These information offices act as intermediaries between the Parliament and the public.

The main tasks of the Directorate-General for Communication are those of "ensuring that the media, the public and opinion leaders (associations, civil society bodies and local elected representatives) are aware of the role, operation and views of the European Parliament, and of providing a library and documentation service for MEPs, committees and other European Parliament bodies for their official parliamentary duties"[12].

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[11] More information on the European Parliament can be found at the following link
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en
[12] About the DG for Communication of the EP, more information is available at the following link
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00d7a6c2b2/Secretariat.html?tab=eParliament_sec
retariat_dgcomm

Members of the European Parliament are the main characters in the communication of the European Parliament. Their communication priorities can be influenced by interests of their political groups or their constituencies.

The Directorate General Communication of the European Parliament is divided into four areas: Directorate for Media, Directorate for Information Offices, Directorate for Relations with Citizens and Directorate for Resources. Besides the institutional communication from the European Parliament, the eight political groups represented in the European Parliament also communicate and issue messages as well as MEPs individually.

In 2001 an Inter-Institutional Group on Information (IGI) was established, to initially manage the joint Parliament-Commission Priority Information Campaigns (PRINCE - intended to promote issues such as the Single European Currency and the Single European Market), but later extended to consider all information and communication matters[13]. This group is responsible for selecting common communication priorities for the EU and agreeing on the EU strategy on communication.

The Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI) is the existing policy structure for agreeing on the EU communication strategy and selecting common communication priorities for the EU institutions and Member States. It is chaired jointly by the European Parliament, the Commission and the Presidency. The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions participate as observers in the IGI.

The third key EU institution is the Council, the one that gathers representatives of the governments of the Member States, i.e., the ministers of the different Member States with competence in a given area. The composition of the Council sessions varies in accordance with the issues being dealt. There are ten ways in which the Council is formed, and it covers all policies of the Union. The General Affairs Council is the one that deals with issues that affect more than one Union policy and co-ordinates preparation and follow-up to the European Council meetings[14].

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[13] Kindly also see http://www.leeds.ac.uk/jmce/bib-info.htm
[14] A description of the Council duties can be found at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/council

The Press Office is chaired by a Head of the Press Office and is composed of a Secretariat, a Newsdesk, a Support Coordination for the European Council President, a set of Press Officers for each area, a Press Centre, an Audiovisual Team, another one for Budget and Projects and finally one for Media Monitoring. There is also a Working Party of the Council that handles issues regarding transparency, public access to documents and Member State communication on the EU.

Finally, the European Council is a full fledged institution itself ever since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. It is composed of the Heads of State or Government from the Member States, together with its President and the President of the Commission, who meet twice every six months and define the general political direction and priorities of the European Union.

The institutional triangle composed of the Council, the Commission and the President draft the policies and the legislation that will be applied throughout the European Union. This is why they can be considered as the main transmitters of European communication and messages. There are another two institutions that play an important role, i.e., the Court of Justice, which interprets EU law to make sure it is applied uniformly in all EU countries, and the Court of Auditors, which controls finance of the activities of the European Union.

Other institutions and organisations that develop specialised functions in the European Union are:

- The European Central Bank, responsible for European monetary policy
- The European External Action Service (EEAS), which assists the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and conducts the common foreign and security policy, also ensuring the consistency and coordination of the EU's external action.
- The European Economic and Social Committee, representing the civil society, employers and employees
- The Committee of the Regions, which represents regional and local authorities
- The European Investment Bank, which finances EU investment projects and helps small businesses through the European Investment Fund
- The European Ombudsman, who investigates complaints about

maladministration by EU institutions and bodies

- The European Data Protection Supervisor, who safeguards the privacy of people's personal data
- The Publications Office publishes information about the EU
- The European Personnel Selection Office, which recruits staff for the EU institutions and other bodies
- The European School of Administration, which provides training in specific areas for members of EU staff
- A host of specialised agencies and decentralised bodies handle a range of technical, scientific and management tasks

Although there are coordination mechanisms for communication among the different institutions, the description above shows that each institution has its own specific competences and its own communication organisation and agenda. Chapter three will throw light on the evolution of the communication strategy of the European Union as well as on its organisation. The thesis will precisely examine how the coordination on communication between the institutions works in practical terms.

2.4. The publics: European citizens and civil society

Considering the reflection on the communication models taken in section 2.1, the term *Audience* used in the sequential model of the mass communication model of the fifties will be replaced by the term *Publics*, more in line with the theory of the Public Spheres, already described in chapter one. Indeed, as McQuail points out, the term audience implies a set of receivers who are passive. The communication model of the European Union, as a communication theory itself, has evolved from a transmission model of institutions as providers of information to a bilateral model in which institutions increasingly engage in a dialogue both with citizens and civil society. The rise of new technologies and the new media has introduced behaviours that involve interactivity and active search. Citizens are communicators themselves and are able to generate content with a great multiplying effect and it is not easy to distinguish between the producers of the message and the audience itself.

Something that McQuail points out and what is especially important in the case of the European Union is that the audiences will become more and more fragmented and atomized upon using new communication technologies and will lose their national, local or cultural identity. On the other hand, new types of integration based on interactivity may compensate for the loss of older forms of shared experience (2010, p. 416).

Internationalisation is a key term for McQuail, who mentions that new technologies are questioning the division between senders and receivers and that internationalisation is a route towards bigger audiences for certain high profile types of content. Mc Quail elaborates on the concept of Segmentation to refer to the process by which media supply is matched more precisely to a relevant set of media consumers, and the process is helped thanks to greater possibility of selection by the consumers themselves (p. 451). In this case, it is interesting to look into the communication strategies of the European Union institutions and analyse how the EU publics have been segmented.

In fact, the problem of the media industry for seeking their audience, predicting its composition and the direction of its interest could also be translated to the EU institutions. McQuail points out that there are more channels of relevant political and civic information nowadays and therefore there is less likelihood of a mass audience being the object of propaganda or biased information. It is generally more difficult for any potential transmitter, either political or commercial, to reach any large general public. The overdose of information supply also diminishes the capacity of the people to notice it or be influenced by it (2010, p. 452).

E.O. Eriksen (year) provides the missing link between the European Public Sphere and the analysis of the public we need. According to him, the notion of "public sphere" means that citizens gather as a public and set their own agenda through open communication (2004 p. 24). And this is when we need to know who this public is.

In studies on Public Opinion, the public was observed to not only be the subject but also the object of the expression. The term public opinion indicates not only that is from the public but also that the subjects that are touched upon are of a public nature (Sartori, G., 1999, p. 169). Therefore the study of public opinion is characterised by

diffusion among the public and the reference to public affairs (*res publica*). Indeed, public opinion can also be defined as a public, or several publics, in which their states of mind (opinions) interact with information flow about the status of the *res publica.*

Monzón Arribas describes ways in which the public expresses its opinion (2006, p.192)[15]:

a) Direct manifestations of the publics as status and opinion trends
b) Participation in the different votes and formal representations (parliament)
c) Through its leaders and decision makers (politicians)
d) In the media
e) Addressing public authorities (letters to the directors, signatures gathering)
f) Using informal communication (rumours), and
g) Expressing through collective behaviours (demonstrations and strikes).

Monzón also mentions that publics are trespassing frontiers because there are issues of general interest that matter most to humanity, and this is the case of the European Union publics. Internationalisation of issues, the end of the Cold War and information on current affairs that reaches everyone through agencies and transnational channels, bring issues and concerns from all parts of the world together (pp. 313-315).

Therefore, passiveness does not describe modern society and the communication model being used for the analysis, and hence the term audience is not valid anymore and neither is the analysis of the types of audiences. Therefore, in order to better analyse the publics, the conceptualisation of European publics made by Eriksen (2004) tends to be the most appropriate one.

Eriksen starts by saying that the creation of the EU has led to a new kind of polity, which is closely connected to its development as a communicative space. Some authors argue that the main problem with the development of a European public

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[15] Translation is mine on the text. The original text in Spanish reads as follows: "a) manifestaciones directas de los públicos en forma de estados y corrientes de opinión, b) participando en las distintas formas de sufragio y de representación formal (parlamento), c) a través de su líderes y dirigentes (políticos), d) en los medios de comunicación, e) dirigiéndose a los organismos públicos (cartas al director y recogida de firmas), f) utilizando la comunicación informal (rumor) y g) expresándose en forma de comportamientos colectivos (manifestaciones y huelgas)."

sphere is the lack of a cultural substrate for a collective will-formation (Eriksen, 2004, p. 2). The concept of European citizenship, in the context of transnational public, a cultural substrate and a European public sphere will be further analysed in chapter four. Furthermore, following Eriksen's notion of public sphere as "equal citizens that assemble into public and set their own agenda through open communication" (2004, p. 3.) and with the public as the subject and object of the study of public opinion, a first analysis is performed on who these publics are and which EU institutions engage in dialogue.

Reflecting on Habermas' distinction between a general public sphere, segmented publics and strong publics, Eriksen reflects on these concepts. Strong publics, (2004, p. 16), are "legally institutionalised specialised discourses on collective will-formation nearer the centre of the political system." Strong publics refers to formally organised parliamentary assemblies and discursive organisations with decision-making capacity. On the contrary, there are the weak publics, or as the author calls them, the general publics: Inclusive and open communicative spaces rooted in civil society in the periphery of the political system, in which all may participate on a free and equal basis.

Eriksen quotes Kleger in a fundamental reflection about the idea that the collective identity based on common origin, heritage, language, memory or remembrance goes together with the conception of citizenship-based government in which sovereign people via law can form a collective will and rule themselves. This republican perspective is opposed to communitarian readings of republicanism suggesting that a post-national identity is possible. This identity would be based on the procedural requirements of modern constitution and its voluntary recognition, accommodating difference and plurality, and solidarity founded on mutual respect. The underlying assumption, then, is that the lack of pre-political identification with the emerging political community can be recompensed through a public debate with catalytic effects on enlarged citizenship, solidarity, and plural identities (2004, p. 13).

A third kind of publics that emerges is the transnational-segmented publics, which are transnational publics evolving around policy networks constituted by the common interest in certain issues, problems and solutions. Eriksen also mentions that there are lacking common communicative systems that facilitate these public debates

but there are also transnational public spheres emerging from the European Union structure (p. 17).

What is interesting though is that the strong publics do exist in the EU since the EU is regarded as an example of transnational governance. Policy making in committees and networks is supplemented with civil society organisations, which could be the transnational public spheres that emerge from the EU.

2.5. The channels: Traditional media and social media

The channel, already present in Lasswell's model, has become even more relevant with the widespread use of new technologies, Internet and social media, which in turn has dramatically changed the way mass communication exists in cohabitation with conventional media.

Mass media have traditionally helped disseminate the opinion of citizens. Indeed, Op eds and opinion articles in the media were used in the XIX century to measure public opinion by analysts and decision makers because there were no modern techniques to measure opinion behaviours. The prominence of mass media comes from the fact that they facilitate expression whilst influencing and creating opinion (Monzón Arribas, 2006, p. 195).

Muñoz Alonso (1990) described the functions of the mass media as that of collecting and presenting information in an objective manner, thereby contributing to the formation of public opinion, setting the political agenda and controlling the government and other institutions.

However, as recognised in the Commission's White Paper on European Communication Policy, "national patterns of media framing" are the most frequent in the mass media. Furthermore, Schlesinger states that more and more citizens do not read the elite press and that the vast majority of news media output is part of the entertainment business. In short, assumptions about the quality press as an instrument of enlightenment only refer to a small part of the system of news production and

distribution. As media systems are increasingly fragmented in time and under pressure from economic competition, digital convergence and the Internet, more questions arise about the conditions under which traditional media reporting will evolve, and that the challenge to credibly address general publics is increasing for political classes everywhere (Schlesinger, 2007).

Moreover, the hypothesis of social distancing implies that the dissemination of information through the mass media in a social system does not reach all citizens evenly. The better educated segments of the population or those with a higher socioeconomic status tend to get more detailed information than those with less education or with a lower socioeconomic status. There are four determining factors involved: socioeconomic status, educational level, motivation and social interest and time of permanence of some news in the media (Dader, J. L. and A. Muñoz Alonso, 1990).

The question posed within this media landscape then, is regarding the role of the mass media in communicating about the European Union Trenz, H -J. and C. Münzing (2007) opine that the role of the media is not only that of covering European news and framing European policy debates but also that of summarising the debates on Europe and reflecting on the "unity in diversity" concept. They are the main carrier of the discourse on European unity and collective self-understanding of the EU. In their study of leading press (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Guardian*, *Times*, *La Republica* , *La Stampa*, *Die Presse, Der Standard*, *El País, ABC, New York Times*), Trenz, H.-J. and C. Münzing (2007) claim that newspapers have also become engaged in public opinion formation processes at the European level because they are not just passive mediators of European political communication but have an active role as a political actor and a campaigner pushing for the European integration. Even though they are usually held responsible for preserving national bias and spreading hostile anti-European attitudes among the public, the quality press has become a dynamic frontrunner of European integration fostering the deepening of EU integration. In brief, the study argues that quality newspapers raise the "European voice" against those in doubt and against some attitudes of national governments and even the Euro-scepticism of their readers.

These authors suggest that the particular section where this "European voice" is raised is the editorials of newspapers. Trenz, H -J. and C. Münzing (2007) believe that editorials are systemically used to turn the collective opinion of the newspaper into public opinions of the Europeans and that the function of the mass media is to produce and reproduce semantic representations of society as a political unity.

In his study, Statham (2008) aims to provide an overview of response of journalists to the emergence of European governance through a systematic study of their evaluations and experiences of the factors that shape their news making decisions (p. 400). He interviewed 110 journalists from all over Europe and found a limited but emergent "Europeanisation" of journalism, carried by transnational newspapers serving specialist audiences and to a limited extent by European correspondents on the national press. However, they may not see themselves as the frontrunners of European integration as in the hypothesis of Trenz, H.-J. and C. Münzing. In general, it seems that journalists evaluate their role by standards of professional performance. This is how they view their potential contribution to improving Europeanised political communication flows and perceive the responsibility for the current democratic deficit to go beyond the scope of their actions, and firmly located within the political system, and more specifically within the European institutions (Statham, 2008, p. 417). A more in-depth analysis of this study can be found in chapter five where the role of the mass media is addressed.

When Statham writes about Europeanisation of journalism he may refer to the fact that transnational journalists receive greater information flows from EU political institutions and make more efforts to influence EU actors when commentating than their national colleagues, who remain mostly locked within information circuit flows with national political actors.

The national frame disappears together with the concept of mediated political communication with the arrival of Internet, Web 2.0 and social media, and the so far prevailing paradigms of mass communication are being questioned. The European Union had to adapt and respond to this new reality using both traditional and new online media for its communication. The characteristic of social media as a post national channel make them especially attractive for European Union communication.

Bingham, T. and M. Conner (2010) define social media as a set of Internet-based technologies designed to be used by three or more people. Indeed, social media are changing the way people work. The new social learning reframes social media from a marketing strategy to a strategy that encourages knowledge transfer and connects people in a manner that is consistent with how we naturally interact (pp. 5-6).

Communication practitioners generally think that social media have made Communication easier. According to the 2007 PRSA Wired for Change Survey, the majority of PR professionals state that social media not only allow public relations practitioners to reach out and engage with their publics in conversation but also provide an avenue to strengthen media relations.

Indeed, as the communication landscape gets denser, more complex and participatory, the networked population tends to gain greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action (Shirky, C. 2011, p. 13). Social media have become coordinating tools for nearly all of the world's political movements. Shirky (2011) opines that the potential of social media lies mainly in their support of civil society and the public sphere and that the more promising way to view the social media is as long-term tools that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere (pp. 14 -15). As a matter of fact, political freedom must be accompanied by a civil society that is literate enough and densely connected to discuss the issues presented to the public. Shirky considers propagating messages and coordinating actions through social media as part of all future political movements.

These studies confirm how social media are a channel that has been embraced by civil society as a way of both organising themselves and mobilising citizens. European Union institutions had to learn from civil society and adapt to the new channel that allows them to have a direct contact with citizens. The media landscape and the way in which the EU is using both traditional and new online channels are examined in chapter five.

2.6. The message: The establishment of the annual political priorities and the communication messages

In a nutshell, the EU messages are the priorities that EU institutions decide to address on an annual basis. The messages that the institutions will issue will obviously be adapted to the turn of events and policy developments. In the last chapter, an analysis of a particular message will be performed with a case of the Common Fisheries Policy.

The European Commission implements the Commission's communication priorities for the general public based on the political priorities and interest of citizens. The messages serve the strategic and political priorities of the President and the College of Commissioners. In addition, the Commission communicates on other topics of political importance and/or public interest and helps citizens learn about EU related matters. Moreover, depending on the media agenda, the Commission is ready to respond to the media on the policies and activities of the EU.

The President of the Commission normally makes a speech on the State of the Union to the European Parliament in September. In it, he presents priorities for the year ahead, which will become part of the European Commission's Work Programme (CWP). The European Parliament has influence over the priorities and can request amendments to the legislative initiatives in the Parliament's annual resolution on the Commission's Work Programme. After the State of the Union Speech, the European Parliament carries on the dialogue with Commissioners of relevant policy areas so that Parliament's priorities are considered before the Work Programme is adopted by the European Commission. The adopted Programme is presented to the European Parliament during the plenary session in October. The preparation for the new Work Programme starts during the first part of the year through dialogue between the European Commission and the European Parliament based on the Inter-institutional Framework Agreement between the Parliament and the Commission. The Agreement

ensures that the Parliament participates throughout all stages of the process until the adoption of the annual Work Programme[16].

In the following analysis, a closer look will be taken of the general priorities included in the European Commission's work programme and of the Communication priorities of DG Communication's management plan during the last three years. As will be shown, in each year, communication is tackled through a different approach.

In the political priorities of 2013 (European Commission, 2012, p. 2), the "absolute imperative was to tackle the economic crisis and put the EU back on the road to sustainable growth". The main objectives set were those of getting the foundations right towards genuine Economic and Monetary Union, economic growth and jobs matched with a strong single regulatory and supervisory authority at EU level; boosting competitiveness through the Single Market and industrial policy; connecting to compete building tomorrow's networks today by having a fully integrated and interconnected European Single Market; growth for jobs through inclusion and; using Europe's resources to compete better; building a safe and secure Europe and further remove obstacles to circulation of citizens in Europe and reinforcing Europe as a global actor.

DG Communication's management plan reflected the common inter-institutional communication priorities defined by the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI) for 2013/2014. The following priority areas for communication activities in 2013 were settled: the economic recovery, growth, Europe 2020; the European Year of Citizens 2013 and the European Elections 2014.

As can be seen, only one of the political priorities matches the communication priorities. The question that instantly arises is whether the other two remaining communication priorities were not politically relevant enough to be considered priorities in the management plan. One may ask whether the substance of the EU work programme is not perceived as important enough to be communicated or whether the EU institutions felt that the narrative of the EU had to differ from its political priorities. This mismatch can foster criticism from those who feel that the European Union is opaque because what the EU decides is not communicated and

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[16] More about legislation programming can be read here http://epthinktank.eu/2013/10/22/eu-legislative-programming/

from those who feel that European Union communication is not purposeful because it is not focused on the real work and priorities of the institution.

One year later, the Commission Work Programme 2014 acknowledged that signs of economic recovery were becoming apparent. It sets a clear priority; the finalisation with the European Parliament and the Council, of a set of negotiations on a series of existing proposals that have the potential to boost growth and job creation. The key priorities for 2014 were the Economic and Monetary Union; a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, since the new MFF programmes were designed to support the priorities of Europe 2020 and include a set of measures to promote investment, employment and social inclusion, and justice and security since the EU must protect citizens and safeguard their rights and External action.

The three priorities that remained unchaged from the previous year were the Economic and Monetary Union, the focus on growth and jobs and the perspective into the external action.

The Management Plan of DG Communication for 2014 does not show clear priorities as in the previous plan but instead there are three calls for action: the first one calls for listening so that they can get to know the citizens (for this, they intend to use the Eurobarometer, the Economic Semester Officers and the reporting of the Representations and the feedback from the Europe Direct Contact Centres), the second one for advice (more for internal use, DG Communication offers to provide advice to the Cabinet, the College and other DGs) and the third one for engagement with citizens. Moreover, five key performance indicators (KPIs) have been identified to measure the impact of communications. While measurement tools such as the performance indicators are welcome, it is disconcerting to see that the content priorities were not identified. Instead of addressing the content (in Laswell´s terms, the "what") the document focuses on the process and the methodology. This could be a sign of "bureaucratisation" in the sense that the process and the method of carrying out an activity becomes more relevant than the activity itself.

In 2015 there came about a clear change with the entry into office of the new European Commission, as the result of the European Parliament elections on 22-25 May, 2015, and the decision of the European Council. The new President of the

European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, set ten clear political priorities for the Commission Work Programme 2014. They were "a new boost for jobs, growth and investment, notably by means of a €300 bn investment plan; a connected Digital Single Market; a resilient European Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy; a deeper and fairer Internal Market with a strengthened industrial base, including a Capital Markets Union, based on the principle that the same work and the same place should be remunerated in the same manner; a deeper and fairer Economic and Monetary Union in which social dialogue is given new importance; a reasonable and balanced free trade agreement with the United States; an area of justice and fundamental rights on mutual trust; a new EU policy on migration; making the EU a stronger global actor; and bringing about a Union of democratic change".

DG Communication's 2015 Management Plan, for the first time introduces the very relevant idea that "The Commission´s communication needs to match the ten political priorities which have been outlined in the Political Guidelines". A coordinator has been appointed for each priority. His/her role is to help set, develop and measure communication activities with a corporate dimension, to fine tune narratives and to encourage synergies throughout the Commission. It outlined that all members of the Commission should be active in the Member States by communicating on the proposals outlined in the Commission´s Work Programme. For the first time, the communication plan was aligned with the political priorities. This was an important step which should be maintained as a long-term strategic goal.

In the next chapter, a closer look will be taken at how communication has been prioritized and organised in the EU institutions throughout EU history. The relationship between political priorities and communication messages will be illustrated in the practical study of the Common Fisheries Policy reform campaigns in chapter six.

2.7. Chapter conclusions

After a thorough examination of institutional communication, the transmission model (McQuail, 2010) was identified as the right basis for the analysis of EU communication. However, its sequential conception will not be considered since the unidirectional approach to communication has become obsolete ever since Westley and McLean introduced the idea of "feedback". Given that the linear and unidirectional sequence of the model will not be respected, the analysis of the audiences or the publics as "feedback" will play an important role.

The four components used in this analysis of communication of the European Union are the three already identified in ancient Greece in Aristotle's Rethoric plus the channel (identified in Lasswell´s formula). The widespread use of new technologies, Internet and social media and their cohabitation with traditional media make the study of the channels all the more relevant.

All in all, there are four elements that articulate this study: a) the senders or transmitters of the message: EU institutions through their communication strategy, developed in chapter three, b) the publics: European citizens and civil society, fully described in chapter four, c) the channels: traditional media and social media, examined in chapter five and d) the message, through the case study on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, in chapter six. References to other elements will be made whenever they serve the purpose of better explaining a concept or idea.

Regarding the transmitters of the message, each EU institution, and mainly the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, has specific competences and its own communication organisation and agenda. Nevertheless, there are some coordination mechanisms put in place for communication among the different institutions. The evolution of the communication strategy of the European Union and its organisation will be further analysed in chapter three.

The study of the publics will be done by taking into consideration Eriksen's starting point namely; that the EU's development has created a new kind of polity, closely connected to its development as a communicative space. Regarding the concept of

European citizenship, chapter four will closely analyse how citizens and organised citizens through civil society organisations constitute a European public space and take part in the communicative space between EU institutions and citizens.

In terms of the channel, civil society has used social media as a way to organise themselves and to mobilise citizens. Therefore, European Union institutions had to learn from civil society and adapt to the new channel that allows them to have direct contact with citizens. The new media landscape and the way in which the EU is using both traditional and new online channels is examined in chapter five.

About the message, in 2015, for the first time the ten political priorities established by the European Commission for their annual work programme were also set as the communication priorities in its communication management plan. It is an important step that should be maintained as a long-term strategic goal. In the next chapter, a closer look will be taken at how communication has been prioritised and organised in the EU institutions during its evolution. The relationship between political priorities and communication messages will also be illustrated in the practical study of the Common Fisheries Policy reform campaign in chapter six.

Chapter six will look into the communication of the last Common Fisheries Policy reform for two purposes. Firstly, because it serves to analyse a concrete message of the European Union, which in this proposed model is the Common Fisheries Policy. And secondly because it serves as a case study where all these elements from the proposed model are studied to find out how communication has contributed to the legitimising and understanding the policy and how it can be used in the future.

3. Transmitters: EU institutions that issue European messages. Strategy of EU institutions and management of communication with citizens

3.1. Introduction

EU institutions are the transmitters of the EU message in accordance with the proposed communication model. They have managed communication initiatives and strategies through adaptation to the EU institutional development. In like manner, EU institutions had to also adapt to the different communication benchmarks. This chapter provides a chronological overview of the communication initiatives in the European Union within the context of its historical and institutional development.

Taking an institutionalist perspective, Giorgia Nesti thinks that communication is part of the process of construction and stabilisation of the political life of institutions and connects the EU information and communication policy to the process of institutionalisation of the EU and, in particular, to the executive body, the European Commission. Indeed, "since the 1950s, the process of European integration has gone hand in hand with the process of institution-building of the Commission, and both of them were accompanied by specific initiatives in the field of communication" (Nesti, 2010, p. 26). This section highlights the main communication policy initiatives in the development of the European Union, showing how they have increased in importance and in number in the 2000s, not only in the European Commission but also in the European Parliament and the Council.

Analysis showed an organisational change would follow whenever a political decision was affecting communication. Therefore, a decision was taken to divide this information into two sections: section 3.2 to cover policy initiatives in its historical context and section 3.3, outlining the organisational structures created within the EU institutions, providing more details on the European Commission and implementation of its policy initiatives.

The thesis has performed an overall analysis of how EU institutions have acted as transmitters of European messages. Even though communication has become more and more important, its strategy and approach has varied depending on the different historical moments, the socioeconomic circumstances, the political leadership and organisational changes.

Each institution has specific competences and has its own communication organisation and agenda for communication, but there is also an inter-institutional cooperation on important issues. In the last section of the chapter, the thesis examines how the coordination on communication between the institutions works in practical terms.

3.2. Communication policy initiatives along the European Union development

The origin of the European Union dates back to the 1950, when the European Coal and Steel Community began to unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace[17]. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome created the European Economic Community (EEC), or 'Common Market' which was followed in the sixties by a period of economic growth in which EU countries stopped charging custom duties when they traded with each other. In this period, Nesti made the reflection that EEC communication campaigns were primarily targeted towards academic, political and economic elites to inform them about EEC main activities and achievements and to co-op them as "ambassadors" of the integration project.

Between the 1950s and the 1960s no specific acts for communication were issued, only occasional information campaigns were focused towards specific audiences.

Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined the European Union on 1 January 1973, raising the number of Member States to nine. The seventies were a decade of economic problems in Europe. On 14 December 1973, the Copenhagen European Council adopted a Report on the European identity and information campaigns about

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[17] Information on the historical development of the European Union can be found on http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm

the main policies were conducted through Press and Information Offices located in the capitals of Member States.

In 1975, Sean G. Ronan, Director-General for Information of the Commission of the European Communities, gave a speech on the information policy to the Public Relations lnstitute of Ireland. In it, Ronan explained the importance of the legitimacy of the EC political system and claimed that for it to be legitimate, it needed to be visible and intelligible to citizens. Ronan said that "for the majority of its citizens, the EC remains remote, intangible and bureaucratic" and points out as possible causes the fact that there are few occasions when the EC comes in direct contact with the citizens as many of the decisions of the Community are executed by the Member States. This happens in contrast with the way in which national and regional political and administrative systems make their impact felt in the daily lives of citizens in Member States and use a wide set of symbols which accompany citizens from cradle to grave. Therefore, Ronan called for the creation of a "European identity in all branches of public opinion" (Ronan, 1975, p. 6). In his speech, Ronan stated "the Commission is well aware of the difficulties which have to be overcome and has taken a series of initiatives in reshaping its information policy to achieve these ends. One of the means is to provide objective, accessible and rapid information and to explain its purpose more directly to the public and associate them with its efforts. The manner in which this is done must be simpler, lively and concrete, stressing that the Community is concerned with the human effects of its decisions and with the improvement of the quality of life" (p. 7).

In 1981 Greece joined the EU and Spain and Portugal did so in 1986. In June 1984, the Fontainebleau European Council established an *ad hoc* Committee to promote the EEC image among the public opinion. The project, named "A People's Europe", was specifically aimed at strengthening the European identity through the adoption of measures affecting the everyday life of people. The Commission Communication starts with the statement "The idea of a People's Europe evolved in parallel to the European Union" (Commission of the European Communities, 1985, p.1).

Nesti points out three areas that were considered important with a view to giving citizens a clearer perception of the Community´s work and importance. The first one was about citizens' political rights. In particular, the Committee suggested

reinforcing the right to active participation in the political process by adopting uniform procedures for the election of the European Parliament. The second area focused on the strengthening of the Community's image and identity through the adoption of symbols. Thirdly, the Committee invited the Community institutions and Member States to cooperate to provide citizens with more information about the European integration and the Community policies (Nesti, 2010, p. 29). Moreover, the removal of barriers among Member States for the free movement of persons, goods and services was seen as concrete steps towards the creation of a common sense of belonging. The Commission acknowledged information and communication as an essential tool for integration.

In 1992, the Treaty on European Union was signed in Maastrich, establishing the single currency and fostering cooperation in justice and home affairs and a foreign and security policy. In 1990, Germany became unified. During the nineties, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined in1995. Building on the treaty from Maastricht, the treaty of Amsterdam was signed in 1997, laying down plans to reform EU institutions, to give Europe a stronger voice in the world, and to put more emphasis on employment and peoples' rights. In 1999, the euro was introduced in 11 countries (joined by Greece in 2001).

