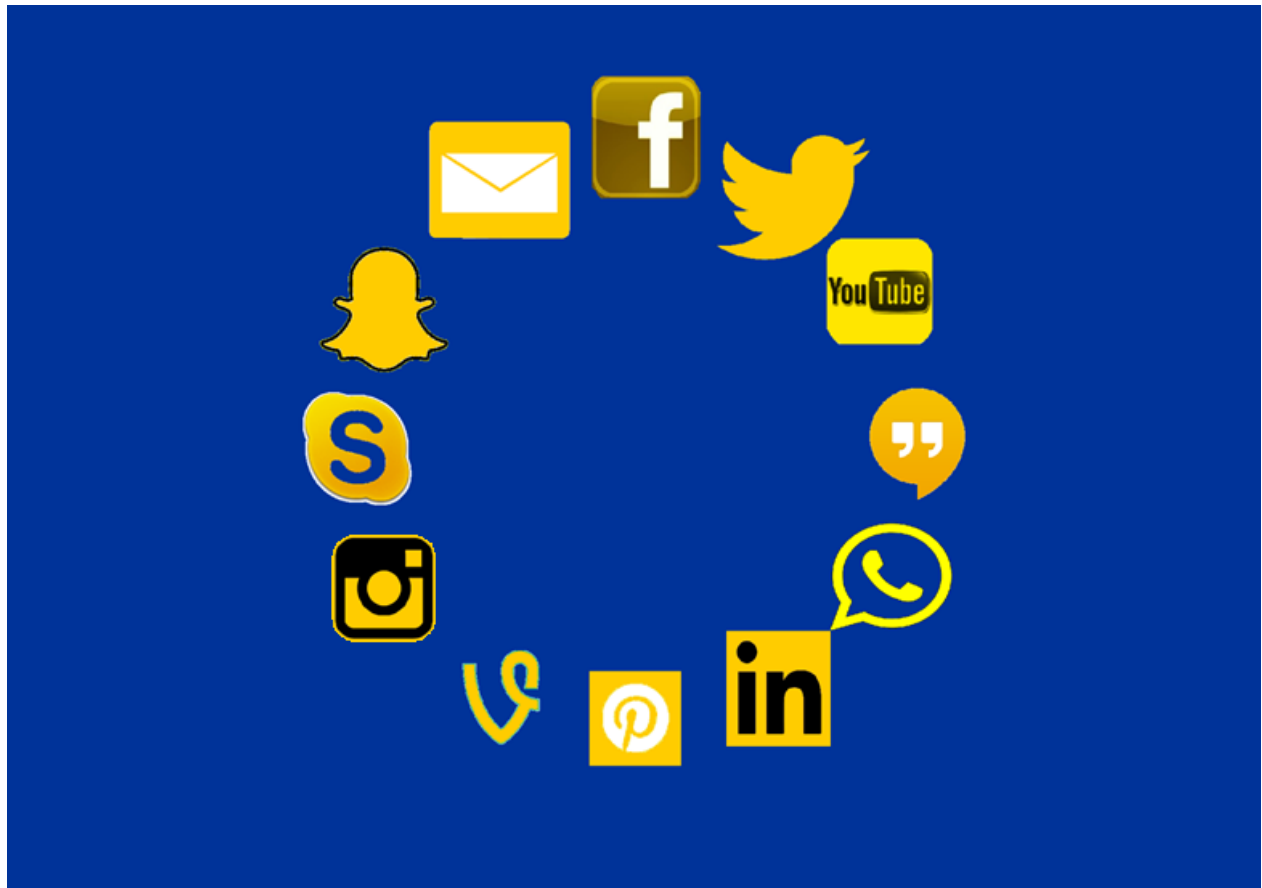


The EU and Social Media



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List of abbreviations

ALDE	- Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
e-DP	- Electronic Democracy and Participation
e-IC	- Electronic Internal Cooperation
e-PN	- Electronic Productions Networks
e-PS	- Electronic Public Services
ECB	- European Central Bank
ECR	- European Conservatives and Reformists
EEAS	- European External Action Service
EFDD	- Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy
EIB	- European Investment Bank
EP	- European Parliament
EPP	-European People's Party
EU	- European Union
EUL/NGL	- European United Left / Nordic Green Left
ICT	- Information and Communication Technology
IT	- Information Technology
OECD	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGB	- Persoonsgebonden Budget (Personal Budget)
S&D	- Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
UK	- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
US	- United States of America

Foreword

My name is Milan Plug, after completing my Bachelor of Business Administrations at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam I started with the Master European Union Studies at Leiden University. To complete my master study I chose to write a thesis about the EU and the social media. I did choose this subject because I am an enthusiastic user of various social media. While I was using the social media, I came across messages of the European Parliament and the European Commission. After reading the messages I became curious about the other social media activities of the EU institution, this resulted in choosing the EU and social media as the topic for my thesis.

I started with this thesis in March 2015. After reading a lot about social media use by governments I started writing the theoretical parts of this thesis. When the theoretical parts were completed the data gathering for the second part of my thesis began. The amount of likes/mentions/subscribers/views can change rapidly in a short period of time. It is therefore that I wanted to collect all data in the shortest time possible. After all the data was collected I started writing the last chapters that were based on this data.

Of course writing this thesis was not possible without the help of all my teachers at the University of Leiden. I want to thank them for the knowledge they have given me. I want to give a special thanks to my supervisor dr. J.S. Oster, his help in the preparation program of this thesis and his feedback later were of enormous value.

I hope that everyone reading this thesis will find it interesting and helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Plug', with a stylized, cursive script.

Milan Plug

IJmuiden, 27 June 2015

Introduction

Background and incentive

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter have gained a prominent position in the daily life of millions of Europeans the last decade. Where in December 2005 Facebook had only 6 million users this number has grown to 1,44 billion active users in March 2015¹. A similar explosive growth can be seen by other social media. For many Europeans being active on social media is part of their daily routine. The threshold to become active on the social media is low because there are usually no (financial) costs involved. Companies also started using the social media because people are easily reachable via social media. Companies do not only use the social media for promotion objectives but also for customer support. A new trend is for governments and government officials to be active on the social media. This thesis focuses on one specific government layer: the European Union (EU). The EU is in the eyes of many people the government layer that is most far away. It is for that reason interesting to see how the EU uses and can use the social media to narrow the gap between the EU and its citizens. In this thesis not only the EU institutions but also EU persons (the Commissioners and Donald Tusk) are researched.

Research question

The main question that this thesis tries to answer is: *To what extend does the EU use social media and how successful is the EU in using the social media?* All chapters try to answer a sub-question. With the answers to all the sub-questions the main research question is answered. The sub-questions are:

Chapter e-governance: *What is e-governance?*

Chapter EU institutions and the social media: *For what purposes and how can the EU institutions use social media?*

Chapter the EU and Facebook: *How is Facebook used by the EU?*

Chapter the EU and Twitter: *How is Twitter Used by the EU?*

Chapter the EU and other social media: *How are the other social media used by the EU?*

Aim of this thesis

This thesis has two aims. The first aim of this thesis is to find out how the EU uses the social media, and what they could do to increase the number of people they reach via the social media. After this research a number of recommendations are made. These recommendations can be used by EU institutions and EU persons to increase their success on the social media. They can also use the data that is gathered for this thesis to compare themselves to other institutions and officials. This thesis can also help them to optimize their social media strategies and activities. The second aim of this thesis is to fill the existing gap in the literature regarding this topic.

¹ Facebook, 2015, Stats <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>

Key terms

Social Media

Some scholars include e-mail and blogs in their definition of social media while others exclude e-mail and blogs. Safko gives in his book *The Social Media Bible* (2010) one of the shortest definitions of social media, the definition that this thesis uses for social media is: *“Social media is the media we use to be social”* (Safko, 2010, *The social media bible*, p. 3). The definition that is used in this thesis for social media is: *Social media are online platforms that consist of content created by its users, and which has the objective to increase the interaction between the users.* This definition is derived from the book *Social Media in de Detailhandel* (2011) by Weltevreden et al. For this thesis two social media are selected that get most attention. These social media are Facebook and Twitter, these are selected because they are the most popular among the EU institutions and EU persons, as well as among the European citizens. The other social media used by the EU institutions and EU persons are all combined in one chapter. However, in this chapter Youtube is described most extensively. Other social media include: Google+, Instagram, Vine, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Flickr.

Successful

In this thesis the EU institution or EU person whose messages reach most people is classified as most successful. Often successfulness on social media can be explained by a number of factors, for example the number of likes/followers/views/etc., also the activity on social media can increase the popularity and thus the success of an institute or person.

EU institutions

A list of all EU institutions can be found on the website of the European Union (europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/). The EU institutions that are included in the research for this thesis are: The European Parliament (the EP), The European Commission (the Commission), The European Council (the Council), The European Central Bank (the ECB), The European External Actions Service (the EEAS), the Court of Auditors, The Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee, The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the EU Ombudsman. If this thesis refers to the “three big institutions” the EP, Commission and Council are meant. This thesis also includes political groups active in the EP, these groups include: The European People’s party (EPP), the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the Alliance of Democrats and Liberals for Europe (ALDE), The Greens, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) and European United Left/Nordic Green Left (EUL/NGL).

EU persons

In this thesis all the individual Commissioners, Donald Tusk and Mario Draghi are the group of persons that is referred to as EU persons.

Reading guide

This thesis begins with a chapter on the research methods. In this chapter the theories that are used, the theoretical framework and the approach are described. Also the method that is used for the quantitative research is described. The chapter on e-governance gives an introduction to the world of ICT and governance. This chapter describes how governance started using technologies and for what purposes the technologies are used. The theories of Schedler and Summerarter and the article by Curran and Nichols play a central role. The next chapter narrows the thesis, only one element that was described in the previous chapter is focussed on (social media) and also only one government layer (the EU) is described. The chapter described how the EU can use the social media. The next three chapters are the quantitative research chapters, these chapters describe the results of the research that is done. Facebook and Twitter have both one chapter, the other social media are all described in the last quantitative research chapter. The thesis ends with a conclusion and recommendations. In the last chapter the answer to the main research question is given.

Research methods

Introduction

This thesis consists of two parts. The first part is the theoretical part where existing literature is used. The second part is the part that uses the self-made database, which was created specifically for this thesis. This chapter explains what is written in the chapters and why it is written. The theoretical framework and the approach of this thesis are also being described.

The first part

The first chapters of this thesis are the theoretical chapters that describe the use of e-governance and how the EU institutions could use the social media. Sources for these chapters are found using the website of the Leiden University library as well as other online search engines such as Google Scholar. Not only digital sources but also paper sources are used. The used literature can be found in the chapter Sources. The theoretical framework that is used in the chapter 'E-governance' is the theory by Schedler and Summermatter that was publicised in their article *E-government* in the Journal of Political Marketing in 2008. Also the article written by Curran and Nichols is used frequently in this chapter. Research done by Arthur Mickleit for the OECD plays a central role in the chapter 'EU institutions and social media'. The OECD working paper (number 26) from 2014 with the title *Social Media use by Governments* describes how the social media are used by different governments. The information of this OECD paper is used to describe how the EU institutions could use social media. Because the EU is not a classical government not all functions of social media that local or national authorities use can be used by the EU institutions. Therefore only information from this paper that applies or could apply to EU institutions is selected. The theoretical framework consists of many more sources but the mentioned sources are the two most important sources for these chapters, all other sources can be found in the chapter Sources. The approach used in this thesis is the institutionalism approach. This approach is chosen because it helps to explain the EU's institutions.

