

Title	Unravelling the mysteries of the Europe Direct Information Relays
Authors	Guedes de Freitas Rodrigues, Ricardo Jorge
Publication date	2025
Original Citation	Guedes de Freitas Rodrigues, R. J. 2025. Unravelling the mysteries of the Europe Direct Information Relays. PhD Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Doctoral thesis
Rights	© 2025, Ricardo Jorge Guedes de Freitas Rodrigues. - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Download date	2026-10-29 15:33:16
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/17930

Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh
National University of Ireland, Cork



**UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERIES OF THE
EUROPE DIRECT INFORMATION RELAYS**

Thesis presented by

Ricardo Jorge Guedes de Freitas Rodrigues

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University College Cork

Department of Government and Politics

Head of Department: Dr Liam Weeks

Supervisors: Dr Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan and Prof Andrew Cottey

2025

Table of contents

Table of contents	2
Declaration	6
List of Figures and Tables	7
List of Abbreviations	8
Acknowledgements	9
Abstract and Keywords	11
Chapter 1 Introduction	12
1.1 <i>L'air du temps</i>	12
1.2 Research questions	13
1.3 Hypothesis	15
1.4 Overview	16
1.5 A turning point	19
1.6 The digital communications era	21
1.7 Several instruments, one goal	22
1.8 A new structure to gain currency?	24
1.9 Research motivation	28
1.10 Research gaps	31
1.11 Research significance	32
1.12 Limitations of the study	33
1.13 Structure of the thesis	34
Chapter 2 The history of the Europe Direct Information Relays	37
2.1 The outcome of an evolution	37
2.2 A long journey to the 21 st century	38
2.2.1 Media policies	39
2.2.2 Communication elements	41
2.3 The rise of European information and communication	47
2.4 The creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays	51
2.5 Development of the Europe Direct Information Relays	57
2.6 An ongoing and unfinished process	61
Chapter 3 Theoretical background	64
3.1 A double-track approach	64
3.2 Delineation	65

3.3 Europe Direct Information Relays as a medium	68
3.4 Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication	70
3.5 Schools of thought in information and communication	77
3.5.1 Origins	77
3.5.2 Chicago School	78
3.5.3 Frankfurt School	79
3.5.4 Palo Alto School	81
3.6 Models of communication	82
3.6.1 Abstractions of reality	82
3.6.2 Aristotle's Model of Communication	83
3.6.3 Lasswell's Model of Communication	83
3.6.4 Shannon and Weaver's Model of Communication	84
3.6.5 Newcomb's Model of Communication	85
3.6.6 Gerbner's Model of Communication	85
3.6.7 Berlo's SMCR Model of Communication	86
3.6.8 Helical Spiral of Communication Model	87
3.6.9 Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication	88
3.7 Operational environment	89
3.7.1 The outline of public opinion toward the European Union	89
3.7.2 The European public sphere	94
3.7.3 Media landscape	98
3.8 The essence of the Europe Direct Information Relays	101
3.8.1 A public relations' instrument	101
3.8.2 A tool to support European integration?	110
3.9 The challenge ahead	116
Chapter 4 Research methodology	119
4.1 Conceptual aspects	119
4.2 Research characterization	122
4.2.1 At the heart of the research	122
4.2.2 Reasoning methods	122
4.3 Plan of action	125
4.3.1 Nature	125
4.3.2 Objectives	125
4.3.3 Approach	126

4.3.4 Technical procedures	128
4.3.5 Sampling	130
4.3.6 Data collection techniques	130
4.3.7 Overview table	132
4.4 Process	133
4.4.1 Charting the course	133
4.4.2 The semi-structured interviews	135
4.4.3 The ethical dimension	137
4.4.4 Dual pathways	138
4.5 Research design synopsis	143
Chapter 5 Analysis	145
5.1 Axes of examination	145
5.1.1 Descriptive analysis	147
5.1.1.1 Synchronic analysis	147
5.1.1.2 Diachronic analysis	165
5.1.2 KH Coder analysis	179
5.1.2.1 Macro-level analysis	180
5.1.2.2 Micro-level analysis	183
5.1.2.3 Recap of the KH Coder analysis	190
Chapter 6 Discussion	192
6.1 The task to perform	192
6.2 Progenitor or progenitors?	193
6.3 A top-down approach	200
6.4 Akin but distinct	203
6.5 The gold standard	208
Chapter 7 Conclusion	212
7.1 A subject of topical interest	212
7.2 Seismographs of reality	214
7.3 Recapitulation	215

Annexes	218
Annex 1: Letter from the Minister of State for Europe, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government	219
Annex 2: United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1086 (XI), dated 21 December 1956	220
Annex 3: Global network of United Nations Information Centres and the Countries they cover	221
Appendices	222
Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview guide	223
Appendix 2: Evidence sought and relevant statements	224
Appendix 3: Co-occurrence network, random walks statistical elements	231
List of references	234

Declaration

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Frequency chart of the ten most frequently used expressions and words in the Schuman Declaration	17
Figure 2: Word cloud of the Schuman Declaration	17
Figure 3: The Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication	72
Figure 4: Research design diagram	144
Figure 5: Overview of the descriptive synchronic analysis	164
Figure 6: Overview of the descriptive diachronic analysis	177
Figure 7: Co-occurrence network, random walks	179
Table 1: Number of EDC in each member state of the EU	59
Table 2: Intersection between elements and indicators in the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication	74
Table 3: Correspondence between indicators in the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication and evidence	76
Table 4: Summary of adopted plan of action	133
Table 5: Basic statistics of the ten files after the pre-processing actions	143
Table 6: Summary of the descriptive synchronic analysis	164
Table 7: Summary of the descriptive diachronic analysis	177
Table 8: Macro-level analysis synopsis	180
Table 9: Micro-level analysis synopsis	185
Table A.3.1: Statistical table	231
Table A.3.2: Summary of statistical table	232
Table A.3.3: Nodes, Internal and External Edges, and Internal and External Cluster Distance	232
Table A.3.4: Nodes, Edges, and Cluster Distance	232

List of Abbreviations

DG COMM Directorate-General for Communication of the European Commission

DG PRESS Directorate-General for Press and Information of the European
Commission

EC European Commission

EDC Europe Direct Centres

EDCC Europe Direct Contact Centre

EDIC Europe Direct Information Centres

EDIR Europe Direct Information Relays

EP European Parliament

EU European Union

EUR European Union Euro

Acknowledgements

Nani gigantum humeris insidentes. Standing on the shoulders of giants. One can only truly appreciate the magnitude of the metaphor dated to the 12th century and attributed to Bernard of Chartres after undertaking a long-term academic research endeavour.

In the case of this specific project, the counselling, direction, and patience of the supervisors at University College Cork, Dr Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan, Dr Mary C. Murphy, and Prof Andrew Cottey were instrumental in carrying out this research. At the outset of the exploration, the advice and steering granted by Dr Christopher Peter Ankersen (New York University, United States of America) and Dr Claus Schreier (Hochschule Luzern, Switzerland) were of enormous worth. The generous commentaries from Dr Clodagh Harris and Dr Theresa Reidy (University College Cork) on different occasions held immense value.

Additionally, the research student benefited regularly from the calm demeanour, structured approach, vast supervisory experience, and wealth of knowledge possessed by two seasoned academics, Dr Fernando da Cruz Bandeira (Universidade Fernando Pessoa, Portugal) and Dr Isabel Pereira Rodrigues (Mahidol University, Thailand). On a frequent basis they allowed for and stimulated the exchange of views, testing of concepts and development of ideas and lines of inquiry, as well as provided unwavering support. They are creditors of the author's earnest admiration and continual gratitude.

All the shortcomings of this work are the sole responsibility of the author, while any positive contributions are owed to the guidance of such magnificent group of academics.

A particular word of recognition is also due to numerous active and former staff members of the European institutions, as well as to several colleagues and friends serving at the United Nations across the planet. Their efforts to support this endeavour by identifying, pointing to, and providing access to a varied pool of documents, liaising with useful information sources, and connecting the author with key stakeholders did not go unnoticed.

Spanning over a period of six years, this mission was carried out in fourteen states in the Asian and European continents, namely Belgium, Cambodia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Qatar, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, The

Netherlands, and Vietnam. Whether attending seminars or workshops, carrying out onsite research activities in libraries, discussing the topic with academics or practitioners, drafting sections of the thesis or testing proposals or viewpoints, this research developed across a few states and profited from a diversity of standpoints.

This allowed to confirm that while reality is the same, the European Union looks very different when observed from Bangkok, Jakarta or Phnom Penh than it does when perceived from Brussels, Dublin or Paris. The confidence, enthusiasm and bright outlook that many citizens in Asia accord to the European construction project stands as a beacon of hope for the future of the European Union.

Abstract

In the year 2004 the European Commission created the Europe Direct Information Relays, an official European information structure instituted across the European Union.

It used an innovative architecture to do so, by resorting to a circular model of communication as its intellectual inspiration. This was the first attempt of the European institutions to design a two-way communication outlet with the European citizens.

This research examines the extent to which the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays by the European Commission fit the Circular Model of Communication of Osgood and Schramm (Schramm, 1954). Additionally, it investigates whether the European Commission adhered to a textbook application of such framework or instead used a proxy model to this one.

Located at the intersection of information and communication, and European politics, this research is likely the first attempt to explore the interplay between the adoption of an academic theory in the field of communication and its practical implementation by a European institution.

Resorting to both qualitative and quantitative research methods, this work dispels the puzzle of the Europe Direct Information Relays. By doing so, it advances understanding in this field of knowledge and offers clues for potentially larger research agendas ahead in this area.

Keywords

Communication; Europe Direct Information Relays; European Commission; European Union; Information.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This opening chapter establishes the foundation for the research by situating the work within the broader contextual and intellectual landscape. It presents the research questions, articulates the guiding hypothesis, and defines the motivation behind the study. By tracing significant historical developments and contemporary shifts, it positions the inquiry in the field. The chapter also identifies research gaps and justifies the study's significance, while acknowledging its limitations. It sets the direction and rationale for the thesis.

1.1 *L'air du temps*

In this third decade of the 21st century, citizens worldwide form and express their opinions on virtually all matters, irrespective of their level of knowledge or familiarity with the topic under discussion. Economic crises, political agendas, sectoral policies, and all sorts of socially relevant events are the object of lively, passionate, and often uninformed or misinformed debate. The European project does not constitute an exception to this state of affairs.

One of the structural elements of today's age, the internet, has facilitated this, allowing for social media to be used as loudspeakers of democracy. Samuel P. Huntington (1975) elaborated decades ago on the increasing disaffection and mistrust in which citizens hold their democratic institutions. From the layman's perspective, this malaise seems to have only grown over time, and at a swifter rate. Perhaps the massive use of modern digital communication tools and the disinformation associated with it is in some way related to this phenomenon.

Not many decades ago, the "regular Joes" would meet at the coffee tables or pubs located across the European Union (EU) and discuss numerous subjects within a free democratic context, but the expression of their opinions in such limited circles would bear little consequence for society at large. Using social networks, any citizen can today generate impactful content, and any opinion may gain traction at a global level, irrespective of its merit, provided it is profusely shared and propagated by many individuals. On the other hand, citizens are selective in the information they consume and surround themselves with others who hear and read the same contents. In doing so, they build their own reality, relinquishing a joint narrative.

It is claimed by Pacheco Pereira (2018; 2022), a scholar in this field, that the obsessive attention provided to social media contents leads to a decrease of the standing attributed to analytical complexity in favour of a simplistic assessment of different subjects, as well as to the emergence of an ersatz reality (Pacheco Pereira, 2022), coupled with the rise of new and aggressive forms of ignorance, for which the term “new ignorance” was coined (Pacheco Pereira, 2018).

Furthermore, in this online cacophony it is often challenging to distinguish the voices of pundits from the ones who metamorphose into instant experts on any given topic, who are significantly larger in number than the real specialists. This is the reason why the Italian intellectual Umberto Eco (2015) did not mince his words in a statement a few months before his passing, expressing his sceptical attitude about the value of social networks and affirming that they give the floor to a legion of imbeciles. While some perceive this as *l'air du temps*, others take it as the zenith of the law of triviality. However, the Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger and Dunning, 2000) must also be considered when analysing this reality, the intellectual predisposition where individuals with shallow capability overrate their skill, also known as “the wisdom of the fool”. Hanlon’s philosophical razor (Hanlon, 1990) may prove handy in this context.

Amidst this climate of disinformation, institutional distrust, and augmented polarisation, the European Commission (EC) created the Europe Direct Information Relays (EDIR) in the year 2004 to serve as official European information and communication structures on the ground across the bloc, at the local and regional levels. This doctoral thesis is devoted to studying them, and namely, to understand their creation in a specific way in terms of communication, and whether they were meant to have a meaningful impact on the multitude of personal actors who in the current century behave like the oblivious shipowner and the quarrelling sailors described in the Ship of State metaphor put forth by Plato’s Socrates in Book VI of *The Republic* (Plato, 360 B.C., translation, 2009).

1.2 Research questions

It is a truism to state that all academic and scientific knowledge is incomplete and transient by nature, either due to the fact that more updated theories or concepts are formulated, or because new approaches emerge. Bertrand Russell claims that “*Not to be absolutely certain is, I think, one of the essential things in rationality.*”

(Russell, 1949, p. 5) What contributes the most to the advancement of knowledge are the questions posed. That is the gate to wisdom. Here lies the importance of formulating a correct research question since the early stages of an investigation effort.

Alon (2009) is of the view that the selection of an appropriate research question or questions is a key initial action in any research, and its chief objective is to guide the process in a rational, reliable, and unambiguous manner. Other scholar considers that the main objective in terms of the formulation of the research question is to make it distinctive, precise, and specific (Rudio, 1978, cited in Lakatos and Marconi, 2017). In any case, the research question is the lynchpin of any academic research and therefore takes great prominence at the start of the process (Van Campenhoudt and Quivy, 2011).

The intent of this doctoral study is to obtain an answer to the following central research question:

1. To what extent did the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays by the European Commission fit the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954)?

This overarching question will reflect on two sub-problems, which are the following:

1. Did the European Commission strictly adhere to a textbook application of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) in the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays?; or
2. Did it in practical terms use a proxy model to this one?

With a view to robustly probe the response to the central and the sub-research questions, the investigative endeavour includes collecting information and addressing several other related issues. It is necessary to understand, among other facts, for example, the background against which this initiative occurred, namely whether it was simply a box-ticking exercise or instead held a deeper significance, if there was support or opposition from member states to their establishment, if there was meaningful buy-in from national authorities or if the financial commitment was enough to ensure the EDIR achieved their objectives. All these matters are investigated and reported in this document.

1.3 Hypothesis

The creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays in 2004 was an exigent undertaking that likely required a practical approach, rather than merely embracing a pure academic model of communication drawn from textbooks in this area of knowledge.

Adopting a theoretical model from scientific literature to reality can prove demanding in any situation. Theoretical models are condensed representations of intricate phenomena that are every so often developed in controlled laboratory conditions or simulations (Giere, 1999). Furthermore, they are designed to explain or foresee the behaviour of a system based on certain assumptions and variables. They may therefore not always account for the complexity and irregularity of the real-world context (Stachowiak, 1973).

Reality is often dynamic and unpredictable. In contrast, theoretical models are developed under specific assumptions and conditions that may not hold true in a specific context. Additionally, the real world is subject to many external factors and variables that may influence the behaviour of a system, which may not have been accounted for in the academic model.

A Prussian general and theorist underlined this in the first half of the 19th century:

“Von Clausewitz called it “friction”. The legendary military strategist was referring to his earlier, Teutonic version of Murphy’s Law. When a battle plan is made, it invariably contains certain assumptions. Assumptions about the weather, or the size and capability of forces, or the contours of the terrain, or the capacity of matériel. When a real battle is engaged in the real world, things change. Events don’t ever come to pass exactly as we expect them to. When “the fog of war” (another von Clausewitz phrase) sets in, things don’t look as clear as when they were planned.” (Carville and Begala, 2002, p. 160)

Another salient point is that real-world systems often involve a myriad of interacting variables that may be complex to isolate and control. This may generate hurdles in accurately applying a theoretical model to real-world situations, as the model may not be able to account for all the variables that are present (Morrison and Morgan, 2010).

Furthermore, different systems may indeed behave differently, even if they share some similarities. This entails that a theoretical model that functions well within the context of one specific system may not necessarily work in the same way for another. It is important to ensure that an academic model is appropriate for the specific system or situation it is being applied to.

Moreover, limitations in available data or measurement tools may make it testing to validate or refine a theoretical model when applied to a real case scenario. Without exact data, it may be demanding to determine the accuracy of the model and make necessary modifications.

Finally, it is relevant to take into consideration that the EC possibly understood the need to navigate the dense political landscape across the continent. This included working with national governments, regional authorities, and other stakeholders to ensure that the EDIR were successfully established and operated effectively. A pure theoretical model may not have provided the necessary insights into the political considerations that impacted the establishment and subsequent operation of the centres.

While it is reasonable to believe the EC carefully pondered on the applicability of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) to the specific system of the EDIR before embracing it, it is likely the creation of these official European information outlets went beyond the adoption of that pure theoretical model.

Therefore, the hypothesis of this research is that the establishment of the EDIR did not exactly match a textbook application of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). Although informed by this model, the adjustments performed to it during the process of establishment of the EDIR made it possible that a proxy model of communication was instead subscribed to.

1.4 Overview

A simple word frequency count of the seminal document considered as the founding step for the European integration project, the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950 (Schuman, 1950), in its English language version, is telling. Among its 953 words, the ten most frequently used expressions and words in the text are, in descending order, “production”, “country”, “common”, “Europe”, “High Authority”,

This is hardly a surprising fact, since at its inception the project was driven by ruling classes in a voluntaristic fashion. It was then “... *an elitist, yet benign, conspiracy led by the French, later in close cooperation with the Germans, with support from virtually all mainstream parties in participating countries* ...” (Tsoukalis, 2016, p. 147). The stepwise venture to achieve political objectives by political means (Griffiths, 2012) did not exclude the citizens, as it was meant as an endeavour in the interests of the peoples, albeit without them (Védrine, 2019).

This work in progress was forecasted to follow the “Monnet Law” (McCormick, 2021) which stipulates that Europe would be forged through crises - vividly predicted to be perpetual - and would be the patchwork result of the answers devised to overcome those. The principle rests on the assumption that national governments would only accept the sharing of sovereignty in times of necessity, and it is still valid to describe several of the key changes to the European project which have occurred in the preceding decades (Fortuna, 2020). Also, it was assumed its legitimacy would derive from the results achieved, and therefore acquired *a posteriori* (Chopin and Macek, 2018).

As time progressed, this benevolent adventure evolved, and its own identity shifted significantly over the course of the years. The nature of the Communities first, and of the EU later, displays little resemblance today with the original structures devised in the 1950s. While it is argued that principles remain the same - even if some recent events question that assertion, leading Pope Francis to call on Europe to rediscover its deeply rooted ideals (Francis, 2020) -, the institutional design, the membership, and the scope of the project have strikingly altered (Cunha, 2019).

The European Parliament (EP) is directly elected by the citizens of the member states and therefore accountable to them, holding co-decision powers in a number of areas (Figueiredo Lopes, 2019). The competencies of the EC have also acutely expanded into new domains (Cruz Vilaça, 2019). In the Council, qualified majority voting is nowadays the norm. The unanimity rule, which proved a comfortable recourse for the member states, is forlorn. The original institutional balance is furthermore shaken by the growing prominent part being played by the European Council, which “... *has become the real nerve centre of the European Union, invading the field of competence of the other institutions* ...” (Giraud, 2020, p. 2), venturing way beyond its role. On the other hand, a much broader cultural, geographic, and linguistic diversity

brought along a wider plurality of national interests which are internally reflected at the table of each European institution. Heterogeneity is now the norm.

Against this backdrop, in a Union that in the view of a former president of the EC is in permanent negotiation status (Barroso, 2019), the decision-making process is increasingly convoluted. The Union may suffer from overstretch, currently placed in a situation in which “... *it is politically difficult to go forwards and scary to go backwards.*” (Tsoukalis, 2016, p. 15) The question is whether it can hold together in the current situation, and for how long.

Furthermore, the concept of legitimacy has also shifted over time. As Christopher Ankersen explains, “... *legitimacy is contingent, culturally constructed, dynamic and, therefore, indeterminate.*” (Ankersen, 2014, p. 50) This means it is a social process (Johnson, Dowd and Ridgeway, 2006), and not an everlasting or static social condition. In this day and age, individuals and organizations alike strive for legitimacy in their actions. In the case of the EU, it must now be obtained *a priori*, with the explicit consent of the citizens, who are requested to understand and embrace the integration challenge. In a certain sense, the journey may still run on voluntarism of the elites, but that is not enough; it needs to attract and conquer the electorates for the cause. And this leads the institutions into a two-way path, namely the requirement to disseminate information on the activities pursued (a push approach), combined with the necessity to provide answers to the European citizens (a pull approach).

1.5 A turning point

The signature of the Treaty on European Union at Maastricht, a key achievement of the first Portuguese presidency of the Council of the European Communities in the first semester of 1992 (Martins, 2019), was a turning point. The establishment of the EU, with its three-pillar structure, touched the core of the sovereignty of the states, and that led to considerable disquiet and scepticism among sections of public opinion in the different member states, reflected in the results of subsequent referendums held on different integration issues (Dinan, 2012; Laursen, 2012; Loss, 2020).

From that moment forward, debate on the EU grew into a contentious and politicized issue, generating negative mobilization of and contestation from sectors of the general public regarding the project (Cini and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, 2013).

The electorates started paying close attention to European negotiations, which had until then been undertaken behind closed doors, and from then onward the automatism and upgrade of reforms were never the same again (Pinheiro, 2019). The ambition enshrined in the Treaty signed at Maastricht led to the entry of the EU in domains which are typically the prerogative of each member state (Costa, 2019), and that called for a more agile and effective capacity to respond to multiple challenges, similar to the instruments traditionally held by a state, which the Union does not possess.

Even bearing in mind the methodological limitations and weaknesses of the Eurobarometer, a survey tool introduced in 1973 by the Commission under the project's leadership of Jacques-René Rabier - such as the absence of a standardized sampling method, the use of different statistical populations, the wording of survey questions, issues with translation and back-translation, or its application in divergent cultural settings and development levels (Nissen, 2014) -, this biannual cross-sectional study of 27 national observations provides signals worth heeding.

The permissive consensus that was corroding, cracked in 1992. Analysis suggests that European citizens were in general enthusiastic about the integration project until 1991, and markedly less so after 1992. There is a before and an after Treaty on European Union in terms of public support to integration (McLaren and Guerra, 2013).

At the time of writing, the latest available data on public opinion in the EU, captured in the *Standard Eurobarometer 93* (summer 2020, fieldwork carried out in July and August 2020) depicts a sobering reality: results show that, in average, 48% of citizens in the 27 member states tend not to trust the EU, while 43% tend to trust, and 9% do not know (European Commission, 2020a). Overall, distrust of the Union has slightly increased since autumn 2019, even at a time when a 750 billion European Union Euro (EUR) economic recovery plan, including both grants and loans, has been arranged to tackle the damage caused by the pandemic, and an agreement reached on a long-term budget for the 2021-2027 period (European Commission, 2020a) - even though the formal approval of both instruments faced some hurdles, as a few member states were demurring, contesting the establishment of a conditionality mechanism on the rule of law. Also, while 40% of citizens claim to have a positive image of the Union, another exact 40% state to harbour a neutral one, while 19% claim

to have a negative image. The positive image of the EU is also in slight decline in 2020, reverting to the levels of early 2018 (European Commission, 2020a).

1.6 The digital communications era

Roughly at the same time of the establishment of the EU and throughout the whole of the 1990-decade, technological advances that allowed for the global rise of the internet led to the third age of communications, the digital communications era (Norris, 2014). This generated a profound impact on the way both individuals and organizations produce, consume, and share information - and on the way in which they are influenced by it.

In today's world, information is omnipresent (Wilfert, 2020). The sheer numbers are striking: out of the 7.8 billion humans on the planet, more than 3.7 billion people use the internet daily; 2.5 quintillion bytes are generated in average every day; and Google alone processes more than 3.456.000.000 searches a day, an average of more than 40.000 per second (Einstein, 2019; Marr, 2018). This information volume, which can be depicted as an information overload or infoxication, is readily accessible at the individuals' fingertips. But while the issues of accessibility and volume are conceivably sufficiently addressed these days, the matter of quality is still pending (Muñoz-Cañavate and Hípola, 2016), of which the fake news phenomenon is an expression, possibly the most worrying one.

In the EU, 48% of the population uses social media every day or almost every day (Lewandowsky *et al.*, 2020). A study commissioned by the Joint Research Centre of the EC (Lewandowsky *et al.*, 2020) concludes, in broad strokes, that social media influences the citizens' political behaviour and puts pressure on democracies. It identifies and analyses four key pressure points, namely the attention economy, choice architectures, algorithmic content curation, and disinformation. This can be examined within the conceptual proposal presented by Norris (2014), in which the author explores the argument that the quality of communication is a central element of the quality of democracy.

Sensing early in the digital communications era that the accessibility, quality, and volume of information were already then, a fundamental element to the future of the European project, the Commission opened the EUROPA server in February 1995. In the first years of this web project the institution faced two issues that are described

in the literature, namely the fact that the advent of the internet led to a return of some of the characteristics of interpersonal and group communications (Norris, 2014), and also that the flow of information reverted to a more horizontal format (Podkalicka and Shore, 2010). These were - and may continue to be - pertinent challenges for any type of organization used to communicate with its publics in a formal and vertical fashion for an extended period.

Yet, the European institutions seem to have understood early on the potential of the internet to broadcast contents, build a relationship with citizens, and activate the political engagement and participation, as described by Just (2010), and Marino and Lo Presti (2018). The opportunities presented by online tools to expedite dual-track communication and permit reciprocal reaction, response and adjustment did not go unnoticed (Leichty and Esrock, 2001), even if calls for further action are made to maintain a genuine dialogue with the citizens, especially the youth (Meriläinen and Vos, 2010). The empowerment of citizens stemming from the widespread utilization of new technologies led to route changes in terms of European communication policies, strategies, and instruments, as examined in the following chapter of this work.

1.7 Several instruments, one goal

Communicating with the citizens is part and parcel of the tasks of the European institutions, and namely of the EC, which takes the driving seat in communicating Europe to the citizens, as described in chapter 2. Within the organizational structure of the EC, several - if not all - the Directorates-General engage in some form of communication aimed at their specific publics. Yet, as the domain leader for external communication, it is the responsibility of the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) to provide the services and tools to inform, exchange, and engage directly with the general public, the European citizens (European Commission, 2018a).

The mission statement of this Directorate-General is “*Listen - Advise - Engage: DG COMM, as a corporate communication service, brings Europe closer to its citizens.*” (European Commission, 2018a, p. 6)

In line with its mission statement and based in the strategic plan in place, the management plan of DG COMM organizes its communication actions around three pillars:

- “a) Listen: executive communication, providing intelligence to the College, Cabinets and Services.*
- b) Advise: corporate communication, ensuring coherence in communication.*
- c) Engage: citizens communication services, engaging with citizens.”* (European Commission, 2018a, p. 8)

The third pillar is the focus of this research, and particularly the Europe Direct Information Relays, forerunners of the current Europe Direct Centres (EDC), one of the communication instruments used by the EC. Within the realm of the activities of DG COMM as a citizens' communication service, listed above in the third pillar, there are three specific objectives, as follows:

- “a) Specific objective 3.1 - Communication Service 1: Commission receives targeted media coverage through relevant publications and continuous engagement with media.*
- b) Specific objective 3.2 - Communication Service 2: Citizens are better informed about the European Union, in particular about the Commission's political priorities and their rights.*
- c) Specific objective 3.3 - Communication Service 3: Citizens express themselves towards and engage with European Union Commissioners through Citizens' Dialogues and other forms of direct communication (like social media) which stimulate citizens' interest in European Union affairs and contribute to restoring trust in European Union institutions.”* (European Commission, 2018a, p. 23)

The specific objective 3.2, under which the EDC rest, encompasses a myriad of instruments, such as visits to the Commission, the Visitors' Centre, the corporate Commission Information Centre (replacing the Info-Point on Schuman Square in Brussels), the Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC), the EDC, events organized by the Representations of the European Commission in the member states, the European Public Spaces, the Back to School programme, the two EC-managed websites (europa.eu and ec.europa.eu), the Commission's social media corporate accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, the EUTube channel (both centrally and in the Representations), audio-visual productions and multimedia pages, Eurobarometer web pages, and publications for citizens, including the EU's General Report (European Commission, 2018a).

The Europe Direct brand was launched by the Commission as a pilot project in August 1996, tasked with answering questions through a mailbox on the internet. This project further evolved, and Europe Direct currently features two main components. On the one hand, the EDCC, created in June 1998, which replies free of charge and in all official languages to queries received via email and telephone about EU matters; on the other hand, the Europe Direct Network, which encompasses three branches, namely the European Documentation Centres, the EDC, and Team Europe. There is a context, a purpose, and a story waiting to be told behind each of these information and communication tools, and likely each of them would elicit interesting results and merit standing alone at the centre of attention of doctoral research. While a summary of these instruments is presented in the next chapter, the predecessors of the current EDC, named Europe Direct Information Relays, are the scope of this work.

1.8 A new structure to gain currency?

Social actors have been taking decisions since the inception of mankind (Kahneman, 2011), whether people or organizations. However, the literature review exposes the fact that, just like in situations in the business sector (Sarasvathy *et al.*, 2013; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), the determinations to create official information outlets are the outcome of processes and opportunities, and not just isolated and occasional choices. In some instances, selections are not the product of determined and clearly thought-out policies or strategies, but a drift towards a particular output that crystallises over time. It is likely that these statements are not surprising for the ones used to observe the usual decision-making process in multinational organizations, which can be compared to big ships, as they all take a while to turn even a few degrees in any direction. Within contextual variables of high complexity and uncertainty, the creation of these structures follows an incremental model of decision-making and implementation, as described in this research.

While this stepwise model is observed in a number of cases in the realm of European information and communication, the following chapter sheds light on the fact that these gradual decisions, a long time in the making, are oftentimes taken in anticipation of or as an immediate consequence of a certain political milestone of the European integration process. Such key events can include the adoption of new legal

documents, enlargements, or upgrades to the nature of the process itself, among others.

Merging two different information relays, the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, the EDIR were created in April 2004, as a two-way communication device between the Commission and the general public at local and regional levels, against the backdrop of the largest enlargement in European history, the conclusion of the work of the Convention on the Future of the European Union, and the final round of negotiations of the Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Devuyst, 2012).

Could the discussions about the enlargement taking place at the national level, and the necessity to hold referendums on the proposed Constitutional Treaty in different member states may somehow have shaped this decision? If it had followed its course unhindered, this legal document would have performed another structural change to the nature of the European project. The ratification process came to a halt after negative results garnered in national referendums, in what has been named the first real electoral insurrection against the European project (Védrine, 2019).

The literature review process does not identify with clarity all the intellectual frameworks which presided over the creation of the EDIR as a connection device between the Commission and the general public at the local and regional levels. From an information and communication standpoint, the belief that citizens need to be acquainted and conversant with a specific political system in order to effectively participate in it (Dahl, 2000) seems to have been adhered to in the creation of this medium. The conventional axiom of public understanding - the more you know, the more you love it - is reflected in the assumption above.

Media are considered powerful tools, as described for more than a century in different ways. Walter Lippmann (1922) took an innovative approach at the time by stating that media shape public perception through images. This assertion was corroborated and highlighted by Bernard Cohen (1963), who frames the media as successful tools in telling people what to think about, and less so in exactly what to think about a specific topic. The constructivist author Lilie Chouliarki later argued that *"The media filter and frame everyday realities through their singular and multiple representations, producing touchstones, references for the conduct of everyday life, for the production and maintenance of common sense."* (Chouliarki, 2005, p. 276)

Perhaps the attitude of the European institutions over the last seventy years, which evolved from unplanned communication at the early stages of the integration project to a communication-at-all-cost approach in recent times is rooted in the belief that the institutions must communicate profusely their policies to the public, in order to gain acceptance by the European citizens.

This is in line with Brunmayr's (2000) intellectual contribution, which postulates communication as a mandatory complementary policy for all new European initiatives and measures adopted, with the objective of describing them, their relevance, and their impact on the general public. If implemented, this proposal could materialize in a compulsory communication statement annexed to each legislative measure taken by the European institutions, to summarize its key contents in layman's terms, its importance and effect on the European citizens, perhaps with a concrete communication strategy alongside it. This would then need to be accompanied with the corresponding financial envelope required to operationalize the contents of the measures described in the communication statement itself.

The role of the communication experts and officers in the EC is specialized and valuable in a heterogeneous Union, with scarce common ancestry, no shared traditions, and lack of cohesive intelligence. It is important therefore to understand how to reach groups dissimilar as to ideals, customs, and even language (Bernays, 1923). It is also relevant to listen to the feedback conveyed by the public, and in this area the Commission has made significant progress with the creation of the EDIR, by moving away from a linear model of communication and adopting a circular model instead, inspired in the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), described in chapter 3.

Yet, the assumption that more information about the European institutions and policies would lead to an increase in the level of support accorded by citizens to the project may be a misguided concept, which needs to be opened to critical analysis. Literature shows this is not always the case.

The public is not a uniform and pre-existing entity, but rather a group in permanent evolution and transformation (Jasanoff, 2014). It is therefore a moving target, a space in continuous metamorphosis. And within a democratic society characterized by freedom of choice of information, the citizens need to be able to understand proposals and relevant alternatives (Miller, 2012). These conditions are challenging to communicate Europe to the citizens.

In the science and technology field, Martin Bauer, Allum and Miller (2007) have identified three periods or paradigms of communication in science which can be, *mutatis mutandis*, also noticed in European communication. From the 1960 to mid-1980s they identified a cognitive deficit by the public, due to a lack of information from the institutions to the citizens. From the mid-1980s until 2000 they uncovered an attitude deficit, meaning that citizens were then provided with information, but that did not translate into a favourable support attitude. From the year 2000 onward, the pendulum shifted, and a new paradigm was detected: the main deficit lies in institutions, which are unable to adequately connect with its publics due to preconceptions about an ill-informed and antagonistic audience, and their inability to tune in with the actual apprehensions of the citizens. This intellectual proposition is in line with the findings of Wilsdon, Wynne and Stilgoe (2005), and later confirmed by Wynne (2014).

In the case of European affairs, a complex reality altogether, it is possible to hold at the same time both positive and negative attitudes regarding specific topics of the integration project, as highlighted by different scholars (Binder *et al.*, 2012). This is directly related with knowledge and the perception of benefits and risks (Seidl *et al.*, 2013), which are separate realities and need to be addressed as such.

Also, it is relevant to mention that, as research shows, not every citizen is interested in forming an opinion about all matters which can be of interest, and that they do not always behave as rational actors when pondering about a topic and making a judgement (Kahneman, 2011; Sturgis and Smith, 2010; Tourangeau, Rips and Rasinski, 2000).

Despite the considerations above, Meyer (1999) and Spanier (2010) are in agreement about the importance of the media in providing information and communication as the crucial components of political debate and opinion formation within the framework of a democratic process. Furthermore, other scholars are of the view that citizens acquire information through their recognizable media outlets (Moussis, 2005), accepting the facts which reach them through their familiar channels. *"They have neither the time nor the inclination to search for facts which are not readily available to them."* (Bernays, 1923, p. 103)

But what if the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays went beyond a simple exercise of information and communication to foster knowledge and

engagement? What if these official information structures were meant to serve simultaneously as an information tool and a political instrument?

In this case, the contributions of Michael Mann (1986; 2012) are worthy of mention and can guide the analysis. While this historical sociologist insists on the conjunctural nature, contingency, and heterogeneity of social processes across space and time, he also advocates for the possibility to trace fundamental arrangements and mechanisms that lead to changes in social structures, thus making explanation and generalization conceivable. Mann argues that “... *societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power.*” (Mann, 1986, p. 1) These networks make use of what he coined as the Ideological-Economic-Military-Political (IEMP) framework of social power, encompassing four distinct sources of power, namely the ideological, the economic, the military, and the political power (Mann, 1986). In an ideal world, social actors could bring into play the four sources of power concomitantly, but that is hardly ever the case.

Drawing a parallel with the reality of the EU, it can be stated that the Union has limited political power, virtually no military power (at a time when a Europe of defence is only starting to emerge), and considerable economic power. However, in line with Mann’s definition, the ideological power which characterizes and symbolises the essence of the project is lacking: “*Ideological power derives from the human need to find ultimate meaning in life, to share norms and values, and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices with others.*” (Mann, 2012, p. 6)

Could the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays have been aimed at leveraging information and communication as key resources to generate support to European integration? Would the EDIR serve, at the end of the day, as a tool for the exercise of ideological power, in accordance with Mann’s intellectual proposal? The semi-structured interviews to be undertaken and its subsequent examination may contribute to elucidate the reader in these aspects and reveal some of the mysteries of the EDIR.

1.9 Research motivation

More than twenty years ago, the author of these lines found himself as the daily operations manager of an Info-Point Europe located in the northern region of his home country, Portugal. Serving a metropolitan area of 1.7 million inhabitants and located in

the heart of the second biggest city in the country, the two staff members working with that official European information outlet were fairly busy with the daily visits of numerous citizens who stopped by for different reasons, but especially to inquire about job opportunities in the institutions, European funding programmes and open calls, and to consult the Official Journal of the European Communities in hard copy. Those were the days in which every morning the Info-Point Europe would receive by post printed copies of the Official Journal of the European Communities, both in English and in Portuguese languages. The research student could not ignore the fact that the priority European communication issues conveyed by the Commission did not match these three main areas of interest for the citizens at the local and regional levels.

In the final months of 2002, and especially in the last quarter of the year, a dialogue on a possible overhaul and rationalization of the European information networks started emerging. Due to the nature of its professional functions then, the research student was actively involved in this debate. In numerous gatherings held at the Representation of the Commission in Portugal or at the Commission's headquarters in Brussels, during Annual General Meetings, training seminars or workshops, and in several informal gatherings, this matter was constantly on the agenda and called for lengthy exchanges during 2003 and the early months of 2004.

The month of April in 2004 marked the legal creation of the new information network, which was named Europe Direct Information Relays, adopting a term directly imported from the French language, *relais*. This was the chosen name for the new information outlets in the first generation of the network, between 2005 and 2008. Interestingly enough, it was due to the internal pressure of the Representation of the Commission in Ireland, compounded by the support of the Irish authorities, that the designation was subsequently changed to Europe Direct Information Centres (EDIC). In their view, Europe Direct Information Relays was not an appropriate terminology in English language.

The Europe Direct Information Relays came into concrete existence, in practical terms, on 01 May 2005, due to bureaucratic constraints, even if their establishment was set on 01 January 2005. From an operational perspective, the major changes observed on the ground were three, as follows: the change in name and branding, which implied significant amount of work in terms of public image and communication; the fact that the Europe Direct Information Relay now reported into the Representation of the Commission in Portugal, and not anymore into a central

service of the Commission in Brussels; and the fact that a continuous and structured feedback mechanism was instituted. From then onward, the staff members meticulously recorded every visit and query asked by every single visitor, and a couple of days of work every month went into filling out feedback checklists and reports that were monthly sent to the Representation of the Commission in Lisbon.

For someone with an academic background in information and communication, all these changes made sense. The move to become a part of the Europe Direct umbrella branding, the reporting to an organizational structure that was closer to the citizens than the central services at headquarters, and the adoption of a circular model of communication seemed reasonable. Some entities were then starting to move away from a linear to a circular model of communication, mainly driven by the effect generated by the rise of the internet and other online technologies. It was thus a time for certainty and clarity.

In 2009 the research student left the EDIC and moved professionally to the global arena. Some years passed, and he felt the urge to better understand the intricacies and mechanisms that underpin political science, hence deciding to embark on further academic studies, at the graduate level. It was by then that the certainties of the 2000 decade morphed into doubts. What if the EDIR were not exclusively created to serve as an instrument for information and communication, but also as a political tool? And if that was the case, what was the agenda they pursued? Furthermore, which actor or actors came up with such an agenda? The author is aware of the work of Tana Johnson (2014) on the problem of delegation, highlighting the fact that often bureaucrats succeed in insulating international structures from state control. Could this have been the case?

The author started browsing through various databases, searching, reading academic literature, and discussing these questions in depth with peers and former colleagues and friends from those times of certitude. Indeed, the response to these concerns was nowhere to be found. The mix between the doubts harboured and the lack of appropriate responses are the impelling intellectual force that incited this endeavour.

This research therefore stems from that spirit of inquiry, and its intended contribution to knowledge. Additionally, a third academic and personal motivation can be highlighted. By the end of this effort, hopefully it can be stated, as the Latin poet

Virgil did in his work *Georgics*, “*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas!*” (Fortunate is he, who is able to know the causes of things!)

1.10 Research gaps

As previously described, the Europe Direct Information Relays were created in the year 2004, having changed its designation to Europe Direct Information Centres in 2009, and subsequently to Europe Direct Centres in 2021. Twenty years have elapsed since their inception, which may account for the fact this is still an emerging topic in terms of academic scholarship. The first identified product of academic research on the EDIR and their users is a paper attributed to Terra (2009). From then onward, academic contributions in this domain are still sparse to this date, and available data in this field is limited.

These information outlets constitute still nowadays a costly instrument for the European taxpayers. In the previous generation alone, between 2018 and 2020, the EC has appropriated substantive financial resources to this exercise. In 2017, under budget line 16 03 01 03, it allocated 12.200.000 EUR to finance the grants for action under framework partnership agreements, and another 3.300.000 EUR for training, support, and coordination of the Europe Direct Network, which includes the European Documentation Centres, the EDC, and Team Europe (European Commission, 2017). In 2018, under the same budget line, it allocated a total of 15.800.000 EUR for the EDC, divided into 12.600.000 for payment of the grants for action and 3.200.000 EUR for procurement activities (European Commission, 2018b). Finally, for the last year of that generation, also under the same budget line, it committed a total of 16.100.000 EUR, split into 12.600.000 EUR for payment of the grants for action and 3.500.000 EUR for procurement activities (European Commission, 2019).

Furthermore, the activities of the information centres might have an impact on the general public, and hence in the future of the integration process itself.

The literature review exercise exposes different aspects, but lingering literature gaps remain. Three different research gaps are identified. First, an evidence gap, stemming from a lack of empirical data or studies in this area. Second, a practical knowledge gap, related to the application of theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. And third, a theoretical gap, linked to a breach in the theoretical

understanding or conceptual framework of a particular phenomenon. The purpose of this doctoral research is to address these three research gaps.

1.11 Research significance

Usually, the research significance of a doctoral study is gauged along two axes: practical/policy, and theoretical/scholarly. This study throws important light on both areas.

Firstly, in terms of practical/policy implications, it better frames the problem of the creation of the EDIR and its use as an official European information outlet, offering an insight into its inner workings. Also, recent research emphasizes the importance of information factors as one relevant turnout determinant at EP elections across the bloc (Marquart, Goldberg and de Vreese, 2020). The EP, in its democratic diversity and plurality, is directly elected by the citizens of the member states. Other studies have additionally demonstrated that attitudes towards the EU and subsequent support levels accorded to it by citizens are affected by information, particularly mediated information (Marquart *et al.*, 2019; Schuck, Vliegenthart and de Vreese, 2016), which have an influence on building public perceptions. Hence, the way that European information and communication is conveyed, and the opinion formed by the citizens about the EU in general - and the EP in particular - may prove eventually relevant for its own composition (Santaolalla, 1989), as determined by the results at the ballot box. This is a major difference with the other institutions, and a fact that is often overlooked by both academics and practitioners. *A fortiori*, this study may thus prove somehow valid to Members of the European Parliament, especially when called on as policymakers to take future decisions about the EDC, namely in terms of allocated budget.

Secondly, in terms of theoretical/scholarly contribution, it adds new empirical findings from the EU context to the information and communication literature. It explores if the selection of a specific intellectual framework, namely a circular model, as a source of inspiration for the creation of communication outlets can effectively and strictly be translated to the real-world scenario of its establishment. In this case and within the European context, limitations imposed by the necessity to traverse the complex political landscape of the continent might have indeed led to the use of a proxy model of communication, which would introduce a new feature to this approach.

This study will therefore provide additional knowledge that is of both practical/policy value, and theoretical/scholarly significance.

1.12 Limitations of the study

All studies encounter potential limitations. This is a reality of academic life, faced by every researcher in each area of science, regardless of its nature. It is relevant to acknowledge these restraints, and at the same time to thoroughly reflect upon the potential impact of such weaknesses. At the beginning of this academic journey, these limitations were not entirely manifest to the research student immediately, but as the time and work progressed, they became increasingly evident.

There are four main limitations identified in this doctoral research study. Three can be considered as methodological limitations, while one can be deemed as a limitation of the researcher.

The three methodological limitations are the lack of previous substantial research studies on this topic, the very limited number of legal texts and official documents depicting the creation of these official European information outlets, and the research sample.

Firstly, as highlighted in section 1.10 of this document, the initial intellectual contribution about these official European information structures is dated 2009, and academic literature on this topic is not profuse. The lack of prior studies about the EDIR poses challenges in terms of substantiating the theoretical foundations for the research questions, and hence the need to complement the approach with literature from the realm of communication, and to develop an innovative research typology.

Secondly, at the time of the creation of the EDIR, a very limited number of legal texts and official documents on this specific subject had been issued, which is also trialling when examining this reality. Furthermore, the third identified limitation relates to the sample size for statistical measurements. As described in the research methodology chapter, ten out of the total population of thirteen individuals decided to participate in this study. Naturally, the larger the sample, the more precise the results are, and therefore the smaller the margin of error is. On the other hand, when the variability in the population increases or the confidence level increases, the margin of error increases. The response rate also influences the margin of error, and when the antecedent is higher, the lower is the margin of error, and the closer the respondents

resemble the larger population. In the case of this work, the response rate is approximately 77%, which is a solid percentage.

While the sample size is ample enough to draw valid conclusions, it would have proven ideal to reach a confidence interval of 95%, the usual standard in most social sciences research. The 90% confidence level achieved is hence a trade-off between level of accuracy and overall study feasibility.

Additionally, there is also one limitation of the researcher, which is the limited access to data. This study examines a procedure led by a European institution, and specifically a deliberative process taken by it behind closed doors, of which no official records exist, or meeting minutes are either inexistent or unavailable to the public. It therefore proves key to design and structure this study in a different way, by resorting to one-on-one interviews with the individuals who took part in the conversations and subsequent decision-making process, and who are willing to share their knowledgeable insights. Despite this identified limitation, shaping the research along these lines makes the findings trustworthy and valid.

In view of the above, a potential merit of this doctoral trajectory and its findings is to fill information and knowledge gaps concerning two of the above-identified limitations, namely, to contribute to the wealth of research studies on the topic of the EDIR, and to address the imperfect access to data. It may be used as a steppingstone in terms of direction for future studies in this realm.

1.13 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized in seven chapters, forty-two sections, and forty sub-sections. Mindful of the fact that structure is vital to enabling readers to navigate a prose, a summary of it is presented below.

Chapter 1 sets the scene for this work. It delineates the elements, research goals, limitations, and scope of this doctoral inquiry, establishing the foundational rationale for the study. It also presents the research questions and outlines the framework that guides the investigation. By mapping out the central areas, this chapter lays the groundwork for a comprehensive exploration of the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays. It serves as a springboard for the subsequent historical, theoretical, methodological, and empirical investigations.

Chapter 2 illuminates the trajectory of European information and communication practices, highlighting the historical processes and institutional developments that culminated in the inception of the Europe Direct Information Relays. The chapter situates this emergence within a broader narrative of evolving European integration, technological transformation, and strategic communication developments. It emphasizes that the Europe Direct Information Relays are the product of an ongoing and incomplete process that reflects the dynamic and often contested nature of communication policy within the European Union. This historical backdrop is important for understanding the motivations and constraints that shaped the construction of these official information outlets.

Chapter 3 transitions from the historical to the conceptual by introducing the theoretical model underpinning the study, the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). This model provides a lens through which the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays is examined. The chapter also contrasts this model with other prominent communication theories and models. In doing so, it anchors the analytical perspective of the research. Additionally, this chapter investigates the operational conditions and organizational milieu in which the Europe Direct Information Relays were designed, offering a deeper understanding of its structural nucleus.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach adopted in this research. It justifies the choice of methods in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework and provides a detailed account of their implementation. This includes a mixed-methods strategy combining qualitative and quantitative tools. The chapter also discusses data collection and processing procedures. This methodological effort aims to support the robustness of the findings presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 displays and explores the empirical results of the study, structured along two main axes of analysis, namely a descriptive examination and a KH Coder-based study. The descriptive component involves both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The KH Coder study, meanwhile, offers a macro-level view and a micro-level probe. Together, these analyses yield a multi-dimensional portrait of the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays, highlighting patterns and salient features.

Chapter 6 moves from analysis to interpretation. It critically engages with the empirical findings, drawing connections to the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework outlined earlier. By contrasting and debating competing ideas and

interpretations, this chapter deepens the understanding of the Europe Direct Information Relays' foundation and its alignment with or divergence from expected patterns. The discussion not only synthesizes the evidence but also opens new avenues for practical and theoretical reflection.

Chapter 7 concludes the investigation by situating the research within the broader context of the European Union's communicative evolution and institutional development. It underscores the contribution of this work to enhancing scholarly and policy-related understanding of how information and communication function in a dynamic, integrative political space. The chapter revisits the main points of the research journey as well as proposes directions for future research and potential policy implications.

