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EPFMA BULLETIN



European Parliament Former Members Association

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Europe of Political
Communication

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Venezuela's Democratic Opposition, laureates of the EP Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. ©European Union



Sámi Blood winner of the 2017 LUX Prize. ©European Union



Livia Járóka and Fabio Massimo Castaldo elected Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament. ©European Union

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CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members who are not up-to-date with the payment of the membership fee will not be included. Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated. The FMA Bulletin is published by the European Parliament Former Members Association (FMA) with the assistance of the European Parliament. However, the views expressed in articles represent the views of contributing FMA members or guest writers and do not necessarily represent the views of either the European Parliament nor the FMA. Similarly, any advertisement does not imply an official endorsement by the FMA or Parliament.

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Message from the PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues,

Another year is coming to an end. Another year full of change and hope for the European Union. As we found from our Study Visit to Washington from 24 to 28 September, Europe must stay united now more than ever. Faced with a difficult international situation where President Donald Trump is pushing for a neoliberal world order of anarchy and war and propagating his ideology of "America First", a slogan that reflects self-interest and a desire for a world in which each country only looks after its own interests, Europe must stand united as an example.

During our visit, which was organised in cooperation with the European Parliament Liaison Office with the US Congress, we had the pleasure of being invited to the annual meeting of the US Association of Former Members of Congress, where we were given a warm welcome. We also had the chance to find out about the work of important organisations and think tanks and to exchange ideas with academics and student representatives. Among the issues discussed were the transatlantic relationship and the EU and climate change. You can find a report on the visit in this bulletin. This issue deals with communication and social media, two very topical subjects. European experts and our colleagues tell us how social media networks have reshaped communication in politics and what changes we can expect to see in the future.

The Bureau meeting of the European Association of former parliamentarians was held on 3 November in Malta, where our association was represented by Brigitte Langenhagen and Andrea

Manzella. The main subject discussed was 'The Future of Europe' and the meeting debated the statement proposed by Mr Walter Schwimmer (Secretary General of the Council of Europe from 1999 to 2004). Another dominant issue was the murder of the Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Our FMA representatives led the initiative to issue a press release condemning this brutal act. We must remember that freedom of expression is one of the pillars of the European Union and acts like Daphne's murder have no place in Europe.

In other news, a delegation from the FMA led by Lord Richard Balfe paid a visit to Estonia from 5 to 7 November. Our members had the chance to talk with former Estonian MEPs and visited the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) where they met with Marianne Mikko, member of the European Affairs Committee and Defence Committee. It was a productive visit that focussed on Estonia's programme for the presidency and the example the country sets to others as one of the leading digital nations in Europe. You can find a report on the visit in this bulletin.

I want to thank all those who came to and helped to organise the FMA's annual events on 29 and 30 November. It was a pleasure to see so many people in attendance. Our guest of honour was Mirek Topolánek, former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic and former President of the Council.

The FMA annual seminar, attended by a large group of students from Belgian universities, addressed the issue of 'EU Global Strategy on Security and Defence'. I should like to thank all of our speakers for agreeing to take part, namely Michael Gahler, Member of the

Committee on Foreign Affairs and of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence and President of the Kangaroo Group, Ivailo Kalfin, Member of the High Level Group on Own Resources and EP Rapporteur on Critical Information Infrastructure Protection, and Sir Julian King, EU Commissioner for the Security Union. It was a fascinating and stimulating debate for both members and students alike. A video of the event is available on the FMA website. Our recruitment drive for new members has been making good progress, with a further 26 colleagues joining us in 2017. I want to thank all of you who have helped the campaign; remember, our existing members are best placed to showcase the work of the FMA and explain its importance. If you know somebody who might be interested in joining us, don't hesitate to get them in touch with the secretariat; if each of us recruits one new member, we could achieve so much more together and maximise the potential of the FMA's programmes. Finally, I should like to thank everyone who has taken part in the events organised by the FMA, especially those members who have worked throughout the year on the 'EP to Campus' programme with universities. Thank you for making our association's continued success a reality.

I wish you, your family and friends a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year for 2018.

Enrique BARÓN CRESPO
FMA President

EP AT WORK

KEY FACTS

MEPs pass EU scheme to support free WIFI in public spaces (September Session - P8_TA-PROV(2017)0326).

The scheme paves the way towards free internet spots in public places for all EU citizens and forms part of efforts to create a Digital Union.

MEPs voted in favour of new Rules to strengthen the security of gas supplies across the EU (September Session - P8_TA-PROV(2017)0327).

Any EU country faced with a gas supply crisis will be able to alert the others and thus trigger cross-border assistance to prevent cuts.

EP green light for setting up EU Prosecutor to fight fraud against EU funds (October Session - P8_TA-PROV(2017)0384).

The European Public Prosecutor's Office will be in charge of investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of offences against the EU budget.

Identifying endocrine disruptors (October Session - P8_TA-PROV(2017)0376)

Parliament blocked an EU Commission proposal which would have exempted some chemicals in pesticides from being identified as endocrine disruptors.

A common electronic system at the Schengen area's external borders was backed by MEPs. (October Session - P8_TA-PROV(2017)0411)

The new Entry/Exit System (EES) will register information on non-EU nationals when they enter, exit or are refused entry into the Schengen area.

Rule of law and democracy in Poland (November Session - P8_TA-PROV(2017)0442)

MEPs believe that the situation in Poland represents a "clear risk of a serious breach" of the European values, including the rule of law and took formal steps to trigger the first stage of the Article 7 procedure.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

September 2017

- MEPs discussed ways to shape the **EU's future** in a debate with Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. (13.09.17)
- MEPs backed a legislative proposal, under which EU countries have to ensure a **balance in CO2 emissions**. (13.09.17)
- MEPs **opposed relaxing checks on food imports from Fukushima region** as this could lead to increased exposure to radioactive contamination and absorption from forests, croplands and grasslands. (13.09.17)
- MEPs gave the green light for rules providing **disabled people with easier access** to key products and services. (14.09.17)
- MEPs approved nearly **€1.2 billion in EU aid** to repair the damage caused by **earthquakes in central**

Italy in 2016 and 2017. (14.09.17)

- **Easier access to capital for innovative and socially beneficial companies** under new rules voted by the EP. (14.09.17)
- MEPs want **legislative information and documents to be directly accessible** to the public throughout the legislative process. (14.09.17)

October 2017

- **Brexit:** MEPs said that tangible progress is still needed on withdrawal terms. (03.10.17)
- **COP23:** MEPs called on the EU to set out a mid-century zero emissions strategy by 2018. (04.10.17)
- Stricter EU rules to better **protect workers** from exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work won Parliament's final approval. (25.10.17)

- **Packaged loans converted into securities** will have to be made less complex and more transparent, say rules approved by MEPs. (26.10.17)
- **Buying online:** MEPs approved EU-wide rules to better protect consumers. (14.11.17)
- MEPs said in a resolution that **Malta needs to prop up its rule of law** and the Commission must monitor the country closely; MEPs called for an independent international investigation into the **assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia**. (15.11.17)
- MEPs recommended a new EU-Africa strategy also aimed at strengthening the resilience of African countries. (16.11.17)

For more information, please visit : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/plenary>

CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE FUTURE EU BUDGET: MAKE THE EU GREAT AGAIN

The Multiannual Financial Framework is one of the cornerstones of the European Union. The seven years duration and the 1,13% of GNI were the symbols of continuity and stability. The own resources combined with Member States contribution were enough to secure at the same time Member States with continuous influence and Commission with freedom to act. In 2013 neither statement was valid anymore. After the Enlargement in 2004, the countries joining the EU, and thus, the Customs Union –no longer paid customs to the EU budget. In the same period of time most of the levies were reduced and disappeared, due to the WTO rules. The EU Member States had to fulfil their obligations and finance the difference. The distortion ended up with about 15% own resources versus 85% of Member States' direct payment. No surprise that the Member States were asking for more influence. In 2013, the UK achieved a reduction to 1% of GNI. In 2017, it is clear that the current MFF is underfinanced, and the headings agreed decades

ago are insufficient to make Europe great again.

The vision of the EU in the 21st century is simple: to keep the EU for the next period the best place to live, to love and to work. To make the EU great and greater again.

We live in an age of disruption and in a new world order. The emerging new technologies disrupting our economies, political and social systems include work and daily life. The Climate Change is knocking at our doors, resulting in natural disasters and migration. We see the concentration of power of a few giants, while in the same time, more and more are losing opportunities.

The historical challenge of the European Council is similar to what it was during the previous similar exercise in Edinburgh in 1992. The commonly agreed vision to keep the 15 countries in a successful Union was sufficient for 20 years. They agreed resources and shared responsibilities with the European Commission and the European Parliament.

'The vision of the EU in the 21st century is simple: to keep the EU for the next period the best place to live, to love and to work. To make the EU great and greater again.'

The European Union has to serve the citizens. It is the same rule for the EU budget. We need a new agreement by the European Council now. Our priorities are our prosperity, our welfare and our security and safety. We have to put resources to new data economy, based on the related

infrastructures: Energy Union, and the Digital Single Market.

'The EU budget has to be Investment into the future, rather than a simple balance sheet.'

We have to stand for the agreed Climate goals and modernise our agriculture, industries and services accordingly. We have to achieve that the EU population is harnessed for the future by continuous learning and new skills. We have to stand for our values, starting with respect of fundamental human rights and all agreed freedoms and security. We have to stand for each individual in the European Union; young or old, man or woman, East or West, South or North.

If we agree the priorities, we can decide on resources and turn the EU towards a new paths. The EU budget has to be Investment into the future, rather than a simple balance sheet. We need Budget for Result. The ambition to achieve efficiency and effectiveness to maximize the outcome is advisable.

To achieve these goals, it is not enough to bring more resources together. The European countries, standing shoulder to shoulder is also required. The first step is to keep the promise of the euro by all countries who agreed to it.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

CULTURAL DIVERSITY: KEY FOR A STRONG AND UNITED EU

The shift to digital is having an important impact on the cultural sector. Many creators and cultural industries now have the possibility to make and distribute more cultural works more easily online. Increasingly citizens watch, listen or read cultural creative works online. In parallel, there has been a rapid concentration of platforms led by a few non-EU players. Hence, the market is now governed by big digital platforms that significantly distort the value chain, impact often negatively on creators' remuneration and contribute little to Europe's cultural diversity of expression. The GAFA (*Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple*) receive enormous transfers of value from the creative sector and its authors. Jonathan Taplin estimates that this transfer is of the order of \$50 billion per annum¹. In 2016, in the music sector, rights holders revenue is very uneven. Youtube used by

1. Move Fast And Break Things by Jonathan Taplin. p 6. 2017. ISBN 978-1-5098-4769-3

900 million users has returned only \$553 million to rights holders. By contrast, 212 million users of audio subscription services (like Spotify) contributed over \$3.9 billion to rights holders. With this unbalanced situation, the promotion and the protection of cultural diversity in the EU are more important than ever. Indeed, the values of cultural diversity, particularly on screen, are many: democratic ...ensuring that as many human stories are visible in order to illuminate the human condition. In turn public policies can more accurately reflect the reality of people's lives. Education and information about the complex nature of societies is necessary for us to act as informed citizens. Cultural diversity underpins identity and values. In addition, those values are not always linked necessarily with commerce and profitability unlike the activities of most non-EU players. Therefore, cultural diversity of expression needs to be promoted.