The process of ratification of the Treaty of the European Union in Maastricht was cumbersome: the referendum got a negative result in Denmark and it was approved only by 51% in France. The question about the democratic legitimacy of the EU Project emerged together with the EU information and communication policy.

In 1993, the Report on the *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Commission* (de Clerq, 1993) was published as part of the work of the Committee of Experts chaired by the MEP de Clerq. In it, it was acknowledged that for the first time there was a break in the traditional support of European citizens to the European integration, questioning the European construction and integration. Already in this report the problem of governments of the Member States claiming credits for themselves for positive initiatives and blaming "Brussels" for unpopular measures, appear. The report stated that communication was inadequate so far but criticised the way communication was managed and its organisation and put forward some proposals for improvement.

These proposals for improvement included changes, inter alia, in the language and tone of communication in management so that the organisational structure reflects the influence and importance of communication in the day-to-day decision-making process, in the amount of resources needed for effective communication and in how to deal with media, etc. It identified the need to address the right audiences in the right way through boosting the advantages of "togetherness": working together in common issues.

The report also identified leadership and money as the sine qua non conditions to improve the situation at the time. As leadership and example must come from the top, Commissioners should give frequent press conferences in their home countries explaining the decisions they have reached, and they should give at least one major speech per month in their home countries. Moreover, a whole set of concrete tools to communicate is listed in the report.

There is something very relevant for the analysis emerging from this report that can be seen throughout EU history: when the situation is not easy, EU leaders have difficulties in taking a step ahead and talking on behalf of Europe. As it can be seen in the "post-crisis" reports, crisis are characterised by the little priority given to EU communication by leaders.

Commissioner João de Deus Pinheiro was entrusted with evaluating and reforming the Commission's information and communication sector. He identified problems in two areas: one related to the multi-level nature of the European Community (Pinheiro, 1993a, 1993b): the complexity was confusing for citizens; the second one addressed the bad coordination and professionalism in the Commission's communication services. Pinheiro proposed solving these issues by promoting openness and transparency, better management of information and reorganisation of Commission's competences.

In July 1993, the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and Media issued a report on information policy of the European Community, with Arie Osstlander as rapporteur, and formulated a set of recommendations on practical arrangements and tools to improve communication. It is outstanding that the need of a European Communication policy (European Parliament, 1993, p. 14) is mentioned: "the results

of the referenda of the Maastricht Treaty have unexpectedly shown that the policy pursued is not achieving its objectives. This is largely due to politico-structural factors, but the information policy pursued is also capable of improvement". The report appeals for a more political concept of information, acknowledging the citizens right to communicate with the Community instead of the "selling" of the European Community to mere clients. The other remarkable content in the report is the need of the Commission and Parliament to work together in this issue. Indeed, "the Commission should have an annual exchange of views on its communication policy with the European Parliament" (European Parliament, 1993, p. 17). As a conclusion, the report claims: "although this means that the communication policy must be pursued in a highly professional manner, what is primarily needed is strong commitment and political leadership".

These documents could be the precedents of the later *Whiter Paper on Communication* and the *Communication in partnership* initiatives. Still, this report from the European Parliament with Osstlander as rapporteur hits the mark: good communication takes place when political leadership is strongly committed to it.

During the ratification of the Treaty of the European Union in December 1991, Member States recognised in Declaration 17 attached to the treaty that "transparency of the decision-making process strengthens the democratic nature of the institutions and the public's confidence in the administration", (Treaty on the European Union, 1992). The Declaration was followed by two Commission's Communications on Public Access to the Institutions' Documents (COM, 93a) and another one on Openness in the Community (COM, 93b).

On a proposal from Commissioner João de Deus Pinheiro, on 30 June 1993 the Commission adopted the principles of a new approach to information and communication (the Commission's Information and Communication Policy - A New Approach. SEC (93) 916). It was followed by the Communication on the Commission's information and communication policy: the practical implementation of the information plans (July 28, 1993b). The Commission decided that an information plan should be attached to all policy proposals recognising that almost all actions taken by a Commission DG or Service may have an information or communication dimension. The new approach included the creation of Users'

Advisory Councils (UAC) to enable the views of the main categories of information users to be made known to the Commission.

In 1999, the College of Commissioners announced its resignation following a scandal of fraud and corruption: it was one of the biggest legitimacy crises of the European Union. When Romano Prodi took office he launched the Lisbon Strategy and in 2001 the Treaty of Nice was signed. The same year, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was proclaimed and the Convention of the Future of Europe was presented during the Laeken Council. With an ambition to reform the institutions, Romano Prodi promoted the White Paper Reforming the Commission (CEC, 2000) and the White Paper on European Governance (CEC, 2001a). The Action Plan annexed to the White Paper lists several measures to improve communication among European citizens: updating of norms and procedures related to public access to documents, the improvement of consultation mechanisms with civil society, the adoption of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to ameliorate communication flow with citizens and to inform them about EU policies, etc. Yet, this is another example of the need of launching the importance of communication after a crisis.

Three policy documents were later born: "A New Framework for Co-operation in Activities concerning the Information and Communication Policy of the European Union" (CEC, 2001b), an "Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union" (CEC, 2002a), and "Implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union" (CEC, 2004). The three communications demanded better cooperation between EU institutions and Member States based on a simple, un-bureaucratic and decentralised approach.

In 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was proclaimed. It contained rights and freedoms under six headings: Dignity, Freedoms, Equality, Solidarity, Citizens' Rights, and Justice[18]. "The drafting of the Charter of Fundamental Right marked a milestone in the construction of Europe, setting a precedent for the beginning of a constitutional process for the Union. This precedent arose from the very method used for the drafting of the Charter, a Convention. This

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[18] The text has become legally biding with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. More can be read on http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/charter/index_en.htm

served as a reference point for the 2002 Convention charged with casting light on the European Constitution (…)" (Del Río, 2014). The method meant a novelty because civil society organisation could participate in the drafting of the Chart of Fundamental Rights though their contributions in the Convention. It was a big step in the participation of European citizens in EU policy making as well through an online debate.

In 2004, ten countries from the East of Europe joined the European Union. On 29 October 2004, the 25 Heads of State and Government signed the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in Rome. The process had started in their meeting in Laeken in December 2001 when the European Council established the European Convention to prepare the reform and make proposals. The Convention brought together representatives of the Member States, European Parliament, national parliaments and Commission, to debate in public between February 2002 and July 2003. As a result, the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, served as a basis for the 2003/2004 IGC negotiations. The IGC took place between October 2003 and June 2004 and reached a consensus on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. This Constitutional Treaty was intended to replace all treaties signed over the last 50 years, with the exception of the Euratom Treaty.

The participation of the Forum of civil society in the debates of the second convention in charge of developing a draft European Constitution meant a step forward in including citizens' views in first order European policymaking.

> It is difficult to imagine the novelty of the process, after fifty years of government exclusivity and of their foreign affairs ministers when approving or modifying community treaties. If it was already almost revolutionary to open doors to parliamentarians from national parliaments and the European Parliament, it was even more so establishing procedures for listening to and consultation with a wide range of different citizens associations (Duch, 2014).

This level of participation helps materialise, amongst other measures, the inclusion of the citizens' legislative initiative that came into force in the Treaty of Lisbon. Further analysis on the participation of civil society in the two conventions mentioned in this

section and the inclusion of its role in the Treaty of Lisbon can be found in the next chapter.

To enter into force, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe had to be ratified by all Member States in accordance with the constitutional rules of each of them. That same year, France and the Netherlands, voted "no" to the Constitution and the Heads of State and Government decided to open a reflection period for starting a debate in each country. The idea was to initiate a broad debate with European citizens, by establishing a dialogue among citizens, civil society, social partners, national parliaments and political parties. The Commission, in response to that "invitation to debate" from governments, launched "Plan D", with thirteen actions for what is considered necessary. Within this context, the Commission also launched the European Transparency Initiative (ETI).

The White Paper on Communication was published in 2006 and it was the first political acknowledgement of communication like a policy on its own, as white papers are the first initiative of the European Commission on a given theme to propose some specific actions. The document remarked that the European Union affects the lives of its citizens in many different ways but that the communication of EU institutions has not accompanied its development. It acknowledged the distance between the European Union and its citizens as reflected in the Eurobarometer polls. For this reason, the White Paper admitted that a bidirectional communication was essential with a view to having a healthy democracy as democracy can only prosper if citizens are aware of what is going on and when they can fully participate it.

One of the priorities mentioned is the development of a European public sphere, in which European political life develops. As most of the conventional mass media are predominantly national, there are not many fora where European people of different Member States can actually meet and together tackle issues of common interest. A "pan-European political culture" still needs to be created. In order to overcome this deficit, the White Paper proposed a set of measures to bridge the gap with the citizens; firstly, it defined common principles, based on the right of information and liberty of expression, integration, diversity or participation. Secondly, it indicated that it was necessary to reinforce the role of citizens by improving civic life. Thirdly, it proposed to work with mass media and new technologies. Fourthly, it

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acknowledged that European public opinion's needs to be understood. Finally, it offered bonds of cooperation: since the "public sphere" cannot be shaped from Brussels, as this will only happen if the goal is supported by all actors and at all levels: Member States, institutions of the European Union, regional and local domain, political parties, industry and social organisations.

In this manner, the White Paper was the first effort to "think" about communication with citizens as a strategic policy of the European Union, also with the objective of democratically legitimising an institution, which thanks to its own institutional complexity, is perceived as not very transparent and distant from the citizens. In brief, the White Paper promoted a two-way communication, involving active public participation moving from a Brussels focus to a local one.

The proposal making communication "a European policy in its own right" triggered a debate with the other institutions, and especially with the European Parliament that emphasised in their Report of the Committee on Culture and Education on the White Paper on a European communication policy (rapporteur: Luis Herrero-Tejedor) that communication can not be divorced by the policies it accompanies. The White Paper was somehow perceived as well a way of putting the Commission in control of means (Aldrin & Utard, 2009).

Annelies Van Brussel (2014) analysed how the EU paid increasing attention to two-way communication in its institutional communication strategy, by developing a dialogic approach to its understanding of Communication. The study looked into the gradual nature of the shift between 2001 and 2009 from a one-way informing to a two-way communicating approach since the Prodi Commission took office with the "New Framework for Co-operation in Activities concerning the Information and Communication Policy of the European Union" (CEC, 2001b).

The author has divided the paper into three periods. Up to 2004, the Commission's main interests lay in stimulating debate and gaining insight into public debates and opinion, as part of its one-way information strategy (including justification, persuasive communication and marketing) predominantly aimed at preparing and evaluating information campaigns. Gradually, more transparency and openness began to gain space. From 2004 onwards the Commission showed interest in

developing a two-way (online) communication and a structured dialogue with its citizens and civil society. In the second period, between 2004 and 2009, communication started to be considered as a dialogue with European citizens and was taken very seriously with the appointment of the first-ever Commissioner for Communication Strategy, Margot Wallström, who linked this process with abstract and ambitious targets such as improving democracy and active European citizenship (2014, p. 99). The listening process explicitly put forward in the 2004-2009 period was related to generating input for EU policymaking. After 2009, the communication strategy was not a fully-fledged policy area in a Commissioner's portfolio and no new policy documents were issued.

Van Brussel reported that even if the dialogic dimension in the Commission communication in the period 2004-2009 was increasingly materialised, a lot of room for improvement was left, for example, in connecting the results of the Plan D to the EU decision making process. One of the criticisms from the author was that the dialogue with citizens was decided in a top-down manner, when it should have been the other way around (2014, p. 103). The author believed that "more goal-orientated initiatives can in the end deliver improved results for the benefit of the European Public Sphere" (p. 104). In other words, more direct connection to EU policymaking for limited consultation procedures with more direct policy relevance should make participants feel more involved in the process.

In general, two important trends were observed when it came to policymaking and Communication. The first one, which has already been remarked both by Nesti and by Van Brussel, is that there is an increasing attention to communication from the beginning of the EU project to the 2000s with more policy initiatives in the field and bigger scope. Indeed, taking into account the previous isolated efforts (described earlier in the document), the first moment in which Communication is fully recognised as a policy in its own right is in 2005.

As can be seen, in the different policy documents, political leaders claimed that more communication was needed, yet sometimes this was not implemented afterwards or maintained over the years. For example, in 1993, the de Clerq report on the *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Commission* stated that Commissioners should visit their home countries and have more press

conferences. Yet, this is not always the case even today. A good example was how difficult it was to find information from the European Commission on the position about the tax lease measures, which were affecting the Spanish fleet, during 2011-2013. In Spain, it was impossible to find information on the Commission's position and that led to the creation of all sorts of misinformation. A much more informative debate would have taken place if the Commissioner on Competition would have openly communicated its position and visited the country and the affected regions.

> Moreover, communication seems to get into the agenda in the aftermath of a crisis. Van Brusel cites events that triggered the need to communicate with citizens such as, the problematic ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), the Santer Commission's resignation (1999) indicating deficiencies in the Commission's communication approach, the French *Non* and the Dutch *Nee* against a Constitution for Europe (2005) and the Irish referenda on the Lisbon Treaty (2008-2009) (Van Brussel, 2014, p. 92).

The economic crisis that started in 2008 could be added too to these events.

However, on many occasions, after the post-crisis Communication measures were put in place, it seemed that the communication effort went back to its secondary role (as was the case with the Barroso´s Commission). The question that emerged was whether a more long-term approach should be taken in communication and whether we are to believe that it is indeed a first-order legitimising tool. Before and during the crisis, the EU often preferred to play a low profile role and not to prioritise the political role of communication (for example in the case of Barroso, there was no specific Commissioner nor follow-up of the White Paper on Communication).

The following year after the adoption of the White Paper on Communication, the European Parliament set in motion a very innovative initiative within the framework of communication with citizens: the Citizens' Agora. It builds a bridge between the European Parliament and civil structure aiming at debating with citizens' organisations issues that were on the European Parliament's legislative agenda. This

is an open forum to analyse EU action and future challenges where civil society can express their opinions and make proposals[19].

Nevertheless, what meant a total change in the way the European Union institutions communicated was the rapid development of the Internet with Web 2.0 and the widespread use of social media. The turning point for European institutions to fully submerge into digital communications took place with the institutional campaign of the European Parliament for elections in 2009. The European Union, led by the European Parliament, embraced the communication possibilities that the new social media channel entailed for direct communication between the European Union and its citizens and thus strengthen the European Public Sphere.

According to del Río (2014, 150), "institutional communication strategies, citizen responses, online communication and journalism, cyber-democratic projects, blogs, initiatives undertaken by civil society organisations and local authorities… all form part of the great digital flow of communication, a big highway, the Web". Del Río defines this way of communicating as a "European integral communication" since it involves people, spheres, possibilities and opportunities (p. 150). The relevance of Internet and social media as a channel of communication for EU institutions, and the leading role in this regard of the European Parliament, will be thoroughly analysed in the next chapter.

3.3. Organisation of communication within the EU institutions until today

Most of the adopted policies that have been described in the previous section were followed by organisational changes in the EU institutions that would guarantee that the policy initiatives would be implemented.

As Nesti points out, communication was reinforced in the seventies and eighties, to support the economic integration with a view to develop a common identity. In the 1980s transparency was associated with simplification of administrative acts,

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[19] More on Citizen's Agora can be found here
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20150201PVL00041/Agora

European identity with the idea of citizenship and the idea of collaboration was extended to all EU institutions, beyond Member States (Nesti, 2010, p. 40).

After the Maastricth crisis, the need to invest in communication was clear. João de Pinheiro was appointed as the first Commissioner for information and communication at the DG X Directorate in 1994 and he started an in-depth process of reform of the EU public communication. However, the Santer Commission that followed did not invest in communication as a strategic area to promote public support and treated it "more like an add-on duty" (Meyer, 1999, p. 625).

Clerq and Pinheiro opine that in 1990s, communicative strategies were more oriented towards the resolution of organisational questions than to the definition of political contents. Indeed, the Report on the *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Commission* (de Clerq, 1993) advocated the creation of a central Office for Communications headed by the Commissioner responsible for Communications and with direct access to the President "to provide the guidelines for a coherent communications' policy and be responsible for the general communications' strategy, ensure that well-trained, qualified personnel were in place, ensure that the EC spoke with one voice, that the right opinion research instruments were in place for tracking public attitudes and ensure allocation and control of budgets according to geographical area, etc.". Moreover, the Directorate-General responsible for general communications and events needed to be strengthened, and have a staff of professional executives.

COUNCIL

COMMISSION

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

SPOKESMAN'S SERVICE

DIRECTORATES-GENERAL RESPONSIBLE FOR SECTORAL COMMUNICATIONS

DIRECTORATE GENERAL RESPONSIBLE FOR GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

NATIONAL BUREAUX

TECHNICAL SERVICES

——— Line authority and responsibility
– – – Line of liaison and collaboration
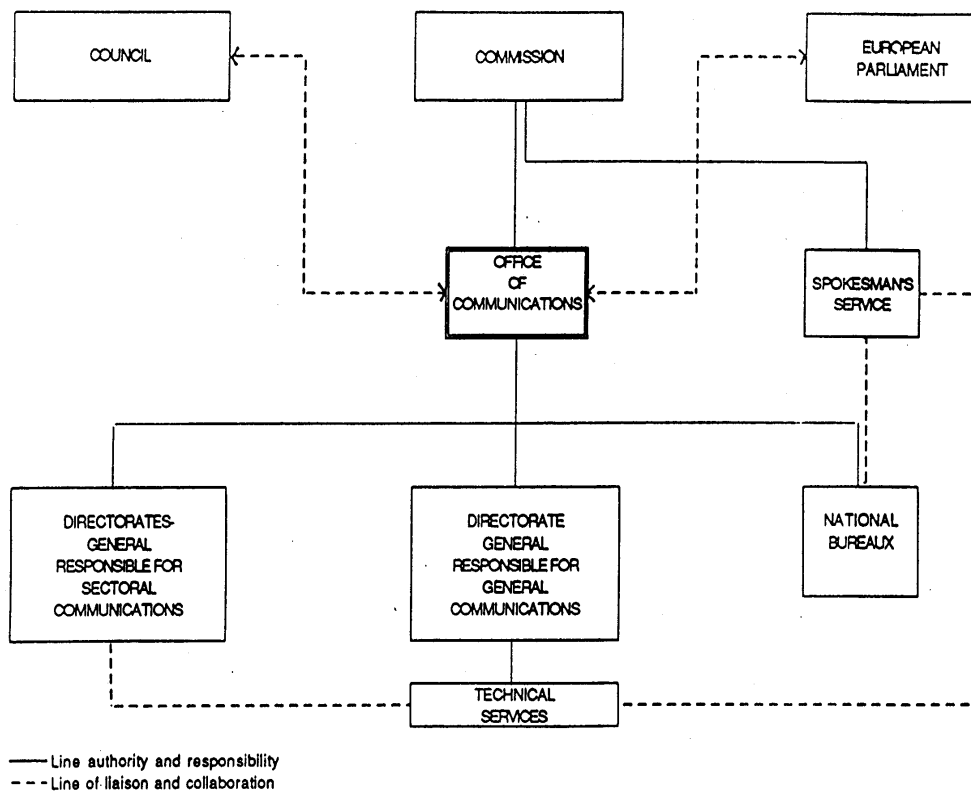
Office of Communication, 1993. Source: European Commission

Following the new approach on the Commission's information and communication policy by Pinheiro in 1993, the implementation of the policy was assured by a reorganisation,

> which consisted in the coordination of Commission's activities; a clear distribution of responsibilities among the DG X, the Spokesman's Service and the College of Commissioners; cooperation among EU institutions and Member States; a reinforced role of Commission Offices in the Member States as relays to collect public and political opinions and to transmit them to the Commission as usable knowledge for policy-making (Pinheiro, 1994a).

Pinheiro also adopted a communication on the role of staff information in the Commission's new information and communication strategy. Finally, Pinheiro called for a better approach to "external information": information for countries outside the Community.

Romano Prodi took office as Commissioner President after an interim mandate of Manuel Marín who stepped in temporarily after the scandal of the Santer Commission who resigned after the investigation on corruption allegations leading to a severe legitimation crisis of the EU project. Prodi was in office between 1999 and 2004 and the Directorate-General of Press and Communication was a service directly attached to the President. He did not assign the portfolio of Communication to any other Commissioner[20].

In its analysis, Nesti felt that with the Prodi Commission, issues such as transparency, simplification of legislative acts, openness, the reform of consultation mechanisms and participation were more articulated under the general title of better governance. Information and communication tools emerged related to the application of ICT and audiovisual media to improve EU communication.

After Romano Prodi's Commission, José Manuel Durao Barroso became President of the European Commission for two mandates (2004-2009 and 2009-2014) very different in terms of their approach and organisation of Communication activities. During the first Barroso Commission, Margot Wallstrom was appointed Vice-President and was in charge of Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy. It was the first time that Communication was considered as a policy issuing the White Paper on Communication. Wallstrom was very determined in raising the profile of Communication professionals in the institutions. During her mandate, competitions for Communication officers were published and all the senior positions received training on communication skills. It can be said that communication was high on the agenda.

In the second Barroso Commission (2009-2014), no Commissioner was explicitly in charge of the communication strategy. Instead, the Vice-President and Commissioner responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Viviane Reding, became in charge of the Directorate-General Communication. This leads us to the question as to whether communication with citizens remained a priority on the agenda. One possible interpretation is that it responds to a less strategic approach and a more tactic and operational one, which was as well the spirit of the Barroso's

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[20] The organisation of Prodi's Commission can be consulted in archive here http://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_1999_2004/index_en.htm

Commission in many other policy areas. In the Commission report on Communicating Europe to Citizens and Media (European Commission, 2011) it is stated "The Barroso II Commissions believes that communication should convey to citizens the message that the European Union is at their service, demonstrating in concrete terms how Europe contributes to improve citizens' lives". In the words of Van Brussel: "in the Barroso II Commission, legitimacy is mostly defined on the basis of output and results, whereas former Commissioner Wallström emphasised the need for stimulating input and active involvement" (2014, p. 102).

A senior Commission official explained it this way:

> Reding said that Communication was not a policy but a tool and that we should not refer to Wallstrom policy documents. The view was to upstream communication, so it is taken into consideration from the beginning of the policy development. Reding introduced the idea of corporate communication incorporating concepts such as coherence of the message (aligned to policy development) and cost-efficiency. The evaluation culture in communication was introduced.

In 2012, corporate communication teams were put in place for the first time. The corporate teams were EU for jobs, EU for business, EU for fair prices, EU for quality for life, EU global players and EU for citizens.

The official added

> The positive side during the Barroso years is that we could build a corporate approach, creating a visual identity first and then with the creation of the corporate teams and corporate campaign. Also, the number of pages on the *europa* site was cut down. All these things were done but there was no strategy for Communication or great vision. DG´s communication strategies were in reality more plans than strategies.

The corporate communication approach during Barroso's tenure also implied that EU institutions were communicating as one EU body to the citizens. Furthermore, no more policy documents on Communication were issued since Wallstrom's time. There was one Spokesperson for each Commissioner. The Spokesperson Service

(that belongs to DG COMM) was responsible for media relations, talking on the record to journalists and liaising with the Communication units of the Directorates Generals for which each Commissioner is responsible.

Jean Claude Juncker entered into office as President of the Commission in November 2014 and there was an organisational change in the communication services of the Commission. Firstt and most importantly, DG COMM became a presidential service, with a view to reflect the collegiality of the Commission. Moreover, the new Spokesperson´s Service is now an integral part of the Directorate-General Communication and it is designed to support the President and the Commission. He wants the change to be seen: "Delivering the priorities of the Political Guidelines will require a reform of the way the Commission has operated up until now. Reform means change. I want us all to show that we are open to change and ready to adapt to it".

The number of spokespersons got reduced and they are now independent from the Commissioner's, covering several portfolios and have a more institutional position. The intention is to have a more unitary and coordinated communication effort and to make the Spokesperson's tasks a part of a bigger institutional communication exercise. As the senior Commission official stated: "the spokespersons before did not perceive themselves as part of DG COMM but more as members of the cabinet of the Commissioner". There is a new figure that is the communication adviser within the Commissioner cabinet, even though he cannot talk on the record to the media; he/she does the coordination with the Spokesperson service.

The intention to intensify coordination in this Juncker Commission is reflected not only in the reduction of the number of spokespersons but also in the number of items of the work programme, from 200 to 23 and in the number of press releases passed from 15 to 5 per day. It seems that Juncker wants to tight the DGs shorter than Barroso.

In November 2014, Juncker proposed new working methods in the European Commission for the period 2014-2019. In this document, the instructions about communication were very clear: "Communication can only be successful if the

Commission speaks with one voice" (p. 10) and he closely links the political role of the Commissioners and their communication responsibilities:

> The Members of the Commission are the public faces of the institution and the best advocates and the best *spokespersons* of Commission policies. Their communication activities and the structures that support them are closely linked to their political role as Members of the Commission. Their success in terms of media and public perception depends on their ability to communicate convincingly on a large number of issues in all Member States and to be seen as a strong team contributing positively to the achievement of the key objectives and priorities of the Commission as a whole (p. 10).

DG COMM
01/09/2015

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01.Coordination and Evaluation
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
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Deputy EC Chief Spokesperson
M. Andreeva

Deputy EC Chief Spokesperson
A. Winterstein

SPP.01 Spokesperson's Service
M. Schinas (Acting)

SPP.02 Multimedia editorial team, Speeches and liaison with the Representations
J. Mester

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Adviser
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I. Barber

A2. Corporate Communication Contracts and Services
A. Dumort

A3. Media Analysis
P. Cattoir

A4. Audiovisual Services
N.Davies

A5. Europa Site
K. Nagy (Acting)

DIRECTORATE B
REPRESENTATIONS
P.Ahrenkilde-Hansen

Adviser
M. Territt

B1. Support and Partnerships
I. Moozova

B2. Priority Actions and Political Reporting
L. Van Hasselt

28 REPRESENTATIONS
AND 9 ANTENNAS

ATHENS P. Carvounis	LISBON M.de A. Soares	RIGA I. Steinbuka
BERLIN R. Kuehnel	LONDON J. Minor	ROME E. Dalmonte (Acting)
Bonn	*Belfast*	*Milan*
Munich	*Cardiff*	SOFIA O. Zlatev
BRATISLAVA D. Chrenek	*Edinburgh*	STOCKHOLM K. Areskoug
BRUSSELS J. Jamar	LJUBLJANA U. Hudina (Acting)	TALLINN H. Rumm
BUCHAREST A. Filote	LUXEMBOURG G. Berg (Acting)	VALLETTA D. Spiteri (Acting)
BUDAPEST T. Szucs	MADRID A. Beristain (Acting)	VIENNA J. Wojahn
COPENHAGEN L.Norlund	*Barcelone*	VILNIUS N. Kazlauskiene
DUBLIN B. Nolan	NICOSIA G. Markopouliotis	WARSAW E. Synowiec
THE HAGUE P.Bekx	PARIS G. Ricard-Nihoul (Acting)	*Wroclaw*
HELSINKI S. Artjoki	*Marseille*	ZAGREB B. Baricevic
	PRAGUE J. Michal	

DIRECTORATE C
COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS
V. Hoffmann

Adviser
J. Andreu Romeo

C1. Citizens Information
M. Espelund (Acting)

C2. Citizens Dialogues
J. Ott (Acting)

C3. Citizens Contact
A. Papacostas

C4. Visitors Centre
B. Woringer

DIRECTORATE D
RESOURCES
G. Zupko

D1.Budget, Accounting and Logistics
F.De Rosa

D2. Human Resources
G. Menchi

D3. Financial Controls
J. Piekutowski

D4. Informatics
J.-J. Cavez

Footnotes

(1) = The EC Chief Spokesperson has an administrative reporting line to the Director General.The Spokesperson's Service is in charge of coordinating and delivering the political communication of the Commission under the direct political authority of the President.

NB :The following members of management staff are seconded in the interest of the service : D.Ineichen, and E.Mamer

V21.16 - Updated 24/08/2015 12:00/TB

DG COMM organisation. European Commission, 2015

As a Commission official acknowledged,

> "With Juncker, there is emerging a vision on communication. He wants to portray the Commission as a political body and not as a bureaucratic body. He is using the term 'political communication'. It can be conflicting because now we should talk on behalf of the Commission, not only on behalf of the EU. More fights between the three institutions are expected and that will not have to be negative, on the contrary, it will make the debate more interesting to the eyes of the citizens. However, when to communicate on behalf of the Commission and when to communicate on behalf of the EU is something still unresolved. The three institutions want to have a more political profile this time. Indeed, Juncker will not agree by default with the Council and Tusk will have more presence than Van Rompuy who was acting more as a diplomat".

Indeed, Juncker Commission is also marked by introducing back the issue of EU Democracy to the agenda, as one of his ten political priorities is "Democratic change. Making the EU more democratic", which remembers the title "Democratic life of the Union", incorporated in the Draft Constitution by the Convention On the dedicated website[21], it is recognised the important step that meant that in 2014 EU countries had to take the results of the elections into account when proposing a candidate for European Commission president, and there would be more steps in making the EU more democratic and bringing it closer to its citizens. The priority includes initiatives such as the mandatory register for organisations and individuals lobbying the Commission, Parliament and Council, the intention to remove unnecessary red tape, finding ways of cooperation between national parliaments and the Commission, reviewing laws about GMOs and the Better Regulation, for better structured consultation with stakeholders. This initiative is explained more in depth in chapter four.