The second part

The second part of the thesis is written based on the database that was created for this thesis, quantitative research plays a central role in this part of the thesis. This database had to be created manually because there is not already an existing database with the required data, and because the data can change very rapidly. In the data-base the information from selected EU social media accounts is collected. The selected EU institutions and EU persons are: The European Parliament and the political groups active in the European Parliament (EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens, ECR, EFDD and EUL/NGL), the European Commission and the Commissioners (Juncker, Timmermans, Mogherini, Thyssen, Georgieva, Ansip, Šefčovič, Dombrovskis, Katainen, Oettinger, Hahn, Malmström, Mimica, Cañete, Vella, Andriukaitis, Avramopoulos, Moscovici, Stylianides, Hogan, Hill, Bulc, Bieńkowska, Jourová, Navracsics, Crețu, Vestager and Moedas), the European Council and its president (Tusk), the ECB and its president (Draghi), the EEAS, the Court of Auditors, the Committee of the Regions, The European Economic and Social Committee, the EIB and the EU ombudsman. The selected social media are: Facebook and Twitter.

However, all social media used by the selected EU institutions and EU persons are researched. Most attention goes to Facebook and Twitter because of the scope of this paper, all other social media (Youtube, Flickr, Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram and Vine) are described only briefly. The reason for selecting Facebook and Twitter as the two main social media platforms for this thesis is because these two social media are the two that are used the most by the selected EU institutions and EU persons.

Research social media

The website www.facebook.com was visited and the search tool was used to search for each of the selected EU institutions and EU persons. When an EU institute or an EU person was found the first thing was to check for a blue v, this indicated that the Facebook-profile was authentic. When there was no blue v on the page the official internet website of an EU institution was consulted for a link to a Facebook page. When the authenticity of a page was established the data of the Facebook page was collected. This data includes: date of first post, number of likes, number of mentions, the language used in most posts and the content of posts. It is not in the scope of this thesis to make full content analyses of posts on the Facebook-pages. Therefore only the 20 most recent posts were read (when written in Dutch, English or German) and the content of these posts was written down in a couple of words in the database. Only for remarkable accounts, or example very popular or unpopular accounts a bigger content analyses was made for trying to explain the (un)popularity.

For Twitter a similar procedure was used. The information collected from the Twitter pages includes: number of Tweets, number of followers, number of following, date of registration and language used in most Tweets.

The procedure for the other social media was very similar to the Facebook and Twitter procedure. for Youtube the number of: subscribers, views and date of creation were registered, for Flickr the number of: Followers, Following, the number of photos and year of creation were registered, for Google+ the number of followers and views was collected, etc.

In the conclusion the results for the theoretical chapters and the research chapters will be combined and interpreted. Recommendations for social media accounts that do not reach a large number of citizens are being made to help them reaching a bigger audience.

E-governance

Introduction

E-governance (or e-government) is an abbreviation for electronic governance. E-governance means the usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by the government for delivering services. There are multiple sub-categories in e-governance: government to citizens, government to employees, government to businesses and government to government. This thesis focuses only on the government to citizens (and citizens to government) category. The European Union has its own definition of E-government: *“the carrying out of government business transactions electronically, usually over the Internet, but including all the related real-world processes. In our information society, customers increasingly expect government to be accessible and convenient. As customers' expectations increase, governments must adopt eGovernment strategies”*². Social media are one of many ICT tools that governments and the institutions can use. This chapter will describe the relevant theories about e-governance.

History and development of E-governance

Since the late 90's the communication technologies did rapidly evolve. The advent of internet, laptops, tablet, smartphones and the introduction of online communication platforms such as: e-mail, Youtube, Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp did in a short time change the way people communicate. Not only do people communicate with each other, also businesses use the internet based technologies to communicate with customers and with other businesses. In the 90's the governments did almost exclusively use memo's, letters and telephones for communication, despite the computer technology that was already available in that period. Computer technologies were mostly exclusively used inside one single department or one single building and were not all connected. In the mid 90's governments on all levels implemented network technologies, these networks became more and more connected. However, these technologies were still mainly used for internal purposes. In the late 90's the technology had created more possibilities and the technologies had become cheaper. Also the World Wide Web became available for large groups of citizens in the late 90's. Not only did new opportunities occur, also new threats like viruses and the millennium bug did occur. New policies and legislation on internet did also start to get a significant size in this period.

Theories

Schedler and Summermatter give their own explanation of e-governance in their article *E-Government*, Published in the *Journal of Political Marketing* in 2003. According to them, there are two groups of people involved in e-government: the external interaction partners and the internal interaction partners. The external interaction partners can be: citizens, politician, courts, parliaments, cooperations, etc. The internal interactions take place within the administration units of a government. The second thing that Schedler and Summermatter describe is the four core elements of e-government: Electronic Public Services (e-PS), Electronic Democracy and Participation (e-DP), Electronic Productions Networks (e-PN)

² European Commission, 2009, e-government, <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/653/5892.html>

and Electronic Internal Cooperation (e-IC). Electronic Democracy and Participation covers the representation, support and participation of democratically legitimizing decision-making procedures. Groups that are involved in e-DP are: citizens, entities and pressure groups. The political organs, which got their democratic legitimacy from the same people and groups, are also an interaction partner here. Electronic Production Networks covers the support of cooperation between public and private bodies and between public and other public bodies for the provision of services that they jointly provide. Electronic Public Services can be explained as the provision of public services via the internet. The recipients of the public services are mainly citizens, but also companies can be recipients of e-PS. Electronic Internal Cooperation means all ICT that is used for internal communication and other processes, for example e-mail and websites. Schedler and Summermatter describe further that e-governance is best implemented when all the four core elements are implemented. Figure 1. shows the basic model of E-governance

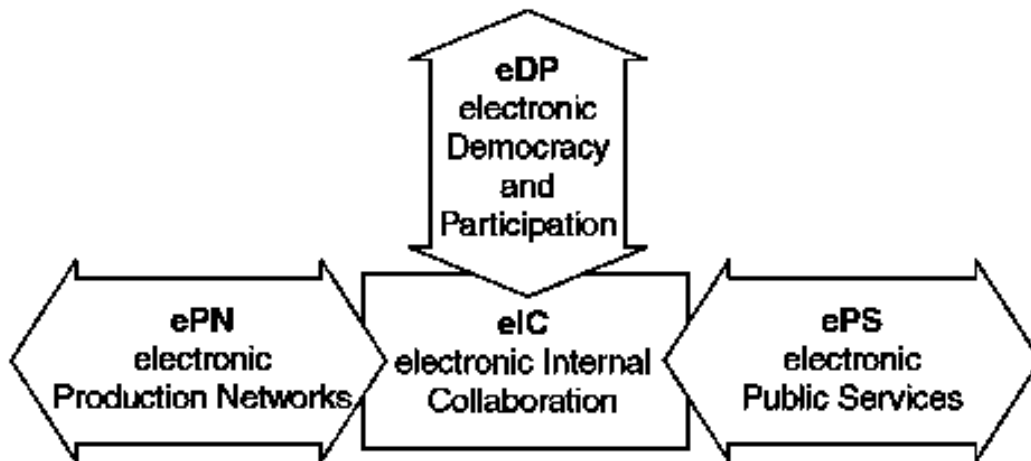


Figure 1: The basic model of e-governance³

Because this thesis focuses on the usage of social media, the Electronic Democracy and Participation is the most important core element. However, the Electronic Public Services may also be to a lesser extent important in this thesis.

³ Schedler and Summermatter, 2003 E-Government, Journal of Political Marketing, 2:3-4, p. 258

The historical development and usage of e-government in different member states

This paragraph describes the development of e-government in a couple of different EU member states

United Kingdom

In 1999 the United Kingdom's (UK) government presented a plan, this plan stated that in 2005 half of all administrative dealings should be available online and in 2008 all administrative dealings had to be online available. In the year 2000 however, the ambitions of the Blair government turned up, in a new plan the goal of making available all services online (by e-mail, internet, telephone or digital television) in 2005 was set. In 1999 the Office of e-envoy and an e-Minister were established. The UK's *Electronic Communications Act of 2000* made the usage of an electronic signature possible. Grabtree made a report in 2001. This report describes that in that time all political parties in the UK used the internet to reach voters. However, only 2% of the voters said that they would use the internet to get information about the views of the political parties⁴. If they would use the internet, they would not go to the sites of the political parties but to sites of the BBC and other independent organizations. A report by the Hansard Society describes that in 2002 the Members of Parliament of Scotland and North-Ireland for the first time got more e-mails than mails⁵. Of course the developments of the last 15 years, especially the rise of social media changed this completely, the role of internet and the social media has been significant in all major elections in Europe the last decade. All political parties in Europe use the internet and social media to communicate with voters. In the early 2000's the focus of the UK government was mainly on the e-PS. Plans for e-IC and e-PN were also made in the early 2000's. The great absentee in almost all government plans is the e-DP.

Germany

The developments in the area of e-governance in Germany are to a significant extent influenced by the developments in the United Kingdom. In 2000 the Chancellor of Germany (Schröder) presented the *Bund Online 2005* plan. This plan had many similarities with the plans of UK's Prime Minister (Blair). The German plan stated that all services of the federal government had to be available online in the year 2005. The *Umsetzungplan für die eGovernment-Initiative* of 2001 was a plan that in more detail described how to implement the e-government plans of Schröder. In 2002 Mellor et al. described that at that time Germans had very big concerns about public services via the internet. 82% of the Germans saw the internet as too insecure to use for online public services⁶. The plans of the German government in the early 2000's were aimed mainly at the e-PS. But elements of the e-IC are also mentioned in the plans. e-PN is not so often mentioned in the plans of the government of Germany. E-DP is not at all mentioned in the plans of the German federal government of the early 2000's.

⁴ Grabtree, J. 2001, *Whatever Happened to the E-Lecture*

⁵ Hansard Society, 2002, *Technology: Enhancing Representative Democracy in the UK?*

⁶ Mellor, W., Parr, W. 2002, *Government Online—An International Perspective*

France

In 1997 the Prime Minister of France (Jospin) declared that the entry of France in the information age was one of the most important things to realise for the government. The *Comité interministériel pour la société de l'information* of 1998 removed all obstacles for the spreading of the internet. The government made more than € 1,3 billion available for France's programme for the information society⁷. Already between 1998 and 2001 the government of France created 3.500 websites for administrative purposes⁸. Besides that, also 900 forms were put online⁹. The population of France adopted the new functions of the internet very quickly. France was the European country with the highest number of users of the online government services after the Nordic countries. This however, contradicts the fact that in 2002 only 15% of the France population viewed the online government services as safe⁸. The 1998 strategy of France had two main aims. The first one was to make access to the government and other authorities easier. The second aim was to update the technology that was used internally. The first aim was related to the e-PS, the second aim was related to the e-IC and also e-PN. The strategy had a lack of elements that were related to the e-DP.