'The promotion and the protection of cultural diversity in the EU are more important than ever.'

EU law doesn't apply to new platforms as it does to traditional players. Their propensity to make and distribute content largely from one culture in competition with traditional European players tends to reduce the cultural choices available. Our artists need a fair chance of being able to create and then for our citizens to access their work online. We must ask the new internet video on demand platforms to carry more

European works and to give them due prominence on their platforms. The European Parliament is on its way to achieving this by voting in committee a relevant 30% quota of European works to be mandatory in video on demand catalogues.

'The EU has to do more for our culture online.'

The E-commerce and IPRED directive need updating to tackle abuses, piracy and criminality online. The Copyright Directive must be reformed so that creators and authors can thrive, underpinned by sustainable financial resources. The Creative Europe programme should have more resources. It may be the only way a platform majoring in European works can emerge to compete with non-EU players. President Juncker is right to call for a fair framework for corporate taxation at EU level.

The EU has to do more for our culture online. This is a major democratic issue for future generations. Creative works of all kinds, shared across frontiers, particularly through the internet, will enhance our creative industries and high quality jobs and increase the sense of being part of the same continent with common important values. If we want a strong and unified Europe, we have to act in support of creators and our creative industries.

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Distribution of cinematographic works and audiovisual programmes - Media Programme EC © European Communities

GERMANY HAS VOTED

For the first time in Germany's post-war history, a party which employs nationalist and at times racist rhetoric that pours scorn on fundamental rights and democratic institutions will be entering the Bundestag. A trend seen elsewhere in Europe has now, unfortunately, reached Germany.

The AfD came second in many of the eastern German Länder and topped the polls in Saxony. The party, most of whose leaders are of West German origin, also did well in some of the economically strong western Länder, securing more than 10% of the vote.

Campaigners who over the past few weeks stepped up their efforts to get people to vote and encourage discussion met with a great deal of indifference, rejection and apathy. Not so surprising, then, that the elections turned out the way they did. AfD voters can be divided into three groups. First, there are the true believers, most of whom have voted far-right in the past. They support the hatred and racism incited by many AfD politicians. Then, there is the much bigger group of the

disenchanted, the fearful and the protest voters. These voters in turn split into the conservatives, who feel betrayed by the overtly liberal turn taken by the CDU under Merkel, and who fear loss of social status and change; and the people who feel left behind, abandoned by politicians who focus on digitalisation, globalisation and migration. All three groups share a profound scepticism towards the so-called elites of politics, business and the media. As overblown as this scepticism and this rejection of mainstream politics may be, they are fuelled by real problems, which have been significantly more prevalent in eastern Germany. It is clear that many people - too many people - experienced the reunification of Germany, and the subsequent impact of globalisation and liberalisation, as a painful loss of identity, stability and security, to the extent that some even feel that they no longer belong in their own country. The process of change that they have had to go through - but which they themselves chose - has left deeper scars than previously assumed. Job losses, patchwork employment histories, the low-wage economy, the flight of the younger generation and demographic change (particularly in rural areas) increasingly mean that they feel like second-class citizens. And now there are the immigrants, with whom they will have to share what little they have left, or so they believe. People are afraid. The parallels with our neighbouring countries in central and eastern Europe are all too obvious.

On the other hand, how can it be that the clear improvements in quality of life, freedom of movement,

freedom of expression, democracy and the rule of law are taken for granted, and not valued as the great achievements they represent? One reason, I believe, is that schools, colleges and universities have failed to educate people about politics. The knee-jerk rejection of the ideologised GDR curriculum has turned into an insurmountable obstacle to political education and debate. As the party of government in Saxony since reunification, the CDU has ignored all the calls made by the 'left' opposition and turned a deaf ear to frustrated and anxious citizens. Continuing down the path of trying to copy the rhetoric and vocabulary employed by the AfD and pin the blame for their poor performance on Merkel's refugee policy will only lead to disaster. Why make do with an imitation when you can have the real thing, voters will conclude. What we really need is for AfD policies to be challenged by means of informed, objective debate. The AfD offers no solutions to the major issues facing modern society: social justice, security, climate change, education, the democratisation of society, the solidarity of Europe and global responsibility. Forming the new government will certainly be a lengthy and difficult process. With the AfD in the Bundestag, it will be up to the democratically-minded majority to defend and uphold the rule of law, human rights, universalism, freedom and equality as non-negotiable values in Germany. I'm optimistic.

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Bundesrat ©European Communities

FOR AN INTEGRATED DEFENCE OF EUROPE

Europe's defence and security are increasingly in need of a new order to strengthen them, given the growing threats from different fronts, such as destabilising terrorist attacks by Daesh or cyber-attacks. Global security is under threat. And this calls for a global response, just as proposed in the Rome Declaration of March of this year and as pledged by the President of the European Commission in his State of the Union speech of September 2016.

In fact, the Union of 27 EU is and should be much more than just a single market, or a body that just recommends economic activities. It is first and foremost a Union of 450 million European citizens and a project for Peace and Social Welfare for our present and future generations.

The fight against Daesh also requires modern and interoperable defence equipment, as well as internal and external operational deployments. In fact, the European Union should play a central role and should enhance the mechanisms



European flags fly at half-mast to pay tribute to the victims of the terrorist attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils, in Spain ©European Union 2017

for coordination and the transfer of information among the security services as well as Europol.

This calls for joint and coordinated action of all 27 Member States. Expenditure on defence amounts to over EUR 180 000 million and there are 1.5 million soldiers in Europe, but very few, just over 6000, are currently deployed or working together in joint humanitarian, peace-keeping, or counter-terrorism actions in Europe and outside Europe. Given their qualifications and knowledge, there is currently a need for them to

play a role in terms of collaboration and coordination with other security services.

Granted, with a view to 2025, the Commission is actively contributing to the establishment of comprehensive European defence and security, with a growing integration of national defence instruments. It has also created a European Defence Fund, which could amount to 1% of the EU budget from 2020, moving towards a Security and Defence Union, a major concern being, however, that London will cease to be part of the European Defence Agency and Europol by leaving the Union.

It is our responsibility to make the European Union a project for shared Security, Peace and Social Welfare, making cooperation under a common policy necessary.



EUROCORPS' soldiers walking around on basement ©European Union

Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo

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THE EU'S FIGHT FOR THE IRAN DEAL

The Iran deal is an international agreement that functions well. It corresponds to the European Union's understanding of a rule based and multilateral international order. The 2015 deal, also called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, is one of the few success stories of the EU as a global actor in foreign and security policy.

‘There will also be a need for an immediate reaction if Congress introduces sanctions that affect European banks and companies doing business in Iran.’

President Trump has made a decision not to certify the deal. This does not mean that Iran is not in compliance with the provisions. On the contrary, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly confirmed that Iran has followed the rules. However, US law requires presidential confirmation every 90 days and includes additional criteria related to US national security. The President believes that the deal is not in the US's national security interests. He would prefer a renegotiation of the deal, which he

has called the ‘worst deal ever’ and an ‘embarrassment’ for the US. According to the EU's High Representative Federica Mogherini, the deal should be implemented as agreed, since it is ‘delivering’. The other European partners, France, Germany and the UK, are unified in their support for the deal and opposed to any renegotiation. Both China and Russia have expressed their interest in preserving the deal. Iran's Supreme Leader has confirmed that ‘we will not tear up the [nuclear] deal before the other party does so’. What happens next is an open question. Congress will take the next step and might issue a new set of non nuclear sanctions or reimpose the sanctions related to the nuclear programme. The later would be a breach of the agreement and imply that the US has unilaterally left the JCPOA. To prevent this, new GOP legislation is in the pipeline in Congress to expand the deal's criteria to include missile testing, which is currently outside the deal. The legislation is aimed at meeting Trump's demands that Congress act quickly to toughen up the existing law that governs US participation in the Iran nuclear deal. Trump is also insisting that other countries

party to the accord agree to this and has threatened to pull the US out of the agreement if the changes are not made.

The EU is in a difficult position, as both the international prestige and the economic benefits related to the deal are at risk. There is a need for a solid EU strategy on how to maintain the deal and prevent its renegotiation and expansion. There will also be a need for an immediate reaction if Congress introduces sanctions that affect European banks and companies doing business in Iran. Strong economic counter-measures have been called for to prevent any impact on EU economic interests in Iran.

Furthermore, the insecure future of the deal is having an impact far beyond its scope. Nuclear non proliferation diplomacy, the EU's signature approach, is being called into question. Would North Korea ever give up its nuclear weapons as a result of diplomatic negotiations, if one of the main partners, the US, might ‘decertify’ at any time? Would this mean that the military option is the only alternative?

Dr Tarja Cronberg is a former MEP and was Chair of the EP's Delegation for relations with Iran in 2011-2014. She is the author of the recent book: ‘Nuclear Multilateralism and Iran: Inside EU Negotiations’ (Routledge 2017).

Tarja Cronberg

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From right to left: Hassan Rohani, President of Iran, Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, and Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission ©European Union 2015

NOT IN THE NAME OF HONOUR

Migration and the influx of refugees have left the EU Member States facing a number of new challenges, for example forms of violence and duress against girls and women which were previously virtually unheard of. 'Honour killings' - the murder of wives or female family members deemed to have acted 'immorally' and thereby 'dishonoured' their husband or family - occasionally made the headlines, but child marriages, forced marriages and the genital mutilation of girls and women only began to be openly discussed by politicians and the media as the numbers of migrants swelled. The migrants have also brought certain types of violence with them - acid attacks, for example.

These crimes have absolutely nothing to do with 'honour'. And one thing must be made absolutely clear: perpetrators can expect no leniency in the EU!

In 2011, the Council of Europe addressed the issue through the Istanbul Convention. It constituted the first binding instrument intended to combat all forms of violence against women: sexual violence of all kinds, domestic violence, sexual harassment, stalking, child marriages, forced marriages and genital mutilation.

Of course, boys and men are also victims of sexual violence and forced marriages, but far more girls and women are affected, as in many countries and many societies around the world they have no right to self-determination.

Genital mutilation was unequivocally condemned as long ago as in 1995, at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. Around the same time the ACP-EU Joint Assembly also adopted a resolution calling for the practice to be halted, although some critics argued that cultural norms and/or traditional customs were being wrongly called into question. Many African countries have since made genital mutilation a criminal offence, but we know that it is still practised. Many women who come to Europe from developing countries have been circumcised. Some accept that their daughters will suffer the same fate when they visit relatives in their home countries (circumcision performed in a third country is also punishable by law in the EU!), but others are strongly opposed to the practice. In European countries, such as Germany, there are now specialist doctors who operate to help the many women suffering from the serious health consequences of circumcision.