Moreover, as it was mentioned in chapter two, the State of the Union, prompted by the 2010 Framework agreement between the European Parliament and the European Commission, is part of the annual political and legislative programming of the Union. Indeed, the State of the Union speech by the President of the European Commission does not only constitute an important instrument for accountability

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[21] http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/democratic-change/index_en.htm

towards the European Parliament but it also makes the priorities at EU level more transparent. The 2015 State of the Union speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker this September takes place in a crucial year for the European Union, marked by the Greek debt crisis and the asylum and immigration crisis. However, the political-setting that started with the European elections in 2014 that enabled the nomination of the "lead candidates" for President of the Commission, and the parliamentary hearings of the Commissioners-designate, as well as the adoption of the 2015 Commission Work Programme, changes the context in which Juncker's first State of the Union takes place.[22]

3.4. Communication in partnership: inter-institutional cooperation to take the European message to the local level

In 2005, the Commission issued the Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe (CEC, 2005c) based on three principles: "listening", "communicating" and "connecting with citizens by going local". One year later, the White Paper on European Communication Policy (CEC, 2006b) was issued, as described in the previous section.

At the European Council meeting on 21 and 22 June 2007, European leaders reached a compromise and agreed to convene an IGC to finalise and adopt, not a Constitution, but a reform treaty for the European Union. The final text of the treaty was approved at the informal European Council in Lisbon on 18 and 19 October. The Treaty of Lisbon was signed by the Member States on 13 December 2007. During the same meeting, the Heads of State and Government included in their conclusions the need for taking the European debate to the citizens and called for the reinforcement of communication with European citizens, to keep them fully abreast about the European Union and to involve them in a permanent dialogue (Council of the European Union, 2007). Pursuant to that, the European Commission adopted its Communication "Communicating Europe in Partnership" (CEC, 2007).

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[22] The whole debate can be followed it up on www.soteu.eu

The Communication recognises the need for working at a European scale to tackle today´s challenges. This new environment requires a more sophisticated working method based on partnership between the different agencies of the European Association to produce the results that matter to citizens and which have been adequately debated with them. The main objective is to be more coherent and offer synergies between EU institutions and Member States to build a better understanding about the EU. The Commission aims at working together with other EU institutions, Member States and other interested stakeholders on annual priorities. It proposes an inter-institutional agreement for developing this process.

The Communication revolves around four main points. Firstly, it remarks the need for a coherent and integrated communication. It proposes a new impetus for transparency and to empower and train senior Commission officials on Communication, and furthermore mentions the adopted Internal Communication and Staff Engagement Strategy. Secondly, it proposes empowerment of citizens by creating a more open debate (in this context multilingualism is crucial) as well as going local. For this purpose, the document mentions the Plan D, the over 400 Europe Direct information relays all over Europe, the other information assistance networks such as EURES, ERA-MORE, SOLVIT and Euro Info Centres and Innovation Relay Centres, the work of the representations and visits of Commissioners, the role of EU agencies and the creation of the European Public Space. In this context it also highlights the support of the existing programmes (Europe for Citizens, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Lifelong Learning Programme) and the support for Education and Training of Member States, which have competence in these two matters. Thirdly, the Communication proposes developing a European Public Sphere for those policies beyond national borders, by integrating the political dimension for which it proposes specific measures such as the creation of Pilot Information Networks (PINs), media and information services (including internet and new technologies) and understanding European public opinion.

As a final point, the Communication proposes a partnership approach in which even if each institution maintains its prerogative, all actors involved in EU decision-making should work in partnership to promote the debate on Europe. The Commission proposes an inter-institutional agreement (IIA) on Communication.

More specifically, it proposes to work with Member States through Management partnerships that can enhance coordination of communication activities on selected communication priorities based on joint communication plans that would bring together the Commission, the European Parliament and the respective Member States mandated to deal with communication issues. The Inter-Institutional Group on Information (IGI) should be the structure for agreeing on the EU communication strategy and priorities for the EU institutions and Member States.

The aim of the Inter-institutional agreement on Communication with the European Parliament and the Council is to have a convergence of views on the main communication priorities, develop synergies and encourage Member States to cooperate. The IIA would provide a framework for cooperation on the Communication process, by securing a common annual work plan that establishes EU communication priorities while preserving everyone´s independence. The practical conclusions of the communication were the inter-institutional agreement, the voluntary management partnerships with Member States, the development of European Public Spaces in Representations and the identification of aspects of school education where joint action at EU level could support MS, strengthening the Eurobarometer and implementing the PINs.

On 22 October 2008, the declaration "Communicating Europe in Partnership" between the three institutions was signed and published in the Official Journal in 2009 (OJ C 13 of 20 January 2009). In it, the European Parliament, Council and the European Commission declared to "attach the utmost importance to improving communication on EU issues in order to enable European citizens to exercise their right to participate in the democratic life of the Union". In it, the three institutions recognised the importance of addressing the communication challenge on EU issues in partnership and recall the importance of the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI) as a high-level framework for Exchange on EU communication activities in which they can yearly identify a limited number of communication priorities.

As a matter of fact, the three policy documents issued between 2001 and 2004 on communication had paved the way for cooperation on communication between Member States and the EU institutions, which was enhanced with the policy vision

from Wallstrom and the White Paper on Communication in 2006 and formalised with the Communication in Partnership agreement in 2008.

If, as described in chapter one, one of the main drawbacks of EU communication are the intermediaries at the national level, addressing them to engage with them in partnership and communicating with them seems the most logical thing do to. This means coordinating communication between the Member States, gathered in the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament. This coordination will help overcome the inherent difficulty and complexity of communicating about Europe. Member States attending the Working Party on Information of the Council have often expressed this need for cooperation and coordination that was finally formalised in the Communication in the Partnership agreement in 2008. The following conclusions for the Council meetings of the Working Party on Information in subsequent years have expressed this wish for coordination and cooperation.

On 26 November 2001, Member States gathered in the Working Party on Information welcomed the new framework for cooperation on Information and Communication, which is said to "represent a further stage in the process of bringing the European Union closer to its citizens". They also concluded that "With respect to the organisation at operational level of cooperation between the Community institutions on information and communication, the Council favoured the coordinated use of existing resources, with the emphasis on rationalisation of those resources and a desire to improve services" and "the Council pointed out that it is for the Member States to provide information on the European Union. These activities will be more effective if they are carried out in coordination with those of the Community institutions, which should produce comprehensive and objective basic information".

On 28 November 2002, the Working Party on Information welcomed the Commission Communication on an information and communication strategy of the European Union and stating that "European Union institutions' information activities in Member States should be coordinated effectively with those of the Member States in question. National authorities will be involved in them as closely as possible and the heads of their information services given an opportunity to participate in the framing, implementation, and evaluation of information and communication activities".

On 9 June 2004, Member States stressed that "the crucial importance of addressing the communication challenge through a close partnership between Member States and institutions with a view to ensuring the cost-effective provision of information to the widest possible audience", concerning the information relays and networks, the Council "notes their extremely pro-active role as multipliers of information", agrees on "the need to create a stable legal framework which guarantees funding of networks from 2005 and their operability" and reiterates "the key role of the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI) in laying down guidelines for EU communication and information activities" and "stresses the need to implement the EU communication and information strategy in conformity with IGI orientations".

On 17 April 2008, the Council wished "to achieve better co-operation in communication efforts, on the principle that the EU institutions and bodies should seek synergies with the initiatives originating from Member States' central, regional and local authorities and from the representatives of civil society", again recognising the importance of the Inter-institutional Group on Information.

The "Communication in Partnership" provided a framework for partnership management programmes on communication between the Member States and the EU institutions. Some of the joint initiatives were the following[23]: in 2009, for the European Parliament elections, the 20th Anniversary of the democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe and for Europe's response to the financial crisis and the economic slowdown. In 2010-2011, for Climate action and Energy (including energy security) , Driving the economic recovery and mobilising new sources of growth (including the Europe 2020 strategy), making the Lisbon Treaty work for citizens with the Council pointing out that flexibility (adaptation of the priorities to the national realities – as needed) and due attention to the macro- regional dimension were to be taken into account. In 2012-2013, for the financial crisis and economic recovery, European Year of Citizens 2013 or European elections 2014.

Eighteen Management Partnership Agreements between the Commission, Member States and the European Parliament were concluded: 18 Management Partnership

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[23] the list of joint initiatives and partnership can be found in issues number 2 and 3 of the magazine Convergence of the Club of Venice, it can be downloaded at http://www.politicheeuropee.it/attivita/18676/il-club-i-venezia-e-la-rivista-di-comunicazione-pubblica-convergenze

Agreements (MPAs) (for Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Estonia, Greece, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden), there were MPAs either in preparation or possibilities being explored to evolve from a Strategic Partnership to a Management Partnership with the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Romania and Bulgaria. The budget was limited but with a gradual increase through the years, (2009: €6.3M; 2010: €7.3M; 2011: €10.3M; 2012: €10.5M, 2013: €10.9M) and was used for a range of activities such as information campaigns for youngsters and in schools, teacher training, pedagogical toolkits, environmental awareness-raising campaigns, discussion forums, seminars, conferences, website activities, social media, online surveys, contests (EU quizzes, online games), concerts, festivals, publications, etc. The framework also catered for bilateral cooperation between the Commission and the European Parliament European Public Spaces, for promoting the EU's cultural dimension.

In 2013, an evaluation of the Management Partnerships (MP) was announced by the European Commission. External independent assessment from scholars and consultancy firms was obtained and concluded with very satisfactory results about the actions undertaken and the benefits of the cooperation between the EU institutions and the national authorities[24]. However, the Commission – for budgetary reasons – decided to put an end to the partnerships beyond 31 December 2013, after the severe cuts agreed in that year for the EU as a whole.

Cooperation, within a standardised framework and carried out regularly, with annual communication plans and a multiannual strategic approach, did not exist and does not exist outside the "partnership system" (Caroyez & Le Voci, 2013). Partnerships were important because they generated cooperation between the EU institutions and the Member States, this being relevant for the multilevel communication that the European Union requires.

The Inter-institutional Group on Information stopped meeting at the end of the partnership programmes. The last meeting of the Inter-institutional Group on Information took place in November 2013. In the past, attendees at the meetings (held one or two per year) included the following representatives: Council —the

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[24] The content of the evaluations can be found in issue Number 2 of Convergence, the magazine of the Club of Venice: http://www.politicheeuropee.it/attivita/18676/il-club-i-venezia-e-la-rivista-di-comunicazione-pubblica-convergenze

Presidency, European Parliament ⸺the Vice-President/s responsible for communication, Commission ⸺the Vice-President/Commissioner responsible for DG COMM. The EESC (Vice-President responsible for communication) and the Committee of the Regions (a member) also attended as observers. For the time being there are no plans for further meetings. At the informal level there is an informal group gathering senior communication officials both from the EU institutions and the Member States to discuss European communication: the Club of Venice[25]. Nevertheless, this research has shown that systematic inter-institutional coordination on communication between the institutions is something that should be improved, since there are currently no coordinating structures in place or an ultimate responsible for EU communication from an inter-institutional perspective. Nevertheless, there are some good examples of good cooperation between the institutions that should be underlined.

A good illustration of communication in partnership is the one that takes place around the Presidencies of the Council. Given that the Presidency of the Council rotates between the EU Member States every semester, Member States holding the presidency work together closely in groups of three, called 'trios' since this system was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The trio sets priorities and establishes the topics to be addressed by the Council over an eighteen-month period. Each of the three countries prepares its more exhaustive 6-month programme. The Member State holding the presidency works very closely with the Secretariat of the Council during their term.

Another good example of successful inter-institutional EU communication is the case of the European Years, which have been organised since 1983, when the very first European Year took place, dedicated to small business ("SMEs") and the crafts industry. Three years later, the Internal Market was the first priority of the European Community and the Euro Info Centre (EIC) network was created with a view to favouring communication between the Commission and the SMEs. Since then, a European year has been dedicated to a specific subject in order to encourage debate with EU citizens. To decide on the theme, the European Commission puts forward a proposal which is then adopted by the European Parliament and the Member States.

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[25] https://clubofvenice.wordpress.com

As it reads on the Europa website

> The aim is to raise awareness of certain topics, encourage debate and change attitudes. During many European years, extra funding is provided for local, national and cross-border projects that address the Year's special topic. The European Year can also send a strong commitment and political signal from the EU institutions and member governments that the subject will be taken into consideration in future policy-making. In some cases, the European Commission may propose new legislation on the theme[26].

A good way of engaging in inter-institutional cooperation from the EU institutions' side would be to engage in partnerships with decentralised European Union agencies. These are EU bodies that carry out technical, scientific or managerial tasks that help the EU implement its policies. They also broker cooperation between the EU and the Member States and provide their expertise in specific fields. They are located all over the European Union territory, which is an advantage for communication, since these are EU bodies away from Brussels, and spread all over the MS territories. They are ambassadors of the EU in their corresponding cities and work closely and exchange information with other agencies and EU bodies.

All in all, EU institutions should build on what has been achieved and intensify coordination and cooperation in communication in a long-term strategic way. The European Union is a model which is based on cooperation. Communication has the capacity to create a space of dialogue and understanding. By using the resources from the communication departments and officials in the EU institutions and making them work together, communication can more effectively support the general work of the European Union policies.

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[26] Information and the list of all EU years can be found at http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/european-years/index_en.htm

3. 5. Chapter conclusion

As can be deduced from the first section of this chapter, communication activities have become increasingly important throughout the history of the EU. Nesti opines that the number and scope of documents and regulations emanating from the field of communication has constantly increased from the origins of the EU to date.

Nevertheless, there is something quite relevant for the analysis that arises from this study and which can be seen throughout EU history: when the situation is not easy, EU leaders have difficulties in taking a step forward and talking on behalf of Europe. Crisis are characterised by the little priority given to EU communication by leaders and that the sudden importance to communication usually comes as a "post-crisis" effect. Nesti mentions examples such as "EU information and communication policy becomes part of the process of reform through which the Commission has reacted to cyclic crisis (for example, after negative referenda, deadlocks in treaty ratifications, the Santer Commission's resignation for suspected fraud and corruption)" (2010, p. 43). Van Brusel also mentions cases in which communication seems to get into the agenda in the aftermath of a crisis, such as the problematic ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), the Santer Commission's resignation (1999), the French *Non* and the Dutch *Nee* against a Constitution (2005) and the Irish referenda on the Lisbon Treaty (2008-2009) (2014, p. 92). To these events, the latest economic crisis that has shaken the foundations of the European Union project in the last seven years could also be added.

Political leaders claim that more communication is needed in the different policy documents over the years, however, this is not always implemented afterwards or maintained over the years. The weakness that emerges from this assessment of the communication activities of the European Union is that the strategy and approach to communication is not consistent and often varies depending not only on the historical moment and the socioeconomic context, but also on the vision of the political leadership. The lack of continuity of the "Communication in Partnership" programme illustrates this. However, communication has also shaped the way EU institutions operate, i.e., always aiming at more transparency, openness and

governance through the different policy documents. Communication has acted as a catalyser impelling institutions to engage in a dialogue with citizens.

We can also say that communication has increased in importance and professionalism. Barroso introduced the idea of impact assessment and evaluation, which made the communication activities perform better and the new Commission wishes to "upstream Communication to the beginning of the policy process". Moreover, Juncker has aligned political priorities with the communication organisation.

EU institutions should strengthen coordination and cooperation in communication in a long-term strategic manner. The European Union is a model based on cooperation. Communication has the capacity to create a space of dialogue and understanding. In the network society, EU institutions should use all existing EU networks in the institutions and Member States, especially if Member Sstates have continuously expressed their wish to cooperate in communication matters. By doing the job together, EU institutions and Member States, can communicate more effectively to support the general work of the European Union policies and strengthen the European dimension of the policies.

Given that communication is one of the most important "legitimising tools", one of the recommendations is to have a more long-term approach to it in terms of strategic priority, that is, ensure that the implementation of the communication policy initiatives take place irrespective of changes within each new College of Commissioners. Identifying an ultimate responsible for inter-institutional communication would help in this endeavour. Political will is key to this as Socrates stated: "The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear".

4. Publics. The European citizenship in the framework of a multilevel democracy: Public Opinion, elections to the European Parliament and civil society

4.1. Introduction

The concept of European citizenship is a complex one. According to Professor del Río, European citizenship is a multiple citizenship, with obligations and rights, wherein citizens enjoy common European values in their cohabitation and evolve and adapt in accordance with the provisions of the subsequent treaties (2003, 2008, p. 476). Eriksen describes it as a new kind of polity that is very much connected to its development as a communicative space (Eriksen, 2004). In the first section of this chapter, the different perspectives of the term European citizenship will be examined taking into consideration that it conforms the publics of the proposed model of this thesis.

The objective of this chapter is to understand ways in which the European citizens voice their opinions towards the European Union. In this chapter, three specific manifestations are considered. Firstly, there is a review of the results of the public opinion surveys of the Eurobarometer. This survey tells us what the level of trust in European Union institutions is. Secondly, European citizens express their opinions on the European Union institutions through direct voting in European Parliament elections. In this chapter, a closer look at the results of the 2014 elections are taken into account.

Finally, citizens participate in the EU decision making by enrolling in civil society organisations. As a matter of fact, the European Union has set in motion fully inclusive and innovative mechanisms for participation of civil society in first order policy making. The importance of civil society participation in the European project has been analysed by Doctor Susana del Río. She believes that the creation of a participatory tissue is a key element to democratically renew Europe and establish a communication network composed of citizens (2006, p. 245).

4.2. Concepts about European citizenship

As described in chapter two, the concept of the EU as a new kind of polity is very much connected to its development as a communicative space (Eriksen 2004, p. 1). For Eriksen, public sphere means that equal citizens can gather and build their own agenda through a communication process. He claims that, "the public sphere is a precondition for the realisation of popular sovereignty, because, in principle, it entitles everybody to speak without limitation, whether on themes, participation, questions, times or resources" (2004, p. 1).

From this perspective, a prior collective identity is not needed for the existence of a public sphere: it is actually the existence of a communication process that defines the European Public Sphere. This view is based on the assumption that the state authority (subject to the rule of law) came first, which was followed by the nation and lastly by democracy. Therefore, collective identity would be constructed (and not discovered) through the communication process. The assertion "no European demos without a European democracy" is derived from this idea. For Erikssen, the public sphere "is not an institution but rather a communication network." He also further elaborates on this idea stating that for the communicative space to take place there has to be a certain sense of unity and solidarity among the actors so that they can work together towards common goals and take up responsibilities and obligations as well as be ready to give up some sovereignty. The "cultural substrate" could be constructed through inclusive opinion formation and the rule of law (2004, 14).

Eder coincides with Eriksen on the decisive role of communication for democratisation. He thinks that the bigger the European Union integration (taking up more issues), the larger the importance of political communication and the need for more democracy therein. In his words, "the longer the integration process continues, the more process of democratisation will be set off"(2007, 45). According to Eder, forces that lead to democratisation have not yet been explained in theoretical terms. Therefore, Eder (2007, p. 45) focused his study on the mechanisms that explain democratisation. These are the cognitive mechanisms that emerge in political

communication, the relational mechanisms that bind together those involved in political communication and contextual mechanisms that explain why these mechanisms are generated or paralysed. These are, indeed, necessary mechanisms that the European Union need to put in place for further democratisation. The author furthermore explains the principles contingent to Democratic Governance. These first is the free and equal participation of all, the second is the principle of deliberation: they should all engage in exchanging arguments, taking into account the conflicting perspectives of all concerned and third, the rational decision-making (Eder, 2007, p. 50).

Following this line of arguments, the public space described by Habermas could be the genesis of a European demos. For Habermas (1989), the mechanisms that create this public space is political communication, which plays a pivotal role in his theory, and the collective will formation and learning

What is clear is that the European public does not have a unitary nature: in the EU, the citizens are EU citizens by means of a contract. As Bauer would say: "a community of cultures" (2000). Indeed, the evolution of the EU poses the problem of how many diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and other cultural communities achieve autonomy within a single, overarching, political framework (Schlesinger, 2007, p. 70-71). Yet, Schlesinger rightly points out that current writers emphasise the transcendental potential of the emergent European framework to connect to a new global order that needs a public sphere to match.

At this point in time it is evident that citizenship concepts should not be linked to the expression of a nation. Schlesinger contends that statehood does not entail monolinguism or monoculturalism. Publics do exist at the sub-state level and actually linguistic and cultural diversity are part of the contemporary landscape of Member States (2007, p. 73).

In this sense, it is important to introduce the work of Manuel Castell. For Castell (2011, 1969), the transformation of communication is the biggest social change in the last years. He furthermore adds "because conscious communication is the distinctive feature of humans, it is logical that it is in this realm where society has been most profoundly modified". This new social structure would define a new

society: the network society in the Information Age. Since networks are an old form of organisation of mankind,

> digital networking technologies, characteristic of the Information Age, powered social and organisational networks in ways that allowed their endless expansion and reconfiguration, overcoming the traditional limitations of networking forms of organization to manage complexity beyond a certain size of the network.

According to the author, networks do not respond to the nation-state logic, they are a part of a global system. At the same time, institutions and the nation-states inherited from the Modern Age and from the industrial society are unable to regulate information flows.

Following this line of thinking, for Habermas, the EU would be a precursor as a political entity in responding to a post-national era in terms of information, as the EU would not only be a political-economic zone but also a specific case of a communicative space. Indeed, following Habermas' line of thought, political communities do not correspond in any straightforward way to territorial boundaries. Both Castell's and Habermas' concepts link to theories of cosmopolitanism that argues that Europeanness goes beyond the EU institutions and should be placed in its global context.

Critical cosmopolitanism assumes that culture has the capacity for learning and that society can develop (Delanty, 2006). According to Delanty in his study about European identity, an important aspect of European identity is that of cultural pluralisation and social justice. For the author, Europeanization will succeed if it is based on pluralisation and justice (not on cohesion), since the dilemma between universalism and particularism can be resolved in this way. In this sense, European identity should be based on values and be an open ended process (Delanty, 2008, p. 356-357).

This cosmopolitan approach of European identity as a plural society based on justice and with the possibility to evolve can respond firmly to the belief that the European Union cannot become a full-fledged democratic polity because it lacks a well-bounded "European demos" (by placing European demos and European democracy on par in the sense that the "demos" (or political community) should coincide with

the "ethnos" (or ethnically defined homogeneous community) (Liebert, (2012, p.3).

Fossum, J.E. and P. Schlesinger (2007, p. 285) studied the institutional factors that intervene in the European Public sphere to conclude that the European Union is a very complex organisation between a regulator and a federation with an emerging EU polity. Modern democracy theory has decoupled the demos from the ethnos.

Susana del Río reflects on the concept of citizenship and of European citizenship, from an evolutionary perspective, by taking into account that the citizen is the main actor and character of the development of historic events. Del Río (2008, p. 476) develops the concept of a multiple citizenship, in which citizens with full obligations and rights, enjoy common European values and cohabit. Indeed, the concept of European citizenship is evolving since it needs to adapt itself to the different treaties that have been signed until today.

Del Río (2008, p. 475-495) highlights the different benchmarks in this evolution such as the right to the free circulation of persons, introduced in the founding treaty signed in Rome in 1957 or the capacity to vote in the European elections to the European Parliament since 1979. In 1990, the European Council gathered in Rome to include the European citizenship as an essential element for reforming the treaties. She also reflects on the changes in the citizenship with the EU enlargement and immigration. The European Union surely binds together a sum of mentalities, cultures and citizenships.

Following the motto, "united in diversity", European citizenship is based on bonds tied among the multiple spheres that compose the so-called multilevel citizenship. As Del Río indicates, the glue that sticks all of them together could be the European values that are shared through a sound communication policy and a participatory citizenship. This idea connects well with the concept of Habermas of a public sphere as a communicative space. In this line, proactivity and participation are important characteristics for citizens to be part of this communicative process.

In the work of Liebert (2012), the European Union is described as a novel type of a transnational non-state political association composed of both states and citizens acting in their dual role of nationals as well as Europeans. There are already informal, non-legal democratic practices, which are necessary preconditions for

representative European Union politics and policy-making. In his study, Liebert focuses on practices of representing discourses that constitute the emerging European democratic public sphere. Relevant discourses are those that form mass public opinions of the EU, echo European public opinion and involve with European political will formation, such as the treaties or European elections. Other sites of discursive representation are the field of European civil society, national courts and constitutional courts (2012, p. 4).

Reflecting on a true European public opinion, Jaume Duch (2006, p 57-77), Spokesperson of the European Parliament, lists the requirements for it to exist: a political class able to issue messages in European terms, a European organisational tissue and mass media with a European versant. For Duch, the existence of European associations and non-governmental organisations is one that works the three items best since it is difficult to find cases of purely European mass media.

In Duch's view the person in the street lacks the basic knowledge on how the European Union works and affects its life. For many people, Europe is faraway, unknown and awkward. People are only aware of the "usual suspects" of European policies and that is why the first objective of the communication policy of the EU is to enlarge the amount of people who are informed about European policies. The information campaigns of the European Union are often consumed by those who already have enough information on it, and therefore are already convinced by the European project (Duch, 2006, p. 78).

Duch (2006, p. 80) feels that more political leader involvement in the European project is needed as well as of transnational political parties that oppose one another. While it is true that there are European political parties which are organisations with members from several Member States who share a common political goal, these are still quite known among the European Union population. He also thinks that there is a need for a European Union with the right mechanisms and competences, in order to be an efficient and recognisable organisation. It means that good governance and efficient institutions are needed for the European Union to be properly communicated. In other words, the more the presence of the Union in the daily lives of its citizens, the better the services it will provide to the citizens, thereby receiving greater support from them.

4.3. Public Opinion in the European Union: the Eurobarometer results

How do the European Union institutions know what European citizens think about the European project? The European Commission has analysed the opinion trends among Europeans ever since 1973. These surveys provide important results that help prepare texts, decisions or assessment of their work. The most relevant topics are addressed in these public opinion studies, such as enlargement, social and economic situation, health, culture, science, environment, the Euro, defence, etc.

The standard Eurobarometer consists of around 1000 interviews per Member State between two and five times per year, with reports published twice yearly. Special Eurobarometers are carried out when an in-depth study of thematic issues is required. Flash Eurobarometer surveys allow the Commission to obtain results relatively quickly and to focus on specific target groups and qualitative studies which profoundly investigate the motivations, the feelings, the reactions of select social groups towards a given subject or concept[27].

Through these studies, institutions can have a good grasp of the state of the public opinion in Europe. The recent results published in the last report of the Eurobarometer show clear indications on the impressions of European citizens regarding European integration and project.

The main findings from the evolution of public opinion over the last 40 years (European Parliament, 2014) with Eurobarometer data demonstrate the prevailing influence of the economic and social context on public opinion. This is very well illustrated by the financial and economic crisis that began in 2008, which provoked a severe decline of indicators concerning support and trust for the EU. These deteriorated significantly from 2011 onwards when the economic crisis became a crisis of the public debt of the Member States. Since autumn 2008, the economic situation in Europe is perceived as increasingly "bad", despite improvements in its perception since 2013.

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[27] More information can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

The economic crisis of the continent has occupied the concerns of many Europeans in recent years. The Standard Eurobarometer 80 published in Autumn 2013 shows that even though a majority of Europeans are upbeat about their financial and job situations, there is a clear division between nine Member States which are generally satisfied with the financial situation in their household (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and Malta) and the ones who actually find it bad (Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal, Hungary, Cyprus, Romania and Croatia) (2013, p. 13). This breach between satisfied and unsatisfied citizens is a clear indication of how public opinion in the continent is divided, as it appears again in other issues. Studies show a division, and thus, disunity in the perceptions of citizens which could be an important threat to the feeling towards a common project which is quite essential for further integration of the European Union.

Despite the apparent division, the people who feel that EU membership is a "good thing" have always been a majority. This is the same with the view on what unites the citizens of the Member States is more important than what divides them. Moreover, a majority of Europeans still believe that they would have been better protected against the crisis if its Member States had taken coordinated measures with other Member States. In addition, between 2009 and 2014, the EU remained for Europeans the player that best dealt with the consequences of the financial and economic crisis (European Parliament, 2014).

These data are important because the perception of citizens about Europe is very much connected to its economic performance, and this became evident when trust levels started dropping with the start of the economic crisis.

Furthermore, there is a clear connection between the levels of trust in Europe and in institutions in general. Indeed, except for the Standard Eurobarometer survey of autumn 2012 (EB78) characterised by a rebound, all Eurobarometer surveys since autumn 2009 have recorded a decline in trust in the European institutions. In the Autumn 2013 Eurobarometer survey, trust in the European Parliament and the European Commission reached quite low. Trust in the European Central Bank has likewise stabilised at the same low level (2013, p. 69). In general, trust in the EU has stabilised at its lowest ever level. Currently, 31% of EU citizens say they trust the EU

as shown in the Eurobarometer of Autumn 2013 and of Spring 2014 (European Commission, 2014, p. 9). In a sociological analysis, one is able to see that the distrust is even more widespread among the more modest and vulnerable categories, which are traditionally less pro- European (2013, p.75).

In the Autumn Standard Eurobarometer Survey of 2013, the impression that things are "heading in the wrong direction" at the national level is stable and continues to be shared by an absolute majority of Europeans (56%, unchanged since spring 2013 and autumn 2012). The score has not fallen below 50% since the Eurobarometer survey of autumn 2009 (2013, p. 51).

Europeans feel that not only trust is at stake but also the quality of democracy. A majority of respondents in 11 Member States were dissatisfied with the way democracy works in the EU as shown in the Autumn 2013 response (2013, p. 103). Yet, the 2014 Spring Eurobarometer showed that more than four in ten Europeans considered that their voice counts in the EU (42%, +13 percentage points since autumn 2013), and this was probably a result of the European elections held just before the fieldwork, and this increase in the belief that "my voice counts" is the largest ever recorded.