Denmark

The 1997 IT (Information Technology) Policy Plan was the first major piece of ICT legislation of Denmark. This plan had a couple of core elements: the online protection of fundamental rights, the promotion and support of IT possibilities for the whole society, a new approach to the contact between the authorities and citizens and solving security issues. The government of Denmark did set ambitious goals: first to be the best IT nation in the Nordic region and after that to be the best IT country in the whole world. In 2001 Denmark implemented the digital signature. Notable is that the Danes seem to have less security concerns than other Europeans. Already in 2002 did 53% of the Danes use the internet for online public services⁷. The 2002 e-governance plan of Denmark sets of four main objectives. The first one is to support the development of the information society, the second objective is that the entire public sector had to use the new technologies. The third aim is to make all internal communication electronically, and to improve the internal communication. The last aim is to make the services more "customer-friendly". Elements of e-PS, e-IC and e-PN are represented in this plane, even some e-DP can be found in the plans.

Reasons for implementing e-governance

There are various reasons why European countries started to implement e-government in the late 90's and the early 2000's. Some of the reasons were the objectives that were set internally. But also pressure from outside could be an incentive for implementing the e-governance. In most strategy papers of the European governments the objectives and thus the reasons for e-governance are written down. Schedler and Summermatter did analyse the different strategy papers concerning e-governance. The strategy papers of Denmark, the UK, Germany, France (and non-member state Switzerland) were analysed. They claim that there are two categories of reasons why the governments started with the e-governance. The first category contains: internal reform of government departments and administration, promotion

⁷ Schedler and Summermatter, 2003 E-Government, Journal of Political Marketing, 2:3-4

⁸ Grabtree, J. 2001, *Whatever Happened to the E-Lecture*

goals, increasing the efficiency, contribution to the support for the information society and increasing the political participation. The second group contains the reaction to internal and external changing environments: new technical developments, gathering new knowledge, personal and "customer" requirements.

E-democracy

A term that is often found in literature regarding e-governance is electronic-democracy (e-democracy). E-democracy is the term for promotion democratic values through modern technology, including social media or as Curran and Nichols write: *"Putting an "e" in front of democracy means nothing more than using information technology tools to facilitate, improve and ultimately extend the exercise of democracy. E-democracy has both a tactical side and a strategic side"* (Curran, K., Nichols, E., 2005, *E-democracy*, page 16). According to Curran and Nichols one of the core elements of a democratic country is that its citizens have to be informed. The modern technologies make it not only possible for citizens to get informed about the government but also about politicians. Curran and Nichols argue that because of the modern media the election system of for example the United States of America (US) is outdated. A long time ago, when the American election system was created the citizens of a certain state could have trouble getting information from politicians that were not from their home state. Because of that the election system known as the Electoral College was created. This system has some very big disadvantages. One can be seen in the elections in the year 2000 where Al Gore got half a million votes more than his opponent George W. Bush. Nevertheless Bush did still win because of the election system. The technology that is available nowadays makes it possible to adjust the election systems in democratic countries. Thanks to the internet citizens are now able to gather information about politicians that do not live in the same state or province. This was of course also possible before the internet, but the internet made it much easier. However, it does not always seem politically feasible to change an election system. According to Curran and Nichols the Western democracies are not real democracies. The societies grown too big for a direct democracy and therefore the representative democracies were implemented. Curran and Nichols ask in their article if the reader is able to tell what the last couple of legislative proposals were his or her representative voted for or against. Almost nobody is able to answer the question, therefore they argue that the western democracies are not real democracies. Curran and Nichols argue that e-democracy is the solution for this problem. People do not have to gather at a single location, because internet is available everywhere. So the citizens can vote themselves on everything, making the democracies more direct. This part of e-democracy is called e-voting. People have various reasons for not voting. Some people have lost faith in the politicians, or some people say that voting will not change anything. These reasons for not voting can become invalid if e-voting would be implemented. More practical reasons for not voting like: sickness, time constraints or because people were on holidays can also become invalid if e-voting is implemented. Curran and Nichols use these arguments for explaining that e-voting creates a better democracy. Of course there are security risks when using the internet for voting. Viruses and hackers are risks, if enough computers would be infiltrated the results of an election could be false. It is not hard to imagine that Russia or other actors would try to infiltrate in as many computers as possible in EU member states to manipulate the results of an online election. Curran and Nichols give some solutions for the security problems, like personal codes, social security number

etc. However, the solutions that they give for the security issues seem not very convincing. Because hackers can infiltrate in computers of banks, governments and even secret services, the security is a very big obstacle in the possible implementation of e-voting. Curran and Nichols agree that until citizens can vote safely the internet can be used in other ways to affect democracy, they use the term “interactive e-democracy” for it. There are for example organizations that send you a mail when your representatives are voting on certain legislation. Already in 2005 the local Government of the Australian province of Queensland made it available to easily communicate with representatives and government institutes. Furthermore they provide a lot of information of legislation on their websites. There was also the possibility to start an online petition addressed to the parliament of Queensland. In Europe the Parliament of Scotland was one of the first that made online petitions possible. In 2001 the Interactive Policy Making project was adopted by the EU. This project had the aim to improve the governance of the EU through the use of internet. Citizens and companies can give their opinion and share ideas on a website. The information on that websites is analysed and evaluated, and sometimes it is the incentive for new legislation proposals by the Commission. It does not seem feasible to turn the EU into an e-democracy. However, the social media can be used to enhance the democracy in a number of ways. The ways the EU can use the social media are described in the next chapter.

E-citizenship

E-citizenship or e-residency is a concept first put into practice by the Estonian Government. The concept means that everyone in the world can apply for an Estonian e-Residency. With an Estonian e-residency someone can for example establish online an Estonian company, use the Estonian tax system for their company, open bank accounts, digitally sign contracts, etc. The Estonian government hopes to attract more people to start a business in Estonia. This is an example that the digital identity and digital citizenship are things that governments are interested in. Another less dramatic form of e-citizenship is the Dutch DigID (digital identity). Dutch citizens can get an online account to do official business with the government (for example: request a study grant, do their taxes, etc.). This not only saves citizens time but it saves the government also a lot of money to interact via the internet.

Conclusion

E-governance did make its first appearance in the late 90's and early 2000's. Schedler and Summermatter describe that there are four core elements of e-government: Electronic Public Services (e-PS), Electronic Democracy and Participation (e-DP), Electronic Production Networks (e-PN) and Electronic Internal Cooperation (e-IC). It is striking that countries like France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark had a lack of e-DP in their early ICT plans. The social media is particularly suited to fulfill this core element. Therefore it is important that governments, including the EU institutions use the social media. New developments like e-citizenship and e-democracy provide new possibilities to enhance democracy. Curran and Nichols describe a couple of examples on how the social media and other new technologies can be used. E-democracy can help to create new and better form of democracy, but e-democracy has some big security risks, partly because of the security risks the plans of Curran and Nichols do not seem very feasible. Curran and Nichols write that there will be e-democracies and that it is just a matter of time before the security problems are solved.

EU institutions and the social media

Introduction

The question that this chapter answers is “for what purposes and how can the EU institutions use social media?”. Because there is little to no research done to specifically this, the theories that apply to national and regional government will be described and then explained to what extent it also applies to the EU institutions. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) did a research to the main expectations and the goals of governments for the use of social media. This report shows that governments (via the social media) want to: improve the communication with citizens, engage with stakeholders in the public governance processes, improve the services delivered to the public, direct public service demand towards digital channels, to manage situations of emergency or crisis, improve the public image of the government, reach the younger generations and to improve communications and cooperation within the public sector. These objectives for the use of social media can also be set (to a lesser extend) for the EU institution. This chapter sets out these possible functions of the social media for the EU institutions.

The possible uses of social media by EU institutions

Communication

Kavanaugh et al. describe that citizens communicate more and more via the social media⁹. That gives governments, officials and leaders new opportunities. One example is that citizens can directly ask questions to Commissioners. If a Commissioner would use the social media properly he or she will not only use his or her Facebook page or Twitter account for sending messages but also to react on questions or comments sent by citizens. One Commissioner that uses his Facebook account the right way is Frans Timmermans. He reacts frequently on comments other people made under his posts. This may be one of the reasons that explain his popularity on the social media. EU institutions can use the social media to spread messages to the citizens that otherwise may not have reached them, this is especially true for the younger generations. Yi et al. describe that the social media can help spreading information under citizens. By doing this the public support for some missions or tasks done by the institutions rises¹⁰. Of course not only communication with citizens but also with other stakeholders in the public governance process is possible. The Commission could for example post plans for new legislation on the social media and then monitor the reactions on it. Not only citizens but also companies or other organizations can use the social media to give a reaction.

Recruitment

Like companies, governments (including the EU institutions) can use the social media for recruitment purposes. The EU institutions can use the social media in a number of ways for recruitment. First of all they can spread the message that there are jobs available. Second of all they can use the social media for

⁹ Kavanaugh, A.L. Fox, E.A., Sheetz, S.D., Yang, S., Li, L.T., Shoemaker, D.J., Natsev A., Xie L. 2012, *Social media use by government: From the routine to the critical*

¹⁰ Yi, M., Oh, S.G., Kim, S. 2013, *Comparison of social media use for the U.S. and the Korean governments*

screening candidates. Like companies, the Human Resources department of an EU institution can check the social media accounts of a candidate to learn more about this candidate and to determine his or her suitability for a certain job.

Crisis and emergency management

Crisis and emergency management does not apply to the EU for a large extent. When a natural disaster happens the EU is not the government layer that provides the aid. However, the EU's social media accounts can spread messages from the national governments in a crisis situation. Another thing is that the EU can via social media ask citizens to donate money or goods to organizations that provide aid. This was for example done after the earthquake in Nepal (2015).

Public safety

Since the EU competences are very limited in this category, the use of social media for this purpose is also very limited. Kavanaugh et al. describe that local governments can use the social media to detect possible dangers to the public health and they can also use the social media for improving the public health¹¹. There is a Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (Vytenis Andriukaitis), he may for example use his social media accounts to inform the citizens about possible dangers that have been discovered in foods, also the general European Commission account can be used for this purpose. But citizens could also send him messages about health and food safety. Andriukaitis could in that way use the social media to discover possible problems and may potentially start an investigation.

Internal use

Social media are not only usable for external communication but also for internal communication. Civil servants that work at the EU institutions may use the social media to communicate with each other. Messaging via the social media can for example be a substitute to e-mailing. However, letting employees use social media has of course a number of serious risks. There are special social media focused on internal use for companies and organization (for example Yammer) but these platforms fall out of the scope of this thesis.

Influence the relation between the EU and citizens (the democratic deficit)

The social media help to create open governments. This also applies to the EU institution; they can provide more openness about their organization via the social media. Furthermore the use of social media may help them to reach the "digital generation"¹². One of the biggest problems of the EU is the distance between the institutions and the citizens, also known as the democratic deficit. This democratic deficit translates in low turnout at the elections for the EP for example. The EU institutions can use the social media to inform citizens about: what they are doing, about when there are elections, etc. This may help to narrow the gap between the citizens and the EU.