Child marriages and forced marriages should not be tolerated under any circumstances. But what exemptions should be granted for consensual marriages involving young people who are barely still minors? This does happen - and it is not unusual for the couples concerned to already have a child. Until recently in Germany, an exemption was granted for persons over the age of 16, but following problems in connection with under-age marriages between refugees it was abolished and the marriageable age was raised to the age of majority (18). Overall, the legal provisions and political and social responses to these challenges in Europe are lagging behind reality, as has been well documented by the European Parliamentary Research Service. However, awareness of the situation is improving; increasing globalisation, the emergence of diasporas and migration mean that the problem is not going to go away. Rules and, if necessary, the criminal law will not in themselves be enough to tackle it effectively; what is needed are bodies which can provide advice and assistance - there are currently far too few of them.

Prevention is just as important as education: integrating migrants and refugees also means making them understand that exercising violence and duress against children, women and, of course, men is at odds with European values and that women, like men, have an unconditional right to self-determination. That we can accept in the name of honour!

Karin Junker

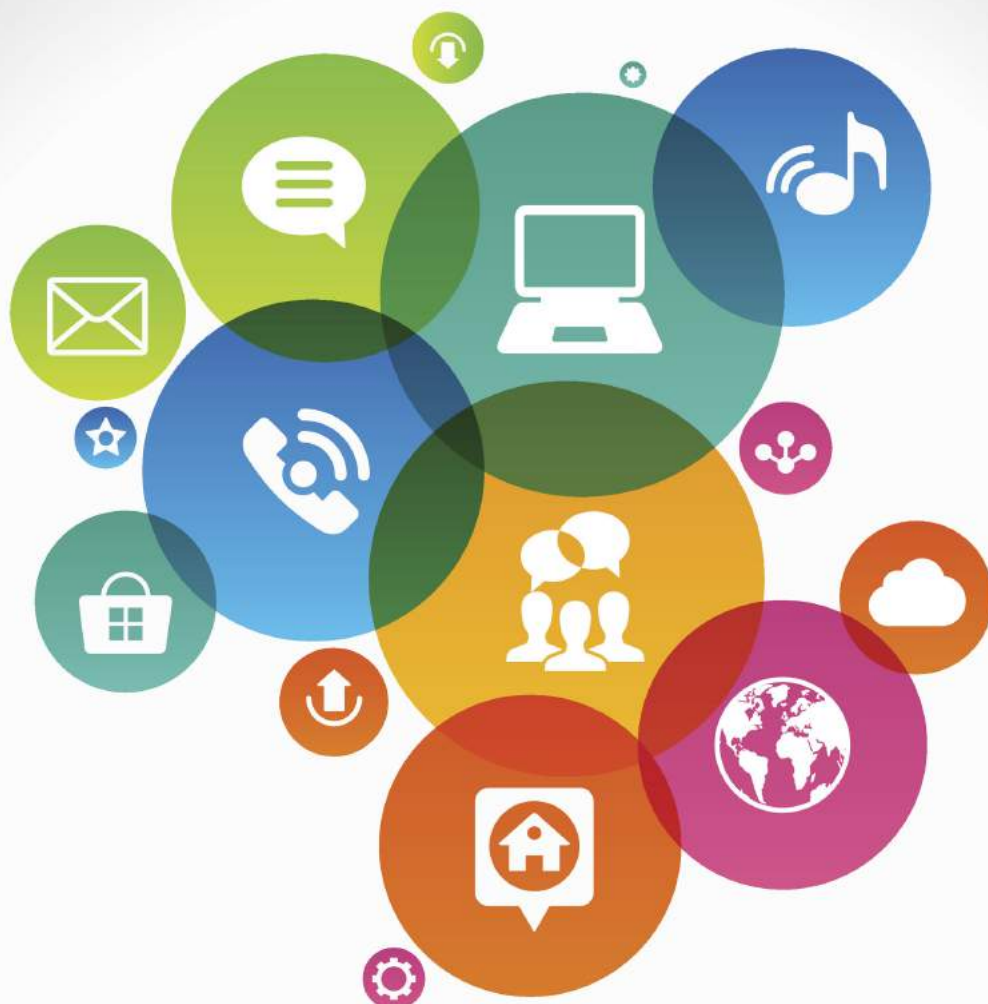
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A woman with her child sits on rocks at the port of Mytilene, on the Eastern island of Lesbos © European Union

FOCUS

EUROPE OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION



FOCUS

POLITICS AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

The IT revolution has turned political communication on its head. We now have a 'before' and an 'after'. 'Before', we saw 'politics', in the form of thought and action, develop solely in community venues: political parties, workplaces, think tanks, trade unions, interest groups and, of course, elected assemblies. Politics was thus based on the debate and dialogue that took place in these socially 'real' places. 'Communication' was a political tool – namely, the 'means' by which to disseminate beliefs and action plans, which had taken shape in the collective exchanges of opinions.

'It was only yesterday that traditional 'politics' still had the ability to guide the Web.'

All this, of course, still exists. But we are in the 'interregnum' of transition, because the 'after' has already begun. In this 'after' phase, communication is no longer a political tool, but has become, in itself, 'politics'.

The situation has been turned on its head. 'Politics as communication' has now emerged, in the mainstream, from the depths of the 'virtual' audience of solitary social network users on the internet.

'Communication has been transformed – like Frankenstein's monster – from a political tool into the essence of politics, in the guise of a rebellion against the form, procedures and institutions of traditional politics: and this was how anti-politics was born.'

It was only yesterday that traditional 'politics' still had the ability to guide the Web. The first presidential campaign of Barack Obama, for example, was able to channel the scattered forces of online opinions in his meet-ups. This meant that 'politics' was able to transform the

What are social media?

Social media encompass a range of information and communication technologies used for sharing information and opinions, often through explicit connections with other people or groups. They include:

- Interactive websites that use 'Web 2.0' techniques to encourage user-contributed content and comment
- Blogs (i.e. personal, publicly available journals) that allow anyone to report or comment on news and events
- Micro-blogging services such as Twitter that make it possible to publish, instantaneously, short messages to which other users can subscribe
- Photo and video-sharing services like Flickr or YouTube that let users publish material they have produced
- Social networking services (SNS) such as Facebook and the professional network LinkedIn, which allow users to create an online profile and to link to – and communicate with – friends, colleagues and organisations.

Source: 2014. EPRS. Social media in election campaigning



Social Network: Twitter on tablet ©European Union.

virtual communities of the Web into real associations. Communication was still a political tool. Then, almost imperceptibly, came the great transformation. Every day politics is increasingly becoming the slave and follower of the Web. The



Voxbox in Strasbourg. Facebook chat ©European Union 2017

emotions, perceptions and moods of the Web have become 'politics' in themselves. Election winners are those who are in tune with what the internet expresses, i.e. with its groundswell which fears no contradiction because it is based on changing, day-to-day activity, with no memory of the past, nor vision of the future.

Can we call all this direct democracy? No, that would be wrong. Even the mythical direct democracy of the Athenian polis consisted of decisions that were preceded by collective reasoning. It is no coincidence that

the rationalisation of dialectics and the rules of argumentation were born simultaneously in that environment. None of this can be found in the 'set' of opinions available online. These have no 'weight' in the discussion, but are only vaguely 'counted'. And thus, communication has been transformed – like Frankenstein's monster – from a political tool into the essence of politics, in the guise of a rebellion against the form, procedures and institutions of traditional politics: and this was how anti-politics was born.

The prime target of this anti-politics is – and why would it be otherwise – parliaments. Or rather, the very concept of parliament as an idea based on reasoning and dialogue.

We can all notice this corruption of political communication by logging on to the social networks at our own computers. And it is easy for populist movements to exploit that for electoral purposes, by surfing the waves of current opinions.

There is therefore a great democratic issue at stake here. But it is not only a question of defending parliamentary

institutions, even though this is vital. The basic question is: how innocent is the Web, how spontaneous are the opinions it records?

'European politics must find its way again by inventing these safeguard procedures.'

The same technological progress that engendered the digital revolution tells us that it can be guided and manipulated from above. Indeed, we know that the (private) companies which own the search engines and social networks also have extremely strong powers to influence their content. They can therefore influence electoral decisions and, accordingly, the very parliamentary institutions themselves.

The basic question of freedom posed by the new political communication in the digital era is therefore that of effective monitoring in the public interest, to prevent the abuses of the private domain perpetrated by a few. European politics must find its way again by inventing these safeguard procedures. It has to take a twin-track approach to 'democratising' digital political communication: in respect of those who, in actual fact, govern it and can distort it to their own ends; and in respect of those who monopolise it, following a 'pensée unique'.

This is a democratic battle to safeguard, against all forms of influence, the system of freedom upon which the EU's identity is based.



Hostage of modern technologies ©iStock

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FAKE NEWS

Fake news: deliberately fabricated stories posing as journalism with the aim of manipulating readers.

source: 2017, *EPRS*, 'Fake news' and the EU's response.

Fake news is not new. History, in and out of Europe, offers many examples of what, at the time, was 'fake news'. Julius Caesar's heir Octavian and his rival Mark Anthony waged a well-documented disinformation war. For centuries, minorities such as Jews or Roma were sadly targeted with false accusations of witchcraft or crime. Even today, the world is packed with hoaxes, false rumours, and half-truths.

Disinformation is as old as humans. So why is it that disinformation and 'fake news' sound so worrisome today? Hardly would anyone disagree that false information has negative effect on our open and free societies, with their cornerstone of freedom of expression and freedom of access to information. Fake news leads to false ideas, false realities and therefore to misguiding citizens and, ultimately, undermining our democracies. In the last decade, for many of us the online platforms and the social media

have become the main source of our news and information to the extent that secretive algorithms are now effectively shaping the information flow of each and every one of us. Today we speak of this as a filter bubble. Facebook and Google, for example, control approximately three out of every four visits to any legacy media site.

Who is taking advantage of this? While traditional media are still there, there are also the start-ups; new ideas, which are changing the nature of the production and distribution of news; or sometimes even citizens, generating their own content. We've all seen successful YouTubers, carving out a niche market and making money from their passion. The problem is the other side of this vast universe - hidden within these legitimate new sources of content and new income streams, there is a motley crew of stakeholders, who exploit disinformation as a tool for manipulation of public opinion. It happened during the U.S. presidential elections in 2016, and we have seen it in different EU members: web sites creating fake content as a way to gain influence or, in some cases, just to make money from easy to click ads.

The result can be ominous:

citizens' trust in digital information remains abysmally low. A recent Eurobarometer survey revealed that only 7% of respondents believe even reliable stories, published on social media. If we couple this with the fact that social media represent the main information source for Europeans under-35, hardly anyone would object that online disinformation is a serious threat, which requires solutions.

'The problem is the other side of this vast universe, there is a motley crew of stakeholders, who exploit disinformation as a tool for manipulation of public opinion.'

It is not up to the European Commission to be a sort of pan-European Ministry of Truth. The definition of 'truth', in pluralistic societies such as ours, is built through open discussion and debate. But this is precisely why we need to have a guarantee that citizens receive quality content, helping them to take informed decisions.

In his letter of intent of 13th of September, President Juncker acknowledged this, when he said that it is necessary and urgent to develop a policy response to the problem of 'fake news'. This is a complex challenge – not only because we will need to determine what we mean by disinformation online, but also because any policy response must preserve citizens' freedoms, our open and democratic choices. The possible solutions must respect freedom of expression and



media pluralism, while guaranteeing access to reliable information, based on professional, ethical journalism.

‘We need to have an open conversation with the main online platforms in order to find solutions. Finding solutions will be good for them, and will be good for all the Europeans.’