The scene for this research has been established in this chapter. It is now necessary to describe the background for the formation of these official European information outlets.

Chapter 2 The history of the Europe Direct Information Relays

The aim of this chapter is to offer a historical and institutional account of the Europe Direct Information Relays, situating their emergence within the evolution of the European Union's communication policies. By tracing the trajectory from early media and communication strategies to the formal creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays in 2004, the chapter establishes the context necessary to understand its inception. This historical perspective is relevant for the thesis as it clarifies the political, institutional, and communicative dynamics that have shaped the Europe Direct Information Relays initiative. In doing so, it supports the wider analytical framework of the study by revealing the underlying assumptions, motivations, and tensions that informed the European Union's approach to public communication and citizen engagement.

2.1 The outcome of an evolution

The creation of the EDIR is the result of evolution – a consequence of developments in information and communication policies, strategies, and instruments at the EU level.

The European information and communication policy have been and remains to this day an established entitlement of the Commission. The Legal Service, in its Opinion dated 10 July 2003, confirms this understanding, highlighting that “... *information and communication measures are covered by the Commission's institutional prerogatives, which can be carried out without a legal basis under Article 49(2)(c) of the Financial Regulation.*” (Legal Service, 2003, cited in Commission, 2004a, p. 4)

Iskra (2018) notes that no specific articles or chapters related to information or communication policy are contained in the treaties. This is an interesting fact, in a Union that “... *has competences as wide and as varied, including whole swathes of sovereign areas ...*” (Chopin and Macek, 2018, p. 1). It may therefore be speculated that the information and communication policy was historically not regarded as a priority for the European institutions. Meyer suggests that “*The reason for the Commission's communicative abstention was partly the concern that increased public awareness could undermine support for further integration.*” (Meyer, 1999, p. 624) Yet

another scholar indicates that innovative and soft modes of governance are inclined to surface within the context of the EU in policy areas where the Treaty base for the Union's competence is thin or non-existent, and/or where diverging interests of the member states make agreement on European legislation unfeasible (Radaelli, 2008).

There are however indisputable signs in the early decade of 2000 that information and communication had attained by then a new level of relevance for the EU institutions. Some scholars (Pinto Cardoso *et al.*, 2017) are of the view that the results of the June 1992 referendum in Denmark on the Maastricht Treaty, as well as the June 2001 referendum in Ireland on the Treaty of Nice were decisive warning signs of the increasing rift between the citizens and the institutions - and of the abyss between the public and national elites. These results follow on the footsteps of the continuously low turnout in every European Parliament election taking place by direct universal voting since 1979, as demonstrated in the joint work of Sanders, Magalhães and Tóka (2012). In this regard, Scharpf (1999) presents three main reasons for the declining participation in the European electoral process, being one of them the lack of European political accountability.

In any case, the road from an impromptu and unwitting approach to a communication-at-all-cost model in terms of European information and communication was not a day's journey. It was prolonged, treacherous, and on a few occasions driven by the political events and crises that marred the European project. The 21st century brought along an important element: it was high time for public opinion to have the upper hand.

2.2 A long journey to the 21st century

The academic contributions in European information and communication can be aggregated in two different streams. On the one hand, media policies. On the other hand, what this researcher identifies as communication elements, encompassing policies, strategies, and instruments. Both may be pivotal for the possible creation of a European public sphere - if that is ever to come to fruition.

2.2.1 Media policies

Recognizing the mediation function played by mass media as a privileged communication device between the institutions and the citizens (Valentini and Laursen, 2012), the Union is active in a myriad of domains which are all a constitutive part of media policies, from audio-visual and mass media policies, cultural policy, innovation policy for the media and creative sectors, telecommunication policy, and an approach to fake news and disinformation. Public service and broadcasting regulations, debates on media concentration and pluralism, as well as state aids, are part and parcel of the key topics in discussion.

Works in media policies are shaped by the debate on whether media are mainly a cultural or an economic good. This logomachy might seem shallow at a first glance but is at the crux of the matter. From a legal standpoint, media is a competence of the member states. However, depending on the perspective taken, the Union is tasked with different obligations. The establishment of the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market is an area in which the EU has sole jurisdiction, for example. Dissimilarly, the internal market itself is a domain in which the Union and member states share responsibilities. On the other hand, the culture and education sectors are matters in which the EU only has the competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the member states at the European level.

The work of Christina Holtz-Bacha (2006) identifies and expands on the chronological development of media policies at the European level, and how these may contribute towards the creation of a European public sphere. This argument must nevertheless also be examined against the backdrop of another school of thought, known as the impossibility school, which claims the emergence of a European public sphere to be impossible to materialize due to differing national cultures, identities, languages, media outlets, and economic and social structures (Esmark, 2005) within the 27 national media systems and citizen public spheres that currently exist within the Union.

Arguably, the first piece in European media policies is the Television Without Frontiers Directive, formally known as Council Directive 89/552/EEC of 03 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in member states concerning the pursuit of television

broadcasting activities (see Official Journal of the European Communities L 298, 17 October 1989). Encompassing an introduction and seven chapters, this legal document is concerned with broadcasting, distribution and European production quotas, television advertising and sponsorship, protection of minors, and right of reply. By defining television signals as services, the text places these within the scope of the internal market rule of free movement, allowing the institutions to take a regulatory role in this domain. It granted the member states two years to implement its contents and an additional two years to report on quota developments.

This text was subsequently amended through Directive 97/36/EC of 30 June 1997 (see Official Journal of the European Communities L 202, 30 July 1997), expanding the previous legal document in one added chapter, and introducing new features such as increased protection of minors, regulations for teleshopping, and the creation of a contact committee. Moreover, it mandated for the transmission of events of social relevance, such as major sports events, on national free television, which constituted a piece of a new regulatory structure applicable to the audio-visual sector within the member states (Hieronimi, 2003).

Even if these regulations were not accompanied by the emergence of European-based multinational media companies, European legislation in the domain of broadcasting continued evolving as a result of technological shifts, policy changes at national level, and industry and market trends. Media convergence was a relevant factor in subsequent developments. Numerous revisions of a text adopted at a later stage, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, have occurred since then, currently crystallized in the text of Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 (see Official Journal of the European Union L 303, 28 November 2018).

Yet, as previously explained, the scope of this research is the EDIR, which was an instrument of European information and communication at the local and regional levels throughout the Union that continues its activities under the EDC banner. This calls for a more elaborate description of the communication elements since the inception of the integration project until the 21st century, which witnessed a significant growth in European information and communication, and thus worthy of a specific section for the period starting in the year 2000.

2.2.2 Communication elements

According to Chiara Valentini and Bo Laursen, analysis suggests that the institutions, and namely the Commission, have little intent to influence the media agenda or the contents produced by them (Valentini and Laursen, 2012). No European “ministry of truth” seems to be envisioned. However, the policies, strategies, and instruments of European information and communication over time are meant as a genesis for the European conversation, as described throughout this chapter.

In tune with the prevalent elitist-driven concept at the initial stages of the integration project, it is not hard to understand why the Commission initiated its journey in information and communication instruments with the creation of the European Documentation Centres in institutions fostering intellectual excellence. Such information outlets are still in operation, although nowadays exclusively in the member states.

Created in 1963 in higher education settings, the European Documentation Centres were established to provide information about European affairs in academic institutions, and concurrently to promote and support teaching and research on European integration (Terra, 2009). At their inception the term European Documentation Centres included, in fact, three different types of centres, namely the European Documentation Centres, the European Reference Centres - which were discontinued in June 1998 -, and the Depositary Libraries, institutions designated by law to receive without charge all or a selection of the official publications, normally the national libraries of the member states.

An operating grant was not directly purveyed to the European Documentation Centres, as these received solely documentation, information, and training. At that time, there were two categories of European Documentation Centres, the generic and the specialized ones. While the generic received the documentation issued by the community institutions in full, the specialized ones only received a selection of documentation covering topics agreed upon in advance by the Commission and the higher education institutions which hosted the European Documentation Centres. The European Documentation Centres later expanded to states beyond the borders of the Communities and their numbers mushroomed as the years progressed. In 1994 there were 399 European Documentation Centres in operation - out of which 130 in non-member states -, 420 in 1997, and 688 in 2004.

In the year 1972, the Dutch Member of the European Parliament Wilhelmus Schuijt authored and presented a report on the information policy of the European Communities, which illuminated gaps in communication and elaborated on a sort of fog: the lack of knowledge of the institutions about public opinion vis-à-vis the European project (Schuijt, 1972). According to Gramberger (1997), the patchwork of communication actions adopted from the start of the project until the late 20th century is not tantamount to a strategy. Therefore, while attempts were made at establishing communication policies, no strategies were devised to accompany them until 1993, when a more serious attempt surfaced. It was the endorsement of the abovementioned Schuijt document by the Commission of the European Communities which led to the establishment of Eurobarometer in the following year, 1973. This survey instrument, which at its outset was a simple instrument with generally ten questions and about twenty tables (Rabier, 1976), was aimed as a device for capturing public attitudes and developing prudent projections (Pausch, 2009).

The creation of the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours in 1989 was the following landmark in terms of communication elements. In document COM(88) 501, the Commission communication transmitted to the Council and to the European Parliament on the future of rural society (see Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 4/88, 28 July 1988), the Commission advocated for an information strategy aimed at rural actors, and for the need to establish these official information structures in rural areas in order to facilitate and stimulate dialogue and cooperation among economic and social actors of the rural world, as well as to facilitate contacts and exchange of information and experiences among rural areas within the Community, often confronted with similar issues and challenges (Commission, 1988).

Implementation was proposed to be undertaken within the framework of the Model Scheme for Information on Rural Development Initiatives and Agriculture Markets, the MIRIAM project, which involved significant resources. Yet, while this approach was unsuccessful, in the following year of 1989, with the budgetary and technical support provided by the Directorate-General of Information, Communication and Culture (DG X), the first pilot projects were rolled out, namely in Belgium (Wallonie), Denmark (Jelling), France (Poitou-Charentes), Germany (Nordhessen), Ireland (Galway), Italy (Emilia-Romagna), and Spain (La Rioja). The eighth pilot Rural Information and Promotion Carrefour was established in the United Kingdom

(Scotland) in the following year of 1990, therefore completing the array of eight pilot rural centres.

Six key mandates were assigned to the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, namely the support to the local farmers in terms of Common Agriculture Policy, structural reforms and actions taken in favour of the rural world; provision of information to all rural economic and social actors; arouse dialogue at the local level with a view to promote joint initiatives and foster cooperation among actors in the rural world; play an active role in partnerships at the rural level; facilitate exchanges of experiences and information between rural regions and the Community; and contribute to bringing the community institutions closer to the rural realities within Europe.

The success of these outlets is mirrored in its numbers: from the initial eight in the pilot phase, 114 were in existence a decade later throughout the member states. They were headquartered in local and well-established host institutions selected by the Commission and engaged in joint work at both national and international level, with regular meetings, trainings, and seminars held in Brussels, on top of the Annual General Meeting of the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours.

The 1990-decade brought along numerous developments in terms of European communication elements.

The first one occurred in the year 1991, with the creation of the Info-Point Europe within urban settings, with the purpose of serving as a contact point between the Commission and the general public located in urban areas. Just like in the case of the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, these outlets were hosted in pre-existing structures located in large cities of the member states. Their daily operations were managed by public authorities directly, or indirectly via private law bodies which were themselves managed by public authorities.

At the outset, the financial contribution of the Commission was not homogeneous to all the Info-Point Europe, as different host structures required dissimilar means. The mandate of the Info-Point Europe encompassed four main objectives, as follows: offer general information on European institutions, its policies, and programmes, to the general public in urban areas; provide access to official publications and assistance in the search for documentation; guide the citizens towards more appropriate entities and/or sources of European information; and organize public events which stimulate debate on Europe.

The Info-Point Europe were also engaged in collaborative work at national and international level, attending regular meetings and workshops organized in Brussels, as well as its Annual General Meeting.

In the heels of the signature of the Treaty on European Union on 07 February 1992, further developments of communication elements occurred, propelled by the legal creation of the EU and the nonnegligible communication challenges derived from that event. Indeed, the public debate generated around this legal document represented a landmark in terms of European information and communication (Gramberger, 1997).

The year 1993 was fertile in terms of developments in the realm of information and communication. For the first recorded time, two separate and even contradicting visions of European communication policy were in dispute, namely information and persuasion.

On the one hand, a group of nine experts on information and communication policy convened at the request of the Commission and under the leadership of the Belgian liberal politician Willy De Clercq (born 1927 – deceased 2011), a seasoned politician in his home country and a Member of the European Parliament in 1993. This expert group presented the report *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Community* (De Clercq *et al.*, 1993), which suggested, in its broad lines, that the institutions should take a commercial approach in communicating Europe, similarly to the practice in the advertising industry, trying to underscore and sell the advantages of the project to the citizens. The efforts in this area should be, in the view of the authors, always hopeful, optimistic, and upbeat, and constantly highlight the positive impacts of the European policies to the public. Bearing in mind the professional background of several of the members of this expert group in the business sector, it is perhaps not strange this was the preferred approach devised by this group.

On the other hand, within the scope of activities of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media of the European Parliament, another report on the same topic saw the light of day in that year (Oostlander, 1993). Taking the name of its *rapporteur*, Arie M. Oostlander (born 1936 – deceased 2019), a Dutch Christian-Democrat, this document advocated for an information-oriented method, grounded in the notion of active citizenship instead of a consumer perspective (Tumber, 1995).

There were similarities in the two documents, such as the urge to assign increased budgetary and human resources to the area of information and communication, the call to resort to specialized public relations professionals, or to expand the use of audio-visual tools in detriment of printed items. Recognizing that by then the key information sources for the European public were the audio-visual and electronic means, the Commission explicitly adopted a way forward in this domain in the following year (Commission, 1994), which ultimately led to the launch of the EUROPA server in February 1995.

However, the nature of the documents was substantially diverse, and a choice had to be made. The report of the group of experts headed by De Clercq was not particularly welcomed by the Commission, nor by the media stakeholders, who regarded it as advocating for the use of propaganda (Gramberger, 1997). In light of this, it were the proposals made by Oostlander which served as the guiding principle for the first comprehensive document on the Commission's information and communication policy, SEC(93) 916/9 (Commission, 1993a). It is specifically mentioned at its outset that citizens reject propaganda and commonplace remarks (Commission, 1993a).

The text rests on a new approach, named after the member of the Commission who then headed this portfolio, João de Deus Pinheiro, as the "Pinheiro Concept", anchored in four key principles, namely transparency in the provision of information, adaptation to the different publics' information demand, a coherent approach through internal and external coordination, and conviviality.

Specific references are dedicated to the information relays and networks in existence at that time. Under point four of this new approach, it is concluded that relays and networks increase the communication efficiency, flexibility, and penetration of the Commission, and operate as a tool to bridge the gap between citizens and the Community (Commission, 1993a). Furthermore, under its point five on procedures and structures, it is mentioned the Commission needs to take a more coherent and systematic approach regarding these information outlets, by defining their rights and obligations more clearly. It asserts these structures should not multiply indefinitely but instead aim at being increasingly efficient in their operations (Commission, 1993a).

On top of this landmark policy in European information and communication, two other relevant documents were approved in the same year. First, document COM(1993) 191 final, a communication on public access to the institutions' documents

(Commission, 1993b). And secondly, a Code of conduct concerning public access to Council and Commission documents, document 93/730/EC (Council of the European Union and Commission, 1993). It thus seems clear that, at this initial juncture, the institutions were concerned about public access to documents, as a first step before evolving into a fully-fledged communication approach.

The third Delors Commission concluded its term in the year 1994 without having implemented the provisions of the “Pinheiro Concept”, which turned to be a fad and not a trend. According to Loitz, this was mainly due to the lack of political support from the Commission’s president (Loitz, 2001). In any case, João de Deus Pinheiro was relieved from his responsibilities as Commissioner in charge of the Relations with Parliament, Culture and Audiovisual, and became responsible for the Relations with Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries in the Santer Commission in January 1995. He was therefore unable to oversee the unveiling of one of its key projects, the EUROPA server, in the month of February.

The portfolio of Relations with the European Parliament, Culture and Audiovisual Policy was then attributed to Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, a politician from the ranks of the *Partido Popular* in Spain. Andy Smith is of the view that Marcelino Oreja Aguirre hoisted differing views about the relevance of public relations (Smith, 2004), which led him to formulate a new proposal, contained in SEC(95) 1672 (Commission, 1995). This communication policy, although less elaborate than the “Pinheiro Concept”, resolved it was important to concentrate the communication efforts in a very limited number of communication programmes with a potential substantial impact. It selected the *Citizens First* programme (internal market and consumers), the *Economic and Monetary Union* campaign, and the *Building Europe Together* initiative (in anticipation of the Intergovernmental Conference) as the cornerstone of the Commission’s activity in this area.

Commissioner Oreja Aguirre seems to have understood the communication deficit, and the lack of popular support offered by the citizens to the European project. In the preface to a book published in 1995, he wrote, in his capacity as member of the Commission, that “... *the European Union will urgently have to face its main challenge, the real pending issue: its commitment to the ordinary citizen to make him an accomplice in its project and a craftsman of its own work.*” (Oreja Aguirre, 1995, p. 18)

In August 1996, the Commission unveiled the Europe Direct brand as a pilot project, with the aim of answering questions through a mailbox on the internet. As

previously mentioned, Europe Direct was reinforced in June 1998 through the creation of the Europe Direct Contact Centre.

From a legal standpoint, the Treaty of Amsterdam signed on 02 October 1997 includes an article on the provisions common to several institutions in relation to the right of access to documents by any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a member state. It is article 255 (see Official Journal of the European Communities C 340, 10 November 1997).

The Santer Commission resigned amidst controversy on 15 March 1999, making way for the Prodi Commission. Further to this process, and at a time when the image of the institutions suffered a public downgrade, the Directorate-General X ceased to exist on 15 September 1999, and most of its attributions were passed on to the newly created Directorate-General for Press and Information (DG PRESS), which remained in existence until 07 February 2006.

2.3 The rise of European information and communication

The year 2000 commenced with another attempt of a renewed information and communication strategy, this time proposed by the Commissioner for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding, who was then responsible for information. Document SEC(2000) 2099 (Commission, 2000) seeks to strengthen cooperation with the European Parliament, particularly in the budgetary area, and also to give way to a reflection aimed at an internal restructuring of the means and structures involved in communication efforts to the European citizens, continuing with a reform started on 16 September 1999 with the creation of DG PRESS.

Throughout the year 2000, discussions and negotiations were in full swing between the EP and the Council on the draft of a joint text regarding public access to official documents, which eventually materialized in the following year in Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 of 30 May 2001 (see Official Journal of the European Communities L 145, 31 May 2001). Again, the concern with transparency via access to documents is noticeable in yet another legislative initiative in this domain.

But it was at the end of the year 2000, when the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was proclaimed, that a significant event occurred: information and communication made its way into a key EU legal document. Articles 11 - freedom of expression and information, as well as freedom and diversity of the media; 41 - right

to good administration, encompassing right to be heard and right of access to documents relating to oneself; 42 - right of access to the documents of the EU institutions; and 44 - right to petition are relevant to the area of information and communication (see Official Journal of the European Communities C 364/1, 18 December 2000).

Iskra further notes that “*As there is no separate legal basis in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) for communication policy, any action at EU level needs to refer to Article 352 TFEU.*” (Iskra, 2018, p. 1), the subsidiary powers clause used when the treaties omit specific rights of action.

The European Council approved, on 15 December 2001, at the conclusion of an “... *ambitious Belgian presidency of the Council of Ministers ...*” (Teasdale and Bainbridge, 2012), the Laeken Declaration on the Future of the European Union, named after the suburb of Brussels where the meeting was held, which in the opinion of some scholars inaugurated a new era in the European construction project (Seabra and Nazaré Pereira, 2005). In the Laeken Declaration the concern expressed with bridging the communication gap and leading Europe nearer to the citizens transpires from this paragraph:

“The Union needs to become more democratic, more transparent and more efficient. It also has to resolve three basic challenges: how to bring citizens, and primarily the young, closer to the European design and the European institutions, how to organise politics and the European political area in an enlarged Union and how to develop the Union into a stabilising factor and a model in the new, multipolar world.” (European Council, 2001, p. 21)

It was the first time that the European Council, the preeminent body providing leadership and guidance within the European architecture, and which has “... *shaped the integration process like no other institution ...*” (Majone, 2010, p. 8) expressed itself in such unambiguous terms about this matter.

As the Commission highlighted in the following year, “*In the Laeken Declaration the Heads of State and Government recognised that the European Union could not move any further forward without public support and commitment.*” (Commission, 2002, p. 6) Long gone were then the times of the permissive consensus (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) of the peoples in allowing further integration advancements (Rosamond, 2014), a noticeable element of the elitist approach to integration, which

is part of the prevailing neofunctionalist theory that underpinned the European integration process in its early decades (Haas, 1958). The idea proposed in the Ventotene Manifesto that progressive forces who believed in a federation would act in the name of the masses (Spinelli and Rossi, 1941) had faded; the classical “Monnet method” of a stepwise approach which would promote a cascade of spillover effects from one economic field of activity to another and from there towards political integration (Lefebvre, 2013) was being questioned; the integration by stealth (Majone, 2010), the preferred method of federalists, seemed a discarded option. This whole new political system, as described by Hix (2014), requires in the 21st century active public engagement and approval.

From a legal and political standpoint, the Commission seemed to understand the value of information and communication as early as 2001, by arguing that *“It is increasingly recognised that information is a key element of policy making ...”* (Commission, 2001, p. 15). Consequently, in the document COM(2001) 354 final, the Commission proposes the establishment of a new inter-institutional relationship on the preparation and execution of an information and communication policy for the Union, along with a range of instruments to develop these activities and several evaluation methods (Commission, 2001). Furthermore, in an innovative manner, it also calls on the member states to join in its endeavours in information and communication. This approach is very much in accord with Lefebvre’s thought, who argues that Europe is the stage for a double movement: while member states get continuously closer, they remain separate entities from one another by culture, economic and social organisation, history, and politics (Lefebvre, 2013). It is plausible that a nation may be an imagined political community. Benedict Anderson argues that national identity *“... is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”* (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) Or, like other authors put it, *“The EU has never really succeeded in replacing the nation state in the hearts of most Europeans.”* (Marshall, 2018, p. 220) Thus, the need to involve member states in this exercise.

Recognizing in the abovementioned Communication that a European public space did not exist at that point in time (Commission, 2001) - as it does not exist at the current date (Cœuré, 2018) -, and that messages must be tailored in line with local circumstances and conveyed according to the specificities of each public and by

locally trusted sources (Commission, 2001), the Commission ventured on elaborating on an ambitious project: the provision of information to the general public at decentralised grassroots level, in the framework of a myriad of active partnerships to be established between the institutions, the member states at national, regional and local level, and civil society. The bold quest is hence to put a human face on European information and communication. This newly proposed approach is anchored in a paragraph at the outset of the document:

“At the heart of information and communication policy is the obligation to bring Europe closer to its citizens. The structures and institutions themselves must adapt to this imperative so that Europe is “round the corner” with information that is clear, appropriate and in touch with real concerns.” (Commission, 2001, p. 4)

Moreover, the Commission establishes three different categories of information, namely general information, specialist information, and press information, which are still relevant and currently in use (Commission, 2001).

Building on the contents of document COM(2001) 354 final, the Commission proceeded in the following year with the publication of document COM(2002) 350 final, proposing in that year a holistic and coherent information and communication policy for the Union. This text opens possibilities for concrete cooperation and serves as the legal basis for several Memoranda of Understanding which were signed at a later stage by the Commission, Parliament, and national governments. This novel way highlights the need of cooperation as close to the people as practicable (Commission, 2002) and underscores the virtues of a genuine dialogue, by means of an interactive dimension of the strategy (Commission, 2002).

It is relevant to mention that, when the text was published, there were already in operation several hundreds of information and documentation relays and networks in the member states and beyond. These centres were independent centres, run by their host entities, such as regional and local authorities, chambers of commerce, civil society organizations, or educational entities, and were designed to bring information to the people. The document lists this wide variety of structures:

*“-3 major national centres for information and documentation in Paris, Lisbon and Rome;
-3 interregional centres for information and documentation in Thessaloniki, Naples and Berlin;*

-142 Info-Points Europe (IPE);
-134 Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours;
-328 European Documentation Centres (EDC), 24 depository libraries and 72 European reference centres (which together with the 360 EDCs set up in countries outside the EU make up a total network of 784 centres).” (Commission, 2002, p. 25)

However, the Commission recognizes that a more homogeneous and consistent framework is needed, with reinforced local decentralized presence, a structured partnership with member states, and revamped institutional cooperation at the national, interregional, and local levels (Commission, 2002). This Communication is at the root of the reflection period which preceded the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

2.4 The creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays

The Communication of 20 April 2004 is indeed the birth certificate of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Facing “... *the challenge of uniting East and West Europe* ...” (Marshall, 2018, p. 217) by means of an enlargement to ten new member states on 01 May 2004 - Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the EU on that date, making twenty-five members -, the Commission undertook in 2003 an analysis and evaluation of all its relays and networks, in preparation for their rationalization and the definition of a new overall model of information relays and networks, hopefully more adequately suited to meet the vast information needs and requirements of the general public.

This exercise concluded, in broad terms, that the information relays and networks were active and useful. Their multiplier effect positioned them as a key supplier of European information to the general public at the local and regional levels. Furthermore, the staunch support from most of the host entities, both operationally and politically, brought a significant added value to the EU message (Commission, 2004a).

Based on this assessment, Info-Point Europe, located in and serving urban areas, and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, located in and serving rural areas, were particularly regarded as powerful information and communication tools,

and awarded a leading role in the development of the new generation of information relays and networks. It was however concluded that the distinction between urban and rural information centres made little sense, and that the dispersion of names and visual identities should cease to exist. The Europe Direct Information Relays were born, under a common name, logo, and visual identity.

The EDIR acted as an interface between the European Union and its citizens at local and regional levels. One document physically accessible in the archives of the European Parliament revealed that at the exact moment of the legal establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays, a total of six Memoranda of Understanding in this domain had been signed by the European Commission, the European Parliament, and six national governments, namely “... *with Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France and Luxembourg.*” (EU Monitor, 2004, p. 3) Four other similar documents were being negotiated at that stage, with “... *Austria, Belgium, Netherlands and Finland.*” (EU Monitor, 2004, p. 3) This may perhaps point to different levels of member states’ engagement in this process.

The European Commission aimed for these outlets to be present in all member states. However, while the relays were legally created simultaneously across the EU, were they established in tandem within the Union? The answer is negative. The famous writer René Goscinny and the illustrator Albert Uderzo presented in October 1959 the first story of the *Astérix* comics, named *Astérix le Gaulois*. This series debuted in the Franco-Belgian comic magazine *Pilote*. Since that time, all *Astérix* stories feature the exact same first sentence:

“The year is 50 B.C. Gaul is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well not entirely! One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders. And life is not easy for the Roman legionaries who garrison the fortified camps of Totorum, Aquarium, Laudanum and Compendium...” (Goscinny and Uderzo, 1959, p. 20)

Mutatis mutandis, a similar event occurred with the establishment of the EDIR on the ground. One member state - albeit not a small village - did not give permission, at the initial stage, for the set up of the EDIR within its territory. It was only in the year 2006 that Her Majesty’s Government decided to allow the instituting and operation of the EDIR in the United Kingdom. In the archives of the European Commission, this research effort unearthed a historical hard copy document, a copy of which features in Annex 1, namely the official letter signed on 16 January 2006 by Minister of State

Douglas Alexander, at the time responsible within the Cabinet for the portfolio of Europe, provided to the European Commission to confirm, on their behalf, that the Government of the United Kingdom supported, since that date, the creation of the EDIR throughout the United Kingdom. This official letter was to be transmitted by the European Commission to all potential candidates to become host institutions of the EDIR in the United Kingdom, so that they could rest assured of the approval of the EDIR by the national administration.

It was therefore only on 01 July 2006 that the then 25 EDIR located in the United Kingdom went live, as conveyed by the European Commission to the press on 30 June 2006:

“25 Europe Direct centres – offering a range of services and information on the European Union will be opening across the UK from 1st July 2006. From Plymouth to Preston, Cardiff to County Tyrone, you will be able to access up-to-date information on the EU law, programmes and policies, and feedback your comments directly to the European Commission.” (Commission, 2006a, p. 1)

As it could be anticipated, the scope of activities of the EDIR in the United Kingdom was the same as the one given to all other EDIR throughout the Union. This can be attested by the text of the *Call for proposals for the establishment of structures to host the information relays of the EUROPE DIRECT Information Network* in the United Kingdom, which reads

“Essentially, the host structure will set up and run the relay(s) with the aim of providing a service that: a) enables local citizens to obtain information, advice, assistance and answers to questions about the European Union’s institutions, legislation, policies, programmes and funding opportunities; b) actively promotes local and regional debate about the European Union and its policies; c) allows the European institutions to improve the dissemination of information tailored to local and regional needs; d) gives the public the opportunity to send feedback to the European Union institutions in the form of questions, opinions and suggestions.” (Commission, 2006b, p. 2)

The mission of these structures was to distribute general information and deliver advice about the EU’s policies, actively promote local and regional debate about the EU, allow the European institutions to disseminate information at the local and regional levels, and give the public the opportunity to send feedback to the

institutions. They were regarded as the key tool for the Commission to keep its ears to the ground and the cornerstone of the decentralized information policy.

“At a time when the Commission’s wish to bring Europe “closer to the citizens” has become paramount, local and regional information relays are highly relevant for the Commission’s efforts to communicate Europe on a wider scale and provide easily accessible information to a general public.” (Kurpas, De Clerck-Sachsse and Brüggemann, 2006, p. 18)

The roles and responsibilities of the EDIR were clearly outlined by the European Commission when it launched the Calls for proposals for the establishment of structures to host the EDIR. The version published for France, named *Cahier des charges pour la mise en place de structures destinées à accueillir les relais d’information du réseau EUROPE DIRECT*, lists them as follows:

“II.1.2. Rôle et obligations du relais d’information EUROPE DIRECT confié à la structure-hôte bénéficiaire: 1) Information (...); 2) Coopération avec d’autres vecteurs d’information actifs dans la région (...); 3) Retour d’information aux institutions européennes.” (Commission, 2004b, pp. 6-7)

The objective of the EDIR was

“... to communicate as directly as possible with citizens, political and economic decision-makers as well as academic circles. This implies both a proactive and reactive element in its activities: designing activities to inform citizens on EU affairs and relaying information on local events, public opinion and news stories back to the Commission’s headquarters in Brussels.” (Kurpas, De Clerck-Sachsse and Brüggemann, 2006, p. 17)

The Commission’s view that the main *“... challenge for the Union as regards communication is primarily one of motivation, arousing the public’s curiosity, stimulating interest ...”* (Commission, 2004a, p. 7) rests at the core of the definition of the mandate of the EDIR. On the one hand, their task was to provide information and generate debate at the local and regional levels; on the other hand, their mission was to provide feedback to the EU institutions through each Commission Representation.

The latter essential assignment of the EDIR highlighted above was a novel and disruptive one, which was at the crux of these new structures, when compared to all prior European information outlets. This fact did not go unnoticed throughout the EU.

Two examples can be highlighted, namely in Ireland and in Malta. In the Emerald Isle, Waterford Libraries describe the kickoff of these new official information outlets as follows:

“The Europe Direct initiative was launched in Ireland in 2005. The European Commission wanted to create a network of accessible, local information centres in all member states. The mission of the network is to distribute information and advice about the European Union’s policies, actively promote local and regional debate about the European Union, allow the European institutions to disseminate local and regional information and give the public the opportunity to send feedback to the European Union institutions.” (Waterford Libraries, 2021)

In an island further south of Europe, located between Sicily and the African continent, the daily newspaper *Malta Independent* wrote that the aim of these newly launched Information Relays is “... *to offer a local service that not only distributes publications, but also listens to what the public is saying and reports back to the European institutions.*” (Francica, 2005)

In communication, a linear model implies that communication is a one-way process where a sender dispatches a message to a receiver, and the receiver simply takes the message without any response or feedback. On the other hand, a circular model of communication implies that communication is a two-way process, where both the sender and receiver participate in the communication process, and feedback is an integral part of the communication process.

The adoption of a feedback mechanism in a communication endeavour denotes the choice for a circular model of communication because feedback allows for a continuous exchange of information between the sender and receiver. In a circular model, the element of feedback is used to modify and improve the communication process, as it allows the sender to receive information on how the message was received and tailor the communication process accordingly. This creates a continuous cycle of communication, where each exchange of feedback leads to further communication and feedback, and the process is ongoing until both parties reach a mutual understanding.

Therefore, the enactment of a feedback mechanism at the inception of the EDIR was a chief and innovative element, as it was considered as a relevant tool to enable effective communication and understanding.

The organizations which hosted these centres were selected by means of an open call for proposals organized in each member state by the Representations of the European Commission. The goal of this process was to select well-established bodies in each region, which were in constant contact with the local and regional audiences, to perform the task at hand. These calls for proposals took place over a specific period, which will be discussed in further detail in the next pages. The EDIR were directly managed in their daily operations by the host entities, but the Commission was in charge of coordinating and streamlining the activities of the relays, via the Representations in particular. The Europe Direct Information Relays were co-financed by the Commission, and the remaining funding was provided by each host entity, by this means substantially increasing the overall resources available for EU information and communication activities.

Only a few months after the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was signed on 29 October 2004 by representatives of all member states and acceding states, who signed the Final Act (Pinder and Usherwood, 2013), in the Italian capital. The ratification process that ensued, in which eighteen states ratified the document, but which was ultimately aborted after the overwhelming refusal of the text in the French and Dutch referendums held in 2005 (Pinder and Usherwood, 2013), came to constitute the first decisively indicative test of the capacity of the EDIR to engage with local and regional actors, and to promote the EU amongst these audiences, displaying their intrinsic value as a proximity tool. And the considerable magnitude of the challenge ahead looked impressive, as in the year 2004 alone the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours had “... *answered more than 85.000 questions from the public about the European Union ...*” (Commission, 2005a, p. 82), a significant “... *50% increase on 2003.*” (Commission, 2005a, p. 82)

As one reputable Portuguese scholar and social-democrat politician wrote, “*The European Constitution is dead; Long live the European Constitution!*” (Poiares Maduro, 2006, p. 7), meaning that the abandonment of this project was not equivalent to its full termination.

2.5 Development of the Europe Direct Information Relays

As previously mentioned, the EDIR were legally created in 2004. The first call for proposals for this network covered the period 2005 to 2008, commonly known as the first generation of these information outlets.

The purpose of establishing a multiannual exercise was naturally to maintain some sort of continuity in the provision of European general information to the local and regional publics, and to ensure the stability of the structures for an extended period, by this means allowing the local and regional audiences to become familiar with the services provided by the new information outlets.

In the first generation, two different types of management were established for the selection of the relays. While in the fifteen member states which were part of the EU before 01 May 2004 the adopted method was direct management, through a call for proposals directly launched by the Representations of the Commission, in the ten member states which joined on 01 May 2004 the selected method was indirect centralised management, by which member states received a delegation of authority from the Commission and in turn issued themselves a call for proposals for the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays at the national level (Commission, 2004a). The two types of call for proposals were simultaneously launched and for the exact same period, and the difference in methodology rests with limitations in resources due to the simultaneous establishment of ten new Commission Representations in the relevant member states.

After the first generation concluded in December 2008, there was a streamlining of the selection process henceforth, and the direct management option was embraced. In terms of co-financing, in the first generation the adopted method was an operating grant awarded to each selected host entity for the creation and maintenance of the relays.

While the Europe Direct Information Relays were meant to be in operation as of 01 January 2005, bureaucratic hurdles delayed the process, and they were solely able to start their activities on the ground on 01 May 2005. The announcement of the inauguration of the EDIR was publicly made via a press release issued by the European Commission on 04 May 2005, bearing the title *The European Union on your doorstep: new generation of information relays launched*. The key paragraph of the statement reads:

“The new information centres – about 400 in number, and for the first time also in the new member states – will offer a range of services, including guides to EU law, programmes and policies, treaty texts (including the European Constitution), a public feedback mechanism (a question, comment or opinion that a citizen would like to pass to the Commission in writing) and a freephone to the EUROPE DIRECT centre on 00800 6 7 8 9 10 11.” (Commission, 2005b, p. 1)

The second generation witnessed the replacement of the name Europe Direct Information Relays with Europe Direct Information Centres, and covered a four-year period, between the years 2009 and 2012. It registered an alteration in terms of co-financing, as the selected method was an action grant, with an established maximum amount and a maximum share of eligible costs.

The third generation of these outlets covered the period 2013 to 2017. The move to a five-year tenure was seen by some at the time as an attempt to synchronise the issuance of the multiannual call for proposals with the five-year term of the European Parliament, even though the eighth legislature of the European Parliament did not fully correspond to the time in question. This could however have possibly been a step in that direction. As of 2013 the chosen co-financing method has been an action grant based on a lump sum awarded by each module of activity, another financial variation to the previous two generations.

In a noteworthy shift from the previous three generations, the fourth generation covered the period 2018 to 2020 only. Some observers attribute this to the fact that the seven-year Multiannual Financial Framework, also known as financial perspective, was valid for the period 2014 to 2020, and hence the requirement to align the co-financing expenses of the Commission with the EDIC.

On 30 June 2020 the EC launched a call for proposals for the selection of partners for a new generation of Europe Direct Centres, this time for the period 2021-2025. In the framework of this call for proposals, the EDIC changed their designation in its fifth generation to Europe Direct Centres (European Commission, 2020b). The adopted co-financing methodology is an annual grant in the form of a lump sum contribution upon approval and implementation of an annual communication plan submitted by each EDC to the Representation of the European Commission. It must be mentioned that in the first year of operation of this fifth generation a one-off extra

grant in the form of a lump sum contribution was paid to cover the organization of a launch event promoting the EDC.

This inconsistency in the terms of each generation, the variety of co-financing mechanisms adopted, and changes in designation for these structures throughout the different generations may nevertheless be potentially viewed as an element of concern and potential disruption to the operation of the EDC.

As of 11 January 2023, there are in operation a total of 434 EDC throughout the territory of the EU, distributed by the twenty-seven member states as follows:

Member state	Number of EDC
Austria	10
Belgium	9
Bulgaria	13
Croatia	11
Cyprus	4
Czechia	12
Denmark	5
Estonia	9
Finland	8
France	49
Germany	50
Greece	12
Hungary	18
Ireland	8
Italy	47
Latvia	8
Lithuania	10
Luxembourg	3
Malta	3
Netherlands	11
Poland	24
Portugal	15
Romania	24
Slovakia	12
Slovenia	7
Spain	37
Sweden	15
Total	434

Table 1: Number of EDC in each member state of the EU.

Source: Author, based on information available at https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en (Accessed: 11 January 2023).

Further to the negative votes in France and in The Netherlands on the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, the European Council decided to embark, in June 2005, on a period of reflection to stimulate a broad debate in each member state, to gauge the views of the European citizens and to adequately understand its chief concerns (European Council, 2005). At that point in time, however, it was not evident for this institution that the Treaty would not be ratified in a foreseeable future, as it can be inferred from a few lines in this document: “*The recent developments do not call into question the validity of continuing with the ratification processes. We are agreed that the timetable for the ratification in different Member States will be altered if necessary ...*” (European Council, 2005, p. 2).

In the following month, July 2005, the Commission published its Action Plan to improve communicating Europe by the Commission, with the aim to “... *ensure more effective communication about Europe supported within the Commission by a modern and more professional approach ...*” (Commission, 2005c, p. 3). Recognizing that communication is far more than information, in the sense that its objective is to establish a solid relationship with and connecting to people (Commission, 2005c), it adopts an innovative methodology anchored on three main vectors, namely listening, communicating, and connecting with citizens by “going local” (Commission, 2005c).

The Europe Direct Information Relays were, as one would expect, considered the ideal tool to “go local” and to communicate meaningfully with the local and regional publics, including by “... *obtaining direct feedback from citizens on their interests and concerns.*” (Commission, 2005c, p. 13)

Bearing in mind the contents of the Action Plan, the Commission proceeded, in October of the same year, with the publication of document COM(2005) 494 final, the well-known Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, an expressed long-term commitment from this institution. Its stated objective was not to come to the rescue of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, but instead to instigate debate between the European institutions and the citizens at all levels. This Communication attributed to the Europe Direct Information Relays a major role, as they were tasked to be “... *the focal point of activities at the regional level.*” (Commission, 2005d, p. 8) in support of Plan-D. It was in fact a great merit to be recognized, after only a few months of the establishment of this decentralized information network at the local and regional levels, that it “... *offers all the EU institutions and bodies a valuable tool for communicating Europe to the citizens on the ground and for implementing the*

Commission's approach to communication activities." (Commission, 2005d, p. 8) Arguably this honour was also a huge responsibility, as it put the Europe Direct Information Relays in the spotlight as soon as these were established and starting its activities.

Both the Action Plan and Plan-D were part of a first phase of the period of reflection in terms of information and communication. The second phase was grounded in document COM(2006) 35 final, the White Paper on a European Communication Policy (Commission, 2006c), which as its name reveals is inscribed at the policy level.

The role of these structures in supporting the delivery of Plan-D seems to have been duly appreciated by the Commission, judging by multiple comments. The vice-president of the Commission responsible for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy affirmed in 2006, in the course of the structured dialogue with the Culture Committee of the European Parliament, that "... *the Commission Representations and Europe Direct Information Relays have been holding open days, conferences and public seminars ...*" (Wallström, 2006, p. 3). Also, in the document COM(2007) 568 final, published in October 2007, these outlets are praised, and the Commission reveals that it plans "... *to launch a call for proposals to renew the network across the EU-27...*" (Commission, 2007, p. 7), further improving its geographical coverage. Equally positive remarks appear at a later stage in document COM(2008) 158/4.

It is interesting to note, however, that "*The year 2009 was the first in which interinstitutional communication priorities were agreed between Parliament, the Council and the Commission under the joint declaration on Communicating Europe in Partnership ...*" (Iskra, 2018, p. 3). Until that point in time, these entities used the communication priorities issued yearly by the Commission as their main roadmap.

2.6 An ongoing and unfinished process

It is of deciding importance to always take into account that the EDIR were official European information relays of the European Commission. Thus, it comes as no surprise that their role was not limited to communicating strictly factual EU information. In fact, several practitioners and observers are of the opinion that their

main - and hidden - goal was to “spread the gospel” on EU integration - and are indeed favourable to this approach.

The Commission itself has highlighted in previous documents the need for the provision of information to come hand in hand with interpretation, by stating that *“Neutral factual information is needed of course, but it is not enough on its own. Experience has shown that a given item of information will not remain neutral because its presentation will constantly be reworked ...”* (Commission, 2002, p. 10). Therefore, *“... communication by the European Union cannot be reduced to the mere provision of information: it must convey a meaning, facilitate comprehension, set both action and policy in a real context ...”* (Commission, 2002, p. 10). This is in line with the view of several information professionals that citizens are drowning in information but starving for wisdom.

Other school of thought amongst practitioners and observers is that the EDIR would have had plenty to gain, namely in terms of credibility and reputation, if noticeable diversity of information and perspectives were on offer by these official information structures to the general public. In line with this, Terra asserts that citizens *“... must not exaggerate the value of the information that is produced and distributed by the European institutions, using external sources to have a plural vision ...”* (Terra, 2009, p. 12). At the same time, emphasis was placed in the added value of reinforced partnerships and transparency, at both the financial and managerial levels.

Professionals in the field of information consider communication as an ongoing and unfinished process by nature. The ones that serve in the European arena often draw a parallel between the EU's information and communication efforts and two sentences of the famous Schuman Declaration: *“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.”* (Schuman, 1950) However, it must be underlined that the process is not the outcome, contrary to what some seem to believe.

Yet another aphorism to remember in this complex realm of European information is that *“True believers will endorse the European project come what may, ardent nationalists will always fight against it, but agnostics will support it only if it works for them ...”* (Marshall, 2018, p. 220).

In the end, perhaps the answer to the fundamental interrogation of whether the EU is primarily a project of peace, or a project of power can provide adequate guidance to the activity and positioning of the EDIR. The author of “The Passage to Europe”,

the Dutch historian and political philosopher Luuk Johannes Van Middelaar, expresses this exact doubt about the main goal pursued by the founding fathers when outlining the European unification strategy (Van Middelaar, 2016). This view is supported by Mazower, who highlights that “*Europe has rarely been just about Europe.*” (Mazower, 2012, p. 415) The answer to this defining question does not however seem to be readily available.

The historical review of the EDIR undertaken in this chapter exposes the fact that a circular model of communication was adopted to guide the activity of these information structures. But what were the key avenues of approaches available in the discipline of information and communication? Also, having established the historical and institutional context in which the Europe Direct Information Relays were created, it is important to understand why a specific conceptual framework was the chosen one within the vast palette of conceptual frameworks to draw from. These are issues to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 Theoretical background

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the research by drawing on key models, traditions, and schools of thought in the field of communication. It adopts a double-track approach, combining classical communication theories with contemporary perspectives on public relations and media environments, in order to conceptualize the role of the Europe Direct Information Relays as both a communicative medium and a policy instrument. By engaging with foundational communication models and situating the Europe Direct Information Relays within the larger operational environment of the European Union's public opinion, media, and the European public sphere, the chapter provides the analytical tools needed to interpret the empirical findings that follow. It plays a significant role in linking the historical and institutional background to the methodological and analytical chapters, ensuring conceptual coherence throughout the thesis.

3.1 A double-track approach

The literature search process developed along a double-track approach.

In August 2021 the research student conducted a systematic search for published literature of three key bibliographic databases, namely EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The exact same search was repeated in April 2024. Four terms which formed the focus of the review were used to develop these searches, namely "Europe Direct", "Europe Direct Information Relays", "models of communication", and "public opinion toward the European Union".

In the first phase, no filters were specified. In the second phase, delimiters were set. Firstly, a language delimiter, including English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish languages. Secondly, time limits were set in relation to the different terms. "Europe Direct" from 1995 to present, since the Europe Direct brand was only created in August 1996. "Europe Direct Information Relays" from 2003 to present, since these official European information structures were only established in the year 2004. "Models of communication" encompassing the whole of the 20th century, when this discipline emerged, until the present. Finally, "public opinion toward the European Union" since 1950, the date of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950, until the present.

These searches identified 5427 potentially relevant publications. Their abstracts or executive summaries were then retrieved for assessment. A closer examination identified 5140 unique references, as some duplication was identified. After evaluation of the abstract or the executive summary, 4236 publications were disregarded. 904 publications were retrieved for detailed scrutiny. After conducting a review of the full text, 566 publications were excluded. At the outcome of this study selection process, a total of 338 publications were considered valid for this research.

Two other search techniques were adopted and elicited useful outcomes. These were snowballing, which allowed for the identification of 27 publications, as well as serendipitous searching, which led to 11 results.

The second approach was carried out in person in both academic and institutional libraries, namely in Belgium, Indonesia, Ireland, Portugal, Thailand, and The Netherlands. The use of the European Commission Library for external researchers proved extremely useful, and so did the European Parliament Library. This last one is divided into three on-site libraries for citizens, two located in Brussels and one in Strasbourg. The two spaces in the Belgian capital, the Info Hub for Citizens and the Library for Europe Collection, contain a wealth of information. Since several legal texts and official documents were of age, they only existed in physical copies, and search for and access to those had to rely on the goodwill and support of both active and former staff members of the European institutions. This effort allowed for six dozen publications to be identified.

Furthermore, older publications proved hard to track, taking several months to be accessed. This is namely the case of the publication featuring the intellectual model guiding this work, a fact that was at the root of some discouragement of the research student in the early stages. Fortunately, a valuable interlibrary loan with a Thai library came to the rescue, making this research eventually possible.

3.2 Delineation

This third chapter is devoted to examining the theoretical silhouettes of the European communication instrument which emerged in 2004, the EDIR.

For several decades the European project was presented to the general public as a matter of foreign policy, in the assumption that citizens would have limited knowledge about it (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016). This has led not only to a lack of elite

and public consensus about the functions and the nature of the EU, but also to a high degree of uncertainty of public opinion toward the European construction project (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016).

As time evolved and the explicit support of the general public became increasingly necessary also in the international arena, research has revealed that international organizations are important communicative agents about themselves, in what can correspond to an institutional strategy of self-legitimation (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020). The European institutions have come a long way in terms of attention to information and communication over the last few decades. The EDIR were tools in such approach.

In view of the above, section 3.3 positions the EDIR in the field of information and communication and characterizes them as a medium, reflecting also on why it is important to scrutinize them through this perspective.

Subsequently to this effort, the following assignment is to portray the intellectual framework which underpinned the establishment of the EDIR. As described in section 2.4, the EDIR have its genesis in document COM(2004) 196 final. At that epoch of creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays the chief objective of these communication structures was

“... to distribute information and advice about the EU’s policies, actively promote local and regional debate about the EU, allow the European institutions to disseminate local and regional information, and give the public the opportunity to send feedback to the EU.” (Commission, 2006d)

The fourth core mandate of the EDIR mentioned above is a fundamentally integral and disruptive one of these new structures, when compared to all prior European information outlets.

In communication, a linear model implies that communication is a one-way process where a sender sends a message to a receiver, and the receiver simply receives the message without any response or feedback. On the other hand, a circular model of communication implies that communication is a two-way process, where both the sender and receiver participate actively in the communication process, and feedback is an integral part of the communication process.

The adoption of a feedback mechanism in any communication endeavour denotes the choice for a circular model of communication because feedback allows

for a continuous exchange of information between the sender and receiver. In a circular model, feedback is used to modify and improve the communication process, as it allows the sender to receive information on how their message was received and adjust their communication accordingly. This creates a continuous cycle of communication, where each exchange of feedback leads to further communication and feedback, and the process is ongoing until both parties reach a mutual understanding.