¹¹ Kavanaugh, A.L. Fox, E.A., Sheetz, S.D., Yang, S., Li, L.T., Shoemaker, D.J., Natsev A., Xie L. 2012, *Social media use by government: From the routine to the critical*

¹² Yi, M., Oh, S.G., Kim, S. 2013, *Comparison of social media use for the U.S. and the Korean governments*

Possibilities and dangers for EU institutions

People have easier and better access to information, including information that was not supposed to be published (for example Wikileaks documents). Besides that, there is also a lot of false information on the internet. The social media make it easier for people to spread this information, wrong or classified information about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) can be spread via the social media. This is a danger for the EU institutions. However, one can also argue that because of these possibilities the openness and transparency is enhanced.

Social media can also empower people. Examples are the (failed) revolutions in the Middle East, where many people were reached via the social media and a so called "critical mass" was formed. A more applicable example is given in an OECD report:¹³ in the UK a family was complaining about the school meals of their children because they were not healthy enough. The school and the local authorities more or less ignored the complaints. The family decided to take a photo of the school meals every day, post it on the internet and write about the nutritious values of every meal. This blog got a lot of attention and many citizens wanted the school meals to change. This caused the highest authorities of the UK, including the Prime Minister to get involved. This power of social media can both be an opportunity and danger for EU institutions. The report also gives an example of the opposite, where the public did want the government to stop something (that they were planning to do). The government of Denmark wanted to privatize and sell an energy company (DONG Energy) to a foreign investor (Goldman Sachs). Via the social media the citizens started to protest and collected 200.000 signatures³ to stop the privatization. Interest groups were very successful in this example and it led to the resigning of a Danish minister, but at the end the privatization was not cancelled. In Latvia the procedure for starting an online petition is made official. The Latvian parliament accepts a petition website (www.manabals.lv) to be a legit platform to gather signatures. If 10.000 people sign on the website a certain petition it has to be discussed in the Latvian parliament¹⁴.

Social media can also be used to provide public services, although this may again not be completely applicable for the EU institutions. People can for example use the social media to ask questions, the OECD report shows that using the social media for answering questions the UK government saves a lot of money. Support via the social media costs according to the report only £0,32 per interaction, while support via the phone costs £3 per interaction and face to face support costs more than £7 per interaction¹³.

There can also be dangers and abuse of this power of the social media. When the Dutch government was changing a system of payment to individuals that take care of seriously and chronically ill people (PGB) things went wrong and some people did not get their money on time. Only 24 people¹⁵ managed to get the Parliamentary Commission of Public Health into a crisis meeting in the middle of the night. These 24 people did send 50.000 Tweets about the problems. Because of this big amount it seemed that the problems were way bigger than they actually were. Research of the OECD shows that 68% of the high

¹³ Mickoleit, A. 2014, *OECD working paper on public governance 26: Social Media Use by Governments*

¹⁴ Yi, M., Oh, S.G., Kim, S. 2013, *Comparison of social media use for the U.S. and the Korean governments*

¹⁵ Navis, J.W. 2015, *de Telegraaf: PGB-alarm truc van handjevol opruiers*

educated citizens use social media to communicate with authorities, while only 21% of low educated people use it for that purpose¹⁰. This means that there is a risk that some groups get over represented.

Governments are putting more and more information on the internet, this process helps to create more openness and transparency. But governments do also use social media (in secret) to get intelligence, most notorious would be the American National Security Agency (NSA). Because it is not a competence of the EU this function of social media for governments may not apply. But gathering information off the social media can help the EU institutions and EU persons in other ways as explained before.

Conclusion

The EU can use the social media for multiple purposes. The EU can use the social media not only for communicating with the citizens but also for: recruitment, crisis and emergency management, public safety, internal purposes and to influence the relation between the EU and its citizens. This last use of social media may also lead to a smaller gap between the EU and its citizens. There are more objects of social media that the EU can use but the ones described are the ones that are used most frequently by governments. The social media bring not only opportunities but also dangers for the EU institutions. The social media can be used to empower people; this means that the EU can use the social media to start a movement. However, there can also be formed a movement with objectives that conflict with EU objectives. There is also the problem of overrepresentation on social media. Some groups of people may get too much attention because they are overrepresented on the social media. It seems that the

The EU and Facebook

Introduction

Facebook was established in 2004, but only in 2006 it became available for everyone. In December 2014 there were 1,39 billion active Facebook accounts worldwide¹⁶. Facebook is a social medium platform based on sharing information and messages among Facebook friends. Facebook is most famous for its like button, when a person likes a profile, message, picture, product, etc. he or she can hit the like button. Another iconic Facebook feature is sharing. When a user likes a certain message he or she can hit the share button. By doing this the message will be spread and be visible for all his or her Facebook friends. By writing down a @ followed by the name of a person, institution or company a so called Mention is created. Especially companies use this to measure how many people are talking about them. All numbers that are used in this chapter are derived from the data base that was created for this thesis and can be found in appendix 1.

Research Facebook

In this thesis the number of likes, the number of mentions and the date of first post are collected. On the website of Facebook the Facebook profiles of institutions and persons were found using the search button. Or a link to the Facebook profile from the official site of an institution or person was used. If an institution or person was found the validity of the profile was checked. This was done by looking for the blue ✓ icon on the page that indicates that the profile is verified. The next step is to look at all the relevant information provided on the Facebook page. This information was collected and written down in a data base. This self-created data base is one of the most important sources of statistical information for this thesis.

Facebook European Parliament

The European Parliament has 43.719 mentions and 1.751.083 likes. The Facebook page of the European Parliament shows its first uploads on the 9th of March 2009. Almost all messages on the Facebook page are in English. All political groups in the European Parliament use Facebook. The first political group that started using Facebook is the ALDE group in July 2009, all other groups created their Facebook account in 2010 and 2011 (the EFDD Facebook account was created in 2014). The content of the Facebook messages of the political parties are all very similar. All parties post selected news messages and politically coloured EP and EU related messages, they also post a lot of links to their own official website. There is however a big difference between the number of posts per day by the political groups. Some political groups are more active than others. There are three political groups that have more than 100.000 likes: the EPP, the S&D and ALDE. The most liked and mentioned group in the European Parliament is the S&D Group (113.666 likes and 3.747 mentions). The least liked and mentioned group is the EFDD (1.401 likes and 17 mentions), however this is a group that is only recently established and that may be one of the reasons for the low number of likes and mentions. If the size of the group is taken into account (how many likes or mentions per EP seat?) the ALDE group is the groups that gets the most likes

¹⁶ Facebook, 2015, *Facebook Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2014 Results*

(1.491 likes per seat), the EFDD gets the least number of likes (29 likes per seat). The S&D group gets the most mentions (20 mentions per seat) and the EFDD gets the least number of mentions (0.4 mentions per seat). If the EFDD groups would be not taken into account because of its recent founding, the ECR would be the least liked and mentions group (in total and per seat). Notably is that the EPP fraction is by far the biggest in the EP, but does not get the most mentions or likes either absolutely or per seat. The only links that can be made regarding the political groups is that the more frequently a political group uses Facebook the more popular the Facebook page seems to be. The historical three biggest political groups in the EP (the EPP, S&D and ALDE) are the three groups that have the most likes. This means that (historical) size in the EP is also a factor that may explain the popularity on social media, meaning: the greater the number of seat in the EP, the more likes on Facebook.

Facebook European Commission

The European Commission has 11.280 mentions and 44.7.795 likes. Compared to the European Parliament the Commission seems to be 75% less popular. The first post on the Facebook page of the Commission is posted on the 11th of June 2010. This makes the page a year and two months younger than the Parliaments page. The language that is almost exclusively used on the page is English. Most posts on the page are EU and European Commission related news and facts, not much politics can be found. The Commission consist of 28 Commissioners. These 28 Commissioners can be divided into 3 groups: the non-Facebook users, the Facebook users and the popular Facebook users. The difference between a Facebook user and a popular Facebook user is the number of likes or mentions. In this thesis more than 750 mentions and 30.000 likes makes popular Facebook user.

Non-Facebook Users

There are nine Commissioners that do not have a Facebook account: Andrus Ansip (Estonia), Valdis Dombrovskis (Latvia), Günther H. Oettinger (Germany), Johannes Hahn (Austria), Miguel Arias Cañete (Spain), Dimitris Avramopoulos (Greece), Jonathan Hill (United Kingdom), Elżbieta Bieńkowska (Poland) and Tibor Navracsics (Hungary). A score of 9 out of 28 means that 32% of the Commissioners do not use Facebook. The reasons why the Commissioners do not use Facebook is not known.

Facebook users

The Commissioner that have a Facebook page are: Frans Timmermans (Netherlands), Jean-Claude Juncker (Luxemburg), Marianne Thyssen (Belgium), Federica Mogherini (Italy), Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria), Maroš Šefčovič (Slovakia), Jyrki Katainen (Finland), Cecilia Malmström (Sweden), Neven Mimica (Croatia), Karmenu Vella (Malta), Vytenis Andriukaitis (Lithuania), Pierre Moscovici (France), Christos Stylianides (Cyprus), Phil Hogan (Ireland), Violeta Bulc (Slovenia), Věra Jourová (Czech Republic), Corina Crețu (Romania), Margrethe Vestager (Denmark) and Carlos Moedas (Portugal). This means that 68% of all Commissioners have a Facebook account. They average number of likes is 27.282 and average number of mentions is 1.444. The average age of a Facebook account is around 3 Years and 4 months. Most Commissioners post messages regarding their job as Commissioners and links to relevant websites. Most notable is that 68% of the Commissioners do use Facebook. To compare this; only 2 of the 19 (11%) Dutch Ministers and State secretaries use Facebook. The UK has a better score than the Netherlands, 13

of the 30 (43%) of the government members have a Facebook account. The European Commission with a participant level of 68% is better performing.

Popular Facebook users

There are four Commissions that for fill the set criteria (minimal 30.000 likes and/or 750 mentions). These Commissioners are (in ranked in order of most likes): 1. Frans Timmermans 200.833 likes and 8.631 mentions, 2. Kristalina Georgieva 108.439 likes and 15.044 mentions, 3. Margrethe Vestager 44.083 likes and 349 mentions and 4. Jean-Claude Juncker 34.675 likes and 171 mentions. Some conclusions that can be made are:

- The two Commissioners with more than 100.000 likes do post mostly in their native language and post messages about both their personal and professional life.
- The average age of a Commissioners Facebook page is around 3 years and 4 months, all the popular Facebook accounts are older except for the Facebook account of Frans Timmermans. This makes his account even more interesting because he gathered the most likes in a shorter time than all the other accounts

But there are also a number of remarks that have to be made:

- The number of mentions and likes of a commissioner before they became a commissioner is not known. Therefore it may be possible that they were already popular before they became a Commissioner
- The size of their possible audience is not taken in consideration, for example: it may be easier for Frans Timmermans to gather 200.000 likes than it is for Kristalina Georgieva to gather 100.000 likes because there are more Dutch people than Bulgarians with a Facebook account
- The importance of the function of a Commissioner is not taken into consideration

Facebook European Council

The Facebook page of the European Council has 166.664 likes and 2.581 mentions. This makes the Council the least popular institution of the three biggest and most important institutions. The language used on the Facebook page is English. The oldest post on the Facebook page is posted on December the 6th 2010. This makes the Council's page also the youngest of the three institutions. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, has since his Facebook Page was created on the 24th of November 2014 gathered 20.094 likes and 1.857 mentions. This makes him more popular than most of the Commissioners active on Facebook. Furthermore his Facebook page was created when it was sure that he would become President of the Council. His page was created 6 days before he officially took office. This means that he did not gather those likes in his former functions.