The Commission has already developed a strategy for limiting the spread online of illegal speech, hatred, violence, and terrorism. It has recently adopted new rules designed to clarify take-down procedures and the responsibility of online platforms. We have developed a partnership to better protect minors from illegal or harmful content, involving industry, civil society and the public sector. Through the East Stratcom Task Force, we are also curbing false narratives systematically promoted by one particular country, with the goal to destabilise Eastern European democracies. I strongly believe it is possible to develop more comprehensive action, by combining all our efforts, and

including traditional media, online platforms, civil society and citizens; so we are launching a consultation process to start a dialogue on a number of important issues, such as reporting and verification systems of fake news, and the transparency of algorithms. We need to have an open conversation with the main online platforms in order to find solutions. Finding solutions will be good for them, and will be good for all the Europeans.

Of course, this alone is not enough. If we are to try to solve this problem it is equally important to pay attention to the traditional media and to the citizens’ media literacy. In the past, citizens consuming media knew in many instances what the agenda of that media was. Today, with the proliferation of media and information overload, such knowledge is much harder to obtain. Different pilot actions, promoted by the European Parliament, will enable us to support media literacy and quality journalism projects. A number of initiatives are already in the pipeline to help balance the relationship between online platforms and the traditional press, so that publishers can finance quality journalism. Such are the copyright reform proposals, which could strengthen publishers’ negotiating position vis-à-vis the internet platforms; the funding of quality information on EU affairs; and supporting projects that monitor risks, related to press freedom and pluralism. The fake news challenge will also require active collaboration from and between the Member States. We need to build on experiences at national level to avoid fragmentation, and this is why an action at EU level can help improve the effectiveness of

The European Council in 2015 asked the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini, to submit an action plan on strategic communication to address Russia’s ongoing disinformation campaigns. As a result, the **EEAS’s East StratCom** task force was set up in September 2015. Since then, the team has been working without its own budget, drawing on the existing EU strategic communication budget and staff from EU institutions and Member States. It relies heavily on volunteers to collect the disinformation stories (more than 2 500 examples in 18 languages since 2015) it presents and explains in its weekly newsletters, as part of its efforts.

source: 2017, *EPRS*, ‘Fake news’ and the EU’s response.

our solutions.

I believe that together we can offer better solutions and diminish the impact of fake news. Zero ‘fake news’ may sound too challenging to achieve, but we have spent enough time hearing that this is a big problem, which cannot be solved, and therefore should not be even addressed. We could at least try. And let’s not forget – real, verified and objective news brings us at least three major achievements: richer debate, better informed citizens, and ultimately – stronger democracies with stronger citizens.

Mariya Gabriel
European Commissioner for
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Mariya Gabriel ©European Union 2017

THE EP INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

At a time of optimism within the Eurozone, but rampant Euroscepticism within member states - encapsulated by the isolationism of Brexit - it may seem premature to declare the European Parliament 'trendy'. But citizens' interaction and engagement with the Parliament is here to stay.

Thanks in part to the 'Spitzenkandidaten' process, media coverage was five times higher for the 2014 parliamentary elections than in 2009. Yet, 2019 is not 2014. Looking out upon a blustery autumnal day in Brussels, the situation Jean-Claude Juncker described in his State of the Union speech on September 13, seems reality: 'We have now a window of opportunity but it will not stay open forever. Let us make the most of the momentum, catch the wind in our sails.'

In developing and implementing the European Election strategy for 2019, it is the task of the campaign to unfurl the proverbial sail and catch that wind, however short-lived. We

must bear in mind that the political, social and digital environment Europeans are faced with today has transformed.

'More than ever, in a context of crisis and increased responsibility for the European Parliament, it is crucial to build engagement, loyalty and trust between Parliament's media professionals and journalists.'

International terrorism, increasingly unpredictable relations between China, Russia and the United States, the constant shadow of the Brexit negotiations, the phenomenon of 'fake news' and the influx of refugees barely figured in most Europeans' minds when they voted in 2014.

As a reflection of European society, the European Parliament is - and

should acknowledge itself as being - fully embedded in these rapidly shifting parameters. In tackling the 2019 EP elections, we must therefore take into account the current reality and not shy away from a courageous and innovative approach to our strategy.

More than ever, in a context of crisis and increased responsibility for the European Parliament, it is crucial to build engagement, loyalty and trust between Parliament's media professionals and journalists. Striving for a common goal, we must inform people about Parliament's activities in an impartial and objective way to combat misinformation.

While this applies to institutions developing connections with media outlets and journalists, it is fundamental for building relationships with citizens. Despite 2014's significant steps forward, difficulties remain in trying to reach every single citizen. Whether the intrinsic remoteness of the EU, the problems that citizens have in working out what happens in Brussels or the complexity of decision making, all complicate Parliament's communication policy.

For these reasons, it is vital for the European Parliament to keep in mind the significance of the European elections in their wider context: they are the full articulation of European democracy. They are the moment when voters can choose in what direction they want the EU to head in the next five years; each new political make-up of the European Parliament is a microcosm of European society and a reflection of the mood of the moment among Europe's citizens. It is a crossroads. Europe's future



Ballot box © European Union 2014

will be shaped by the results of the 2019 elections. Our duty is to increase awareness of the elections and their meaning and help people make informed choices. As a result, the campaign strategy will seek to reach as wide and diverse a public as possible.

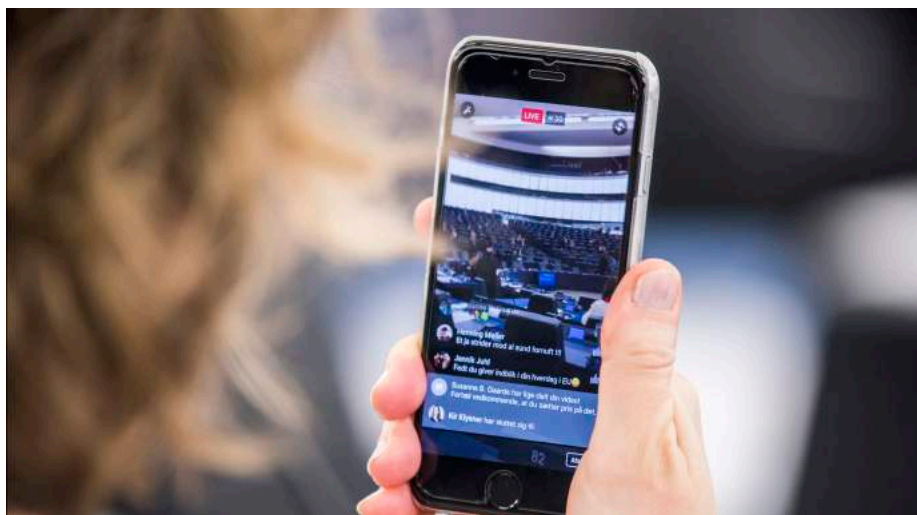
To ensure the greatest impact in terms of translating potential voters into actual voters, more specific choices regarding target audiences need to be made.

The EE19 campaign must place particular emphasis on convincing those segments of society who look favourably upon the EU, but do not turn up on voting day.

Opinion makers, youths (15-24) and students are three key pro-European target groups. Despite their pro-European statements, abstention rates among these demographics remain high. Therefore, they represent a logical target group for the campaign.

Identifying a potential group is only part of the process. Motivating and mobilising the relevant people to vote is the intended result. A mixture of messaging and social media strategy will prove most effective.

The term 'message' pertains to the overarching story or narrative that we



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would like the campaign to tell. Building a message and movement with a real mobilising force requires the audience to feel that they are part of a bigger picture. It should provide them with a sense of empowerment and control. From the perspective of younger voters and opinion makers, the 'Choose Your Future' messaging strategy is forward-looking and plants the idea that there is a prospect for change should the appropriate action in voting be taken.

'We need to adapt to the evolving social media landscape and develop new communication tools for the elections.'

Active engagement on social media will also help the European Parliament access digital natives. But momentum needs to result in people voting on the day. Facebook's 'I voted' status update, Twitter's election banner and an election-related Google doodle proved popular in 2014 and deserve to be repeated in 2019.

Nonetheless, we need to adapt to

the evolving social media landscape and develop new communication tools for the elections. One example is chat-bots, automated identities in messaging apps, which answer a range of practical queries, like 'where is my closest polling station?' Overcoming technical difficulties for voters is key. But to unlock the full power of EE19, we need a pro-European campaign. The European elections should not just bring voters to the polls, but convince them to support the European project. Beyond 2019, the battle will be against those who want to annihilate the European construction and return to a Europe where states confronted each other and people suffered. This battle will take place on many fronts, and its outcome will shape our Europe in 30 years' time. EE19 is our opportunity to drive that narrative.

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Jaume Duch Guillot ©European Union 2016

YOUTH, POLITICS AND COMMUNICATION: A SHORT HOW-TO

Participating in democratic societies has always been important for young people: naturally, they have different policy priorities than other age groups; their engagement also promises a sustainable future for democracy. With an aging society in Europe it has become even more crucial for young people to do so. And yet, reality looks different: not even every third young person (18-24 years) voted during the last European Parliamentary election¹. The participation rate of young people for the British referendum is slightly better with 64%, yet for such a historical vote not as participative as it should have been². 18 months

1. EP Thinktank (2015). Young people engaged but not voting. Retrieved October 1, 2017 from <https://epthinktank.eu/2015/12/14/young-people-engaged-but-not-voting/>

2. Helm, Toby (2016). EU referendum: youth turnout almost twice as high as first thought. Guardian. Retrieved October 1, 2017 from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jul/09/young-people-referendum-turnout-brexit-twice-as-high>

ahead of the next European Parliamentary elections we should therefore not only address questions of European democracy but also review how politicians communicate to and with young people.

To start off, "youth" is not a homogenous entity which is why more than one communication approach is needed: it consists of different groups, some active in political parties, others in non-partisan youth NGOs like ours, and some active in mono issue movements such as LGBTQIA rights or the fight against climate change. But what we share is general millennial dimensions of communications, namely real life or digitally. In real life, young people can often be met in various youth organisations. This needs to be paired with societal long-term goals: if young people don't understand the political system, if they don't know their rights and duties as citizens, they won't be interested in hearing about detailed political work. Worryingly, schools in Europe often

don't fully integrate civic education into their curriculum, let alone teach about how the EU functions. It is thus no wonder that google trends on "what is the EU" spiked on the day after the British referendum³.

'Politicians should take users seriously. If someone reacts or responds, this should be treated like a digital letter from a citizen, and be listened to.'