Therefore, the adoption of a feedback mechanism at the inception of the EDIR was a creative and innovative element, as it was considered as a relevant tool to enable effective communication and understanding.

The provision of regular feedback to the EU institutions was indeed a brand-new lease of life at the time. By “... *informing them about the most salient questions, opinions and suggestions, concerns and comments of citizens on any aspect of the work that affects them.*” (Valentini, 2010, p. 147), this novel function of the EDIR led one researcher to ambitiously claim that these “... *centres can serve as the mediators between the European institutions and the civil society organisations ...*” (Valentini, 2010, p. 140).

While the importance of having mediators between the EC and civil society is acknowledged, this suggestion may well be far-fetched, since the modest resources attributed to each EDIR might perhaps not have placed them as the ideal instrument for this task.

It can thus be understood from these official sources that the model of communication used as a starting point was indeed a circular one. But did the EC consciously adopt a model from academic literature as the mainspring of its undertaking? It is important to ponder on different sources to support any inference drawn. In this regard, the semi-structured interviews conducted prove to be of substantive relevance, as their appraisal can supplement and allow for the triangulation of the findings from official documents. These semi-structured interviews explicitly trace the creation of the EDIR to the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). Even though it may not have been applied in practical terms in all its entirety and academic purity, it is the intellectual reference which carries a prominent role as source of reference in their inception. It consequently merits a specific investigation of its own.

Therefore, section 3.4 delves in the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), examining in detail its three main elements and expanding on the indicators of the model, as well as outlining the corresponding evidence to be pursued during the semi-structured interviews. It will be key to ascertain whether the features of the Circular Model of Communication were adhered to at the inception of the EDIR, as well as to establish whether all indicators carried an equivalent weight for the EC. The importance awarded by this institution to the extent and scope of the compliance with the different components of the model may indicate its overall position in terms of European information and communication.

The subsequent sections, 3.5 and 3.6 respectively, sketch out in a brief descriptive manner the different schools of thought in information and communication, and the range of models available in the toolkit of choices, as well as their main features. This posits that the Commission had several possible options to draw from, and there was nothing inevitable about the selection of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) as a source of inspiration for the EC.

Section 3.7 will then evolve into three further frameworks of analysis, in an effort to enrich the theoretical discussion and expose larger relationships at play. These are the outline of public opinion toward the EU, encompassing both support for and opposition to European integration, the European public sphere, and media landscape. It is against these background elements that the EDIR exercised its communication activities, which calls for the relevance of understanding them. It sets the circumstances and context for the operation of the EDIR.

The following section, 3.8, will problematize the identity of the EDIR as a public relations' instrument or a tool to support European integration.

The concluding section will serve as a segue to the following chapter, where the research methodology will be discussed at length.

3.3 Europe Direct Information Relays as a medium

Information. Communication. Two concepts as old as mankind itself, and yet so dense, multifaceted, and rich. The elasticity of these two notions makes it hard to set its boundaries, and consequently they remain elusive (Sousa, 2006).

Information is defined as facts relating to someone or something, which can be disclosed to one person or to a group of persons gathering in one same place or dispersed and with no direct relationship amongst themselves (Balle, 1998). It can thus be considered as similar to a raw material (Simões, 1995).

Communication, on the other hand, is the action that allows for human beings to exchange messages, in person or remotely, with or without the support of a medium (medium is the singular of media), whichever the form or the intended purpose of this exchange. It refers both to an action and to the result of such action, *communicare* and *communitas* respectively (Balle, 1998). Simply stated, it is to put something in common, to share publicly, not only information *stricto sensu*, but also experiences, feelings, and thoughts (Gill and Adams, 1998) for reaching mutual understanding. Berlo (1960) and Simões (1995) describe communication as a process, an ongoing phenomenon that withstands continuous evolution and experiences a myriad of changes over time, and which displays no clearly defined outer limits in terms of beginning or end (Sousa, 2006). Communication is a social activity (Martino, 2001) aimed at fulfilling needs, in accordance with the five-level hierarchy postulated by Maslow in 1954, in the following ascending order: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Seitel, 1998).

The above considerations beg the question of whether the EDIR served as a medium, in terms of European information and communication, bearing in mind a twofold reality: they served as European official information relays, and operated in this domain as a mediator between the European institutions and the citizens. The restrictive definition of medium, encompassing only newspapers, radio, and television, is clearly outdated, but the broad definition coined by the Canadian communication theorist Herbert Marshall McLuhan that the medium is the message (McLuhan, 1964) seems loose-fitting. In the opinion of this scholar, the nature of a medium, the channel through which a message is conveyed, is more relevant than the content or meaning of the message.

If the term medium is understood in the commonly accepted sense of any outlet or technique used by an individual or group to communicate to another individual or group, in person or remotely, the expression of its thoughts, whatever the form or the purpose of this expression may be (Balle, 1998), then it is reasonable to recognize the need to examine the EDIR through the lenses of information and communication, and to understand how and where do they fit in within the realm of the communication

sciences. This is the discipline under which media studies fall (Bounoux, 1999), even though its scope reaches beyond the studies of the media alone (Santaella, 2001).

To investigate the EDIR through the perspective of information and communication in which they are inscribed, the starting point is to recognize the model of communication that was at their core, and which inspired its creation, and to describe it in detail. Also, despite the model of communication subscribed to, to be mindful of the simple principle that accurate and complete information should generate larger understanding, but that increased awareness should not be equated with greater support for something. This is particularly pertinent when reflecting about the conditions and environment in which the EDIR manoeuvred.

3.4 Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication

As explained in section 3.2, the conceptual undergirding of the EDIR was a circular model of communication, and namely the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), crafted in the year 1954. On the one hand, this is reflected in the official documents which are at its root; on the other hand, this research exposes the fact that the source of intellectual inspiration for the EDIR was this specific model of communication. That is documented and assessed in the analytical chapter. It was the first time the EC adopted in one of its physical information networks a circular and interactive model, discarding previously used linear models centred in pushing information to the publics they served.

This model of communication is in fact a landmark one, as it is the first which distances itself from a linear approach and is interactive in nature. It was proposed by Wilbur Lang Schramm (1954), a renowned specialist in mass communication. Schramm noted that his studies were influenced by and adapted from the theories of yet another scientist, the American Charles Egerton Osgood, a psychologist. Its established name is therefore the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). Previously in his career, Schramm had authored a communication model which was also linear, very much in accord with the teachings of Shannon and Weaver. He nevertheless included the notions of encoder and decoder in the first model, along with the idea that the encoding and decoding processes depended on the field of experience - the knowledge - of both source and receiver. If the field of experience of both individuals was similar, the communication

process flowed easily; if not, it would be difficult to establish sound communication with the other individual. By this he means, for example, it would be easier for an expert economist to communicate with another expert economist on a topic of mutual interest than to a layman. This assertion is in line with the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) thought, in which he developed the concept of *habitus*. It is through it that individuals learn how to act within the context of society, and to daily reproduce it in their actions. In his view, individuals tend to connect and socialize with individuals who are like themselves and therefore are seldom confronted with alternative *habitus* which can jeopardize their own. This contributes to the imposition of limits on change and reconfiguration, as individuals are not exposed to different norms, perceptions, thoughts, or values.

Not fully satisfied with his first theoretical attempt, Schramm developed and presented in 1954 a second model, the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). In this new model, the author showed how communication happened in two directions, and required three steps, namely encoding, decoding, and interpreting a message. The three elements of the model are therefore source (encoder), receiver (decoder), and message.

Its main feature is that it was the first known circular model proposed, as far as each source could also be a receiver in the same communication act, and vice-versa since they are both active communicators. This was the dynamic feature of this model, which also highlighted the role of redundancy and repetition in communication actions. Recognizing that communication is a complex process and that, in fact, when one message is transmitted, several messages are relayed, the model explained the element of cyclical feedback. The overall purpose of this theoretical approach was to depict a complete cycle of communication, and to offer a general explanation of the communication process.

The below diagrammatic representation captures the main elements of this model.

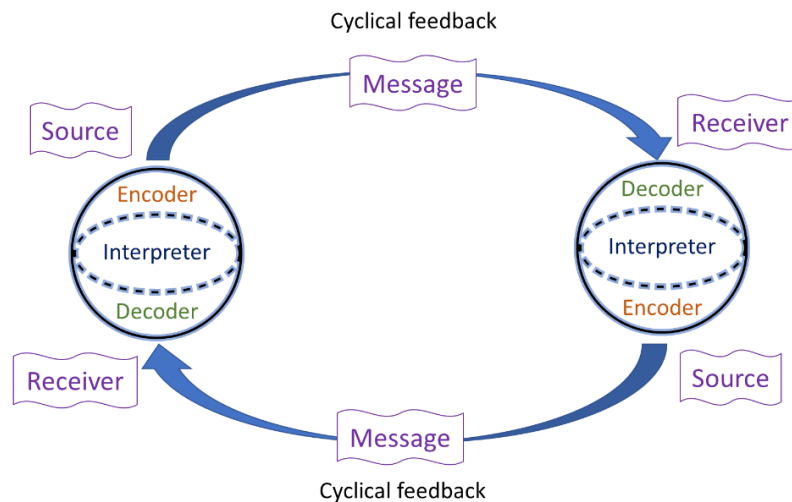


Figure 3: The Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication.
Source: Author, based on Schramm (1954).

In order to gauge the utilization of this model of communication by the Commission at the time of the implementation of the EDIR, its central elements and indicators must first be described. This is followed by the developed evidence to assess its use.

It is fitting to understand if all the components of this model have been adopted in an analogous manner, and therefore carried an equivalent weight, or if there is an emerging pattern of prevalence of one or more of the indicators. The evidence to be devised and subsequently tracked during the semi-structured interviews will hopefully allow for a measurement of the grade in which the different indicators have been incorporated, and in turn for an assessment of the degree of relevance awarded to each one. This will expose the priorities of the EC at the time of the creation of the EDIR.

The Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) features three main elements, as described above. These are source (encoder), receiver (decoder), and message. It also encompasses a total of nine indicators, as follows:

1. Once coded and sent, a message is quite free of its sender.
2. The model can be no stronger than its weakest link.
3. The model has a maximum capacity for handling information but will work at less than top efficiency.

4. Communicator's redundancy is an important aspect of constructing a message.

5. Source and Receiver must be in tune.

6. The communication process is endless.

7. This model is circular, with a bi-directional flow of information.

8. Messages are conveyed in multiple channels.

9. Conditions of success in communication:

9.a) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended destination.

9.b) The message must employ signs which refer to experience common to source and receiver, so as to "get the meaning across".

9.c) The message must arouse personality needs in the destination and suggest some ways to meet those demands.

9.d) The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the destination finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.

These nine indicators are applicable almost in its entirety to the three elements of the model, except for one, which refers only to source and receiver.

The table below presents a summary of the intersection between each of the elements of the model and its indicators.

Indicators	Elements		
	Source	Message	Receiver
1. Once coded and sent, a message is quite free of its sender.	X	X	X
2. The model can be no stronger than its weakest link.	X	X	X
3. The model has a maximum capacity for handling information but will work at less than top efficiency.	X	X	X
4. Communicator's redundancy is an important aspect of constructing a message.	X	X	X
5. Source and Receiver must be in tune.	X	N/A	X
6. The communication process is endless.	X	X	X
7. This model is circular, with a bi-directional flow of information.	X	X	X

8. Messages are conveyed in multiple channels.	X	X	X
9. Conditions of success in communication: a) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended destination. b) The message must employ signs which refer to experience common to source and receiver, so as to “get the meaning across”. c) The message must arouse personality needs in the destination and suggest some ways to meet those demands. d) The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the destination finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.	X	X	X

Table 2: Intersection between elements and indicators in the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication.

Source: Author, based on Schramm (1954).

To scrutinize the embracing of the indicators of the model, the doctoral student has devised a set of evidence linked to each of the indicators to uncover the degree of adoption of each component of the model. The proposed evidence is the following:

1. The key concern of the EDIR were the information materials it made available to the public.

2. The EDIR utilized tools to assess whether the users correctly understood the information provided (through customer satisfaction surveys, verbal feedback, etc.).

3. and 4. (merger) Customer service at the EDIR was performed by qualified professionals, who made sure the information was often repeated.

5. Information materials were available in the local language and adapted to local and regional cultures.

6. The EDIR continuously listened to its users and responded to their feedback with appropriate information.

7. The EDIR routinely gathered feedback from its users and conveyed the views of the local and regional audiences to the European Commission.

8. The EDIR organized a variety of events (such as career fairs, open days, training sessions and workshops) and provided information materials in multiple formats (such as audio, text, video, or a combination of all).

9.a) Institutional and policy information was provided to the public in an appealing way, highlighting both challenges and opportunities in each area.

9.b) Information materials distributed by the EDIR were produced and reviewed by subject matter experts and were appropriate for different target audiences.

9.c) Information materials focused on the main positive aspects of each institutional and/or policy information.

9.d) Information was provided to the public at the right time, when it was needed the most.

The table below depicts the correlation between each of the indicators of the model and the evidence to be explored.

Indicators	Evidence
1. Once coded and sent, a message is quite free of its sender.	1. The key concern of the EDIR were the information materials it made available to the public.
2. The model can be no stronger than its weakest link.	2. The EDIR utilized tools to assess whether the users correctly understood the information provided (through customer satisfaction surveys, verbal feedback, etc.).
3. The model has a maximum capacity for handling information but will work at less than top efficiency.	(Merger) 3. and 4. Customer service at the EDIR was performed by qualified professionals, who made sure the information was often repeated.
4. Communicator's redundancy is an important aspect of constructing a message.	
5. Source and Receiver must be in tune.	5. Information materials were available in the local language and adapted to local and regional cultures.
6. The communication process is endless.	6. The EDIR continuously listened to its users and responded to their feedback with appropriate information.
7. This model is circular, with a bi-directional flow of information.	7. The EDIR routinely gathered feedback from its users and conveyed the views of the local and regional audiences to the European Commission.
8. Messages are conveyed in multiple channels.	8. The EDIR organized a variety of events (such as career fairs, open days, training sessions and workshops) and provided information materials in

	multiple formats (such as audio, text, video, or a combination of all).
9. Conditions of success in communication: a) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended destination. b) The message must employ signs which refer to experience common to source and receiver, so as to “get the meaning across”. c) The message must arouse personality needs in the destination and suggest some ways to meet those demands. d) The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the destination finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.	9. a) Institutional and policy information was provided to the public in an appealing way, highlighting both challenges and opportunities in each area. b) Information materials distributed by the EDIR were produced and reviewed by subject matter experts and were appropriate for different target audiences. c) Information materials focused on the main positive aspects of each institutional and/or policy information. d) Information was provided to the public at the right time, when it was needed the most.

Table 3: Correspondence between indicators in the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication and evidence.

Source: Author.

The contention of this endeavour is that a careful examination of the way the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) was used as a guiding tool at the inception of the EDIR will provide an account of the priorities and rationale of the Commission in terms of European communication. The phenomenon of apophenia, the tendency to perceive connections between unrelated elements, will hopefully not prove valid in this context. Information theories alone may fail to comprise the full breadth of European communication, but they offer a glimpse into the broader approach of the EC in this domain. Focusing on information and communication theories is a step towards understanding the larger picture at play in this domain.

Yet, a wide variety of schools of thought in information and communication and of models of communication exist, which are concisely described in the next sections.

This allows the reader to understand that other intellectual options could have been selected, as well as their main features.

3.5 Schools of thought in information and communication

3.5.1 Origins

Intellectual traditions in the field of information and communication emerged in the first half of the 20th century, in Europe and the United States of America. It can be argued that the seeds of this discipline date back to the Classical era, namely the 4th century B.C., when Aristotle's collection of notes on rhetoric saw the light of day (Aristotle, circa 350 B.C., translation, 1909). However, from an academic standpoint, it was only several centuries afterwards, in the year 1690 precisely, that the first doctoral thesis in information, entitled "*De relationibus novellis*", was defended by Tobias Peucer at the University of Leipzig, in Germany (Casasús and Ladevéze, 1991).

The period after World War I witnessed the emergence of holistic and systematic studies on information and communication. Hohlfeldt (2001) attributes this to the intensive urbanization phenomenon that led people to depend on intermediaries - both journalists and media outlets - to obtain the information they require, and this in turn stimulated the rise of scientific studies in this field. Sousa (2006) proposes yet another explanation, suggesting it was the censorship exercised by several states during this bloody conflict that rests at the origin of these studies, making people aware of the value of the equation Information = Freedom = Democracy (Ramonet, 1999).

Moreover, several pertinent authors in other areas of knowledge are credited with contributions, even if only indirect, to the creation of contemporary information and communication scholarship, such as Karl Marx in philosophy, David Émile Durkheim, Ferdinand Tönnies, Jean-Gabriel de Tarde or Maximilian (Max) Karl Emil Weber in sociology, as well as Alexis Charles Henri Maurice Clérel, viscount of Tocqueville, also known as Alexis de Tocqueville, in political science (Sousa, 2006).

3.5.2 Chicago School

It is nevertheless sociology that lies at the heart of the creation of the first seminal school of thought in the discipline of information and communication: the Chicago School. Its origins date back to 1892, when the first Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago was created, under the leadership of Albion Woodbury Small. It is curious to note that Small also studied at the University of Leipzig, which could have exposed him to early studies in information and communication. An initial group of sociology scholars affiliated with this Department conducted research on migration towards large cities and urbanization by using a detailed observation method on the ground, and it were these studies that led them to information and communication as a discipline. This first generation of academics with this Department came to the conclusion that communication is a process that enables the society to function, transmit its traditions, and ensure a consensus amongst its members (Balle, 1998), and this finding had a pivotal role in the establishment of information and communication as a valid field of academic study.

The method of analysis adopted in the 1940-1950 era by the second generation of social researchers at the University of Chicago was however the one which generated a long-standing effect in information and communication. The creators of this method, namely Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, and Herbert George Blumer - who coined the term Symbolic Interactionism to describe it -, consider of the utmost importance the influence in all social interactions of the meanings brought about by the individual to each interaction, as well as the detailed significations obtained in those interactions considering the individual's own perceptions. In their view, the members of a society are connected through a complex system of personal influences, and the actions taken by individuals are a response to the actions of others. Life, social cohesion, and ultimately the sheer survival of society and civilization rest on the communication's interactions taking place amongst the members of any given society.

Herbert Blumer states that Symbolic Interactionism is based on three core postulates of the perspective: the first one, that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things; the second one, that the signification of such elements stems from, or arises out of, the social interconnection maintained with others and the society; and the third and final one, that these

meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by each individual in dealing with the encountered elements (Blumer, 1969, cited in Rüdiger, 1998).

3.5.3 Frankfurt School

In the same stream of sociology scholarship, the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) was founded by Félix José Weil in the city of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in the year 1923, affiliated with the Goethe-University of Frankfurt am Main. This Institute was the cradle for the second key school of thought in information and communication: the Frankfurt School. Inspired mainly by the readings of the philosophical works of authors like Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, a few illustrious philosophers-sociologists (Montero, 1993) representatives of this School, namely Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Ludwig Wiesengrund Adorno and Walter Bendix Schönflies Benjamin, developed the eminent Critical Theory of Communication.

Domination is the core topic of this intellectual tradition. In the view of its proponents, the media are instruments of power and control, producing a symbolic violence and leading to a standardization of the thought of the masses. According to Held (1980), one of the innovations of this school is to study culture within the context of the cultural setting in which it is produced - and the media are a relevant part of that same environment. The homogenization and standardization of the cultural products, the so-called cultural industry, aims for the chief goal of profit, and citizens become prey and ultimately victims of a low quality and stereotypical culture relayed by the media (Sousa, 2006). This mind-numbing industry leads to the anomy of the people, greatly contributing to its manipulation by the ruling classes. Marcuse (1964) considers technology as a domination system, attributing it the capability to reconcile opposing forces and to ultimately suppress protests for freedom. Habermas (1962) puts the spotlight on a profit-oriented public arena through the growth of the media, and highlights its malevolent reverberations, namely the conversion of citizens into consumers and taxpayers. Rüdiger (2001) explains that for these authors consumer capitalism has gone way beyond economic domains and is now using the cultural industry to influence individuals' thoughts and worldviews by transforming cultural goods in commodities featuring full fungibility.

Different types of communication mediators, but especially journalists, are regarded as being mere watchdogs of the contents, the ideas, the news, or the thoughts conveyed to the general public, so the latter does not dare to question the social order in place, the *status quo* that mediators want to preserve at all costs. Some contemporary authors, when examining and discussing European affairs in a current setting, underline the validity of the Critical Theory.

For instance, Serge Halimi's account (Halimi, 1997) of the role played by the media in France during the period of discussion of the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht, is a compelling example. The author examines the behaviour of mainstream French media during the months that led to the referendum on this legal document, and highlights three core features of their conduct, namely the prominence awarded to opinions emanating from the centre of the political spectrum, as opposed to the ones branded as extremist, nationalist or even populist; the spotlight on the views of experts and intellectuals, as opposed to those of ordinary people; and the connection made between political leaders who cared about building a better tomorrow in Europe, and uninformed citizens stuck in nostalgia from the past and fear of the future. According to him, this democratic contest was pitched by mainstream media as a confrontation of ambition against fear, enlightenment against darkness, future against past, and wisdom against ignorance (Halimi, 1997).

These arguments must carefully be pondered over when examining the establishment of the EDIR. Littlejohn (1978) defends that persuasion is the process of generating changes through communication. Additionally, Seitel claims that an administration's "... *ultimate power is the power of persuasion*." (Seitel, 1998, p. 397) This author also refers to spin as a way of thought control (Seitel, 1998). Is there something normative about the creation of the EDIR network in 2004? Are these official information outlets meant to serve as a tool for the exercise of ideological power in support of European integration? In the military essay offered by Sun Tzu it is indeed argued that all war is based on deceit (Sun, circa 500 B.C., translation, 2013). If a battle to conquer the minds and the spirits of the European citizens was underway, could the EDIR have served as a weapon in this conflict? This matter will be further explored in subsequent sections.

3.5.4 Palo Alto School

The third leading intellectual tradition certainly illuminates the process of creation of the EDIR network in a very dissimilar light. The Palo Alto school of thought, also known as the Invisible College, was devised by a network of academics and researchers from different areas of knowledge affiliated with Stanford University, located in California, United States of America, in the late 1950s. Anthropologists, medical doctors, philosophers, and sociologists all rendered a vital contribution to this tradition in information and communication, which likely made it more diverse since its inception, when compared with the remaining schools. Its main field of study is the human behaviour in its numerous dimensions. Illustrious names such as Erving Goffman, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, and Paul Watzlawick are at the core of this tradition (Ferin, 2002).

Anchored in the teachings of the Chicago School, these theorists propose a theoretical model in which communication is central to all human activities. In their view, communication is both a social process and the vital element of personal and social integration. They devote themselves to the study of words, gestures, looks, the social space, and other elements. They argue that communication is like an orchestra of instruments, composed of a myriad of complex verbal and non-verbal elements which is important to understand and decipher (Balle, 1998). Human beings are simultaneously sources and receivers of messages in continuous interaction, in a concrete cultural and social context which shapes their actions and perceptions. The most relevant contribution of this school of thought towards the communication theory was the enunciation of five principles which have become widely accepted in this field of knowledge. These are the following: 1. It is impossible not to communicate; 2. All communication features two aspects, the contents and the relationship, and the latter encompasses the first; 3. The message depends on its internal organization; 4. Communication can be digital or analogical; and 5. The interaction between the participants in a communication activity may be symmetric or ancillary (Watzlawick, Helmick and Jackson, 1967).

The greatest contribution of this tradition rests in the belief that it is impossible not to communicate. All human beings, in a conscient or inconscient manner, using verbal or non-verbal elements, are always indeed communicating with one another. Even the absence of a voluntary communication action or effort may carry a meaning

to a receiver and therefore generate a particular effect or reaction from it. Also, the established connection between contents and relationship alerts both academics and practitioners in this area to the importance of planned and systematic messages and communication efforts, which are pursued hand in hand with the establishment of good will and relationships of mutual trust between the participants involved in communication actions. It is impossible to be successful in one area without being effective in the other one since a mutual interdependence exists between the two. This principle points to the relevance of public relations, a subset of communication sciences which rose to prominence based on the works of Edward Louis Bernays (1923), an Austrian American pioneer in this domain, who is referred to as the father of this discipline. This branch of learning will be more carefully examined in a subsequent section of this document, as it is directly related to the creation of the EDIR.

Bearing in mind the contributions of this significant school of thought, and the fact that experienced communication professionals are responsible for devising the information and communication actions and efforts of the European institutions, it is reasonable to admit that these institutions do want to engage and establish solid relationships with the different publics - the general public, the specialist public and the press - in a conscious and planned manner, and at the same time also avoid running the risk of being seen as indifferent to the publics' concerns, expectations, and information and communication needs.

3.6 Models of communication

3.6.1 Abstractions of reality

At the outset of this reflection on the main models of communication, it is timely to state that models are by and large not perfect replications of the reality which they try to encapsulate. Models are "... *inevitably abstractions of reality*." (Kitchen, 1997, p. 8) All models are therefore faulty and incomplete representations of phenomena which occur in real life, unable to fully capture its diversity, and can be understood as a map which presents selected features of each territory (Fiske, 1993).

The models of communication, which refer to the conceptual models used to expound human communication, are generically grouped in three distinct categories:

linear models, interactive models, and transactional models. Other scholars (Cáceres, 2003) present a more refined and elaborate taxonomy, but the three categories mentioned above are the most common in the literature.

The search and review exercise exposed a great number and wide range of theoretical approaches in this field of knowledge. Some, however, are more widely accepted amongst the academic community, and these are the classical models which are more closely examined in this section.

3.6.2 Aristotle's Model of Communication

As previously described, the emergence of information and communication as a solid field of study occurred in the first half of the 20th century, in Europe and the United States of America.

The first model of communication, however, is credited to Aristotle, author of a well-known treatise on the art of persuasion (Aristotle, circa 350 B.C., translation, 1909). Even though this ancient collection of notes that has survived from antiquity is more focused on public speaking and renowned for the rhetorical modes of persuasion it presents - *ethos* (moral character), *logos* (reason), and *pathos* (emotion) -, its value in the area of information and communication rests in the first known description of three fundamental elements of the communication process, namely the person who speaks (the sender), the speech (the message), and the person who listens to the speech (the receiver).

It is the first identified account and breakdown of these cardinal elements of communication, and hence its value for the communication sciences. This is a linear model, since the sender is active and the receiver is passive, and the communication flows in one direction only.

3.6.3 Lasswell's Model of Communication

The second model of communication which received worldwide acclamation and acceptance was developed by the leading American communications theorist Harold Dwight Lasswell (1948), a member of the Chicago School. This functionalist model was originally developed for mediated communication processes through the mass media, but its impact was felt in many other streams of communication. It is a

model comprised of five elements, namely Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect.

This is clearly a linear model, which describes communication as a unidirectional process, in which the initiative of a communication act always rests with the source and its effects occur solely in the receiver of the message. It does not take account of the feedback element, nor of the mutual influences generated between source and receiver, and it assumes the beginning and end of the communication process are both clearly defined. While this model may indeed be compartmentalized, incomplete and linear, its pertinence in the academic field is indisputable, as it represented at that time a step forward in this science.

3.6.4 Shannon and Weaver's Model of Communication

The third model of communication which made an imprint in the area of information and communication was the one crafted by Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949). In the year prior to this, Shannon, a mathematician, and engineer by trade, authored a quantitative paper founded on mathematical theories about information. But it was only in 1949 that, in association with Weaver, the researchers published their joint paper and model. While Shannon developed the statistical process underlying information theory, Weaver's contribution mainly focused on the philosophical aspects of the theory as regards human communication.

The original model by Shannon, focusing on the engineering aspect, aims to explain signal transmission with maximum telephone line capacity and minimum distortion. It was Weaver who stretched its original scope and applied the theory developed by Shannon to other kinds of communication. The model has seven main elements: information source, transmitter, message, channel, receiver, destination, and noise (or unwanted edition). Accounting for the communication process between source and destination, it is also a linear model, a one-way model to communicate with others, as it does not contemplate the feedback mechanism, the ongoing process of communication, or the mutual interdependence between sender and receiver - in this case called information source and destination. The only considered feedback is of a technical nature, and it has to do with the unwanted editions to the transmitted signal, which may cause distortion or error. This model is both practical and technical in nature.

3.6.5 Newcomb's Model of Communication

Theodore Mead Newcomb (1953), an American social psychologist, proposes a different approach, using a triangular model, concentrating on the social purpose of communication. This model, inspired by the tradition of the Chicago School, depicts all communication actions as a means of sustaining relationships between individuals, highlighting the central role of communication in a group or society. Concentrating more on the reasons which explain the dynamics and communication motivations of the agents in interaction, it demonstrates that the perceptions of the persons who are involved in a conversation about one another and the external elements have a significant effect on the overall human communication process. Communication is therefore the element which provides equilibrium to the social system and promotes dialogue and negotiation.

This model focuses on interpersonal communication, and it implies that two elements are in continuous association, and that one of the participants in the dialogue intentionally starts the communication process and obtains feedback from the other. Even though the feedback element is present in this model, it is considered as a linear model as well, since its paradigm is unidirectional, in the sense that the feedback provided by the receiver does not convert him into a source in the following stage of the process.

3.6.6 Gerbner's Model of Communication

After the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) emerged, a new and, in chronological terms, sixth model of communication is attributed to George Gerbner (1956), an American professor of communication.

Following on the footsteps of the research conducted by Schramm, Gerbner devises a descriptive and simple theoretical model which addresses the general purpose of this discipline. This approach envisages to display communication as the transmission of messages, while at the same time aiming to establish a relationship between the message and reality, tackling the questions of selective perception and meaning concurrently. In the author's opinion, individuals with different cultural backgrounds perceive reality in a distinct manner. The framing of each message is therefore restricted by cultural foundations, as knowledge and meaning vary in

accordance with these elements. Culture is thus the factor which affects the reliability of the communication process. Ultimately, the meaning of any given message emerges from the framing of the message in the cognitive system.

Each communicating agent in the process can send a message to another one. The message bears a form, or a sign, and concrete contents. The same content can be communicated in different formats, and therefore the agent is given the freedom to select the means to convey any given message, amongst the ones which are adequate and available to relay the message. This is the main reason why the question of the means and control of the media also arises from this theoretical approach, in line with the concerns expressed by the Critical Theory. When and if the message becomes available and known to a second agent, it is once again submitted to a dynamic process of interpretation, perception, and selection. Therefore, this model argues that each message at any given level is altered or changed, reinforcing the continuous communication loop.

3.6.7 Berlo's SMCR Model of Communication

The seventh seminal theoretical framework is the one authored by David Kenneth Berlo (1960), an important American communications theorist. While complex in nature, this is yet another linear model. In contrast with other functionalist models, the focus of this approach is the established relationship between the source and the receiver of the message. The communication skills of both participants in the communication process are required to be adequate from inception, allowing for the message to be properly encoded and decoded. Only two skilled communicators can maximize the effects of the communication process. The model proposes therefore a certain level of similarity between source and receiver - the *habitus* which was previously discussed -, as well as stipulates the need for them to be at the same level of communication skills.

This framework is known as Source-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) Model of Communication, and integrates four main components, while in turn each component contains its own sub-components. The mentioned components and sub-components are the following: Source (where the message originates) - includes Attitudes, Communication Skills, Culture, Encoder, Knowledge, and Social System; Message (the subject matter under transfer) - includes Code, Content, Elements,

Structure, and Treatment; Channel (it refers to the five senses) - hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching. It does not however include thinking or understanding. The Receiver - decoder, the one who receives the message and decodes it - includes the same features as the Source, as both need to be aligned so that communication can flow seamlessly. This might be difficult to accomplish in real-life situations. The elements of feedback and noise are also absent from this theoretical approach.

3.6.8 Helical Spiral of Communication Model

Frank E. X. Dance's (1967) model is by all accounts a novelty at the time. It is a combined linear and interactive model, and its simple enunciation questions the foundations of the well-established concepts of linearity and circularity in the realm of communication.

The object of study of this American academic is the communication of a human being from childhood until adulthood. In the course of his observations, the author verifies that the human evolves in a gradual way from very brief and simple forms of communication to more elaborate and prolonged ones. Based on this, a model inspired by a helix was drawn. This is a three-dimensional object with a form similar to that of a smooth curve that moves upwards as also downwards.

The structure of this object illuminates what happens during the communication process throughout a human being's life journey. This approach attempts to depict the gradual nature of the communication process, which starts in slow motion and produces little effects, until it progressively grows and expands. The starting point, at the bottom, is indeed very limited, and then it progressively moves upward in a back-and-forth circular motion, generating larger circles on top of the helix. This process is however lengthy, and it doesn't happen all at once. The time element is extremely relevant in this model. In a similar fashion to what happens in a helix, communicators start by sharing little information at an initial stage, and as time progresses and trust is built and develops over time, they move on to sharing wider portions of information. This will bring the communicators to a next level in the communication process, which is therefore elastic. As they engage and commit more and more to one another, the model will expand and progress, basing subsequent actions in previous events. This is therefore a sequential model, in which a group of events happen in a specific order, following one another in time.

As a purely abstract and speculative exercise, this simple model lists few elements, and its variables are difficult to identify. It also assumes there is continuity in the communication process, which is not always the case. Yet its main value resides in the combination of the linear and the interactive approaches and serves as a valuable intellectual exercise to question some of the fundamental concepts in this field of knowledge.

3.6.9 Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication

A revolutionary new model emerged by the hand of Dean C. Barnlund (1970), classified as the Transactional Model of Communication. According to this theoretical proposal, both source and receiver are in the same level playing field, and they both equally contribute towards the communication process. The author is of the opinion that both agents are concurrently engaged in the sending and receiving of messages, in a reciprocal manner, and interchanging their roles as the process evolves. They are therefore equally accountable for the result produced by the communication since this process does not revolve around the transmission of messages alone but implies the shared construction of meaning as well. This premise highlights the fact that this model is designed bearing in mind interpersonal and intrapersonal communication forms alone, as it is grounded in the notion of instant and simultaneous feedback, which becomes a new message and triggers yet another new message.

This approach considers the context of the environment of both source and receiver, as well as the concept of noise, a salient topic since both source and receiver generate noise by talking at the same time. This American academic argues that for this process to be effective both communication agents need to share a similar cultural background, since the model establishes a connection with social reality and relational context. This is logical in the surrounding conditions of this theoretical framework, taking into consideration the fact that non-verbal elements are also regarded as feedback in this intellectual contribution. Barnlund (1970) bases his scientific proposal in the argument that there are seven communication postulates. In his view, communication features the following characteristics: it describes the evolution of meaning; is dynamic; is continuous; is circular; is unrepeatable; is complex; and is irreversible.

3.7 Operational environment

3.7.1 The outline of public opinion toward the European Union

An extensive body of knowledge on the viewpoints of the public toward European integration is available today, both in terms of popular support and opposition to it.

During the initial stages of the European process, no need was felt in gauging public support to it: *“It suffices to single out and define the political elites in the participating countries, to study the reactions to integration and assess changes in attitude on their part.”* (Haas, 1958, p. 17) If time travel would have been a possibility, Ernst Haas might well have met European tourists from the future. If he had, they would perhaps have mentioned to him that time alters everything, including ideas, institutions, the social fabric, and the perception that citizens have of those ideas and institutions. *“Change alone is eternal, perpetual, immortal.”* (Schopenhauer, 2010, p. 39)

Time changed the nature of the European project, which mutated into a hybrid ecosystem, and along with it citizens' impressions and role in legitimizing it. The term Euroscepticism appeared for the first time in the print media in 1985 in the British newspaper *The Times*, as a new word to reflect an emerging reality (Ultan and Ornek, 2015). Indeed, it is proposed nowadays that the European integration ideal has become ever more contested and politicized (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016; Zürn, 2018), placing the whole of the Union under significant strain. The move mentioned in the first chapter of this work, from a permissive consensus (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) toward a constraining dissensus (Hooghe and Marks, 2009), is closely related with the empowerment of civil society, who now holds in its hands, consciously or even not so much, the future of this ambitious project, which is more and more reliant on broader popular legitimacy (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016).

The signature of the Treaty on European Union in 1992 was a turning point, which was at the origin of the first wave of academic literature on popular support to European integration (Franklin, Marsh and McLaren, 1994; Gabel and Palmer, 1995; Siune and Svensson, 1993; Siune, Svensson and Tonsgaard, 1994; Worre, 1995).

Interestingly, early studies published in the 1990-decade focus on support for European integration but evolved in the 2000s to scholarship on opposition to European integration (Hakhverdian *et al.*, 2013; Hooghe, 2007; Leconte, 2010).

Most of the literature focuses on individual-level determinants of support to or rejection of the EU, and share another commonality, namely the fact that they concentrate on overall EU regime support or rejection, rather than on policy-specific endorsement or refusal. A few exceptions are studies on enlargement (Hobolt, 2014; Schuck and De Vreese, 2006) and on the single currency (Banducci, Karp and Loedel, 2009; Gabel and Hix, 2005; Hobolt and Wratil, 2015; Kaltenthaler and Anderson, 2001).

Easton (1965; 1975) is the leading researcher reflecting on popular backing for governance structures and draws a distinction between regime support and policy-specific support or diffuse and specific political support. In the context of the EU, De Wilde and Trenz (2012) posit the need to discern between overall regime support for membership and integration, and policy-specific support for accelerating integration in different policy areas. In contrast to what occurs in a democratic state, regime support in the European context is intrinsically precarious (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016).

Another interesting feature of much of the literature is that it reflects on public opinion as the dependent variable, while a reduced amount of attention is devoted to the impacts of public opinion on integration. Studies on the relationship between public attitudes and European policy outcomes are still in its infancy (Crombez and Hix, 2015), against the backdrop of concerns about a deficit of democratic participation in the European process (Dehousse, 1995; Shepherd, 1975) and the responsiveness of the EU to the public (Williams and Bevan, 2019). The academic debate on democratic deficit within the EU is vivid and its contentions are grouped in six main categories, namely lack of accountability, consensus, continuity, legitimacy, protection, and transparency (König, 2007; Zweifel, 2002).

A few exceptions must be highlighted. Moravcsik (2002) reminds its readers that the Council and the EP are indirectly and directly elected respectively, but that the EC is not. Therefore, the first two institutions mentioned can be more easily evaluated and eventually penalized by the general public, while the EC is at least partially immune to such judgement (Ferejohn, 1986; Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2008). Studies conducted by Bølstad (2015) and Toshkov (2011) point to the existing link between

public opinion toward the EU and the normative activity of both the Council and the EP.

However, research also suggests that, within democratic contexts, even unelected bodies respond to public views (Bevan, 2015; Casillas, Enns and Wohlfarth, 2011; Rauh, 2016). In line with this intellectual proposal, Williams and Bevan (2019) emphasize that the EC also reacts to varying degrees of collective public attitudes toward the European project, behaving this institution in a different way in terms of unilateral legal act adoption at dissimilar times of public views about the project.

Moreover, Franklin and Wlezien (1997) conclude that public opinion is responsive to adopted European policies, behaving in the following manner: when more policies are agreed upon, popular support declines; as fewer policies are approved, support for the European project surges amongst the general public.

The vast body of academic literature on popular support for and opposition to integration within the European continent can be aggregated into three key categories, namely utilitarian expectations, identity values, and domestic politics.

The utilitarian expectations cluster revolves around the axis of economic motivations and rational actor assumptions. It postulates that individual support to European integration is associated with expectations of reaping economic benefits, thus allowing for its classification as an individualistic perspective. Studies at both macro- and micro-economic levels suggest that when citizens consider they will obtain economic advantages from, for example, allocation of cohesion funds, improved trade, or net financial transfers, they will increasingly support national membership and further European integration (Anderson and Kaltenhaler, 1996; Anderson and Reichert, 1996; Carrubba, 1997; Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993). Analogous predictions in terms of support for the single currency were rendered in the context of The Netherlands by Van Everdingen and Van Raaij (1998), just before the adoption of the Euro. And indeed, using statistical tools, Piret Ehin (2001) validates the claim that backing for European integration is directly affected by individual prospects of economic gain, lending credibility to the “what’s in it for me” attitude.

Another batch of literature is organized around identity values, a category which is grounded in cultural beliefs and norms rather than in potential economic benefits. It considers that the European project is far more than an economic integration project alone, incorporating a significant cultural dimension that is reflected in the sharing of sovereignty for the pursuit of common objectives. In this sense it lends more weight to

considerations of identity values and national communities, examining matters of possible erosion of independence, self-determination, and sovereignty (Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2006).

Deviating from utilitarian factors, it concentrates on identity issues, which can prove even more relevant considerations than economic factors, as highlighted by Hooghe and Marks (2005). Another aspect of this approach can be contemplated in the research carried out by De Vreese and Boomgaarden (2005), which draws attention to negative attitudes towards immigrants and other minority groups within the EU. Also, this perspective develops around national identities rather than a single European identity, acknowledging that additional effort is required to establish a conceptual framework for a European identity, and from there to understand how such collective personality would manifest its views in terms of aggregate support to European integration (Bruter, 2003; Bruter, 2005).

Notwithstanding the importance of this strand, some researchers recognize that, as the process evolves and intensifies, and particularly in more fragile member states in economic terms, identity issues are being relegated to a second position when compared to utilitarian expectations (Kuhn and Stoeckel, 2014). Citizens seem to consider that a Euro in disarray is not an appealing possibility ... (Hobolt and Leblond, 2013)

A third and significant group of studies converge around domestic politics (Franklin, Marsh and McLaren, 1994; Franklin, Van Der Eijk and Marsh, 1995). This category is grounded in two core assumptions: firstly, the realist notion that while a multitude of actors are now active on the international stage, statehood remains coin of the global realm (Ankersen and Sidhu, 2021); and secondly, that the integration process is far too convoluted and detached from the day-to-day of commoners for them to have adequate attention, consciousness, or spiritual connection to build their views on an informed assessment of the consequences of European integration (Anderson, 1998; Wessels, 1995). They decide instead to trust on proxies within the domestic political context, be they national governments, news media, or political parties.

In possession of more information – and perhaps interest – about the performance of their national governments, research indicates that some link their views on European integration to their personal appraisal of national governments (Anderson, 1998; Kritzinger, 2003). Others, however, argue there is at times a mirror

effect which depicts an inverse perception of the performance of national and European institutions (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). This is in line with findings that individuals who are politically informed can differentiate between national and European topics and institutions when assessing a particular context (Karp, Banducci and Bowler, 2003).

National news media are also a key source of information for European citizens (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016). Studies reveal that media coverage shapes individual attitudes toward the EU (Azrout, Van Spanje and De Vreese, 2012; De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2006; Schuck and De Vreese, 2006).

National political parties also play an important role in this domain, as citizens who endorse parties in favour of integration are then themselves more prone to support the European project, as described by Hellström (2008) and Hobolt (2007).

The contrasting effect also merits attention, as in the current days blaming the European institutions is a popular pastime of governments and national political parties when things don't go exactly the way they envision. The ambiguity surrounding the EU is more and more politicized and explored in the public discourse of national political parties, as well as in electoral competition (De Vreese, 2003; De Vries, 2007). In any event, the influence established between national political parties and their electorates is a mutual undertaking, since party directorates influence the viewpoints of their followers, but are also affected by them, as shown by Gabel and Scheve (2007), having to adjust to the preferences of their own party members.

By means of logistic regression, Ehin (2001) again confirms the validity of the domestic politics approach, showing the statistically significant relation between trust in national governments and support for European integration. As such, evidence suggests that mass attitudes towards the European project are affected by domestic politics (Ehin, 2001).

Not all consulted studies can however be allocated to one of the above three categories. In the case of Poland, for example, one author describes that a polling institute characterizes public views on integration as a mixture of apprehensions, aspirations, and mythologies (Millard, 1999).

The literature review conducted on this topic lends credibility to the importance of the cueing theory (Bullock, 2011; Druckman and Lupia, 2000; Zaller, 1992), which specifies that citizens hardly ever have conversant, reliable, steady, and well-developed political attitudes, and are therefore susceptible to elite messages

(Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020). Moreover, it is argued that three types of elites are particularly prominent communicators about international organizations, namely national governments, civil society organizations, and the international organizations themselves (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020).

In view of this statement and in the case of Europe, the official information and communication efforts carried out by the EC through the EDIR might have been relevant to overcome citizens' information shortfalls at the local and regional levels - and perhaps also to project a positive image of the EU.

3.7.2 The European public sphere

The debate on the profile of public opinion toward the EU shows the way to another noteworthy discussion, namely about the existence of an EU-wide public opinion. Is there a European public opinion as such? Or to be more accurate, is there a European public sphere which encompasses a European public opinion as one of its elements?

The topic of the European public sphere has been profusely explored, including its understanding in multi-level structures of governance and representation. Contributions from academics, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers have been published, leading to a mix of policy-oriented recommendations.

Several works in the field are rooted in the seminal intellectual contribution of Jürgen Habermas (1962), which has earlier been mentioned in this same chapter. This home-grown disciple of the Frankfurt School places emphasis on contemporary politics, the fundamentals of social theory and epistemology, the scrutiny of progressive capitalistic societies and democratic systems, and the rule of law in a socio-evolutionary perspective.

The forefather of the theory of the social evolution based it in the concept of reconstructive science, placing a general theory of society between philosophy and social science, and re-establishing the separation between generic theorisation and empirical research. This thought on social evolution guided his work on the structural transformation of the public sphere, as the author identified a moving socio-political-philosophical context in culture and society which was dominated by a representational culture during feudalism and until the French Revolution, being

replaced by a public sphere culture after that point in time, and more visibly during the capitalist stage.

It was in the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity, namely in the 15th and 16th centuries in the western part of Europe, that the notion of public sphere originated. It was a place in which private individuals and public authorities met and maintained talks about public matters, as a counterbalance to officialdom. It could occur in different gatherings or settings, around a coffee table, or in taverns. As a public space outside the control of the authorities, its key elements were an engaged public, its open nature, dialogues, and direct or mediated exchanges.

The public sphere was thus described as a general arena in political terms, displaying a compounded network that broadens into numerous imbricate international, national, regional, local, and subcultural domains, which are permeable in their relations and generate webs. Its merits were highlighted by reasoning that it is a positive element to keep the powers that be within boundaries.

Later, Habermas (1981) developed two other relevant theories in this domain.

The first one was the theory of communicative rationality, which refers primarily to the use of knowledge and reason in language and action. This approach describes human rationality as an outcome of successful communication and examines the process by which different validity claims are brought to a satisfactory resolution.

Denouncing the one-way paradigm brought about by economic and administrative rationalisation, the author equates modernisation with a real possibility of revival of the public sphere, in which a representative democracy reliant on national states is progressively replaced by a deliberative democracy founded on political organs based on equal rights and obligations of citizens. In this deliberative-driven political system the public sphere is the place where debates on matters of public importance are held.

Consequently, the author elaborates on the theory of communicative action, as a process through which individuals form their own identities but also achieve mutual understandings. It serves both to transmit and renew cultural knowledge, but also as a tool for solidarity and social integration.

This body of principles illuminated a widely used and descriptive definition of European public sphere:

“It is a common space for free communication that is secured by legal rights to freedom of expression and assembly, where problems are discovered, but also thematised and

dramatized and formed into opinions and wills that formal decision-making agencies are to act upon." (Eriksen and Fossum, 2002, p. 403)

The above definition is the starting point for what Nieminen (2006) identifies as the four concepts of the European public sphere: an arena for debate with established procedures and structures open to all EU citizens; the relationship between individuals and society; a supranational public sphere carved around Europe; and European media public representations.

The positions of different scholars on this topic vary between optimistic and pessimistic approaches, including supporters, pragmatists, sceptics, and critics. Some contend the elements for the creation of a European public sphere are currently absent from the integration process: Eriksen and Fossum (2002) argue no European demos exists, in which they are seconded by Seoane Pérez, who writes that "*... the European demos is not yet there, or at least it is far from its functional completeness.*" (Pérez, 2013, p. 101) Conrad questions whether a communication without a community can effectively function, "*... in the presumed absence of an overarching European collective identity.*" (Conrad, 2014, p. 25), and De Vreese (2007) lists a common language, shared identity, and a transnational media system as key conditions for a European public sphere to materialize. This author further sees the Europeanisation of national public spaces as crucial to the emergence, legitimacy, and accountability of the European public sphere. Eriksen (2007) presents three types of European public spheres - a general public sphere, transnational segmented publics, and strong publics -, and mentions the possible establishment of the first one through pan-European media using English as a common language.

This opinion is not shared by other scholars, who argue that culture plays an important role in the generation of any public sphere, and that the lack of a collective background and identity, of a common language, and of a European-wide media system prove as obstacles hard to overcome (Crusafon, 2012; Gripsrud, 2012).

Others are of the view that modern technology creates new identities which go beyond geographical borders and make them less relevant (Moore and McDonald, 2012), offering the possibility of creation of a European public sphere through communication and participation of EU citizens in discussions held via social media, with the potential of generating an emotional attachment to the EU (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012). The active online participation of political actors in European discussions is

considered as an important element for building a European public sphere (Van Os, Jankowski and Wester, 2009). However, the permanent online status of citizens calls for a different type of communication approach, more agile, contextual, and time sensitive (Bierhoff, 2012).

On a different note, Belluati (2012) posits the most discussed topics within a society are linked to local interests. Consequently, the EU visibility at the grassroots level depends on the local implications of the work it develops. According to this researcher, the creation of a European public sphere can only be achieved if the EU institutions intensify its relations with local institutions and other territorial stakeholders, tailoring its communication to the local circumstances and adapting it to the local language, and increasingly supporting local debate on European affairs.