Other EU institutions on Facebook

Other EU institutions that are active on Facebook include:

- The European External Actions Service, since the 16th of May 2011, 93.186 likes and 2.917 mentions.
- The Committee of the Regions, since the 22nd of January 2014, 4.277 likes and 390 mentions.
- The EU Ombudsman, since the 3rd of April 2012, 4.610 likes and 94 mentions.

EU institutions that are not active on Facebook include: the European Central Bank, the Court of Auditors, The Economic and Social Committee, The EU Ombudsman and the European Court of Justice.

Facebook conclusion

The most popular EU institution is the European Parliament and the most popular EU person is Frans Timmermans. Together, all researched institutions and persons have gathered 3.364.750 likes, making it possible that almost 3.4 million people are reached with EU related messages. However, it is very likely that people liked multiple EU institutions or persons, making the number of people reached with EU messages via Facebook smaller. Another remark is that people that read a message can hit the share button, this increases the number of people reached via Facebook again. If assumed that the 3.4 million likes are coming from 1 million unique profiles (this is just a guess) and that the average European has 133 Facebook-friends¹⁷, than the maximum number of people that can potentially be reached via Facebook (if the share button is used one time) is 133 million.

¹⁷ Het Laaste Nieuws, 2012, *Belg heeft meer Facebookvrienden dan 'gemiddelde Europeaan'*

The EU and Twitter

Introduction

Twitter is a social medium that focuses on sending small messages named Tweets. These Tweets can be read by everybody including people without a Twitter profile. The user of a Twitter account can get followers, these followers are Twitter users that will automatically see all Tweets that the followed person is sending. The maximum length of a Twitter message is 140 characters. Twitter was established in April 2007. Twitter claims on the website that there are 302 million active Twitter users and 500 million Tweets are sent every day¹⁸. All numbers that are used in this chapter are derived from the data base that was created for this thesis and can be found in appendix 2.

Research Twitter

In the Twitter research the following data is collected: the number followers, the number of accounts followed, the number of sent Tweets and the date the account was created. Usually the official website of the EU institution was used to find the link to the official Twitter Page. When there was no website or link on the website the search tool on the Twitter website was used, when an account was found the validity of the account was checked by looking for the blue v icon on the page.

Twitter European Parliament

Important to tell is that the European Parliament has multiple Twitter accounts in multiple European languages. There are in total 24 different Twitter pages of the European Parliament. The content on all the different pages is more or less the same. The EP has produced 182.422 Tweets, has 460.024 followers and is following 113.587 accounts if the numbers of all the different accounts are added up. All accounts were created in April or May 2009, except the Croatian account (for obvious reasons). The most active account is the German account with 13.500 Tweets, the least active account is the Maltese with 1.644 Tweets. The English account has the most followers (112.000) and the Maltese account is the least followed (1.201). The Italian account is the account that is following most other accounts (28.100). The Slovenian account seems not every interested in the Tweets of others and is only following 72 other account. However, this may just be a certain policy. The Italian account may have tried to just follow back everybody that started following the Italian account, while the Slovenian account just follows certain other institutions or EU related persons. Of course there are more English or German speaking people in the EU than there are Maltese or Irish speaking people. For this research the official number of citizens of a country is the number of speakers of that country's official language. Even though not all German citizens may speak Germany they are all counted as German speakers. If a country is multilingual like Belgium the number of citizens of a certain language region (for example Flanders) is taken as the number of speakers. Relatively seen is the Finnish account followed by the highest percentage, 0,329% of the Finish speaking citizens is following the EP's Finish Twitter account. Other popular accounts are: (second place) Maltese 0,291% and (third place) Greek 0,238%. The EP's Romanian Twitter account is the least popular, only 0,029% of all Romanian speaking people are following the

¹⁸ Twitter, 2015, *Company*
Milan Plug

account. Other unpopular accounts are: (second place) Slovak 0,034% and (third place) German 0,039%. A remark is that only mother languages are applied in this research and the number of people having a Twitter account in a certain country or language region is also not taking into consideration. Still it is remarkable that the least active Twitter account (Maltese) has in percentages the most followers, while the most active German account is in the top-3 unpopular accounts.

All political groups in the EP do use Twitter. The ALDE group is the political group that first started to use Twitter in December 2008. All other political groups started using Twitter in 2009 or 2010. Notable is that all political groups use their name as their Twitter account name, only the S&D group uses @TheProgressives as their Twitter account name. The content of the Twitter messages of the political parties is very similar. All parties post selected news messages and politically coloured EP and EU related messages, they also post a lot of links to their own official website and news websites. The political parties do also retweet a lot of Tweets done by politicians of the same political family. There is however, a big difference between the numbers of Tweets posted by the political groups. Some political groups are more active than others. There are two groups that posted more than 10.000 Tweets: the EPP (14.900) and the S&D (12.700). The EFDD is the least active political groups (1.857). The most followed political group on Twitter is the EPP group and the least followed is the EFDD. However, the ranking shifts dramatically when calculated how many followers per EP seat every political group has. As seen in appendix 2 the ALDE group has most followers per seat (403), followed closely by the Greens (396). The EFDD is also in this ranking the least popular political group. Notable is that the EPP group that has absolutely the most followers, but when divided by the number of seats the EPP is one of the least followed political groups. In total the political groups have 157.643 followers and have posted 49.563 Tweets. The average age of a Twitter account is 4 years and 9 months, making the average Twitter account significantly older than the average Facebook account.

Twitter European Commission

The Twitter account of the European Commission has posted since June 2010 17.000 Tweets and gathered 396.000 followers. This means that the Facebook account of the Commission is slightly more popular than its Twitter account (447.795 likes against 396.000 followers). However, there are many more people with a Facebook account than with a Twitter account¹⁹. The Tweets of the European Commission are usually written in English, the content of the Tweets can be summarized as news and information from the European Commission.

All Commissioners use Twitter, also the Commissioners that do not have a Facebook page, however, the use of Twitter differs very much between the Commissioners. The most active Twitter user is the Bulgarian Kristalina Georgieva with a total number of 7.788 Tweets. The rest of the top three consist of Maroš Šefčovič (5.357 Tweets) and Pierre Moscovici (5.336 Tweets). The least active user is The Polish Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska with only 63 Tweets. She is a little bit more active than Dimitris Avramopoulos (163 Tweets) and Jonathan Hill (298 Tweets). The average number of Tweets sent by a Commissioner is 1.861, combined the commissioners have sent 52.102 Tweets.

¹⁹ Statista, 2014, *Number of monthly active mobile social media users in Europe as of February 2014, by country*

Kristalina Georgieva may be the most active user but she is definitely not the most popular Commissioner. The Commissioner with the most followers is Dutch Commissioner Frans Timmermans with 171.000 followers. Federica Mogherini and Pierre Moscovici are the numbers two and three with 135.000 and 134.000 followers. The least followed Commissioner on Twitter is Věra Jourová from the Czech Republic with only 3.911 Followers. The numbers 2 and 3 Elżbieta Bieńkowska (4.027 followers) and Vytenis Andriukaitis (4.660 followers) are performing just a little bit better. The average Commissioner has 35.958 followers. Together the Commissioners have over 1 million followers. Violeta Bulc is the Commissioner with the oldest Twitter account, she created her account in July 2007. This is very contradictory because she only started using Facebook in October 2014. The average Twitter account is 4 years and 9 months old, this is older than the average Facebook account (3 years and 4 months). A remark is that on the Twitter page of 11 of the 28 Commissioners the creation date of the profile is not displayed.

In total the Commissioners are following 28.783 other Twitter accounts. Federica Mogherini (7.535) and Pierre Moscovici (6.768) are following a lot more accounts than all other Commissioners. The average number of accounts that a Commissioner is following is 1.027. Elżbieta Bieńkowska and Věra Jourová seem not very interested in the Tweets of other people they follow respectively 45 and 71 other accounts. A remark is that this research did not look into the accounts that the Commissioners are following. Federica Mogherini may for example just try to follow back everybody that started following her, while for example Elżbieta Bieńkowska only follows accounts of colleagues.

Some remarks have to be made. First of all it is not known how many Tweets and followers the commissioner already had before they became commissioner. They may just be popular because of their previous function. All other remarks written in the Facebook chapter do also apply for Twitter.

Twitter European Council

The European Council has tweeted 1.670 Tweets since the creation of the account in October 2010. The Council is following 429 other Twitter accounts and is followed by 89.900 accounts. This makes the Twitter account of the European Council the least popular and least active of the three main EU institutions (the Council, the Commission and the English version of the European Parliament). The Tweets of the European council contain general EU and European news and Council related news and information. The language used in almost all Tweets is English. Donald Tusk, the president of the Council, uses Twitter since September 2010. He has posted 3.398 Tweets, gathered 248.000 followers and is following 348 accounts. This makes him more popular than all Commissioners, the general account of the Council, and all EP accounts.

Other EU institutions and persons on Twitter

Other EU institutions that are active on Facebook include:

- EEAS, since October 2009: 12.500 Tweets, 100.000 followers and following 1.777 accounts.

- ECB 6.413 Tweets, 241.000 followers and following 58 accounts.
- Court of Auditors, 1.604 Tweets, 2.940 followers and following 147 accounts.
- Committee of the Regions, 2.658 Tweets, 13.000 followers and following 1.746 accounts.
- Economic and Social Committee, 4.422 Tweets, 17.700 followers and following 445 accounts.
- EIB, 1.222 Tweets, 5.014 followers and following 493 accounts.
- EU Ombudsman, 4.590 Tweets, 11.600 followers and following 5.63.7 accounts.

All these institutions use the English language and Tweet news and information related to their functions. The only EU person that is researched in this thesis who has no Twitter account is Mario Draghi, President of the ECB.

Twitter conclusion

All important EU institutions and persons together have tweeted 339.564 messages. In total the EU institutions and persons have over 2,7 million (non-unique) followers. All EU institutions and EU persons use Twitter (except Mario Draghi). The oldest Twitter account is founded by Violeta Bulc in July 2007 the most recent Twitter account is Frans Timmermans', created in April 2013 (not all accounts do display their date of creation). The average number of Tweets is 4.921, most active is the European Commission (17.000 Tweets), least active is Elżbieta Bieńkowska (63 Tweets). The most popular is the European Commission (396.000 followers) The Maltese version of the EP account has the smallest amount of Followers. The average Twitter user has 208 followers²⁰. If assumed that of the 2,7 million followers (of all the EU institutions and persons combined) there are 1 million unique persons (this is just a guess). If every one of these unique users re-Tweets at least 1 EU Tweets every year the EU has the possibility to reach 208 million people via Twitter. Of course there are many remarks by this calculation: the number of unique accounts is not known, not everyone has 208 unique Twitter followers, etc.

²⁰ Gilbert, J. 2013, *Yahoo news: Twitter, by the numbers*

The EU and other Social Media

Introduction

The EU institutions and persons use more forms of social media besides the two most popular ones (Facebook and Twitter). This chapter describes what other forms of social media are used. All numbers that are used in this chapter are derived from the data base that was created for this thesis and can be found in appendix 3, 4 and 5.