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
- My voice counts in the EU -

→ Tend to agree   → Tend to disagree   → Don't know
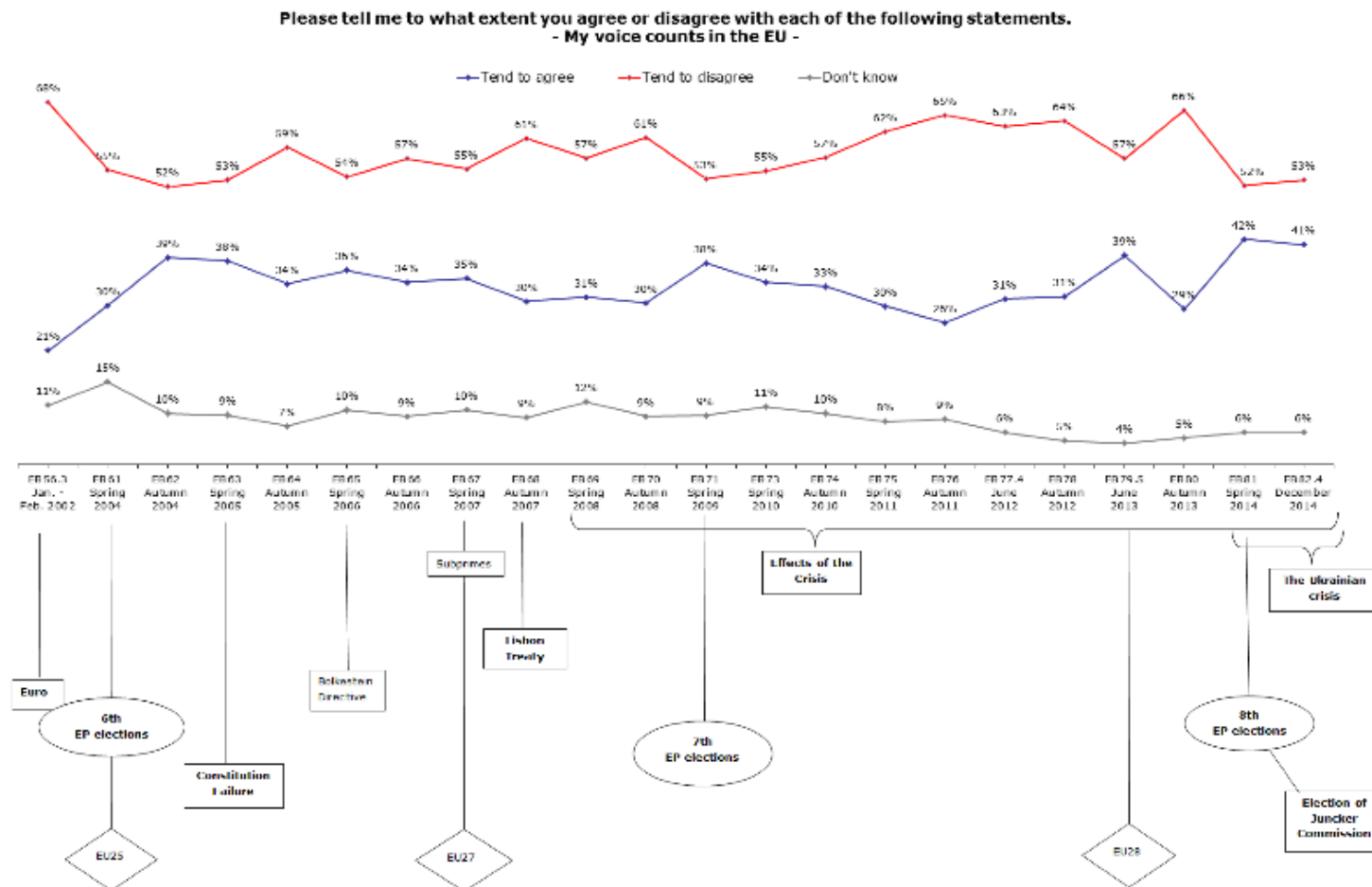
Source: European Parliament, 2015

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Against this background, the big institutional moments of the EU often coincide with the time of improvement in positive opinions about the Union. This is especially the case with enlargements and elections to the European Parliament, as shown by the latest results in May 2014. These results show that despite the progressive distrust in European institutions and democracy in general, European citizens do feel positively when they are able to participate in the democratic decisions of the European Union. The plausible explanation of these results is that Europeans do want to have a say in EU policy making and take part in decisions, either through a critical or a supporting opinion. Therefore, European Union institutions must be courageous and always remain connected to citizens and communicate in European terms during economic crisis so that European citizens can understand what is going on from a European perspective and can cast a more informed vote.

4.4. The elections to the European Parliament: participation in 2014

The European Parliament is considered as the body that legitimises the European Union, and this to a large extent is due to the strong idea that legitimacy is derived from representative democratic practices in Member States and the 100ransposition of these ideas into Europe. In this multilevel governance, the European Parliament is the institution whose representatives are elected directly by the citizens. This is the reason why it is felt important that citizens must vote at the EP elections: it legitimises the European Union project in a democratic way.

Indeed, when the first elections were held in 1979, it was thought that this democratic appointment could provide a new and strong legitimacy to the European project. The inauguration of the European elections generated a level of interest that has been lost over the years. The low turnout invites a profound reflection about its causes.

There has been a tendency for participation to be lower in every election. In the first direct elections in 1979, the turnout was 61%. In 1999, it was the first time that less

than half of the voters went to cast their vote, with 49, 51%; five years later, the turnout was 45,57% with the incorporation of ten new Member States into the Union; in 2009, it got a historic low turnout, when just 43% of the citizens voted[28].

In 2014, the results showed the lowest turnout ever at 42.54% participation but it can be said that the deep declining trend in participation has now stopped. There has always been great heterogeneity in the turnout results between the Member States. Nicola Maggini (2014, pp 277-283) analysed the 2014 elections results and concluded that not only is there a significant gap in terms of participation between the group of the original members and the group of the new Eastern European countries but also that this gap has widened compared to 2009, which may take us to conclude that the situation in Europe may be of more disintegration and fragmentation than before. Indeed, Maggini divides Member States in her study into the 9 original members (all from Western Europe), the 3 from Southern Europe that joined the EU in the 1980s (Greece, Spain and Portugal), the 3 countries from centre-north Europe that joined the EU in the 1990S (Sweden, Austria, and Finland) and, finally, the countries from Eastern Europe that joined the EU in the early 2000s (in this group, Malta has also been added even though it does not belong to the Eastern part). The figures show that the 9 original members of the EU have in both elections, had a significantly higher turnout in comparison to the other groups. She suggests that this variability proves that elections are mediated by the national economic and political context.

Participation in the south of Europe has decreased since 1999, thus widening the gap with respect to the 9 original members who seem to remain fairly stable over time. Nowadays, this trend has stopped probably due to the great increase in the participation in Greece, one of the EU countries most hit by the economic crisis and the austerity measures imposed by the EU. The impact of these policies has probably augmented the perception that there is much at stake in these elections.

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[28] The detailed turnout data between 1979 and 2009 can be found at the following link
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/es/turnout_es.html

4.4.1. The Second Order Elections theory

After the first European Parliament elections, Reif Karlheinz and Herman Schmitt (1980) formulated the Second Order Elections Theory connecting European elections and national political configurations. They argued that European Parliament elections are second order elections and that many voters cast their votes on the basis of factors in the main political arena of the nation. According to the authors, the most important aspect is that there is less at stake and, consequently there is lower level of participation, wherein small and new political parties perform better. There is also a higher percentage of invalidated ballots and government parties are observed to lose (since in a way elections are a protest against the government).

Following this hypothesis, elections to the European chamber achieve the opposite desired effect: they weaken the European Project since citizens either vote following national patterns or do not vote. The assumption of an automatic correlation between the increase in democracy (through voting) and in legitimacy (since more voters would be giving their view on the Union) implied that the low turnout could undermine the legitimacy of the European Parliament, as explained by Judge and Earnshaw (2003).

The paradox of the Second Order Elections is that if voters are casting their vote on national criteria (either to support or to show rejection towards a government), the vote to the European Parliament cannot indicate an opinion or a criticism in relation to the European project or the behaviour of the European chamber. In this way, the lack of participation may not necessarily mean a lack of interest in the European Union, or the perception that it is not important, but rather a way of expressing an opinion towards their own government because they do not know about the EU.

European Parliament (2011) studies reveal that even though the European Parliament has an essentially political role which is larger than the one of many national parliaments, there is still limited knowledge about this institution. This "ignorance" of the voters and the lack of ability from transnational parties to claim the merits that are essentially inter-institutional and intergovernmental does not help the European

Parliament in making their importance visible. Despite the constant increase in the competences of the Parliament, and despite the acknowledgement by knowledgeable voters, most citizens still do not have any general knowledge about the work and impact of the European Parliament.

According to this theory, EP elections are very much about punishing the governing party rather than protesting against Europe. Then, just as Hix and Marsh indicate (2007, p. 495), the increase in competences of the European Parliament over the years would not better connect the European institutions with voters. The European Parliament has been gaining more institutional weight and competences and the co-decision procedure, which allows it to co-legislate with the Council of the European Union on equal footing, has been extended to most policy areas. Yet, citizens seem not to have primarily used EP elections to express their preferences on policy issues on EU agenda.

In 2014, there was the general expectation that, they would be for the first time be true first-order elections (De Sio, Emanuele and Maggini, 2014, p. 11). It was clear that the European Union had played a key role in the economic and financial crisis that affected Europe and that the "Troika" (European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) had strongly shaped the national policy sovereignty of Member States. Together with the corresponding austerity measures, many citizens saw their lives affected by the European Union in a very clear way. The impact of European decisions this time was undeniable, not something abstract floating in the air.

Moreover, objectively, it could be said that there was more at stake with the new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty since the European Council would have to "take into account" the election results. Indeed this could strengthen the connection between popular vote and the election of the President of the Commission, leading to a higher mobilisation of voters (De Sio, Emanuele and Maggini, 2014, p. 12).

Yet, the 2014 elections results may likewise contradict the Second Order elections theory as well, due to the very high expectations from these elections, thereby changing the patterns observed so far. The turnout was still very low, small and new political parties still performed better than governing parties like in previous

elections and the great majority of parties in government lost ground. This goes in line with the evidence that in previous elections, large parties performed worse but small parties had relatively better results in national elections held immediately prior to each EP election (Hix, S, Marsh, M. 2007, p. 497).

As a matter of fact, parties that most criticised the idea of Europe were thought to have obtained satisfactory results since European issues were mostly addressed in a negative manner. Consequently, populist parties and Eurosceptic right wing ones got more support in this electoral appointment, thereby politicising European issues and taking advantage of the discontent with the austerity measures.

According to De Sio, Emanuele and Maggini (2014, p. 322-323), pro-European parties, out of fear, preferred to depoliticise issues about the European Union and focus on national issues. These authors introduced the concept of "political supply", referring to features of the parties that participate in the election and their strategies. They argue that for Europe to be a central issue, political actors have the option to decide to politicise it and use it in their strategy. Having Europe in the centre of the agenda therefore becomes a matter of political strategy.

This idea could contradict the hypothesis of Sara H. Hobolt and Jae Spoon (2008, 112) who think that voter decisions in the European Parliament elections are not only a referendum on domestic performance but also a vote on the European project as a whole. They claim that the EU is now more of a trending topic in European elections only because it has had more success in the political arena. In recent years the European Union has become more visible not only because of its role in the crisis but also due to the new economic environment in general. The entire political system has been put into the spotlight of many citizens. Debt negotiations with the troika have been in the front pages of many newspapers and on national TV news.

Anti - European and Eurosceptic parties have decided to talk openly about Europe, portraying the EU as a whole negatively, simplifying its functioning and blaming it for the economic situation. In fact, Hobolt and Spoon point to the media coverage of the European Union during the campaign as the factor which most influences levels of defection. In their analysis, they did not address the capacity of institutions and parties to intervene in the media debate and put European issues in the heart of the

agenda. Therefore, they ignored the role that communication from the EU institutions can play. So, if the "political supply" (political parties and their strategies) is able to put Europe at the heart of the matter from whatever angle, then this may actually be useful. EU institutions should take a stand and intervene in such a debate and agenda. Niccola Maggini emphasised that thanks to anti-European parties, themes revolving around the European Union have been put at the heart of the campaign, and thus elections become first order to vote against Europe, in Europe (2014, 85-86).

The argument that some citizens do not completely realise how the EU affects their daily lives cannot be defended so easily (Herzmann Schmitt, 2005). The role of Europe has been undeniable on this occasion. The fact that the anti-European parties have been the ones bringing up Europe in the campaign or that the national parties decided to tackle the issue as one of domestic importance responds to a political communication strategy from the parties.

Regarding the results in terms of party composition, it is true that the vast majority of ruling parties from countries have lost ground. However, despite the low consensus for austerity policies in the European Union which makes one think that there would be a change ahead, the European People's Party has once again won 221 seats, even though there is a wide gap between it and the second party, namely; the progressive alliance between the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), whose result has decreased to 30 seats.

As analysed by De Sio, Emanuele and Maggini, the populist and anti-European parties have made progress but not evenly across Europe. Europe of freedom and direct democracy Group (EFDD) which managed to bring together the populist and Eurosceptic parties and, in some cases, even some explicit anti-Euro and anti EU parties in the EP, gained 48 seats out of 751, thereby increasing its presence by 17 seats but still remains a minority force. As against the Eurosceptic parties, GUE-NGL, led by Alexis Tsipras from Greece, was not against European integration but its neoliberal version and increased results from 35 to 52 seats. The new Spanish force, Podemos has joined hands with this group.

The Liberal Group (ALDE) and the Greens/EFA considered as two political groups that are keen towards European integration, lost ground. The Greens/EFA passed

from 57 to 50 seats and ALDE from 83 to 67. It can be noted that the Greens/EFA chose a very open and participatory way to choose their candidate, i.e., through an online primary election in which all European citizens older than 16 years were invited to vote.

Furthermore, the experience of having lead candidates - or 'Spitzenkandidaten' - campaigning for the major European political families and personalising the debate seems not to have had the desired impact of voter mobilisation. Truly, just "having a face" is not enough. European parties need to be convinced about the importance of Europe in order to take the message to citizens.

The European Parliament made a great effort and orchestrated an institutional campaign with some of the greatest communication benchmarks in EU history such as the televised debate with candidates to the European Commission presidency, which was a benchmark in EU communication. Five candidates from the five European political parties, representing a wide range of political options, took part in a live debate on television with a "studio" audience in the European Parliament in Brussels on 15 May 2014. Citizens could participate in the debate through social media (Twitter and Facebook) and use the hashtag #TellEurope. The five candidates who took part were Jean-Claude Juncker representing the European People's Party, Martin Schulz represented the European Socialists Party, Guy Verhofstadt represented the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, Ska Keller represented the Green Party, Alexis Tsipras represented the the European Left Wing Party. The interview moderator was Monica Maggioni, director of the Italian public television channel RAI News24. Moreover, the European Parliament carried out a solid digital campaign, which is analysed in the next chapter.

Despite institutional efforts for running an ambitious campaign, the turnout was still quite low and new, small political parties performed better than governing parties. As a matter of fact, it was shown that Anti-European and Eurosceptic parties talked more openly about Europe, while other parties did not defend Europe in its message. Big national parties should have supported the European Parliament's effort with a European discourse and message in their communication strategies but this did not happen. In the end, the subjects and angles of the campaign were largely determined by the discourses from the national parties, which once again stressed the need to

engage in a multilevel coordinated communication.

4.5 The role of civil society in shaping the European project

The function of each institution of the European Union is explained in Chapter one. They all form a system of multilevel democratic governance. Each Commissioner is appointed by the Member State in consultation with the Member State and after approval from the European Parliament. Ministers from each Member State have a seat in the Council. Finally, the European Parliament is composed of representatives that are directly elected by European citizens every five years. It is a complex system made up of a dense network of actors, structures, regulations, competences and responsibilities. As Morata (2002) points out, right from the beginning of the European integration, there has been a progressive transformation of national sovereignty into a shared sovereignty between Member States and the supranational institutions. Despite the above, the interdependence and cross-directional dimension of societies seems to need a multilevel governance system.

According to Susana del Río, the European Union has made efforts to promote participatory democracy. It has set in motion tools to "complement representative democracy with participatory democracy" (2008, p. 492)[29]. This effort will contribute to more agile European governance focused on citizens. Indeed, the importance of the participation of civil society in the European project has been analysed by Doctor Susana del Río. She feels that the creation of a participatory tissue is a key element to democratically renew Europe and constitute a communication network composed of citizens (2006, p. 245). Del Río studied the evolution of civil society participation in the European project using the contributions that civil society made to the Intergovernmental Conference from 1996 onwards to the elaboration of a European Constitution by the Convention and beyond.

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[29] In her original words: "Se trata de complementar la democracia representativa con la democracia participativa".

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During the IGC of 1996, NGOs could indeed express their views in hearings. In the IGC of 2000 concerning the Treaty of Nice, the contributions of civil society were essentially made through the Internet and in organised fora. The European Convention for drafting a European Constitution saw the participation of civil society organisations acquire higher visibility and repercussion. The preparation of a Constitution for Europe opened an entire process with a structured and permanent dialogue that involved civil society with European, national and regional institutions. This dialogue was explicitly formulated in the roadmap of the Convention. Civil society was given a determinant role in the European project through a Forum, which was institutionally recognised in the *Laeken Declaration* in 2011. This produced a formalisation of the role of the European civil society in a first order political framework.

The formalisation of civil society as an actor in the constitutional process has consolidated it into a political debate of great importance. The participation of civil society in the *Laeken Declaration* and the posterior creation of the Forum of the Convention, led to a direct interaction between the European Union and civil society organisations. The innovative method of the Convention meant a great step forward towards European Union democratisation. This inclusive process that overcomes the intergovernmental method is a benchmark in for active participation of new actors (Del Río, 2014, 123-124).

After the rejection of the European Constitution and the "no" votes in the referenda in France and the Netherlands, the Commission, in 2005, launched the Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate in order to promote citizens' participation, "a listening exercise for the European Union to act on the concerns expressed by its citizens" (European Commission, 2005). The Commission provided financial assistance to launch projects that would stimulate a wide public debate on very general issues such as Europe's economic and social development or Europe's borders and its role in the world. Further analysis of the communication dimension of this Plan D is described in chapter three.

Subsequently, the Lisbon Treaty recognised civil society as a relevant actor on EU issues and called on the EU institutions to keep a dialogue with civil society. The Lisbon Treaty comprises dialogue with civil society under the 'Provisions on the

Democratic Principles' (Title II Lisbon Treaty). As a matter of fact, the Treaty proclaims both 'representative democracy' and 'participatory democracy' to be constitutive principles of democracy and stipulates that "the institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society" (Art. 11 (2) TEU).

The Lisbon Treaty comprises the relation with civil society under the 'Provisions of the Democratic Principles' (Title II Lisbon Treaty). These provisions address four issues: the equality of citizens (Art. 9), the functioning of the Union as founded by the principles of representative democracy (Art. 10), the active contribution of National Parliaments to the good functioning of the Union (Art. 12) and an active dialogue between EU institutions and society (Art. 11). Article 11 enumerates four provisions (1). The institutions shall "give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action"; (2) they shall "maintain an open and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society"; (3) the Commission shall "carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent". The fourth provision includes a new element the Citizens' Initiative.

The Citizens Initiatives facilitated, one of the demands from Civil Society, that at least one million citizens from any number of Member States will be able to ask the Commission to present a proposal in any of the EU's areas of responsibility.

For Habermas, civil society is composed of organisations and movements that are familiar with how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, and transmit such perceptions in amplified form to the public sphere (Habermas 1996, pp367). It is a common view that civil society promotes democracy in many different ways. In their analysis of the role of civil society beyond Lisbon, Kohler-Koch (2011, 9-19) again refers to Habermas and his concept of public sphere as a "communication structure rooted in the lifeworld through the associational network of civil society" arguing that the institutional core [of civil society] is comprised of those non-governmental and non- economic connections as well as voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere in the society component of the lifeworld.

Kohler-Koch states that the influence of civil society has to be exerted not through participation in governance but through the public sphere. "It is the function of civil society to feed public debate with the full range of pertinent pragmatic and moral reasons and it is the function of representative institutions to guarantee the effective exercise of communicative rights, to absorb the deliberations of public discourse and to channel them into legislative decision-making" (Kohler-Koch /Humrich/Finke 2006, p.11).

Kohler-Koch concludes that the Lisbon Treaty gave civil society greater visibility and commitment to an open and regular civil dialogue strengthening the position of associations who want to have a voice in EU affairs. Yet, according to the author, they are still in a weak position because the Treaty did not lay down rules, procedures or instruments (2011, p. 18).

The European Commission makes public consultations in the development of all policy areas. The list of these public consultations can be found on the Commission website[30] together with all related information about the relations between civil society and the Commission. Moreover, aiming at improving the transparency of EU decision-making, both the European Parliament and the Commission launched a joint, public Transparency Register in 2011 to provide information and shed light on those who seek to influence on European Policy. It was time to do so as the number of European trade associations, NGO, trade unions, corporations, which were considered full-time lobbysts, were approximately 15,000 (Gueguen, 2007), about a third established in Brussels and the other two thirds in the Member States.

The Treaty of Lisbon distinguishes between representative associations and civil society. NGOs gathered in the Civil Society Contact Group concurred with the opinion that only NGO qualify as representatives of civil society and they argued strongly in favour of a 'structured dialogue' with 'organised civil society'. Their main argument was that NGO are 'schools of democracy' and that engaging citizens in (grass roots) associations serves the democratic empowerment of citizens as it will

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[30] As part of a general website with information on civil society
http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/civil_society/

build up social capital and will further citizens' participation (Kohler-Koch, 2011).

Moreover, the European Economic and Social Committee, whose role is that of acting as a bridge between civil society and the EU Institutions, has been reinforced with the Treaty. As it was described in an official communication,

> The EESC, in partnership with the other institutions, looks set to be, even more so in the future, the instrument of participatory democracy and civil dialogue at European level. (…)The EESC can help set the tone for social partner agreements, help pave the way for their passage through the formal EU decision-making procedures into European law and help implement such decisions at grass-roots level[31].

This Juncker Commission has once again put democracy back on the agenda; one of its ten priorities is "A Union of democratic change[32]". As a matter of fact, for the first time, the political groups of the European Parliament are proposing the candidate for the European Commission President. The intention of this Juncker Commission is to be the first of many others towards a more democratic European Union and thus bring it closer to its citizens. In particular, this Commission intends to review legislation for the authorisation of GMOs, have an Inter-institutional agreement on a mandatory transparency register and Inter-institutional agreement on better law-making.

Within the scope of the priority "A Union of democratic change", there is need for a very important piece of legislation for a better regulation to design EU policies and laws with transparency, to make sure all stakeholders are involved and to assess the impact.

The main goal of such better regulation legislation, according to a Commission senior official's statement, is that:

> EU policies should be inclusive, based on full transparency and engagement, listening to the views of those affected by legislation so that it is easy to

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[31] More information can be found at http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.institutional-reform

[32] Information on the priority "A Union of democratic change" can be found here http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/democratic-change/index_en.htm

implement. We should be open to external feedback and external scrutiny to ensure we get it right.

It will be implemented this autumn 2015.

The idea is that stakeholders are consulted in a structured way throughout the legislation cycle, from the very beginning of the legislative process to its evaluation, when civil society will also have a say with 12 weeks of public consultation. For that purpose, there will be more and better consultation, with more extensive feedback and public consultation and an improved explanatory memorandum, aiming at better explaining the purpose of the piece of legislation. There will also be better tools with single guidelines, to cover the entire policy cycle and link the phases better; a web based toolbox, with operational guidance for practitioners, and an inter-institutional agreement programming important stages such as impact assessment, priority assessment, legal drafting, etc.

The Commission also plans to issue a "Slimming down legislation" with the motto "lighten your load, have your say!". The aim is that citizens will be able to communicate to the EU whenever they think that piece of legislation is obsolete and should be withdrawn, thereby enlarging the circle of stakeholders.

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter has focused on the analysis of the European citizenship and its expressions. For Eriksen (2014, p.1), the European Union is "a new kind of polity that is very much connected to its development as a communicative space". Given that, the public space described by Habermas could be the genesis of a European demos and since the mechanisms that create this public space are political communication, will formation and learning, it becomes evident that the European Union is taking the form of a new polity, which is not linked to the expression of a nation.

The characteristics of this citizenship are well described by Susana del Río (2008, p. 476) as a multiple citizenship, with full obligations and rights, enjoying common European values in their cohabitation and evolving and adapting according to the provisions of subsequent treaties.

How then does this citizenship manifest itself and how do institutions listen to them? The aim of this thesis is to study the opinions of European citizens towards the European Union institutions through the following manifestations: public opinion surveys carried systematically via the Eurobarometer; participation in European Parliament elections and involvement in civil society.

The Eurobarometer is the tool the European Commission has been analysing opinion trends since 1973. Besides thematic polls, the standard Eurobarometer consists of 1000 interviews per Member State, performed between two and five times per year and the reports are published twice a year. The data show how much the economic crisis has engaged the concerns of many Europeans in recent years and how Europe is very much connected to economic performance. Indeed, trust levels in EU institutions have dropped since the economic crisis started and is now at 31%, the lowest level ever. However, citizens still express their interest about the main European Union developments, their perception that their voice counts when they participate in European Parliament elections and the European Union is the best tool to coordinate actions concerning the economic and financial crisis.

The European Parliament is the body to which representatives are directly elected and is thus considered the body that democratically legitimised the European Union. Even though, the European Parliament has gained new competences in every treaty, there seems to be a trend of low participation in each successive election.

The elections for 2014 were especially important in this regard. The new provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon stated that for the election of the President of the European Commission, the European Council would have to "take into account" the election results: therefore votes this time would have even more weight. The European Parliament organised an institutional campaign with one of the milestones in EU communication: a pan European televised debate with all the candidates to the European Commission presidency alongside a sound digital campaign. It was also

evident that the European Union had played a key role in the economic and financial crisis that afflicted Europe. There was the general expectation that results would contradict the Second Order theory, which states that votes in the European Parliament elections are cast on the basis of factors in the national arena and that there is less at stake.

However, the results showed that the lowest turnout was 42.54% meaning that the deep declining trend in participation seems to have stopped. Small and new political parties performed better as the great majority of parties in government lost ground. It can be construed the "political supply" or the communication strategies from the national parties is what strongly determine the subjects of the campaign and the angles to be taken.

Finally, the importance of the participation of civil society in the European project was analysed by Susana del Río, who defined it as a key element to democratically renew Europe and constitute a communication network composed of citizens, that adapts to the rights and obligations provided in the different treaties. Civil society has participated in European Union first order political process, ever since its contribution in the Intergovernmental Conference in 1996 right through to the participation in the Convention drafting the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and in the Convention drafting the European Constitution. The European Union has included the participation of civil society in an inclusive, open and innovative method. The role of civil society has been formalised in the Lisbon Treaty, under the 'Provisions in the Democratic Principles' (Title II) where EU institutions are called to maintain a dialogue with civil society.

Civil society organisation have been great mobilisers of citizens, through of opening new communication paths, participation in the European Union debate and ultimately being both multipliers and frontrunners of European integration.

5. Channels. Traditional mass media and the role of Internet and social media

5.1. Introduction

As indicated in chapter two, the channel, the element already present in Lasswell's model, has gained much importance with the widespread use of new technologies, Internet and social media. The channel is the element of the proposed communication model that has dramatically changed mass communication today.

As mentioned in section four of chapter two, cohabitation exists today between the traditional mass media (radio, television and newspaper) and the massive development of Internet with the entry of social media. Public authorities had to adapt to this new way of communication which means both a radical transformation and an enormous opportunity for institutions to communicate directly with citizens, without any national frame or intermediary, and in real time.

This chapter intends to analyse both the role of traditional mass media and the new social media in the formation of public opinion in the European Union. In so fas as traditional media are concerned, questions asked are: What role have they had in relation to the European Union? Have they contributed to European integration? Are there truly "Europeanised media"?.

Secondly, the role and penetration of Internet in the European Union is addressed in line with the following questions: How has the development of Internet affected political participation and civil society? How does it contribute to a dialogue between political actors and citizens? In particular, how has it affected the dialogue between the EU institutions and European citizens? And in the European political debate and decision making?

The European Union had to adapt and respond to this new reality using both traditional and new online media channels for its communication to ensure an

inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders and reach out to citizens in a courageous, innovative and multilevel approach. In this section, the two important cornerstones of the European Union presence in the Internet have been discussed: the initiative of the Digital Agenda and the Europa website. Moreover, the European Parliament is the institution that leads online communication. The use of Internet during the European Parliament elections in 2009 meant a turning point for European Communication.

Finally, the role of social media is also analysed. How have social media affected political participation? How are the EU institutions using social media to reach their audiences and foster political debate and participation? How are both the European Commission and the European Parliament using social media to engage in a dialogue with citizens? These are some of the issues that are addressed in this chapter.

5.2. Traditional media in the European Public Sphere

Mass media have traditionally been the main channel of political communication. As developed in chapter one, in the public sphere model of Habermas (2006), mass media play an important role as they are a source of power that select and process politically relevant content and intervene in both the formation of public opinions and the distribution of influential interests (2006, 416 - 419). Following Habermas' school of thought, there were two types of actors who intervened in political communications: professionals from the media system –journalists- and politicians. To these two main actors, other five types were added (lobbyists, advocates, experts, moral entrepreneurs and intellectuals). The legitimation process must pass through a public sphere for the formation of public opinion through two actors: media and politicians.

However, Habermas (2006, 416-421) was critical about the role of mass media in the development of a healthy and democratic deliberative system: media must be independent from their social environment. He exemplifies a special case of damage to editorial independence when private owners of a media empire develop political ambitions. Indeed, Habermas thinks that while mass media had initially contributed to the general debate on politics, it later turned from the public sphere to a sphere of

publicity that was more interested in making profit than on providing information and deliberation.