Others however believe the discussion on the possible creation of a European public sphere is off-track, since the requirement is for the EU institutions to have awareness of conversations held in local public spheres in the context of European policies (Ambrosi, 2012).

Heft and Pfetsch (2012) underscore that the emergence of a European public sphere is a long-term process stemming from the Europeanisation of public debates in national arenas and can rise both within the national and transnational spaces if issues of common concern are simultaneously discussed and stimulate resonance on European politics. Furthermore, the authors bring to the table the need to combine input legitimacy with output legitimacy, something that is currently not fully practised within the EU environment.

It is important to bear in mind that the communicative actions taken by different entities, at the European and national levels, all produce system-wide effects on a variety of public spheres. For the general public, the image of the EU is assembled under the influence of numerous and wide-ranging communicative inputs from a variety of sources. Hence, the complexity of the issues related to the European public sphere calls for a comprehensive and blended analysis, at the crossroads of citizenship, communication, culture, education, history, information, media, governance, among others.

The mentioned literature lists, as described above, several challenges for the possible creation of a European public sphere, but a few seem to be accepted in a generalized manner. These are the limited collaboration in terms of information and communication amongst the EU institutions, the heterogeneous cooperation between

different EU institutions and national authorities of member states in the area of information and communication, the absence of common civic education, different levels of schooling and interest in European issues by different sections of European public opinions, and the lack of both legal instruments and political will for the creation of a truly pan-European media sector.

A starting point could perhaps be the adoption of a common information and communication strategy of EU institutions and national governments on EU issues, complemented by a structure tasked with carrying it out and subsequently evaluated through the achieved results.

If the media act as gatekeepers in public communication (McQuail, 1994), they may have a relevant role in the “... *Europeanization of national public spheres*.” (Pfetsch, Adam and Eschner, 2010, p. 151) Moreover, if the relationship between citizenship and the European public sphere is based on daily media appropriation, as postulated by Hepp *et al.* (2012), then it is relevant to analyse the media landscape for a better understanding of this reality.

3.7.3 Media landscape

“Media attention is important in forming public opinion and allowing citizens to form their ideas.” (Bergamini and Murlon-Druol, 2021, p. 1) This statement may appear as a truism to some, but there seems to be available room for additional scientific research in the area of the media - as defined and categorized in section 3.3 of this work - and its potential influence on the general public, particularly at the European level, which may further extend and perhaps strengthen academic knowledge in this domain.

So far, researchers have scrutinized case studies, such as the quality press in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom after the end of World War II and 1997 (Díez Medrano, 2003), or the print media in the United Kingdom in the early 1960s (Häussler, 2014). Efforts have also been devoted to examining the press coverage of European summits (Meyer, 2010), or the public discussion evolving around deeper integration in the early 1990s, at the time of the negotiation of the legal text adopted at Maastricht (Barth and Bijsmans, 2018). Also, the reporters working on European topics and even their activism for the project at times have not gone unnoticed and are the object of academic studies (Baisnée, 2003; Herzer, 2019).

But it was only the 2008 paper authored by Vliegenthart, Schuck, Boomgaarden and De Vreese that clearly suggested that media coverage has a sizeable impact on the general public within the EU-wide context (Vliegenthart *et al.*, 2008). By inquiring about the topic of news framing inscribed within the concepts of benefits or conflict, they reached the above conclusion in the framework of the European integration process.

What most of the consulted literature has in common is that it focuses predominantly on traditional media, and amongst these mainly on the print media.

Perhaps this should not come as a surprise, since it is only in recent years that more sophisticated statistical tools and user-friendly machine-based learning technologies have allowed for the treatment of fairly wide-ranging audio-visual data and digital records, specifically information carried over the internet. Yet, future research on other media may yield interesting results, bearing in mind a few facts about the media landscape in the EU.

In available research on media use across the bloc, the Statistical Office of the EU reveals an interesting scenario in this domain (Eurostat, 2019c).

Television continues to be the most widely used medium in the EU, as 81% of the respondents claim to watch it every day or almost every day (Eurostat, 2019c). This is followed by using the internet, which has been steadily growing in the last decade and is nowadays utilized by more than two-thirds of the respondents (69%, to be exact) daily or almost daily. The frequent use of online social networks ensues (48%), followed by listening to the radio at 47%, and finally reading the written press at 26% of the respondents, displaying the lowest reach (Eurostat, 2019c).

Striking disparities remain within the Union. Television maintains a strong presence in the south of the continent, while newspaper reading is more relevant in the north than in the east or the south. The unpleasant news for the print media, however, is that their consumption is continuously declining across the EU, especially amongst youngsters and amidst a trend of tabloidization of news (Eurostat, 2019c).

However, a ray of hope may exist for all traditional media - radio, television, and written press - as the respondents seem to trust them more than the contents they access via the internet or online social networks. Only 32% of the respondents allege to trust the internet, and a meagre 20% affirm their belief in online social networks. On the opposite side of the confidence spectrum, radio is the most trusted source (57%), followed by the television (49%) and the written press at 46% (Eurostat, 2019c).

The study in question also looks at media treatment of the EU, interrogating the respondents about their perception of the amount of coverage granted by different media to EU topics. In this domain there seem to exist no remarkable dissimilarities between the different media examined: a majority of respondents consider that the media talk “about the right amount” about the EU, and the percentages are not that far apart from one another: 50% for the television, 49% for the print media, 47% for the radio, 45% for websites, and at the end of this ranking the online social networks with 35% (Eurostat, 2019c).

An important caveat must be highlighted in this issue, which is that a significant share of the respondents affirms not to know whether these media talk too much, about the right amount, or too little about the EU: 38% in relation to online social networks, 30% for websites, 22% for the print media, 20% for the radio and 10% for the television (Eurostat, 2019c). These numbers may suggest that these percentages of respondents are not following the media treatment of the EU.

Media activity takes place in Europe within the framework of several EU policies and regulation, as described in section 2.2.1. These outlets are subject in the first place to national regulatory authorities, but also to EU-wide controls, since broadcasting is not only a cultural matter, but also a tradeable services issue, configuring a tension between cultural and economic dimensions. Furthermore, even when national restrictions on ownership are in place, pluralism may face challenges when commercial concentration takes place, or when non-media conglomerates possess media companies, which may affect their editorial line or independence. Yet another concern is to balance freedom of speech with the presence of large players in this market, with the possibility of dealing with dominant and extra-EU media conglomerates.

It is against this backdrop in the media sector that recent research offers further insights in relation to the print media. After quantitatively examining nearly 13 million full-text newspaper articles published between 1945 and 2019 in three well-established written press outlets from France, Germany, and Italy (Bergamini and Mourlon-Druol, 2021), conclusions are drawn. These indicate that coverage of European news is on the rise when compared to national news, with a noticeable increase of velocity in the 1990s, correlated with the upgrade in the nature of the process coined at Maastricht (Bergamini and Mourlon-Druol, 2021). Key milestones of the European project are linked with intensified coverage, be they European elections,

institutional highpoints, or summits (Bergamini and Mourlon-Druol, 2021). However, this does not equate to a more confident posture by the general public toward the EU, but rather implies additional attention is devoted to it (Bergamini and Mourlon-Druol, 2021).

Further research on coverage of EU issues and impact of new media will likely develop over time and present valuable conclusions, as many open questions remain, in topics such as consultation, participation, perception, or regulation. For the time being, some prefer to point to potential benefits of its increased use to the European project, emphasizing that “*The spread of digital technology, especially among younger people, could ultimately lead to a different, less nation-centric debate about the role of Europe.*” (Cœuré, 2018, p. 6) Others examine it from a gloomier perspective: “... *the advent of 24x7 global social media, coupled with fact less news or fake news, armies of trolls and the ability to influence millions across borders instantaneously poses new disruptive threats.*” (Ankersen and Sidhu, 2021, p. 4)

Even though logic and evidence are ever more exalted in different sectors, from policymaking to thinking, Kane (2021) alerts the readers that fake news are accelerative leading to the post-truth world societies are proceeding to, in which logical arguments and facts are irrelevant, and only what each individual chooses to believe in matters. Engaging with diverse sources of information and questioning their credibility seems out of date.

Irrespective of the trends that will prevail in the future in terms of online social media analysis, it is useful to realize that outlets in this category do not share the same sincerity trait of the Magic Mirror in *Snow White*. Online social media tailor their contents to each specific user, and therefore never respond like the Magic Mirror did to the Evil Queen in the famous tale. And this certainly is a noticeable difference when compared to other media.

3.8 The essence of the Europe Direct Information Relays

3.8.1 A public relations' instrument

Both the letter and spirit of document COM(2004) 196 final inscribe the conception of the EDIR network within the boundaries of information and

communication and recognize its value as a public relations tool for the European institutions.

Public relations, defined as an art and science to achieve harmony between an organization and its surrounding publics, based on a mutual understanding anchored in complete information (Black, 1993), is a legitimate form of persuasion.

Brüggemann, however, takes a different approach, considering that “... *public relations activities may serve or distort free public discussion.*” (Brüggemann, 2010, p. 71), and “... *might or might not promote democratic communication.*” (Brüggemann, 2010, p. 71) Such statements can be attributed to some ambiguity contained in the definition of propaganda, which pursues compelling objectives and often resorts to scheming practices. The two terms, propaganda and public relations, are nevertheless distinct, as described by Black (1993). The abovementioned COM document contains no explicit reference to the use of illegitimate persuasion as an instrument or to European integration as a goal.

The Treaty on European Union pursued the aim of moving Europe closer to the general public, permitting the bloc to develop new initiatives and policies to better protect and serve the citizens. Testimony of that is, for example, the introduction of the European citizenship, which entailed the right of EU citizens to stand and vote in local, regional, and European elections in their country of residence, regardless of national citizenship; the establishment of legal consular protection when travelling; the creation of the right to petition to the EP, by which every European citizen and all natural or legal residents of the EU have been granted the prerogative to submit a petition to this body, in the form of a complaint or a request, on an issue that falls within the EU's fields of competence; the founding of the European Ombudsman; and the significant reform of the legislative process, introducing the co-decision procedure with the Council and making the EC increasingly accountable to the EP, directly elected by the citizens (Leclerc, 2013; Pinto Cardoso *et al.*, 2017; Sousa de Jesus, 2005).

This led some to affirm that after Maastricht the European construction project became an issue in which the peoples of Europe are granted a voice as well (Sousa, 1999). It is even ambitiously argued by some scholars that “*The European citizen hereby becomes a new player in the classic decision-making triangle of Europe...*” (Țuțuianu and Preda, 2018, p. 43). Several years later, the introduction of the European Citizens' Initiative under Regulation (EU) 211/2011 of 16 February 2011 (see Official Journal of the European Union L 65, 11 March 2011) aimed at providing

a stronger voice to EU citizens by giving them the right to call directly on the EC to bring forward new policy initiatives. Through this instrument, it was expected that both the general public and civil society organizations could find a more fertile ground for taking part in the design of European policies. At least one million citizens from one quarter of the member states were then entitled to formally request the EC to present legislative proposals in policy areas in which it has the power to do so.

If it is stated that “*The European Union has a problem with its citizens.*” (Brüggemann, 2010, p. 67), then it is no wonder that EU information and communication activities and strategies have noticeably changed since the defining moment of the signature of the Treaty on European Union (Valentini, 2008). According to Elías and Mascaray, public administrations have been, for several years, the ultimate non-communication specialists (Elías and Mascaray, 1998), and hence a radical modification in this area was in order. The efforts undertaken by the European institutions in this field for the last two decades are commended by some scholars, who consider that

“*Currently it can be said that the EU is one of the public administrations most concerned with establishing information and communication mechanisms, and as a result it is also one of the most transparent.*” (Martín González and Terra, 2013, p. 320)

These information and communication endeavours coincided with a time of widespread adoption of the use of the internet and its establishment as a valuable information media (Muñoz-Cañavate and Hípola, 2016) and had a visible impact on the selected channels and platforms of communication (Podkalicka and Shore, 2010). This, in turn, called for a necessary upgrade of information literacy skills by end users of EU information (Terra, 2009). It is suggested that the advent of the internet and of social media has generated a shift in the concept of citizen, who evolved from being a customer of the administration into being a co-creator or a partner of that same entity (Bonsón, Royo and Ratkai, 2015; Marino and Lo Presti, 2018).

The prospect of new media serving as an agent to increase trust in the European project did not remain undetected (Just, 2010). Others, in turn, consider that “*... people spend more time with technology but probably the engaged democracy is less than at any point in history.*” (Kent, 2013, p. 338)

In spite, however, of all the efforts, several support the view that the EU is continuously failing to convey its institutions, messages, and policies to the European citizens (Valentini, 2008). Bloj and Schweitzer state, in the framework of their overall positive assessment of the term 2014-2019 of the European Commission, that “*The real negative remains, as has been the case for many years, communication.*” (Bloj and Schweitzer, 2019, p. 16) They further add that the Commission “... *had refused to communicate with citizens directly, intelligently and simply.*” (Bloj and Schweitzer, 2019, p. 16) Others suggest more broadly the EU is unable to tailor its messages to different audiences (Anderson, 2004; Featherstone, 1994).

In the 1990 decade, a few identified the term uncertainty as the keyword to describe the European construction project - a threefold uncertainty to be exact, encompassing its model, nature, and objectives (Sousa, 1999). In the current days, however, the doubts that are reflected on the European societies by a project whose strength is daily challenged by strong tensions makes the use of the term crisis more common (Soromenho-Marques, 2019). It is noticeable to a European observer that some seem to have lost hope in the EU's role in achieving a better collective future and are at the same time condemning it for being responsible for all negative aspects - real or perceived - of the present in multiple spheres. The ambiguity and doubt that are making its course in European societies are considered by some to be a consequence of the failure of the European institutions in getting closer to citizens, by lacking a coherent and systematic outreach formulation and implementation policy (Valentini, 2006). Communication is therefore blamed for the current crisis. But is this really the case?

The convoluted political puzzle which constitutes the EU, duly examined by Føllesdal and Hix (2006), might well be one of the reasons for the crisis. The ambition in the European construction project is one of the seeds of this predicament.

As the Union became tasked with additional competencies and powers, especially in domains that were previously of the exclusive sovereign responsibility of member states, it faced the challenge to provide an adequate response to them, very much in line with the one given by states individually. In confronting that test, the Union displayed its lack of agility, its ineffectiveness and slowness. This was apparent in a myriad of cases, from the financial crisis that gripped Greece, to the relationship with the Russian Federation or the handling of the Ukrainian predicament. And it probably can't be different. This is in no way or form a reproach. For the formation of its common

will, the Union must ensure it respects the democratic processes of its member states, which is essential to guarantee the legitimacy of its decisions. Differently from other regional collaboration experiences, the “... *most advanced experiment ever in multilateral cooperation and political integration* ...” (Bomberg, Peterson and Corbett, 2012, p. 7) rests on the premise of the primacy of democracy - and it has even coined the term conditionality as “... *imposing or threatening to impose sanctions or providing or promising to provide rewards in order to promote or protect democracy.*” (Schmitter and Brouwer, 1999, p. 15)

Moreover, “*Times of economic crisis are very challenging for democratic systems.*” (Smismans, 2013, p. 351) The author is correct. This can be witnessed in the case of the EU. A study commissioned by the EP and published by the European Parliament Research Service reveals, based on an analysis of the *Standard Eurobarometer* between the years 1973 and 2016, that economic conditions have had a decisive reverberation on swings in European public opinion, with a substantial deterioration of the EU's image and trust in it and its institutions in times of economic predicaments (Nancy, 2016).

The banking and subsequent sovereign debt crises in Europe, which led to the imposition of severe austerity measures in a few member states, was often the root cause of social frustration and turbulence, which paved the way for a negative sentiment towards the Union in different social groups, although with a variable intensity across the bloc. Even if official data reveals that income inequality has remained approximately steady in the EU between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, 2019a), there is an extensive belief that it is continuously on the rise and is swelling by the rich amassing capital (Piketty, 2013).

On the social domain, the prevalent supposition that the alarming levels of unemployment and the eroding revenue base of the welfare state are a direct result of economic integration and supervisory competition (Scharpf, 1999) similarly call into question the EU's capacity to tackle economic and social inequities within the Union. Indeed, official data shows that the Europe 2020 strategy to promote social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, is far from achieving its target of lifting 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2019b), being able to reach only about 8.3 million people over the period 2008-2018, or a mere 41.5% of its target. Progress has certainly been made, but numerous challenges lie ahead.

In yet another area, Anthony Giddens (2014) defends that the EU is a community of fate. Interesting expression. Hermet *et al.* (2008) define community as a form of social organization in which individuals are connected amongst themselves by a natural or spontaneous solidarity and shared objectives. It is nurtured by emotions and common values. Is this the case with the EU? In the German language, the word for community of fate is *Schicksalgemeinschaft*. It is a word that became well-known in Germany in 1932, when Adolf Hitler chose it as the title of one of his first speeches to the Reichstag. *Schicksalgemeinschaft des deutschen Volkes*. A community of fate of the German people. This is the reason why this expression, contaminated by the Nazis, had to be hastily removed from a speech that in July 2008 then Senator Barack Hussein Obama delivered in Berlin (Rhodes, 2019). From an information and communication standpoint, the conclusion can only be one: if, from a semantic perspective, a word cannot be used across a defined geographical space with a similar meaning, no community exists in it. And while communication is only one aspect of a multidimensional process of social construction, it is in any case an extremely important one (Hepp *et al.*, 2016), as it is the one which articulates the meaning of each element.

From this perspective, it is somehow puzzling to note the claim that there is indeed a common culture (Chopin, 2018) when words can't even be used in the same way across the continent. Indeed, within the regional diversity of each state different signs, symbols or words present a dissimilar relation between their significance and what they stand for. Yet, embedded in collective rituals and customary heritage, a community recognizes its similar semantic value.

Moreover, in more recent times, the intricate and tortuous Brexit process is living testimony of the fragility and reversibility of this community of fate. Until that moment in time, a term often associated with the European project was construction. From then onwards, the word deconstruction joined the vocabulary of European affairs as well. And this may have far-reaching consequences for the project itself.

It is against this backdrop of numerous prevailing challenges that the EDIR were created in 2004. This date of inception might suggest that the famous Italian diplomat, politician, and historian Niccolò Machiavelli was right when he wrote in his famous political treatise that it is the common nature of men not to think of storms in good times (Machiavelli, 1532). According to Schneeberger and Sarikakis, “... *times of alleged crisis have put issues of communication firmly on the agenda of EU*

institutions.” (Schneeberger and Sarikakis, 2008, p. 269) And in order to project an image of Europe to the citizens, the institutions start from its own identity and add communication work to it (Villafañe, 1993).

It is interesting to note, from a purely theoretical communication perspective, how the creation of the EDIR was informed by a circular model of communication, and namely the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), crafted back in 1954 and featuring three main elements, namely source (encoder), receiver (decoder), and message. This convergence model, interactive in nature, encompasses the notion of feedback, even in the context of modern communication channels and tools. It can however take a long time, and therefore the reward of the source and the receiver in the communication process may come in the form of instant gratification or it may be deferred. Source and receiver may be unaware of the identity of one another, and the communication process deviates to a linear form if the receiver does not respond.

At the time when the Commission was preparing for the creation of the EDIR, it engaged in an unelaborate consultative process with partners at the local and regional levels and gathered opinions on the future feedback mechanism. The author of this text recalls that several practitioners from across the continent alerted with a certain degree of concern at the time that, in a Digital Age, when a convivial electronic community is in place (Santos, 1998), the feedback mechanism is currently performed directly and almost instantly by citizens to institutions, normally via modern media platforms, and not solely on a monthly basis by a formal structure to an institution.

Considering that “*Decisions made by EU institutions are having an increasingly profound impact on the daily life of the citizens in its Member states.*” (Terra, 2009, p. 189), the institutions, and particularly the Commission, seem to have ventured in this journey with three key concepts in mind.

First of all, that cultural contexts and factors inform the production and dissemination of European information and the establishment of communication strategies. No unvarying process in this field is identified on an EU-wide level, “... *namely a system whereby receivers interpret and glean the information intended by the sender.*” (Sievert, 2010, p. 237) In fact, the EU is “... *still a union of different cultures and nations rather than a single entity.*” (Valentini, 2008, p. 111) Even some who are persuaded that a Europeanisation phenomenon is currently ongoing

throughout the continent underline that “... *national segmentation prevails.*” (Hepp *et al.*, 2016, p. 218) Or, as Smismans describes in a straightforward manner,

“There is no European public sphere in which citizens are informed on, and take part in, political discussions. There is no European media. Communication on European issues is nationally coloured and split into different languages.” (Smismans, 2013, p. 343)

The second idea follows on the footsteps of the phrase coined by the late American Democrat politician and former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Thomas Philip “Tip” O’Neill Jr. (1994), which reads that “all politics is local”. The EU wants to directly engage with local and regional communities as a matter of priority, and to maintain its ears to the ground amongst them. Mindful of the fact that European issues are often taken hostage by national agendas or perspectives, and that the success of the construction project is relevantly linked to and dependent on the circumstances, concerns and conjunctures faced in their national turfs by the peoples of Europe, the Commission decided to step in and become an active player in the local and regional arenas as well.

The strategic value of the relationship with the local and regional communities is not an original concept. In fact, in about 500 B.C. Sun Tzu summarised it in military terms by claiming that one cannot take advantage of the nature of a specific territory without the use of local guides (Sun, circa 500 B.C., translation, 2013). In the realm of public relations, this is explained in the pertinent literature (Lendrevie *et al.*, 1996). In more recent times, the Committee of the Regions commissioned a study (Raube *et al.*, 2013) to the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies on the communication potential of local and regional authorities, focusing on the willingness, ability, resources, and potential need for support of local and regional authorities in the context of communicating the EU and more specifically the 2014 European elections (Raube *et al.*, 2013). The conclusion and recommendations of this study undoubtedly point to the high communication potential of local and regional authorities in conveying European information and communication to the local audiences (Raube *et al.*, 2013).

The third notion relates to the influence of an emotional human factor when receiving and decoding information. The American Portuguese neuroscientist António Damásio (1994) has argued in his seminal publication that it is emotion that drives the decision-making process of an individual and not reason itself. The Commission

subscribes to this concept by defending that the provision of information alone is insufficient. In its view, interpretation and a provision of meaning need to accompany the relaying of information and communication materials, as the message is permanently being reworked by other agents and often misinterpreted.

The sheer amount of resources invested in the construction of this new network - financial, human, time - validate the claim that the institutions took this process very seriously. This doesn't appear to be an unassuming public relations initiative, perhaps in line with the ones prescribed by Maitland (1999), nor correspond to the adoption of a practical exercise of public relations drawn from a specialized textbook (Barquero, 1995). The institutions want to confront the recurring issue of lack of dialogue between the institutions and the citizens, as pointed in the research by Eriksen and Fossum (2004) and Michailidou (2008). Yet, the institutions also aim to "... *affect the European citizen engagement and stimulate both citizen attachment to the institutions and public consensus.*" (Marino and Lo Presti, 2018, p. 40) Finally, some expand on the idea that while citizens have now a voice in the European construction project, they are in fact not listened to by the European institutions (Boucher, 2009). The text of SEC(2005) 985 final bears testament to the fact that the institutions understood the value of listening and thus incorporated the feedback element as a central component of this novel network.

Valentini ponders on the question of whether the association established between the EU, EDIC and civil society organisations is some sort of enchanted partnership (Valentini, 2010), based on a case study of the Italian EDIC network and the information and communication actions carried out by them at the local and regional levels. Against the background of the findings, this scholar concludes that while the role of EDIC is certainly positive, as they are closer to citizens and local communities, their communicative impact is nevertheless limited (Valentini, 2010). In the view of this author, grounded in the Italian experience, one of the main factors that contributes to this is the nature of the host entities, as these will push for the participation of the respective EDIC in EU-wide public debates when they "... *have specific interests and thus see in their participation a way to affect political outcomes towards policies that favour their organisational goals.*" (Valentini, 2010, p. 160) As a consequence of this, EDIC stimulate dialogue with citizens at the local and regional levels, but "... *their role is merely of a tool for some EU public communications.*" (Valentini, 2010, p. 160) In short, a public relations' instrument.

3.8.2 A tool to support European integration?

At these challenging times, when the law of perpetual change advocated by Heraclitus of Ephesus seems to be at the crux of the European construction project, which is being built along the way, could the EDIR have played a role in terms of support to European integration? It is paramount to bear in mind the lessons of Tsoukalis, who reminds European citizens that the fate of the project will not be decided in Brussels (Tsoukalis, 2016). It will be decided at the national level, in all local and regional communities, against a backdrop of rapid change in domestic political landscape (Tsoukalis, 2016). This may have been the added value of the EDIR, and one of the mysteries this study may contribute to unravel.

Europe has come a long way in the last centuries. Its modern history is synonymous with conflict and war, not only within the continent itself but also in other geographical locations where the European power was projected (Jackson and Sørensen, 2013). Several attempts were made by different players to unite the continent by force, whether by the Habsburg Empire, Louis XIV, Napoleon, or Hitler, to name just a few (Jackson and Sørensen, 2013; Martins, 2005). The dark continent is a term used to describe it then (Mazower, 1998).

Yet, while this process was ongoing, Elias (2000) claims that the citizens within the European states were undergoing a relevant civilizing process between the 15th and the 20th centuries, identifying more closely with one another, and enjoying additional levels of personal security. Linklater (2011) supports the view that Elias' (2000) theoretical proposal can be stretched and is applicable to the international domain as well, pointing to contemporary Europe as a testament to the ability of the civilizing process to reach beyond the nation-state (Linklater, 2011). This follows on the heels of Oakeshott (1975) stance, who raises objections to Thomas Hobbes' state of nature condition (Hobbes, 1946) and believes that individuals are civilized by fear of death.

This may well be at the origin of alternative proposals to bring Europe together by peaceful means, of which the suggestions put forward by Victor Hugo, Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi or Aristide Briand are examples of (Martins, 2005).

When Jean Monnet, regarded as one of the forefathers of European integration, was able to persuade the federalist Robert Schuman, who had become the French foreign minister in July 1948, to table his proposal of creation of the European Coal

and Steel Community through the cabinet, an initial step had been given towards a fundamental political priority of generating the basis for reconciliation in the continent (Tsoukalis, 2016), and achieving and maintaining durable peace in Europe (Cini and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, 2013; Pinder and Usherwood, 2013).

Indeed, as described by Linklater, the EU's predecessor first task was to pacify relations between France and Germany (Linklater, 2011). Contrary to some opinions, the founding fathers aimed at obtaining political goals by political means, and it was the crushing failure of the European Defence Community exercise which left the economic option as the single viable route (Griffiths, 2012). In the specific context of that time, in the aftermath of World War II, the pursuit of cooperation in more politically sensitive areas hit the hard rock of national sovereignty (Tsoukalis, 2016).

The European Union of today, which represents the most advanced experiment ever in multilateral cooperation and political integration (Bomberg, Peterson and Corbett, 2012), remains, in spite of all its problems, one of the most impressive political achievements of modern times (Hix, 2014). It is not only a unique entity that has become deeply institutionalized (Hermet *et al.*, 2008; Karns and Mingst, 2010). It is also a truly supranational institution (Hurd, 2014), configuring a political puzzle which is hard to decipher or classify (Bomberg, Peterson and Corbett, 2012; Tsoukalis, 2011). Indeed, it bears little resemblance to any other regional organization in the world (Tsoukalis, 2005). Furthermore, Europe is now a model for many people in different corners of the planet (Tsoukalis, 2016), who aspire to be one day exclusively faced with the same predicaments as European citizens currently are.

McLaren and Guerra (2013) and Tsoukalis (2005) agree that the European construction began in the 1950s as an elite-driven process. For decades citizens were kept apart from this integration process and largely considered as irrelevant to it (Hobolt, 2012). These were the times of the permissive consensus of the people (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) which characterized the first decades of the process, anchored in the premise that elites could steer new initiatives and propel wider and deeper integration as long as the end results were considered as positive to the general public. Tsoukalis summarizes this plot of the few using the following words:

“The early European success story had been based on an elitist, yet benign, conspiracy led by the French, later in close cooperation with the Germans, with support from virtually all mainstream parties in participating countries with the exception of the

UK, and relying on a wide permissive consensus of citizens who supported integration as long as it was seen to be delivering the goods.” (Tsoukalis, 2016, p. 147)

This consensus, however, gradually eroded as the process moved along, and met its demise in 1992, when core issues of sovereignty were touched upon at Maastricht. The negative outcome of the Danish referendum in this regard was the first confirmation of its end, closely followed by the narrow margin of approval in the subsequent French referendum on the same topic (Cini and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, 2013). It was time for the emergence of what Hooghe and Marks named the “constraining dissensus” (Hooghe and Marks, 2009), pointing out that “... *referendums are elite-initiated events which can have elite-defying consequences.*” (Hooghe and Marks, 2009, p. 20)

Anchored in the teachings of Auguste Comte, Bronislaw Malinowski or Herbert Spencer on structural functionalism, the starting point of the European construction project was that societies have needs and that institutions and practices can be explained in terms of the functions they perform for the survival of the whole (Burnham, 2018). Functionalism is one of the dominant paradigms regarding the analysis of society, describing it as an intricate structure whose parts work alongside each other for the promotion of the overall solidarity and stability (Hermet *et al.*, 2008). Yet, specific theoretical frameworks applicable to the study of the EU emerged in the context of international relations (Pollack, 2012), as this novel entity was indeed formally a treaty-based international organization (Ringe, 2010).

The application of functionalism to the study of the European process (Jones, 2018) led to the advent of the first classical theory of European integration: neofunctionalism (Bomberg, Peterson and Corbett, 2012).

When Ernst B. Haas published his seminal work focusing on the European Coal and Steel Community in the year 1958, his ambition was not to devise an approach which could uncover all aspects of the integration process (Niemann, Lefkofridi and Schmitter, 2019). Another pioneer of this theoretical proposal was Lindberg (1963), whose main work focused on the European Economic Community instead. Their framework was at times used as the lenses to investigate integration phenomenon in other parts of the globe, such as in Latin America (Jensen, 2013), but with the conclusion it would be unsuitable for regions other than Europe. Indeed, since the European experience was - and still is - the most thoroughgoing example of regional

economic and political integration (Howarth, 2018), with an unmatched extension and intensity, it was in the European continent that its basic premises and lessons were applied and put to the trial of reality (Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach, 2014). It was indeed the *sui generis* nature of the European construction that attached this approach to Europe (Best and Christiansen, 2011).

Rejecting basic realist assumptions, such as the pessimistic effects of anarchy and state-centrism (Pollack, 2012), neofunctionalism rises as a deterministic method steered by underlying political, economic, and social forces (Hix, 2014). The underlying intellectual assumptions are straightforward: in order to solve a given problem, human beings engage in functions by cooperating with one another, and if the tasks are satisfactorily accomplished, it is expected that cooperation will continue and expand into different adjacent areas (Niemann, Lefkofridi and Schmitter, 2019).

This pluralist model presents at its core three main arguments concerning the dynamics of the integration processes, as follows: the spillover hypothesis; the elite socialization hypothesis; and the hypothesis on supranational interest groups. Applied to the European construction, neofunctionalism predicted that integration would start in limited sectors - initially confined to coal and steel - and would progressively expand into other policy areas, encouraged by the efforts of supranational actors, such as the Commission. Interest groups and political parties would be fascinated by the success of the European institutions in tackling issues encountered in these two sectors and would themselves press for the Community's competence to be extended to other policy areas (Pinder and Usherwood, 2013), thereby transferring their classical national allegiance to a supranational domain. This vision has found an echo in the famous "bicycle theory" attributed to Jacques Delors: if the European construction project would stop moving forward, it would fall (Lefebvre, 2013).

This approach, which was dominant until the 1970s and later revived in the 1990s, was not exempt from criticism. On empirical grounds, it was attacked for not offering an explanation to the unsatisfactory pace of European integration, namely during the 1970s and early 1980s, faring poorly with regard to predicted outcomes (Stacey, 2010). On theoretical grounds, critics questioned the existence of elite socialization and the absence of the nation state from the heart of the European process (Jensen, 2013). Interestingly, from an information and communication perspective, the objection raised by Smismans (2013) is that this framework fails in its

lack of understanding of the need for the institutions to establish legitimacy among the peoples of Europe.

In the course of the 1970-decade, classical intergovernmentalism began to gain traction in scholarship on European integration. The pioneer work of Stanley Hoffmann (1966; 1982) was instrumental in this regard. This approach constitutes, at the same time, a theory and a method from where to observe the European construction project. It provides an explanation for European integration (or better yet, cooperation) by highlighting the role of the national governments in the process and downplaying the role of supranational institutions, and at the same time brings the nation states back to the centre of the analysis (Cini, 2013). Indeed, regionalism does not simply happen by itself; it involves choices by states' leaders (Karns and Mingst, 2010), as the EU institutions exist by virtue of a grant of authority from the member states (Hurd, 2014). And while accepting that integration might work well in the realm of low politics, Hoffmann (1966; 1982) argues it would succumb when the spillover effect would reach core national interests of the state.

Going beyond classical intergovernmentalism, liberal intergovernmentalism emerged in the 1990-decade, due to the intellectual contributions of Milward (1992) and Moravcsik (1993; 1998). It rests on one of the core premises of liberalism, the one that stipulates that societal demands are a variable, shifting with factors such as technology, geography, and culture (Moravcsik, 2008).

According to it, key policy options reflect the preferences of national governments - and not supranational institutions -, crafted in the balance of their domestic interests. Therefore, the outcomes of EU negotiations are the result of bargaining among sovereign nations, and any delegation of power to a supranational institution is calculated and rational. In short, as Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig explain,

"Liberal intergovernmentalism simply acknowledges a blunt empirical fact about contemporary institutions like the EU: member states are "masters of the treaty" and continue to enjoy preeminent decision-making power and political legitimacy."
(Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, 2019, p. 65)

Criticism also exists regarding this theoretical approach. From an empirical standpoint, Nugent concludes it is too selective with the references used (Nugent, 2010). Others find it conceptually simplistic, since they are of the opinion it cannot offer

explanation for increased cooperation and integration in non-economic domains (Finke, 2009).

The classical European integration approaches expanded on above serve as a beacon in a multitude of issues within the realm of European studies, including on the analysis of the role of the EDIR and on whether they served as an instrument to support European integration.

Information and communication are nowadays an essential part of the political system and process, and a central element of the quality of democracy (Norris, 2014), particularly at a time when the general public plays a determining role in the integration process (McLaren and Guerra, 2013). Each medium - and each EDIR was definitely a medium - is a dominant actor in political and social life (Voltmer and Rawnsley, 2009). They served as a source of information and as a link through which the European institutions could communicate with the general public. Francisco Lucas Pires (1987, cited in Lucas Pires, 2007) reminds its readers of the absence of an integrated civil society, of the lack of an important dimension of shared culture and common education. Europe is faced with twenty-seven different peoples, making the information and communication challenge even more demanding.

The EU held, until early 2020, a remarkable record, one of continuous expansion in terms of functions and membership (Tsoukalis, 2016). This virtuous cycle has crashed, calling into question the need to develop a new theoretical approach which can account for disintegration (Bickerton, 2012), taking stock of the innovative spill back effect and adding depth to Rebecca Adler-Nissen's "opting out" of the EU approach (Adler-Nissen, 2014).

When regional integration was progressing quickly, several players were under the illusion that would always be the case. Yet, there is nothing inevitable about the EU's advancement towards greater integration (Hurd, 2014). The EU has been for a long time in the making and is still work in progress. Some believe that the EU is doomed (Zielonka, 2014), but likely there is no valid eschatology when it comes to European integration. This is a process requiring imagination and courage (Tsoukalis, 2016). And the EDIR may have been part and parcel in terms of shaping future European integration.

3.9 The challenge ahead

The EU is both an intergovernmental organization and a supranational entity (Jones, 2008). Or, like Buzmaniuk describes it, “*The European Union is neither a State nor an international organization like any other.*” (Buzmaniuk, 2019, p. 1) Its nature is in fact unique. Over the course of its history, it has been swaying between cooperation and integration forces, and this dynamic movement can be attributed to the internal politics of its member states, to the precedence of urgency over gradual developments at times, as well as popular support to this project amongst the citizens, namely after 1992.

In Maastricht the heads of State or Government touched the core of state sovereignty, such as the currency, the foreign and security policy, even justice and home affairs, and this in turn generated considerable shock amongst certain European public opinions. It may be argued this lies at the heart of the European project’s legitimacy crisis. From that moment onward, public opinions throughout the continent started paying attention to the European negotiations, usually held until that point in time *à huis clos*. And the automatic mechanisms in place for European deepening and reforms were never the same again after the early 1990s.

Later, the documents signed at Amsterdam and Nice yielded limited significance in terms of advancement of the European project. The dark shadow cast by Maastricht, the referendums that ensued, and the difficulty experienced in national ratifications were in the mind of European politicians, even if some label the EU as the best political project in recent history (Rajoy, 2019).

These days, twenty-seven public opinions, each one with its own agenda of concerns and interests, frequently contradictory, and often steered by political forces of antagonistic nature, are alert to developments in the European arena. And this is directly related to information and communication.

The former president of France, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, who also presided over the Convention on the Future of Europe, stated in an interview to a Spanish medium that the most noteworthy shift in politics in the last decades has been the evolution from politics based on culture in the past, to today’s politics based on communication (Giscard d’Estaing, 2019). This is aligned with the thought of the French sociologist Jean Cazeneuve, who noted early in the decade of 1970 that everything depends on the organization of communications in the global society

(Cazeneuve, 1972). Others, like the European Economic Advisory Group, go a step further and conclude that “*Political developments are shaped by the evolution of communication and media technologies.*” (European Economic Advisory Group, 2014, p. 71)

Being this as such, it is relevant to ponder on the choice of the theoretical framework, which was picked at the inception of the EDIR, and particularly on how its different components have been incorporated into the architecture of this official European communication instrument. Was the selection of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) solely grounded on information and communication reasoning? Or did its creators envisage the EDIR to serve, at least to some extent, as political tools to support European integration, at the local and regional levels?

As mentioned in section 3.4, the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) presents a more dynamic and interactive understanding of how communication unfolds. Unlike earlier proposals that depicted communication as a one-way process, this model emphasizes the bidirectional nature of communication, where both participants, labelled as the source and the receiver, are actively engaged in sending, receiving, and interpreting messages. Central to the model are the processes of encoding (formulating a message), decoding (interpreting a message), and interpretation (deriving meaning), which occur continuously and reciprocally between both agents. Each participant in the communication loop functions as both sender and receiver, illustrating the active involvement required in effective communication. This circular flow allows for ongoing feedback, enabling participants to adjust and refine their messages in response to one another. A key contribution of the model is its recognition of redundancy and repetition as important elements that help ensure mutual understanding and reduce the risk of miscommunication.

Furthermore, by acknowledging that a single message may carry multiple layers of meaning and trigger various interpretations, the model seeks to capture the complexity and cyclical nature of real-world communication. Ultimately, this intellectual approach serves as a foundational framework that portrays communication as a continuous and adaptive process aimed at mutual understanding rather than a simple transmission of information.

In his influential 1923 work, Edward Louis Bernays included the following words:

“The only difference between “propaganda” and “education”, really, is in the point of view. The advocacy of what we believe in is education. The advocacy of what we don’t believe in is propaganda. Each of these nouns carries with it social and moral implications. Education is valuable, commendable, enlightening, instructive. Propaganda is insidious, dishonest, underhand, misleading.” (Bernays, 1923, p. 157)

The semi-structured interviews to be conducted will aim to uncover evidence that will expose the concepts in the minds of the forefathers of the EDIR; specifically, by investigating the extent to which the components of the communication model were adhered to, the kind of information foreseen, and the objectives they embraced. Analysts of society through a stricter information and communication lens may argue that by 2004 the EC had taken heed of Albert Camus’ advice, who alerted in his book describing a plague sweeping the Algerian town of Oran to the need to move away from cultivating habits, at a time *“When what’s needed is imagination.”* (Camus, 1947, p. 30)

This research lens may potentially display its usefulness in two different domains, namely by better framing the problem of the creation of the EDIR and adding new empirical evidence from the EU context to the information and communication literature. This research approach will thus guide this work.

Having established the theoretical framework and conceptual underpinnings of this study, the thesis now moves from abstraction to application. The communication models, schools of thought, and contextual factors explored in this chapter serve not only as interpretative tools but also as the basis for selecting an appropriate methodological approach. The next chapter will elaborate on the selected research methodology to tackle the challenge ahead, providing the reader with a roadmap of this intellectual journey.

Chapter 4 Research methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological foundation upon which the research is built, providing an account of the conceptual orientation, research design, and procedures used to generate and analyse data. Its objective is to demonstrate the coherent alignment between the research questions, the philosophical underpinnings, and the practical steps taken to conduct the investigation. By articulating the reasoning methods, research approach, and data collection strategies, this chapter ensures that the study's findings are both credible and replicable.

4.1 Conceptual aspects

The starting point to this chapter is research and methodology. Two words which need to be defined, as they capture two different concepts.

Research can be described as the rational and systematic procedure which aims to provide responses to different problems (Gil, 2007). The expression methodology derives from the Greek language, and at its root is the addition of three elements, namely *methá* - beyond -, *odon* - way -, and *logos* - study (Vilelas, 2017). It can thus be characterized as the assessment and study of the diverse possible courses of action for the acquisition of knowledge.

Other related concepts are worth heeding. Methods refers to pursuing a way to achieve an objective. It stands for an investigation which follows a planned and determined trajectory to achieve knowledge (Lakatos and Marconi, 2017). The scientific methodology, which is the one that is at play in this work, hence refers to the logical and organized approaches, processes, and techniques employed in science, its foundations, validity, and relationship with scientific theories (Gerhardt and Souza, 2009).

Based on each definition above, it may be argued that scientific research is a set of orderly and coordinated methods, grounded in logical reasoning, which display the aim to find solutions to problems using scientific techniques.

Now that the fundamental concepts of methodology, methods, research, scientific methodology, and scientific research are adequately established, it is key to grasp the underlying concepts of science, scientific knowledge, as well as a brief evolution of the scientific method.

The etymology of the word science resides in the Latin verb *scire*, which means to learn or to know. That etymological definition falls however short of differentiating science from other activities also related to learning and knowledge. Demo (2000) is of the opinion it is easier to define what science is not. In summary, this author argues that science does not equate to common knowledge, cannot be confused with wisdom, is not synonym with ideology, and is not a specific paradigm (Demo, 2000). In his opinion, science is characterized by a dynamic and never-ending confrontation between paradigms, which constantly add to and transform one another, in a permanent state of tension. This reasoning is in line with the thought of Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1962), as this American historian and philosopher of science upholds the notion that science evolves quickly and unexpectedly, and not in a gradual manner, as it could be anticipated. Paradigms endure, and when a certain theory is unable to justify a particular occurrence, a paradigm shift arises. According to this intellectual perspective, scientific knowledge does not produce certainties but generates instead certitudes that carry less fragility (Demo, 2000). Trujillo Ferrari (1974) upholds the view that science is a set of rational activities and attitudes aimed at obtaining systematic knowledge with a limited scope, and capable of enduring a verification test. And here lies the relevance of the reproducibility principle of science, which stipulates different researchers using an identical dataset, and the same methodology should reach a similar conclusion, as noted by Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017). Science may thus be described as the rational and organized approach to gaining insight of the natural world through observation, experimentation, and analysis. It is a rigorous and methodical process that involves testing hypotheses, collecting and analysing data, and subsequently sketching conclusions based on empirical evidence.

Scientific knowledge, on the other hand, must be set apart from common knowledge. The former is grounded in the build-up of evidence and the development of theories and models that can explain and predict natural phenomena (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013). Common knowledge does not distinguish itself from scientific knowledge for its accuracy or the nature of the analysed target. Indeed, science is not the only way to access knowledge, and the same fact or object may be observed by both the scientist and the layman. It is the approach, the instruments, and the methods which lead to knowledge which set them apart. In this regard, Lakatos and Marconi (2017) characterize common knowledge as lacking a systematic endeavour, as well as being non-critical, subjective, superficial, and in the clutches of emotions.

Prodanov and Freitas (2013) defend that scientific knowledge is of a different nature, as it is analytical, cumulative, predictive, useful, and transmissible. It aims to offer an explanation to a matter being subjected to investigation, but also to uncover and explain its relations with other phenomena, going beyond the surface and shedding light on reality. Others, like Fonseca (2002) claim that scientific knowledge is methodical, objective, and provisional, since it may continuously be enriched, reformulated, and tested.

The scientific method is a set of procedures adopted with the purpose of achieving knowledge, as described by Prodanov and Freitas (2013). Its use is not exclusively reserved for science, as it may be employed to solve daily issues (Lakatos and Marconi, 2017). However, science cannot be practised without the use of scientific methods.

The notion of scientific method has come a long way, evolving from its origins in Ancient Greece to the current days. Prodanov and Freitas (2013) offer an overview of its development throughout the centuries, displaying its initial connection with the philosophical theory of empiricism and theological concepts, and its journey towards the decoupling from these areas, namely in the 16th and 17th centuries. Until the conclusion of the Middle Ages, names of logicians and thinkers such as Archimedes of Syracuse, Aristotle, Claudius Ptolemy, Euclid, Plato, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Thales of Miletus made relevant contributions to the scientific method. After the Dark Ages and influenced by the works of prominent intellectuals such as David Hume, Francis Bacon, Galileo Galilei, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Immanuel Kant, James Mill, Johannes Kepler, John Locke, Karl Heinrich Marx, Karl Popper, Nicolaus Copernicus, René Descartes, Sir Isaac Newton, Thomas Hobbes or Thomas Samuel Kuhn, a rupture with the epistemic and theological structure of the medieval era occurred, privileging the quest for a formal and numeral interpretation of reality (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013). Minayo (2007) is of the view that the scientific method currently holds a significant advantage, not only because scientists worldwide have subscribed to a shared approach and system, but also because through its use valid responses were attained for a myriad of issues originating from economic, human, and social development.

4.2 Research characterization

4.2.1 At the heart of the research

The research methodology chapter of a dissertation can be considered the identity of that research work because it outlines the specific characteristics, methods, steps, and techniques used to conduct the study, as well as its roadmap, holistically delineating its path (Bell and Waters, 2018). This segment looms large in the document because it demonstrates the credibility of the research and its results. “A *research design is a plan that shows, through a discussion of our model and data, how we expect to use our evidence to make inferences.*” (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994, p. 118) It provides an understanding of how the study is conducted, and on that account how reliable its findings are. Additionally, it identifies the unique approach used to answer the research questions and distinguishes it from other studies in its area of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

In this sense the research methodology chapter encompasses a comprehensive description of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. It elaborates on the sample size, how the data is collected, and how the results are analysed (Pandey and Pandey, 2021).

It is through the provision of a well-crafted research methodology chapter that an author can establish the reliability and validity of a study. The methodology chapter lets readers to evaluate the research in full and determine if the results attained are trustworthy (Ragab and Arisha, 2018). Furthermore, it allows other researchers to replicate the study, which is an essential aspect of scientific research.

4.2.2 Reasoning methods

At the conceptualization phase of any research project, one issue takes centre stage: the choice of and subscription to a reasoning method. Both the preference of the researcher and the adequacy of the selected method in relation to the scope and process of the study need to be factored in at this juncture, since the reasoning method is interconnected with the question or questions to be answered (Van Campenhoudt and Quivy, 2011).

In this unassuming section of this chapter 4 the aim is not to present a thorough review of the epistemological and philosophical traditions in this area, since abundant academic literature is offered on the nature, general features, and range of the human knowledge, and particularly reflecting on the relationship between subject and object. It is however important to briefly ponder on this matter, as this shapes the process, the framework of analysis, and ultimately the research outcomes. It is also paramount to position this work in the broader context.

There are five most used reasoning methods in science.

The deductive method enables successive approximations from the general to the particular. Starting from principles or theories considered to be truthful and unquestionable, it predicts the occurrence of particular facts or events in a formalized way, based on logical reasoning (Gil, 2019; Pandey and Pandey, 2021). This method was proposed by the rationalist authors Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza, and is rooted in the assertion of reason leading to true knowledge. Prodanov and Freitas (2013) describe that the objective of this method is to explain the contents of the premises. Through a logical chain of thought undertaken in descending order, from the general to the particular, it reaches a conclusion, by using the syllogism. It is widely used in areas like Mathematics or Physics, and less so in social sciences, bearing in mind the difficulty of presenting undisputable rules, which cannot be subject to questioning (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013). Gil (2019) highlights two main objections to this typology. First, its a priori nature, since initiating an intellectual exercise from a general argument is tantamount to assuming a preconceived knowledge as being set in stone. The second one relates to its tautology, since it permits the conclusion, through a different process, of the same.

Lakatos and Marconi (2017) explain that, in a dissimilar fashion, the inductive method is a mental process through which, starting from particular data, an inference is made about a general or universal rule, previously absent from the examined conditions. The goal of the inductive method is to lead to conclusions which are much wider than the premises in which they are grounded. In this type of reasoning, the generalization derives from the observation of the reality as is. It is the particular observations which lead to the crafting of generalizations. Gil (2019) argues that it was Francis Bacon's work which rose this method to fame within the field of natural sciences. With the advent of positivism, its importance was reinforced, and its use considered as effective in the realm of social sciences, elevating observation to the

condition of an indispensable procedure for the attainment of knowledge. But the aim is not simply to contemplate facts. It envisages to acquire scientific knowledge which can serve humans and grant them domination and power over nature. Prodanov and Freitas (2013) describe the main criticism to this method as the generalization of what is observed in a number of cases, irrespective of its size, to all general cases. In summary, the deductive method aims to explain the content of the premises, while the inductive method's objective is to widen knowledge (Lakatos and Marconi, 2017).