In lack thereof, our members work in close cooperation with schools. The great interest our network experiences is a good indication that there is a demand for teaching this content and should be further followed up by policy-makers on different governmental levels. Social media has become an everyday-life tool, especially for young people. Like many elements of our lives, political discussions have moved on there. The question of how to reach youth should hence more be framed as how we connect public discourse on traditional media with the one on social media that currently seem to run in parallel? We would recommend politicians to become active on social media, too. The investment to find out what platform is most popular for young generations in certain regions and to post regular, meaningful updates is absolutely worthwhile. Three principles, however, are important

3. Rosalie Chan (2016). Brexit: U.K. googling what the EU is hours after voting to leave. Retrieved October 2, 2017 from <http://time.com/4381612/uk-brexit-google-what-is-the-eu/>



Antonio Tajani - EP President takes part in a Facebook live chat © European Union 2017

to keep in mind: First, social media is social and has to be used accordingly. Politicians should take users seriously. If someone reacts or responds, this should be treated like a digital letter from a citizen, and be listened to. In fact, accounts that only post and don't respond are rarely successful. Consequently, a politician's social media strategy should include a component that frequently monitors the engagement and allows for reflection on the decision-maker's own positions. Second, young people shouldn't be underestimated. Sure, the end of roaming costs can be celebrated but there's more to us than just our homo oeconomicus. We see how our generation has difficulties finding employment or how people cross the Mediterranean in the hope of a better home. These topics matter, too. But, thirdly, social media needs to be paired up with real-life interaction, creating and strengthening contacts. Politicians shouldn't be afraid to ask these groups, e.g. the European Youth Forum, for help: they can also support by introducing new young people to your work. Despite all the advantages of the digital revolution, there are pitfalls to it, too: for instance, twitter allows everyone to report news. This tempts some decision-makers to reply rapidly before knowing the full facts and it facilitates the process of picturing a complex situation in black-and-white due to its character limit. Facts can easily be changed, lies are difficult to detect and weaken the credibility of other credible actors. Platforms that depend heavily on algorithms are also the perfect soil to build echo chambers since they aim for the user to spend more time online and show less controversial posts that might oppose the user's views. This



*Live interview of Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the EC, for YouTube and Euronews
©European Union 2017*

confirmation bias is dangerous for everyone, especially to teenagers, as an awareness of the existence of other opinions, the ability to think critically as well as to debate with others - skills needed to maintain a democratic society - are weakened when no critical opinions are shown. A Pew Research Center study showed that 62% of US-American users receive their news from social media; another study concluded that 59% of 2.8 million shared articles happened without having been read^{4,5}. This is why it's crucial to rethink how we want society to work: How important is quality journalism and fact-checking to us? How can we stimulate critical thinking and allow for better

media education?

Some things have already improved: Though twitter, whose main characteristic is formulating snazzy one-liners, has certainly facilitated the current wave of populism, so-called twitter threads, i.e. an argument written in multiple tweets, have become popular when discussing politics. More steps in this direction need to be taken, both by platforms and its users. When it comes to communicating politics, it is utmost time carefully to balance good communication with a reasoned, well-thought through approach by politicians.

4. Gottfried, J., Shearer, E. (2016). News use across Social Media Platform 2016. Pew Research Center. Retrieved September 30, 2017 from <http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/>
5. Maksym Gabielkov, Arthi Ramachandran, Augustin Chaintreau, Arnaud Legout (2016). Social Clicks: What and Who Gets Read on Twitter?. ACM SIGMETRICS / IFIP Performance 2016, Antibes Juan-les-Pins.

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FMA ACTIVITIES



European Parliament Former Members Association
Association des anciens députés au Parlement européen



FMA activities

FMA STUDY VISIT TO USA

THE EU-US PARTNERSHIP WILL OUTLAST PRESIDENT TRUMP

The political atmosphere in the United States has changed considerably since last year's presidential election.

Since World War II the United States has played a systemic role in the multilateral institutions set up during that period. In the early fifties it was a major advocate of the then European Coal and Steel Community, as a forerunner of the EC, which later became the European Union. Over the years the US and the EU have closely collaborated and created the basis of global co-operation between and with countries of different size and culture. As a whole the world has benefitted greatly from the growth of multilateralism. It has promoted a climate of more open governance, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs. Multilateral institutions have also contributed to tackling jointly world-wide issues, such as climate change, immigration flows or terrorism.

A week before our visit to Washington DC President Trump offered a radically different vision of a world order dominated by a return to the concept of sovereignty of individual states and the exclusive

pursuit of national interests. A modern catch as catch can. His 'America First' vision constitutes a total departure from decades of bipartisan foreign policy consensus in the United States.

Throughout our visit the defining issue was nationalism vs. internationalism. Our discussions at the State Department demonstrated its declining role: practically no senior political officials have yet been confirmed by the Senate, the sixth and seventh floor are nearly empty, and its budget has been reduced by more than 10% (against an earlier reduction foreseen for 30%!). At the same time we were comforted by hearing from its permanent staff that the administration has come to understand that a strong commitment to US-EU relations is an essential component of defending US interests, even though many trade issues are still outstanding. We received similar messages in other meetings.

At the same time our visit was a stark and troubling confirmation of the polarized situation in the country. In discussions about a potential nuclear conflict with North Korea and the possible refusal by President

Trump to recertify Iran's compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal, we were impressed by the differences between the near unanimous views of his advisors and the natural instinct of President Trump for radical action. For most of us this new political climate in a longstanding ally of Europe is very worrying indeed. The recent extraordinary statements by the much respected Senator Corker, chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on the instability of the President and the resulting possible threats of a new armed conflict are not new, but should add considerable concern in European circles. President Trump's earlier welcome of Brexit, the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union, is in retrospect a minor ripple compared to the gravity of the current situation.

The lessons for the European Union are clear. As Chancellor Merkel has confirmed on many occasions that the EU and its member states stand alone in facing the numerous challenges within our countries and in the world around us. If ever, the famous words by Winston Churchill apply to the current position of Europe : 'if we do not hang together we will hang separately'. President Trump's actions contribute greatly to a more united Europe.

The conclusion of our visit is clear: the United States remains an essential partner for the European Union. There is no doubt that our relations will outlast President Trump!



Protester holds sign at Anti-Trump Love Rally Boston Common ©iStock

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DIVISIONS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

When President Trump took office on 20 January 2017, the US economy was actually doing pretty well; since the credit and financial crisis, the unemployment rate had dropped to 5% and the GDP growth rate had climbed back to 2.4% (compared to 1.9% in the EU).

But the lengthy and aggressive election campaign exposed both old and new economic, political, ethnic, religious and regional divisions.

For those of us who see the USA - a vast community of different ethnic groups and States united under one legal system and language - as a role model for the European Union, the deep disagreements which emerged during the Obamacare Debate (TV) on the future of the common healthcare system are shocking. The Republicans, in thrall to the Calvinist concept of individual responsibility, reject the idea of solidarity which underpins the welfare state.

They are against all forms of redistribution of wealth; the better-off, who have worked hard to get where they are, should not have to support those in need, the unemployed.

The pension system and tax reform proposals reflect this philosophy as well.

With political tensions this high,

you would think that the election campaign was still in full swing. Our discussion partners, including Ambassador David O'Sullivan - who some of us know from his time in Brussels - confirmed that American society is becoming increasingly polarised, as did former Congressman Brian Baird, with whom I discussed the topic at length. We also spoke to some important figures at Georgetown University and Johns Hopkins University. Remember, there are no state-funded party foundations in the USA; it is therefore left to independent institutes with no party affiliations to provide a running commentary on political affairs.

The lecture at Johns Hopkins University on energy costs, which have plummeted thanks to fracking (as the extreme levels of air conditioning in every building reminded us), ended in a frustrated account of the lack of interest in climate change and its effects shown by US politicians.

Concerns about the significant effects of emissions are being taken seriously in California, but nowhere else.

But here as well there is a rift in society between the eco-conscious and those who want - at the expense of future generations - to exploit as many free resources (air, water, land, etc.) as possible and to whom the concept of precautions to deal with later repercussions means nothing.

There is no suggestion of setting up a body, similar to the one here in Germany, whose task it is to highlight the impact of environmental damage on public health, in an effort to

influence politicians. And California's more stringent emissions standards have no chance of being adopted by any other states.

People turn a deaf ear to scientists who try to explain the relationship between climate change and hurricanes and tsunamis.

As might be expected, EU, and particularly Germany, migration policy was often cited in the heated debates on Trump's immigration restrictions. As Germans, people asked us about the recent election result, and it was impossible to ignore the element of gloating at the way the influx of refugees had turned people against Merkel's coalition.

The future of immigration to the USA was also discussed, in particular for non-whites and Muslims; the fear of taking in even more people who are 'different' is all too evident.

The election results in November showed strong support for the Republicans in the eastern USA and for the Democrats in the west and south of the country, with the exception of California and Florida. The President, who is constantly rallying his fans, and the gun lobby against critics of the right to carry a gun, is merely polarising opinion even more and deepening the rifts in society.

It is as if the centrifugal forces - pulling towards the centre - are losing strength and the centripetal forces are tearing the 'United' States apart.

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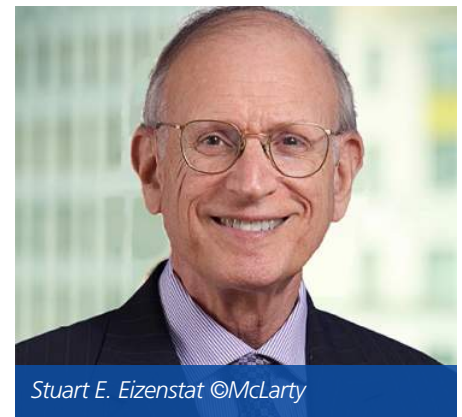


IRAN-NORTH KOREA

The Trump Administration faces twin, interrelated challenges from North Korea's existing nuclear weapons program and Iran's potential one. President Trump's recent decision to 'decertify' the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany (P-5+1), can complicate resolution of both challenges. Indeed, he asserted that there are 'many people who believe that Iran is dealing with North Korea', for which there is no concrete evidence. In his October 13, 2017 announcement, repeating his campaign statements, he called the JCPOA 'one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into'. This is despite the fact the JCPOA reduced the number of centrifuges enriching uranium by two-thirds; totally dismantled its heavy water facility at Arak producing plutonium; forced Iran to relinquish

98% of its nuclear fuel stockpile; limited the amount of nuclear fuel it can produce until 2031; and provided the most intrusive inspection regime by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ever used -which has repeatedly found that Iran has complied with the terms of the JCPOA-.