Other scholars have built their analysis by taking mass media as the predominant channel for mass Communication. Indeed, Christopher Meyer (1999, 621) states that "in western democracies political communication occurs primarily, though not exclusively, in and through mass media". According to Meyer, the purpose of mass media is that of interpreting issues within a complex environment and supplying information, they are the key actors in political debate and opinion formation. This viewpoint is very much in line with those of other scholars such as Monzón Arribas (2006, 195) who contends that "the prominence of mass media comes from the fact that they make expression possible, but also influence and create opinion" or that of Muñoz Alonso (1990, 332-336), who describes the functions of the mass media as to collect and present information in an objective manner, contribute to the formation of public opinion, set the political agenda and control the government and other institutions.

Most of the media supply in Europe is part of the entertainment business; news and information are only a small part of the media system. As Schlessinger (2007, 80) acknowledges, media are more and more fragmented due to the pressures from economic competition and digitalisation, and traditional media face even more challenges.

The questions that arise in this analysis are to what extent have the European mass media played a significant role in public opinion formation of the European Union and whether there is a truly 'European journalism' or as Del defines journalism "in European"(2014, p. 144) as bringing in the European perspective.

For the first question on the role of European mass media in public opinion formation in the European Union, it can be generally said that traditional media, and in particular the main newspapers, the radio and television at national level, have been frontrunners of European integration. With around 1000 international journalists accredited[33], Brussels is, together with Washington, the city where more press is accredited in the world, which could only respond to the interest that mass

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[33] The economic crisis, which only showed the importance of Europe in current affairs, made the number of accredited journalists even increase: http://cleareurope.eu/myth-shrinking-eu-press-corps/

media have on European issues. In his study, Hans-Jörg Trenz (2007, 18) concludes that "the quality press has become an active entrepreneur in promoting the European case" and that there is a general support for European integration and a European-friendly climate in the largest newspapers. But this study was underatken before the economic crisis, and as shown in chapter four, it led to altered perception of the public towards the European Union: media have been even more interested in the European Union but it could be said that more critical voices were raised on the European project.

In his analysis, Trenz (2007) contends that the semantics used for the representation of European integration remain flexible, open and comprehensive, but there is not a "visionary Europe" in the media: either it is linked to functional institutionalisation or it is mentioned as a necessary part of Realpolitik of the governments. Given that, there was no vision of a unity of Europe in the past, it seems unlikely that there will be a vision of Europe in the future. A common European cultural heritage or European civilisation are rarely mentioned.

> Media tend to make use of a new practise of commemoration for turning the good old success story of European post war integration into the shared story that constitutes the European community of memory and experience. At the same time, this practice of commemoration is becoming rather negative in evaluating the past and the future.

According to Trenz, the media are rather defensive in attributing the achievements of the past to the European Union (p. 16- 17).

The second question raised above is whether we can talk about a European journalism in the sense of a real European channel that serves as an intermediary between citizens and institutions.

In his study, Statham (2008, 398) claims to have found a limited but emergent "Europeanization" of journalism, "carried out by transnational newspapers serving specialised audiences and to a limited extent by European correspondents in the national press". Yet, the author presents the problems that journalists face when trying to make Europe news or take a European perspective on the news they offer: that is there is a predominance of national sources compared to European or regional

ones or the difficulties in making EU stories interesting for readers and in finding a proper space for EU news (p. 413). In general, journalists tend to see their role not as "leading" the debate but rather as "representing" the political debate in a context where they actually do not get incentives for producing news that generates Europeanized viewpoints. The author also points out differences across countries: while in France, the debate about Europe is directly connected at the EU level, it is not the case in the UK, where the thematic convergence of issues does not necessarily imply a European perspective on them.

The analysis on how journalists perceive the EU with regards to media work is very interesting and all institutions should take it into consideration when developing their media strategies. These were the most remarkable results of what journalists thought about the EU as providers of information (p. 407-413): National actors are much more numerous than European ones; EU institutions target EU correspondents considerably more often than they do with other journalist. Moreover, journalists consider the EU's professional standards on communication slightly worse than national actors. Regarding the information, they find that the technocratic style and the high number of countries and the complexity of issues involved in the news, are limitations for making EU news, understandable and easy to consume for their readers. Some journalists said that they did not find much transparent information or clear political lines, especially from the Commission.

When reflecting on news reporting, journalists in the same survey, often said they were not supported by their management to cover EU issues due to the lack of resources (such as the cost of having a correspondent in Brussels or the time needed to become familiar with EU policies): they generally complained that there are no organisational efforts to enhance European coverage. As a whole, journalists reported that they have difficulties in communicating European news due to space constraints and due to the lack of really easily and understandable news for everyone. The complexity and nature of the issues may lack the "news values" that would attract readership (Statahm, 407-413).

In the current context of the crisis of traditional media, Christopher Meyer (2000) argued that there is an increasing trend for transnational investigative journalism to emerge and thus contribute to the accountability of the institutions. In this sense, the

initiative from the European Journalism Centre for Data Driven Journalist would confirm this hypothesis. The Centre works as a hub for news and resources for journalists, editors, designers and developers who use data in the service of journalism. Through the exchange of data across countries they are enhancing data collection and bringing in a European perspective. Data Driven Journalism is investigative journalism that goes to the roots of journalism and breaks national barriers in an ever more interconnected world[34]. Satatham (2008, 418) also refers to international journalists claiming that transnational journalists receive greater information flows from EU political institutions, for comparison of data that is eagerly read by EU representatives. In parallel, national journalists usually remain in contact with and only address national political actors.

Yet, as presented in chapter two in the argument introduced by Schlesinger, Internet poses more and more questions about the future of traditional media (Schlesinger, 2007). As an example, while the largest newspapers are facing record declines in circulation, Wikipedia now has over 13 million articles[35].

Even though the European mass media are facing difficulties to find their place in today's new informative landscape, there seems to be an emergence of new forms of journalism that do not respond to the traditional national frame, and therefore an in-depth and professional analyses in a globalised and complex world is more needed than ever. The European Union should make the most of the situation to develop the highest professional standards and assure they provide information in the way that journalist need. Communication officers in the EU need to take into account what journalists think and demand from public authorities in terms of information and thematic news. The EU needs to courageously prioritise communication with media, by correcting the errors from the past and being responsible and rigorous in transmitting news from a European perspective.

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[34] More information can be found on http://datadrivenjournalism.net

[35] The documentary *Page One*: Inside the New York Times (Andrew Rossi, 2011) analyses how the internet has become the first source of information and how the media industry needs to adapt to not disappear. The film analyses how the leading newspaper the New York Times has to make huge efforts to continue being a relevant source,by adapting to the new times and ways of connecting with readers and publishing material from Wikileaks, while maintaining their rigor and professionalism.

5.3. The role of Internet in European Union communication

Internet has meant a revolution in the way citizens obtain information and participate in public life, and it can be said that it has actually increased interconnection. Studies show that emergent and evolving use of ICT (broadband, mobile connection combined with social media, blogging and microblogging) provide a strong communication infrastructure for today's world and that the Internet is used to "reconnect and reinforce connections" in a way which is "driving changes into communities" (Haythornthwaite, C. and L. Kendall, 2010, p.1) and encourages the "emergence of social movements" (Day and Schuler, 2004a, p.6). Day and Schuler studied how civil society is using ICT tools to empower communities, and individuals in the network society. Yet, online activism cannot be a substitute for offline engagement. Day and Schuler (2004, p.10) quote Howard Rheingold's idea that ICTs only provide another platform in for social engagement to occur. In his earlier work in 1994, Rheingold (1994, p.14) argued that Internet could be used to foster democracy and "revitalise citizen-based democracy".

When it comes to political actors, the fact that Internet allows every single person and organisation to create its own information channel to the world has permitted that actors and organisations outside the so called "establishment" could actually become visible and connect with citizens in a way that was not possible before. Campante, Durante and Sobbrio (2013, p.1) studied the relationship between high-speed Internet and political participation in Italy, and found out that "the effect of Internet availability on political participation changes across different forms of engagement, it also changes over time, as new political actors emerge who can take advantage of the new technology to tap into the existence of a disenchanted or demobilised contingent of voters, and these new forms of mobilisation eventually feed back into the mainstream electoral process, converting 'exit' back into 'voice'".

The fabric of the web is very dense and with multidirectional information flows. Del Río acknowledges the difficulty in trying to control and organise information without losing the freshness that it is inherent in social media (2014, p. 147). Indeed, with so many entry and exit points and the variety of possibilities that the Internet offers, provision of structured and organised news may no longer be possible. Yet, Internet

allows connection to the global, European and national spheres, thus enabling a direct overall communication between the supranational institutions and the citizens, without intermediaries.

In the European Union, the level of penetration of the Internet is quite high, with 76.5% of the population according to the last data from 31 December 2013[36], and has the potential of reaching 385 million Europeans in a direct unmediated manner[37]. Therefore, communication processes have dramatically changed from the arrival of Internet to its high penetration today. This is an especially important channel to take into consideration for the European Union, since it does not have a national frame, which used to be the main constraint identified by EU leaders for a long time as a lack of a European communication. Indeed, Internet is an unmediated channel that permits direct interaction between institutions and citizens.

Public authorities and the European Union were quick to acknowledge the importance of the Internet. The European Commission highlighted the importance of Internet in addressing the general public in many of its policy papers (such as its core policies like the White Paper on Communication in 2006 or the Communication in Partnership in 2009.) There are other clear advantages on Internet based communication for the European Union besides the potential reach of Internet and the direct connection it offers. These have been analysed by Michailidou in her study on the role of Internet in European communication (2012, 6-7). She contends that the interactivity of Internet enables more open feedback from the public, a cost-free way to share a big amount of documentation and an "opening-up" of the EU institutions process.

Internet is a useful communication channel for institutions to foster participation as all different national public opinions can be gathered in the one platform that is not geographically constrained and thereby engage directly in a dialogue with citizens in an open and inclusive way. As a matter of fact, Michailidou (2012, 53) concludes that "Internet does offer the possibility of an all-inclusive, democratic public sphere," in which gender, age, socioeconomic and/ethnic background are irrelevant and where language does not play such an important role, and is an "important communication

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[36] http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats9.htm

[37] http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/living/index_en.htm

tool, which allows for the official EU voice to reach the public directly, bypassing national/regional media". The question that arises is whether European institutions are fully using the communication possibilities that cyberspace offers.

The importance that the Internet plays in EU communication is illustrated in the key role that the *Europa* web portal plays, for covering information in all the main areas of EU work and for being a gateway that links all EU institutions and agencies. All legislation and documents of political importance are published in all 23 official EU languages and EU bodies use the subdomain *europa.eu* for their Internet portals. The *Europa* website and the Internet are acknowledged as an important channel for communication not only in the most important EU policy documents so far but also in the 2005 European Commission Action Plan and in the White Paper on Communication, which have already been analysed in chapter three.

However, in the specific analysis of Michailidou (2012, 175) on the European Union online, the author highlights the presence of a gap "between policy and online implementation". She analysed three websites: *Europa*, *Eurunion* and *Eu@un* and found out that the content of these EU websites "lacked sufficient coverage of issues which, according to recent Eurobarometer surveys, concern the European public most, i.e., social issues, such as unemployment, pensions and education" (p. 80).

Beyond the *Europa* website, Internet has been taken very seriously by the European Union, which has given shape to this commitment with the adoption of a Digital Agenda for Europe, closely linking vey the development of the Internet with that of the Single Market, at the heart of the European project. The concept of a single market had to be extended to the digital world with the same guarantees as the offline Single Market: online content and services should be the same in all EU countries, with the same rules across the EU, data protection respected in all Member States and the same online infrastructure across all countries.

Indeed, the European Digital Agenda is one of the seven pillars of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which sets growth objectives for the European Union by 2020. The main purpose of the Digital Agenda is to "develop a digital single market in order to generate smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe"[38]. It is composed of

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[38] Exhaustive information on this policy can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/

seven pillars: achieving the digital single market, enhancing interoperability and standards, strengthening online trust and security, promoting fast and ultrafast Internet access for all, investing in research and innovation and promoting digital literacy, skills and inclusion ICT-enabled benefits for EU society, and enabling the benefits for the use of ICTS in areas such as climate change, e-health and intelligent transport system.

Yet, if there ever was a turning point in the utilisation of Internet possibilities by the European Union, this was the European Parliament election of 2009, with the European Parliament being the leading institution in online communication. In the words of Jaume Duch, Spokesperson of the European Parliament, in the preface of Del Río's book (2014, p. 25) "For the first time, a European institution was truly capable of reaching a part, - albeit a small one- of the population without having to pass through the often insurmountable filter of the communications media". As he acknowledges, just a few months after Internet and social media had contributed to take Barak Obama, almost an outsider of American politics, to the presidency of the United States, the European Parliament launched an ambitious and innovative political campaign on Internet.

Several scholars have tackled the issue of Internet as a campaign tool, such as Gibson and Römmele (2009) who provide an overview of how political campaigning has changed over the years. The intensive use of Internet would fall under the "professional" campaign phase, where campaigning takes place on a continuous basis and contact with voters occurs in an interactive way. Much of the political campaigning among the parties takes place on the web. Cristian Vaccari (2009, p.17) points out that "internet electioneering seems to constitute a more equal competitive environment than other campaign realms such as mass media".

However, the Internet has also very much changed from the Web 1.0 world to the Web 2.0 one, and the analyses on political campaign in the new Internet era are still quite recent. Web 2.0 is the term used from 2004 onwards (and made popular by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty) to designate websites with a strong focus on user generated content, socialising, content sharing and interoperability; allowing non-experts to contribute to the web. As published by Maurice Vergeer, Liesbeth Hermans and Steven Sams (2010, p.2) in their analysis on microblogging on the

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European Parliament elections in the Netherlands, web 2.0 would *"not only potentially close the gap between politicians and the electorate but would also have the potential to close the digital divide between people in general and politicians in particular"*. In their analysis, they conclude that while the European Parliament elections of 2009 were the first elections where micro-blogging was used in official campaigning, "there are positive relations between the various blogging activity indicators and the number of votes". Nevertheless, "it draws people to a politician for whom they already have a preference" (p. 20).

Del Río (2012, pp.69-97) also analysed the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 and concluded that they are a "revolution" at the avant-garde of the European Union communication, and that this campaign has meant "the emergence of a new model of European communication based on communicating Europe to motivate participation"[39].

According to del Río's (2009) analysis, the institutional campaign of the European Parliament, "It's your choice", stimulates participation with innovative tools. It is important to distinguish this campaign from the ones of political parties. It is a transversal campaign for the 27 Member States. And is a common campaign because the European Parliament feels that there is already a space for European citizenship, which shares the same concerns and ideals for the future: it could even lead to think about a European demos. The main message is for the citizens to take a side. By choosing one option or the other, they are deciding over their future in the next five years.

The message of the EP elections campaign for 2009 revolved around the idea that Europe is very relevant for your everyday life and that voting completely influences one's future and this was considered a milestone in the marketing of Europe's political institutions with a very cohesive image and message. What were the formats used to spread the message and image? First, they went to the streets with billboards, 3-D installations, interactive multimedia studios, traditional media through TV and radio spots and, prominently, the use of Internet: viral videos to spread through the Internet obtained up to 300,000 hits on YouTube in three weeks. According to Lutz

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[39] "Durante la preparación para la campaña de las elecciones europeas 2009 la emergencia de un nuevo modelo de comunicación europea basado en comunicar Europa para motivar la participación se ha hecho visible".

Meyer (2010, 15) "around 55,000 community members linked themselves to the Parliament on its MySpace and Facebook profiles".

With this campaign, the European Parliament made its debut on social media by linking the European Parliament's MySpace page with the YouTube video platform and the Flickr photo gallery. In addition, they used web banners, the European Election's online campaign made good use of interactivity and the MySpace website offered a range of Web 2.0 applications. Another element of the online campaign was a virtual tour of the European Parliament's website. A Navigator guided users from web banners to the most relevant information on the European Elections (from background knowledge about the institutions to ten good reasons why you should make use of your right to vote).

All visual elements of the campaign –posters, audio-visual products, logos, etc.- were downloadable so that everyone could use them, enabling the possibility of a real viral campaign[40]. Indeed, both conventional and online communication channels such as blogs picked up the campaign. Even some leading media mentioned the innovation of the EP campaign with headlines such as the one in the Financial Times "Parliament's online quest for excitement", with the sub-title "the cool new kid on MySpace", referring to the European Parliament's profile on the social media platform. It can be said that the innovation of the campaign was news itself.

As Meyer (2010, p.25) analysed, "it therefore relied mainly on unconventional PR instruments instead of expensive advertising, and offered contents that the media could use and disseminate for free. The strategy certainly paid off". This could well be interpreted as being a pioneer in using the benefits that web communication allow and set the precedents for the boom to come from social media, which were fully used in the EP elections campaign in 2014 analysed in the next section.

The European Parliament showed its will and courage to be innovative and fully use the possibilities offered by web technologies for encouraging Europeans to vote. It can be said that the European Parliament soon acknowledged the vital role of Internet for a direct communication between citizens.

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[40] All the graphical elements for the campaign can still be downloadable on this website http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections_2009_package/

"The big difference between access and utilisation of these networks by a significant portion of society in 2009 and 2014 has logically meant a re-adaption of communications policy by European institutions" (Duch, 2014). In parallel, the European Parliament favoured instruments that can give access to citizens to its everyday policy making, either through web streaming (often live) or through the development of websites offering most of the working documents and legal texts of the parliamentary work.

All in all, it is clear that Internet has to be fully exploited by European institutions to communicate directly with citizens and that it has the potential to be a fully unmediated space for deliberation and debate. Del Río (2012, 69-97) highlights the challenges that this channel caters for: it is important that people use the domain *eu,* an easily identifiable European symbol; information should be provided in a real and tangible way so it does not seem a "virtual process" which only takes place on the screens; institutions should be courageous and give in control over the message; transmit realist messages in its "European version": we are all part of Europe; realise that the human aspect and solidarity is what touches everyone: online communication should be humanised; online interaction can be somehow chaotic and interactive: some order is needed in the communication.

The strengthening of the European Parliament in the Treaty of Lisbon has resulted in citizens being empowered and their participation becoming more important. Internet also allows for citizens to have their say in an easier and more direct way with institutions: they are now more empowered than ever to participate in the dialogue with the EU actors. As del Río (2012, 69-97) points out: "Citizens become 'integrators' in this new communication network that is boosting a new phase of European integration"[41].

Beyond doubt, the massive presence of European citizens in social tools meant that European institutions had to adapt to this new reality. As Duch (2014, p. 26) points out, "The dilemma between representative democracy and participatory democracy begins to not be much of a dilemma. With its activism in social networks, a growing part of society is finding a way of joining together both ways of managing

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[41] "Los ciudadanos se convierten en 'ciudadanos integradores' en esta nueva comunicación en red que impulse una nueva etapa de la integración europea."

democracy". Duch mentions the need of "co-responsibilisation" of citizens in the next phase of the European Union.

In these times, in which the European Union is open to embrace participation from citizens and the possibilities of direct dialogue via Internet, citizens, with rights and responsibilities, need to develop their responsibilities. As Del Río (2014, p. 145) points out "we can incorporate an interlinked concept that is related to an improvement in the democratic quality of the EU contributing to the configuration of a new European policy. This interlinked concept is "responsible Citizens". For Del Río, the change of model presented since the 2009 campaign means an important precedent to consolidate a European communication policy (p. 147).

5.4. Social media

Social media is the term used for online channels created to share information and opinions, promote debate and build relationships. They are very powerful because they enable reaching out directly to stakeholders and citizens. For public institutions social media are important because through targeting 'multipliers', respected communicators in different areas can be followed by many stakeholders and the messages get better coverage. 'Multipliers' (also called "influencers") are often journalists, bloggers, researchers or representatives of civil society organisations.

Social media networks have entered into the communication scenario and the number of users of the different platforms has increased extraordinarily: According to Qualman[42]: it is the number one activity on the web. Some remarkable figures from this social media analyst show the way they have significantly changed the Communication landscape: Facebook added 100 million users in nine months and more than 1.5 million items of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, photos, etc.) are shared daily on Facebook.

The way in which we receive and perceive information has also been radically transformed: social media promotes peer-to-peer communication, information is

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[42] The figures of his study are constantly updated on http://www.socialnomics.net

received immediately and it is often the user who chooses its source of information through his/her own contacts.

Undoubtedly, the presence of traditional mass media has suffered negatively from the surge of this new media, through which users can access information in an easy and fast way. The largest newspapers, while facing record declines in circulation as described in the previous section, had to adapt to the new situation. On 12 May 2015, Facebook announced that it would be directly posting news from nine of the largest newspapers, four out of the nine were from Europe: The New York Times, National Geographic, BuzzFeed, NBC, The Atlantic, The Guardian, BBC News, Spiegel and Bild[43]. Will this partnership mean a step forward for a hybrid way of communication between the traditional mass media and the social media networks? All in all, social media means a tremendous shift in the way we communicate with each other and how we get information.

A study from the European Parliament Research Service acknowledges that social media can be used "to broaden political participation by helping citizens to communicate with their representatives and with each other" (Davies, 2014). As a matter of fact and as commented in chapter one, the perceived disengagement of citizens to politics in the European Union (with lower participation in time) and the negative opinions shown in the Eurobarometer, as stated in chapter four, could be overcome by using the possibilities these new channels offers. The study lists several clear advantages of this tool for political campaigning such as allowing candidates to communicate directly with citizens, keeping control of the content, distribution and timing of their messages, without intermediaries, indirectly influencing the stories that mass media present, targeting young people, helping mobilize offline events and creating a multiplier effect (that can even go "viral") through acquaintances (stronger than through someone you do not know).

The study also points out that sentiments in social media, as a part of disadvantages, can change rapidly and that the opinions expressed online do not necessarily match

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[43] In the post where Facebook announced the launch of "instant articles", it was explained that "Fundamentally, this is a tool that enables publishers to provide a better experience for their readers on Facebook (…) "Instant Articles lets them deliver fast, interactive articles while maintaining control of their content and business models". The post can be fully read at: http://media.fb.com/2015/05/12/instantarticles/

with general public opinion, they often undermine serious deliberation, encouraging simplistic and populist messages and eluding responsibility. It is still to be seen whether social media are effective in mobilising those who are committed to be online in the real world, or the ones whose participation in political life is limited to commenting or posting on social media networks.

As pointed out in chapter two, social media have also played an important role not only in political campaigning (well exemplified in the case of Barack Obama arriving to the US presidency) but also as a coordinating tool for nearly all of the world's latest political and social movements (as is the case of the Arab Spring movement in the Middle East, Occupation of Wall Street in the US, the Spanish 15-M movement or the worldwide cry "Bring Back our Girls" for the kidnapped girls by Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria). Indeed, according to Shirky (2011, 14-15), the potential of social media lies mainly in being a support for civil society and the public sphere. The most promising way to think about social media is as a long-term tool that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere. Shirky considers propagating messages and coordinating actions through social media as part of all future political movements. The instrumental role of online networks in the dissemination of protest information and collective action was confirmed by the study of Gonzalez-Bailon, Sandra and Wang, Ning (2013). Several studies of the different worldwide movements such as: the Occupy Wall Street Movement by Alessandro Flammini, the protests in Tahrir Square by Zeynep Tufekci1 & Christopher Wilson or the European mass protest between December 2009 and June 2011 by Eva Anduiza[44], have been published.

In this scenario, how then are the EU institutions using social Media to reach their audiences and foster political debate and participation?

Figures in Europe speak for themselves: according to Eurostat data, in 2014, 46% of EU citizens were using Internet for participating in social networks[45]. Therefore, using social media for dialogue with citizens is not a possibility anymore: it is a

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[44] All these studies were presented in the framework of an academic conference in New York University: http://www.lapietradialogues.org/dialogues_sch.php?id=90

[45] The Eurostat table with figures can be checked at:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tin00127&plugin=1

must.

In 2011, the European Commission acknowledged that Social media have earned their rightful place in the media mix by creating a *Social Media Network* to ensure a consistent and coherent presence of the European Commission on social media. The team was composed of Commissioners, Spokespersons, Heads of Representations and Press Officers in the Commission Representations in the different Member States who are entitled to speak on behalf of the European Commission as well as mandated staff that gives support and assistance. DG COMM will be coordinating and supervising this process. The General Principles establishing responsibilities, purpose, target groups and social media channels for the *Social Media Network* and main channels have been drafted and circulated among Commission staff.

The social media experience in the Commission starts with the acknowledgement that they can be used as a dissemination channel for promoting their websites, as information and campaigning tools to obtain feedback and as a channel for official/political communication. DG COMM set up the blog http://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_2010-2014/blogs/waltzing_matilda/ (archived at the end of 2014) to share all the experience and knowledge on Social Media live between 2010 and 2014. The Vice President and Commissioner responsible for Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes' presence in Social Media through Facebook, Twitter and Flicker is currently very strong.

On 11 August 2011, DG COMM built an inter-institutional page listing where EU can be found on social media. The list of channels and EU bodies present on social media is increasing over time and being updated accordingly: http://europa.eu/contact/social-networks/index_en.htm.

The European Commission also prepares Social Media Guidelines for All Staff[46], by defining social media as online technologies and practices to share content, opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships. Social media services and tools involve a combination of technology, telecommunications and social interaction. They can use a variety of formats, including text, pictures, audio and video.

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[46] The guidelines can be checked at: http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/docs/guidelines_social_media_en.pdf

Once the core principles for presence on Social Media are defined, all EU staff will be able to participate in social media, in their own personal capacity where statements and opinions will remain personal and cannot be regarded as representing the Commission's official position.

As described in the previous section, the European Parliament is the institution which has actually placed its bets on the new web technologies and therefore on social media channels. Since the June 2009 elections, the use of social media networks by the European Parliament has become part of DG COMM's core tasks and it is now present on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace, Youtube (EUtube Channel) and the blog "Writing for y(EU)" (also until 2014) where the web team of the European Parliament talks about Communication and digital media.

The European Parliament has on a day-to-day basis proven to be innovative and accountable towards the citizens' right to know. It has increased citizen's knowledge of the European Parliament and its work, is open to citizens and provides objective and non-partisan information. To that end, the professionals working in the European Parliament are ready to be more informal than traditionally (through press conferences and press releases), and are prepared to accept loss of control over the message and be courageous while remaining professional.

The results speak for themselves. In Facebook, the European Parliament has achieved a fan base of 1.664.735 (while that of the European Commission stands at 438.692); and on Twitter the following is 95,200. For the European Parliament, the only institution whose members are directly elected by the citizens, having a solid presence on social media means being where people are, participating and creating public debate on European issues, while informing about the EP's activities and legislative process and enabling a consistent high-quality experience of European online debate and interaction. Through its social media networks, the European Union institutions are building a community through which content is shared. (I would link this idea with the quotation below):

"That people can now influence political decisions beyond elections is not even a subject of discussion anymore" (Duch, 2014). The EP Spokesperson mentions the case of the decision of the European Parliament of not ratifying the Anti-

Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). The social pressure exerted through the social media, often without the participation of stable organisations behind, influenced enough so that MEPs would end up rejecting the text. Duch also considers that the real time dialogue that takes place between policy makers and citizens can only be enriching for democracy.

The European Parliament has been leading the presence of institutions in social media the Commission and the rest of EU bodies are following. Little by little, an understanding is being built on how social media operate and more effort is being made on professionalisation. In this line, EU institutions have realised that social media are not another channel for "publishing" information, but a means for listening to public opinion in real time and establishing a dialogue between policy makers and citizens, giving citizens the possibility to influence decisions being taken. Social media are the opportunity for creating a public sphere, a community, in an unmediated manner where "direct contact" with the person is becoming more important than ever. Yet, it is it is a long-term exercise: connections and dialogues are built on trust, and trust is not built in one day.

In the 2014 elections, the European Parliament fully used social media as a channel for its communication campaign, by creating more than 80 official Twitter accounts and tweeting in the 24 languages of the EU member states[47]. In her article, Veronika Horvath analysed that there was a sound difference between the 2009 and 2014 campaigns, with a higher number of European Parliament members having a Twitter account and the widespread usage of the hashtag #EP2014. However, she also highlighted that social media are still being used by a small number of heavy users, perhaps the ones that are already engaged in politics offline.

An important aspect of communicating with social media is the measurement of its activity. Monitoring the social media channels provides institutions with very valuable information about what European citizens think. The messages and accounts that receive more feedback probably reflect issues that are of most interest to EU citizens. Social media gives a huge amount of information about the reactions of citizens and what it is more, in an immediate manner. The noteworthy correlation

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[47] More info on this analysis can be found at http://www.rand.org/blog/2014/05/how-wired-are-the-2014-european-elections.html

between social media and the results of traditional mass surveys, as well as the important capacity of social media to forecast electoral results, was analysed in depth by Ceron, Curini, Iacus and Porro (2014). As a matter of fact, social media provide an enormous amount of data and information as there are millions of users recording what they are thinking on a daily basis in their networks.

There are nevertheless big challenges on how to make this new challenge work for EU institutions. The stimuli to which users are exposed to have not stopped increasing. Users, on a daily basis, quickly scroll through information on either their computer or their mobile screen. Most visual and appealing content catches everyone's attention in a forceful competition and EU institutions are not always the best in speaking the Internet language. "Users look for rich media posts and infographics, images and videos, brief teasers and statements, but instead, the EU often offers reports, publications, data, conferences and events," said Iñaki López Martín, from the European Maritime Safety Agency.

Even for campaigning purposes there are still some reserves. A study of the EP elections in 2009 revealed that less than 5% reported being contacted by a political campaigner on social media (De Vreese et al., 2010). Indeed, social media can be a complementary instrument in a political campaign but it will not by itself convince politically uninterested citizens to vote due to their self-selection nature, i.e., there is no authoritative voice mediating the messages. It can thus be said that social media are yet another channel through which political parties can communicate their message. As an illustration for the case of Twitter, the study of Barberá (2015) exemplifies that the resulting positions of the party accounts on this social network are highly correlated with offline measures based on their voting history and their manifestos and Twitter exchanges (in particular, the author used as a case study the 2012 US presidential campaign) take place mainly among users with similar standing points.