The third method is the hypothetico-deductive one. It was proposed by the philosopher Karl Popper, further to his critique of the inductive method, since in the author's view no quantity of evidence can ensure that an antithesis will not be eventually found (Kalinowski and Pelakh, 2024; Prodanov and Freitas, 2013). To deal with a scientific question, hypotheses are formulated. Consequences are extracted from those hypotheses, which must subsequently be tested or refuted (Gil, 2019). While the deductive method is concerned with the confirmation of a hypothesis, the hypothetico-deductive method looks for empirical evidence to reject it.

The dialectical method is probably one of the oldest, used for centuries in the sense of art of dialogue. Facts and events exist holistically, interconnected, and interdependent (Lakatos and Marconi, 2017). The end of a process corresponds to the beginning of another one. Gil (2019) underscores the fact that this method is grounded in the argument that in nature everything is interconnected, in constant evolution and transformation, and there is an inherent contradiction in each phenomenon. It favours a qualitative vision of change, privileging constructivism over positivism, and hence rejects quantitative order as the source of knowledge.

Finally, the fifth method is the phenomenological one, which is neither deductive nor empirical. It does not aim to explain occurrences using theories or deducting from established principles. It is oriented towards the object, limiting itself to the essential aspects of the phenomenon, with the aim of understanding it through intuition, irrespective of its nature (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013; Williams, 2021).

Based on the above specifications, it is reasonable to state this research proceeds mainly in accordance with the inductive method. It analyses the reality of the EDIR at the moment these were established, a process which was informed by the Circular Model of Communication. The observation of the events and facts at the time of the creation of the EDIR allows the student to confront the reality then with the theoretical model which inspired their inception. It is not a purely inductive method, but

as described by Gerhardt (2009), a vast number of studies in social sciences encompass both deductive and inductive methods. This is also the case here.

4.3 Plan of action

4.3.1 Nature

Silveira and Córdova (2009) present a classification of the nature of research encompassing basic research and applied research. The former category aims to generate new knowledge which proves useful for the advancement of science, but it does not foresee practical applications. It points to universal truths. The latter, on the other hand, intends to produce original understanding for functional purposes, aimed at the solution of concrete and specific problems. It thus indicates interest in particular realities. This is in line with the teachings of Prodanov and Freitas (2013), who present a similar categorization and explanation.

Further to the above and bearing also into consideration the work of Lakatos and Marconi (2017), this study is both basic and applied in terms of its nature. While it was initially grounded in bibliographical and documental research, the semi-structured interviews and the subsequent analysis induce new knowledge in European information and communication, which is still a nascent research area. From a thorough examination of the acquired results, it will be possible in the future for other researchers to expand the production of academic knowledge in this field.

4.3.2 Objectives

Gil (2007) and Patten (2016) argue that research can be classified in three separate categories in terms of its objectives, namely as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory.

The exploratory research intends to make scholars more conversant with the event or fact being scrutinized, uncovering new information about a topic, permitting the construction of postulates, or of a finer framework (Sakyi, Musona and Mweshi, 2020). It features flexible planning, allowing for the consideration of multiple angles of analysis (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013). It involves bibliographic and documental research, interviews with individuals who have had direct practical experience with the

object of study, as well as the analysis of examples which stimulate understanding of the issues problematized.

The descriptive research, on the other hand, takes note of and describes the facts and phenomena related to a specific event, without intervening on those (Sakyi, Musona and Mweshi, 2020). It requires a robust set of data about the issue being pursued, as it registers, sorts, and analyses information without interference of the researcher. It is concerned with the causes, characteristics, nature, and relationships with other events, as well as with the frequency these may occur. Triviños (1987) claims this type of research puts emphasis on a descriptive narrative of events, failing to account for the role of observation as a tool to verify the validity of the explanations offered.

The third category is explanatory research. It looks to identify the factors which determine or contribute to specific facts or events. It searches for the root cause of phenomenon, and by this it deepens the understanding of reality as it provides an answer to the reason of things (Gil, 2010). Most explanatory research uses the experimental method (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013), which allows for the manipulation and control of variables, to identify the independent variable which determines the cause of the dependent variable, or of the phenomenon being considered.

In view of above description, this doctoral study can be classified as exploratory in terms of its objectives as it aims to expose new evidence and facts about a specific matter, allowing for the formation of a more detailed outline.

4.3.3 Approach

The two well-known types of approach in research include qualitative and quantitative. Prodanov and Freitas (2013) elaborate on its features, commonalities, and distinctions.

The qualitative approach is rooted in the belief that a dynamic relationship exists between the real world and the individual, a bond between the objective reality and everyone's subjective reasoning, which may not be converted into numbers (Zou and Xu, 2023). It dispenses the use of statistical methods or techniques. The natural environment is the direct source for data collection, and the researcher the key instrument to this end. It is often descriptive, and it privileges an iterative-inductive journey. Generating insights, it is mainly constructivist in nature. The issues are

studied in their natural environment, without manipulation from the author of the study. It may be argued that qualitative approach is complexity. It is a cyclical process of building a theory and testing it against data. Interviews and observations are the primary data-collection tools, and it generally involves multiple participants or settings. It adopts a process that culminates in description and presentation of themes and overall story.

On an opposite note, quantitative approach considers that everything should be – and must be – measurable. It is therefore necessary to convert information and opinions into numbers, to analyse and classify them (Patten, 2016; Prodanov and Freitas, 2013; Zou and Xu, 2023). It is associated with statistical methods and techniques. To ensure the accuracy of the results, due attention needs to be paid to the hypotheses formulated, as well as to the relationship between the variables. Precision is vital to this approach, and contradictions in the analytical process are to be avoided. The concept of positivism, with the primacy of experience and empirical evidence, is treasured in this approach.

While some authors in the realm of research methodology do not make a distinction between the two approaches, as they consider that quantitative research is also inherently qualitative, it is the nature of the variables at play that determines the tools to be used in its treatment, and consequently the interpretation and the conclusions of the study (Creswell, 2003). Other authors, however, claim that mixed methods combine the two approaches (Bell and Waters, 2018; Zou and Xu, 2023).

In the case of this doctoral study, text is the main source of research. The decision made by the student is to resort to both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Indeed, not only qualitative content analysis is used, but also quantitative text analysis tools. Santos *et al.* (2017) defend there are four independent situations when the use of a mixed approach is recommended, as follows: a) when abundant academic literature is not available on a specific topic; b) when the results obtained using one approach can be better interpreted by using a second approach; c) when neither of the approaches alone is enough for the comprehension of the issue at hand; and d) when quantitative data may be difficult to read and the use of qualitative tools may support their interpretation.

The use of a mixed approach contributes to identify confluence and remoteness between data acquired, allowing for the generation of more solid findings.

4.3.4 Technical procedures

The way the data required for the study is obtained refers to the technical procedures. Abundant academic literature is on hand in this field, and numerous taxonomies are put forward. Among others, authors like Boaventura (2004), Gil (2019), Prodanov (2006), Prodanov and Freitas (2013), Trujillo Ferrari (1974) or Yin (2001) propose valid categorizations, with slight terminology nuances. This doctoral study encompasses three different technical procedures, namely bibliographical, documental, and ex-post-facto.

Bibliographic research is the key technical procedure adopted to expose the student to the academic literature in this field of knowledge, to understand the development of concepts and practices throughout times, and to recognize the state of the art in this scientific field (Grazziotin, Klaus and Pereira, 2022). Also, online sources are resorted to. In this instance, the author is particularly careful in reviewing the origin of the published information and assessing the material for contents and value.

Documental research supplements the bibliographical one, as the nature of the instrument is different in the two cases. Both legal texts and official documents of the European institutions are used and scrutinized, which complement the information obtained via the bibliographical research technical procedure (Grazziotin, Klaus and Pereira, 2022).

During the period spanning from January 2019 to April 2024, the research efforts undertaken by the student encompassed an exhaustive exploration of both academic literature and pertinent documents through a combination of bibliographic and documental research methodologies. This scholarly pursuit was propelled by an earnest quest to secure primary data from diverse sources. To this end, the student systematically engaged with both online repositories and tangible records. The comprehensive nature of this search necessitated recourse to academic libraries situated across the Asian and European continents, namely located in Indonesia, Ireland, Portugal, Thailand, and The Netherlands. Moreover, an on-site perusal of the documentation centres housed within the European institutions based in Brussels further augmented the researcher's access to important materials.

This search was however not devoid of challenges. The research student encountered a notable predicament when seeking official and unofficial documents

within the precincts of the European institutions. This challenge, particularly conspicuous with respect to historical materials, arose from the circumstance that certain documents, especially those of earlier provenance, existed solely in a hard copy format. These aged documents, due to their archival value and in accordance with the stipulated documents retention policy of the European institutions, had been relegated to off-site storage facilities. Consequently, instant access to these materials was precluded, compelling a sequential retrieval process characterized by a temporal lag of several months. The exigency of this procedural interlude thereby occasioned multiple engagements with the different materials, requiring the student to revisit and consult these documents at distinct points in time.

The success of this intricate retrieval process was notably facilitated by the cooperative involvement of both present and past staff members of the European institutions. The collective efforts of all these individuals materially contributed to the realization of the researcher's aims. Their collaboration, expertise, and insights were instrumental in identifying the archival materials of interest and expediting their retrieval from off-site storage. This collaborative connexion between the researcher and the institutional personnel stands as a vivid testament to the symbiotic relationship between scholarly investigation and institutional expertise, underlining the necessity of mutual recognition in the scholarly discourse.

Although this exercise involves the detailed and exhaustive study of one reality, the EDIR, it cannot be considered as a case study, since the facts it looks at and examines occurred in the past, two decades ago. The other technical procedure adopted is accordingly ex-post-facto research. Through the study of a phenomenon which took place in the past, the aim is to better understand it and explain it. As Gil (2019) expounds, ex-post-facto research is a systematic and empirical investigation in which the researcher has no control over the independent variables, either because they cannot be manipulated, or its manifestations have already occurred. This type of technical procedure aims to expose the possible relationship between variables and is indeed a *fait accompli* when something has already been done or happened and cannot be changed.

4.3.5 Sampling

To identify the suitable interview population, the research student initially consulted a few personally known active and retired staff members of the European Commission, requesting each to compile a list of individuals involved in the conception and design of the Europe Direct Information Relays. The information received was subsequently triangulated, cross-referencing the lists to ensure accuracy, eventually determining that thirteen (13) individuals had participated in the exercise.

Equal probability sampling, also named simple random sampling, is a technique in which each member in a population has an equal and independent chance of being selected, without bias or preference. In the specific case of this doctoral research, it is adequate for a mixed methods' study aiming to draw conclusions about a small population.

A total of thirteen (13) individuals were identified as having been directly involved as officials of the European Commission in the process which led to the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays in 2004. Those thirteen (13) individuals were contacted via electronic mail and invited for a remotely held semi-structured interview. Ten (10) accepted the invitation. Two (02) declined. One (01) did not respond, despite three contact attempts. It is to be noted here that one (01) of the individuals who accepted the invitation indicated the preference to respond to the questions via electronic mail.

With a population size of thirteen (13) individuals, a response distribution of 50%, a confidence level of 90%, and an acceptable margin of error of 15%, the recommended sample size is ten (10) individuals, which corresponds to the total number of interviewees. Therefore, this sample size is robust to enable the subsequent analysis and drawing of conclusions.

4.3.6 Data collection techniques

As described in section 4.3.3 above, this research brings into play mixed methods, following both a qualitative and a quantitative approach.

In the first instance, the evaluation and study of the legal texts and official documents alluded to mostly in chapters 1 and 2 is conducted in accordance with the content analysis teachings proposed by Laurence Bardin (1977, translation, 1988).

Subsequently, the academic texts which are at the core of the literature review and the account of the conceptual framework which inspired the architecture and construction of the EDIR are assessed and interpreted in view of the same content analysis theory.

It is the systematic and objective procedures of content reporting and analysis of the theoretical structure which exposes the elements and isolates the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). The recognition and description of the indicators, in turn, allows for the generation of evidence to be sought, as taught by Bardin (1977, translation, 1988). Further to it, questions are then incorporated into the interview guide for the semi-structured interviews, also known as the protocol for the semi-structured interviews, in search of evidence which would corroborate or contradict the utilization of the model at the initiation stage of the EDIR.

After the conduction, initial processing, and ensuing transcription of the semi-structured interviews, two strategies are deployed. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to uncover information, and to examine such data in detail.

On the one hand, the qualitative analysis plan of action links the evidence obtained with the indicators of the model. Those qualitative elements are then numerically and statistically inspected, in a quantitative fashion. On the other hand, a quantitative content analysis procedure is followed. KH Coder features as the selected tool, as it holds the ability to perform the different analytical tasks required by the research student. Moreover, it is a reputable, well-established, and free access software for quantitative content analysis or text data mining. It is also widely used for computational linguistics.

Once numerical and statistical values are obtained resorting to KH Coder, they are subsequently scrutinised in a qualitative manner as well. Hence the mixed methods approach of this research study.

The SAGE Handbook of mixed methods research design (2023) is a valuable reference in this area of knowledge. In chapter 23, Mitsuyuki Inaba and Hisako Kakai elaborate at length on the advantages of the use of software for quantitative content analysis, and specifically of the benefits of the KH Coder tool, supplementing qualitative content analysis. The authors argue that this “... *hybrid strategy integrating two methods* ...” (Inaba and Kakai, 2023, p. 328), “... *improves the quality of*

researchers' textual data analysis by combining their analytical and creative insights with a computer's objectivity.” (Inaba and Kakai, 2023, p. 328)

Originating in Japan and enabling the analysis of Japanese language since its initial version, it is no surprise this software started being employed in the context of the Japanese academia. Its utilization and reach, however, rapidly spread throughout the globe and across a myriad of areas of knowledge, whether in education and learning, human resources, information, innovation, or health. Several master's and PhD theses resorting to this software for quantitative content analysis have been presented and successfully defended globally, in prestigious higher education institutions such as the Eindhoven University of Technology, in The Netherlands (Smits, 2017), the Queensland University of Technology, in Australia (Cunningham-Nelson, 2019), the Universidad de Murcia, in Spain (Palomares González, 2021), the Universidade Federal de São Carlos, in Brazil (Matui, 2020), the University of British Columbia, in Canada (Merchan, 2023), and the University of Vienna, in Austria (Marinski, 2023).

KH Coder uses R as the back-end software to execute analytical tasks. R is a statistical programming tool equipped to handle a significant amount of information and generate statistical analysis, graphic representation, and reporting. Critically, the use of both approaches for the study of the semi-structured interviews allows to supplement and triangulate conclusions drawn from legal texts and official documents. Additional details on the process adopted are described in section 4.4.

4.3.7 Overview table

The table below captures and reports in summary the plan of action implemented in this doctoral research.

Nature: basic and applied
Objective: exploratory
Approach: qualitative and quantitative
Technical procedures: bibliographic, documental, and ex-post-facto
Sampling: equal probability sampling
Data collection techniques: semi-structured interview

Table 4: Summary of adopted plan of action.

Source: Author.

The ensuing step is to elaborate on the process followed.

4.4 Process

4.4.1 Charting the course

This doctoral study deliberately follows a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach, as depicted in section 4.3.3 above. Academic literature and legal texts, as well as official documents featured in this dissertation are assessed and interpreted in accordance with the content analysis framework authored by Bardin (1977, translation, 1988).

The above-mentioned theoretical framework encompasses a set of communication analysis techniques, aimed at gathering indicators, which may be of either quantitative and/or non-quantitative nature, through methodical and unbiased procedures of content account, which lead to indirect knowledge in relation to the conditions of production and reception of such messages. (Bardin, 1977, translation, 1988) The intellectual proposal of this author highlights different phases of content analysis, organized in a chronological sequence, which are the pre-analysis, the exploratory reading, and the results and interpretation.

In the first stage, the pre-analysis, the aim is to systematize and operationalize the initial thoughts, so that a precise scheme of operations can be achieved. (Bardin, 1977, translation, 1988) This step starts with an initial reading of the applicable documents, and takes into account four rules: a) exhaustiveness - the researcher needs to carefully read the documents, considering all elements or aspects, as not to miss any important information contained in them; b) representativeness – the

analysis may be performed in a sample, as long as its representativeness is ensured, namely in the case of interviews; c) homogeneity – the analysis must be performed in accordance with homogeneous criteria, such as scrutinizing interview contents which follow an interview guide; and d) pertinence – the selected sources must be credible and reliable. (Bardin, 1977, translation, 1988)

In the second phase, the exploratory reading, additional time is dedicated to getting a properly accurate picture of a material's presentation of ideas. At this stage the most frequently used terms are identified and aggregated into different categories, so they can be examined in a consistent manner.

In the third step, results are obtained, and interpretation is suggested. These are described in the following chapters 5 and 6, where the analysis and the discussion are recorded.

The research student adhered to these steps by resorting to different strategies and tools. The texts under scrutiny were sourced from reputable origins and carefully read at least twice. To ensure consistency and homogeneity in their assessment and analysis, a table was prepared, where the different features of each document were recorded. This included information such as discipline, keywords, main arguments, notes, review questions, relevant quotes, source, and type of publication.

The utilization of this structure of analysis uncovers elements and reveals indicators of the model of communication used by the EC as the theoretical reference for the creation of the EDIR. To carefully and thoroughly examine the degree to which the indicators of the model are embraced, the research student has crafted a set of evidence linked to each of the indicators, a process which is documented at length in section 3.4. This is to serve as an instrument to measure the difference between each indicator of the model and the degree to which each indicator was incorporated into the EDIR at their establishment.

Further to the completion of the action described above, three of the four identified limitations in section 1.12 stood out. These were namely the shortage of prior notable scholarship on the EDIR, the very limited number of legal texts and official documents available, and the limited access to data. In view of these identifiable constraints, and to address the three, the research student decided to carry out interviews with the officials of the EC who were directly involved in the creation of the EDIR. This is a commonly used data collection instrument, taking place orally or in writing, based on an interaction between the researcher and the interviewees.

4.4.2 The semi-structured interviews

The decision made was specifically to conduct semi-structured interviews, a qualitative research method widely used in social sciences to collect data from participants. This type of interview blends open-ended questions with predetermined questions or topics, allowing for flexibility and exploration during the interview process. Indeed, the research student had prepared a general outline or a set of predetermined questions but also kept the freedom to probe and follow-up on responses, leading to a deeper understanding of the participant's experiences, insights, and perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted in a conversational manner, with the interviewer building rapport with the participant and using open-ended questions to encourage them to share their feelings, opinions, and thoughts on the topic being explored. Probes are also used to elicit further information or clarification from the participant. While also ensuring a level of consistency and structure in the data collection process, the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allows for the collection of detailed and rich data, as participants can freely express their experiences and thoughts without being constrained by rigid questionnaires.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews are a particularly suitable tool when research features an exploratory objective, and an ex-post-facto technical procedure, such as in this case. The findings obtained through them provide significant data for understanding behaviours, human experiences, and perceptions, and are effective in contributing to academic research.

After the choice to carry out semi-structured interviews was taken, the ensuing chronological step was to prepare an information sheet, a consent form, and a draft interview guide for the semi-structured interviews, also known as the protocol for the semi-structured interviews.

The designed semi-structured interview guide featured in Appendix 1 follows a comprehensive approach by integrating two distinct yet cooperative pieces.

Primarily, the interview guide strives to extract factual insights aligned with the fundamental tenets of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). To unravel the adherence to its different components, the interview guide employs a series of meticulously formulated questions. These inquiries are designed to elicit concrete responses, thereby facilitating a thorough assessment of the fidelity to the Osgood and Schramm paradigm (Schramm, 1954).

Concomitantly, this interview guide incorporates an innovative dimension characterized by its accessory questions. These queries deviate from the conventional approach and are intentionally fashioned to be disruptive. Their unsettling nature aims to transcend the realm of preconceived notions and scripted responses, thereby affording the opportunity for novel insights to surface organically. This distinctive facet of the interview guide is rooted in the pursuit of nuanced understanding and is underpinned by anecdotal evidence. By proffering unanticipated angles of exploration, these supplementary questions unveil hidden layers of information that might otherwise remain concealed within the conventional discourse.

The synthesis of these two diverse elements within the interview guide underscores its multifaceted nature, poised to engender a holistic comprehension of the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays. While a set of questions aligns with the theoretical framework and the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), the disruptive additional questions introduce an element of unpredictability, fomenting a dynamic exchange that encourages interviewees to delve deeper into their experiences and perceptions. This approach not only underscores the commitment to robust empirical inquiry but also acknowledges the intricacies inherent in real-world application of a theoretical model, thereby enriching the overall depth and quality of the interview outcomes.

One relevant criterion aimed for in qualitative research is redundancy of information, also known as data saturation. This stands for the point in the process where sufficient data has been collected to draw conclusions, and any additional data gathering will not generate value-added insights (Yang, Qi and Zhang, 2022). In the case of this specific doctoral research, attaining saturation is not a breeze to accomplish. Indeed, in the context of semi-structured interviews, every single contribution is expected to generate new insights. Moreover, if any deviation or exception is captured in the entire set of contributions during the examination, these merit special attention, as they may illuminate the object of the research from a dissimilar standpoint. Hence, it will be the construction of co-occurrence networks and its random walks that will reveal if the semantic relationships which will be exposed in the entire corpora of documents, and identified through the Clusters, Nodes, and Edges, fit a specific pattern, or in fact present any irregularity.

4.4.3 The ethical dimension

On 08 May 2020 the formal ethics approval form was submitted to the Social Research Ethics Committee for appraisal and deliberations. The application submitted contained the information sheet, the consent form, and the proposed interview guide for the semi-structured interviews. After several exchanges via electronic mail took place, ethical clearance was granted by the same Social Research Ethics Committee on 17 June 2020 to this case, which bears application Log number 2020-100.

Subsequently to this, three interview pre-tests were remotely conducted via Skype, on 11 July 2020, 23 July 2020, and 12 August 2020 respectively, with individuals who were familiar with the initial operation of the EDIR. Conducting this pre-test proved beneficial in numerous ways. It allowed the research student to familiarize himself with the interview process, to test and fine-tune specific interview questions and topics, to manage time effectively during the interviews, and to reflect on his performance and gauge his preparedness for the actual interviews. This process was concluded towards the end of August 2020.

In line with and within the parameters of the ethical clearance granted, the research student started contacting the thirteen active and retired officials of the EC in early September 2020 via electronic mail. The scope of the study was duly explained to them all, and the prospective participants were supplied with an ethically approved information sheet with the purpose to provide an overview of the research project and to iron out what the participation in this study would involve, to enable the invitees to make an informed decision. Along with the information sheet, potential contributors to the study also received an approved consent form, which was requested to be filled out and signed prior to the semi-structured interviews exercise.

The semi-structured interviews were remotely conducted using the Skype software, and were recorded, having obtained prior consent of the interviewees. Immediately after the conclusion of each interview, these were copied to an encrypted portable hard drive and to the University College Cork-supplied Google drive, where they were stored, first in non-anonymized form, for a period of two weeks. During that time, and until anonymization had occurred, the interviewees could exercise their option to withdraw from the study. After that period elapsed, the research student performed the transcription, converting the data to an anonymous form.

Based on the availability expressed by the active and retired officials of the EC, nine remotely held semi-structured interviews were scheduled. One individual expressed preference to respond via electronic mail. The dates of the semi-structured interviews and the reception of the electronic mail message were as follows: Interview A – 12 October 2020; Interview B – 19 October 2020; Interview C – 23 October 2020; Interview D – 28 October 2020; Interview E – 06 November 2020; Interview F – 09 November 2020; Interview G – 24 November 2020; Interview H – 02 December 2020; Interview I – 10 December 2020; and Interview J – 15 December 2020.

At the end of the semi-structured interviews, the research student engaged in an informal discussion with each participant. Feedback was sought from this experience and concerns raised by the interviewees were addressed. Further information concerning follow up and research dissemination was provided. The contact details of the interviewer were once again shared. No physical or psychological distress was perceived as a realistic risk in this context.

The recordings on the original device were destroyed once the semi-structured interviews were transcribed, as set out in the granted ethical clearance. The transcription of the interviews, with anonymized content, is stored in two password-protected locations, and will be kept for a period of ten years. After this period elapses, destruction of data will be performed by the research student, in accordance with the ethical consent issued.

The robust process of ensuring anonymity, but also of dealing with data protection and security, was not only treasured by the research student, but also highlighted as robust by some of the interviewees, which added a layer of confidence to the interviewees and thus merits a special mention.

4.4.4 Dual pathways

Once the transcriptions had been finalized, two types of processing were conducted, qualitative and quantitative, as described in previous sections. On the one hand, a qualitative approach was followed, using the same content analysis framework authored by Bardin (1977, translation, 1988) and formerly described. On the other hand, a quantitative approach was followed.

The expression text mining was initially presented by Feldman and Dagan (1995) with an analogous meaning to knowledge discovery in text. It was used to refer

to machine-supported analysis of text. *“It may be characterized as the process of analysing text to extract information that is useful for a specific purpose.”* (Kumar and Bhatia, 2013, p. 37) At that point in time, however, the concept was associated with information extraction, as *“The first approach assumes that text mining essentially corresponds to information extraction – the extraction of facts from text.”* (Hotho, Nürnberger and Paaß, 2005, p. 23) Only four years after the first reference made in academic literature, Hearst (1999) noted that despite generating a significant buzz within academia, few researchers were in fact engaged in its practice. With the passing of time, the original scope of the concept evolved and expanded to encompass a more scientific dimension. *“Text mining can be also defined - similar to data mining – as the application of algorithms and methods from the fields machine learning and statistics to texts with the goal of finding useful patterns. For this purpose, it is necessary to pre-process the texts accordingly.”* (Hotho, Nürnberger and Paaß, 2005, p. 23) The rigorous terminology to be used nowadays is therefore text data mining.

Yet, a clear distinction between data mining and text data mining is pointed out: *“With text data mining, however, the information to be extracted is clearly and explicitly stated in the text. It is not hidden at all.”* (Witten, 2004) Although text serves as a prevalent means for the formal transmission of information, it remains inherently ambiguous, lacks structure, and poses challenges in comprehension. (Kumar and Bhatia, 2013) *“Text is just as opaque as raw data when it comes to extracting information – probably more so.”* (Witten, 2004) This implies that, despite the conceptual distinction between data mining and text data mining described above, from a software’s perspective the challenges are similar in nature. In the specific case of this doctoral project, where the input is plain natural language, the specific pre-processing methods undertaken by the author are described below.

Multiple options are available for quantitative content analysis. In this instance, the purpose was to select a reliable and robust option, which could perform different types of functions, such as: generate word and document frequency, clustering, correspondence analysis, co-occurrence network, keyword in context concordance, terms extraction and text categorization, among others. Additionally, the tool would prove user-friendly and be affordable for the research student.

Different software was tested, such as KH Coder, KNIME, NVivo, or The R Project for Statistical Computing. While difficulty in the use of some soon became noticeable, others called for the payment of a subscription for its use. The choice of

KH Coder was therefore made based on a combination of its technical merits, namely the fact that it is a well-known solution, which can effectively respond to the researcher's requirements, is user-friendly, and of free access, making it adequately suited for this work.

The KH Coder software allows for the building of co-occurrence networks and its random walks, and by this it enables the examination of a few essential components for text analysis, namely Clusters, Nodes, and Edges.

Clusters are a gathering of Nodes that are intricately connected to each other, in a much robust way than to Nodes outside the grouping. They can be taken as a collection of dots which are tightly interwoven with one another. That being so, they indicate common themes.

Nodes, on the other hand, represent an individual component or object. It is a unit of analysis, which can be a word, a phrase, or even a paragraph. They are like spots in the overall picture.

An Edge is a linkage between two Nodes. It represents an existing association or connection between them. They are therefore like lines connecting the Nodes.

In summary, the software identifies groups of elements that are closely associated with one another, forming Clusters. The Nodes, which are the basic unit of analysis in the Clusters, may or not be linked to other Nodes by means of Edges, which display the correlation between Nodes.

The practice of using statistical instruments and methodologies to examine intricate and entangled systems is documented in academic literature (Xia *et al.*, 2012; Chen *et al.*, 2015), encompassing also written text (Amancio *et al.*, 2012), “... *which now include network representations of text to investigate linguistic phenomena.*” (Akimushkin, Amancio and Oliveira Júnior, 2017, p. 1) Among the available methods, “... *co-occurrence network analysis to improve the identification of implicit inter-relationships between parts of a text.*” (Sulis *et al.*, 2022, p. 1) is of relevance to this doctoral research. In fact, co-occurrence network is “... *a particular type of network between items (from the given text) known as unigrams (e.g., the words), of which it is possible to compute graph measures related to the role and importance of nodes and edges.*” (Sulis *et al.*, 2022, p. 1) “*Such a network consists of concepts that are linked if they often appear close to each other in the database. Several algorithms have been developed to construct such networks.*” (Veling and Van der Weerd, 1999, p. 695) The investigation of co-occurrence networks and the network dynamics

measurements obtained have proven appropriate and useful, as demonstrated by Sulis *et al.* (2022).

In this study, two other factors recommend the construction and analysis of co-occurrence network. First, the fact that the entire corpora of documents is available in English language. Prior research comparing the six official languages at the United Nations shed light on the fact that the “*English language is an analytic language.*” (Gao *et al.*, 2014, p. 580) Moreover, “*The connections among English words are denser, and the expression of English language is more flexible and powerful.*” (Gao *et al.*, 2014, p. 589) Second, the co-occurrence network in this study is also an undirected one, like “... *most of language networks constructed in the existing literature are undirected.*” (Gao *et al.*, 2014, p. 580) As a holistic output of the semi-structured interviews, the co-occurrence network does not flow in a specific direction; instead, the distance between nodes is split between pairs of nodes, and no in-degree and out-degree are noticeable. Therefore, co-occurrence network emerges as a valid methodological choice.

Since the semi-structured interviews called for an exercise of historical recollection, the recommended type of co-occurrence network to be used is random walks, originating from the intellectual proposition of the French mathematician Louis Alphonse Bachelier. A natural of Le Havre, in Seine-Maritime, he is considered the forefather of mathematical finance. “*When people are asked to retrieve members of a category from memory, clusters of semantically related items tend to be retrieved together.*” (Abbott, Austerweil and Griffiths, 2015, p. 558) Research suggests that “*Random walks provide an alternative account of how people search their memories, postulating an undirected rather than a strategic search process.*” (Abbott, Austerweil and Griffiths, 2015, p. 558)

Once a decision on the software to be utilized had been made, as well as on the operational methods to be followed, the research student read its instruction manual (Higuchi, 2016) in detail, to understand the different actions and processes required to enable the undertaking of the analysis. From that set of instructions, the stipulation to carry out five sequential steps and associated actions emerged, and the research student performed them in the following manner:

- 1) Document retrieval – in this case the transcriptions of the ten semi-structured interviews were the corpora of documents selected.

2) Text encoding – in this phase a decision was made not to resort to summarization, because the corpus quality is one of the crucial factors for a robust machine-supported analysis of text (Bullinaria and Levy, 2007). Since the software exclusively imports and handles documents in text (*.txt) format, the ten files were converted to this format.

3) Text preprocessing – three activities occurred at this stage, namely: a tokenization process, by which punctuation marks were removed, and tabs and other non-text characters were replaced by single white spaces; a standard filtering exercise, using stop word filtering – also known as “noise words” (Veling and Van der Weerd, 1999), and therefore removing from the investigation words holding no semantical value; stemming methods were subsequently applied, by building the basic form of words and achieving natural groups of words.

4) Linguistic preprocessing – this phase comprised six different activities, addressed in the following order: part-of-speech (POS) tagging, which concluded for the value of using nous, proper nouns, verbs, and foreign language expressions; concept standardization was the following activity, replacing acronyms and other technical terms by one single expression; word sense disambiguation, to clear any ambiguity in the meaning of expressions or words; entity extraction – since several different entities are mentioned by the interviewees, it was important to streamline their designations and use standard names for each one of them; the joint examination of some words was forced, as together they represent one concept; and finally parsing, by producing full parse trees of sentences and paragraphs.

5) A clustering simulation was the last stage of the pre-processing methods, to understand if the ten documents adequately provided a holistic view of the topic under scrutiny. *“Clustering algorithms compute the clusters based on the attributes of the data and measures of (dis)similarity.”* (Hotho, Nürnberger and Paaß, 2005, p. 37)

Once the actions listed above were concluded, the ten files featured the following characteristics:

File name	Number of words	Number of lines	Number of paragraphs
Interview A	1500	125	16
Interview B	2639	198	17
Interview C	2633	210	20
Interview D	1825	152	17
Interview E	680	97	26
Interview F	3689	293	32
Interview G	5057	381	37
Interview H	2196	175	17
Interview I	2459	212	29
Interview J	2448	197	25

Table 5: Basic statistics of the ten files after the pre-processing actions.

Source: Author.

After the pre-processing actions the ten files were aggregated into one single text file, in preparation for the subsequent phase, namely knowledge extraction. In accordance with the teachings of Gonçalves (2002), the process of Knowledge Discovery in Textual Databases encompasses four different stages, as follows: text document collection, pre-processing of the documents, knowledge extraction, and assessment and interpretation of the results. In view of these lessons, knowledge extraction is the ensuing step (Gonçalves, 2002), to be reported in the following chapter.

4.5 Research design synopsis

A corollary to the above sections and sub-sections is the following research design diagram, which serves as a schematic representation of the appearance, structure, and workings of this research exercise.

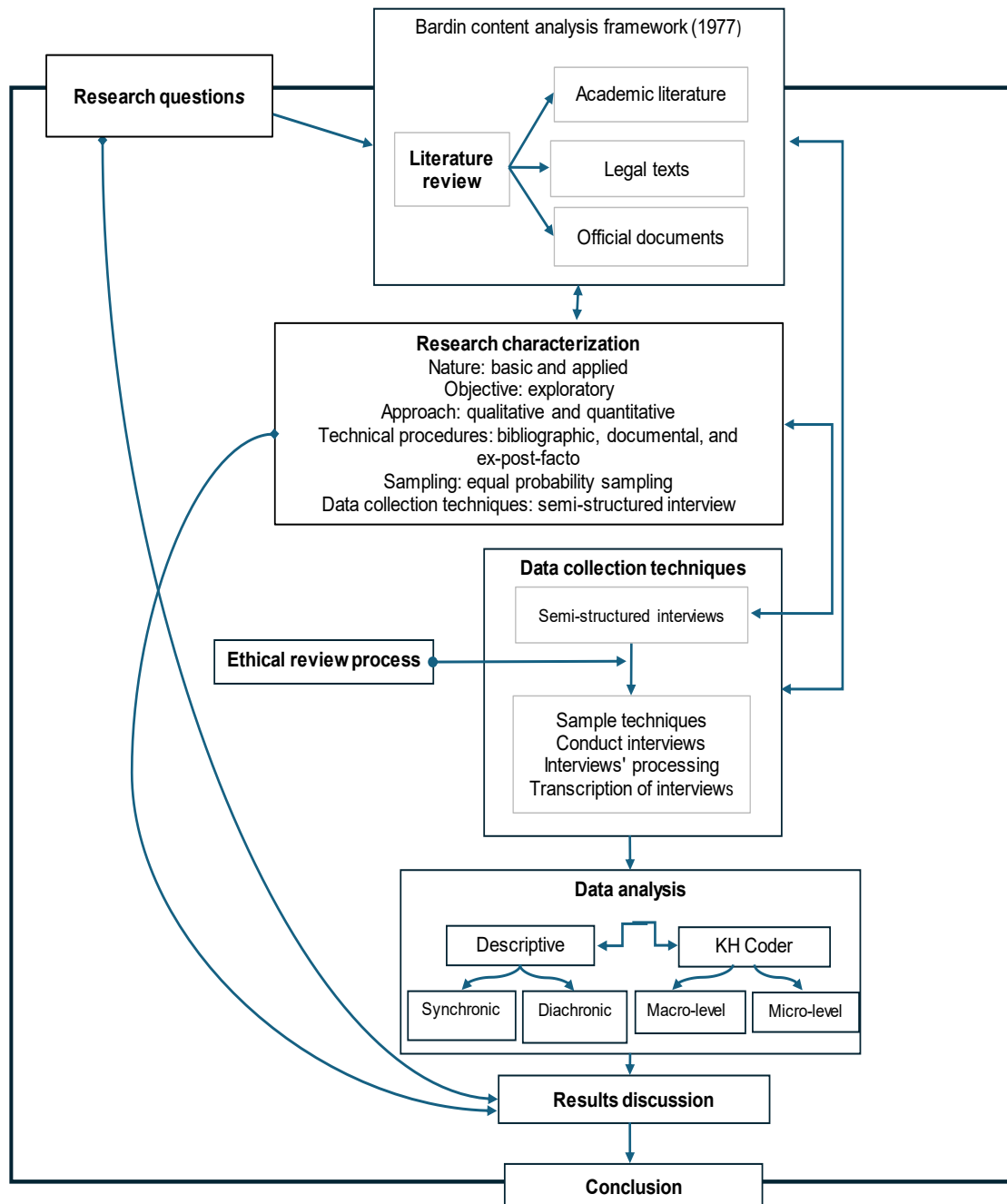


Figure 4: Research design diagram.

Source: Author.

This chapter was dedicated to explaining how this doctoral research is being conducted. After enunciating the reasoning methods, research approach, and data collection strategies, the subsequent step is to proceed to the analysis in accordance with it. This task is undertaken in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The chapter is organized into two principal strands. The first encompasses a descriptive analysis, both synchronic and diachronic, to capture different dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. The second strand introduces KH Coder-based content analysis, which offers macro- and micro-level views of textual data through statistical and linguistic metrics. Together, these complementary approaches reinforce the interpretative depth of the study and lay the foundation for the discussion of findings.

5.1 Axes of examination

In the quest of a comprehensive insight and understanding into the EDIR, the analysis is executed along two distinct axes. These axes, each serving a unique purpose, contribute to the depth and breadth of the examination. The two fundamental analytical approaches employed in this study are the following:

Axis 1 - Descriptive Analysis:

The first axis of analysis pursued is the descriptive analysis. This analytical approach is characterized by its dual nature, encompassing both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The synchronic analysis examines the standpoint of each interviewee, thereby individually tracing the adoption of the different indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). In doing so, it illuminates the progression which culminated in the establishment of the EDIR.

In contrast, the aim of the diachronic analysis is to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the overall adherence to the theoretical model by the European Commission at the specific time of the creation of these information outlets.

The insights gleaned from this examination find their expression in the form of statements, figures, and tables. These visual aids serve as important tools for conveying the intricacies of the EDIR to the reader, ensuring clarity and transparency in the dissemination of findings.

In addition, a succinct statistical analysis is applied to both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The aim of this investigation is to ascertain the validity of the data obtained from the conducted semi-structured interviews and to facilitate a comprehensive analysis using the KH Coder software.

Axis 2 - KH Coder Analysis:

In parallel with the descriptive analysis, the second axis of examination involves the utilization of KH Coder, a specialized computational tool renowned for its adeptness in text analysis and data exploration. This software, equipped with advanced algorithms and linguistic metrics, is harnessed to explore the subject matter, uncovering hidden associations, patterns, and semantic relationships within the dataset.

As briefly mentioned in section 4.4, KH Coder is a free, open-source, and versatile software tool used for text data mining and quantitative analysis of text data. It was developed by Koichi Higuchi, a Japanese researcher in the field of computational linguistics. KH Coder is designed to support analysts and researchers in exploring and analysing large volumes of text data for various purposes, namely content analysis.

This software does not require extensive manual coding of data. It can automatically perform various text data mining and analytical tasks, such as frequency analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and clustering without the need for extensive manual coding. As it is more user-friendly than other similar software, it is accessible to a wider range of users and is therefore profusely employed in the context of academic research.

KH Coder is oriented toward quantitative analysis of text data and used for exploring and extracting understanding from text datasets, irrespective of its length. Its main goal is to extract quantitative insights from text.

Some of its key features and functionalities include Unicode support (the capability of handling text data in multiple languages); importing text data from multiple sources; pre-processing text data by resorting to tokenization (breaking text into words, phrases, or n-grams), removing stop words (commonly used words with little analytical value), and stemming (reducing words to their base form); a profusion of statistical analysis options, such as correlation, co-occurrence and frequency analysis, as well as keyword extraction; numerous visualization features and formats for exporting results; and text classification capabilities.

Amongst the statistical analysis tools available, co-occurrence analysis is an important asset. It is a technique used to identify associations, patterns, and clusters of terms within a text corpus. It displays how words or phrases appear together in the scrutinized documents, and major themes emerge from there. It may be explored

using cluster analysis, co-occurrence network, or multi-dimensional scaling. The interpretation of the results of this co-occurrence analysis provides valuable insights into the underlying themes or topics present in the document.

Correspondence analysis is another important element, as it allows the research student to navigate through the story flow by checking characteristic words of each part. As described in sub-section 4.3.6, R is the back-end software used to execute these multivariate methods.

The application of KH Coder represents a core component of this analytical endeavour, as it has the potential to reveal wisdom that might elude traditional manual examination. The results obtained from this computational investigation are subjected to scrutiny and interpretation, enriching the overall understanding of the EDIR, and complementing the findings of the descriptive analysis that is conducted in the first instance.

The synergy between these two analytical approaches aims to lead to a holistic and well-rounded examination of the EDIR. Through this effort, the goal is to contribute meaningfully to the body of knowledge in this specific domain, offering insights that may inform future research and decision-making processes.

5.1.1 Descriptive analysis

5.1.1.1 Synchronic analysis

Interviewee A

The Europe Direct Information Relays were introduced by the European Commission with the purpose of establishing a unified entry point for the public to access European information. The main purpose of these official European information outlets was to provide citizens with a single channel to obtain information about the European Union, thereby eliminating the complexity of multiple specific gateways.

The European Commission commanded the creation and management of the Europe Direct Information Relays without direct participation from any other European institution. However, the European Parliament recognized the necessity of concentrating efforts on responding to citizens' information needs. This initiative was

consequently positively received, facing almost no significant opposition or negative sentiment from member states. It was viewed as a logical step towards streamlining the delivery of European information to the public.

An important feature of these information structures was its feedback mechanism, through which the European Commission sought to engage European citizens. By gathering and incorporating feedback, the Europe Direct Information Relays ensured that the information provided was relevant and aligned with the general public's needs. The funding for each relay varied based on factors such as the number of citizens they served and their level of activity. Some were highly active, organizing various events, while others were less so.

Member states did not actively interfere with the functioning of the Europe Direct Information Relays, allowing them to operate as agents on the ground for the European Commission. The benefits of these information structures were substantial, as they significantly improved information accessibility for citizens. By providing information in local languages and various formats, the Europe Direct Information Relays made information more accessible and eliminated the need for citizens to navigate through multiple sources.

These official information points proved to be an effective communication tool for the European institutions to connect with citizens across all member states. They facilitated the dissemination of information on a wide range of topics and contributed to fostering a positive relationship between institutions and citizens. The proximity of the information relays to the European citizens was seen as essential for effective communication and information dissemination. A strong relationship between institutions and citizens is crucial for the functioning of democracy, in the view of Interviewee A.

In concluding remarks, the interviewee expressed satisfaction with the achievements of the Europe Direct Information Relays, highlighting the importance of their work in promoting democratic engagement. The success of these structures in improving access to information and enhancing communication between institutions and citizens was highlighted as a significant achievement.

Interviewee A conveyed the opinion that properly structured and well-functioning Europe Direct Information Relays were “... *crucial for a good relationship between institutions and citizens.*” (Interviewee A) Moreover, “... *when citizens are satisfied with the institutions, this is good for the institutions. In the end, when the*

institutions and citizens are in a good relationship, I think democracy works better.”
(Interviewee A) The contribution of the Europe Direct Information Relays to the quality of democracy was thus an eminent aspect of this statement.

Interviewee A referred to five (5) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 12.82% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee B

The statements produced by Interviewee B shed light on the historical background and evolution of the Europe Direct Information Relays. Initially, these information structures originated from the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours and the Info-Point Europe. These official European information entities were part of the European Commission's initiative to establish a local presence beyond national capitals, aiming to reach areas that were otherwise difficult to access. This initiative was a major step in ensuring that information about the European Union was accessible to all citizens, regardless of their location throughout the European Union.

In addition to the Europe Direct Information Relays, there were other outreach networks with more specific policy focuses, such as the Enterprise Europe Network, SOLVIT, and Euro Desk. While these networks targeted particular policy areas, the information relays had a broader focus, encompassing a wide range of policies to provide comprehensive information to the general public. This wide scope allowed the Europe Direct Information Relays to address diverse information needs and cater to a larger audience.

The management of these relays was diverse, with various entities, including local authorities and associations, hosting them. This decentralized approach enabled these official European information structures to maintain a strong local presence and connect more robustly with citizens in different regions. The support from member states and the European Parliament was generally positive, with local politicians and members of the European Parliament often praising the work of the Europe Direct Information Relays. They advocated for maintaining or even increasing the number of such entities to ensure continued access to European information.

Financial considerations were a significant aspect of the relays' operations. The budget for these information structures was subject to variation due to factors like

budget cuts or fluctuations in financial envelopes. Decisions about funding could impact the number of relays or the level of support for existing ones. The host structures played a crucial role in the functioning of the Europe Direct Information Relays, and their active involvement, including resource contributions, was expected. This collaboration was essential for the sustainability and effectiveness of the information relays.

Over time, the Europe Direct Information Relays evolved into Europe Direct Centres, highlighting the importance of creating a European public opinion and sphere through local engagement. These Centres continued the mission of the Europe Direct Information Relays by providing objective, factual information about the European Union. They were expected to reflect the philosophy and benefits of European policies while avoiding propaganda. Addressing both the positive and negative aspects of European Union's policies was crucial to ensure credibility and trust among citizens.

Looking to the future, the emphasis on reaching citizens through digital means is becoming increasingly important. The Europe Direct Centres are adapting to the changing communication landscape by incorporating social media and virtual platforms into their outreach strategies. While maintaining a physical presence remains important, these Centres are leveraging digital tools to enhance their reach and effectiveness in engaging with citizens.

In the view of Interviewee B, the evolution of the Europe Direct Information Relays into Europe Direct Centres underscored the ongoing commitment to local engagement and the dissemination of objective information about the European Union. These Centres played a vital role in fostering a well-informed public and promoting democratic engagement across the European Union.

This interviewee expressed confidence in the relevance of these information structures to the European Commission, by explaining that “... *the Europe Direct Information Relays for us were not just ticking the box, because it had to do with policymaking and the feedback on the temperature on the ground.*” (Interviewee B) After two decades of existence, “*We are not in the business of dematerializing completely from the physical part...*” (Interviewee B), stated this interviewee about the successors of the Europe Direct Information Relays, but there is the “... *need to equip the Europe Direct Centres with means of reaching people online, and with virtual means and social media.*” (Interviewee B) While today's mission may be similar, the evolution of times calls for other means, according to this interviewee.

Interviewee B mentioned four (4) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 10.26% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee C

Historically, the concept of decentralized information networks was not new to the European Commission. References to such networks date back to as early as 1993, accentuating their perceived necessity for adequately disseminating information about the European Union.

Interviewee C led a team within the European Commission during the formation of the Europe Direct Information Relays. This organizational unit was responsible for evaluating proposals for the establishment of these official information relays and had an overview of their merger from pre-existing networks. The creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays involved integrating several pre-existing networks, including Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, Info-Point Europe, and networks for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. The aim was to provide an integrated approach to disseminating European information.

Involving other European institutions, particularly the European Parliament, was deemed crucial given its closer relationship with citizens. The European Parliament actively participated in the evaluation process of proposals. The creation of these information entities was primarily led by the European Commission, with significant involvement from the European Parliament, member states, and local authorities, which often hosted the centres.

While there was overall enthusiasm for the initiative, the level of passion varied among countries. For instance, France and Italy were notably supportive, whereas the United Kingdom showed less initial interest. Despite these variations, there was no major resistance to the creation process.

The Europe Direct Information Relays represented a significant step towards professionalizing the distribution of information to European citizens. Their goal was to bring Europe closer to its citizens by providing professional, factual, and objective information. However, while the information relays had formalized feedback mechanisms in place, their ability to collect citizens' opinions and engage in two-way

communication was limited compared to their primary function of broadcasting information.

Financially, the grant allocated to the Europe Direct Information Relays was relatively small compared to the range of services they provided. These structures were seen not as profit-making ventures but as a means of promoting the European idea. They were particularly useful for reaching citizens who were not digitally connected and for tailoring information to local audiences in their languages. This made them relevant tools for bridging the gap between European institutions and citizens.

Decentralization of information and communication was considered as essential for making Europe more accessible and understandable to its citizens. Even in the digital age, the relevance of decentralization remained significant for effective communication. The Europe Direct Information Relays, therefore, played a meaningful role in ensuring that information about the European Union was disseminated in a manner that was both accessible and relatable to citizens across different regions.

This “... *merger of pre-existing centres, trying to create a more integrated approach to disseminating information on the European Union.*” (Interviewee C), highlighted by this interviewee, also denoted it was “... *very important to have the European Parliament participating in this exercise from the beginning.*” (Interviewee C) The same interviewee deemed this as a condition for the success of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Interviewee C referred to six (6) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 15.38% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee D

In this interview, several key points stood out, highlighting the importance of and challenges faced by the Europe Direct Information Relays. The European Commission identified the need for a single information gateway to disseminate community information to European citizens. This initiative aimed to replace various existing gateways with a more streamlined and coherent approach.