For sure, the JCPOA has limitations. The restrictions have a sunset clause and will expire in 2025/2030; access to military facilities is not permitted; and it does not cover Iran's missile program, let alone its support for terrorism and other destabilizing actions in the region. But the nuclear agreement was never intended to cover all Iranian behavior, and other US sanctions cover these. Once the time limits expire, Iran remains under an obligation in the Non-Proliferation Treaty not to develop a nuclear weapons. Taking the advice of his national security team, the President did not immediately walk away from the agreement at a time there is



Stuart E. Eizenstat ©McLarty

already a confrontation with North Korea. Nor did he assert the JCPOA was contrary to America's national interest, which would have limited his room for flexibility, but took the narrower ground under the 2015 Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act that he could not certify that the suspension of sanctions under the JCPOA was 'appropriate and proportionate' to measures Iran has taken 'to terminate its illicit nuclear program'. He then tossed the issue to the Congress, which can impose nuclear-related sanctions under expedited procedures for up to 60 days. However, the President will not ask Congress to impose those sanctions, but will ask Congress to place additional sanctions outside the JCPOA to target Iran's ballistic missile program and its support for terrorism, and will work with our allies 'to counter Iran's destabilizing activity' in the region. At the same time, he announced he would work with Congress and our allies to address the flaws in the agreement, like the sunset clauses. He will ask Congress to write into law certain thresholds for Iranian behavior, which if violated, would lead automatically to renewed sanctions against Iran. -continued ballistic missile launches



Rex Tillerson, US Secretary of State, on the left, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission; 2nd on the right, and Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iranian Foreign Minister, on the right, during a EU3/ E3+3 and Iran Ministerial Meeting on JCPOA. ©European Union, 2017



by Iran; a refusal to extend the duration of the constraints on its nuclear fuel production; or a conclusion by US intelligence agencies that Iran could produce a nuclear weapon in less than a year. While far short of terminating the agreement immediately, the President has nevertheless put the U.S. in a box. Neither Iran nor any of the other P5+1 countries will agree to reopen the hard-fought, long-negotiated JCPOA. While Secretary of State Tillerson has stated that Iran's other threatening activities could be negotiated in a separate agreement outside the JCPOA, Iran would have little incentive to do so, without receiving substantially greater sanctions relief from the U.S., which the Administration will certainly not provide. By January 12, 2018, the President must decide whether to grant the regular six-month waiver of nuclear sanctions under the JCPOA, which was the basis for Iran to agree to major limits on its nuclear program. If this happens, the JCPOA is dead, and Iran would then be freed of its constraints on its nuclear program. But he can hardly do so, absent the kinds of actions by Iran it unfortunately will not take. President

Trump stated that absent such an agreement the JCPOA 'will be terminated.' Then, it would be the U.S., not Iran, who will have terminated a multilateral treaty, and the U.S. will be isolated. If he re-imposes secondary sanctions against European companies and those from other countries doing business with Iran, he will ignite a trade war that will undercut the cooperation he needs to address the deficiencies in the JCPOA; Iran only came to the negotiating table for the JCPOA because of united, strong sanctions action by the U.S. and EU. The President tried to justify his decertification by stating that North Korea was an example that 'the longer we ignore a threat, the worse that threat becomes.' But there is a very different lesson North Korea will take from this initial action by the President to walk away from the agreement: why negotiate an agreement with the U.S. to forswear its nuclear program, when the U.S. can unilaterally terminate its obligations? If we could achieve a nuclear agreement with North Korea that was anything like the tough one

we have with Iran under the JCPOA, it would be a minor miracle. At this point, they should immediately appoint a high-level envoy to work with the EU and attempt to negotiate a supplement agreement on the deficiencies under the JCPOA, and Iran's other activities, but should not tank the JCPOA in the process.

Stuart E. Eizenstat was Chief White House Domestic Policy Adviser to President Carter (1977-1981), and held a number of Senate-confirmed positions in the Clinton Administration, including U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, Under Secretary of Commerce, Under Secretary of State, and Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. (1993-2001). His new book, "President Carter: The White House Years" will be published in the spring of 2018.

Stuart E. Eizenstat
Former United States Ambassador to the European Union (1993-1996)



Federica Mogherini, speaks following a EU3/E3+3 and Iran Ministerial Meeting on JCPOA meeting at the United Nations. ©European Union, 2017

TRUMP AND THE MIDDLE EAST

President Trump's speech to the UN in September shows life will be different - but how different?. This dilemma is particularly reflected in US policy towards the Middle East. There is one certainty. There will be no progress on the 'road map' on the solution of Israel's boundaries. This was underlined by the vigorous applause given to President Trump at the UN by Mr Netanyahu. Trump is not the only cause of the stalling on the road map but he will put less pressure on Israel than in the past. However other areas of Middle East policy remain less clear. In April the US Navy destroyers in the Mediterranean fired 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at the Shayrat airfield in the Western Homs Province of Syrian in retaliation for the Assad government's use of chemical weapons in an attack in Khan Sheikhoun. This might have indicated to EU and others that Trump was going to be tough on the Assad regime. However there is confusion particularly surrounding Trump's handling of Putin's role in Syria. Will there be a more direct involvement by the USA in countries like Syria and Libya and even a new cooperative US /Russian initiative in Syria?

The area of most concern is the President's approach to Iran. Iran has supplied up to 100,000 missiles to Hezbollah aimed at Israel. Iran supports terrorist groups. Iran intervened in Syria in support of Assad, and is in the process of constructing a military facility in Syria. Concern by the USA on this deserves support. Consequently a tough approach to Iran would not be a surprise.

The President does not do this. He approaches this issue by attacking the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JPOCOA) with Iran on nuclear weapons which he has described as 'one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered'. Since 2012 Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium has reduced from 8000kg to 300kg. The heavy water reactor at Arak, making plutonium, has been totally dismantled. Iran's facilities are inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 24 hours a day. On 8 occasions the IAEA has certified Iranian compliance with its terms. There is no evidence of a change since the last certification. In other words any action by the



FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo with the President of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, Cliff Stearns, during the welcome reception at K&L Gates premises

US would be punishing Iran for its good rather than its bad behaviour. The United Kingdom, France and Germany have made it quite clear that they would not support the USA and would not pull out of the agreement. There is no indication that US departure from the JPOCOA would have any impact on the real issues that are of concern in Syria. The USA has a proud record for good in the world. The USA could be immensely beneficial in the Middle East for example over the dispute in the Gulf States over Qatar or in encouraging Turkey to be a full democracy. However at present the Trump administration has yet to show that it will live up to the US record.

The American constitutional system of checks in balances could come into play with Congress forcing the President in a rational direction. Also much depends on the extent which the President listens to the sensible members of his administration (the 'adults'). Hopefully the USA will get on track.

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Enrique Barón Crespo addressing a question during the Panel on The Trump Administration's Foreign Policy at the FMC annual events ©FMC

HOW CAN WE COMBAT TERRORISM?

Our meeting with General Gray at the Potomac Institute was particularly interesting in that it gave us an insight into the findings of studies carried out in the USA and worldwide. What struck me in particular was the way those findings highlighted the root causes of terrorism, information which can help us to devise better ways of fighting this global scourge. Terrorism is nothing new and it affects all five continents. The most obvious current example is Daesh, which is stepping up its attacks every month across the Middle East, Europe, Africa and America. The main factors that enable terrorism to develop and thrive include:

- The material and social poverty endured by so many of our fellow citizens. Millions of these people live on the edges of our society: they have no skills, they do not belong and they have no personal or professional prospects.
- The vulnerable mental state of many individuals, who see terrorism as an outlet for their abnormal urges.

- Attempts by states to destabilise one another. Although they are not powerless, our democracies have weaknesses that can be exploited by terrorists:
- Cooperation between all intelligence services urgently needs to be made more effective, both at domestic level and between EU Member States and further afield. In New York, closer cooperation between local law-enforcement services led to a rapid fall in crime rates. In France, President Macron recently set up a task force to coordinate the work of the country's multiple intelligence services. At European level, information exchange must be improved using all the modern techniques available.
- At operational level, networking between all police and military forces is essential.
- In neighbourhoods seen as problematical, the EU, its Member States and local and regional authorities must develop schemes to combat poverty and integrate everyone, particularly by means of language and general education.
- Social media and networks are

The **Potomac Institute for Policy Studies** is an independent, not-for-profit public policy research institute. The Institute identifies and aggressively shepherds discussion on key science and technology issues facing our society. From these discussions and forums, they develop meaningful science and technology policy options and ensure their implementation at the intersection of business and government.



Jean-Marie Beaupuy with Prof. Yonah Alexander, Director of the Potomac Institute for Policy studies

indisputably aiding terrorists. The role they play must be addressed.

- Collective action is needed in many other areas, such as cutting off sources of funding for terrorists and engaging in 'targeted' diplomacy. The European Union was built to defend peace and foster its citizens' well-being. It urgently needs to make rapid progress in the fight against terrorism, and it is high time, therefore, that the Member States and their political leaders established proper intelligence and law-enforcement networks.

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A moment of the introductory speech of Alfred Gray, Lieutenant General, at the Potomac Institute for Policy studies

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Prospects for Climate Action in the United States proved a valuable and interesting discussion during the FMA visit to Washington in October 2017. The USA has never been the most enthusiastic supporter of policies to tackle climate change. True, President Clinton did sign the Kyoto Protocol but it was never put to a vote in the Senate. President George W Bush, having defeated Vice President Gore a leading campaigner for climate change policies, withdrew from the protocol despite much criticism. President Obama, in contrast, was a strong supporter of the Paris Agreement and because it was not a treaty, was able to ratify it by executive order without a Senate vote. President Trump has attracted much criticism in signalling his intention to withdraw from that Agreement. He has also indicated support for what remains of the US coal industry having had the backing of the mining community in his election campaign. Despite this wavering support for climate change policies, there

has been a 25% reduction in US emissions since 2005, mostly in the last five years and mainly in the switch from coal to gas. Renewable energy sources and improvements in the efficiency of energy use have also played a part.

It has been reported that since 2009 renewable energy costs have fallen by 66% in the case of wind and by 85% in the case of solar. These cost reductions, as well as some tax incentives are encouraging activity at State and local level. Little mention was made of the role of nuclear energy though it provides some 10% of electricity but its future contribution is somewhat uncertain. While it is easy to report on the past, it is hugely difficult to assess the future. Electric power is now unquestionably seen as the main source of energy. The production and the transmission methods will depend on science and technology developments and the extent to which these can be economically used. Government decisions to apply taxes or subsidies will have

influence either nationally or locally. Supply and or distribution decisions may be influenced by local geographical factors.

Transport infrastructure is a key driver of economic growth and the current Chinese rail project now heading west towards Europe will not be the last such project. During the visit to Washington Alstom and Siemens announced ambitious plans to create an advanced rail network throughout Germany and France. Similar projects are certain to arise elsewhere.

Nuclear power in the USA did not feature much in the discussion but a recent staff paper to the Secretary for Energy listed a number of factors that favour an increase rather than a decrease in its contribution. These were: the reduction in greenhouse gases, resilience in the grid (baseload issues), national security with diversity of fuels, jobs and the contribution to the tax base.

I recall from my early days as a member of the European Parliament's energy committee that there was a greater support for nuclear power than now and also a struggle to convince the Commission to increase research and development funding for renewable energies. Today, many millions of people in the world do not have a secure electricity supply (including one third of the population of India) and the world's population continues to grow.



Climate Change and American flag. Influence of USA on global climate. ©iStock

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HURRICANES AND THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

During our visit to Washington, the humanitarian emergency in Puerto Rico, caused by the passage of Hurricane Maria, continued. Huge damage had been caused, leading to death and destruction, with blocked roads, collapsed bridges and a population with no water, food or electricity.

Recently, hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, which formed over the Atlantic Ocean, have hit the coasts of the United States, while Hurricane Ophelia caused casualties, catastrophic devastation and violent fires in Portugal, Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Today, thanks to satellite observation and sophisticated technical instruments, we are able to have a better knowledge of the structure and development of hurricanes and to determine, with greater accuracy, the relationship between these events and 'climate change', though experts have conflicting views.

Some say it is difficult to establish whether hurricanes in recent years have been stronger than those in previous years, while others say that, since the 1970s, rising temperatures have led to an increase in the frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones. However, the UN World Meteorological Organization has

stated: 'Climate change does very likely increase the associated rainfall and the strength of hurricanes and cyclones which have always been there. The relationship between climate change and the frequency of hurricanes is not clear.'