Youtube

Youtube started in May 2005 as a website where people could upload short self-made videos. Later Youtube got features like making accounts, starting channels, subscribe to channels and to give videos a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down. These new features transformed Youtube into a social medium. Youtube has over 1 billion users worldwide, every second over five hours of video are uploaded on Youtube and every day millions videos are watched on YouTube²¹.

Research Youtube

In the Youtube research the following data is collected: the number of subscriber, the number of views, the date the account was created. Usually the official website of the EU institution was used to find the link to the official Youtube page. When there was no website or link on the website the search tool on the Youtube website was used. No content analyse is done of the videos put on Youtube because of time constrains.

Youtube European Parliament

The European Parliament has 15.894 subscribers and its videos are watched 29.749.901 times. All of the political groups in the EP use Youtube. There are two political groups with over a million views: the EPP (1.907.756) and the Greens (1.152.817). The videos of the ECR group are with 120.431 views the least popular. The average number of views is 575.313 for an EP political group. The Greens have the most subscribers (1.695), the EFDD (1.102) is the only other group with more the a thousand subscribers. The ALDE group has the least amount of subscribers (342). The youngest Youtube account is the ALDE account (April 2013), the oldest account is the EPP account (October 2007) remarkable is the more than 5 years gap between the oldest and newest account. If the number of seats in the EP is taken into consideration (how many view per seat?) the Greens have the best score: 23.056 views per EP seat, the S&D group has the least amount of view per seat (910). If the number of subscribers is divided by the number of seats (how many subscribers per seat?) the Greens score again the best with 34 subscribers per seat. The S&D has the lowest score with only 4 subscribers per seat. The EPP and ALDE are only slightly better than the S&D with both only 5 subscriber per seat. Together the videos of the political groups are viewed over 4 million times.

²¹ Youtube, www.youtube.com/yt/about/
Milan Plug

Other EU institutions and persons and Youtube

Other EU institutions and persons with a Youtube channel are:

- The European Commission (and Commissioner Avramopoulos)
- The European Council (and Donald Tusk)
- Other Institutions: EEAS, ECB, Court of Auditors, Committee of the Regions, Economic and social Committee, EIB and the EU Ombudsman

The European Commission has since March 2006 got 30.514 subscribers and its videos are viewed 24.390.361 times. The only Commissioner with an official Youtube account is Dimitris Avramopoulos, he started in September 2008 and has since got 419 subscribers and his videos are viewed 591.991 times. The European Council has started its channel in April 2009 and has 3.514 subscribers and 296.512 views. This makes the Council the least viewed channel with also the least amount of subscribers of the three main institutions. The President of the Council has started its Youtube account in November 2014 and his videos are watched 109.321 times, Tusk has 457 subscribers. The data of the other institutions is shown in figure 2. This figure shows that the ECB has a very popular Youtube channel with over 11,5 million views.

Name	Subscribers	Views	Date
EEAS	1.001	142.491	28-Jan-13
ECB	5.561	11.530.093	25-Nov-10
Court of auditors	396	397.501	16-Oct-12
Com. of the Regions	933	168.255	17-Jul-07
Eco. and soc. com.	NA	168.216	9-Jun-09
EIB	654	14.283	6-Oct-09
EU Ombudsman	613	27.069	11-Mar-11

Figure 2

The ECB uploads videos in multiple languages, this may help explain its popularity on Youtube.

Flickr

Flickr is a social medium that focuses on photos and pictures. Flickr was established in 2004 and has 92 million users. After Twitter, Facebook and Youtube it is has the most EU institutions or persons as users (11). The Flickr users are: The European Parliament, the EPP group, the S&D group, the Greens, EUL/NGL group, Commissioner Avramopoulos, The European Council, Donald Tusk, EEAS, ECB and the Committee of the Regions. The EP has the most followers (1.800) and Tusk has the least number of followers (15), the average number of followers is 236. The average number of posted pictures is 3.215, with the EP as top poster (7.391) and Donald Tusk (408) as least active poster. These numbers show the enormous gap between the tree most popular social media (Twitter, Facebook and Youtube) and the other social media.

Google+

Google+ (or Google Plus) is the social medium that was created by Google. Google+ was launched in 2011 Google claims that is has over 2.2 billion users, however, a study done by Morbius shows that only 9% (198 million) users do actively post content and that only 4 to 6 million people do actually use Google+ to communicate.²² The high number of users claimed by Google can be explain by the fact that people create a Google account to use other google services like Youtube and just get this Google+

²² Morbius, E., 2015, *2.2 billion profiles* (<https://plus.google.com/104092656004159577193/posts>)

account as a side effect. Only nine EU institutions or persons do use Google+: The European Parliament, ALDE group, EFDD group, the European Commission, the European Council, Donald Tusk, the ECB, the Economic and Social Committee and the EU ombudsman. Remarkable is that the Commission has 1,4 million followers and the number two (the EP) has 'just' 94.000 followers. The average number of followers a researched account has is 170.255, if the Commission would not be taking into account the average number of followers would be 13.980.

Other social media

Other social media used by EU institutions or EU persons are:

- Pinterest, used by: the European Parliament and the Commission
- LinkedIn, used by: the European Parliament, the Commission, Carlos Moedas, the EIB and the EU Ombudsman.
- Instagram, used by: the European Parliament, the Commission, the European Council and the EEAS
- Vine, used by the Commission

The data of these social media is not specified because too little institutions or persons use these social media.

Conclusion Social Media

The number of social media account used by the 47 researched EU institutions is 33 Facebook accounts, 69 Twitter accounts (23 belong to the EP), 19 Youtube accounts, 11 Flickr accounts, 9 Google+ accounts and 12 other social media accounts, in total 156 social media accounts (133 if EP Twitter is counted as 1). See also figure 3.

The European Parliament and the Council have the most different social media accounts. They are both active on 8 different social media. The only researched person that is not active on the Social Media is Mario Draghi. Eight Commissioners are just active on one social medium (Twitter). The average EU institution or EU person is active on 2,7 different social media. The least used social medium is Vine with only one user. If all followers, likes, views, etc. would be added up the total number would be almost 80 million.

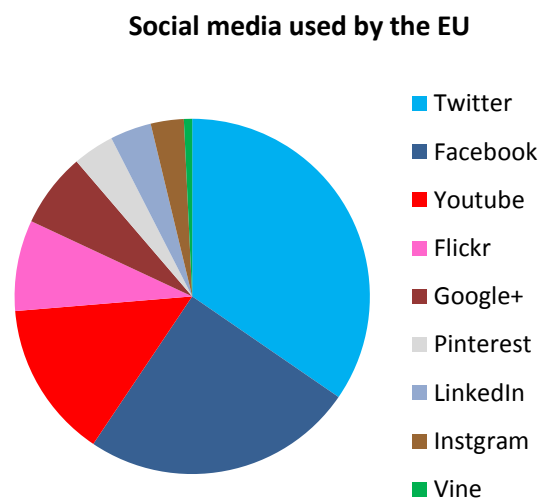


Figure 3

The top 5 most popular EU institutions or persons are:

1. The European Parliament with 32.057.912 followers/likes/views/etc.
2. The European Commission with 26.654.606 followers/likes/views/etc.
3. The European Central Bank with 11.772.720 followers/likes/views/etc.
4. The EPP Group with 2.057.079 followers/likes/views/etc.
5. The Greens Group with 1.192.003 followers/likes/views/etc.

All other accounts have scored under 1 million in total. The highest scoring person is Dimitris Avramopoulos he has 597.116 followers/likes/views/etc. The top 3 least popular EU institutions or persons are all persons:

1. Elżbieta Bieńkowska 4.027 followers/likes/views/etc.
2. Jonathan Hill 5.472 followers/likes/views/etc.
3. Tibor Navracsics 6.592 followers/likes/views/etc.

The least popular institution is the EU Ombudsman with 12.128 followers/likes/views/etc. and the least popular political group is the ECR group with 144.971 followers/likes/views/etc. The other conclusion and recommendations are made in chapter 'Results, conclusion and recommendations'.

Results, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter will give an overview of the most important result from each chapter in this thesis. This chapter ends with a final conclusion, recommendations and the answer to the main research question.

E-governance

Social media are a communication technology that can be used by governments. The use of social media by governments fits in a framework that is called e-governance or e-government. E-governance began in the late 90's and early 2000's when new technologies like computers and the internet became widely available. First governments used these technologies only for internal purposes but later also for communication with external actors. Schedler and Summermatter describe that there are the four core elements of e-government: Electronic Public Services (e-PS), Electronic Democracy and Participation (e-DP), Electronic Productions Networks (e-PN) and Electronic Internal Cooperation (e-IC). Social media can play a role in all of these elements but are most suitable for e-DP. E-governance developments in the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Denmark show that especially in the early stages of the implementation of e-governance the e-DP element played almost no role. This means that when the governments started to adopt the computer and internet they had no plans to enhance democracy and participation with these new technologies. Curran and Nichols write that because of new technologies like smartphones and social media an e-democracy can be established. According to their theories, new technologies give new possibilities for democracy. Direct democracies (a government form in which the citizens do not choose representatives but vote directly on legislation) are possible because citizens can use the internet to vote online. Of course there are enormous security risks. They write that it is just a matter of time before these security problems are solved. However, even if internet voting is just as safe as voting with a red pencil there might be no political feasibility to turn a representative democracy into a direct democracy. One of the most recent developments is the phenomenon that is called e-citizenship. This was first implemented by Estonia and it means that everybody in the world can become a digital citizen of Estonia. This means that someone in Greece could open an Estonian company using his or her digital Estonian identity. One of the reasons the Estonian government made this possible is to get more businesses and to boost the economy.

EU institutions and the social media

There are a lot ways in which governments can use social media. The EU institutions too can use the social media for multiple purposes. These purposes include: improve the communication with the public, engage stakeholders in public governance processes, improve the services delivered to the public, direct public service demand towards digital channels, to manage situations of emergency or crisis, improve the public image of the government, reach the younger generations and to improve communications and cooperation within the public sector. Citizens can use the social media to get information, they can directly ask questions to European Commissioners for example, the EU institutions can use the social media to gather information. The Humans Resources departments of the institutions can use the social

media for recruitment purposes. The social media can also be used for public safety, crisis managements and they can be used internally. Maybe one of the most important aspects is that by using the social media the EU institutions and EU persons can get closer to the citizens and therefor partly solve the democratic deficit problem. The social media bring more possibilities but they bring also dangers. Wrong information can be spread via the social media, and people can abuse the power of the social media, the EU institutions and EU persons have to be aware of these dangers. Another danger is that governments can abuse the social media, for example to spy on citizens (like the NSA). One last function of the social media is that it can help save the EU money. This thesis recommends the EU institutions and EU persons (like Commissioners) to use the social media as much as possible. Not only does it help to solve the problem of the democratic deficit, but it also helps to save money, gather information and to get better policies.

Facebook

Facebook is used by 33 of the 49 researched EU institutions and persons. The most liked is the European Parliament (1,7 million likes) and least liked is the Irish Commissioner Phil Hogan (485 likes). The most liked political group is the S&D (113.666 likes) and least liked is the EFDD (1.401 likes). However, if the number of likes is divided by the number of seat the political group has (the number of likes per seat) the ALDE group is the most popular (1.490 likes per seat) and the EFDD stays the least popular (29,8 likes per seat). The difference between the EFDD and the ALD and S&D cannot be seen in activity. All three parties are more or less active every day on Facebook. However, the EFDD account is the youngest account (the first post was on January the 24 2014). This may explain the difference in likes.