The Europe Direct Information Relays were consequently designed to function as a single-entry point for citizens, allowing them to access information through various

channels and subsequently be directed to the most appropriate services. This approach aimed to simplify the process of obtaining information about the European Union and ensure that citizens received accurate and relevant guidance.

Stakeholder involvement played a significant role in the creation of these official European information structures. The European Parliament displayed considerable commitment, whereas member states were supportive but did not actively partake in the process. This lack of active participation from member states highlighted a challenge in coordination, as there was often a disconnect between the information available to citizens at the regional level and overall European information. To address this, closer links between the European Commission's Representations and local authorities were suggested.

The Directorate-General for Communication of the European Commission took responsibility for handling all matters related to the Europe Direct Information Relays. Collaboration with other stakeholders was limited, except for the initial involvement of the European Parliament. National attitudes towards the Europe Direct Information Relays varied, with some member states, like the United Kingdom, showing limited interest, while others, such as Belgium and France, demonstrated enthusiasm for this initiative.

The design of the Europe Direct Information Relays was inspired by Osgood and Schramm's circular communication theory (Schramm, 1954), emphasizing a model of continuous feedback and interaction. Despite this, at the local territorial level, minimal consultations were held with stakeholders. The European Commission maintained a hands-off approach to avoid being perceived as influencing the process, which led to some challenges in local engagement.

One significant issue identified was the feedback mechanism devised to collect citizen input. It was viewed by Interviewee D as not very successful and somewhat empirical, indicating that the Europe Direct Information Relays struggled to serve as the main information gateway. Notwithstanding these challenges, the economic impact of these official information entities was relatively low for the European Commission. Host entities contributed additional resources, making the initiative a cost-effective way to disseminate important information.

Moreover, the Europe Direct Information Relays acted as information multipliers, particularly outside capital cities. They reached citizens at the local level, making European topics more accessible and relevant. This multiplier effect was

important for engaging citizens and ensuring that information about the European Union reached a broader audience.

Interviewee D expressed the opinion that while the Europe Direct Information Relays succeeded in providing a centralized entry point for official European information and acted as valuable information multipliers, issues such as coordination, feedback mechanism, and local consultations posed significant challenges. Despite these obstacles, the Europe Direct Information Relays remained a cost-effective and relevant tool for disseminating information and engaging with citizens across the European Union.

Interviewee D stated that *"I believe there should be a closer link between the European Commission Representations and local authorities. This is my personal view."* (Interviewee D) In addition, this interviewee described that *"From 2004, the European Commission had instruments, such as the Europe Direct Information Relays, to disseminate the main messages at a local level, and they had a multiplier effect."* (Interviewee D)

Interviewee D mentioned two (2) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 5.13% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee E

The Europe Direct Information Relays have undergone various transformations since the early 2000s, evolving from Info-Point Europe in urban areas and "Carrefours d'Information Rurale" in rural regions. The management of this network fell under the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication.

Throughout the years, the European Parliament has consistently endorsed these networks. This support is evident from the exchanges between members of Parliament in its respective Committee and Commissioners. A notable period of coordination and management of the Europe Direct Information Relays occurred under Commissioner Margot Wallström. The European Commission had actively sought partnerships with member states and other stakeholders through initiatives such as "Communicating Europe in Partnership", which played a crucial role in the network's development.

Engagement from member states varied. Countries like France, Portugal, and Spain were proactive in their participation, whereas others allowed regional governments to take a more prominent role in the networks. Civil society was given opportunities to comment on related plans and white papers, although specific consultations on the establishment and operation of the Europe Direct Information Relays were somewhat limited.

The significance of the Europe Direct Information Relays was underscored by their mission and tasks, as defined in the call for proposals. These grants were structured based on the co-financing principle, providing an incentive to achieve specific outcomes. The transition to a more modern generation of information relays brought about significant improvements, including the elimination of duplications, rationalization of processes, and better territorial coverage. This modernization enhanced the network's coordination and management.

The network has undergone evaluations, and the recommendations from these assessments have been largely endorsed, contributing to the overall success of the Europe Direct Information Relays. The role of such information entities in communication cannot be overstated; they served as relevant channels for providing local-level information about the European Union, tailored to local cultures and languages. This adaptability ensured that European information was accessible and relevant to citizens across different regions.

The Europe Direct Information Relays have evolved significantly since their inception, supported steadily by the European Parliament and managed by the European Commission. The partnerships and co-financing principles have driven their success, while modernization and evaluation have enhanced their effectiveness. The Europe Direct Information Relays played - and its inheritors continue to do so - a vital role in bridging the gap between the European Union and its citizens by providing localized, culturally relevant information.

This interviewee outlined the history, support, coordination, and significance of the Europe Direct Information Relays. It furthermore emphasized their role as a key channel for local-level communication about the European Union and the importance of partnerships and effective coordination.

“The Commission has always sought partnerships with the member states and other actors.” (Interviewee E), and *“Several member states have played an active*

role...” or “... *let regional governments take a more prominent role ...*” (Interviewee E), contended this interviewee.

Interviewee E referred to one (1) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 2.56% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee F

The European Commission had previously established information networks such as Info-Point Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours. These networks laid the groundwork for later initiatives aimed at improving communication between the European Union and its citizens.

A critical moment came in 1998 when a resolution from the European Parliament expressed concerns about citizens' disengagement with European issues, particularly in the lead-up to the 1999 European Parliament elections. This resolution called on the European Commission to propose measures to strengthen the information and communication policy, enhance coordination between European institutions, and optimize the use of resources.

The European Parliament played a pivotal role in driving a new strategy for communication and information policy. It strongly advocated for strengthening existing information networks, including Info-Point Europe, and continued to push for better coordination and increased resources dedicated to such efforts. In response, the European Commission presented a new framework for information policy activities in 2001. This framework emphasized the importance of networks and information relays, and in 2002, a communication strategy was proposed to create a more coherent structure and greater decentralization of information dissemination.

By 2004, a significant transition occurred when the European Commission decided to replace Info-Point Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours with a new generation of information centres known as Europe Direct Information Relays. These relays were designed to be more proactive in providing information and engaging citizens, thereby enhancing the connection between the European Union and its populace.

The level of participation and support from member states for these networks varied. Some member states were actively involved and supportive, while others were

less engaged. Additionally, there were limited consultations with the existing Info-Point Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours during the transition to the new information relays.

The Europe Direct Information Relays were considered as an important initiative to bring the European Union closer to its citizens. They played a crucial role in bridging the gap between the European institutions and the public by promoting European issues and fostering dialogue with citizens. Despite the changing information environment, the Europe Direct Information Relays were able to maintain their relevance and were regarded as irreplaceable for providing accurate, verified information about the European Union and engaging effectively with the public.

This interviewee highlighted the influential role of the European Parliament, the strategic initiatives of the European Commission, and the varying degrees of member state participation. The Europe Direct Information Relays have proven to be a vital tool in enhancing communication between the European Union and its citizens, ensuring that European issues were communicated and understood at the local level.

When the Europe Direct Information Relays were established, Interviewee F was of the opinion “... *that this construction and integration of the European Union depended more and more on the public opinion of citizens in favour of the European Union.*” (Interviewee F) As time progressed, “... *I think there is an information deficit in public opinion on European issues and a drift towards a strong populism.*” (Interviewee F) Moreover, “... *the importance these social networks have today for building opinions, often distorted and without any basis...*” (Interviewee F) is acknowledged, and hence the need for today’s information centres to be present in these spaces and play a pedagogical role from within.

Interviewee F mentioned three (3) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 7.69% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee G

The primary goal behind establishing the Europe Direct Information Relays was to harmonize and professionalize the European Commission's previously fragmented information networks. The Europe Direct brand, which was already well-known for its Call Centre, played a central role in this endeavour.

Initially, there were limited consultations between the European Commission and other institutions. While the initial Communication in 2002 was shared with the Council and the European Parliament, direct consultations were minimal. At the inception of the Europe Direct Information Relays, particularly after the 2004 enlargement, the management of these structures in new member states was delegated to national governments. This delegation resulted several times in political decisions being made at the Director-General level.

Support for the Europe Direct Information Relays varied among member states. France and Germany were supportive of the idea from the outset, while the United Kingdom initially opposed it but eventually changed its stance. Public consultation and direct engagement with other European institutions regarding the network set up were lacking, with the decision-making process being primarily unilateral and led by the European Commission.

The aims of the Europe Direct Information Relays were multifaceted. They were designed to provide information services with localized management, thereby enhancing communication with citizens and improving the collection of real-time feedback. However, financial considerations posed challenges. Disparities in grant amounts between member states created issues, and the level of involvement and support from national governments varied across the European Union.

Moreover, the nature of citizen inquiries to the Europe Direct Information Relays often revolved around obtaining grants and financial support rather than focusing on European Union's priorities. This highlighted a gap between the intended purpose of the information relays and the actual concerns of the citizens engaging with them.

This initiative aimed to create a more unified and professional network to enhance communication between the European Union and its citizens, although it faced several hurdles in its implementation and operation.

This interviewee highlighted two relevant facts. The first one was that the management of the EDIR in the member states which joined the European Union in 2004 was delegated to national governments at an initial stage, making the structures headquartered in those states prone to political influence and decision-making practices. The second one was that citizens' concerns and queries did not go hand in hand with the communication priorities established by the European institutions.

“What did the people ask? And the funny thing was that we never got the correct answer from the Europe Direct Information Relays, because the citizens rarely

mentioned the priorities. For example, the questions were mainly about money.” (Interviewee G) The information gaps and needs expressed by citizens were concrete: *“How do I get grants for this? How do I build this? How do I get financial support for that?”* (Interviewee G)

Interviewee G referred to seven (7) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 17.95% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee H

These information relays, uniformly named across all member states, aimed to foster a unified European identity.

The selection of host institutions for such official information entities was conducted through calls for proposals. This approach allowed a diverse range of private and public actors, including trade unions, professional organizations, and employers' associations, to apply for the opportunity to host a Europe Direct Information Relay. The European Commission's strategy was to mobilize various stakeholders to enhance European information efforts.

Collaboration was of paramount importance for the European Commission. The information relays were encouraged to work together not only within individual member states but also across borders. To facilitate this, the Commission organized regular general and thematic meetings, which served as platforms for these structures to share best practices and experiences.

The creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays was not merely a technical exercise in disseminating information. It held substantial political significance, embodying a two-way communication process. Margot Wallström, a former member of the European Commission and later Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, underscored the importance of listening to citizens and actively involving them in the European debate. This approach aimed to bridge the gap between the European institutions and the public.

The feedback received through the Europe Direct Information Relays was highly valued by the European Commission. This feedback played a substantive role in informing political and legislative proposals, helping the Commission understand

the attitudes and expectations of European citizens. The network of Europe Direct Information Relays enabled a more coordinated and professional effort in reaching out to citizens, representing a significant improvement over previous method.

Furthermore, the Europe Direct Information Relays were instrumental in facilitating Citizens' Dialogues. These dialogues were not confined to capital cities but extended to various regions, ensuring broader and more inclusive participation from citizens across the European Union.

The establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays was thus a strategic initiative by the European Commission to create a more unified and professional network for disseminating information and engaging with European citizens. Through collaborative efforts, inclusive selection processes, and an emphasis on two-way communication, the Europe Direct Information Relays played a pivotal role in enhancing the relationship between the European Union and its citizens.

For this interviewee, the Europe Direct Information Relays were “... *a focal point that the European Commission had all across Europe.*” (Interviewee H) And this is the reason why “... *the Europe Direct Information Relays had a key role in ensuring that this type of dialogues could take place not only in the capital cities, but all around the countries.*” (Interviewee H)

Interviewee H mentioned five (5) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 12.82% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee I

The Europe Direct Information Relays were created to consolidate and streamline existing information networks that had been in place until 2004, such as the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours and Info-Point Europe. These networks, each designed with specific purposes, required integration to enhance efficiency and provide consistent information on European issues. The European Commission recognized the necessity of a single, coherent network capable of addressing both general and specialized inquiries.

Before the Europe Direct Information Relays' inception, there was an effort to geographically distribute the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours in rural areas and Info-Point Europe in cities. However, this approach did not achieve the

desired outcomes, prompting a reassessment of the strategy. The creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays aimed to rectify this by establishing a unified information network with a broader geographical reach and more coherent structure.

Collaboration with the European Parliament was key during the foundation of the Europe Direct Information Relays. The European Parliament supported the network's creation, facilitating communication at local and regional levels beyond just the capital cities. This partnership was complemented by the involvement of the Committee of the Regions, which played a significant role, especially since some information relays were hosted by local administrations. This collaboration underscored the importance of reaching citizens at the local and regional levels.

The European Commission's aim was to increase efficiency through a unified network, bolstered by a larger budget and an extensive geographical reach. The Europe Direct Information Relays were expected to provide European citizens with timely and high-quality information. Monitoring and feedback mechanisms were integral to the network, with these information structures required to provide regular reports on their activities. This feedback was crucial for the European Commission to assess the network's effectiveness and address citizens' concerns.

Host institutions played a crucial role in their operation, contributing to the budget and ensuring the network's effectiveness. The allocation of funds to these institutions depended on several criteria, including the size of the country and the number of regions. The Europe Direct Information Relays aimed to offer information tailored to local environments and specific community concerns, acknowledging the diversity of regions across member states.

The Europe Direct Information Relays were envisioned as the local face of Europe, providing the European Union with a presence in every region. They were seen as the most effective means to inform and engage European citizens at the local level, fostering a closer connection between the European Union and its citizens. This local engagement was essential for making European issues relevant and accessible to the broader public, thereby strengthening the relationship between the European institutions and the people they served.

This Interviewee I contended in strong terms that the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays was “... *the best thing that we could have done for the future of Europe in each region. I am convinced of this.*” (Interviewee I) The interviewee added that “... *Europe Direct Information Relays were our face, the face of Europe*

locally. And I know that most of them were doing a great job. Very useful to the European Commission!" (Interviewee I)

Interviewee I referred to five (5) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 12.82% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Interviewee J

The process of establishing the Europe Direct Information Relays involved two main steps. First, a legal base was enacted to facilitate their formation, rooted in a decision by the European Commission. The second step involved the actual set up of these relays on the ground.

The primary concept behind the Europe Direct Information Relays was to create partnerships with local and regional authorities to reach European citizens in various regions. This methodology aimed to communicate European priorities to as many citizens as possible. To achieve this, the European Commission decided to unify two types of information relays under a common brand name, Europe Direct Information Relays, providing a consistent and unified source of information for European citizens.

A partnership model was established where the European Commission covered a portion of the activity costs, while the other partner, often a local authority or an association, contributed to the remaining expenses. This joint approach enabled these information structures to operate adequately. At the beginning of each year, the European Commission defined the communication priorities, and local partners proposed activities aligned with such priorities. The Commission evaluated and accepted the work programs of the relays, ensuring flexibility in their regional operations.

The Europe Direct Information Relays were granted autonomy to plan and carry out their own activities, allowing them to cater to the specific needs and concerns of their regions. The European Parliament also played a significant role by cooperating with the European Commission in setting communication priorities, particularly focusing on the European elections to enhance European citizenship.

To ensure accountability and evaluate the impact of the activities undertaken by the Europe Direct Information Relays, a structured feedback mechanism was implemented. This feedback was firstly processed by the Representations of the

European Commission in each member state. However, while the information relays were a useful tool, their effectiveness was constrained by limited resources. The budget allocated for this initiative was modest, given the ambition to reach hundreds of millions of European citizens. The interviewee noted that greater resources might have yielded more sustainable results.

Addressing the unique concerns of citizens across diverse regions remained a challenge, as interests varied significantly. It was essential to explain the decision-making process and compromises within the European Union to the public. One fundamental challenge was to elucidate the difference between the European Union and its member states, particularly the compromise-based decision-making process of the Union. This aspect of communication was crucial to fostering a better understanding among European citizens.

As a conclusion, the interviewee acknowledged the importance of the research effort to document the history and evolution of the Europe Direct Information Relays and appreciated the initiative taken by the research student.

Interviewee J remarked that “... *the European decision-making process is based on compromise, which is the social fabric of democracy. The compromise is often not one clear decision.*” (Interviewee J) Accordingly, the Europe Direct Information Relays faced challenges in terms of explaining the decisions taken by the institutions in several areas to citizens.

Moreover, the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays was “... *an ambitious operation, but the amount that we had for it was not appropriate to create a sustainable operation. Because the budget was very low for reaching 300 or 400 million European citizens.*” (Interviewee J) In concluding remarks, this interviewee highlighted that the history of these official European information structures “... *is still not written, and your investigation is probably the first step in that. I am happy that you are doing this, and I praise you for that.*” (Interviewee J)

Interviewee J mentioned one (1) of the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), corresponding to 2.56% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

The table below presents a summary of the key evidence deriving from the interviewees' statements regarding the indicators of the intellectual paradigm of Osgood and Schramm (Schramm, 1954).

	Interviewee G	Interviewee C	Interviewee A	Interviewee H	Interviewee I	Interviewee B	Interviewee F	Interviewee D	Interviewee E	Interviewee J
Indicator 7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Indicator 5	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Indicator 9	x	x		x	x	x				
Indicators 3 and 4	x	x	x		x	x				
Indicator 1	x	x		x	x					
Indicator 6	x	x	x	x						
Indicator 8		x	x				x			
Indicator 2	x									
Total	7	6	5	5	5	4	3	2	1	1
%	17.95%	15.38%	12.82%	12.82%	12.82%	10.26%	7.69%	5.13%	2.56%	2.56%
Accumulated %	17.95%	33.33%	46.15%	58.97%	71.79%	82.05%	89.74%	94.87%	97.44%	100.00%

Table 6: Summary of the descriptive synchronic analysis.

Source: Author.

The figure below presents an overview of the same key evidence deriving from the interviewees' statements in regard to the indicators of the theoretical model of Osgood and Schramm (Schramm, 1954), with the aim of helping to illustrate the analysis.

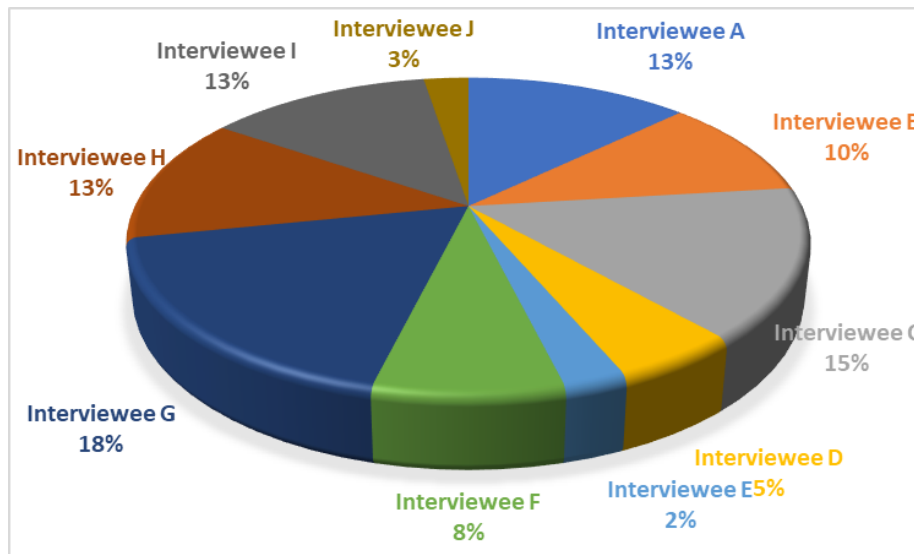


Figure 5: Overview of the descriptive synchronic analysis.

Source: Author.

The ten interviewees referred to the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) for a total of thirty-nine (39) times during the semi-structured interviews. By examining the number of times each of them has mentioned the indicators, the interviewees may be sorted in three different categories, as follows: a) Category 1: More than 15% of the total number of mentioned

times – interviewees C and G; b) Category 2: Between 15% and 10% of the total number of mentioned times – interviewees A, B, H and I; c) Category 3: Less than 10% of the total number of mentioned times – interviewees D, E, F and J. Category 1 accounts for 33.33% of the references, category 2 for 48.72%, and category 3 for 17.95% of the references.

From a statistical perspective, this dataset features a mean of 3.9, a median of 4.5, a mode of 5, and the range is 6. A few insights can be extracted from these numbers.

Firstly, a range of 6, in a total of 10 interviews, is significant and is testament to the multiplicity of contributions in the dataset. Secondly, despite this variety, the most frequent number of indicators mentioned is 5, which is an expressive number of indicators. Thirdly, since the mode is larger than the median, which in turn is larger than the mean, this shows a negatively skewed distribution when considering the number of indicators covered by each interview. It is therefore not a normal or symmetric distribution, but rather a distribution with a left-hand side tail. This means that the lower end of the range is longer than the right-hand side, and most data-points tend to cluster on the right hand-side. Such distribution suggests that the dataset is composed of a substantive number of interviews that covered many indicators, and therefore provided a valuable set of qualitative information that can be further analysed.

Across the narrative of the ten interviewees, all indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) were alluded to. But does evidence support the idea that all indicators were awarded similar prominence? This is what the descriptive diachronic analysis that ensues aims to uncover.

5.1.1.2 Diachronic analysis

Indicator 1: Once coded and sent, a message is quite free of its sender

The statements of various interviewees regarding indicator 1 can be presented in a narrative, highlighting different perspectives on the professionalization and quality of information distribution to European citizens.

Interviewee C underscored the substantial development in the professionalization of information dissemination. This individual stressed the necessity

for information to be rigorous and verified by experts, emphasizing the role of professional teams in delivering such high-quality content to the European public.

Seconding this viewpoint, Interviewee G referred to the paramount importance of the quality of information content. This interviewee argued that for the information to be effective, it must be delivered in the local language and tailored to specific local circumstances. Moreover, the content should be accurate, clear, and timely, ensuring that it meets the needs of the target audience.

Adding another dimension to the discussion, Interviewee H observed that citizens who are particularly interested in European issues might seek information beyond what is usually provided by the information relays. While acknowledging the superior quality and presentation of the disseminated information, this interviewee noted that the content is generally basic, hypothetically encouraging more engaged citizens to look for more in-depth information elsewhere.

In agreement with the previous statements, Interviewee I placed emphasis on the need for high-quality information prepared by experts. This interviewee highlighted the importance of presenting this information in the local language and adapting it to address the specific concerns and environments of each community.

Considered collectively, these statements underscored the significance of professional, localized, and expert-verified information in the context of information distribution to European citizens.

Interviewee I remarked that “... *information of high quality existed, prepared by experts, in the local language, adapted to local environments, to the concerns of each community.*” (Interviewee I) However, Interviewee H commented that the substance of the information offered “... *normally is basic.*” (Interviewee H) Despite this fact, the same interviewee expressed his view that the information “... *is very well done and presented ...*” (Interviewee H).

Indicator 1 was alluded to by four (4) interviewees, corresponding to 10.26% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicator 2: The model can be no stronger than its weakest link

Only one interviewee made a remark pertaining to indicator 2. Interviewee G underlined the importance of engaging with local communities and gathering their opinions about the European Commission and other European institutions. To achieve

this, the Europe Direct Information Relays employed various methods, such as surveys, reviews, and debates, to gauge public sentiment. This feedback was continuously collected and shared with the European Commission, fostering a two-way communication channel between the institutions and the local public.

These were the exact words of Interviewee G in this regard: *“We had to talk with the local people, in the regions, and indicate to the European Commission what they thought at all times of the European Commission and the other European institutions.”* (Interviewee G) In addition, *“That is why the Europe Direct Information Relays used all sorts of instruments to gauge the public sentiment, surveys, reviews, debates. This feedback was constantly collected and relayed to the European Commission.”* (Interviewee G)

Indicator 2 was mentioned by one (1) interviewee, corresponding to 2.56% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicators 3 and 4 (merged): The model has a maximum capacity for handling information but will work at less than top efficiency, and Communicator’s redundancy is an important aspect of constructing a message

Five interviewees provided statements which are relevant to indicators 3 and 4, offering a broad view on the Europe Direct Information Relays and their impact.

Interviewee A praised these official European information relays, noting that they were well-executed and staffed by competent and dedicated professionals who possessed an in-depth knowledge of the European Union.

In a similar manner, Interviewee B mentioned the relays' duty to describe the Union's activities objectively, yet in an engaging and interesting manner. This interviewee referred to the necessity of having dedicated and competent individuals on the ground to effectively convey the European Union's message. The importance of knowledgeable personnel was seen as crucial for the relays' success.

Adding yet another perspective, Interviewee C viewed the Europe Direct Information Relays as a significant step towards professionalizing the distribution of information to European citizens. This interviewee mentioned the need for providing rigorous, expert-checked information through professional teams, thereby ensuring the accuracy of the information disseminated.

Interviewee G highlighted the role of these entities in actively distributing information to local audiences. This interviewee stressed the importance of listening to user concerns and questions, and repeating information as necessary. Moreover, the repetition of information was seen as an important aspect of their work, ensuring that the message was thoroughly communicated and understood by the audience.

Lastly, Interviewee I acknowledged the competency of most staff at the Europe Direct Information Relays but pointed out that not all personnel were equally knowledgeable in European affairs. This observation indicated a potential variation in expertise among the staff, suggesting that while many were highly competent, there was room for improvement in ensuring uniform expertise across all personnel.

These statements underscored the significance of having competent and dedicated professionals in the Europe Direct Information Relays to effectively convey European information to local audiences and to ensure rigorous and engaging communication. The importance of professionalization and responsiveness in the distribution of information to European citizens was also acknowledged.

Interviewee A expressed the opinion that *“This was well done, and the Europe Direct Information Relays were - and still are - very good, mostly staffed by very competent and dedicated professionals, who knew the ins and outs of the European Union.”* (Interviewee A) *“Many times, they had to repeat and repeat the information. This was important as well.”* (Interviewee G), remarked another interviewee. Exceptional cases were underscored by Interviewee I, who stated that *“... the majority of Europe Direct Information Relays were staffed by competent persons in European affairs, but some were not.”* (Interviewee I)

Indicators 3 and 4 were referred to by five (5) interviewees, corresponding to 12.82% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicator 5: Source and Receiver must be in tune

The thoughts of the interviewees which are relevant to indicator 5 can be described in a few paragraphs.

Interviewee A stressed the importance of providing various types of information in local languages, tailored to local audiences, and presented in diverse formats. This approach was emphasized as a significant factor in communication.

Similarly, Interviewee B underscored the importance of conveying the European message at the local level, highlighting that considering both language and local sensitivities is essential for the message to resonate with the audience.

Interviewee D discussed the Europe Direct Information Relays, describing them as instruments used by the European Commission to disseminate messages at the local level with a multiplier effect.

Acknowledging the diverse channels available for information dissemination, Interviewee E noted that Europe Direct Information Relays were one among other means to provide information to the local public, tailored to their cultural and linguistic needs.

Interviewee F draw attention to the necessity for better information that aligns closely with the specific needs of the audience.

Focusing on the content and delivery of information, Interviewee G stressed that the information should be in the local language, adapted to local circumstances, accurate, clear, and timely. It also pointed out the role of Europe Direct Information Relays in distributing information to local audiences, actively engaging with users, and repeating information as needed.

Interviewee H mentioned that these relays were equipped with adequate tools to engage with local citizens, offering information materials in different formats. These materials were professionally prepared, reviewed by experts, and tailored to the local environment and culture. This facilitated the collection of feedback for regular transmission to the European Commission.

Echoing a similar opinion, Interviewee I highlighted the importance of providing high-quality information prepared by experts. This information should be in the local language and adapted to the specific environments and concerns of each community.

These statements accentuated the significance of offering a diverse array of information customized to suit the culture, language, and unique sensitivities of local audiences. They underscored the crucial nature of delivering information that is both timely and crystal clear, with a strong emphasis on accuracy. Furthermore, they emphasized the role of the Europe Direct Information Relays in facilitating this objective. Additionally, they placed relevance on the necessity of providing high-quality information, crafted by experts, to effectively address the specific requirements of various communities.

“All types of information were available, in the local languages, adapted to the local audiences, and in many different formats. This was a big thing.” (Interviewee A) In the view of Interviewee B, *“It boiled down to the possibility of getting the European message across locally, in the language and in accordance with the sensitivities that you had on the ground.”* (Interviewee B) Interviewee E pointed out that *“Europe Direct Information Relays were one channel to bring information to the public at the local level throughout Europe, adapted to their own culture and language, but there were others.”* (Interviewee E)

Indicator 5 was mentioned by eight (8) interviewees, corresponding to 20.51% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicator 6: The communication process is endless

The details below pertain to indicator 6 and are derived from the interviewees' remarks.

Interviewee A explained that the European Commission aimed to gather feedback from citizens via the Europe Direct Information Relays to ensure the relevance of the information provided. This feedback was essential for adjusting the information to meet public demand. The same interviewee noted that well-organized information channels, like the Europe Direct Information Relays, with clear objectives and effective feedback mechanisms in place, were crucial.

In contrast, Interviewee C mentioned that while there was a formalized and regular feedback process in place, there were challenges and not complete success in this exercise. The interviewee expressed some scepticism about the effectiveness of the feedback mechanism compared to other studies, such as the Eurobarometer, which is contracted to specialized companies. Despite good intentions, the fruitfulness of the feedback mechanism implemented in 2004 was questioned.

Interviewee G highlighted the use of various instruments by the Europe Direct Information Relays to gauge public sentiment and collect feedback for the European Commission. These instruments included surveys, reviews, and debates. The interviewee also explained that detailed questionnaires were used to gather feedback from the Europe Direct Information Relays about citizens' thoughts and questions, emphasizing the importance of listening to and responding to citizens. This

interviewee underlined the repeated effort of the Europe Direct Information Relays in distributing information to local audiences and responding to their questions.

Similarly, Interviewee H explained that the primary ambition was to genuinely listen to citizens, with the Europe Direct Information Relays serving as the means to implement this approach. The importance of using feedback information was highlighted, especially in political and legislative initiatives, and how the European Commission had tools to listen to citizens.

These views were testament to the importance of feedback mechanisms and actively engaging with citizens in the functioning of the Europe Direct Information Relays. Their purpose was to ensure that the information disseminated by the European Commission to local audiences remained pertinent and impactful. Additionally, these remarks shed light on the challenges surrounding the effectiveness of the feedback mechanism adopted.

Interviewee A highlighted that *“The European Commission wanted to know if the information it provided was relevant to the public, and to adjust that information to public demand. To give the public the information the public needed.”* (Interviewee A) *“That is why the European Commission constantly asked for the feedback from the users of the Europe Direct Information Relays - it wanted to respond to that feedback with appropriate information.”* (Interviewee A) The political element of this exercise was alluded to by Interviewee G, who described the adoption of *“... detailed questionnaires for Europe Direct Information Relays to send us feedback about what citizens thought, and what people normally asked. They were always listening to the citizens and responding to it. It was a cycle.”* (Interviewee G) *“So, my feeling is that the political side was very much linked to this, the desire to go closer to the citizens at the local level.”* (Interviewee G) Interviewee H corroborated this argument: *“Receiving feedback was crucial. And normally, I can say that in specific political and legislative initiatives, the European Commission has put this feedback information to good use. And this was very important.”* (Interviewee H) Interviewee C noted however that in terms of the regular feedback exercise, *“... I would not say that we have had a complete success on that side.”* (Interviewee C) The same Interviewee C added that *“I think all the system that was created, it worked, it provided some information, but I am not convinced that this was very effective as compared to the Eurobarometer or other studies that were contracted to specialized companies.”* (Interviewee C)

Indicator 6 was alluded to by four (4) interviewees, corresponding to 10.26% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicator 7: This model is circular, with a bi-directional flow of information

The insights from various interviewees concerning indicator 7 expose the importance of the feedback mechanisms employed by the European Commission through the Europe Direct Information Relays, although also present a nuanced perspective.

Interviewee A explained that the European Commission aimed to gather continuous feedback through the Europe Direct Information Relays to ensure the relevance of the information provided and to respond appropriately to public demand. Gathering ongoing feedback was pivotal for the Commission's information mission.

Emphasizing a different aspect, Interviewee B highlighted the crucial role of the Europe Direct Information Relays in assessing the acceptance of the European Commission's policies on the ground. This interviewee noted that the relays played a vital role in this regard.

Conversely, Interviewee C mentioned the formalized and regular feedback process initiated in 2004 but expressed doubts about its complete success. Comparing it to other studies like the Eurobarometer, the interviewee suggested that while the intention was sound, the results might not have been as fruitful as anticipated.

Adding to this scepticism, Interviewee D discussed the feedback collection from citizens through the Europe Direct Information Relays and suggested it was not very successful, viewing the feedback as somewhat empirical rather than robust.

Interviewee F also expressed doubts, particularly about the institutions effectively utilizing the feedback obtained. This interviewee suggested that the process might have been more bureaucratic than effective.

In contrast, Interviewee G highlighted the various instruments used by the Europe Direct Information Relays, such as surveys, reviews, and debates, to gauge public sentiment and collect feedback for the European Commission.

Interviewee H stressed the importance of receiving feedback and mentioned that the European Commission used this information effectively in specific political and legislative initiatives.

Echoing this sentiment, Interviewee I underlined the importance of feedback for both the Europe Direct Information Relays and the European Commission, emphasizing its role in ensuring the relevance and responsiveness of the information provided.

Finally, Interviewee J noted a major change with the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays was the introduction of a regular and structured feedback mechanism. This interviewee believes this mechanism was taken seriously in Brussels for drawing political conclusions and shaping policy directions.

The importance of feedback mechanisms in the Europe Direct Information Relays, which were intended to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of information provided by the European Commission to local audiences, was a key message from the interviewees. While some of them expressed doubts about its effectiveness or described limitations, others highlighted the significance of such mechanisms in shaping policies and decision-making.

For example, Interviewee J asserted that “... *the feedback mechanism was an important element. It was one very important step. Brussels, on the other side, has taken this feedback mechanism seriously to take political conclusions.*” (Interviewee J) Interviewee B seconded this statement with the words “... *we used the Europe Direct Information Relays to gather feedback on the temperature on the ground. The European Commission would not have been able to see how its policies would have been accepted in the territory if it was not for the Europe Direct Information Relays. So, this was a very crucial remit that the Europe Direct Information Relays had.*” (Interviewee B) Scepticism about the effectiveness of the collected feedback was also conveyed. Interviewee D contended that “*It was also very much about getting feedback from citizens, which was usually made through reports from the Europe Direct Information Relays.* (Interviewee D) “*That, in my view, was not very successful. That feedback from the Europe Direct Information Relays was a bit more empirical.*” (Interviewee D) Interviewee F, on the other hand, stated its uncertainty about the utilization of the collected information, as follows: “... *I am not sure we used the full potential this feedback should have given the institutions.*” (Interviewee F) Interviewee G noted another interesting aspect of this matter, namely that “... *when we started to have this very strict feedback mechanism, we started asking what the people asked in the Europe Direct Information Relays.*” (Interviewee G) “*And the funny thing was that we never got the correct answer from the Europe Direct Information Relays,*

because the citizens rarely mentioned the priorities.” (Interviewee G) In fact, “... the questions were mainly about money. How do I get grants for this? How do I build this? How do I get financial support for that?” (Interviewee G)

This indicator 7 was referred to by almost all the interviewees, namely nine (9), corresponding to 23.08% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicator 8: Messages are conveyed in multiple channels

Three interviewees offered their opinion in relation to indicator 8.

Interviewee A noted that the level of activity and organization within the Europe Direct Information Relays varied significantly. Some relays were highly active, organizing numerous events such as debates, talks, and training sessions, while others were less active. The interviewee emphasized the importance of offering various types of information in local languages, adapted to local audiences, and presented in diverse formats. This method was considered crucial for effective communication and engagement with the public.

Interviewee C elaborated on the evolution of the Europe Direct Information Relays, explaining that in 2004, they transitioned into a more service-focused network. These relays regularly organized events, disseminated information, and, importantly, collected citizens' opinions, which were then communicated to the European Commission.

Describing further changes, Interviewee F highlighted the transformation in the dynamic of the Europe Direct Information Relays. They were envisioned as proactive gateways for citizens to access information, taking the initiative to bring information to the citizens rather than waiting for citizens to seek it out. This was seen as an important step in making information more accessible and engaging to the audience.

These viewpoints offered an account of the varying levels of activity and organization within the Europe Direct Information Relays, the importance of offering information in diverse formats and local languages, and the shift towards proactive information dissemination and citizen engagement by the information relays.

In the opinion of Interviewee F, “... *the idea was that these Information Relays should take the initiative, bringing information to the citizens and therefore not waiting for the citizens to go there to give them information, but being proactive in bringing it*

to the citizens.” (Interviewee F) Furthermore, “In 2004, it became a serviced-focused network, with the regular organization of events, dissemination of information, and another very important feature, collecting citizens’ opinions and bringing those to the attention of the European Commission.” (Interviewee C), in the words of another interviewee. Interviewee A expressed his belief that “... some Europe Direct Information Relays were very active and organized many events - debates, talks, trainings, etc. - while others were not so active.” (Interviewee A)

This indicator 8 was alluded to by three (3) interviewees, corresponding to 7.69% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Indicator 9: Conditions of success in communication: a) the message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended destination; b) the message must employ signs which refer to experience common to source and receiver, so as to “get the meaning across”; c) the message must arouse personality needs in the destination and suggest some ways to meet those demands; d) the message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the destination finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response

Indicator 9, in its multiple dimensions, was alluded to by five interviewees.

Interviewee B referred to the importance of describing the Union's activities objectively, attractively, and interestingly. They stressed the need for dedicated and competent individuals on the ground to ensure the Union's message effectively reached the public. While objectivity in the information provided was crucial, it did not imply neutrality. The European Commission expected the Europe Direct Information Relays to accurately represent the philosophy behind proposals and policies, as well as the benefits for citizens, without turning into mere propaganda machines. This interviewee further emphasized the ability of the Europe Direct Information Relays to address facts and objectively present what the European Commission proposed.

Interviewee C viewed the Europe Direct Information Relays as a step towards professionalizing information distribution to European citizens. They highlighted the importance of providing rigorous, expert-reviewed information delivered by professional teams.

Interviewee G underscored the significance of the content of information materials, stating that it should be in the local language, adapted to local circumstances, clear, correct, and timely in delivery. This focus on localization and clarity was considered important for reaching the public.

Interviewee H believed that the existence of the Europe Direct Information Relays improved coordination, professionalism, and the capacity to reach out to people with timely information. They noted that the relays were equipped with suitable tools to work with local citizens, offering information materials in various formats, professionally prepared and reviewed by experts, in the local language, and adapted to the local environment and culture. This set up facilitated the collection of feedback, which was regularly transmitted to the European Commission.

Echoing a similar opinion, Interviewee I emphasized the importance of high-quality information, prepared by experts, in the local language, and adapted to local environments.

These interviewees highlighted the significance of objectivity, professionalism, and high-quality information in the context of Europe Direct Information Relays, aiming to effectively disseminate information to European citizens.

In the words of Interviewee G, *“The most important thing was the content, the content of the information materials, which had to be in the local language, adapted to local circumstances, clear, correct, and had to be given at the exact time.”* (Interviewee G) Additionally, Interviewee B stated that the Europe Direct Information Relays should have been able to *“... address the facts and objectively present what the European Commission puts forward.”* (Interviewee B) The same Interviewee B mentioned the following: *“... what we told and tell the Europe Direct Information Relays is that we did not really want them to be propaganda machines, saying that everything that comes from Brussels is fantastic.”* (Interviewee B) Furthermore, *“That was not in our interest. The very meaning of engagement means that I want to gather feedback on the dissatisfaction and frustration of people, report it back, and discuss it with the people.”* (Interviewee B)

Indicator 9 was referred to by five (5) interviewees, corresponding to 12.82% of the total number of times the indicators were mentioned by all ten (10) interviewees.

Appendix 2 features a detailed table which makes a correspondence between the evidence sought and the exact relevant statements of the interviewees. The table

below presents a summary of the crucial evidence of the use of the indicators of the model of communication of Osgood and Schramm (Schramm, 1954) collected across the interviewees' statements.

	Interviewee G	Interviewee C	Interviewee A	Interviewee H	Interviewee I	Interviewee B	Interviewee F	Interviewee D	Interviewee E	Interviewee J	Total	%	Accumulated %
Indicator 7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	9	23.08%	23.08%
Indicator 5	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		8	20.51%	43.59%
Indicator 9	x	x		x	x	x					5	12.82%	56.41%
Indicators 3 and 4	x	x	x		x	x					5	12.82%	69.23%
Indicator 1	x	x		x	x						4	10.26%	79.49%
Indicator 6	x	x	x	x							4	10.26%	89.74%
Indicator 8		x	x				x				3	7.69%	97.44%
Indicator 2	x										1	2.56%	100.00%

Table 7: Summary of the descriptive diachronic analysis.

Source: Author.

The figure below presents an overview of the same crucial evidence of the use of the indicators of the intellectual paradigm of Osgood and Schramm (Schramm, 1954), with the aim of helping to illustrate the examination.

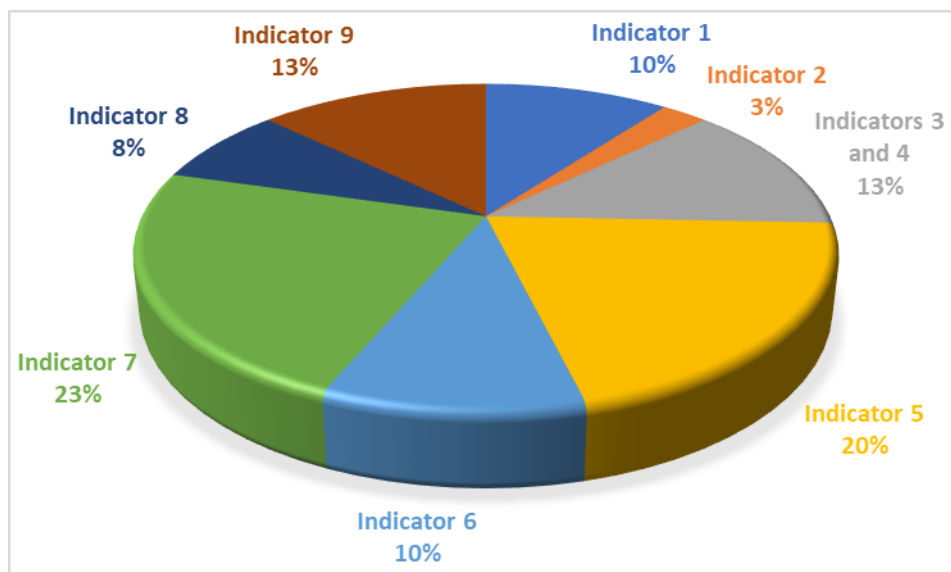


Figure 6: Overview of the descriptive diachronic analysis.

Source: Author.

The nine indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) were mentioned for a total of thirty-nine (39) times during the semi-structured interviews. By examining the number of times each of them were alluded to, the indicators may be sorted in three different categories, as follows:

a) Category 1: More than 20% of the total number of mentioned times – indicators 5

and 7; b) Category 2: Between 20% and 10% of the total number of mentioned times – indicators 1, 3 and 4 (merged), 6 and 9; c) Category 3: Less than 10% of the total number of mentioned times – indicators 2 and 8. Category 1 accounts for 43.59% of the references, category 2 for 46.16%, and category 3 for 10.25% of the references.

From a statistical perspective, this dataset features a mean of 4.8, a median of 4.5, two modes of 4 and 5 (it is bimodal), and the range is 8. A few insights can be extracted from these numbers.

Firstly, a range of 8, in a total of 9 indicators, is significant and just like in the case of the interviews, is testament to the variety of contributions in the dataset. Secondly, despite this diversity, the most frequent numbers of indicators mentioned are 4 and 5, which is an expressive number of indicators. Here lies proof that the indicators were significantly referred to across the interviewees. Thirdly, this distribution is almost symmetric, which indicates that in this dataset half of the interviewees mentioned five or more indicators, while the other half alluded to four or less indicators.

The diachronic analysis performed exposes that not all indicators were awarded the same degree of prominence by the European Commission when it created the Europe Direct Information Relays. While two of them, namely indicators 5 and 7, were at the forefront of the Commission's concerns, others were modestly considered, namely indicators 2 and 8.

Therefore, crucial testimony indicates that the European Commission placed strong emphasis in two areas, one being the provision of clear, precise, high-quality, and well-timed information to the general public, adapted to local culture, languages, and specific local and regional sensitivities, and the other its concern with the bi-directional flow of information, the feedback mechanism.

On the other side of the spectrum, the areas which were object of less attention were the identification of the weakest link of these new structures, as well as the dissemination of messages using multiple channels of communication.

The analysis has established by now that all the indicators of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) were used, but they did not carry the same prominence to the European Commission. But does evidence support the idea that other elements were added to the theoretical proposition which inspired the founding of the Europe Direct Information Relays? This is what the KH Coder analysis that ensues aims to uncover.

Further to the methodological options selected and the route taken, which are described at length in chapter 4, and particularly in sections 4.3 and 4.4, the full set of documents, encompassing 25.126 words, 2040 lines and 236 paragraphs, was processed using the KH Coder software tool. The co-occurrence network, random walks obtained is as follows:

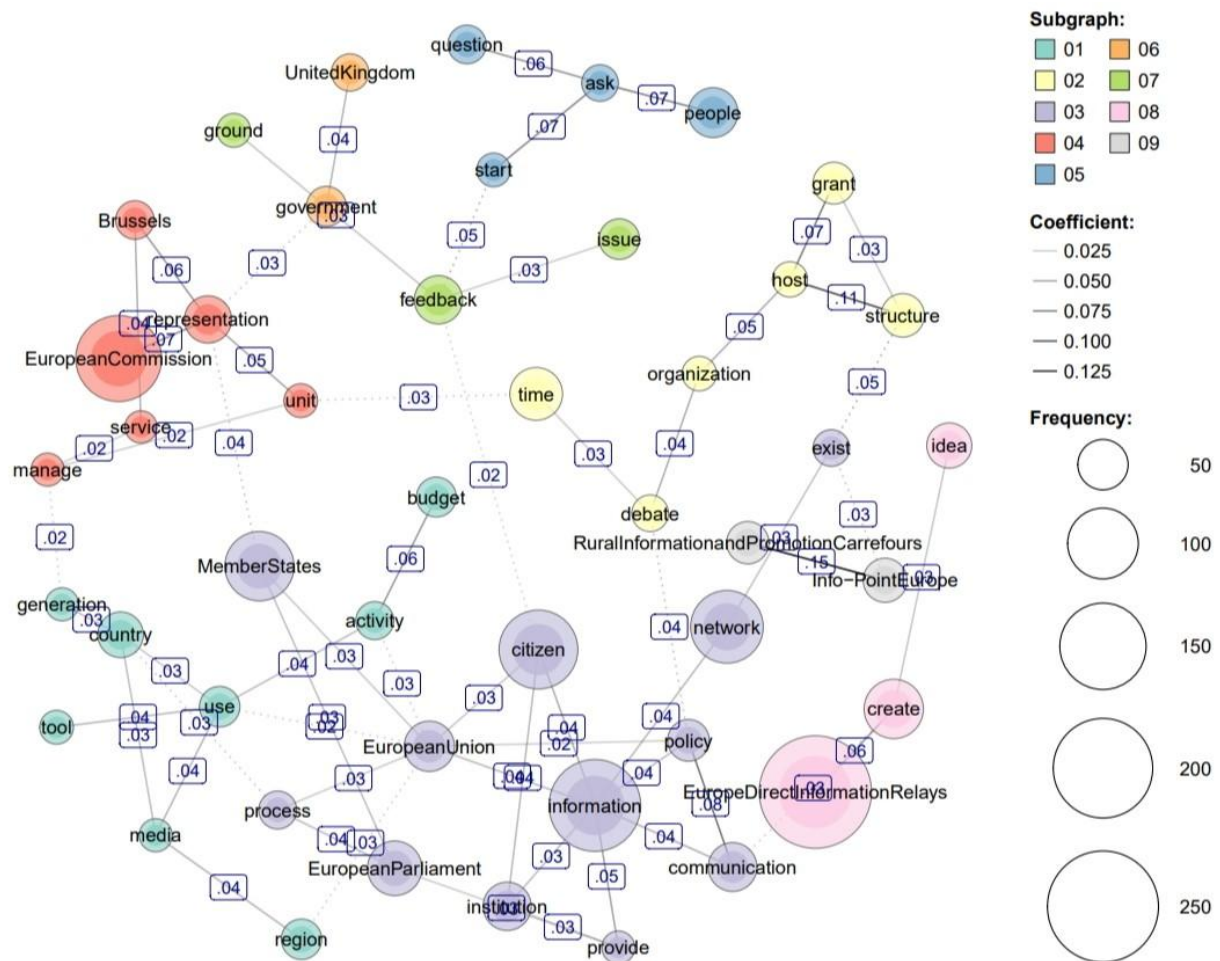


Figure 7: Co-occurrence network, random walks.

Source: Author, using KH Coder software.

Within the co-occurrence network, random walks play an instrumental role in acquiring knowledge on the motion of information within a body of text, as explained previously. They determine and expose the fundamental concepts, aid in the comprehension of how these notions amass collectively, unveil connections among them, and accentuate central terms that permit navigation amidst clusters. In essence,

random walks assist in capturing the essential dynamics of the understanding embedded in the corpus.

It is now the moment to develop two types of analysis, namely a macro-level analysis, focusing on the Clusters, and a micro-level one, examining all the Nodes and Edges featured in the co-occurrence network, random walks.