Undoubtedly, the increase in sea levels due to global warming makes flooding more likely in coastal areas along hurricane paths. Coordinated development policy and environmental strategies need to be implemented, by facilitating exchanges of experience and information, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the proper use of energy resources and new lifestyles, while bearing in mind the island states which could disappear below the sea, as highlighted in 1999 in the Persad-Bissessar report on 'Climate change and small island states in the context of the ACP-EU cooperation framework'.

In 2016, the Paris Agreement, signed by 195 countries, entered into force. It is the first-ever universal, legally binding deal which sets out a global action plan with a view to avoiding dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C. Governments have agreed on action plans based on

mitigation (to reduce emissions), transparency, global reviews, adaptation and support, with a special focus on the loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, involving all stakeholders at the sub-national level.

In June 2017 President Trump declared that the US would be withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, on the grounds that it was causing huge damage to the economy, with losses of jobs and competitiveness; he also put a stop to further funding for the Environmental Protection Agency. In the debate at the John Hopkins, lawyer Benjamin Longstreth explained that since 2005, significant progress in reducing emissions had been made at the federal level, owing to investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency and, given that President Obama's 'Clean Power Plan' had not been ambitious enough, Congress had had to adopt a range of renewable tax incentives. Individual US states nevertheless manage, independently, to promote ambitious measures locally. Atlanta, for instance, aims to attain a renewable energy level of 100%. In spite of President Trump's decision, there is great bipartisan support for clean energy and renewables. Since the 1970s, much has been done worldwide, but we must continue making a strong global commitment in order to avoid painful consequences.

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FMA Delegation with Ambassador David O'Sullivan, at the EU Delegation to the United States

IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA

When the stars - and schedules - are in alignment, symbolic coincidences can arise. Before going to Washington, I attended the Deauville American Film Festival. Philippe Augier, the prestigious resort's dynamic mayor, put it this way: 'Since it was founded in 1860, Deauville has established close relations with the American people. Normandy is eternally grateful to the Americans and we will never forget the role they played in our history.' For 43 years, the American Film Festival has been a major cultural and political event which brings together film industry professionals from the United States, France and Europe. 'With each edition, the festival has continued to evolve and explore all aspects of American cinema. It is a real forum for artistic and business exchanges, and offers an insight into US culture and the evolution of US society', he went on. Cinema is an effective form of 'soft diplomacy'. Before even setting foot in Washington, I already felt 'American'. Films had taught me everything I needed to know about US society - its values, its violence, its hopes and its fears. In Washington, thinking of Lafayette,

Pierre Charles L'Enfant (who served General George Washington and then worked as the architect of the Federal City) and the American liberators of Europe, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of pride in our shared history.

France's election of the youngest president in the history of the Fifth Republic, who defied expectations and traditional divisions and speaks frankly on the world stage, is something Americans can relate to. Paradoxically, with its unexpected outcome, the French election mirrored Donald Trump's rise to power. From an American standpoint, Emmanuel Macron's speeches in Greece and at the UN revealed the dynamic role which France, and by extension Europe, want to play in international affairs.

Against the background of the diplomatic chaos generated by the Trump Administration and the lack of consistency and cool-headedness in the President's political thinking, which he all too often communicates by means of a series of tweets, Europe has no choice but to take the lead.

The EU continues to move forward in the face of what are often unforeseen challenges; Brexit, Catalonia and the 'America first'

stance adopted by the United States are pushing Europe to become an active world power, a guarantor of universal values, democracy and peace.

The consensus among the people we spoke to is that there are deep divisions in American society. Some spoke with resignation and concern, some with real anger and others - the hard-core Trump supporters among the white middle-class - with satisfaction. Trump cultivates this lack of consensus, taking a stand against free trade and immigration and backing the right to bear arms.

The Republicans revere the Second Amendment of the Constitution as an almost 'sacred' text.

Europe has not been immune to divisions and populism. While traditional political parties have lost ground, nationalist voters have become radicalised.

We discussed these topics openly with our American partners. There are many issues of international concern - North Korea, Iran, Syria, the Paris Agreement - and they cannot be handled by means of improvisation and guesswork. Sabotaging existing agreements is simply reckless.

Our counterparts trust in American democracy to channel this dangerous upsurge in populism.

The onus is on Europe to present a more united, active front, to defend treaties and agreements.

Just one man's impressions of Trump's America ...



Family picture of the FMA Delegation with Antoine Ripoll, Director of the EP Liaison Office with US Congress

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AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR SUPPORT TO DEMOCRACY

During the Study Visit to Washington from the FMA delegation under President Barón Crespo we had an interesting lunch with two institutes. The two institutes were the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). The Delegation spoke together with them both in one room. This is now rather rare in Washington. The relations between Republicans and Democrats are tense and bipartism is exceptional. Both organizations work in many countries. Matters of foreign affairs are even in Washington controversial. We were received by the president of the National Democratic Institute Kenneth Wollack, as well as by Stephen Nix, the director of the Eurasia Division and Jan Surotchak, the director of the European Division of the International Republican Institute. Both institutes were founded around 30 years ago in the ninety eighties. The big impetus was the collapse of the Soviet Empire. The founders of the institutes based themselves on the model of the German foundations like the Konrad



A moment of the meeting with NDI and IRI

Adenauer foundation. The difference is that the German foundations have many activities in Germany itself. The two institutes are focussing on the outside world exclusively. Both institutes receive substantial support from taxpayer. Further income is generated by gifts. In Europe the two institutes work in the eastern and western Balkan and in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland and Ukraine as well as the Caucasus region and Turkey. The Mission from the NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, nongovernmental organisation, which supports democratic

institutions and practices. The NDI works to strengthen political and civic organizations, promote citizens participation. The IRI has an objective: to foster the infrastructure of democracy; the system of free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows to people to choose their own way to develop their own culture to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means. These are the official mandates. The lunch was too short to find out which activities the Institutes instigate. It would be very important to find out more about the results of the activities. Those activities cover most of the eastern part of the EU. I would be very interested in experiences from our FMA members with either of the two institutes. A conclusion can be that America has not forgotten our old continent. Congress is still willing to spend a lot of money for aid to European countries.

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A moment of the meeting with NDI and IRI

MEETING WITH FORMER MEPS

Earlier this month, I attended a presentation by members of the European Parliament FMA at Georgetown University. There were Former MEPs from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and the UK. I am just beginning my studies at Georgetown in German and European Studies, and this discussion was one of the most enlightening extra-curricular events I have been to during my time here. As a student of Europe, I have been following the elections in Germany, the referendum in Catalonia, and Brexit from afar, but to be able to listen to former MEPs from Germany and Britain discuss what is going on in their home state and in the EU was very academically stimulating. In the United States, we hear of constant discord between member states, and it was refreshing to note that such discord does not necessarily extend outside of Brussels and that, in the end, all former MEPs want to promote a strong and stable Europe.

Not being European, I have never felt qualified to give an opinion

on the merits of Brexit, even after many other Americans blasted their opinions all over Facebook. After hearing the former MEPs from the UK speak, I can fully grasp what a tragic event this could be for Britain. I have high hopes for the future of the EU, and for Britain's sake I hope they have a part in it. One way the EU can help ensure success is by becoming more salient among citizens of the member states. It seems that Brexit happened in part due to an electorate uninformed about the numerous benefits of being an EU member, and it is easy to see why. The EU has a serious PR problem and needs to work on developing a 'face' to portray on a local level, to encourage more people to vote for Parliament and to understand what it means to be a part of the EU. As the only democratically elected body of the European Union, for parliament to have only 42% percent voter turnout points to a democratic crisis. Citizens are unaware what parliament does, and do not feel the need to make their voices heard. At Georgetown,



Some members of the Delegation at Georgetown University

one British former MEP mentioned that only the elites truly understand the goals and structures of the EU, and in my eyes that needs to change. Brexit poses potential issues for the transatlantic relationship. The US has always had cultural and historical ties with Britain, and has counted on them as a gateway into the EU. I see this as an opportunity for the US to strengthen our relationships with other member states. Here in the US, we have a new president who seems unable to reach a firm opinion on the European Union. But I am not worried about President Trump. The transatlantic partnership has proven itself time and time again through numerous hardships, and we are determined to continue such relations despite potential setbacks. As Western nations, we have many of the same goals: international security, helping those in need, and keeping our planet healthy just to name a few. As a future leader, I am confident that our partnership will continue to strengthen if we focus on the big picture, and on what we can do together to accomplish our common goals.

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Lunch Roundtable Event with professors and students at Georgetown University

FP-AP meetings in Malta

FORMER MEMBERS NETWORK

FP-AP MEETING IN VALLETTA

Valletta, the capital of the parliamentary republic of Malta in the Mediterranean, is the smallest capital city in the EU by area, and by its population of only 5 700 out of the country's total of some 430 000¹. Malta has the fifth-highest (and still rising) population density of any country in the world.

Malta has an ancient culture and history. During the Late Neolithic, six large temples were constructed on Gozo, the archipelago's second-largest island, and 22 on Malta itself, by a people who reached the islands between around 6000 and 4000 BC². The archaeological museums provide eloquent testimony to this, particularly with their valuable prehistoric (female) statuettes. It is no wonder that three sites in Malta have been declared Unesco World Heritage Sites, and that Valletta, alongside Leeuwarden (Netherlands) will be the EU Capital of Culture 2018, and is preparing itself for this major event, as witness the construction works at the entrance to the city with its defensive town wall. More archaeological finds were made during this work. According to The Times of Malta, the EU is subsidising this rebuilding project alone to the tune of EUR 24 million.

We – Andrea Manzella, Valeh Nasiri and myself, plus former parliamentarians from 19 Member States of the Council of Europe – admired the bustling tourist city of Valletta and the many European singers visiting for the major choir festival. We visited the Mdina, the silent medieval citadel, and made a trip to Gozo, where the

FP-AP President Lino DeBono lives. He and his team, led by Dr Noel Buttigieg Scicluna and Pauline Abela (Malta), were ably assisted by Krist Decanniere, Lisette Hermans and Roland Roblain from the Brussels FP-AP Secretariat.

In Marsa we visited the Turkish cemetery, which is regarded as another architectural treasure.

The 'Great Siege of Malta' by an Ottoman army took place in 1565. The Order of St John of Malta, defending the island, succeeded in defeating the besiegers. The late-16th century fortifications made Malta the most strongly fortified island in the Mediterranean and are today among the most impressive fortifications in the world.

That is the good side. However, Malta also has big problems. During its chequered history it was coveted by many warlike powers from all corners of the earth owing to its special strategic position in the Mediterranean. Today it is the brutal murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, which Andrea Manzella is particularly highlighting, as well as such matters as the debates on the infamous Panama or Paradise Papers, or the ways of obtaining a Maltese passport, which could irreversibly change the life and atmosphere of this special island. One treasure of the present day, though, is the modern Parliament building designed in 2011-2015 by the Italian architect Renzo Piano.