There are two commissioners with more than 100.000 likes: Frans Timmermans (200.833) and Kristaline Georgieva (108.4390). The least popular Facebook users are: Phil Hogan (485 likes, he started using Facebook March the 10th 2015) and Violeta Bulc (3.229 likes). The average number of likes a Commissioner has is 48.308, there are 21 commissioners that use Facebook. The difference in popularity between especially Timmermans and the other Commissioners has a number of reasons, these reasons are used to formulate a number of recommendations for other Commissioner. The recommendations for other Commissioners to become more popular are: use multiple languages, do not only put technical and professional messages on Facebook but also more personal messages, do not use Facebook to only send messages but do also react on the messages of other people and do frequently post messages on Facebook.

Other EU institutions that use Facebook are: The European Council, Donald Tusk, the EEAS, The Committee of Regions, and the EIB. The European Council is with 165.664 likes the least popular of the three big institutions. Major differences between the Facebook pages of the institutions are not found. However, where most institutions post round one message a day, the Parliament and the Commission post usually multiple messages per day. The only recommendation for institutions to become more popular is therefore to post more messages, react on messages or question of other people and use multiple languages. The importance of the institution may also be a factor that explains its popularity.

Twitter

Twitter is used by all researched EU institutions and EU persons (except Mario Draghi). Most active on Twitter are the European Commission (17.000 Tweets) and the EPP political group (14.900). However, the European Parliament has sent 182.422 Tweets if all 24 accounts of the European Parliament would be combined. The least active are Elżbieta Bieńkowska (63 Tweets) and Dimitris Avramopoulos (163 Tweets). The European Commission has the most followers (396.000), least followed is the EFDD Group (2.343), the Maltese version of the European Parliament's Twitter account has only 1.201 followers.

The English version of the European Parliament's account (112.000 followers) is the most popular of all EP accounts; the Maltese version (1.201 followers) is the least popular. However, when the numbers are corrected for the number of people that speak the language used the results change. The Finish Twitter account is the most popular, 0,329% of all Finish speakers follow the Finish EP account. Least popular is the Romanian account, only 0,029% of all Romanian speakers follow the Romanian EP account. The German EP account is the most active (13.500 Tweets), the Maltese EP account is the least active (1.644 Tweets). There does not seem to be a link between the number of Tweets and the amount of followers. Therefore the recommendation to be more active cannot be made. However, using Twitter the right way (not only send but also react) may increase the number of followers.

Most popular political group is the EPP group (44.500 followers) the EFDD group is the least popular (2.343 followers). The most active political group is the EPP group (14.900 Tweets), least active is the EFDD group (1.857 Tweets). The more active a political group is, the more followers it has. However, when taking into account the number of seats, (how many followers per seat) the ranking changes. The ALDE group has the most followers per seat (402,9) and the EFDD the least (48,8 per seat). Recommendation for politician groups to get more followers is to be more active.

Federica Mogherini is the most active Twitter user, she has posted 7.788 Tweets since she started using Twitter. The least active Commissioner on Twitter is Elżbieta Bieńkowska, she did only send 63 Tweets. The average number of Tweets sent by a Commissioner is 1.861. The most popular Commissioner is Frans Timmermans, he has 171.000 followers, Federica Mogherini is second with 134.000 followers and Pierre Moscovici is third with only 1.000 followers less than Mogherini. Least popular is Věra Jourová with only 3.911 followers. Recommendation to Commissioners to get more followers is to be active frequently, the most popular Commissioners are active multiple times every day. The only popular Commissioner that does not tweet in English is the French Commissioner Moscovici. All Commissioners do only put professional and EU related Tweets on Twitter, personal Tweets may increase the popularity because the Commissioners that do post personal messages on Facebook the most popular.

All other EU institutions that are researched use Twitter, including Donald Tusk. Notable is that Donald Tusk has 248.000 followers while the European Council has only 89.900 followers. The ECB is also a very popular institution on Twitter, it has 241.000 followers. Least popular is the Court of Auditors with only 2.940 Followers. Most active is the EEAS (12.500 Tweets) and least active is the EIB (1.222 Tweets). The difference in popularity among these institutions is probably because some "important" institutions get more media attention than others and therefore gain more Twitter followers.

Other Social Media

The third most used social medium is Youtube. Youtube is used by 19 of the researched EU institutions and EU persons. Of the three most important institutions the European Parliament has the most views (29.749.901) while the Commission has the most subscribers (30.514). The European Council seems to lack behind the two other institution with 'only' 3.514 subscribers and 296.512 views. A good explanation for the gap between the Council and the two other institutions is not found. Therefore recommendations to increase the number of view and subscribers cannot be given. Most popular political group is the EPP with 1.907.756 views, least popular is the ECR group with 120.473 view. However, the Greens have to most subscribers (1.695) and the ALDE has the least amount of subscribers (342). The ALDE Youtube account is by far the youngest account, and the gap between the numbers of subscribers may be explained because of that. The Greens upload clips in multiple languages this may be one of the reasons that they have the most subscribers. Being active on a frequently may also contribute to the number of views and subscribers because the popular account seem to be more active than the unpopular account. Therefore the recommendations for political groups to get more views and subscribers are: use multiple languages and to be active frequently. Linking to Youtube videos via other social media may increase the number of views. Of all the other institutions the ECB had the most views (11,5 million), second most popular is (surprisingly) the Court of Auditors. The Court of Auditors uploads clips in multiple languages, this may be the key to become more successful. Therefore this thesis recommends the institutions to upload the clips in multiple languages or at least add subtitles in multiple languages. However, since the title of a clip is shown in search results it may be wise to upload use also multiple languages for the title of videos. Of all other social media that are researched (Google+, Flickr, Instagram, Vine, Pinterest, LinkedIn) the number of user under the EU institutions and EU persons is too low to make strong conclusions. However, being active frequently, using multiple languages, and (for EU persons) share personal messages seem to be key factor to gain more followers, views, likes, etc.

Answer to the main research question

The main research question is: *to what extend are the EU institutions successful in using the social media?* All social media accounts of all EU institution and EU persons combines have a total of 3,4 million Facebook likes, 2,8 million Twitter followers, 72 million Youtube views, 2.600 Flickr followers, 1.4 million Google+ subscribers, 6.000 Pinterest followers, 251.000 LinkedIn followers, 4.500 Instagram followers and 3.800 vine followers. These numbers combined make a total of almost 80 million social media accounts that are linked to an EU related social media account. This is an equivalent of almost 16% of the number of EU citizens. To give a reference: Dutch municipalities have over 3 million social media accounts linked to their accounts²³. This is 18.8% of the total Dutch population. However, the municipality is a government layer that is the closest to the citizens, where the EU is the government that is most far away. The conclusion therefore is that the EU institutions are quite successful in using the social media. However, there is plenty of room for improvement like: using the social media properly as describes in chapter 'The EU institutions and Social Media', and taking in consideration the recommendations made in this chapter.

²³ Plug, M., 2012, *De Nederlandse gemeenten en sociale media*.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Facebook database

Date	Name	Country	Language	Mentions	Likes	1 st Message	Like p. seat	Mention p. seat	Position	Content
18-05-15	European Parliament		English	43.719	1.751.059	09-04-09				General EP related news
18-05-15	EPP Group		English	543	104.736	17-02-10	478,25	2,48	Christian democrats	General EP related news
18-05-15	S&D Group		English	3.747	113.666	12-05-11	598,24	19,72	Socialists / social democrats	General EP related news
18-05-15	ALDE Group		English	1.236	102.858	02-07-09	1.490,70	17,91	Liberals	General EP related news
18-05-15	The Greens Group		English	630	19.343	28-02-11	386,86	12,60	Environmental	General EP related news
18-05-15	ECR Group		English	122	6.298	18-11-10	87,47	1,69	Conservatives	General EP related news
18-05-15	EFDD Group		English	17	1.401	26-01-14	29,81	0,36	Eurosceptic	General EP related news
18-05-15	EUL/NGL Group		English	178	11.406	12-04-11	219,35	3,42	Communist/ Socialists	General EP related news
20-05-15	Commission		English	11.280	447.795	11-06-10				General Commission and EU related news
20-05-15	Frans Timmermans	NL	Dutch/ English	8.631	200.833	5-12-12			Better Regulation	Professional, Political and Personal
20-05-15	Jean-Claude Juncker	LUX	English (and some French)	171	34.675	12-05-09			President	General Commission and EU related news
20-05-15	Marianne Thyssen	BE	Dutch (and some English)	14	3.071	20-03-14			Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility	not very active, Political and General EU related news
20-05-15	Frederica Mogherini	IT	English (and some Italian)	975	29.384	27-09-10			High Representative	Professional
20-05-15	Kristalina Georgieva	BG	Bulgarian/ English	15.044	108.439	19-05-10			Budget & Human Resources	Professional
20-05-15	Andrus Ansip	EE							Digital Single Market	
20-05-15	Maroš Šefčovič	SK	Slovak/ English	69	5.426	6-10-11			Energy Union	Professional
20-05-15	Valdis Dombrovskis	LV							Euro & Social Dialogue	
20-05-15	Jyrki Katainen	FI	English (and some Finnish)	373	3.355	21-01-15			Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness	Professional
20-05-15	Günther H. Oettinger	DE							Digital Economy & Society	
20-05-15	Johannes Hahn	AU							ENP & Enlargement	
20-05-15	Cecilia Malmström	SE	Swedish/ English	104	9.499	11-01-10			Trade	Professional and links

			English							
20-05-15	Neven Mimica	HR	English	92	898	5-02-15			International Cooperation & Development	
20-05-15	Miguel Arias Cañete	ES							Climate Action & Energy	
20-05-15	Karmenu Vella	MT	English (and some Maltese)	259	7.891	14-01-13			Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	Professional
20-05-15	Vytenis Andriukaitis	LT	Lithuanian	45	5.703	11-11-14			Health & Food Safety	
20-05-15	Dimitris Avramopoulos	GR							Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship	
20-05-15	Pierre Moscovici	FR	French	242	28.068	28-11-09			Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs	
20-05-15	Christos Stylianides	CY	English (and some Greek)	97	6.166	4-04-09			Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management	Professional and links
20-05-15	Phil Hogan	IE	English	134	485	10-03-15			Agriculture & Rural Development	
20-05-15	Jonathan Hill	UK							Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union	
20-05-15	Violeta Bulc	SL	English (and Slovenian)	32	3.229	14-10-14			Transport	Professional and links
20-05-15	Elżbieta Bieńkowska	PL							Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs	
20-05-15	Věra Jourová	CZ	Czech (and some English)	225	3.656	5-09-13			Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality	
20-05-15	Tibor Navracsics	HU							Education, Culture, Youth and Sport	
20-05-15	Corina Crețu	RO	English (some French, Romanian)	372	17.728	12-04-13			Regional Policy	Professional and links
20-05-15	Margrethe Vestager	DK	Danish/English	349	44.083	2-10-08			Competition	Personal and professional
20-05-15	Carlos Moedas	PT	English	199	5.768	11-11-14			Research, Science and Innovation	
21-05-15	European Council		English	2.581	165.664	6-12-10				General EU/Europe/Council