Two conceptual models serve as the intellectual backdrop to undertake these analyses, namely modularity at the macro-level, as proposed by Radhakrishnan *et al.* (2017), and the teachings of Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda (2013), in terms of centrality at the micro-level, and specifically Degree Centrality, Closeness Centrality, and Betweenness Centrality. The mathematical calculations that support both the macro-level and the micro-level analyses are documented in Appendix 3, co-occurrence network, random walks statistical elements.

5.1.2.1 Macro-level analysis

The macro-level analysis is devoted to examining the composition, organization, and theoretical merit of the clusters. To enable this exploration, a co-occurrence network, random walks is generated. It reveals in terms of modularity that the corpus is composed of nine (9) clusters, featuring the following characteristics:

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9	Total
Number of Nodes	8	6	12	6	4	2	3	3	2	46
% total Nodes	17.39%	13.04%	26.09%	13.04%	8.70%	4.35%	6.52%	6.52%	4.35%	100%
Number of Edges	21	15	46	18	7	3	6	5	3	124
% total Edges	16.94%	12.10%	37.10%	14.52%	5.65%	2.42%	4.84%	4.03%	2.42%	100%
Cluster distance	0.375	0.39	0.83	0.31	0.225	0.055	0.095	0.105	0.165	2.55
% total distance	14.71%	15.29%	32.55%	12.16%	8.82%	2.16%	3.73%	4.12%	6.47%	100%

Table 8: Macro-level analysis synopsis.

Source: Author.

The specific weight of clusters numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 is higher than the one of clusters numbers 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. This is hinted in Figure 7, where the size of the circles belonging to clusters numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 is visibly larger. The statistical analysis conducted and documented in Table 8 confirms the initial visual assessment obtained via Figure 7.

In terms of network centrality, Cluster 3 is the one which presents a higher one. It accounts for 26.09% of the total number of Nodes, 37.10% of the total number of

Edges, and 32.55% of the total distance among clusters. It features therefore a decisive and unambiguous force in the corpora, which will be explored in detail in the following section, devoted to the micro-level analysis. Cluster 1 presents the second highest network centrality, with 17.39% of the total Nodes, 16.94% of the total Edges, and 14.71% of the total distance among clusters. After Cluster 1, Clusters 2 and 4 present close numbers in terms of network centrality. Both encompass the same number of Nodes, each corresponding to 13.04% of the total Nodes. Cluster 2 displays 12.10% of the total Edges, and 15.29% of the total distance among clusters. Cluster 4 presents 14.52% of the total Edges, which means it possesses more connections than Cluster 2, but a shorter distance as well, at 12.16% of the total distance among clusters. Clusters numbers 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 present more modest numbers in all these metrics.

It is imperative to underscore at this stage that all nine clusters feature at least one External Edge, as it is demonstrated in Appendix 3. This is both significant and telling, as it reveals there is a route to connect all the clusters in the co-occurrence network, random walks. The validity of the contents of the corpora can also be attested by these valuable connections and objective inner cohesion.

The macro-level analysis will now turn to the individual examination of each of the nine clusters in presence.

Cluster 1 comprises eight (8) Nodes, twenty-one (21) Edges, of which sixteen (16) are Internal and five (5) are External, and a total cluster distance of 0.375, of which 0.31 correspond to internal and 0.065 to external distance. The Nodes are activity, budget, country, generation, media, region, tool, and use. The prevalent Nodes are country and budget, in this order. A keyword-in-context analysis reveals these dominant Nodes to refer to the set up and subsequent operation of the Europe Direct Information Relays at the country-level across the European Union, in a decentralized fashion, as well as concerns about budget adequacy for this type of demanding exercise.

Cluster 2 features six (6) Nodes, fifteen (15) Edges - twelve (12) Internal and three (3) External -, and a collective cluster distance of 0.39, divided into an internal distance of 0.33 and an external distance of 0.06. This cluster is more balanced in terms of frequency than the previous one, featuring debate, grant, host, organization, structure, and time as the Nodes. It reflects concerns with practical elements related to the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays, such as the time of its

creation, the selection of the host structures, and the grant attributed by the European Commission.

Cluster 3 is, as described above, the richest of all. It encompasses twelve (12) Nodes, forty-six (46) Edges, thirty-six (36) being Internal and ten (10) External, and a combined cluster distance of 0.83, divided into an internal distance of 0.67, and an external distance of 0.16. It includes the Nodes citizen, communication, European Parliament, European Union, exist, information, institution, Member States, network, policy, process, and provide. Its focus lies on the role of the Europe Direct Information Relays as an information network for the citizens, to be used by the institutions of the European Union and by Member States as a channel for reinforcing their connection with the peoples in terms of European information.

Cluster 4 contains six (6) Nodes, namely Brussels, European Commission, manage, representation, service, and unit. It displays eighteen (18) Edges, of which fourteen (14) are Internal and four (4) are External. The total cluster distance stands at 0.31, comprising an internal distance of 0.25, together with an external distance of 0.06. It is erected around the determining role of the European Commission in the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Cluster 5 includes four (4) Nodes, as follows: ask, people, question, and start. It revolves around the people as recipients of the actions of the Europe Direct Information Relays. It contains seven (7) Edges, six (6) being Internal and one (1) External. The collective Cluster distance is 0.225, of which 0.2 is internal distance and 0.025 is external distance.

Cluster 6, together with Cluster 9, is one of the least dense in the co-occurrence network, random walks. It contains two (2) Nodes, three (3) Edges - two (2) Internal plus one (1) External -, and a combined cluster distance of 0.055, divided into 0.04 of internal distance and 0.015 of external distance. It depicts the fact that the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland took exception to the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays in its national territory at the foundation stage, the only such case across the Union then.

Cluster 7 captures with clarity the feedback element. It features three (3) Nodes, six (6) Edges, out of which four (4) are Internal and two (2) are External, and a total distance of 0.095. This overall distance is shared between 0.06 of internal distance, and 0.035 of external distance.

Cluster 8 reflects the path which led to the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays. It presents three (3) Nodes, five (5) Edges - four (4) Internal plus one (1) External – and an aggregate cluster distance of 0.105, shared between an internal distance of 0.09 and an external distance of 0.015.

Finally, Cluster 9 possesses solely two (2) Nodes, three (3) Edges, and a combined cluster distance of 0.165, 0.15 internal and 0.015 external. Out of the three (3) Edges, two (2) are Internal and one (1) is External. This cluster encapsulates the significant legacy of prior information structures, the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, on the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Furthermore, also at the macro-level, the Network Density is computed to understand the worth of the contributions received. Network Density is a measure that assesses the number of Edges in existence between the Nodes in a specific network to the highest number of connections that would be possible between the Nodes in that same network (Simpson, Tacheva and Kao, 2023). The formula to quantify it is detailed in Appendix 3. The Network Density calculated for this network amounts to 0.119. It is thus a relatively low-density network, which suggests that the varied participation of each of the interviewees adjoined a number of elements to the overall dataset.

This macro-level analysis sets the scene for the micro-level examination that follows.

5.1.2.2 Micro-level analysis

As described in section 5.1.2, the theoretical framework which underpins the micro-level analysis is the one proposed by Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda (2013). This basic conceptional structure defines the three measures which are frequently used for a micro-level investigation, namely Degree Centrality, Closeness Centrality, and Betweenness Centrality.

At a higher level, Noh and Rieger expound that “*The centrality of a node determines the relative speed by which a node can receive and spread information over the network in a random process.*” (Noh and Rieger, 2004, p. 1) In broad terms, centrality is accepted as a common concept in network analysis. Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda took a deeper look at this notion, and bearing into consideration other

teachings, offer an additional layer of inquiry, comprised of three elements. While two of the above-mentioned notions – Degree Centrality and Closeness Centrality – are employed to study associations among Nodes within the same cluster, Betweenness Centrality is applicable to Nodes which serve as links between different clusters.

The simplest of the three, namely Degree centrality, “... *is defined as the number of links incident upon a node (i.e., the number of ties that a node has).*” (Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda, 2013, p. 38) It stands for the basic number of Edges each Node possesses in a specific network.

In a more complex fashion, these authors report there is a “... *natural metric distance between all pairs of nodes, defined by the length of their shortest paths.*” (Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda, 2013, p. 38) This is Closeness Centrality. Moreover, “*In the classic definition of the closeness centrality, the spread of information is modelled by the use of shortest paths.*” (Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda, 2013, p. 38) It is, in its essence, a measure of closeness or distance to other Nodes in the network. Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda are of the view that the Closeness Centrality measure holds little explanatory value when applied to an interconnected graph, such as this one (Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda, 2013). Other authors, such as Dangalchev (2006), are of a different view, inferring that Closeness Centrality is most discerning when applied to an incompletely connected network, since the difference in values proves more explicit. Bearing this difference of views in mind, the methodological choice is to consider it as well in this study.

Finally, the most elaborate concept is Betweenness Centrality, which refers to a measure of when a Node is the shortest path between other Nodes in different clusters. It is used to quantify the capacity of a Node to act “... *as a bridge along the shortest path between two other nodes.*” (Tanaka, Takahashi and Tsuda, 2013, p. 38)

The key results of the micro-level analysis are presented in Table 9:

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9	Total
Number of Nodes	8	6	12	6	4	2	3	3	2	46
% total Nodes	17.39%	13.04%	26.09%	13.04%	8.70%	4.35%	6.52%	6.52%	4.35%	100%
Number of Internal Edges	16	12	36	14	6	2	4	4	2	96
% total Internal Edges	16.67%	12.50%	37.50%	14.58%	6.25%	2.08%	4.17%	4.17%	2.08%	100%
Number of External Edges	5	3	10	4	1	1	2	1	1	28
% total External Edges	17.86%	10.71%	35.71%	14.29%	3.57%	3.57%	7.14%	3.57%	3.57%	100%
Cluster internal distance	0.31	0.33	0.67	0.25	0.2	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.15	2.1
% total internal distance	14.76%	15.71%	31.90%	11.90%	9.52%	1.90%	2.86%	4.29%	7.14%	100%
Cluster external distance	0.065	0.06	0.16	0.06	0.025	0.015	0.035	0.015	0.015	0.45
% total external distance	14.44%	13.33%	35.56%	13.33%	5.56%	3.33%	7.78%	3.33%	3.33%	100%

Table 9: Micro-level analysis synopsis.

Source: Author.

An initial overarching finding that can be drawn from this table is that the co-occurrence network, random walks feature a satisfactory proportion between Internal and External Edges. Out of a total number of 124 Edges, there are 96 Internal Edges – corresponding to 77.42% of the total number of Edges –, and 28 External Edges, or 22.58% of the total number of Edges. For every four Internal Edges there is more than one External Edge, which means there is an accessible linkage between concepts across clusters and a consistent trail to access knowledge.

Cluster 1 is a significant one in the context of the micro-level analysis. It includes eight (8) Nodes, which correspond to 17.39% of the total Nodes, sixteen (16) Internal Edges, or 16.67% of the total Internal Edges, five (5) External Edges, or 17.86% of the total External Edges, an internal distance of 0.31 (14.76% of the total internal distance), and an external distance of 0.065, equivalent to 14.44% of the total external distance. In terms of Degree Centrality, the prominent Nodes are use, with a measure of five (5), and country, with a value of four (4). The Nodes which own more Internal Edges are use, with four (4), and country and media, with three (3) each. Five Nodes present one (1) External Edge, namely activity, country, generation, region, and use. In terms of Closeness Centrality, use features the highest value, at 0.075, followed by media at 0.055, and country at 0.045. Three Nodes share the top metric in terms of Betweenness Centrality, each at 0.015, namely activity, country, and region.

In comparison with the macro-level inquiry, additional knowledge emerges from the micro-level investigation conducted of this Cluster 1. First, the concern with and importance of a utilitarian perspective about the role of the Europe Direct Information Relays, as a tool used by the European Commission and the European institutions at large. Furthermore, this examination confirms the centrality of the European states in

its founding, as the Europe Direct Information Relays were established at the country-level across the European Union, in a decentralized manner. Another topic which is visible is the relevance attributed by the European Commission to the contacts and work of the Europe Direct Information Relays with the media.

Cluster 2 counts six (6) Nodes, equivalent to 13.04% of the total number of Nodes, twelve (12) Internal Edges, amounting to 12.50% of the total Internal Edges, three (3) External Edges, or 10.71% of the total External Edges, an internal distance of 0.33, corresponding to 15.71% of the total internal distance, and a 0.06 external distance, or 13.33% of the total external distance. The Nodes debate, host, and structure share the highest Degree Centrality, at three (3) each. Host is the Node with the highest number of Internal Edges - three (3) -, while the Nodes debate, structure, and time offer one (1) External Edge each. Host (0.115) and structure (0.07) are the Nodes with the greatest Closeness Centrality within the cluster, while structure (0.025) features the top Betweenness Centrality value.

This confirms the importance of the host structures in the process of establishment on the ground of the Europe Direct Information Relays, as unearthed in the macro-level study of this cluster.

As previously assessed, Cluster 3 is a rich one in terms of this co-occurrence analysis, random walks. It features twelve (12) Nodes, which correspond to 26.09% of the total Nodes, thirty-six (36) Internal Edges, or 37.50% of the total Internal Edges, ten (10) External Edges, amounting to 35.71% of the total External Edges, an internal distance of 0.67 (31.90% of the total internal distance), and an external distance of 0.16, or 35.56% of the total external distance. The Nodes European Union, at eight (8), and information, at seven (7), display the highest Degree Centrality. These two Nodes present also the most significant number of Internal Edges, namely seven (7) in the case of information, and five (5) for European Union. The latter Node is also the one which reveals a larger number of External Edges, three (3). Closeness Centrality is dominated by the Nodes information (0.14), European Union (0.075), and institution (0.065). Betweenness Centrality rests undoubtedly at the Node European Union, with 0.04.

Some conclusions may be drawn from the micro-level analysis of this cluster. First, it is a particularly strong cluster within this network. The above metrics indicate that roughly between one-fourth and one-third of the contents of the corpus is reflected in this cluster. Second, what may come as not so evident, is that the Nodes citizen,

communication, and network do not display a central role in this cluster. This is particularly noticeable in the case of citizens, as the Europe Direct Information Relays were established with the purpose of serving the general public, and to adequately respond to their European communication needs. The citizens are therefore the end users of the Europe Direct Information Relays. Yet, a keyword-in-context analysis shows an absence of consultation or participation of the general public in the process which led to the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Specific sentences attributed to different interviewees confirm this finding. Interviewee D expressed the view that *"At the local territorial level, zero consultations."* (Interviewee D) Interviewee F used the following words: *"Basically, it was a consultation, carried out in a relatively restricted environment and with institutions that were already involved in an existing network. I don't remember anything else besides this."* (Interviewee F) The same interviewee added that *"There was no real and open consultation. But, if a report was needed, a report was done."* (Interviewee F) Interviewee G added the following on this: *"I don't think that there was a consultation. I don't think there was a consultation in the modern sense of consultation."* (Interviewee G) And Interviewee J highlighted that *"... it was impossible to set up a comprehensive consultation with relevant stakeholders in each Member State."* (Interviewee J)

Moreover, communication is also not central to this cluster, while the concept information is. This suggests a focus on the latter. Additionally, the realization that a network was being created, instead of a single entity, did not take centre stage. And perhaps the dynamics and operation of a network might somehow display different features from the ones which characterize a single organizational unit.

Cluster 4 comprises six (6) Nodes, equivalent to 13.04% of the total Nodes, fourteen (14) Internal Edges, or 14.58% of the total Internal Edges, four (4) External Edges, corresponding to 14.29% of the total External Edges, a 0.25 internal distance, or 11.90% of the total internal distance, and an external distance of 0.06, amounting to 13.33% of the total external distance. Representation is the Node with the most relevant Degree Centrality, at five (5). Both European Commission and representation display the same number of Internal Edges - three (3) -, while representation is the leader in terms of External Edges, with two (2). Closeness Centrality is dominated by representation (0.06), and European Commission (0.055). The most significant value of Betweenness Centrality is in representation, at 0.035.

Apart from confirming the reading of the findings of the cluster's macro-level analysis regarding the determining role of the European Commission in the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays, the micro-level analysis adds a layer of valuable information by recognizing the centrality of the Representations of the European Commission as new protagonists in the establishment and subsequent operation of the Europe Direct Information Relays across the Union.

Cluster 5 encompasses four (4) Nodes, or 8.70% of the total Nodes, six (6) Internal Edges, amounting to 6.25% of the total Internal Edges, one (1) External Edge, equivalent to 3.57% of the total External Edges, an internal distance of 0.2, or 9.52% of the total internal distance, and an external distance of 0.025, or 5.56% of the total external distance. Degree Centrality rests in the Node ask, which is also the one which features the highest number of Internal Edges, three (3). In terms of External Edges, it is start that presents the top score, one (1). Ask is also the Node which presents a more significant metric for Closeness Centrality - 0.1 -, while start stands out in terms of Betweenness Centrality, at 0.025.

Similarly to what can be observed in Cluster 3, also in Cluster 5 the Node people does not take centre stage. A keyword-in-context examination determines the European Commission's desire to ask the people about their information and communication needs, and to design and start the new Europe Direct Information Relays with the participation of the people. While these realities are recognized, asking the people, and absorbing them as true partners in this undertaking does not seem to have occurred at the inception stage.

Cluster 6 is the least expressive one in this co-occurrence network, random walks, as evidenced by the statistics. It reflects the presence of two (2) Nodes, amounting to 4.35% of the total Nodes. It shows two (2) Internal Edges - 2.08% of the total Internal Edges -, one (1) External Edge - 3.57% of the total External Edges -, a 0.04 internal distance, or 1.90% of the total internal distance, and a 0.015 external distance, corresponding to 3.33% of the total external distance. Degree Centrality rests in government, with a metric of two (2). Both Nodes in this cluster, government, and United Kingdom, share the same number of Internal Edges, one (1), but only government features one (1) External Edge. The two Nodes share the same Closeness Centrality, at 0.02. It is however government that holds the Betweenness Centrality score, at 0.015.

While the density of this cluster does not carry a noteworthy weight, its presence in the co-occurrence network, random walks reflect a significant reality which arose during the creation phase of the Europe Direct Information Relays when the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland did not authorize its founding throughout its territory. This was a controversial matter back then, and it is interesting to note how this cluster connects to a European institutional dimension outside of its boundaries, illustrating the path taken by the Europe Direct Information Relays in that specific state.

Cluster 7 is heavily dominated by the feedback Node. It displays altogether three (3) Nodes, equivalent to 6.52% of the total Nodes, four (4) Internal Edges, amounting to 4.17% of the total Internal Edges, two (2) External Edges, corresponding to 7.14% of the total External Edges, an internal distance of 0.06, or 2.86% of the total internal distance, and an external distance of 0.035, or 7.78% of the total external distance. Feedback holds the top number for both Internal and External Edges, two (2) in each category. It also possesses the highest values for Degree Centrality, four (4), Closeness Centrality, 0.03, and Betweenness Centrality, at 0.035.

This micro-level investigation confirms both its centrality, and the relevance awarded to the feedback element by the European Commission when devising the Europe Direct Information Relays, in line with Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954).

Cluster 8 is the one which directly encapsulates the discussions and ideas which paved the way for the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays. It contains three (3) Nodes, namely create, idea, and Europe Direct Information Relays, representing 6.52% of the total number of Nodes. It owns four (4) Internal Edges, or 4.17% of the total Internal Edges, and one (1) External Edge, equivalent to 3.57% of the total External Edges. Its internal distance stands at 0.09, amounting to 4.29% of the total internal distance, and 0.015 is the value of the external distance, or 3.33% of the total external distance. Degree Centrality rests in Nodes create and Europe Direct Information Relays, with a metric of two (2) each. The Node which features more Internal Edges is create, with two (2), while Europe Direct Information Relays presents one (1) External Edge. Closeness Centrality lies in create, with 0.045, while Betweenness Centrality rests with Europe Direct Information Relays, at 0.015.

It is, as explained above, a relevant cluster within this co-occurrence network, random walks, as it aggregates important elements of debate which laid the first stone

for the creation of the new information structures, the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Cluster 9 retains only two (2) Nodes, equivalent to 4.35% of the total number of Nodes. It carries two (2) Internal Edges, or 2.08% of the total Internal Edges, and one (1) External Edge, amounting to 3.57% of the total External Edges. The internal distance stands at 0.15, or 7.14% of the total internal distance, and the external distance at 0.015, equivalent to 3.33% of the total external distance. Both Nodes in this cluster present the same number of Edges, two (2), as well as the exact same number of Internal Edges, one (1). Degree Centrality falls therefore on both Nodes. However, only Info-Point Europe features one (1) External Edge. They also share the Closeness Centrality, with a metric of 0.075. Betweenness Centrality falls however in Info-Point Europe, with a value of 0.015.

The micro-level analysis of this Cluster 9 confirms the examination of the macro-level investigation. It condenses the sizable heritage of the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours, which were preceding official European information structures, in the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

5.1.2.3 Recap of the KH Coder analysis

The co-occurrence network, random walks denote a vigorous structural vitality marked by a diverse interchange among clusters. Thus, it is thought to encapsulate the core of this subject.

While Clusters 1, 2, 3 and 4 reveal a sturdy intensity of relationships, Clusters 6 and 9 display weak network integration. These are composed of only two Nodes, which connect to one another in a reciprocal manner. Both Clusters exhibit however External Edges and are consequently an integral part of this co-occurrence network, random walks.

The leading purpose of the use of the KH Coder analysis, as described in subsection 5.1.2, is to unveil other elements that might have been added to the theoretical framework which guided the creation of the EDIR. This study brings into the open a few of those ingredients. Furthermore, and as underlined before, the granular micro-level analysis propelled the disclosure of insights that the macro-level examination was unable to expose, as demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter.

These are the key findings of the KH Coder analysis:

- a) The endowment of the activity and traditions of the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours in the set up of the EDIR is discernible and hefty.
- b) The European Commission conceived a network of relays, but that circumstance was not considered as the driving force in that exercise.
- c) The initial refusal of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to allow the inauguration of the EDIR in its territory was noticeable and a cause of concern for the European Commission.
- d) The EDIR were designed for the citizens, but without their direct input and/or participation.
- e) The primogenitors of the EDIR took the feedback element into serious consideration. Evidence suggests however the EC was more concerned with pushing information to the general public.
- f) Perhaps more striking than anything else, it is to realize that the co-occurrence network, random walks indicate a significant incidence of European administrative lingo. Indeed, the European institutional jargon is prominent. This suggests a top-down approach in the design of such instruments. They were forged for its end users, the citizens of the Union, but those peoples are not prominently represented here, as it could perhaps have been expected before processing the testimonies.

Considering this, a what-if exercise was conducted. The research student removed the institutional elements from the corpus considered and produced a new co-occurrence network, random walks. This exercise demonstrated that no substantial contents change is manifest in the co-occurrence network, random walks. This indicates that even the removal of direct references to institutions does not significantly alter the network composition and motion, which maintains its chief attributes.

The above considerations constitute a relevant starting point for the discussion chapter that ensues.

Chapter 6 Discussion

This chapter presents a discussion in alignment with the research objectives, methodological framework and analytical effort undertaken in the previous chapters. It ponders on the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays through the perspective of institutional design and relates that to evidence obtained in relation to the participation of citizens in this exercise. It furthermore examines an analogous communication instrument used by another international organization, the United Nations.

6.1 The task to perform

Having taken part in a fair share of academic conferences and symposia throughout the world, the research student could not help noticing that the role and responsibilities of the discussant are not always well understood. Furthermore, flicking through several completed graduate research works, it appears that a similar phenomenon occurs regarding the scope of the discussion in a research product. It is thus beneficial to outline the focus and range of this chapter.

The *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* defines discuss as “... *to investigate (as a question) by reasoning or argument; argue by presenting the various sides of a debate.*” (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, 1971, p. 648) Also, it inserts a relevant dimension by stating that “*Discuss implies a reasoned conversational examining, especially by considering pros and cons, in an attempt to clarify or settle.*” (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, 1971, p. 648) The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, for its part, describes discuss as “... *to write or talk about something in detail, showing the different ideas and opinions about it.*” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 2005, p. 435)

On the other hand, discussion is presented as an “... *argument for the sake of arriving at truth or clearing up difficulties; a formal or orderly treatment of a topic in speech or writing.*” (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, 1971, p. 648) It can also be construed as “... *a speech or a piece of writing that discusses many different aspects of a subject.*” (Oxford Advanced

Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 2005, p. 435) From a social phenomenon perspective, Lindeman argues that "*More rigorously defined discussion is an orderly procedure of exchanges between participants involved in an immanent or social conflict, designed to resolve differences and permit joint action.*" (Lindeman, 1949, p. 166)

The role of the discussant, the "... *one who discusses; one who takes part in a formal or prearranged discussion.*" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, 1971, p. 648), is to approach this chapter by analytically contrasting the intellectual framework which informed this specific work, and the research findings obtained with other conceptual models and similar cases in this area of expertise. It is somehow like the task of a politician when confronted with distinct technical options on the table. A tall order, but key to the advancement of knowledge in any given field.

The results obtained through this study, which are presented and supported by evidence in the analytical chapter, call for a reasoned debate about these findings. Furthermore, this examination ushers to different fields within the realm of European affairs and beyond, suggesting wider research agendas ahead.

6.2 Progenitor or progenitors?

Abundant scholarly research exists in the field of institutional design (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Barnett and Finnemore, 2004; Bauer, 2006; Beach, 2004; Bierman and Siebenhüner, 2009; Epstein and O'Halloran, 2008; Fortna, 2004; Goodin, 1996; Gruber, 2000; Haftel and Thompson, 2006; Johnson, 2013; Johnson, 2014; Lipson, 1984; Mashaw, 1985; Strange, 1998; Vaubel, 2006; Weimer, 1995; Wendt, 2001; Zegart, 1999). Yet, this profuse academic literature mostly refers to the method of establishment of Intergovernmental Organizations, legal bodies created by virtue of a treaty involving two or more states. The Europe Direct Information Relays are not *de jure* Intergovernmental Organizations. They are instead entities serving as official European information structures, created by the European Commission and operating under terms and conditions outlined in agreements signed between this executive body and several host structures across the Union. Notwithstanding this fact, the European institutions are crucial bodies in regional governance, as they are legal and stable entities established and validated by the member states. Therefore,

with consideration of the respective legal differences, several of the factors and lessons from this stream of learning are applicable to this specific case.

Institutional design is a deciding exercise with enduring results (Goodin, 1996). The literature demonstrates the difficulties surrounding the abolishment of any international institution (Strange, 1998). Indeed, “... *institutional elements, once in place, are remarkably durable and do not change easily.*” (Johnson, 2014, p. 39) This is not equivalent to affirming that institutions do not evolve and change over time. They often do, mostly slowly but steadily. The European institutions are testament to this reality, as mentioned in previous chapters. Yet, even if they can and do adjust and transform over the years, “... *founding moments loom large ...*” (Johnson, 2014, p. 27), since the “... *initial institutional design makes possible certain paths and rules out others.*” (Zegart, 1999, p. 7)

The Europe Direct Information Relays were established by the European Commission in 2004 – actually, they were designed by a concrete group of international staff members affiliated with this institution, and subsequently legally created by the Commission. While international bureaucrats are, by its own nature, considered as non-state actors (Bauer, 2006), they are also not totally exogenous either (Fortna, 2004). Their aptitude and capability to take part in such processes is recognized. Johnson describes that “... *international bureaucrats regularly enter the institutional design arena.*” (Johnson, 2014, p. 10), and further clarifies that 65% of the Intergovernmental Organizations currently in existence were devised with the participation of international bureaucrats (Johnson, 2013). In such cases of involvement, their level of influence is not the same in all instances, varying from modest to more extensive. International bureaucrats serving in preceding Intergovernmental Organizations at times recommend, prescribe, and even campaign on behalf of the establishment of new Intergovernmental Organizations, taking active part in the institutional design exercise. Their value in participating in such process is highlighted by Mashaw (1985), who claims that their specialized competencies and skills, combined with the fact of not being elected politicians, and hence not dependent on their popularity among the electorate, places them in an advantageous position to take decisions on behalf of the general public.

It is somehow puzzling to an observer that states alone do not preserve the monopoly of initiative of creation of new Intergovernmental Organizations – and in this case, of the Europe Direct Information Relays. The reviewed literature identifies two

conditions under which the states conserve this prerogative for themselves exclusively. Firstly, when the importance of the matter for states is high, such as in areas of national defence or security. (Lipson, 1984) Secondly, when the design negotiations involve a group of states with the same high capabilities. In the case under scrutiny, information and communication certainly do not fall under the realm of defence or security. And within the European Union, heterogeneity in a number of areas is the norm. This quote from Tana Johnson's work is perhaps relevant to the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays: "... *the group of negotiating states suffers from technical uncertainty, a lack of resources, and/or collective action problems.*" (Johnson, 2014, p. 15)

Bearing these two conditions in mind, it may possibly be understood why the staff members of the European Commission were able to sketch the Europe Direct Information Relays on their own. Yet, "*We have known little about why international bureaucrats' design roles vary, and why.*" (Johnson, 2014, p. 27) This same author highlights that three important premises need to be considered when pondering on the international bureaucrats' design roles, as follows: they are not automatons of states; they face reasons to enter the institutional design process; and they behave instrumentally in such process (Johnson, 2014).

Other authors, however, call the attention to other relevant perspectives.

Vaubel underscores that "*Staff members from so many countries and diverse backgrounds are united by the collective and bureaucratic interest of their organization.*" (Vaubel, 2006, p. 137) Barnett and Finnemore (1999) argue that international staff members are incompletely controlled by states and pursue their own self-interested objectives. Moreover, Bierman and Siebenhüner (2009) reflect on the fact that international staff members work together to transform their sketches into outcomes that adequately serve their objectives into the foreseeable future.

When all the above academic research and statements are collectively analysed, one needs to ponder on whether the Europe Direct Information Relays could have been devised by a group of staff members serving with the European Commission and then legally established by this same institution, without the concurrence – or at least the *nihil obstat* – of member states and of the European Parliament. It would likely not have been feasible to install the Europe Direct Information Relays in the territory of the member states without their agreement. The reaction of the government of the United Kingdom at that time is a case in point.

Moreover, these official European information structures could not operate without funding, and in that area the role of the European Parliament is essential.

Notably, one of the salient results in this study points to the fact that the initial refusal of the government of the United Kingdom to allow the set up of the Europe Direct Information Relays in its territory was conspicuous and a cause of concern for the European Commission.

The response to the query on the foundational institutional design stage can be found in numerous responses obtained during the semi-structured interviews. In fact, several interviewees referred to this matter. In this regard, their statements merit attention.

Interviewee A shed light on the fact that *“It was solely the European Commission that created them. They managed all the process ...”* (Interviewee A). This interviewee further noted that *“As far as I know, no other institution participated directly in that effort. However, at that time, the European Parliament understood that it had to do something to concentrate on the responses to the citizens.”* (Interviewee A)

According to Interviewee C, *“The Europe Direct Information Relays were created by the European Commission, but it was very important to have the European Parliament participating in this exercise from the beginning.”* (Interviewee C) This interviewee additionally expressed that *“For this idea to work, it was necessary to have close cooperation with the European Parliament, which, by definition, is the institution with a closer relationship with the citizens.”* (Interviewee C) It was also acknowledged that *“In organizational terms, I would say the European Commission led the process, with the involvement of the European Parliament, member states, and the local authorities.”* (Interviewee C)

Harbours a different perspective, Interviewee D conveyed the view of a passive demeanour of both the member states and the European Parliament at the inception stage of the Europe Direct Information Relays: *“The member states were supportive, but it was like with the case of the European Parliament: they were supportive but did not get involved.”* (Interviewee D)

Interviewee F underscored that *“The European Commission managed the creation process and ensured its creation, but there was a contribution and a demand from the European Parliament ...”* (Interviewee F). An additional statement was that *“In fact, I think the European Parliament had an important role in creating the Europe*

Direct Information Relays.” (Interviewee F) The same interviewee resorted to a powerful analogy to illustrate the above stance: “... *I would say that if there were a paternity of the Europe Direct Information Relays, the European Commission would be the mother, and the European Parliament would be the father.*” (Interviewee F)

Interviewee G mentioned that “*The two other institutions were aware of the plans, and these had been discussed in the Inter-Institutional Working Group on Communication.*” (Interviewee G)

Interviewee H placed emphasis on the collaboration between the institutions, as follows: “*And also, the European Commission services in Brussels and the Representations of the European Commission in the member states, worked jointly with the European Parliament in supporting the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.*” (Interviewee H)

Interviewee I remarked that “... *during the period of creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays, the European Commission began working very closely with the European Parliament.*” (Interviewee I) And since “... *the European Parliament was always in favour of these networks, disseminating information and facilitating the communication at a local and regional level, it was very easy and fruitful.*” (Interviewee I) The same interviewee also referred to a key fact, as follows: “*And because we depended on the European Parliament on the budget, its support was essential. We had all reasons to work together.*” (Interviewee I)

This was further highlighted and reinforced by Interviewee J, who claimed that “... *technically, it was only the European Commission who had the responsibility to set up the Europe Direct Information Relays. I know this very well, as I was one of the creators.*” (Interviewee J) The decision to “... *lead this operation came solely from the European Commission. It was only us. We informed the Council. I did it myself. And we received their feedback, mostly positive.*” (Interviewee J) However, “... *the European Commission had the sole responsibility. We informed the Council and the European Parliament, in order to set up joint political priorities on communication.*” (Interviewee J) Also, “... *the European Parliament was very important because, at the end of the day, they authorized the budget.*” (Interviewee J)

The above intellectual review and interviewees’ considerations trigger a reflection and scrutiny of the decision-making process within the European Union, along with some examination of this specific field of information and communication,

which is visible to the general public. Some inferences may be presented as a corollary of this exercise.

When things proceed smoothly at the domestic level, national politicians regularly take ownership of the positive matters and news. When they don't evolve so well, Brussels is often publicly blamed for that circumstance. Politicians tend to nationalize successes and Europeanize difficulties. As soon as they are confronted with problems at home, there is a tendency to invoke the international context and European rules as being at their root. Some of these actors do not realise that the immediate political gains obtained through these statements are short-lived, while the damage inflicted to the overall idea of the European project is long-lasting.

The European Union is regularly featured as a benign and generous entity, which distributes grants, market shares, and subsidies. However, when the reality proves at times not so rosy, the same Union is portrayed as an evil construct, which confiscates, demands, imposes, and limits. To add insult to injury, it does so from some cold and pitiless offices headquartered in distant Brussels, without listening to the peoples and disregarding the views of national politicians. This deviation from reality causes harm to the public perception about the European Union – and ultimately to the Union itself.

There are at least five realities which the above episodes try to deny. First, the Union is a voluntary association of twenty-seven sovereign states, which have not relinquished their sovereignty. They share it in some areas, decided by themselves, but they are their absolute masters, as the Brexit decision and subsequent process made clear. Second, it is an association of states which does not exist beyond the states. Third, it is the result of permanent negotiations and compromise, in which it is impossible for any member state to enjoy simultaneous gains in all areas, precisely because no other member state can lose in all matters. Fourth, the European ecosystem appreciates investing, proposing, legislating, regulating. Fifth, the ones who negotiate and ultimately decide in Brussels are the members of the European Parliament, elected in national circumscriptions, and members of the national governments. Additionally, arguments between these two entities are frequent and sometimes bitter, as fighting one another seems to be one of their favourite sports.

Bureaucrats exist, naturally, and they are dedicated to progressing the objectives of their respective entities, but they depend on the support of the political

ecosystem to succeed (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). Bureaucrats do not vote in the European Parliament or take a seat at the table in the Council's chambers.

This is the European Union. An imperfect and heterogeneous entity, which does not even hold a common understanding of a shared interest in all domains, nor a collective view of the world.

Notwithstanding the above, recent developments and episodes over the last years have brought to public light one issue of foremost importance, which appears to partly contradict the conjectures above. It is in relation to a key ongoing transformation of the nature of the Union, without touching the contents of the Treaties.

During the financial crisis, the European Union took on increasing powers, but it did so mainly through the Council, where representatives of national governments have a seat. In the 2019-2024 tenure, and especially during the pandemic, it was the European Commission which exercised increasing *de facto* powers. In the face of a major predicament, it was suggested that a joint European response was the most viable way to tackle it. And to circumvent national self-interests, actions needed to be coordinated and led by the European Commission. A similar approach seems to be at the origin of the creation of a portfolio for Housing in the European Commission for the 2024-2029 term. In fact, housing is by no means a matter which the Treaties define as a competency of the Union, nor that the subsidiarity principle may support being treated at the European level. Yet, the Commission argues that if it is a matter of relevance to the European citizens, it is important for Europe. Formally, however, being important for the European peoples does not make it a competency of the European Union. And it is appropriate to keep this principle in mind.

An organization which was created to provide support to its member states in pursuing its ends is gradually becoming an entity at the service of the citizens. This may sound attractive to some, but it harbours substantial issues. The more the electorates are led to think that the European democratic process needs to emulate the national democratic process, the greater the belief that the European Commission is responsible for its actions directly to the peoples of the Union.

This process of transformation encompasses at least two problems. First, the competencies of the Union must be decided by the states, the holders of sovereignty and of the founding democratic legitimacy. It should not be the Union – let alone the European Commission – to establish its own powers. Second, the Union should not

promise what it may not fulfil, as it cannot be an endless Europe. By doing so, it risks converting a successful political process in a disappointment for the public.

The Union cannot exist beyond the states or serve as an alternative to those, at least without asking the European citizens if it is that what they wish for.

6.3 A top-down approach

Two other pertinent findings of this research refer to the participation of citizens in the design process of the Europe Direct Information Relays. Evidence obtained from this study suggests that these official information entities were indeed established for the citizens, but without their direct input and/or participation. Moreover, the prevalence of European institutional jargon, which is reflected in the co-occurrence network, random walks is an indication which seems to confirm the earlier assessment. The combination of these outcomes points to a top-down approach in the design of these official European information structures. There is a segregation between the institutional element, which is predominantly detectable in the semi-structured interviews, and the end-users of this communication instrument, the general public. In fact, a fragile and remote connection to consultation or partnership is discernible.

It is beneficial to revisit a few statements produced by the interviewees in this regard.

Interviewee D affirmed that *“At the local territorial level, zero consultations.”* (Interviewee D) A stalwart declaration. Interviewee F adopted a nuanced position. This individual expressed that there *“... was a consultation, carried out in a relatively restricted environment and with institutions that were already involved in an existing network.”* (Interviewee F) However, the same interviewee subsequently sustained that *“Of course, of course. There was no real and open consultation.”* (Interviewee F) This judgement was seconded by Interviewee G, who shared the following view: *“I don’t think that there was a consultation. I don’t think there was a consultation in the modern sense of consultation.”* (Interviewee G) Interviewee H followed a similar line of thought, arguing that there was *“Not a formal specific consultation process, but we organized meetings ...”* (Interviewee H). Interviewee J added a useful reflection, by highlighting the lack of resources necessary to conduct such exercise, as follows: *“I have many doubts it could have even been meaningfully conducted, simply because taking into*

account the limited time me and the team were given to prepare this Communication, it was impossible to set up a comprehensive consultation with relevant stakeholders in each member state.” (Interviewee J) Additionally, it was mentioned that “... *we had no obligation back then to do that.”* (Interviewee J)

Thus, it can be inferred from this collection of statements that no expressive and solid consultation with the general public was held before the exercise of creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

The above reflections speak to a variety of academic research on elite communication in global governance. An expanding body of work is available in this domain (Binder and Heupel, 2015; Bullock, 2011; Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020; Hurd, 2007; Morse and Keohane, 2014; Tallberg and Zürn, 2019; Zaum, 2013; Zürn, 2018).

In the theoretical background chapter, two important points were raised. The first one highlighted the fact that citizens are susceptible to elite messages, since they don't hold well-grounded and definitive political attitudes, notably in the international affairs' arena (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020). The second remark pointed to evidence which discloses that three types of elites are particularly adept at communicating in global politics, namely national governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations themselves (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020).

Other important aspects of elite communication may be of relevance to this section. Zaum (2013) calls attention to the weight of elite communication in global politics. In an area which is more distant from the daily routines and concerns of citizens, and about which knowledge may be thinner, it seems plausible that elites play a more leading role in communicating both its performance and procedures on a regular basis. Dellmuth and Tallberg (2020) note that messages about the performance and procedures of international organizations are equally successful at establishing confidence among citizens (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020). This activity undertaken by elites may generate two different effects on citizens, both worthy of note. First, societies may be receptive to such elite information because it grants them the possibility to build views about the complex topic of international organizations in useful ways (Bullock, 2011; Tallberg and Zürn, 2019). Second, this elite communication effort likely affects the level of trust of citizens in international organizations (Morse and Keohane, 2014).

Prior research conducted in the discipline of psychology (Baumeister *et al.*, 2001) raises awareness about the testimony that societies tend to be more easily

swayed by negative information than by positive one. If this is so, the implication is that the efforts of elite communication will potentially be more competent in persuading the general public if focusing on negative aspects rather than on positive ones. This is surely a matter of concern for all elites involved in such activity, and primarily for the international organizations themselves, as they face an uneven challenge to highlight positive perspectives.

The participation of international organizations in elite communication about themselves additionally raises an important concern, related to its own credibility to act in this field, bearing in mind their self-interest. It may be reasonable to assume that the identity of the elite messenger also matters for the audience. The research conducted by Dellmuth and Tallberg indicates that “... *citizens are often not convinced of international organizations’ attempts to talk up their legitimacy.*” (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020, p. 19)

Moreover, the same authors conclude that the international organizations’ “... *best chance of boosting the legitimacy is to mobilize supporters among civil society and national political elites who can speak on their behalf.*” (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2020, p. 19) This is indeed a noteworthy conjecture, which stands in sharp contrast with the approach taken by the European Commission at the inception of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

While the support of national governments was sought, civil society organizations were ignored. This research has revealed that Europe Direct Information Relays were established without the direct input or participation of the peoples across the Union in their design process. The theoretical proposal made for the international organizations to establish key elite allies among national political elites and civil society actors was not the selected route. The European Commission has instead taken this process into its own hands.

This specific work does not call for a methodology grounded on the use of treatment and control groups, due to the nature of the research questions at play here. However, based on the prior considerations, there could be space for an intellectual reflection on what the situation might be in terms of effectiveness of elite communication if the chosen approach had been a different one, namely by capitalising on the existence of and support by elite allies. This section therefore hints at richer research undertakings ahead.

Could this process have been steered differently, considering the opinions and preferences of civil society, even within the resource constraints alluded to by Interviewee J? Possibly yes. But the mere existence of alternative courses of action does not imply that the selected option was not the most adequate one. To understand that it would be necessary to use a methodological approach which could incorporate and evaluate the efficacy and power of several routes at once.

The disability community worldwide frequently uses a catchy slogan: “Nothing About Us, Without Us”. In the view of many, it is a tenet that should apply horizontally across all policy areas, as it voices the idea that actions and policies should not be adopted by representatives without the involvement of the ones affected by them.

If this principle would have won the day at the time of inception of the Europe Direct Information Relays, this would likely have meant a quantum leap. In science, this well-known expression, sometimes also referred to as quantum jump, applies to an alteration of the state of an electron in an atom or molecule from one energy state to another. Yet, in everyday usage, it expresses a significant advancement in a condition or momentous progress. A quantum leap would have been to have designed these official European information structures with consultation to and participation of their target group, the general public.

6.4 Akin but distinct

The received literature did not permit to identify the existence, back in the year 2004, of another international organization that used an official communication tool such as the Europe Direct Information Relays, sharing the exact same features and design model. Yet, it did allow to detect an analogous communication instrument utilized by another well-known international organization, the United Nations.

Founded in 1945, in the aftermath of World War II, this Intergovernmental Organization came into existence at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, when delegates to this Conference agreed upon the text of the Charter of the United Nations, together with the newly established Statute of the International Court of Justice, which forms an integral part of the Charter. The deliberations concluded on Monday, 25 June 1945, at the San Francisco Opera House, in San Francisco, United States of America. The signature of this legal

instrument occurred on the following day, Tuesday, 26 June 1945, at the Herbst Theatre auditorium of the Veterans' War Memorial Hall in the same city in California.

On that day, representatives of fifty governments signed the document, and a space was left for the signature of the representative of one more state, Poland. At the moment of the signature of the Charter, this state did not have a government in place, and its composition was only announced on 28 June 1945. Therefore, this Eastern European state was only able to sign the Charter on 15 October 1945 and still become one of the fifty-one founding members of the United Nations. This is the reason why the correct answer to the question of the founding number of states of the United Nations is indeed fifty plus one.

Formally, however, the United Nations only came into existence on 24 October 1945, a day which is observed annually as United Nations Day. In several states the Charter required approval or ratification by national parliaments. A legal provision had therefore been made on its Article 110, paragraph 3, stipulating that the Charter would only come into effect when the governments of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the United States of America – the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - and a majority of other signatory states had ratified it and deposited notification to this effect with the State Department of the United States of America.

Slightly over a decade after its creation, and confronted with the increasing appetite of its member states for hosting United Nations Information Centres in their territories, the General Assembly resolved on 21 December 1956 in its Resolution A/RES/1086 (XI) to formally request the Secretary-General to “... *continue to give favourable attention to the establishment of information offices in the new Member States ...*”, (United Nations, 1956) and recommended “... *the Secretary-General to keep the structure of the information centres under constant review ...*”, (United Nations, 1956), as well as “... *to set aside funds for the progressive establishment of the necessary information centres in new Member States.*” (United Nations, 1956) Annex 2 displays the full text of this Resolution.

Only three years later, in the course of the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in 1959, the member states adopted United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1405 (XIV), which urged the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, to “... *establish such new Information Centres as appear necessary and request the cooperation of the Member State concerned in providing all possible*

facilities (rent free premises and contribution for operations) – for the establishment of such new Centres.” (United Nations, 1959)

It was however only in 1978, and namely by its Resolution A/RES/33/115 of 18 December 1978, that the United Nations General Assembly decided to establish the Committee on Information, with the mandate to look into the Organization’s public information activities and directions, as well as to assess the endeavours conducted by this Intergovernmental Organization in the realm of information and communication worldwide (United Nations, 1978). Since that point in time, it also became part of the purview of this Committee to issue proposals to the General Assembly in respect of possible locations of new United Nations Information Centres.

Further to a recommendation issued by the Committee on Information, in 1982 the General Assembly set certain parameters for the establishment of new Information Centres, outlined in the text of Resolution A/RES/38/82, as follows:

“In countries where the size, population, the state of media and non-governmental and other organizations, or the role being played by their Governments in United Nations affairs warrants it, separate United Nations information centres should be established as and when resources become available.” (United Nations, 1982)

Bearing into consideration the continuing decrease in resources, the Secretariat has taken the stand that the set up of a new United Nations Information Centre should be grounded on the sanction of supplementary financial and human resources. Operational and monetary support from the host administration has also become a precondition. Processes are in place about negotiating and eventually signing a legally binding arrangement with a state interested in hosting such a structure. Such agreement details the level of assistance to be provided by the host government.

The creation of a new United Nations Information Centre calls for approval from the General Assembly. It is a multilayer process. Initially, the interested state would need to work within the Committee on Information to win support for its proposal. If accepted, it would subsequently be transmitted for consideration to two of the six main Committees of the General Assembly, namely the Fourth Committee – the Special Political and Decolonization Committee -, and the Fifth Committee – the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. If approved in both instances, it would finally be included in the agenda and reach the floor of the General Assembly

for debate and decision. When the required mandate of the General Assembly is obtained, the Department of Global Communications initiates the negotiations of a Host Country Agreement, with the support of the Office of Legal Affairs. Few examples exist of shutting down an existing Information Centre, but these would follow the same layered procedure outlined above, starting with the Committee on Information and concluding by a Resolution of the General Assembly.

An example of the closing of existing Information Centres occurred in the year 2003, when the General Assembly decided, through Resolution A/RES/58/101, to rationalize the network of Information Centres around regional hubs in high cost developed states, starting with the establishment of a Western European hub on 01 January 2004, the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels (United Nations, 2003). This followed the termination of nine United Nations Information Centres operating in Western Europe on 31 December 2003, namely in Athens, Bonn, Brussels, Copenhagen, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Paris and Rome.

In the month of December 2004, the General Assembly decided through Resolution A/RES/59/126 that a possible future rationalization of Information Centres in other cases “... *must be carried out in consultation, on a case-by-case basis, with all concerned Member States in which existing information centres are located, the countries served by those information centres and other interested countries in the region ...*” (United Nations, 2004).

Currently the Department of Global Communications operates a wide network of United Nations Information Centres across the world. Sixteen in Africa – a seventeenth is to be operationalized in Luanda -, ten in the Americas, eight in the Arab States, eleven in Asia and the Pacific, and fourteen in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, in Eurasia, in a total of fifty-nine information outlets worldwide. Annex 3 displays the global network of United Nations Information Centres and the states they cover.

This research elicited two other findings which may be contrasted with the situation of the United Nations Information Centres.

First, the European Commission conceived in 2004 a network of relays, but that circumstance was not considered as the driving force in that exercise. An analogous situation seems to emerge from the reviewed legal documents which relate to information and communication activities of the United Nations. As the different Information Centres were established in distinct years, in an asynchronous manner

and holding diverse features, their development proved organic, based on demand and supply by member states. Currently, they feature different operational structures, with dissimilar budgets, equipment, facilities, human resources availability, and are headed by two categories of United Nations staff members. Some of the bigger and more prominent outlets are headed by International Directors, while others, more modest in resources, are led by National Officers.

A second conclusion drawn was that the founders of the Europe Direct Information Relays took the feedback element into serious consideration. Data suggests however that the European Commission was more concerned about pushing information to the general public.