Nowadays, together with the institutional accounts, the main leaders of each institution (the President of the European Council, Commissioners, the President of the European Parliament) are provided with personal accounts through which they can engage in conversations with anyone willing to reach to them. All Commissioners now have a Communication adviser in their cabinet who is often in charge of social media, since it

has become a priority for the communication activities in the DGs. Commission officials working in Communication reveal that the will of both Barroso's and Juncker's Commission is to improve online implementation, in order to achieve a more consistent online presence and measure the impact on Communication. In parallel to the social media presence, an evaluation culture has also been developed in Communication through the creation of key performance indicators that are already giving much information about the specific performance of institutions on social media.

5.5. Chapter conclusions

The deep transformation experienced by the communication scenario with the onset of Internet and social media has resulted in an adaptation of public authorities to the new channels. The traditional mass media, radio, television and newspaper nowadays share information provision with online channels such as websites, blogs and social media.

However, it can be said that Habermas' identification of media and politicians as the two main actors for the formation of public opinion can be challenged. Mass media still have an important role to play in our societies. The development of the Internet and social media is transforming mass media, which are beginning to carve their own niche within the new communication landscape.

Regarding the role of European mass media in public opinion formation of the European Union, studies like the one by Hans-Jörg Trenz (2007) show that, traditional media in general, and the main newspapers, radios and televisions at national level in particular, have been promoters of European integration. However, they have not perceived themselves as "leading" or participating in the political debate but rather as "representing" what was going on (Statham, 2008). What is interesting is to learn from the studies in which journalists show how they perceive the European Union as an information provider, is that nowadays, communication officers and spokespeople working in the EU institutions are meeting their professional demands and standards.

Regarding the transformation of mass media, there seems to be an emergence of transnational investigative journalism (Meyer, 2000) and Data Driven Journalism. The European Union can tap into the media scene and use the opportunity to be the main provider of European data and information. In such a globalised and interconnected world, the European Union holds a privileged position undertake analysis, provide transnational and comparative data and analyses and to propose innovative initiatives to address the communication needs that affect citizens' problems and situations beyond borders. In this new composition of actors within the communication scenario, the European Union should take the lead, by being courageous and working together with journalists to provide a European perspective of what is going on in Europe, in a responsible and rigorous manner.

Internet is an unmediated channel that permits direct interaction between institutions and citizens without national frames. Additionally, "it does offer the possibility of an all-inclusive, democratic public sphere," Michailidou (2012, 53). The European Union, with a 76.5% Internet penetration in the European Union territory, must make full use of the opportunities that Internet offers to communicate. Internet has to become a priority in a consistent manner and with a long-term perspective. The important weight that Internet has for the European Union is shown in the development of the Digital Agenda and the major role of the website *europa.eu*.

46% of EU citizens use Internet to participate in social networks[48]. The European Parliament has been the pioneer of social media employment with its Europe wide campaign for European Parliament elections in 2009 and it is now fully using social media for its communication. It can be said beyond doubt that the opinions of citizens transmitted in real time to decision makers can now affect decisions that are being taken. From its part, the European Commission has reacted to the emergence of social media and has developed guidelines for staff members on social media and has created a dedicated team in each DG in charge of managing its social media networks.

All in all, social media have proven to be an important instrument for encouraging political debate and participation, as well as, a good source of data and information.

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[48] The Eurostat table with figures can be checked at:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tin00127&plugin=1

European Union institutions will have to be determined in setting them as a priority if they want to connect with citizens to deliberate and provide information by using the channels that citizens themselves use. Times have changed: European citizens are giving their opinions and participating in political debates as well in cyberspace and this is where EU institutions should be, they have become "integrators" (Del Río, 2012) in this new communication in networks that is boosting a new phase of European integration. The participation and commitment from citizens will be the force driving the European Union to the next level.

The following chapter will address how mass media, Internet and social media channels are used in the case of the Common Fisheries Policy reform, through a case study which will asses and illustrate the theoretical contributions of this debate.

6. A message. The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

6.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the message, which is one of the four communication model elements used as methodology in this thesis. In this case, the message is the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, one of the six exclusive competences of the European Union, whose objective is the sustainable exploitation of marine resources. How does the European Union actually communicate about a specific European policy? How does it turn the policy content into communication messages? This are questions that will be addressed in this chapter.

The Common Fisheries Policy is a historical policy of the European Union. Its origin dates back to 1970. The development of the fisheries policy goes hand in hand with two important processes. Firstly, at the international level, Environment and Sustainable Development are getting high on the political agenda and so is the angle from which to approach a wide range of policies. The focus on sustainability underscores the interdependencies between different policy areas: First and foremost, the Common Fisheries Policy safeguards the sustainable exploitation of marine resources and profitably from the economic perspective, based on scientific assessment. Secondly, a culture of debate, participation and communication in EU policy-making, as illustrated in chapters three and four is being developed in the European Union, and the Common Fisheries Policy illustrates how the views of civil society are becoming part of policymaking and that its consultation is a structural part of a new governance method.

The Common Fisheries Policy, as an important policy in the framework of Sustainable Development, can enhance EU legitimisation, and therefore its communication must be taken very seriously. As mentioned by Dolgui (2009, 57) in chapter one, EU's legitimacy is enhanced when it is identified with solutions that actually secure certain otherwise unattainable goals. Sustainable environment is one

of the objectives mentioned by this author. If the EU is not improving an ecological problem, there can be a lack of legitimacy towards the EU.

Communication is essential to emphasise the need for supporting a sustainable environment, healthy oceans and marine resource towards citizens. Yet, sustainability goes in both directions. Connecting with citizens, indeed, constitutes, according to Susana del Río, "one of the solid indicators of institutional 'sustainability' to give credibility to the European project in the citizens landscape and in its everyday life" (2008, p.32)[49].

By analysing the communication campaigns of the last reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, the thesis aims at describing the mechanisms that were deployed to connect the EU institutions with the citizens and stakeholders in order to improve legitimation, understanding and acceptance of this relevant European policy.

This analysis will be carried out following the same method as in the general analysis of European Union communication, so that this case study can illustrate the theoretical and methodological contribution of this thesis. Consequently, this chapter is structured as follows: Section 6.2 explains the message itself: the Common Fisheries Policy from its origin until its latest reform, as a participatory process at the heart of the Sustainable Development concept; section 6.3 addresses the EU institutions as transmitters of information and analyses the communication campaigns of the latest reform; section 6.4 examines the different publics with an analysis of the stakeholders involved and the identified target audiences; section 6.5 elaborates upon the channels used to cummunicate the reform of the CFP: traditional and online media. Finally, there is a general conclusion of the chapter which wraps up the case study.

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[49] In her original words, "la capacidad de conectar con los ciudadanos constituye uno de los indicadores sólidos de la 'sostenibilidad' institucional europea para dar credibilidad al proyecto europeo en el paisaje de los ciudadanos y en su día a día".

6.2.The Common Fisheries Policy over the years and the main elements of the reform: A participatory process in the framework of Sustainable Development

The Common Fisheries Policy is one of the first European Union policies. Its objective is to regulate the management of a common natural resource and of one of the most traditional jobs in the continent that represent many different interests across territories. The first Community measures for the fisheries sector were established in 1970, when the six original Member States agreed that EU fishermen should have equal access to Member States' waters. Yet, the measures were limited in scope.

After hard negotiations, the Common Fisheries Policy saw light in 1983 when Regulation (EEC) No 170/83 was adopted, which established a common regime for fishing resources[50]. Member States agreed to grant free mutual access to each other's waters within the 200-mile limit and to look after and preserve their traditional fishing grounds and practices. However, Member States decided to keep the 12 miles strip of coastal waters exclusive to their own fleets. TACs (total allowable catches) and quotas were introduced[51] and the concept of relative stability was also agreed[52]. Under this system, Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for each stock are fixed based on historic rights [53].

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[50] The EU committed to the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), the sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea over which a state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources extending to 200 nautical miles from their coastline.

[51] This means that for all species subject to overfishing, TACs are fixed by an annual decision of the Council of Ministers. They are divided into quotas for each Member State.

[52] More information on the origins of the Common Fisheries Policy can be read both on the European Parliament website http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.3.1.html and on the European Commission User's Guides: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcp2008_en.pdf

[53] The objective is to avoid repeated arguments on how quotas should be allocated, and to provide fishermen with a stable environment. Since then, there are critical voices to this system arguing about its incompatibility with a full Single Market.

In 1992, saw the adoption of a new regulation. The objective of Regulation No 3760/92 was to reduce the Community fleet and thus alleviate its social and economic impact through structural measures via the concept of 'fishing effort'. The whole idea was to acquire the right balance between the natural resource and the fishing capacity.

Right from the beginning, the Common Fisheries Policy reveals that the European Union is a playing field to negotiate committments between governments and social actors. In short, this policy illustrates that the EU is not only a transnational process but it is also based on negotiations in which each one defends their national, regional and local interests (Lequesne, 2005).

In parallel to the development of the fisheries policy, two important processes were developed. Firstly, at international level, Environment and Sustainable Development are scaling up high up on the political agenda and so is the angle from which a wide range of policies are approached. Sustainability lays emphasis on the interdependence of the different policy areas. Secondly, a culture of debate, participation and communication in EU policy-making (as indicated in chapter three) is being developed. The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002 incorporated these two processes and became a flagship policy for these two modern streams.

Regarding the global scenario, the concern for Environment and Sustainable Development has been on the international agenda for a long time. One of the most important benchmarks was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)[54], also known as the Rio Summit, Rio Conference or Earth Summit. It was a major UN Conference that took place from 3 to 14 June 1992 and set a global Environmental agenda from there onwards [55].

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[54] More information on the Summit can be found at http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html. It is interesting to read the precedent conference, the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972.

[55] Issues addressed included the scrutiny of production patterns such as toxic components, alternative sources of energy to replace use of fossil fuels which are linked to global climate change, new reliance on public transportation systems in order to reduce vehicle emissions or the growing scarcity of water. Two important achievements were the agreement on the Climate Change Convention that led to the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The importance of communication about and public participation in decision making and environmental issues is also underscored at the global level not only with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) but also with the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environment Matters (1998). Indeed, participatory democracy in science and environmental governance often builds on models of deliberative democracy of political theory (Phillips, Carvalho, & Doyle, 2012, p. 5).

The European Union has since long closely followed the global agenda on Environment and Sustainable Development. Sustainable development has been defined in different ways but the most frequently quoted definition is from Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report (1987): "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The definition of Sustainable Development that emerges from the Rio conference would be well grounded in all future policies of the European Union. As del Río points out, in the environmental field, collective policies of States should be two-fold: actions should be taken internally but also at global level (Del Río, 2008, p. 269).

From this moment onwards, the participation of civil society in the general EU decision-making processes, as described in chapter four, and concretely in the area of Sustainable Development, marked a new governance method, as illustrated in the process of the Intergovernmental Conference of 1996. In this process, the contribution from civil society and environmental NGOs has been decisive. In her study, Susana del Río (2008, pp. 250-251) writes about how environmental NGOs such as Climate Network Europe, European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E), Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace International European Unit and World Wide Fund for Nature –WWF, contributed to the Intergovernmental Conference of 1996 with the document "Greening the Treaty: Sustainable Development in a Democratic Union" This paper proposed that Sustainable Development should be the main objective of the European Union and that environmental considerations should be integrated confidently in other policies of the European Union and in the reduction (in interest

of the Environmental protection) of the democratic deficit of the European Union. In its contribution, they presented a proposal for the text of the Treaty, for each relevant article. It is interesting to see that NGOs

joined forces to make a united and strong contribution to the debate. It will be shown that this unity and joint alliances will be reflected in the case of the Common Fisheries Policy.

In this line, civil society made an important contribution to the Constitutional Convention that started its work in February 2002, both in terms of content and method. A Contact Group on Environment was created, whose moderator was Giorgios Kafitoris, member of the *Presidium* of the Convention and President of the Group on European Social Work. Fourteen registered organisations asked the European Union to prioritise Environment and Sustainable Development in the EU agenda. The main proposals of this Contact Group revolved around the inclusion of environmental rights in the Chart of Fundamental Rights, the right of animal welfare, the revision of agriculture policies, a quality food production, protection of health and environment and an adequate rural development. They also demanded that the Treaty include a provision on ample participation, open and relevant public opinion, extension of the transparency requirements to all EU institutions and bodies, end of secrecy in the Council and a bigger role to civil society (Del Río, 2008, p. 401).

On 28 October 2002, the Convention presented its Draft Constitutional Treaty, where the voice of civil society became very relevant on many important issues. The proposals of civil society were adopted in the draft of the European Constitution, fundamentally in the points related to the democratic life of the European Union in its article 34: the values, the need of a transparent system with participatory democracy and the acknowledgement of the role of civil society. The involvement of civil society in this constitutional process with new actors demonstrates a new policy making method in the European Union where the intergovernmental model is overcome (Del Río, 2008, p. 443).

The importance of the Environment as seen in the global scenario in the UN Conference and the involvement of civil society in policy making are two of the key features that defined the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002, which

changed profoundly. The objective clearly became a commitment to sustainable development of the fishing activity from an ecological, economic and social perspective, in accordance with policy developments in the international arena. The Community decided to apply a precautionary approach aimed at protecting and conserving these resources and at reducing the effect of fishing activity to a minimum on marine ecosystems. From 2002 onwards, the CFP undertook conservation measures (besides the already established TAQs) such as limitation of fishing effort, technical measures (related to fishing gears or minimum sizes) or the obligation to register catches and landings[56]. The pillars of this policy reform were included in the basic Council Regulation no 2371/2002.

Two pillars from the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy are fundamental for the communication and governance analysis in this thesis: the focus on Sustainability as the guiding principle of the policy, in line with the international agenda, and stakeholders' involvement[57] through the Regional Advisory Councils as a new method of communication and participation in the decision making process in line with the participatory method of civil society in policy making that was taking place at the general EU level. As explained above, first with the Intergovernmental Conference of 1996 and then with both the Convention elaborating the Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2000 and the Convention drafting the Constitutional Treaty in 2002-2003. The Regional Advisory Councils were established to advise the Commission on matters of fisheries management (Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002, Art 31). They are composed principally of fishermen and other representatives of interests affected by the CFP, such as representatives of the

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[56] In addition, the reform of 2002 introduced a long-term management strategy through multiannual plans for the recovery of several fishing grounds under the secured biological limits and the multiannual plans for other populations.

[57] The main measures were: in the first place, the creation of the European Fisheries Fund, the financial element of the CFP, which lasted from 2007 to 2013 and had an overall budget of around €3.800 million. Its objectives were to have a balance between the sustainability and capacity of the Community fishing fleet, the economic viability of the sector, the respect towards the environment, the adequate support to workers in the sector and the incentive of the sustainable development in the fisheries area. Secondly, another measure was the fleet management policy to reduce fishing capacity Athird measure included the common market organisation to balance market needs and fishermen interests, the relations with third countries to allow access to fisheries grounds in exchange for financial support towards a responsible and sustainable fisheries, the control and compliance of rules from Member States to comply with the rules through good inspection rules ensuring equalitarian treatment and, lastly, to reinforce controls with a view to creating the European Union Fisheries Control Agency to coordinate control activities from Member States.

fisheries and aquaculture sectors, environment and consumer organisations and scientific experts from all Member States having fisheries interests in the sea area or fishing zone concerned.

Nevertheless, in 2007 a special report from the European Court of Auditors[58] criticised deficiencies in the current system of control of both the Commission and Member States. The Court of Auditors' report read; there was the widespread belief that a reform was badly needed in the Common Fisheries Policy. The European Environment Agency claimed that overfishing had been a chronic problem for the European Union[59]. According to the EEA, the main failures of the CFP were overcapacity of the fleet, a lack of political will to follow through with implementation, a disregard of scientific advice and early warnings, the absence of clear objectives, and a decision-making system oriented towards short-term goals (EEA, 2014, p. 23).

In a general EU context, the Treaty of Lisbon was adopted in 2007 and entered into force in 2009. There are two important considerations in the Treaty regarding the Common Fisheries Policy. Firstly, the Common Fisheries Policy is declared one of the six exclusive EU competences. The Common Fisheries Policy is also one of the few policies implemented through direct administration via regulations (binding for Member States) and not directives (where Member States can "customise" community law), therefore the European Union has full competence over this policy. In addition, the Lisbon Treaty provides for co-decision (the ordinary legislative procedure) between the Council and the European Parliament for the Common Fisheries Policy as well as for EU membership of international fisheries conventions and the conclusion of agreements with third countries. The Lisbon Treaty has given the Parliament; the institution directly elected by the citizens, greater power to legislate, thus contributing to the shaping of the Common Fishing Policy and the

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[58] The Special Report No 7/2007 on the control, inspection and sanction systems relating to the rules on conservation of Community fisheries resource This report indicated that the Common Fisheries Policy, as defined in 1983 with the establishment of allowable catches and national quotas, needed a better system to make sure rules were fully complied.

[59] According to the EEA, only now, after 30 years of CFP implementation is there the first evidence that things are changing, with the visible improvement of the status of assessed fish stocks. In their analysis, the overfishing that took place for decades and other pressures, have affected the ecosystem structure and functioning. The lack of knowledge has furthermore created a challenge to ecosystem-based management

CFP rules[60].

These two considerations indicate the importance of fisheries management for the European Union. Indeed, fish is a common living resource that moves across borders and the management of fisheries is a complex policy that needs a comprehensive and transnational approach. In terms of its economic weight, fisheries are a historic industrial activity in European basins. It is the fifth largest producer worldwide and in terms of value, the European Union is the leading importer of fisheries and aquaculture products in the world[61]. The European Union has a big role worldwide in terms of fisheries conservation and management. Taking into account the economic, political and technical capacities of the EU, it has a great responsibility to ensure the sustainable exploitation of its fisheries resources. A reform is needed again.

In 2009 the European Commission analysed the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and issued the Green Paper on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. It concluded that despite progress made since the 2002 reform, the objectives to achieve sustainable fisheries in all its dimensions have not been met yet. The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers supported this conclusion. Between April 2009 and November 2010, a public debate was launched that received numerous contributions[62].

After a wide consultation with stakeholders, on 13 July 2011, the European Commission presented its proposal for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy[63]. The "reform package" was submitted to the European Parliament and Council for

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[60]   http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.3.1.html

[61] Furthermore, EU exports to third countries increased by 50% in value between 2009 and 2012 to reach EUR 4.1 billion. All statistical data regarding the specific weight in economic and social terms of the fishing industry can be found in this publication from the European Commission that it is continuously being updated: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcp_en.pdf

[62] Specific studies and evaluations were carried out which helped to identify the weaknesses needed to be addressed through the reform and confirm the overall assessment of the Green Paper.

[63] The "reform package" consisted of the following components: a legislative proposal for a new Regulation setting out the main rules of the CFP, a legislative proposal for a new Market Policy, a Communication on the external dimension of the CFP and an overarching communication explaining the links between the above. The European Commission Communication on the need for a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy started from an analysis of overcapacity (too many vessels) and overfishing. The Commission objective was that the report would help implement the Europe 2020 Strategy, part of the Integrated Maritime Policy, to ensure more coherent policies for the EU's seas and coastal areas.

adoption under the co-decision procedure[64]. In April 2013, an amended proposal on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund of the European Parliament and of the Council was adopted.

Once again, just like in 2002, sustainability was at the heart of the proposed reform. The key concept is 'maximum sustainable yield' (MSY): the highest catch that can be safely taken year after year and which maintains the fish population size at maximum productivity. The Commission proposed that by 2015, stocks had to be exploited at sustainable levels, at their MSY[65].

In its memo of 2011, the European Commission announced the main elements of its proposal for a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy[66]. The most relevant issues

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[64] This process was also accompanied by Impact Assessments on the Common Fisheries Policy, the Common Market Organisation of the Markets and the Integrated Maritime Policy. All these documents can be consulted at the European Commission website on the subject: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/proposals/index_en.htm

[65] This objective was set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, and was adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, as a target the world should reach by 2015. According to the Commission Impact Assessment, if stocks were exploited in this way, stock sizes would increase by about 70% and overall catches would increase by around 17% The different studies on Impact Assessment can be consulted at the European Commission website at: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/impact_assessments_en.htm

[66]

The most relevant issues were a multi-annual ecosystem-based management following the precautionary principle to ensure that the impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are limited, therefore, multi-annual management plans should move from the current single-stock plans to fisheries-based plans; the banning of discards, i.e., the practice of throwing unwanted fish overboard estimated at 23% of total catches; a system of transferable catch shares, known as 'concessions', for vessels over 12 metres length, as support for small-scale fisheries, extending to 2022 the right of Member States to restrict fishing in a zone within 12 nautical miles of the coastline; development of sustainable aquaculture with a better framework that would increase production and supply of seafood in the EU; improve scientific knowledge with trustworthy and updated information about the state of marine resources; decentralised governance with Member States deciding on the actual implementing measures and with cooperation at the regional level; a new market policy to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU industry; improve the transparency of the markets; a simplified storage mechanism and new marketing standards on labelling, quality and traceability; an adapted financial instrument, taking international responsibility as almost 85% of the world's fish stocks for which information is available are reported as being either fully exploited or overexploited. According to the FAO, the EU is the world's largest importer of fisheries products in terms of value.
Moreover, Sustainable Fisheries Agreements (SFAs) would replace the existing Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and ensure that the exploitation of fishery resources takes place on the basis of sound scientific advice by only targeting surplus resources that the partner country cannot or does not want to fish..The proposal would be consistent with the EU's new control regime since 2010 and would integrate the basic elements of the control and enforcement regime for compliance with the rules of the CFP. In the light of the introduction to the landing obligation in order to avoid discards, the Commission proposed monitoring and control obligations, in particular, in relation to fully documented fishery, as well as pilot projects on new fisheries control technologies that could contribute to sustainable fishing.

were *inter alia* a multi-annual ecosystem-based management following the precautionary principle, the banning of discards, a system of transferable catch shares, known as 'concessions', and the development of a framework for sustainable aquaculture.

The Council and the European Parliament finally adopted the Common Fisheries Policy basic Regulation No 1380/2013 in December 2013[67]. The reform is structured in four main policy areas: fisheries management, the international policy, the market and trade policy and funding through the European Monitoring Fund. With regards to fisheries management, it was decided that stocks had to be exploited at sustainable levels, at their maximum sustainable yield (MSY) where possible by 2015, and at the latest by 2020. The gradual introduction and antry into force of the landing obligation, aimed at reducing unwanted catches and wasteful practices; meant a revolution in the way fishing was carried out until then: discarding fish caught for which fishermen did not have quotas was regular practice which caused much ecological damage. More importantly, the new CFP has overhauled its rules and management structure, through the introduction of regionalisation for fisheries management and an extensive stakeholder consultation. Other measures adopted were TACs and quotas, the rules on access to waters, the limitation of the fishing capacity of vessels and technical measures to regulate the use of gears. Multi-annual plans that often combine different management tools will be adopted and fisheries management will be based on data and scientific advice. Additionally control measures will be introduced to ensure that rules are applied fairly and complied with by all fishermen[68]. In its final communication on the Common Fisheries Policy, the

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The memo can be consulted at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-503_en.htm?locale=en

[67] More information on the adopted Common Fisheries Reform can be found on the European Commission website at: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/index_en.htm

[68] In addition, the international dimension of the CFP is crucial since more than a quarter of the fish caught by European fishing boats are actually taken from outside EU waters. Around 8% of EU catches (2004-06) are made under fishing agreements with countries outside the EU, while another 20% are taken on the high seas, mainly in regions under the care of regional fisheries management organisations. This involves developing and implementing policy on fisheries management and – more generally – on the Law of the Sea (UN). Regarding the Common Organisation of Markets, the EU policy for managing the market in fishery and aquaculture products is yet another pillar of the Common Fisheries Policy. The main areas covered by the scheme are: organisation of the market through producer organisations, setting marketing standards, ensuring consumer information and setting competition rules. Finally, for Funding, the European Maritime Fisheries Fund is the fund for

European Parliament highlights very similar aspects to the ones underscored by the European Commission on its communication[69]:

An interesting aspect is that when the new College of Commissioners entered into office at the end of 2014, the portfolios of Environment and Fisheries have been merged, being Karmenu Vella the first Commissioner for both Environment and Maritime and Fisheries: a political declaration on the angle from which Fisheries has positioned itself within the EU institutions. In addition, it has launched the public consultation on the Ocean Governance in June 2015[70], as well starting a participatory debate with civil society and stakeholders.

6.3. The EU institutions' communication on the Common Fisheries Policy reform of 2013

According to the European Environment Agency, the Common Fisheries Policy is a sound example of participatory policy development, with massive, organised citizen engagement involved in reforming the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which

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the EU's maritime and fisheries policies for 2014-2020. It is one of the five European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds that complement each other and seek to promote a growth and job based recovery in Europe. It helps fishermen in the transition to sustainable fishing, supports coastal communities in diversifying their economies, finances projects that create new jobs and improves quality of life along European coasts and makes it easier for applicants to access financing.

[69] These are the Multiannual ecosystem-based management plans to strengthen the multiannual ones from the previous reform; the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), to comply with the international commitments, such as the 2002 Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development (where possible by 2015, and by 2020 at the latest); the Discard Ban: by 2019 all EU fisheries will be implementing the new discard policy; the obligation to adjust fleet capacity by drawing up plans; attention to small-scale fisheries, with the exclusion zone of 12 nautical miles for traditional fleets is to be extended until 2022; rules governing the activities of EU fishing fleets in third-country and international waters; sustainable aquaculture with the double objective of increasing yields to supply the EU fish market and boosting growth in coastal and rural areas and new obligations that require Member States to reinforce the role of science in the future CFP by increasing the collection of data and sharing of information on stocks, fleets and the impact of fishing activities.
The information from the European Parliament on the reform together with background information can be found on the following website:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.3.1.html. At the moment of the adoption, the European Parliament issued the following messages:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131206BKG30078/html/Common-Fisheries-Policy-reform

[70] The Ocean Governance public consultation can be read at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/vella/announcements/announcement-ocean-governance-public-consultation-and-listening-tour-world-ocean-summit-lisbon-4_en

proved to be fundamental for the outcome for the new CFP (EEA, 2014 p. 25).

In the following sections, an analysis will be made following the proposed communication model of this thesis, regarding how concretely the communication between the EU institutions and particularly the European Commission, as the main EU executive body, took place with stakeholders and target audiences during the last Common Fisheries Policy reform. The analysis addresses all stages of policymaking: the adoption of the Green Paper in 2009 with the subsequent open consultation, the adoption of the Commission's Communication on the CFP reform in 2011, the debate that followed until it was adopted in December 2013 by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers and, finally, the communication on the implementation of the policy, the so called Omnibus Regulation.

As explained in the previous section, the Common Fisheries Policy is one of the six exclusive competences of the European Union. and has full capacity to communicate. In the previous section, the content of the reform was summarised in light of its participatory dimension. In this section, the analysis will focus on EU institutions as information transmitters, specifically in the case of the latest Common Fisheries Policy reform. EU institutions, and particularly the European Commission, are establishing a dialogue with both stakeholders and citizens about this important reform. How did the Commission communicate this? In the case of the CFP, the European Commission drafted the first proposal of the policy and had the legal initiative. Furthermore, it is responsible for ensuring that Member States are implementing the policy in accordance with the legislation. The European Commission communication on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy can be divided into three phases as follows:

- In 2009, the European Commission published the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and it opened a period of consultation. This consultation will be analysed, as an illustration of the debate and participatory model of the EU described in chapter four and in the previous section.
- In 2011, the Commission launched its communication on the reform and thereafter launched a communication campaign prior to the adoption of the CFP by the Council and the European Parliament in 2013.
- In 2013, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the reform of the

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Common Fisheries Policy and the Commission launched a communication campaign following such adoption, which was evaluated in 2013.

These three phases are analysed in specific subsections, each corresponding to the elements of the proposed model. Section 6.3 analyses the EU and particularly the Commission, as transmitters of information. In the case of the communication campaigns of 2011 and 2013, the main messages and strategies of the campaign are examined. Section 6.4 analyses stakeholders and section 6.5 analyses the channel.

6.3.1. Publication of the Green Paper by the Commission in 2009 and consultation period

In 2009, the European Commission published the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and opened a wide consultation with stakeholders on the orientation of the policy, thereby receiving a large number of contributions. A total of 382 contributions (as well as a mass email of 1329 identical responses) were received. The Commission organised meetings with stakeholders, Administrations of coastal Member States, and other organisations and entities. A large number of meetings took place in 2009 to consult on the Common Fisheries Policy reform. In total, there were 35 meetings with Member States Fisheries Administrations, 32 with Member States Administrations other than fisheries, regions and other events, 12 with EU institutions, 43 with stakeholders, including NGOs and 7 external events. The list of meetings was published by the European Commission in line with its principle of full transparency.

The Synthesis of the Consultation on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy published by the European Commission outlines the main items included in the Green Paper and the assessments from the stakeholders. These are grouped under two main headings: "Overcoming the five structural failings of the policy" (which are identified as overcapacity, lack of prioritisation of policy objectives, focus on short-term principles, deficient responsibility from the industry and not enough compliance culture) and "Further improving the management of EU fisheries" (tackling different issues such as the need for a separated regime to protect the small-

scale coastal fleet, MSY for 2015, relative stability, strengthening the role of producers organisations and the Common Organisation of the Markets, integrating the CFP under the Integrated Maritime Policy, improve scientific knowledge, an external dimension with more involvement of the European Union into the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and support to Aquaculture).