										Related news and information
21-05-15	Donald Tusk	PL	English	1.857	20.094	24-11-14			President of the Council	
21-05-15	EEAS		English	2.917	93.186	16-05-11				EEAS related news and information
21-05-15	ECB									
21-05-15	Mario Draghi	IT							ECB President	
21-05-15	Court of auditors									
21-05-15	Committee of the Regions		English	390	4.277	22-01-14				Relevant news and information
21-05-15	Economic and social Committee									
21-05-15	EIB		English	94	4.610	3-04-12				Relevant news and information
21-05-15	EU Ombudsman									

Appendix 2: Twitter database

Date	Name	Country	Language	Tweets	Following	Followers	Registered	% of speakers that is following	Position	Followers per seat	content
21-05-15	Euroopan Parlamentti		Finish	7.105	9.104	15.500	mei-09	0,329			
21-05-15	Parlament Ewropew		Maltese	1.644	269	1.201	mei-09	0,291			
21-05-15	Ευρ. Κοινοβούλιο		Greek	7.597	2.567	28.400	apr-09	0,238			
21-05-15	Eiropas Parlaments		Latvian	4.559	2.535	3.865	apr-09	0,179			
21-05-15	European Parliament		English	11.900	9.945	112.000	apr-09	0,168			
21-05-15	Parlamento europeo		Italian	6.657	28.100	85.300	mei-09	0,138			
21-05-15	Euroopa Parlament		Estonian	6.376	1.389	1.729	mei-09	0,137			
21-05-15	Europees Parlement		Dutch	8.627	24.700	27.200	mei-09	0,119			
21-05-15	Evropski parlament		Slovenian	6.760	72	2.026	apr-09	0,102			
21-05-15	Europski parlament		Croatian	4.515	1.568	4.197	apr-13	0,094			
21-05-15	Parlamento Europeo		Spanish	12.200	3.828	43.500	apr-09	0,091			
21-05-15	Parlaimint na hEorpa		Irish	2.250	687	1.548	N.A.	0,083			
21-05-15	Europos Parlamentas		Lithuanian	8.088	609	2.860	apr-09	0,082			
21-05-15	Parlamento Europeu		Portuguese	6.291	4.034	6.932	mei-09	0,064			
21-05-15	Euroaparlamentet		Swedish	8.832	1.575	5.725	apr-09	0,057			
21-05-15	Parlement Européen		French	10.800	5.709	37.400	apr-09	0,057			
21-05-15	Parlament Europejski		Polish	7.893	5.414	21.500	apr-09	0,056			
21-05-15	Európai Parlament		Hungarian	8.069	487	5.391	mei-09	0,054			
21-05-15	Evropský parlament		Czech	10.500	1.320	5.754	mei-09	0,054			
21-05-15	Европейски Парламент		Bulgarian	8.333	397	3.422	apr-09	0,049			
21-05-15	Europa-Parlamentet		Danish	3.229	1.483	2.742	apr-09	0,049			
21-05-15	Euroaparlament		German	13.500	5.995	34.700	apr-09	0,039			
21-05-15	Európsky parlament		Slovak	7.294	690	1.849	mei-09	0,034			
21-05-15	Parlamentul European		Romanian	9.403	1.110	6.283	apr-09	0,029			
21-05-15	EPP Group		English	14.900	2.252	44.500	jul-09		Christian democrats	202,3	
21-05-15	S&D Group		English	12.700	7.734	33.400	jan-09		Socialists / social democrats	174,9	
21-05-15	ALDE Group		English	9.273	11.900	27.400	dec-08		Liberals	402,9	
21-05-15	The Greens Group		English	5.003	788	19.800	aug-10		Environmental	396,0	
21-05-15	ECR Group		English	3.767	4.532	18.200	okt-09		Conservatives	260,0	
21-05-15	EFDD Group		English	1.857	189	2.343	jun-10		Eurosceptic	48,8	

21-05-15	EUL/NGL Group		English	2.063	447	12.000	jun-09		Communist/ Socialists	230,8	
24-05-15	European Commission		English	17.000	1.010	396.000	jun-10				
24-05-15	Frans Timmermans	NL	English	755	203	171.000	apr-13		Better Regulation		News and information from the European Commission
24-05-15	Jean-Claude Juncker	LUX	Mostly English	1.004	1.360	125.000	jul-10		President		Professional information
24-05-15	Marianne Thyssen	BE	Dutch / English	326	113	9.379	N.A		Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility		Professional and EU- related information
24-05-15	Frederica Mogherini	IT	English	5.024	7.535	135.000	jan-12		High Representative		Professional information
24-05-15	Kristalina Georgieva	BG	English / Bulgarian	7.788	1.757	53.100	mrt-10		Budget & Human Resources		Professional and EU- related information
24-05-15	Andrus Ansip	EE	English	745	175	15.100	N.A		Digital Single Market		Professional and EU- related information
24-05-15	Maroš Šefčovič	SK	English	5.357	574	13.200	sep-11		Energy Union		Professional information
24-05-15	Valdis Dombrovskis	LV	English	2.552	625	47.200	mei-09		Euro & Social Dialogue		Professional information
24-05-15	Jyrki Katainen	FI	English	839	463	17.700	mrt-09		Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness		Professional information
24-05-15	Günther H. Oettinger	DE	English	698	292	26.400	okt-12		Digital Economy & Society		Professional information
24-05-15	Johannes Hahn	AU	English	2.026	1.171	13.500	dec-12		ENP & Enlargement		Professional information
24-05-15	Cecilia Malmström	SE	English	4.655	426	34.700	jan-12		Trade		Professional information
24-05-15	Neven Mimica	HR	English	1.785	583	8.164	N.A		International Cooperation & Development		Professional information
24-05-15	Miguel Arias Cañete	ES	English	726	638	25.700	N.A		Climate Action & Energy		Professional information
24-05-15	Karmenu Vella	MT	English	722	1.304	6.934	okt-10		Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries		Professional information
24-05-15	Vytenis Andriukaitis	LT	English	361	276	4.660	mei-12		Health & Food Safety		Professional information

24-05-15	Dimitris Avramopoulos	GR	English	163	119	5.095	N.A		Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship		Professional information
24-05-15	Pierre Moscovici	FR	French	5.336	6.768	134.000	apr-09		Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs		Professional information
24-05-15	Christos Stylianides	CY	English	888	899	7.650	N.A		Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management		Professional information
24-05-15	Phil Hogan	IE	English	1.185	651	8.603	dec-10		Agriculture & Rural Development		Professional information
24-05-15	Jonathan Hill	UK	English	298	248	5.472	N.A		Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union		Professional information
24-05-15	Violeta Bulc	SL	English	1.214	728	9.112	jul-07		Transport		Professional information
24-05-15	Elżbieta Bieńkowska	PL	English	63	45	4.027	N.A		Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs		Professional information
24-05-15	Věra Jourová	CZ	English	1.026	71	3.911	N.A		Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality		Professional information
24-05-15	Tibor Navracsics	HU	English	611	365	6.592	N.A		Education, Culture, Youth and Sport		Professional information
24-05-15	Corina Crețu	RO	English	832	212	5.957	N.A		Regional Policy		Professional and EU-related information
24-05-15	Margrethe Vestager	DK	English	4.759	235	103.000	jan-09		Competition		Professional information
24-05-15	Carlos Moedas	PT	English	364	947	6.658	feb-09		Research, Science and Innovation		Professional information
25-05-15	European Council		English	1.670	429	89.900	okt-09				General EU/Europe/Council Related news and information
25-05-15	Donald Tusk		English	3.398	348	248.000	sep-10				General EU/Europe/Council

											Related news and information
25-05-15	EEAS		English (and some French)	12.500	1.777	100.000	okt-09				EEAS related news and information
25-05-15	ECB		English	6.413	58	241.000	N.A				ECB/Euro/Economic news and messages
25-05-15	Mario Draghi						N.A				
25-05-15	Court of auditors		English	1604	147	2.940	N.A				
25-05-15	Committee of the Regions		English	2.658	1.746	13.000	N.A				
25-05-15	Economic and social Committee		English	4.422	445	17.700	N.A				
25-05-15	EIB		English	1.222	493	5.014	N.A				

Appendix 3: Youtube database

Date	Name	subscribers	views	date of creation	views per seat	subscribers per seat
26-05-15	European Parliament	15.894	29.749.901	2-jun-07		
26-05-15	EPP Group	991	1.907.756	24-okt-07	8.711	5
26-05-15	S&D Group	820	172.983	1-jul-09	910	4
26-05-15	ALDE Group	342	273.678	20-apr-13	3.966	5
26-05-15	The Greens Group	1.695	1.152.817	10-dec-07	23.056	34
26-05-15	ECR Group	528	120.473	14-sep-09	1.673	7
26-05-15	EFDD Group	1.102	220.431	23-jun-11	4.690	23
26-05-15	EUL/NGL Group	881	179.055	7-mrt-08	3.443	17
26-05-15	Commission	30.514	24.390.361	3-mrt-06		
26-05-15	Dimitris Avramopoulos	419	591.991	10-sep-08		
26-05-15	European Council	3.514	296.512	26-apr-09		
26-05-15	Donald Tusk	457	109.321	26-nov-14		
26-05-15	EEAS	1.001	142.491	28-jan-13		
26-05-15	ECB	5.561	11.530.093	25-nov-10		
26-05-15	Court of auditors	396	397.501	16-okt-12		
26-05-15	Committee of the Regions	933	168.255	17-jul-07		
26-05-15	Economic and social Committee	N.A.	168.216	9-jun-09		
26-05-15	EIB	654	14.283	6-okt-09		
26-05-15	EU Ombudsman	613	27.069	11-mrt-11		

Appendix 4: Flickr database

Date	Name	Followers	Following	Photos	year of creation
27-05-15	European Parliament	1.800	3.900	7.391	N.A.
27-05-15	EPP Group	87	19	3.035	2011
27-05-15	S&D Group	35	1	4.980	2012
27-05-15	The Greens Group	43	12	2.047	2007
27-05-15	EUL/NGL Group	69	25	5.045	2010
27-05-15	Dimitris Avramopoulos	30	3	3.008	2012
27-05-15	European Council	232	9	2.010	N.A.
27-05-15	Donald Tusk	15	0	408	N.A.
27-05-15	EEAS	204	15	4.810	N.A.
27-05-15	ECB	55	8	1.381	N.A.
27-05-15	Committee of the Regions	30	77	1.255	N.A.

Appendix 5: Other social media database

Date	Name	Google+ Followers	Google+ Views	Pinterest Followers	Pins	LinkedIn Followers	Instagram Followers	Vine Followers
28-05-15	European Parliament	94.128	23.899.788	4.508	2.439	70.595	1.049	
28-05-15	EPP Group						963	
28-05-15	ALDE Group	974	99.443	1.641	1.162			
28-05-15	EFDD Group	34	22.238					
28-05-15	Commission	1.420.450	56.416.860			214.054	2.118	10.49
28-05-15	Carlos Moedas					500+		
28-05-15	European Council	747	539.683				1.225	
28-05-15	Donald Tusk	13.558	331.279					
28-05-15	EEAS						772	
28-05-15	ECB	1.572	303.808					
28-05-15	Economic and social Committee	301	169.137					
28-05-15	EU Ombudsman	528	542.815			1.449		