Here we had a question and answer session with Claudette Buttigieg, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and later with Dr Tonio Borg, the former European Commissioner, and Michael Farrugia,



Family picture of the FP-AP meeting in Malta ©FP-AP

Minister of the Interior and National Security, during the FP-AP seminar on the wide-ranging topic of 'Statelessness' – an attempt to bring clarity to the subject of refugees, with all its many facets and problems, and address the extraordinary challenges it poses for the EU as a whole.

Two impressive speakers for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – Inge Sturkenboom (Brussels) and Sharzad Tajbakhsh (Geneva) – also made reference to the UNHCR manual 'Nationality and Statelessness' for parliamentarians, and to the 'Global Action Plan to End Statelessness (2014 – 2024)' – vital reading matter for everyone.

We also had extensive and lively discussion on the first proposal by the former Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Dr Walter Schwimmer, on 'The Future of Europe', the topic of the 2018 FP-AP Colloquy in Strasbourg.

Malta has now created an international platform for discussion and has called for joint action to combat the deadly threats with which the world is faced.

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1. Wikipedia

2. Wikipedia

FP-AP STATEMENT ADOPTED IN VALLETTA

On the same day as the funerals in Malta of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, murdered for exercising her freedom of press and thought, the FP-AP Bureau adopted the following Declaration on the initiative of the FMA Delegation:

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (FP-AP)

FP-AP BUREAU MEETING IN VALLETTA
3 NOVEMBER 2017

We, Former Parliamentarians of the Member States of the Council of Europe and of the European Parliament meeting in Malta to discuss together about the Future of Europe,

- EXPRESS our profound sorrow and great indignation with regard to the criminal act which cut short the life of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia;
- CONDEMN the foul crime which has greatly moved all the people of Europe: not only because it extinguished a young life, but also because – in a Member State of the EU and of the Council of Europe – such an atrocious infringement of the rights of a free press and freedom of thought, enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the European Convention on Human Rights, could have been committed, in the form of terrorism;
- CONDEMN all kind of terrorist acts and killings in the Member States of the Council of Europe;
- SUPPORT the urgent call by the European Parliament with a view to ensuring that the government and all the authorities of the Republic of Malta make every effort to back the international investigation and bring the perpetrators and sponsors of this assassination to justice, in order to remove the dishonourable shadows that surround this brutal killing;
- TAKE NOTE of the commitment undertaken by the Prime Minister of Malta to stop at nothing to get to the truth behind this atrocious murder and the involvement of Europol, the FBI and other foreign forensic experts to provide technical expertise and assistance to the Malta Police Force in their investigations into the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia;
- EXPRESS their condolences to the family of the victim and gather together in silence in memory of Daphne Caruana Galizia and her courageous life.



EP Plenary session, October 2017. Minute of Silence in Memory of Daphne CARUANA GALIZIA - Maltese Journalist ©European Union 2017

VISIT UNDER EU PRESIDENCY

VISIT TO ESTONIA

Besides Estonia's defence priorities, the country's leading defence MP Marianne Mikko is determined to promote its cultural heritage and digital expertise.

Estonia is the most northerly of the three Baltic states, the country shares a border with Russia, and it has linguistic ties with Finland. And since independence in 1991 membership of the EU has been one of the main objectives of Estonian foreign policy. The country has a history of being occupied so many times during its history including by both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in recent times and is extremely sensitive to being a small and fairly remote country on the edge of the EU.

And sharing a border with Russia and the annexation of The Crimea by Russia has not lessened the country's anxiety.

The country was ruled at various times during the middle ages by Denmark, the German knights of the Livonian Order, and Sweden, and ended up as part of the Russian Empire in the 18th century. It experienced its first period of independence in 1918, following the

end of the First World War and the collapse of the Russian empire.

In 1920 a peace treaty was signed with Russia, in 1939 the Soviet Union compelled Estonia to accept Soviet military bases, and in 1940 Soviet troops marched in 1940 into Estonia which was incorporated into the Soviet Union.

German troops invaded Estonia in 1941 and the country was annexed again in 1944 by the Soviet Union when tens of thousands of Estonians were deported to Siberia and Central China.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country has become one of the most economically successful of the EU's newer eastern member states.

The recent former EU Moscow envoy Vygaudas Usackas has said that he does not think Russia under Putin will change its attitude to the Baltic states but that he 'believes in dialogue and it is important not to label Russia and its people as a terrorist state'.

The leading Estonian defence MP, Marianne Mikko, also shares the view that despite the potential threat to her country from Russia under Putin, dialogue is important however sensitive or difficult.

Marianne Mikko is a member of the Estonia Parliament, she heads the Estonian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and is a former Socialist MEP.

As an experienced journalist, a member of the Women for Defence group in Estonia, and having served as an MEP on the Culture and Media committee of the parliament, she is extremely important in Estonian and European defence politics.

Marianne Mikko said it is important for Europe to take its own defence and security needs seriously and for both NATO and non NATO countries within the EU to work together for their common defence.

A fascinating aspect of Estonia's history and culture especially music is its tradition of choral singing with the amazing success of the 'Singing Revolution' in helping to achieve independence from the mighty Soviet Union by the use of its voice and choral singing.

The country has long experience of mobilising the creative talents and collective voices of its people and perhaps more than any other country in the world the history of Estonia is a story set to a song.

And besides its concentration on defence and security Estonia is a world leader in digital technology and this small Baltic county of 1.3 million people it is determined to enhance further the profile of its digital voice during its current EU presidency.



FMA Delegation in Tallinn with Marianne Mikko, member of the Riigikogu in the National Defence and European Union Affairs Committee

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TOWARDS E-EUROPE?

Estonia has chosen an original initiative to focus on during its EU Presidency: it will be promoting what its government calls 'digital Europe', pushing for the more widespread use of electronic communication technologies in administration and commerce. The aim is to facilitate access to all types of data for everyone, to reduce the time taken to perform transactions of all kinds and to make all administrative exchanges completely transparent. In presenting the initiative to its 27 partners, Estonia coined the slogan 'More transparency, less bureaucracy'. It called on the European Union to take the immediate step of declaring 'the free movement of data' a fifth freedom. The country's dream is for our union of nations to become a world leader in internet use.

In a bid to win over the other governments, Tallinn decided to lead by example. The government proudly announced that 95% of Estonians now use an electronic identity card. These cards enable people to carry out every administrative task imaginable using just their computer or mobile phone. There

are only two exceptions, ministers joked: marriages and divorces. Prescriptions no longer need to be written out and kept; information on the treatments prescribed to patients is stored online and can be accessed by any pharmacy. Individual medical records are stored in electronic folders and can be consulted by medical professionals in any hospital. Elections are heading the same way; Estonians now have the option of voting at home from their computers. Setting up a business also takes just few clicks: the administrative process can be completed in a few minutes, without even leaving the house. The Estonians recounted these achievements with great enthusiasm. They offered reassuring responses to the concerns we raised regarding the reliability and confidentiality of such a broad-based system: we were assured that every precaution had been taken to prevent data from being hacked and to deter cybercriminals. We were not in any position to dispute these claims. Not all Member States share the Estonian Government's enthusiasm, however. Even in Estonia itself, the



Online Security Technology background
©European Union



FMA delegation during the guided walking tour in Tallinn Old Town

digitalisation of public activities has met resistance and problems have arisen. At the last general election, more than 70% of voters preferred to cast their ballot in the traditional at a polling station, rather than voting electronically. What is more, the official information on the procedure for voting was, oddly, provided first in Estonian, then in English: no thought had been given to the Russian speakers who make up over 30% of the population. Digitalisation may not solve political problems, but it can make them worse.



FMA Delegation in front of the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds.

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PHOTO REPORT



From left to right: Enrique Barón Crespo, President of the FMA; Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the EP and Mirek Topolánek, Former President of the Council of the EU (2009) and former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2006-2009) during the Annual Cocktail ©European Union 2017

The FMA annual events took place on 29 and 30 December 2017. During the cocktail, we counted with the presence of Ms. Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the EP.

The guest Speaker of the dinner was Mr. Mirek Topolánek, Former President of the Council of the EU (2009) and former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2006-2009). His speech was entitled *'The former Communist states of Eastern Europe are they meeting the challenges of our continent'*.

On the 30th December, the Annual Seminar took place. This year it was focalised on *'EU Global strategy on Security and Defence'*. Former and currents MEPs, as well as students from different Belgian Universities attended the event.

The video is now available on the FMA website: www.formermembers.eu



A moment of the FMA Annual Dinner ©European Union 2017



A moment of the FMA Annual Seminar "EU Global strategy on Security and Defence" ©European Union 2017



From left to right: Michael Gahler MEP; Elisabetta Fonck; Enrique Barón Crespo, Sir Julian King and Ivailo Kalfin during the FMA Annual Seminar ©European Union 2017



The Former EP Presidents, Nicole Fontaine and Pat Cox during the FMA Annual Dinner ©European Union 2017



LATEST NEWS

ACTIVITIES



2 May 2018

EPRS INFORMATION SEMINAR

From 3.45 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.
European Parliament, Brussels.

2 May 2018

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

Current and former MEPs will commemorate their colleagues who passed away in 2017-2018.
From 5.45 p.m. to 6.15 p.m.
European Parliament, Brussels.

2 May 2018

FMA COCKTAIL AND DINNER DEBATE

From 6.30 p.m. in Members' Restaurant, European Parliament, Brussels.

3 May 2018

FMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ANNUAL LUNCH

At 10.00 a.m. followed by the Annual Lunch at 1.00 p.m.

4-5 June 2018

VISIT TO BULGARIA

Details will be communicated at a larger stage.

SPONSORS

The FMA would like to thank for its generous contribution CANDRIAM



and KBC



For sponsoring the "EP to Campus" Programme.

IN MEMORIAM

† 12 October 2017
Horst POSDORF
EPP-ED (1979-1993)

He served as a German member of the European Parliament from 2005 to 2009. During his time in Parliament, Mr Posdorf was a member of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats). At the national level she represented the party 'Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands'.



NEW MEMBERS



**Cachia Therese
COMODINI**
(Malta, 2014-
2017, EPP)

Cachia Therese Comodini was a Member of the European Parliament from 2014 to 2017. Through her time in the European Parliament she served in the committee on Legal Affairs, the Delegation for relations with Palestine and the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean.



**Guido
VICECONTE**
(Italy, 1994-2001,
EF&EPP)

Guido Viceconte was a Member of the European Parliament from 1994 to 2001. During his time in the Parliament he served in the committees on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, Social Affairs and Employment, Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism and Legal Affairs and the Internal Market, delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and Mexico and the Delegation for relations with Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.



**Glenis
WILLMOTT,**
(United Kingdom,
2006-2017, S&D)

Glenis Willmott was a Member of the European Parliament from 2006 to 2017. Through her time at the Parliament, she served as a Vice-chair of the delegation for relations with Canada and as a member of the committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, delegation for relations with the countries of south-east Europe, Delegation to the EU-Croatia Joint Parliamentary Committee and Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand.



Fabio DE MASI,
(Germany, 2014-
2017, GUE/INGL)

Fabio De Masi was a Member of the European Parliament from 2014 to 2017. Through his time at the Parliament, he served as a Vice-chair of the committee of Inquiry to investigate alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to money laundering, tax avoidance and tax evasion and as a member of the committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, special Committee on Tax Rulings and Other Measures Similar in Nature or Effect and the Delegation for relations with South Africa.