A number of contributions, including from the European Parliament, called for the social dimension of the policy and the value of recreational fisheries. Regarding citizens contributions, many asked for stoppage of overfishing, elimination of subsidies and prohibition of destructive gears and a discard ban. Some advocated following scientific advice when setting TAC and mentioning the need for fleet reduction, more control, saving of the reefs and safeguarding artisanal fisheries. There were also a few contributions that called for elimination of the CFP and going back to the 200-miles zone under MS competence, and/or re-nationalisation of the fisheries policy. Two types of mass e- mails were received: a limited number that called for permanent marine reserves of up to 40% of the Community waters combined with a call to ban destructive trawling and to eliminate discards and by-catch. A second mass e-mail collection insisted that too many fishermen were catching too much fish, with the following policy proposals: fleet reduction by at least 50%, respect of scientific advice, creation of a network of MPA, prohibition of destructive fishing methods, a discards ban, and obligation to extensive product and production information for the consumer.

Section 6.4 analyses the stakeholders of the Common Fisheries Policy and assesses these contributions from the point of view of their authors.

6.3.2. The Commission publishes its Communication on the campaign and launches a communication campaign in 2011

The European Commission conceived a communication campaign after publishing the Green Paper on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and publishing all contributions on the website: www.europa.eu, in a very transparent exercise. In order to make strategic decisions, A steering group, was created, composed of the Director

General of DG MARE, the Director of Direction A, the spokesperson of the Commissioner of Maritime and Fisheries Affairs, the Head of Unit of Information, Communication and Inter-institutional Relations and its Deputy Head of Unit. The campaign kicked off in February 2011.

The concept paper of the campaign[71] concluded that a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy was badly needed and that there was an opportunity to construct the reputation of the European Commission as guardian of the seas. In its situation analysis, the European Commission realised that it was important not to upset the fishing industry with the campaign, and therefore messages had to be carefully crafted.

The concept paper on the campaign lists some of the most outstanding campaigns on sustainability issues such as the celebrity involvement campaign of Isabelle Lövin or Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall in the UK, the bluefin tuna campaign (of the Commission and EFCA), films such as HOME, by Yann Arthus Bertrand or The End of the Line, public campaigns in the run up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit, social media campaigns run by fish2fork restaurant guide or grassroot campaigns of the CFP reform. The Commission's assessment in its concept paper acknowledged that general public awareness on sustainability issues was just in its initial stage. Conservation issues were on the public arena thanks to international NGO campaigns. Campaigns on nature, biodiversity, conservation or sustainability had had a certain impact meaning that there were people already well aware about environmental issues.

Chapter four developed the process and manner in which civil society contributed to the EU's first order political processes. An example of how a civil society communication campaign shaped a specific policy is the Fish fight campaign against the idea of discarding fish that started in October 2010 in the UK and, according to an Ocean2012 Coalition spokesperson, is what gave the Commissioner the idea of including the landing obligation as one of the key features of the Common Fisheries Policy. The chief, broadcaster and campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstal launched the campaign Fish fight. As he wrote on his website: "He was appalled at how much

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[71] The concept paper was drafted by the contractor in charge of carrying out the campaign, MOSTRA, called "A Citizen Awareness Campaign to support CFP reform. Strategy", is on 15 February 2011, following the modifications requested by the Commission on 7 February 2011.

edible fish was being caught in the north sea, and then thrown back overboard, dead, because of crazy EU laws". The reach of the campaign was enormous. 870 000 people from 195 countries added their name to the petition, 225 000 emails were sent and 22 000 tweets were posted to MEPs. Germany, France and Spain launched their own campaigns. Was this campaign from a cook an inspiration as well for the Commission to target consumers in their approach? It could well have been.

In this sense, Kohler-Koch's premise mentioned in chapter four would be confirmed as for him, "the function of civil society is to feed public debate with the full range of pertinent pragmatic and moral reasons and it is the function of the representative institutions to guarantee effective exercise of communicative rights, to absorb the deliberations of public discourse and to channel them into legislative decision-making" (2006, p.11). In this sense, civil society was indeed exercising its rights and communicating a pertinent message and the European institutions, through the European Commission, would be introducing them into the legislation.

The key message of the Commission campaign was "The EU takes action to protect the future of fish. Your choice matters. (As a consumer,) be more demanding". The explanation is the following:

> The EU is working for better and sustainable management of fish. Fish is a natural resource belonging to everyone and therefore needs to be managed globally, taking into account all actors. The EU issues European policies, sets strict rules to tackle the over-exploitation of the seas and keeps an overarching view on this challenging issue. Within this process, your everyday choice matters. We need your support, in order to make sure our children will still be able to eat fish in the future. We are all in this together. So today, when choosing fish for you and your family, demand information to make "the sustainable choice (MOSTRA, 2011, p.11).

The secondary messages are that "Fish is a common good", "Diversifying your consumption of sustainable fish is good for your health –and for biodiversity" and "To support sustainable fisheries".

The main aim of the campaign was to engage with citizens/consumers with a positive message on the CFP reform by persuading people that their fish/seafood purchasing

choices can make a difference and engage them to demand access to clear information about the fish they eat with the questions like "How do you choose?" and "How do you go about buying your fish?" prompting the answer "When buying your fish, think sustainable".

As can be seen from the main message of this campaign "How do you choose?" on responsible consumption, it clearly reminds one of the message from the 2009 European Parliament elections campaign (analysed in chapter five) with the motto "It's your choice", trying to address European citizens in general to position themselves with respect to some of their everyday decisions, such as labelling, highlighted the idea that Europe is very relevant for your everyday's life.

At this stage of the debate, the Commission had already published their Communication but the European Parliament and the Council still had to position themselves with respect to the reform. One can therefore question the relevance of such a general message about the campaign addressed to end consumers, instead of informing them about the most relevant aspects of the reform, such as the landing obligation or the Maximum Sustainable Yield. In this first campaign, it becomes evident that there is a mismatch between the political content of the reform and the broad communication messages of the campaign, which are are far from what the reform text contains, something already identified as a concern in EU communication in chapter two.

Regarding the strategy of the campaign, the targeted countries for media buying and PR were Belgium, France, Spain, Germany, Greece, Poland, UK (Scotland) and Denmark (EU Presidency in 2012) and the Member States for only PR were Ireland, Portugal, Italy, and the broader UK. The identification of this second pool was made by cross checking total fish catches and total consumption. The campaign included both offline and online media activities in eight Member States, media activities in eleven Member States, a campaign website in 23 languages, audio-visual and printed material in 23 languages. A specific analysis of the channels used in this campaign can be found in point 6.5.2.

6.3.3. Adoption of the reform and the 2013 communication campaign

A second communication campaign was carried out after the adoption of the CFP by the Council and the European Parliament in 2013, to promote implementation of the reform. In its strategic concept paper of 27 August 2013 (DG MARE contracted this paper to PAU Education), the Commission acknowledged that the newly adopted CFP reform changed the way fish was caught, sold and eaten in Europe.

This paper studied the sustainability communication campaigns throughout history. As a matter of fact, the first campaigns started in America in the 1990s most were actually carried out by conservation NGOs such as Green Peace International, WWF, Marine Conservation Society, PEW Trust and the Seafood Choices Alliance. Large retailers are also setting policies, as is the case with Walmart declaring that it would only sell Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified products.

Pan European campaigns promoted by NGOs gained support from citizens and stakeholders and the Commission acknowledged their useful contribution to the successful implementation of the CFP. This is a good example of NGOs as promoters of EU policiesas mentioned in chapter four. The idea of the campaign was based on the study of the different campaigns and the analysis of the CFP context, to emphasise the commitments of thousands of Europeans for sustainable seafood consumption. These being cooks and restaurant owners, catering firms, fishermen, retailers, scientists and informed consumers.

The paper also concluded that the Common Fisheries Policy as such was quite wide and complex to cover in a single communication campaign. The final message of the campaign was "Eat, Buy and Sell sustainable fish", a rather general message focusing on responsible consumption by consumers.

Image of the campaign. Source: PAU

As for the previous campaign, the message was very positive in reaching out to consumers but yet was too distant from the content of the reform. The campaign had a very general message on responsible consumption but the regulation was very technical and concrete in its proposal about fisheries management, and introduced important features that would dramatically change the way fishing was being carried out such as the obligation to land all fish or the need to achieve maximum sustainable yield levels. A look at the webpage of the campaign https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/inseparable/en, provides general information on sustainable consumption habits as well as a set of links to other resources and information. However, there is almost nothing about the content of the reform which had just been adopted.

As in the previous campaign, this example could illustrate the mismatch between the political priorities of the European Commission and the communication messages, something already identified as a concern in EU communication in chapter two of this thesis since the role of communication is contributing to the legitimation of EU policies and helping to further confidence and understanding of its rules. However, sometimes the communication campaigns could be perceived as a general PR exercise rather than a true and serious effort to communicate the most relevant parts of complex regulations that directly affect some parts of the EU population.

According to the Commission, the objective of the campaign was two-folded: to increase citizens' awareness of sustainable seafood consumption and improve DG MARE's institutional communication and image on the CFP reform. The approach was based on the idea that there is a need to improve the sustainability of seafood consumption in Europe. The strategy revolved around emblematic events that would transmit a unified "global" message on sustainable seafood consumption, while including tailor-made features, relevant to each region or country, to add regional relevance and local flavour. The events were aimed at highlighting the commitment of citizens, so they could share their experience, be encouraged, generate high-quality contents and engage media.

Regarding its strategy, a communication toolbox was created comprised of a campaign informational leaflet, campaign posters, a campaign FAQ sheet, a campaign fact sheet, campaign USB and USB case, a campaign press kit and a campaign online banner.

In its strategic paper (DG MARE, PAU Education, 2013, p. 84), a media strategy was to be deployed especially around the events to be organised. At first, events were to take place in five of Europe's largest cities: Hamburg (launch), London, Athens, Paris and Rome. Print and radio was considered the ideal media for this kind of campaign as it allowed for segmentation. Finally, two campaign events took place, which gathered more than 400 stakeholders. The first event was held in Hamburg to celebrate the launch of the campaign, and the second in Athens with a specific focus to stop the practice of consuming juvenile fish in that area. The two events had a unified global message on sustainable fish consumption but incorporated customised features. The campaign was also present at Slow Food's Salone del Gusto – Terra

Madre that took place in Turin on 23rd October 2014. The fair was organised by Slow Food and the Terra Madre network of small producers every two years and sought to promote good, clean and fair food.

With only three events of the campaign, the objective of adapting the global message to the region or country was not fully fulfilled as expected. Indeed, as explained in point 6.2 on the main content of the reform, regionalisation and the need to manage fisheries at the regional level, with a less centralised approach by the Commission, is one of the key features of the new Common Fisheries Policy. Moreover, the European Commission DG MARE is organised by regions in its organisational chart. Furthermore, stakeholders through the Advisory Councils are structured at the regional level.

The next section describes the concentration of fishing communities in coastal regions, often far away from the capitals, and with very strong local cultural identities. Fishermen are often traditional professionals that are a symbol of the community (one could think of the weight of "arrantzales" in the Basque country or of fishermen in Scotland or Ireland).

This regional approach so present in the Common Fisheries Policy and in the way fisheries works, should have been properly addressed in the communication campaign. On the contrary, the Commission acknowledged not having partnerships with other institutions to be "freer". Yet, from the lessons learnt in chapter three, an inter-institutional approach, with cooperation from the European Parliament, which has MEPs in many of the fisheries regions, the Committee of the Regions and even decentralised agencies, could have put in place a campaign through the "Communication in partnership" approach that would have had a multilevel effect that would easily reach the regions, using the already established networks in the EU institutions (MEPs or Committee of the Regions representatives) as multipliers and intermediaries.

The European Union has often been perceived as the source of all evil affecting the fisheries sector. This is the case of the protests against the annual decision for the allocation of Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas between Member States. Fishermen often perceive it as a punishment from the EU to a specific national fleet,

instead of taking it as a measure based on scientific advice to preserve the health of the stocks. Moreover, they do not understand that it is the Council of Ministers, where the Minister of his/her Member States sits at the negotiation table that makes the last decision, and not the European Union or "Brussels", as an abstract entity. As mentioned in the first chapter, the fact that citizens do not understand exactly who is responsible for what or the reasons behind the decisions, permits blaming Europe as a whole, as an unidentifiable entity, for most of the negative decisions that affect them.

Indeed, the need for specific regional communication and with all stakeholders was also part of the conclusions of the ComFish project. From 2012 to 2015, the ComFish project was developed as a Support Action funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme: FP7 – Cooperation with a view to explore innovative mechanisms to improve communication between scientists, policy makers, fisheries stakeholders and the society at large. In the report of its final event, the need to engage stakeholders in co-management of their resources and improvements to fishery management plans was identified". For example, the need for more transparency, simpler and flexible rules was strongly echoed in the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black sea regions. Generally, region specific issues tend to require reactive and short-term communication, whereas overreaching issues can be better served with proactive communication activities over a mid- to long-term time scale"[72].

According to the Commission, the communication priorities of the campaign were based on what was considered as a "historical consensus for passing the CFP reform since DG MARE and Commissioner Damanaki received unprecedented support and respect from a spectrum of stakeholders". However, it could be considered that the consensus was not so obvious according to the reaction from the fishing industry, for example from Europeche, the Association of National Organisations of Fishery Enterprises in the European Union, which communicated their opposition to the

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[72] The report from the Partenering event of the Comfish project can be read at http://www.eusem.com/main/ComFish/comfish and the website covers all the different meetings that were organised in each region: http://www.eusem.com/main/home

details of the CFP reform to the European Parliament in 2014[73] or the European Association of Fish Producers Association which wrote an Open Letter on 31 July 2014 stating "There is no need to hide that the pelagic industry is very disappointed that the recommendations of the Pelagic RAC, which were unanimously agreed, have not been followed by the three Member States groupings dealing with the pelagic landing obligation"[74]. The difficulties to reach a decision on the implementation measures needed after the CFP adoption also delayed the agreement of the Omnibus regulation until 2015. Proof the same were the negotiations breakdowns between the EU institutions, such as the one in December 2014, which impeded the adoption of the Omnibus Regulation prior to the introduction of the landing obligation[75].

In the future, both the new consultation instruments, better regulation and the initiative to slim down legislation, as mentioned in chapter three, will help in building a consensual legislation throughout the entire process.

The assessment from the NGO sector was much more favourable than the one from the fishing industry. In the words of Ocean 2012 Coalition Spokesperson: "Ocean 2012 Alliance was supporting a fundamental reform of the CFP. The EC set 'failure' as benchmark, so we supported what they were going to do. The Green Paper and the Commissioner's position encouraged us; with another Commissioner it would have been different. But she wanted a fundamental reform and so did we, and we supported her (…). The team was satisfied that the opinions were well considered in most cases, especially our demands on the MSY, which was the fundamental question for us".

To sum up, reactions show different viewpoints on the reform and it can be said that there was a true European Public Space, a communicative space, in which everyone could participate, with all the characteristics from Habermas.

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[73] As read on this press statement: http://www.fishupdate.com/europeche-and-european-fisheries-industry-express-disappointment-over-cfp-reform-details-fishupdate-com/

[74] The Open Letter can be read at http://www.pelagicfish.eu/news-2013-14

[75] The break in negotiations was reported in specialised press such as http://www.fishsec.org/2014/12/15/omnibus-delay-likely-after-negotiations-break-down/

6.4. The different publics: Analysis of stakeholders

The analysis of the publics is one of the four elements of the Communication model used in this thesis. As analysed in chapter four, the role of civil society in shaping the European project by actively intervening in the debate with policy makers is quite relevant, and so is it in this particular case of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. This analysis follows the three phases of communication as described in the previous section: the consultation following the publication of the Green Paper in 2009, the communication taking place after 2011 when the Commission Communication was published and, finally, in the implementation phase, after the final adoption of the reform in 2013.

6.4.1. Stakeholder analysis in the publication of the Green Paper by the Commission in 2009 and consultation period

The contributions received for the Green Paper published by the Commission are a good mapping exercise to identify stakeholders of this policy. There were 382 contributions received. It is very interesting to see the breakdown of contributions. 114 came from the general public (plus the 1329 identical e-mails); 117 from the fishing industry or interest group: mainly fishers associations, angler associations, processor organisations, retailers and tourist bodies; 63 from civil society organisations, mainly environmental NGOS but also from animal welfare NGOs, consumer NGOs and development NGOs; 16 from academia such as university institutes, national research institutes, networks of researchers and research organisations; 30 Member States administrations, 35 regional or local governments; 8 from other institutions and EC advisory bodies such as the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, ACFA, RACs, individual members of the European Parliament and intergovernmental bodies and 11 from third countries: Nordic Council, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand and the ACP group.

What is remarkable is that the number of contributions of civil society organisations

is more than half of those coming from the industry affected directly by the regulation. This shows the amount of general interest in a policy that matters to citizenship and civil society. Worth highlighting is how environmental NGOS, just like they did in the Intergovernmental Conference of 1996, gathered on one platform, by creating the Ocean 2012 Coalition. The OCEAN2012 Coalition was created in 2009 to support the reform of the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy, or CFP. It was launched by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, the Fisheries Secretariat, the new economics foundation and Seas At Risk, which were later joined on its Steering Group by Ecologistas en Acción. Within five years, the coalition grew to 193 member groups in 24 EU Member States and beyond. As can be seen, the concept of sustainable fisheries was able to bring together civil society actors from across Europe.

The other big group of stakeholders are the fishing industry and the community around it (other industry derived from it and the coastal zones where much of the sources of its economy come from the sea). In contrast with NGOs, the interests of the fishing industry are more scattered and it is worth analysing this phenomenon a bit deeper. Fishing is often perceived as part of the tradition of a specific region and there is a great symbolism attached to this ancestral profession. Moreover, there is great regional concentration in the sector, which affects a limited number of geographically disperse population. This concentration of the fishing activity in very concrete regions helps create strong local identities which feel that Brussels very far away from their own identity and can be mobilised to defend their own interests. Regions which attach much importance to fisheries in Europe are, for instance, Galicia, where a significant part of the local population is active in fishing and related activities such as processing industry or shipbuilding, ports like Kerwock and Scalloway in Scotland and other coastal regions such as the south of Brittany. Examples of this defence of the fisheries sector as a matter of identity could be the case of the fall in the price of fish in France in 1993 and 1994 that led to the creation of a "Committee of Survival" in the south of Brittany, supported by the local population despite the violent attacks on public buildings (Couliou, 1997); in the United Kingdom, "Save Britain's fish" can be considered a political movement, born in the port of Grimbsy, or, in the Spring of 2008, demonstrations of fishermen's associations in regions like France, Catalonia or Galicia during the fuel crisis that led

them to demonstrate in a violent way at the European Commission's DG MARE doors in Brussels.

How is the fishing industry organised? The fishing sector is heterogeneous within the Member States of the European Union. In Spain, for example, the interests of fishermen from Andalusia fishing bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean with the *almadrabas* artisanal technique are totally different from those in Galicia fishing in Atlantic Waters. Sometimes, there is even internal competition as was the case between operators in Galicia and the Basque Country that catch small pelagic fish. The social diversity of the fishing community, together with the geographic concentrations, fragments the interests of fish operators. This fragmentation can be seen within each Member State: L´Union des Armateurs à la Pêche in France traditionally represents the industrial fishing sector whereas the Coopération Maritime defends the interests of artisanal fishing, the Federación Nacional de Cofradías de Pescadores represents the coastal fishing in Spain whereas the Confederación Española de Asociaciones Pesqueras and the Federación Española de Armadores de Buques de Pesca defends the interests of high seas fishing or the National Federation of Fishermen´s Organizations (NFFO) in the UK represents the English and Welsh fishermen, whereas the Scottish Fishermen´s Federation (SFF) represents the Scottish interests (Lequesne, 2005, p. 360). All in all, the organisation of the fish industry does not correspond to the "nation state" logic.

The 2002 reform created the Regional Consultative Groups (RACs), to bring together fishermen, scientists and other stakeholders such as NGOs to work together on relevant issues. This regionalisation can be seen both in the way structured dialogue operates and in the new fisheries management measures to be considered in communication. Fishermen prefer to lobby through their national government. The association Europêche, created in 1970, is a federation of national producers association that has very limited resources in comparison to other industry sectors such as Chemistry. It is often easier, for producers to directly contact the Commission or their own governments than through Europêche.

All these considerations are important to take into account in order to understand how environmental NGOs could join forces towards the common objective of sustainability. Instead, the fishing industry has scattered interests wherein each

fishermen association defending its own interests. All this was reflected in their contributions to the Green Paper published in 2009 and in the words of a spokesperson on the 2012 Ocean Coalition: "The coordination between civil society actors was very impressive throughout the campaign. In the end, we were all moving in the same direction". Surely, Internet and social media were great catalysers for this coordination, just like Shirky pointed out as described in chapter five (2011, pp. 14-15). As can be seen, the digital presence of most of the NGOs in the social media network is impressive.

As a matter of fact, this capacity of environmental NGO to come together with the common goal of Sustainability recalls the process of the Intergovernmental Conference of 1996, in which the contribution from civil society and environmental NGO was decisive, and when they also worked together and made a joint contribution with the document "Greening the Treaty: Sustainable Development in a Democratic Union" (Del Río, 2008, pp. 250-251).

Eriksen (2004, p. 17) states that the way in which Environmental NGOs gather may be considered as an illustration of a transnational public sphere, constituted by the common interested on a certain issue, that emerged from the European Union structure.

With the introduction of the new regulation (the Better Regulation) mentioned in chapter four, the consultation will be even more structured and would take place throughout the entire legislative process and not only after the publication of the Green Paper.

6.4.2. Stakeholder analysis in the communication campaign launched in 2011

In the concept paper of the 2011 campaign, the identification of all stakeholders relevant to the CFP reform was considered very important for DG MARE. These are the thousands of people working in the fisheries and fish processing sectors (it needs to be clear to them that restructuring and reforming does not mean losing jobs), political stakeholders in Member States (Fisheries ministers and their colleagues in

the Economic, Environmental and Social Affairs portfolios), fishermen (from previous reform processes, the Commission expects fishermen to speak with "strong emotion in defence of their livelihood) and citizens.

In its concept paper (MOSTRA, 2011), the Commission acknowledges that the public tends to empathise with fishermen since they work in harsh condition and have strong social and historical linkages with their local heritage. This can be especially true in areas such as Brittany in France or the Spanish Atlantic coastline. The reform intends to make them fish differently with a clear understanding on the policy and by respecting rules. Fishermen have a great power since they are choosing what to take to the market. Regarding citizens, the Commission considers citizens as demanding on food and environmental issues. They would like to have information on what to buy and can exert pressure on decision makers to inform them that the products they buy are healthy and are caught sustainably. In their approach towards consumers the objective of the European Commission is to ensure that the consumer demands and chooses fish caught sustainably.

The campaign identified its target audiences, and they did not necessarily match with the identified stakeholders. The core target audience was the "sustainable consumer": who care about sustainability principles and can be influencers in their environment. The secondary target audience identified was the political stakeholders in national governments that hold other than fisheries portfolios. The Commission identified the "person responsible for purchase" (PRP) in marketing terms as the "sustainable consumer". This is the "mother in a family": a woman (60-70%), aged 30 to 69 (more than 70%), often with children and married (70%), watches TV, reads women's magazines and surfs the web, her educational level ranks from average to high, she is the one that gets the groceries, cooks and shows an interest in health issues and 70% are likely to spend more money in eco-friendly products.

Within this group, the Commission is especially interested in "swing voters" since they are sensitive towards sustainability issues and are responsible and concerned about the future of their societies. They are motivated enough to write letters to newspapers and change the way they vote according to issues that specifically affect natural resources. Getting the support of swing voters was identified as determinant for the outcome of the CFP reform and was the target of the media plan.

Through these consumers, the Commission intends to reach national politicians in order to ensure the adoption of a radical reform. By creating public pressure from citizens, national decision makers will have to commit to a radical reform that the Commission's wishes to implement. The specific communication objectives of the communication plan are to inform citizens about the CFP reform and the benefits it will bring to them, engage "swing voters" so they endorse the campaign and convince citizens that their fish/seafood purchasing choices can "make an impact".

However, this approach may not be comprehensive, as national politicians are receiving pressure mostly from their industries and from the specific coastal communities in their countries to defend their interest in EU negotiations. By targeting consumers and citizens, the European Commission may be missing one of the most concerned actors.

6.4.3. Stakeholder analysis in the adoption of the reform and communication campaign in 2013

Regarding target audiences for the 2013 campaign, the concept paper of the campaign (DG MARE, Pau Education, 2013) describes the central target group as well-informed consumers and already engaged stakeholders. These consisted of those with higher education, and reasonable high purchasing power, young to middle-aged people, that were socially aware. Engaged stakeholders were conservation NGOs, consumer organisations, restaurants, chefs, etc. The secondary target group was consumers and stakeholders engaged in responsible consumption. A tertiary target group included other consumers and stakeholders uninterested now but possibly interested in the near future.

This communication campaign, as a multiplier campaign directly targetted five audiences: well-informed consumers: who are well aware of the issue at hand, often with a high level of technical knowledge: deeply committed ordinary people, who work daily to improve seafood sustainability in Europe, thus directly contributing with their experience, vocation, and inspiration; engaged stakeholders: restaurants, chefs, cooks, retailers, producer associations, supermarket chains, fishermen,

researchers and scientists, etc. and other highly visible "ambassadors"; journalists: the media is central to public debate on all issues concerning our relationship with the planet. Specialised journalists were the key informers, opinion-makers and multipliers. The ultimate goal of the campaign was to reach the general public and stakeholders, the fifth target audience, in order to give effective, wide and lasting support to change.

As a multiplier strategy, it recommended avoiding institutional partnerships as collaborative supports by independent actors ensure freedom and agility to focus on the main objectives and the potential to create alliances that can be useful. The aim wass to get the support for multipliers to spread the message and influence others in committing to sustainable seafood consumption. Multipliers are referred to as research institutions, education and training centres, control and compliance agencies, local fishermen associations, sustainable agriculture associations, fishing industry associations and food and consumer association. Yet, as highlighted in chapter three and throughout this chapter, communication in partnership, by creating a communicative space with all EU actors involved would surely help to converge positions and enhance the understanding and legitimation of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy.

As this analysis shows, both communication campaigns crafted on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy indicated consumers as the main target audience: in the 2011 campaign as a way of exerting indirect pressure on national politics and in the 2013 campaign as multipliers. The importance of raising sustainability awareness among consumers and citizens is quite evident. Yet, given the key features of the new CFP reform, which aims at dramatically changing the way fishing is managed by the European Commission, it would be appropriate to affirm that the primary communication efforts should be targeted to informing about the main features of the reform, such as MSY, landing obligation or regionalisation as well as those affected by the policy, that is, the fishing community.

By reading the Commission's strategic papers on the campaign, one is able to easily understand the need to engage citizens on the need for sustainable fishing. However, the first ones to understand the rationale and the new rules work should be the communities around the fishing regions (fishing industry and complementary

activities), who already feel quite disconnected from "Brussels". This is because access to the EU institutions' view point on the regional and specialised fisheries media is not easily available, even though Fisheries is a EU policy.

Just like in the previous section, not having the directly affected stakeholders as the main target audience could be counterproductive, as it would create a climate of confrontation that may not favour a consensus and easy implementation. An inclusive multilevel communication could definitely help avoid this. Just like the Principle of Subsidiarity, applied in concentric circles, communication efforts should be first addressed to those more affected by the decisions in order to be legimised. Only after that, the communication can go to the next leve.

Moreover, the existing EU networks or the other EU institutions can contribute as multipliers and intermediaries to address stakeholders during campaigns. Ignoring the industry and the coastal regions in the communication message is also a way of dissociating the policy from communication, when communication, as explained by Habermas should be the common space that permits a deliberative legitimising process.

The mandatory register of Transparency and the Better Regulation in which the Juncker Commission is working are also two initiatives that will help make the communication process more transparent and inclusive.

6.5. Channels used in the communication of the Common Fisheries Policy reform

As discussed in chapter five, of the mass communication theory models, channel is the element that has changed the most in recent years with the widespread use of new technologies, Internet and the social media.

In particular, regarding communication on Environmental or Sustainable Development issues, Bucchi proposes the idea that knowledge is in constant circulation and that there is a co-production of knowledge in which non-experts and their local knowledge are essential for the production of knowledge itself. "Expert

and lay knowledge are not produced independently in separate contexts to encounter each other later; rather, they result from common processes carried forward in 'hybrid forums' in which specialist and non-specialist can interact (Bucchi 2008, p. 68).

In her analysis on Environmental and Science communication, Ursula Plesner (2012, p. 41) claims that "communication processes around the mass mediation of science are dialogic and multidirectional" and this dialogic, multidirectional nature allows for negotiations about citizens' concerns. The author writes that an image of mass mediation based on dialogue emerges when mass media actors go about finding sources or analysing the mundane practices of news production. This means that European institutions need to be there to co-produce news with the mass media and be there for the co-production of knowledge based on dialogue, debate, deliberations and negotiations. How this can be done in the case of the Common Fisheries Policy is analysed in section 6.5.2.

6.5.1. Channels used during the publication of the Green Paper by the Commission in 2009 and the consultation period

A specific website was actually devoted to the publication of the Green Paper on the reform, which was a very transparent exercise, since all contributions were published and are still accessible for everyone to read [76]. This illustrates Hix's argument (2010) in chapter one about the head start of the "gold standard" of the EU in terms of transparency and disclosure on documents and legislation, with respect to many governments and international organisations. This exercise of transparency and inclusion, is an example of how a channel as a website offers the possibility to all actors involved for contributing to a common decision making process, through a public space. In Habermas' terms, "it grants publicity and transparency for the deliberative process, inclusion and equal opportunity for participation, and a justified assumption that outcomes will be reasonable" (2006, p. 413).

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[76] The contributions can be consulted on
http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/consultation/received/index_en.htm

6.5.2. Channels used while the Commission publishes its Communication on the campaign and launches a communication campaign in 2011

What were the channels used during the 2011 campaign after the Commission published its Communication on the reform and prior to adopting by the European Parliament and the Council? According to the concept paper of the campaign (MOSTRA, 2011), the traditional media were considered an important channel to convene their message. In particular, the campaign envisaged media buying aimed at covering the message (reaching the largest part of the target audience), repeating the message (reaching the audience several times), creating emotional involvement (using media to create empathy) and opting for people to engage in the "call for action". For this, the Commission decided to use women's magazines as a very important channel to confer strength and visibility to the media. Media relations and PR were deemed as very important for a positive media offering especially relevant factual content at the time of the publication of the CFP reform legislative proposal in May 2011. In Plesner´s terms (2012, p. 41), this would have been an exercise of "co-production" of Fisheries knowledge since the European Union is co-producing the content with the editors of the magazine.

The campaign evaluation assessed this exercise very positively since the printed advertisement was seen by an average of 75, 5 million people. In addition, there were 143 press articles in the targeted Member States based on the campaign material with an estimated 8.3 million readers. In their results analysis, the Commission deems that the overall coverage was favourable as media reported in an informative manner on sustainable fishing, adding tips for consumers to choose sustainable fish. Spain and Italy were leading the results with close to 30 articles each. The only country did not publish any articles was Ireland.

Online channels were used with a viral campaign through blogs and website bannering. Two videos were created with the intention to go viral, a short video and a longer 5 minute one on "Buying and consuming sustainable seafood". In addition, there was a b-roll of up to 20 minutes and background material. According to the evaluation report, the website and its advertising campaign had 93 600 unique

visitors and almost 120 000 visits in one year. The online advertising campaign helped promote and drive users to the campaign website, by alerting them that the EC was promoting sustainable fish consumption, through inspiring testimonials and a rich supply of information resources on why and how to eat, buy or sell sustainable fish. 60% of the website visits were from advertising during the campaign. The online advertising campaign furthermore contributed to helping promote the EC, with more than 130 million posts of our banners, representing more than 50% of the total website viewers. This high percentage shows the importance of such strategies in raising awareness on a certain topic among the general public.

In quantitative terms, the results of the online campaign were satisfactory. The web banners were placed on 73 websites and in 61 magazines, creating 132 million "contacts" "and banners" and 159 860 clicks on the advertisement with an average of 0.12% which is considered good; the viral clip was viewed by 1.5 million people, and appeared on 5 869 websites, blogs and Facebook pages and had more than 30 000 video actions (shared on Twitter, views on EUTube) got an average "click through" rate of 6.49% which is considered excellent. The short video clip for stakeholders presenting the main arguments of the CFP reform was uploaded on DG MARE's website and more than 3 million people saw the video news release. Overall, there were more than 160 000 unique visitors to the campaign website http://chooseyourfish.eu. The webpage had documentation downloadable in 23 languages.

6.5.3. Channels used in the adoption of the reform and communication campaign in 2013

No media strategy for traditional media was finally carried out. Advertising was nevertheless carried out through online media in the following countries: France, UK, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Poland and the Netherlands. Banners were placed in the leading national media of these countries, as shown in the following table:

Table 2: Media advertising in the Commission campaign

France	Le Figaro	
	La Libération	
	Le Monde	
Germany	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	
	Sueddeutsche Zeitung	
Austria	Krone	
UK	The Guardian	
	BBC online	
	The Huffington Post	
	Daily Telegraph	
Ireland	Independent	
Greece	http://www.kathimerini.gr/	http://www.naftemporiki.gr/
	http://www.enet.gr/	http://www.protagon.gr/
	http://www.tovima.gr/	http://www.zougla.gr/
	http://www.tanea.gr/	http://www.in.gr/
	http://www.e-typos.com/	http://left.gr/
	http://www.ependytis.gr/	http://www.skai.gr/
	http://www.efsyn.gr/	http://www.inewsgr.com/
	http://www.protothema.gr/	http://www.tvxs.gr
	http://www.ethnos.gr/	http://www.nooz.gr
	http://www.kerdos.gr/	http://www.news247.gr
	http://www.avgi.gr/	http://www.psarema.gr/

	http://www.real.gr/	www.newsit.gr
	www.capital.gr	http://www.metarithmisi.gr
	www.imerisia.gr	
	http://www.athensvoice.gr/	
	www.lifo.gr	
Cyprus	Philenews	
Italy	La Repubblica	
Spain	El País	
Portugal	Diário de Noticias	
Poland	Gazeta Wyborcza	
Netherlands	De Telegraaf	
Belgium	Le Soir	
	La Dernière Heure	
	De Standaard	
	Het Laatste Nieuws	

Regarding the online channels, the objective was to inspire dialogue by promoting an exchange of ideas, building engagement by stakeholders, raising awareness about the campaign, creating partnerships in exchange of visibility, supporting the events and reaching out and engaging EU bloggers, stakeholders and other influencers. The online campaign strategy had two main features: using social media channels and creating a viral campaign.

The evaluation report of the campaign (DG MARE, PAU Education, 2015) concluded that social media played a leading role within the strategy for the campaign, not only as a central tool to disseminate its message at a European level, but also as a mirror of the events and other online activities related to sustainable fish consumption. The Commission assesses that social media have undoubtedly

consolidated the campaign's reputation among the various targeted groups and helped promote and fulfil its objective of improving the sustainability of eating, buying and selling seafood. In quantitative terms, the campaign is deemed a success. In a nutshell, these impact figures of the campaign were the following: 150 000 Facebook users engaged, 36 500 Facebook fans, 3 100 Twitter followers and 120 000 website visits.

The Strategic paper analysed the Communication tools of the different campaigns: visual messages, audio-visuals, social media, events, partnerships and collaboration and impact. It is interesting to note that according to this study, social media is an effective tool for quantitative monitoring of interest and activities, but does not show how or if this translates into changing behaviour. It is recognised that social media has become a powerful tool for raising awareness and spreading socially driven commitment.

The Facebook page of the Inseparable campaign was launched on 13 January 2014. Facebook posts contained useful information on sustainable fish consumption; posts were entertaining, educational or related to policy. The Inseparable Facebook page showed a sustained growth and ended with 36 500 likes. When compared to other EU initiatives, it was considered to have very good results. A closer analysis reveals that, out of the most successful posts published on Facebook – 50% related to Policy, 30% to Education, and 20% to entertainment: there is an audience that already has a strong appetite for policy based posts.

The Twitter account became active on 13 January 2014. The account has been used to promote campaign messages and other related initiatives, such as posting quality information on sustainable fish consumption issues. The @InseparableEU Twitter handle has shown a sustained and constant growth of followers from January 2014 (260 followers) to December 2014 (3174 followers). In addition, when the account migrated from @InseparableEU to @EU_MARE, it became the official account of DG MARE, being solely managed by the EC, the follower base grew much more rapidly: @EU_MARE tripled its followers from 3rd November (1 075 followers) to December (3 174 followers).

In quantitative terms, it is also interesting to see that an institutional campaign

(Discard ban) was still way behind a civil society campaign such as the Fish fight campaign. In its short life, the Fish fight campaign reached 255 000 Facebook fans, 47 000 followers on Twitter and 692 000 views on YouTube. EU institutions are still lagging behind civil society when it comes to social media engagement. Probably, recalling Iñaki López Martin's, words in chapter five, EU institutions are still on their way to produce the dynamic and fresh kind of information that it is appreciated in social media channels.

The YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/user/InseparableEU gathered all campaign videos: testimonials, event videos and more importantly, showcased the three videos of the Inseparable campaign: "Size Does Matter", "From Sea to Plate" and the video of the 3 Greek chefs.

Overall, according to the European Commission, the "Inseparable" campaign (as it was finally named) has been a great success across many different platforms, raising awareness on the issue of sustainable consumption of seafood at various levels. The social media channels were the meeting place to share the most relevant factors affecting fish sustainability from a consumer perspective. The Evaluation report concluded that the campaign website was informative and integrated various ideas into a comprehensive database, connecting and informing stakeholders and consumers and the final result of the campaign's visual image was very successful and received compliments during the events and social media dissemination. However, if we assess the campaign with only the number of visits as indicators, this evaluation could be considered as a bit superficial. Reactions to the campaign should also be assessed or the level of penetration of the campaign in its target audiences. Do the well-informed consumers and already engaged stakeholders towards whom they address their communication efforts know about the campaign and the CFP reform? Has it helped change their behaviour?

The analysis of the channels reveals that the European Commission has fully used the online channels and the potential of social media for their communication campaigns, with excellent quantitative results which permits them to achieve the goals set for their campaigns. Indeed, social media are considered to have played a leading role within the strategy for the campaign, not only as a central tool to disseminate its message at the European level, but also as a mirror of the events and

other online activities related to sustainable fish consumption. It has permitted reaching European citizens at once in a way that otherwise would have been impossible.

The question to ask now is whether those affected by the policies, the fishing communities, were targeted in this communication. It is still quite common to read testimonials from fishermen saying "there is now more fish than ever" or "I have seen tons of fish", in the most popular media in regions with fisheries (*La Voz de Galicia*, *Midi Libre*, etc.), and obviously such testimonies do not recognise the scientific data on overfishing and the decline of the fishing grounds. Having specialised fisheries media such as *Fishing News*, *Le Marin*, *Firkistidende* or *Industrias Pesqueras* or newspapers very much read in fisheries regions such as the *Irish Times* or *Faro de Vigo* as priority channels would be an easier way to efficiently reach stakeholders in the very concentrated but geographically disperse fishing communities. Yet, as it was stated in the previous section, coastal communities were not the target audiences.

As pointed out in chapter five, social media can be a complementary instrument but will not convince uninterested citizens due to their self-selection: there is no authoritative voice mediating the message (De Vreese et al., 2010). Focusing on social media as almost the primary channel does not ensure reaching the citizens and it could possibly mean losing the authoritative voice that mediated communication still provides.

Even though the campaign websites were very informative, there were different websites on the reform: the official website of the Commission containing some parts of the information, the websites for consumer campaigns, the one of the European Parliament with its part in the process, the Council website with the Council's conclusions on the debate of the reform, etc. From a user perspective, it was difficult to follow up the entire legislative process. A communication partnership would have been better to have a single website that covers all phases of the reform since 2009, covering the adoption in 2013 and even the omnibus regulation of 2015. By providing a single platform to follow up all political and legislative process, one facilitates ease of information access whilst providing information in a more transparent manner, ensuring access to all users on all information about a political

process in the one place. This would ensure inclusion, transparency and coordination. Moreover, it shows that the EU is still sometimes trapped in a "technocratic mindset" defined by Meyer (1999) in chapter one as one that impedes streamlining of the communication processes in the same way that NGOs, for example, do. Moreover, recalling the quote from McQuail in chapter two: "The overdose of information supply also diminishes the capacity of the people to notice it or be influenced by it" (2010, p. 452).

6.6. Chapter Conclusion

The Common Fisheries Policy is a policy at the heart of the Sustainable Development concept, whose objective is to ensure marine resources are fished in a sustainable manner, profitably from an economic perspective and fisheries based on scientific assessment. It has evolved in parallel to the importance of sustainability at the global level and the need to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process and furthermore raise communication standards in the European Union.

As acknowledged in the Lisbon Treaty, the Common Fisheries Policy is one of the six exclusive competences of the EU; therefore the EU has full capacity and competence to communicate about it. The communication of the latest reform of the Common Fisheries Policy had three phases. This thesis analyses the last reform of the policy: the publication of the Green Paper by the Commission in 2009 followed by a public consultation and the two European Commission campaigns: the first in 2011 after the European Commission issued its proposal, and the second one after the European Parliament and Council adopted the regulation in 2013.

Regarding the analysis of the different publics, the Common Fisheries Policy is one of the policies that has a more structured communication with civil society. Stakeholders (NGOs and industry) are a part of the decision making process through the Regional Advisory Councils, that were included in the 2002 reform, and have gained even more importance and consultancy power in the latest reform. Environmental NGOs are a good example of effective communication and how they have shaped public opinion through their campaigns, what Eriksen calls the

"transnational-segmented" publics. The interests of the fishing industry are much more fragmented.

Both Commission campaigns were targeting consumers: the importance of EU citizenship buying into the Sustainability concept is undeniable. Yet, given the key features of the new CFP reform, aiming at dramatically changing the way fishing is managed as it is well described by the European Commission, it would have been appropriate that the primary communication efforts were addressed to the fishing area communities.

Regarding the channels used in the communication of the CFP reform, the Commission fully used the possibilities of social media and online campaigning, with very good quantitative results, connecting and informing stakeholders and consumers. Indeed, social media played a leading role within the campaign strategy and it permitted reaching European citizens at once in a way that otherwise would have been impossible. Yet, having specialised fisheries media or much read newspapers in fisheries regions as priority channels would have been an easier and more efficient manner to reach stakeholders most affected by the regulation in the very concentrated but geographically disperse fishing communities.

The key message of the Commission campaign in 2011 was "The EU takes action to protect the future of fish. Your choice matters. (As a consumer,) be more demanding" and for 2013 and for 2013 "Eat, Buy and Sell sustainable fish". The message could be considered as too distant from the content of the reform. This example illustrates the mismatch between the political content and the communication messages, something already identified as a general concern in EU communication.

Fisheries are very much linked to the concept of sovereignty of waters. Moreover, local culture in fishing regions is sometimes still quite strong in defence of the traditional jobs in their communities and in order to obtain a cultural change, European institutions must make a real effort to transmit the European message on Sustainability so it is well accepted by the population in these regions (measures such as reduction of their fleets undoubtedly mean much sacrifice in these communities). This is where Communication in partnership is important. The Commission decided

not to team up with other institutional actors to be freer in its communication stance. However, on the subject of the reform's agreed key features that will dramatically change the way fishermen perform their daily tasks, such as the obligation to land all fish, this would necessarily require coordination between the EU institutions and use of the resource that the EU's instituional networks provide. The concrete example of a single website to follow up the entire reform process has been analysed in section 6.5.3.

In the light of this analysis, a communication partnership between the EU institutions in a multilevel dimension, integrating all spheres would have the capacity to converge two spaces: the communicative space of the local fisheries communities and the need of a Common Fisheries Policy, in order to ensurethat marine resources are fished sustainably, profitably from an economic perspective and based on scientific assessment.

Conclusions and recommendations for the communication of the Common Fisheries Policy and the European Union

These conclusions have identified the conclusions for each hypothesis presented in the introduction, chapter wise. After demonstrating the importance of communication to support the democratic legitimacy of European Union policies and using a revised model from communication theory, this thesis has identified the characteristics that communication should have, in order to contribute to legitimising European policies and ultimately strengthening the European project. The thesis has been structured around elements of the proposed model, following the theoretical and methodological study in chapters one and two. European Union institutions as transmitters of European messages were analysed in chapter three; European citizens as publics were discussed in chapter four; Traditional media and new online media were studied in chapter five, and the Common Fisheries Policy was analysed in chapter six, as an example of how a European message was communicated. In this line, the examination of each element permitted identification of one or two important characteristics for preparing an optimal European communication model. And lastly, this study draws an overall conclusion looking towards the future on the characteristics of what a legitimising European communication should embrace.

The case of the Common Fisheries Policy reform was used as an illustration of European communication in a concrete European policy. The case of the Common Fisheries Policy has exemplified how some of the characteristics identified as important throughout the thesis have been implemented in this specific policy. An analysis of its communication campaigns reveals that they could have been reinforced with more inter-institutional coordination, by directly targeting the identified policy stakeholders and the most affected communities and by focusing more on communicating the content of the regulation than what was being discussed. At the same time, the Common Fisheries Policy is one with a very structured dialogue and a very strong participatory dimension from civil society, that echoes the general debating model of the European Union. Civil society through environmental NGOs has played a prominent role, in the mobilisation of many citizens in favour of

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a deep reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and for shaping a transnational-segmented public, as coined by Eriksen. Moreover, the European Union has been innovative in fully using the possibilities of social media as a channel and engaging its numerous citizens in a European message.

Conclusion one

European Union competences have increased over the years and have likewise affected the lives of its citizens. Communication has been identified as a very important means of message dissemination by a wide range of scholars (Del Río 2008; Valentini and Nesti 2010; Dolgui 2009, Meyer, 1999). Del Río (2008, p.511) states that the communication policy is a "first order European 'legitimising' resource". The concept of European Public Sphere, which Habermas describes as a communication system between formally organised and informal face-to-face deliberations in the political systems, have served as the theoretical basis for the analysis of the communication policies of the European Union, and particularly the case of the Common Fisheries Policy.

The difficulty in communicating about Europe has been pinpointed to several factors. National, regional and local politicians and mass media, which are the principal intermediaries in communication, do not always transmit from a European perspective. The division of competences within the EU institutions does not correspond to that in national governments, which citizens usually know best. Moreover, in times of economic crisis, there is a general lack of trust in politicians and governments and a decline of public support to the European Union.

European communication is a driving force for connecting European Union institutions with its citizens by creating a common space of understanding and dialogue that reinforces the political processes. It supports the democratic legitimation and implementation of the European Union policies by taking into account citizens views. Communication is a mechanism that strengthens the quality

of the participatory democracy of the institutions, ultimately boosting the European project.

Conclusion two

Through the analysis of the models from Communication Theory, the Transmission model (McQuail, 2010), has proven to be the best for the purpose of explaining communication in the European Union. Its sequential conception has not been considered because the unidirectional approach to communication is now deemed obsolete ever since Westley and McLean introduced the idea of "feedback" in 1957. Moreover, the European Union's own communication has evolved from a model based on information provision to one based on dialogue, in which communication is conceived as a two-way process.

The four components used for analysing the communication of the European Union are the ones already identified in times of Ancient Greece,in Aristotle's *Rethoric*: the orator, the speech and the hearer, plus the channel, which was already identified in Lasswell´s formula. The widespread use of new technologies, Internet and social media and their cohabitation with traditional media, makes the study of channels all the more relevant.

To sum up, four elements have been researched in this study: a) the senders or transmitters of the message: EU institutions through their communication strategy,b) the publics: European citizens and civil society, c) the channels: traditional media and social media and d) the message, through the case study on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Conclusion three

The study of the transmitter of the EU message: EU institutions as communicators, allows us to gauge the extent to which EU institutions have dedicated an increasing importance to communication activities in the past years: the development of the communicative dimension of the European Union has gone hand in hand with the development of the European institutions themselves. In 2006, communication was recognised as a policy as such with the publication of the White Paper on Communication.

The socioeconomic situation in the European Union, or what Berlo calls "scenario" of communication has affected the way the European Union communicates. The study of communication initiatives throughout history reveal that while legitimation by citizens and communication becomes more and more important in the European Union agenda, in times of crisis, EU leaders still face difficulties in taking a step ahead and speaking on behalf of Europe and with a European message. The economic crises of the last seven years or even the very recent case of the referendum in Greece are good examples of how difficult it still is to communicate courageously and from a post-national perspective. Communication within the EU institutions is prioritised as a reaction in the aftermath of a crisis and usually there is an organisational change that follows.

The relevance of communication has gained weight throughout history, as can be seen in the range of documents dedicated to it. However, the changes in European leadership have made communication strategy and approach vary, especially in the Commission. For instance, while for Wallstrom, communication was considered a policy on its own, it was not the case for the following Commissioner in charge of communication. Given the importance of communication as a driving force for democratic legitimation, a long–term, strategic and structural approach should be followed. Communication with citizens should be at the core of every policy of the European Union, from its conception to its implementation and follow-up, like a requirement enshrined in each decision. Consequently, an ultimate responsible for EU communication should be identified.

Moreover, since the European Union is an institution based on cooperation among the different political actors, communication should follow the same cooperation pattern. The inter-institutional model "Communication in partnership" should be applied to all policy areas and be implemented in a systematic manner. Cooperation between European Union institutions on communication matters ensures that the multilevel governance method that characterises the European Union is also applied in communication.

Conclusion four

The study of the manifestations of European citizenship towards the European Union has warranted an analysis of the publics in accordance with the proposed model. This thesis studies the opinion of European citizens towards the European Union institutions in line with the following manifestations: public opinion surveys carried systematically through the Eurobarometer; participation in European Parliament elections and the involvement of civil society.

The main findings on the evolution of public opinion during the last 40 years (European Parliament, 2014) based on the Eurobarometer data show that despite the prevailing influence of the economic and social context in EU public opinion, European citizens believe that their decision are taken in consideration in the European Union and feel positively when they are able to participate in democratic decisions of the European Union.

The participation in last European Parliament elections was especially important because the new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty stated the European Council would have to "take into account" the election results for the election of the President of the European Commission: therefore voting in these elections was more important than ever. Furthermore, due to the economic crisis and the debt negotiation issues, the European Union was put into the spotlight. The European Parliament orchestrated an institutional campaign with some of the greatest communication milestones in EU history such as the televised debate with the candidates to the European Commission

presidency and a solid digital campaign. All this created the expectation that the Second Order Elections theory, which states that there is less participation in the EP elections since citizens think there is less at stake, would be contradicted this time. Nevertheless, the turnout was still low. In the end, the subjects and angles of the campaign were largely determined by the discourses from the national parties, pointing once again to the need to engage in a multilevel coordinated communication.

The role of European civil society as a relevant actor is formalised in a first order political framework, the Lisbon Treaty. Through their involvement in organised networks, active citizens are shaping the European project by intervening in debates in areas of their interest. Civil society is a key player in introducing novelties in the manner EU institutions communicate with its citizens. For instance, in the digital era, EU institutions have learned much about civil society methods and ways of organising and sharing information through networks. Civil society does not only shape the way policy making is done in the European Union but often is also the multiplier and frontrunner of European integration.

Conclusion five

Habermas' model of a mediated political communication in which media and politicians were the two main actors for the formation of public opinion is questioned with the entry of new media that bring together institutions and citizens in a direct manner. The information provision channels are now shared between mass media, (radio, television and newspapers) and online media such as websites, blogs and social media networks.

The role of traditional media in the European Union debate so far seems to have been "representing" the debate of what was going on rather than leading European integration. Today, their role has changed: both transnational investigative journalism and data driven journalism are breaking through. European Union

institutions and now hold a privileged position to provide transnational data and analysis to this media.

Internet is an especially important channel because it allows direct communication between institutions and citizens without passing through a national frame for network communication. Therefore, the EU institutions have taken it very seriously. Firstly, by developing the *europa* website, to cover all areas of work of the European Union in 23 official languages, secondly, with the adoption of the Digital Agenda for Europe, by closely linking the development of the Internet with the Single Market and thirdly, through the creation of the domain *.eu* available for organisations from and residents of EU Member States.

With the European Parliament elections in 2009 as a turning point, the European Parliament has been the institution that leads online communication and particularly social media, as a direct communication channel between the representatives and the citizens. There is now an authentic dialogue taking place online: opinions of citizens are transmitted in real time to decision makers and they are actually affecting the decisions that are being taken. All in all, institutions should have a clear and determined strategy on social media, using the same language as citizens while being responsible, courageous, and ready to have real time feedback and less control over the message.

Conclusion six

The Common Fisheries Policy is a policy at the heart of the Sustainable Development concept. It has integrated the participatory debate model of the European Union with civil society. This thesis analyses the last reform of the policy: the publication of the Green Paper by the Commission in 2009 followed by a public consultation and the two European Commission campaigns: the first in 2011 after the European Commission issued its proposal, and the second after the European Parliament and Council adopted the regulation in 2013. The public consultation following the Green Paper was a transparent exercise in which all the 382

contributions were published online and the Commission summarised them in a report.

For the communication campaign, the European Commission decided not to team up with other institutional actors, in order to be more autonomous about its own strategy. However, given the relevance of the Common Fisheries Policy regulation in dramatically changing the way fishermen are carrying out their daily tasks, once adopted, the European Union should have acted as one voice and joined forces in taking the European message to the regional and local communities. This spirit of cooperation is precisely the DNA of the European Union and it is the guiding principle of the inter-institutional model of cooperation. A practical example that illustrates this lack of practical cooperation in the communication of the reform is that there was not a single website to follow up the entire reform process.

On one hand, environmental NGO had a strong voice and concentrated their efforts in a platform for advocacy, introducing their views in the debate and ultimately acting as a promoter of the EU, they form what Eriksen calls "transnational segmented publics". On the other hand, the fishing industry and the communities living in the fishing areas are stakeholders affected by this regulation, that often defend interests that are opposite to those of environmental NGO. Their interests are much more fragmented. Even though civil society and industry had been identified as stakeholders, the Commission decided that the main target audience of the campaigns was consumers. It does not seem like the appropriate decision since a good communication with the affected stakeholders increases legitimacy of the Common Fisheries Policy by building further confidence and understanding of the new rules.

Rather than stakeholders, the messages were addressed to consumers. For the 2011 campaign, the main message was "Your choice matters" and for 2013 "Eat, Buy and Sell sustainable fish". It is deemed that consumers were too distant from the content of the reform, as the regulation was very technical and concrete in its proposal about fisheries management. This example illustrates a mismatch between the political content of the reform and the communication messages, something identified as a concern in EU communication.

With regards to the channels used to communicate the reform, the Commission fully used the possibilities of social media and its message was echoed through the multiplying effect of NGOs with their very high presence in social media. This channel does not ensure communication with the fishing industry and fisheries regions.

To sum up, the proposed model highlights the need for a communication that addresses those affected by its policy in a systematic manner, the need for a structured dialogue with civil society, good alignment between political priorities and communication messages, good inter-institutional coordination, the use of right channels so that all stakeholders are addressed and a courageous, responsible and inclusive action.

Conclusions on and recommendations for a European communication model

Communication is a driving force in connecting European Union institutions with its citizens and in supporting the democratic legitimation of the EU institutions. The participatory democracy dimension of the institutions is reinforced through mechanisms that communication provides. Communication provides for the convergence of positions, the coordination of messages and helps create a space of inter-subjectivity and understanding. Creating a common space of understanding reinforces political processes and ultimately boosts the European project process with the integrating capacity of citizens.

Communication of the EU institutions has evolved with the development of the EU institutions, by creating more spaces for a structured participation of stakeholders, granting a two-way dialogue and using the new channels of the digital era for direct connection between the European Union institutions. Putting more emphasis into communication with citizens and creating more instruments for engaging in a dialogue with them are transforming European Union institutions as communicative bodies, open to feedback and input from citizens in their decision-making.

The European Union institutions have likewise evolved alongside its communication dimension. They are two intertwined processes. As Del Río states, EU institutions have used the communication possibilities to unfold and deploy democracy, so that the representative democracy is complemented by participatory democracy. This leap has enabled passing "from a European model of debate to a model of communication and now we find ourselves in the consolidation of a European communication policy" (2014, p. 151).

In this process, the thesis has identified the characteristics that permit full deployment of all possibilities that a European communication model allows. This will also be relevant in setting trends for preparing the European elections in 2019. In parallel to the European integration process, there are sometimes, internal divisions, nationalist and particularistic views, the lack of the right leadership or complicated socioeconomic conditions which hinder an optimal European communication. However, engaging with citizens and building Europe with its citizens alongside institutional development seems to prevail overtime as a strategic priority. An integral model of European communication policy is being built step by step. European institutions understand well that without the trust from citizens, no policymaking is possible, and in this sense, the role of communication is essential.

What then are the characteristics identified in this thesis that shape a European communication model? Firstly, in terms of its organisation, communication should be fully prioritised all through the political process, ensuring its strategic, long-term approach and its inter-institutional coordination. Communication should be a structural process, that is fully integrated into policy design and implementation, independent of the socioeconomic situation or organisational changes that take place in the institutions. European policies will be better understood and more legitimised when they systematically take into account the views of stakeholders affected by them.

Inter-institutional coordination is an important aspect of the EU communication model. Cooperation is the DNA of the European Union. Cooperation between the European Union institutions on communication matters ensures that the multilevel governance method that characterises the European Union is taken to the communication dimension. It also means that the European Union is fully using its

own resources through the European networks that the EU institutions and bodies comprise. Moreover, coordination implies that EU institutions are in the same boat and work in conjunction towards the same destination: transmission of European messages.

With regards to its policies, the European Union should first communicate to those stakeholders and communities that are affected by its policies. Just like the Principle of Subsidiarity, applied in concentric circles, communication efforts should be first addressed to those most affected by the decisions in order to be legitimised. Only after that, can communication go to the next level of circles. In this sense, structured dialogue with civil society is very important. The European Union has tried a very innovative governance method that takes into account the voices and opinions of civil society through public consultations on every policy initiative. In this sense, the new Better regulation that will enter into force is another step ahead in terms of transparency and structured participation.

European communication messages should be fully aligned with the political priorities. This exercise will ensure transparency in the European Union decision-making and will focus its course even further. This measure will avoid giving credit to those who think that the European Union institutions are opaque because what the EU decides is not communicated or to those who feel that European Union communication is not purposeful because it is not focused on the real work and priorities of the institutions. The recent re-organisation of President Juncker along the ten political priorities is a good step in that direction.

European Union institutions should use both traditional and new online channels to ensure multilevel, inclusive and multidirectional dimension of the European communication. Online channels ensure direct communication without intermediaries between EU institutions and citizens. The European Parliament elections in 2009 was a turning point for fully using the multidirectional informative flow offered by Internet and social media. The European Parliament played a leading role in employing digital communication in European communication and permitted direct interaction between citizens and EU decision makers outside a national frame. Social media are an important instrument for European Union communications.

Traditional channels, representing mediated political communication, are still influencers, agenda setters and information providers for many citizens. In today´s globalised world, a professional and in-depth analysis of the issues is very much needed. Both traditional and new online channels must be taken into account by the EU institutions and they should be provided with rigorous and responsible information, to facilitate healthy and sustainable development to conform a truly European Public Sphere, that is able to transmit recognisable European messages.

To sum up, sound communication ensures that citizens are at the heart of European Union policies. European Union institutions should be courageous, be permanently connected to citizens and communicate in European terms at all times, and especially during trying times. Participation and commitment from citizens will be a force that drives the European Union project. As Del Río points out, "citizens have integrating capacity, rights and also responsibilities" (2014, p.159). Responsibility, like communication, is a two-way process. Citizens must also be responsible when using their capacity to empower a stronger Europe that can effectively and democratically represent them.

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