No reference is made to feedback in the General Assembly Resolutions when it comes to the United Nations Information Centres. This does not preclude the possibility, or even the likelihood, of the United Nations carrying out feedback activities, namely through outreach events. Even modern-day Information Centres may collaborate in that effort at times. However, it appears that feedback does not take centre stage in their operations, even nowadays. The latest *Report of the Secretary-General on Activities of the Department of Global Communications: campaigns and country operations services* (United Nations, 2024), contained in document A/AC.198/2024/2, issued on 12 February 2024 and prepared in accordance with General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/80 B, details a variety of actions conducted by the United Nations Information Centres. Along the seventeen pages of text, no reference exists to feedback obtained by the United Nations Information Centres. The word citizen is also absent from the document. However, the word people are present twenty-two times in the document, and five of those in relation to the concept of young people. The United Nations appears to consider this specific audience as critical. Also, the three main strategic points of action to drive multilingual communications campaigns are listed as “... *the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action and combating hate speech* ...” (United Nations, 2024).

It is timely to mention that the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954), presented in detail in the theoretical background chapter, was only crafted in the year 1954 and gained increased notoriety in the following decades. It is therefore not surprising that at its inception the United Nations Information Centres did not feature feedback as one of the cornerstones of their activity. Even if today, such information outlets are focused on pushing information to

the general public, structured feedback might be an element in store for these outlets in the future.

6.5 The gold standard

When the author of these lines was steering the semi-structured interviews with the ten individuals who created the Europe Direct Information Relays, he heard a number of interesting facts and stories and could not help thinking to himself that several of those were not reflected in the myriad official documents consulted. This thesis is to a certain degree precisely what this is about: what is not recorded in official documents.

At a certain point during one conversation and reminding the research student of the time when the author served at the European Parliament, more than twenty years back, Interviewee F stated an undisputable fact: *“You have witnessed that negotiations are most often not put in writing.”* (Interviewee F) This is indeed the case during the negotiation stage in many instances, and not exclusively in the European setting. This is also the case in two-level games, both in domestic and foreign policy. Additionally, strict legal limitations are in place for the public disclosure of information, particularly of a sensitive nature.

Council Regulation (EEC, EURATOM) No. 354/83 of 01 February 1983 concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community is the first document to pay attention to in this domain. It stipulates that, in line with similar practices in other institutional archives, Commission documents with an historical value must be made public thirty years after their production. This is the so-called “30-years rule” (Council of the European Communities, 1983).

Subsequently, in the year 2003, Council Regulation (EC, EURATOM) No. 1700/2003 of 22 September 2003 amending Regulation (EEC, EURATOM) No. 354/83 concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community came into force. It determines that some historical documents are not accessible. Classified documents, bearing the classifications of restricted, confidential, secret, or top secret, can solely be made public after being declassified. Moreover, documents containing

sensitive information are exempted from the requirement to be made public and cannot be consulted (Council of the European Union, 2003).

The interviewees share with the author actions, discussions, and events which only they would be able to tell, because they were the ones who were physically present then, in that moment, in that place, in that conversation, in that decision, in the drafting of that specific document. They are the only ones who know who did what, who requested what to whom, who participated, who decided, what the ones sitting around them at the table did or said. Oral history, the first narrative description in history, has thousands of years of tradition and remains essential, notably in a world where the value of slow thinking is shrinking.

These accounts provide an original perspective, their standpoint, in their own words, using their own voice. Collectively considered, they constitute a self-portrayal, but also the representation of an era in the field of European information and communication. This is the gold standard.

Locating itself at the intersection of information and communication and European politics, this research is likely the first attempt to look at the interplay between the adoption of an academic theory in the field of communication and its practical implementation by a European institution within its decision-making framework.

This research produced three other important results which should be addressed.

One of them points to the recognizable and sturdy legacy of the attributes and praxis of the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours in the formation of the Europe Direct Information Relays. This fact is not cause for surprise, since the latter information structures were the immediate predecessors of the Europe Direct Information Relays. Even though the European Commission opted for the use of a new model as the intellectual ground for the foundation of the Europe Direct Information Relays, it could feasibly have taken advantage of elements of the previous entities which might have been considered valid back then, particularly when their use did not contradict the philosophy behind the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Yet, several interviewees referred to substantial differences between the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours as compared to the Europe Direct Information Relays.

Interviewee E underlined that the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays “... brought both a rationalisation and an increase in coverage of the territory, eliminating duplications (some Info-Point Europe were in the same town as Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours).” (Interviewee E) The need “... to harmonize a bit all this ...” (Interviewee G) was felt by another interviewee.

Interviewee F conveyed the viewpoint that “... Info-Point Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours were very static information points ...” (Interviewee F). A reflection undertaken by the European Commission “... led to the conclusion that Info-Point Europe did not respond to this, nor did the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours that existed in rural areas, because they were merely information points reactive to people who asked them for information ...” (Interviewee F), according to the same interviewee.

The inception of the Europe Direct Information Relays, considered as a tool “... much more modern than the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours and Info-Point Europe were.” (Interviewee G), rested on “... the objective also to give feedback and to engage with citizens. So, it's not only information ...” (Interviewee B). Paired with stringent reporting requirements, which “... were much tougher than Info-Point Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours.” (Interviewee G), this new instrument “... came much closer to the citizens with this reform than the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours and Info-Point Europe ever were.” (Interviewee G)

Two other significant outcomes have emerged from the examination, and namely from the descriptive analysis which was carried out. First, the synchronic analysis revealed an alignment with the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954). All the components described thoroughly in section 3.4 are present in the contents of the semi-structured interviews. This hints to the fact that this was indeed the intellectual frame used as inspiration by the architects of the Europe Direct Information Relays. Supplementary to this, the diachronic analysis unearthed a second piece of facts, which reveals that not all components were bestowed with an analogous intensity of standing. While indicators 5 and 7 were at the forefront of the Commission's concerns, indicators 2 and 8 were modestly considered. But why was this so?

The first mission of a researcher is to unravel facts, to investigate and straighten out something that existed or has happened. This is the initial step towards

understanding complexity. It implies insulating situations, describing contexts, referencing key stakeholders, and situating in space and time questions, topics, and challenges. It is by no means a coincidence that this word is part of this thesis' title. Subsequent tasks are then to analyse and interpret such reality.

Johnson argues that on occasions there is a simplistic perspective to guide the answer to this question: *"That is because wherever human beings are involved, something that looks like a straightforward mathematical equation to be solved ends up being a much more complicated interpersonal game to be played."* (Johnson, 2014, p. vi)

There are nevertheless conceivably more elaborate responses to the same query, pointing to the necessity of supplementary investigations. To grasp this reality, it would be necessary to uncover the actors' stimuluses, manoeuvres, and sequencing of exchanges. This is not however the scope of this study.

As described in section 1.2, the aim of this research is to obtain answers to a main research question and two sub-research questions. These are, namely: a) To what extent did the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays by the European Commission fit the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954)?; and b) Did the European Commission strictly adhere to a textbook application of the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) in the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays?; or c) Did it in practical terms use a proxy model to this one?

By applying the research methodology outlined exhaustively in chapter 4, all the research questions have been adequately responded to.

There is another noticeable advantage when resorting to direct accounts from participants in one notable event, in direct speech: it often generates clues for further research efforts. This is precisely the case, which opens a positive outlook for further research agendas in European information and communication. And hence, this chapter concludes with an even larger point than the one that motivated it.

This chapter offered a layered debate on the foundation of the Europe Direct Information Relays, reflecting on it through different perspectives and hopefully enabling a nuanced understanding of the issue under scrutiny.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

As in any research work, the aim of this concluding chapter is to provide a synthesis of the entire research, highlight its main findings, their significance, and the contribution to the field of study.

7.1 A subject of topical interest

Information and communication are relevant issues in today's world, and within the Union. The institutions are concerned with matters such as media freedom and pluralism, media literacy, tackling online disinformation and fake news, copyright or digital cultural heritage.

Ancient societies followed a lone storyline. Modern societies are in turn stridencies of opposing narratives. The well-known global village posited by Herbert Marshall McLuhan (1962; 1964), carrying the theoretic potential to allow for ample and serious discussions on useful subjects for society, has shattered in millions of communities. Such groups are united by common interests and opinions but largely insulated from one another. They are skilled in holding intense arguments but prove incapable of influencing each other. Trust is the main currency. Without it, additional information does not conduce to clarity but adds instead to uncertainty.

Combined with the diminishing influence of traditional media, facing significant challenges in an environment where end users expect to enjoy contents free of charge, it is becoming increasingly harder to undertake constructive and thoughtful discussions, based on objective facts, cost-benefit analyses, and mutual yielding. The relentless search for the consumers' interest, both on social media and traditional outlets, the abundance of platforms, the crumbling of audiences, and the reduced attention span deriving from all these elements leads to the triumph of clichés, contentious issues, or scandals.

Democracy is ultimately impaired in this context, since one of its premises is to allow for a productive dialogue between different opinions which can generate synergies, and to achieve compromises and consensus that prove more advantageous than the original positions, typically more extreme. This dialogue is nowadays hampered by these and other economic, social and technological challenges. This is notably the case within the European Union.

Furthermore, the reality of the Union persists in continuous evolution, and it is precisely that endless change which becomes a relevant challenge. Reality often surpasses human imagination, takes ownership of the future and formats its design.

Until the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe lived the Soviet menace protected by American security. The threat was real, but so was the American protection. In a world divided into two blocks, Europe announced a political integration ambition but focused on an economic integration reality. Safety was left for the United States of America.

After 1989 economic integration turned into the single market within the confines of the Communities and into globalization with the rest of the world. During several years Europe assumed two things. First, the global expansion of international trade, integrating the larger economies, would render conflicts among powers unlikely. Second, that the American presence and force would keep some sort of order across the planet, while Europe's moral might would inspire and attract the rest of the world to Europe. While the United States equated to hard power, the Union associated with soft power.

This world vision has come to a demise in recent years. The Union is now concerned with events in its Eastern borders, suspicious about the reliability of traditional partners, protecting itself from international trade, and prioritizing the development of a security and defence industry. The nature of this polity is therefore different from its form in the last few decades. Yet, it remains a moral construct, a project for peace (Rajoy, 2019).

In the year 2023 the author published an article on the future of Asia-Europe cooperation. In that text was written: *"Thus, the challenge of predicting the future in any domain makes me cringe. The answer to what the future holds is not a guessing exercise; it is rooted in actions related to human agency or responsibility."* (Freitas Rodrigues, 2023, p. 213) And it was added that *"... the sum of the combined actions and endeavours taken by a myriad of stakeholders across time shapes and determines the outlook of any area of human activity. The future will be what each and every one of us makes of it."* (Freitas Rodrigues, 2023, p. 213)

The above holds true also for the current day European Union. Faced with dissimilar characteristics, the Union needs to become popular amongst the citizens without becoming populist. And this is a key task for European information and communication.

Grasping the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays is a step towards understanding how the European Commission has dealt with an ever-changing reality and how it leveraged information and communication to pursue its goals.

7.2 Seismographs of reality

An analogy can be used to characterise researchers. They are, in a sense, seismographs of reality. The gateway to understanding is to question, and the aim is to acquire knowledge.

In an era of information deluge and scattered societies the bedrock of reasonable thinking is being called into question, leading to the corrosion and depreciation of rational thought. Thus, the relevance of rigorous qualitative and quantitative research and analysis must be underlined, together with the importance of slow thinking processes.

In the poem *Ithaka*, authored by the legendary Greek poet Konstantínos Kaváfis (1911), one is reminded of the importance of the journey of every individual through life, in powerful words:

*“As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery. (...)”
“Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka gave you the marvellous journey.
Without her, you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now. (...)” (Kaváfis, 1911)*

This doctoral investigation tries to adhere to such path, which was long and winding, full of doubts and hesitations, but ultimately fruitful. The below recapitulation emphasizes the importance of the research journey undertaken.

7.3 Recapitulation

At the outset of this project, as referred in section 1.10, three different types of research gaps were identified. These were, namely, an evidence gap, a practical knowledge gap, and a theoretical gap. It is argued that this work contributes to addressing and shortening these three research gaps. First, it generates data and rigorous academic study in this subject. Second, it examines in depth the application of theoretical knowledge to a real-world situation. And third, it contributes to the theoretical understanding or conceptual framework of a particular phenomenon. The purpose of this doctoral study to address these three research gaps is thus fulfilled.

The research objectives, translated into the central research question and two sub-research questions are also met. As highlighted in section 1.2, the intent and scope of this investigation was to obtain an answer to three specific maiden questions, which are the lynchpin of this study. The responses attained are well grounded and valid. They point to the fact that the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) was indeed the intellectual inspiration for the EDIR. However, data suggests that not all its components were awarded the same prominence. Furthermore, evidence reveals that the European Commission did not strictly adhere to a textbook application of the chosen model. By contemplating other dimensions and influences, this institution used in practical terms a proxy model to the selected one by incorporating other facets. Thus, the indications gathered validate the hypothesis proposed in section 1.3.

As described in sub-section 4.3.3, the decision made by the research student to adopt a mixed approach proves suitable and constructive. While the descriptive examination revealed an important set of information, the subsequent KH Coder analysis complemented and expanded it. Crucially, it allowed not only to confirm such data, but also to generate new insights which supply added answers to the initial questions.

This study faced four main limitations, described at length in section 1.12.

These limitations include three methodological limitations, and one limitation of the researcher. On the methodological limitations, the list consists of shortage of prior academic studies on this topic, a circumscribed quantity of legal texts and official documents outlining the process of building the EDIR, and the research sample size. One limitation of the researcher relates to the restricted capacity of retrieving data,

due either to its scarcity or unavailability to the researcher and the wider public, in line with legal restrictions in place. These limitations were confronted with earnestness and perseverance, precluding them to derail this research effort.

The results attained are examined exhaustively and rigorously in the analytical chapter. A few of the main findings and contributions are highlighted here. The European Commission used the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954) as the intellectual backdrop for the institution of the EDIR, but did not accord the same level of relevance to all its components. While the feedback ingredient was taken seriously, the EC was more preoccupied with relaying information to the general public than to gather its reaction. A network of relays was devised, but that was not the driving force in that action. Even if the EDIR were constructed for the general public, this was carried out without their direct input or participation, in a top-down manner.

Additionally, two external factors are noticeable in the erection of the EDIR. One is the legacy of two previous information structures, the Info-Point Europe and the Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours. The other is the original denial of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to allow the inauguration of the EDIR in its territory.

No academic research constitutes an end point. On the contrary, it may be considered as a starting point. It leads to novel study topics and points to new research agendas. This is also the case in this work, which signals and augurs new lines of inquiry. This study examines meticulously the framework selected and the approach taken by the European Commission for the creation of the EDIR. This is the scope of this exercise.

However, two other viewpoints can arguably prove valuable in future investigations. First, it can be beneficial to understand how this model was received and put into practice by the staff members of the EDIR across the Union. A second interrogation can focus on the end users of these official European information instruments, and on how they perceived and experienced the EDIR created under this model. Combined with the current scrutiny, these two additional examinations can potentially offer a holistic view of these information tools. Perhaps these suggestions merit featuring in a future post-doctoral research endeavour.

It can only be hoped that the scholarly rigour which presided over this research work dispels the puzzle of the Europe Direct Information Relays, and by doing so

advances the understanding of European information and communication, and of the European Union as a whole.

Annexes

Annex 1: Letter from the Minister of State for Europe,
on behalf of Her Majesty's Government

Annex 2: United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1086 (XI),
dated 21 December 1956

Annex 3: Global network of United Nations Information Centres and the
Countries they cover

Annex 1

16 January 2006

Dear Applicant

Her Majesty's Government is pleased to support *Europe Direct Centres*. We welcome the European Commission's initiative to provide the public with factual information on the European Union.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Alexander', written in a cursive style.

Douglas Alexander
Minister for Europe

year 1956 exceed the amount of that Member's advance under the provisions of paragraph 2 above, the excess shall be set off against the amount of contributions payable by that Member in respect of the twelfth annual budget, or any previous budget;

4. The Secretary-General is authorized to advance from the Working Capital Fund:

(a) Such sums as may be necessary to finance budgetary appropriations pending receipt of contributions; sums so advanced shall be reimbursed as soon as receipts from contributions are available for the purpose;

(b) Such sums as may be necessary to finance commitments which may be duly authorized under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1084 (XI) of 21 December 1956 relating to the unforeseen and extraordinary expenses; the Secretary-General shall make provision in the budget estimates for reimbursing the Working Capital Fund;

(c) Such sums as, together with net sums outstanding for the same purposes, do not exceed \$125,000, to continue the revolving fund to finance miscellaneous self-liquidating purchases and activities; advances in excess of the total of \$125,000 may be made with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; the Secretary-General shall submit, with the annual accounts, an explanation of the outstanding balance of the revolving fund at the end of each year;

(d) Loans to specialized agencies and preparatory commissions of agencies to be established by inter-governmental agreement under the auspices of the United Nations to finance their work, pending receipt by the agencies concerned of sufficient contributions under their own budgets; in making such loans, which shall normally be repayable within two years, the Secretary-General shall have regard to the proposed financial resources of the agency concerned, and shall obtain the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for any cash issues which would increase the aggregate balance outstanding (including amounts previously advanced and outstanding) at any one time to an amount in excess of \$1,500,000 and for any issue which would increase the balance outstanding (including amounts previously advanced and outstanding) in respect of any one agency to an amount in excess of \$500,000;

(e) Such sums not exceeding \$35,000 as may be required to finance payments of advance insurance premiums where the period of insurance extends beyond the end of the financial year in which payment is made; this amount may be increased with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; the Secretary-General shall make provision in the budget estimates of each year, during the life of the related policies, to cover the charges applicable to each such year;

(f) Such sums as may be necessary to enable the Tax Equalization Fund to meet current commitments pending accumulation of credits; such advances shall be repaid as soon as credits are available in the Tax Equalization Fund.

632nd plenary meeting,
21 December 1956.

1086 (XI). Public information activities of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Having examined sections 10 and 20 of the budget estimates for the financial year 1957;¹²

Noting with satisfaction the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the network of information centres to the new Member States,

Considering the desirability of the establishment of information centres, on the basis of the regional and linguistic distribution referred to in the basic principles underlying the public information activities of the United Nations¹³ approved by the General Assembly in resolution 595 (VI) of 4 February 1952,

Considering that the new Member States should be treated, by means of a flexible administrative policy, on a footing of equality with other Members in the matter of the provision of information services,

1. *Recommends* the Secretary-General to continue to give favourable attention to the establishment of information offices in the new Member States, giving priority to those countries which, for linguistic or other reasons, cannot be adequately served through existing centres or through the information services of the specialized agencies and which have informed him of their interest in that regard;

2. *Recommends* the Secretary-General to keep the structure of the information centres under constant review and to renew his efforts to co-ordinate the information services of the United Nations with those of the specialized agencies in order to avoid duplication of work and to make it possible—by means of savings which may be made in other sections of the budget without prejudice to existing services, or by other administrative means within the competence of the Secretary-General—to set aside funds for the progressive establishment of the necessary information centres in new Member States;

3. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take into consideration the views expressed in the debate on this item in the Fifth Committee, both in the distribution of the funds appropriated for 1957 and in the preparation of the budget estimates for the financial year 1958.

632nd plenary meeting,
21 December 1956.

1087 (XI). Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The General Assembly

Resolves:

1. That the scale of assessments for Members' contributions to the United Nations budget for the financial years 1956 and 1957, contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 970 (X) of 15 December 1955, shall be revised to include assessments for the sixteen States admitted to membership in the United Nations on 14 December 1955;¹⁴

¹² Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/3126).

¹³ Ibid., Sixth Session, Annexes, agenda item 41, document A/C.5/L.172, annex.

¹⁴ See General Assembly resolution 995 (X) of 14 December 1955.

Annex 3

Global Network of UN Information Centres and the Countries they Cover		
Africa		
UNIC Abuja	Nigeria, *Sierra Leone	
UNIC Dakar	Senegal, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, *Benin, *Central African Republic, *Chad, *Gabon, *Mali, *Niger	
**UNIC Luanda	Angola	
UNIC Pietermaritzburg	South Africa	
UNIS Nairobi	Kenya, Seychelles, Uganda	
UNIC Accra	Ghana	
UNIC Antananarivo	Madagascar	
UNIC Brazzaville	Congo	
UNIC Bujumbura	Burundi	
UNIC Dar es Salaam	United Republic of Tanzania	
UNIC Harare	Zimbabwe	
UNIC Lomé	Togo	
UNIC Lusaka	Zambia	
UNIC Ouagadougou	Burkina Faso	
UNIC Windhoek	Namibia	
UNIC Yaounde	Cameroon	
UNO Asmara	Eritrea	
Americas		
UNIC Bogota	Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	
UNIC Buenos Aires	Argentina, Uruguay	
UNIC Mexico City	Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic	
UNIC Port of Spain	Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Aruba	
UNIC Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	
UNIC Washington D.C.	United States of America	
UNIC Asuncion	Paraguay	
UNIC La Paz	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	
UNIC Lima	Peru	
UNIC Panama City	Panama	
Arab States		
UNIC Beirut	Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Syrian Arab Republic	
UNIC Cairo	Egypt, Saudi Arabia, *Somalia	
UNIC Manama	Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates	
UNIC Rabat	Morocco	
UNIC Algiers	Algeria	
UNIC Khartoum	Sudan	
UNIC Sana'a	Yemen	
UNIC Tunis	Tunisia	
Asia and the Pacific		
UNIC Canberra	Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Tonga, *Papua New Guinea, *Solomon Islands	
UNIC Islamabad	Pakistan	
UNIC Jakarta	Indonesia	
UNIC New Delhi	India, Bhutan	
UNIC Tehran	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	
UNIC Tokyo	Japan	
UNIC Colombo	Sri Lanka	
UNIC Dhaka	Bangladesh	
UNIC Kathmandu	Nepal	
UNIC Manila	Philippines	
UNIC Yangon	Myanmar	
Europe and CIS		
UNIC Moscow	Russian Federation	
UNIS Geneva	Switzerland	
UNIS Vienna	Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia	
UNO Almaty	Kazakhstan	
UNRIC Brussels	Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Netherlands, Holy See (Vatican City State), Andorra, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	
UNO Kyiv	Ukraine	
UNIC Ankara	Turkey	
UNIC Prague	Czech Republic	
UNIC Warsaw	Poland	
UNO Baku	Azerbaijan	
UNO Minsk	Belarus	
UNO Tashkent	Uzbekistan	
UNO Tbilisi	Georgia	
UNO Yerevan	Armenia	

*standing country coverage adjustment
**UNIC Luanda to be operationalized
UNICs lead by an International Director
UNICs lead by a National Officer

© 2020 TomTom, © 2020 Microsoft Corporation, © OpenStreetMap contributors

Information Centres Service | CCOD | DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview guide

Appendix 2: Evidence sought and relevant statements

Appendix 3: Co-occurrence network, random walks statistical elements

Appendix 1

Interview Guide for Semi-structured Interviews

Research question: **To what extent did the establishment of the Europe Direct Information Relays by the European Commission fit the Osgood and Schramm Circular Model of Communication (Schramm, 1954)?**

1. What was the process that led to the creation of the Europe Direct Information Relays (EDIR)?
2. By which institution(s) were they created?
 - 2.1 By the European Commission alone?
 - 2.2 Or was there any other institution(s) involved in this process?
3. Was there any particular organizational unit or specific individual that was more prominent in their creation?
 - 3.1 If so, which one/whom and why?
4. Was there support from the Member States for the proposal to create the EDIR?
5. Was there any Member State(s) that specifically supported it?
6. Was there opposition from the Member States to the proposal to create the EDIR?
7. Was there any Member State(s) that specifically objected to it?
8. Were civil society organizations consulted before their creation?
9. Were other institutions/organizations consulted before their creation? (e.g. representatives of employers, media outlets, workers, etc.)
10. Was their creation a box-ticking exercise only?
 - 10.1 Or was there a deeper significance to this initiative?
11. The structured and regular feedback mechanism was a novelty introduced with the EDIR. Why were they created in this manner?
12. Was the financial commitment enough to allow the EDIR to achieve their supposed objectives?
13. Was there meaningful buy-in from the Member States?
14. In your opinion, did the move from Info-Points Europe and Rural Information and Promotion Carrefours to EDIR mean a significant improvement, a minor improvement or on the contrary a setback in terms of European information and communication?
 - 14.1 Why was it so?
15. The European Commission considered the EDIR as a useful information tool. Are you in agreement or disagreement with this?
 - 15.1 Why?
16. Were the EDIR the most appropriate venue for informing citizens?
 - 16.1 Why?

Appendix 2

Evidence sought	Interviewee's statement
1. The key concern of the EDIR were the information materials it made available to the public.	"I think it was an additional step in the professionalization of the distribution of information to European citizens, with rigorous and solid information, checked by experts, and professional teams delivering it." (Interviewee C) "The most important thing was the content, the content of the information materials, which had to be in the local language, adapted to local circumstances, clear, correct, and had to be given at the exact time." (Interviewee G) "Citizens who are effectively interested in European issues can exceed the type of information being offered by the Europe Direct Information Centres, which is very well done and presented, but normally is basic." (Interviewee H) "And information of high quality existed, prepared by experts, in the local language, adapted to local environments, to the concerns of each community." (Interviewee I)
2. The EDIR utilized tools to assess whether the users correctly understood the information provided (through customer satisfaction surveys, verbal feedback, etc.).	"We had to talk with the local people, in the regions, and indicate to the European Commission what they thought at all times of the European Commission and the other European institutions. That is why the Europe Direct Information Relays used all sorts of instruments to gauge the public sentiment, surveys, reviews, debates. This feedback was constantly collected and relayed to the European Commission." (Interviewee G)
(Merger) 3. and 4. Customer service at the EDIR was performed by qualified professionals, who made sure the information was often repeated.	"This was well done, and the Europe Direct Information Relays were - and still are - very good, mostly staffed by very competent and dedicated professionals, who knew the ins and outs of the European Union." (Interviewee A) "(...) they had the duty to describe, to picture the activities of the Union in an objective, attracting, and interesting way. And unless you had dedicated and competent people on the ground who did that, the message of the Union would never reach the ground." (Interviewee B) "I think it was an additional step in the professionalization of the distribution of information to European citizens, with rigorous and solid information, checked by experts, and professional teams delivering it." (Interviewee C) "They were - and still are - distributing information to the local audiences, listening to the users, then answering the questions of the local audiences. Many times, they had to repeat and repeat the information. This was important as well." (Interviewee G)

	"I would say that the majority of Europe Direct Information Relays were staffed by competent persons in European affairs, but some were not." (Interviewee I)
5. Information materials were available in the local language and adapted to local and regional cultures.	"All types of information were available, in the local languages, adapted to the local audiences, and in many different formats. This was a big thing." (Interviewee A) "It boiled down to the possibility of getting the European message across locally, in the language and in accordance with the sensitivities that you had on the ground." (Interviewee B) "From 2004, the European Commission had instruments, such as the Europe Direct Information Relays, to disseminate the main messages at a local level, and they had a multiplier effect." (Interviewee D) "Europe Direct Information Relays were one channel to bring information to the public at the local level throughout Europe, adapted to their own culture and language, but there were others." (Interviewee E) "And it was necessary to provide better information, more adapted to their needs, so to speak." (Interviewee F) "The most important thing was the content, the content of the information materials, which had to be in the local language, adapted to local circumstances, clear, correct, and had to be given at the exact time." (Interviewee G) "They were - and still are - distributing information to the local audiences, listening to the users, then answering the questions of the local audiences. Many times, they had to repeat and repeat the information. This was important as well." (Interviewee G) "And also normally, the Europe Direct Information Relays were given adequate tools to work with local citizens, information materials in different formats, professionally prepared and reviewed by experts, in the local language, adapted to the local environment and culture. This allowed to gather adequate feedback and transmit it to the European Commission regularly." (Interviewee H) "And information of high quality existed, prepared by experts, in the local language, adapted to local environments, to the concerns of each community." (Interviewee I)
6. The EDIR continuously listened to its users and responded to their feedback with appropriate information.	"(...) the European Commission wanted to have the citizens' feedback through the Europe Direct Information Relays. The European Commission wanted to know if the information it provided was relevant to the public, and to adjust that information to public demand. To give the public the information the public needed. That

	is why the European Commission constantly asked for the feedback from the users of the Europe Direct Information Relays – it wanted to respond to that feedback with appropriate information.” (Interviewee A) “When the information channels are well organized – and the Europe Direct Information Relays were well organized, with proper objectives and adequate feedback mechanism...” (Interviewee A) “There was a formalized, as you said, and regular feedback. But I would not say that we have had a complete success on that side.” (Interviewee C) “I think all the system that was created, it worked, it provided some information, but I am not convinced that this was very effective as compared to the Eurobarometer or other studies that were contracted to specialized companies.” (Interviewee C) “Perhaps there was a lot of progress that I am not aware of in the last ten years, but I don't see a lot of signs of these effective feedback mechanisms that were created in 2004 with the best of intentions.” (Interviewee C) “We had to talk with the local people, in the regions, and indicate to the European Commission what they thought at all times of the European Commission and the other European institutions. That is why the Europe Direct Information Relays used all sorts of instruments to gauge the public sentiment, surveys, reviews, debates. This feedback was constantly collected and relayed to the European Commission.” (Interviewee G) “We had detailed questionnaires for Europe Direct Information Relays to send us feedback about what citizens thought, and what people normally asked. They were always listening to the citizens and responding to it. It was a cycle. So, my feeling is that the political side was very much linked to this, the desire to go closer to the citizens at the local level.” (Interviewee G) “They were - and still are - distributing information to the local audiences, listening to the users, then answering the questions of the local audiences. Many times, they had to repeat and repeat the information. This was important as well.” (Interviewee G) “The keyword was to listen to the citizens. This was not a demagogical approach. It was an ambition to listen to citizens, the main ambition. The Europe Direct Information Relays were the tool we created to implement this theory.” (Interviewee H) “Receiving feedback was crucial. And normally, I can say that in specific political and legislative initiatives, the European Commission has put this feedback information to good use. And this was very important. I don't know how it happens today, but at
--	---

	the time, this listening exercise was something very serious. And it was important to say that the European Commission had and still has today a number of tools to listen to citizens.” (Interviewee H)
7. The EDIR routinely gathered feedback from its users and conveyed the views of the local and regional audiences to the European Commission.	“By experiencing that, the European Commission wanted to have the citizens’ feedback through the Europe Direct Information Relays. The European Commission wanted to know if the information it provided was relevant to the public, and to adjust that information to public demand. To give the public the information the public needed. That is why the European Commission constantly asked for the feedback from the users of the Europe Direct Information Relays – it wanted to respond to that feedback with appropriate information.” (Interviewee A) “Gathering continuous feedback from the local and regional audiences was key to the success of the information mission of the European Commission and of the Europe Direct Information Relays.” (Interviewee A) “And we used the Europe Direct Information Relays to gather feedback on the temperature on the ground. The European Commission would not have been able to see how its policies would have been accepted in the territory if it was not for the Europe Direct Information Relays. So, this was a very crucial remit that the Europe Direct Information Relays had.” (Interviewee B) “In 2004, it became a service-focused network, with the regular organization of events, dissemination of information, and another very important feature, collecting citizens’ opinions and bringing those to the attention of the European Commission.” (Interviewee C) “There was a formalized, as you said, and regular feedback. But I would not say that we have had a complete success on that side.” (Interviewee C) “I think all the system that was created, it worked, it provided some information, but I am not convinced that this was very effective as compared to the Eurobarometer or other studies that were contracted to specialized companies.” (Interviewee C) “Perhaps there was a lot of progress that I am not aware of in the last ten years, but I don't see a lot of signs of these effective feedback mechanisms that were created in 2004 with the best of intentions.” (Interviewee C) “It was also very much about getting feedback from citizens, which was usually made through reports from the Europe Direct Information Relays. That, in my view, was not very successful. That feedback from the Europe Direct Information Relays was a bit more empirical.” (Interviewee D)

	“In this sense, effective feedback allows for action to be more effective. Now, I think, in this case, all that has become bureaucratic tasks. It was not the number of people who contacted the Europe Direct Information Relays that counted...” (Interviewee D) “Unfortunately, I never felt they were in a position to give reliable feedback.” (Interviewee D) “I always thought that feedback was a very important issue, but I have some doubts that the institutions made good use of that feedback.” (Interviewee F) “I wonder if all that feedback wasn’t lost.... Maybe it was more of a bureaucratic report, we would do anything to show we heard and had feedback, but I am not sure we used the full potential this feedback should have given the institutions.” (Interviewee F) “And then, there was the question of feedback, which I also mentioned, and which did not exist before.” (Interviewee F) “We had to talk with the local people, in the regions, and indicate to the European Commission what they thought at all times of the European Commission and the other European institutions. That is why the Europe Direct Information Relays used all sorts of instruments to gauge the public sentiment, surveys, reviews, debates. This feedback was constantly collected and relayed to the European Commission.” (Interviewee G) “We always had priorities, and we were supposed to communicate them. And I remember that when we started to have this very strict feedback mechanism, we started asking what did the people ask in the Europe Direct Information Relays.” (Interviewee G) “And the funny thing was that we never got the correct answer from the Europe Direct Information Relays, because the citizens rarely mentioned the priorities. For example, the questions were mainly about money. How do I get grants for this? How do I build this? How do I get financial support for that?” (Interviewee G) “(...) but maybe on the European Commission’s side, the European Commission colleagues were disappointed because people were not asking the right questions.” (Interviewee G) “Receiving feedback was crucial. And normally, I can say that in specific political and legislative initiatives, the European Commission has put this feedback information to good use. And this was very important. I don’t know how it happens today, but at the time, this listening exercise was something very serious. And it was important to say that the European Commission had and still has today a number of tools to listen to citizens.” (Interviewee H)
--	---

	“That was also something extremely important, the feedback. It was crucial for the Europe Direct Information Relays and the European Commission, in fact.” (Interviewee I) “There were two major changes. The first was the feedback mechanism, regular and structured.” (Interviewee J) “(…) the feedback mechanism was an important element. It was one very important step. Brussels, on the other side, has taken this feedback mechanism seriously to take political conclusions.” (Interviewee J)
8. The EDIR organized a variety of events (such as career fairs, open days, training sessions and workshops) and provided information materials in multiple formats (such as audio, text, video, or a combination of all).	“Also, some Europe Direct Information Relays were very active and organized many events – debates, talks, trainings, etc. - while others were not so active.” (Interviewee A) “All types of information were available, in the local languages, adapted to the local audiences, and in many different formats. This was a big thing.” (Interviewee A) “In 2004, it became a service-focused network, with the regular organization of events, dissemination of information, and another very important feature, collecting citizens' opinions and bringing those to the attention of the European Commission.” (Interviewee C) “The new Europe Direct Information Relays had in fact a completely different dynamic, because the aim was to offer citizens a gateway, where they could go to an office, to an area where they could get information, but the idea was that these Information Relays should take the initiative, bringing information to the citizens and therefore not waiting for the citizens to go there to give them information, but being proactive in bringing it to the citizens.” (Interviewee F)
9.a) Institutional and policy information was provided to the public in an appealing way, highlighting both challenges and opportunities in each area. 9.b) Information materials distributed by the EDIR were produced and reviewed by subject matter experts and were appropriate for different target audiences.	“(…) they had the duty to describe, to picture the activities of the Union in an objective, attracting, and interesting way. And unless you had dedicated and competent people on the ground who did that, the message of the Union would never reach the ground.” (Interviewee B) “Objective means being factual in the information provided. If the European Commission puts forward a proposal on apples and pears, you cannot say it was on cherries and bees. There was a factual element, but we expected the Europe Direct Information Relays to respect and reproduce in the most objective way possible the philosophy behind a proposal, behind a policy, and the benefits that went to citizens. Now, having said that, to be very honest with you, no one is neutral. So, what we told and tell the Europe Direct Information Relays is that we did not really want them to be propaganda machines, saying that everything that comes from Brussels is fantastic. That was not in our interest. The very meaning of engagement means that I want to gather feedback on the

9.c) Information materials focused on the main positive aspects of each institutional and/or policy information. 9.d) Information was provided to the public at the right time, when it was needed the most.	dissatisfaction and frustration of people, report it back, and discuss it with people. We did not want the Europe Direct Information Relays that were just propaganda tools and said this is fantastic.” (Interviewee B) “We should be able to, or they should be able to, address the facts and objectively present what the European Commission puts forward.” (Interviewee B) “I think it was an additional step in the professionalization of the distribution of information to European citizens, with rigorous and solid information, checked by experts, and professional teams delivering it.” (Interviewee C) “The most important thing was the content, the content of the information materials, which had to be in the local language, adapted to local circumstances, clear, correct, and had to be given at the exact time.” (Interviewee G) “(…) I think that it was an improvement, because we had extra capacity to coordinate, to work together, to be more professional in reaching out to people, and to bring them information at the right time.” (Interviewee H) “And also normally, the Europe Direct Information Relays were given adequate tools to work with local citizens, information materials in different formats, professionally prepared and reviewed by experts, in the local language, adapted to the local environment and culture. This allowed to gather adequate feedback and transmit it to the European Commission regularly.” (Interviewee H) “And information of high quality existed, prepared by experts, in the local language, adapted to local environments, to the concerns of each community.” (Interviewee I)
--	---

Appendix 3

[illegible]

Table A.3.1: Statistical table. Source: Author.

09 Communities or Clusters

46 Nodes in total

124 Edges in total

96 Internal Edges (77.42% of the total Edges)

28 External Edges (22.58% of the total Edges)

Cluster 1: 08 Nodes, 21 Edges (16 Internal and 05 External)

Cluster 2: 06 Nodes, 15 Edges (12 Internal and 03 External)

Cluster 3: 12 Nodes, 46 Edges (36 Internal and 10 External)

Cluster 4: 06 Nodes, 18 Edges (14 Internal and 04 External)

Cluster 5: 04 Nodes, 07 Edges (06 Internal and 01 External)

Cluster 6: 02 Nodes, 03 Edges (02 Internal and 01 External)

Cluster 7: 03 Nodes, 06 Edges (04 Internal and 02 External)

Cluster 8: 03 Nodes, 05 Edges (04 Internal and 01 External)

Cluster 9: 02 Nodes, 03 Edges (02 Internal and 01 External)

Total distance between all Clusters: 2.55 (100%)

Total internal distance: 2.1 (82.35%)

Total external distance: 0.45 (17.65%)

Table A.3.2: Summary of statistical table.

Source: Author.

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9	Total
Number of Nodes	8	6	12	6	4	2	3	3	2	46
% total Nodes	17.39%	13.04%	26.09%	13.04%	8.70%	4.35%	6.52%	6.52%	4.35%	100%
Number of Internal Edges	16	12	36	14	6	2	4	4	2	96
% total Internal Edges	16.67%	12.50%	37.50%	14.58%	6.25%	2.08%	4.17%	4.17%	2.08%	100%
Number of External Edges	5	3	10	4	1	1	2	1	1	28
% total External Edges	17.86%	10.71%	35.71%	14.29%	3.57%	3.57%	7.14%	3.57%	3.57%	100%
Cluster internal distance	0.31	0.33	0.67	0.25	0.2	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.15	2.1
% total internal distance	14.76%	15.71%	31.90%	11.90%	9.52%	1.90%	2.86%	4.29%	7.14%	100%
Cluster external distance	0.065	0.06	0.16	0.06	0.025	0.015	0.035	0.015	0.015	0.45
% total external distance	14.44%	13.33%	35.56%	13.33%	5.56%	3.33%	7.78%	3.33%	3.33%	100%

Table A.3.3: Nodes, Internal and External Edges, Internal and External Cluster Distance.

Source: Author.

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9	Total
Number of Nodes	8	6	12	6	4	2	3	3	2	46
% total Nodes	17.39%	13.04%	26.09%	13.04%	8.70%	4.35%	6.52%	6.52%	4.35%	100%
Number of Edges	21	15	46	18	7	3	6	5	3	124
% total Edges	16.94%	12.10%	37.10%	14.52%	5.65%	2.42%	4.84%	4.03%	2.42%	100%
Cluster distance	0.375	0.39	0.83	0.31	0.225	0.055	0.095	0.105	0.165	2.55
% total distance	14.71%	15.29%	32.55%	12.16%	8.82%	2.16%	3.73%	4.12%	6.47%	100%

Table A.3.4: Nodes, Edges, and Cluster Distance.

Source: Author.

Calculation of Network Density

For an undirected graph, the maximum possible number of Edges is given by the equation

$$Max\ Edges = \frac{N * (N - 1)}{2}$$

where N stands for Nodes.

In this specific case,

$$Max\ Edges = \frac{46 * (46 - 1)}{2} = 1035$$

The density D of the Network is the ratio of the number of actual Edges to the number of possible Edges, expressed in the equation

$$Density = \frac{Edges}{Max\ Edges}$$

In this specific case,

$$Density = \frac{124}{1035} = 0.119$$

List of references

Academic literature

- Abbott, J. T., Austerweil, J. L. and Griffiths, T. L. (2015) "Random walks on semantic networks can resemble optimal foraging", *Psychological Review*, 122 (3), pp. 558-569.
- Adler-Nissen, R. (2014) *Opting Out of the European Union: Diplomacy, sovereignty and European integration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Akimushkin, C., Amancio, D. R. and Oliveira Júnior, O. N. (2017) "Text authorship identified using the dynamics of word co-occurrence networks", *PLoS ONE*, 12 (1), pp. 1-15.
- Alon, U. (2009) "How to choose a good scientific problem", *Molecular Cell*, 35, pp. 726-728.
- Amancio, D. R., Nunes, M. G. V., Oliveira Júnior, O. N. and Costa, L. F. (2012) "Using complex networks concepts to assess approaches for citations in scientific papers", *Scientometrics*, 91 (3), pp. 827-842.
- Ambrosi, G. M. (2012) "The European public sphere and the NUTS. An approach towards multilevel activation of the European citizenship", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 237-254.
- Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso Books.
- Anderson, C. (1998) "When in doubt use proxies: attitudes to domestic politics and support for the EU", *Comparative Political Studies*, 31, pp. 569-601.
- Anderson, C. and Kaltenhaler, K. (1996) "The dynamics of public opinion toward European integration, 1973-1993", *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (2), pp. 175-199.
- Anderson, C. and Reichert, S. (1996) "Economic benefits and support for membership in the EU: A cross-national analysis", *Journal of Public Policy*, 15 (3), pp. 231-249.

- Anderson, P. J. (2004) "The greater non-communicator? The mass communication deficit of the European Parliament and its Press Directorate", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 42 (5), pp. 897-917.
- Ankersen, C. (2014) *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation: Canada in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ankersen, C. and Sidhu, W. P. S. (2021) "Introduction: Navigating Uncharted Waters", in Ankersen, C. and Sidhu, W. P. S. (eds.) *The Future of Global Affairs: Managing Discontinuity, Disruption and Destruction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-21.
- Aristotle (circa 350 B.C.) *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*. Translated from Greek by R. C. Jebb. 1909. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Azrout, R., Van Spanje, J. and De Vreese, C. H. (2012) "When news matters: media effects on public support for EU enlargement in 21 countries", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50, pp. 691-708.
- Baisnée, O. (2003) *La Production de l'actualité Communautaire. Eléments d'une Sociologie du Corps de Presse accrédité auprès de l'Union Européenne [France/Grande-Bretagne]*. Rennes: Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Rennes.
- Balle, F. (dir.) (1998) *Dictionnaire des Médias*. Paris: Larousse-Bordas.
- Banducci, S. A., Karp, J. and Loedel, P. (2009) "Economic interests and public support for the Euro", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16 (4), pp. 564-581.
- Bardin, L. (1977) *Análise de Conteúdo*. Translated from French by L. A. Reto and A. Pinheiro. 1988. Lisboa: Portugal Edições.
- Barnett, M. and Finnemore, M. (1999) "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations", *International Organization*, 53 (4), pp. 699-732.
- Barnett, M. and Finnemore, M. (2004) *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Barnlund, D. C. (1970) "A transactional model of communication", in Sereno, K. K. and Mortenson, C. D. (eds.) *Foundations of communication theory*. New York: Harper and Row, pp. 83-92.
- Barquero, J. D. (1995) *Casos Prácticos de Relaciones Públicas*. Barcelona: Ediciones Gestión 2000.
- Barroso, J. M. (2019) "Uma perspetiva portuguesa para a União Europeia", in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 411-427.

- Barth, C. and Bijsmans, P. (2018) "The Maastricht Treaty and Public Debates about European Integration: The Emergence of a European Public Sphere?", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 26 (2), pp. 215-231.
- Bauer, M. W., Allum, N. and Miller, S. (2007) "What can we learn from 25 years of PUS survey research? Liberating and expanding the agenda", *Public Understanding of Science*, 16, pp. 79-95.
- Bauer, S. (2006) "Does Bureaucracy Really Matter? The Authority of Intergovernmental Treaty Secretariats in Global Environmental Politics", *Global Environmental Politics*, 6 (1), pp. 23-49.
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenaver, C. and Vohs, K. D. (2001) "Bad is Stronger than Good", *Review of General Psychology*, 5 (4), pp. 323-370.
- Beach, D. (2004) "The Unseen Hand in Treaty Reform Negotiations: The Role and Influence of the Council Secretariat", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11 (3), pp. 408-439.
- Bell, J. and Waters, S. (2018) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers*. 7th edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Belluati, M. (2012) "The local communication flow as a strategic resource in the construction of a European public sphere", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 197-210.
- Bergamini, E. and Mourlon-Druol, E. (2021) "Talking about Europe: Exploring 70 years of news archives". Bruegel Working Paper No. 04/2021.
- Berlo, D. K. (1960) *The process of communication; an introduction to theory and practice*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Bernays, E. (1923) *Crystallizing public opinion*. New York: Boni & Liveright.
- Best, E. and Christiansen, T. (2011) "Regionalism in international affairs", in Baylis, J., Smith, S. and Owens, P. (eds.) *The globalization of world politics*. 5th edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 428-442.
- Bevan, S. (2015) "Bureaucratic responsiveness: the effects of government, public and European attention on the UK bureaucracy", *Public Administration*, 83 (1), pp. 139-158.
- Bickerton, C. J. (2012) *European integration: From Nation-States to Member states*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Bierhoff, J. (2012) "The EU information machine: High time for refuelling", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 165-182.
- Bierman, F. and Siebenhüner, B. (2009) "The Role and Relevance of International Bureaucrats: Setting the Stage", in Bierman, F. and Siebenhüner, B. (eds.) *Managers of Global Change: The Influence of International Environmental Bureaucrats*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, pp. 1-14.
- Binder, A., Cacciatore, M. A., Scheufele, D. A., Shaw, B. R. and Corley, E. A. (2012) "Measuring risk/benefit perceptions of emerging technologies and their potential impact on communication of public opinion toward science", *Public Understanding of Science*, 21, pp. 830-847.
- Binder, M. and Heupel, M. (2015) "The legitimacy of the UN Security Council: evidence from recent General Assembly debates", *International Studies Quarterly*, 59 (2), pp. 238-250.
- Black, S. (1993) *ABC de las Relaciones Públicas*. 3rd edn. Translated from English by A. Santapau. 1999. Barcelona: Ediciones Gestión 2000.
- Bloj, R. and Schweitzer, C. (2019) "Juncker or European added value: The positive legacy of the European Commission (2014-2019)", *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 520, pp. 1-16.
- Boaventura, E. M. (2004) *Metodologia da Pesquisa*. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Bomberg, E., Peterson, J. and Corbett, R. (2012) "Introduction", in Bomberg, E., Peterson, J. and Corbett, R. (eds.) *The European Union: How does it work?* 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-22.
- Bonsón, E., Royo, S. and Ratkai, M. (2015) "Citizen's engagement on local governments' Facebook sites: an empirical analysis. The impact of different media and content types in Western Europe", *Government Information Quarterly*, 32 (1), pp. 52-62.
- Boucher, S. (2009) "If citizens have a voice, who's listening? Lessons from recent citizen consultation experiments for the European Union". European Policy Institutes Network (EPIN) Working Paper No. 24/2009.
- Bougnoux, D. (1999) *Introdução às Ciências da Comunicação*. Bauru: Editora da Universidade do Sagrado Coração.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985) *La Distinction. Critique Sociale du Jugement*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

- Bølstad, J. (2015) "Dynamics of European integration: public opinion in the core and the periphery", *European Union Politics*, 16 (1), pp. 23-44.
- Brüggemann, M. (2010) "Public Relations between Propaganda and the Public Sphere: The Information Policy of the European Commission", in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 67-90.
- Brunmayr, H. (2000) "Do we really need a European Information Policy?", in Baerns, B. and Raupp, J. (eds.) *Transnational Communication in Europe. Practice and Research*. Berlin: Vistas, pp. 20-24.
- Bruter, M. (2003) "Winning hearts and minds for Europe: the impact of news and symbols on civic and cultural European identity", *Comparative Political Studies*, 36 (10), pp. 1148-1179.
- Bruter, M. (2005) *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bullinaria, J. A. and Levy, J. P. (2007) "Extracting semantic representations from word co-occurrence statistics: A computational study", *Behavior Research Methods*, 39 (3), pp. 510-526.
- Bullock, J. G. (2011) "Elite influence on public opinion in an informed electorate", *American Political Science Review*, 105 (3), pp. 496-515.
- Burnham, P. (2018) "Functionalism", in Brown, G. W., McLean, I. and McMillan, A. (eds.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*. 4th edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 225-226.
- Buzmaniuk, S. (2019) "Speaking European", *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 541, p. 1.
- Cáceres, M. (2003) *Introducción a la Comunicación Interpersonal*. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis.
- Cámara, M., Muñoz van den Eynde, A. and López Cerezo, J. A. (2018) "Attitudes towards science among Spanish citizens: The case of critical engagers", *Public Understanding of Science*, 27 (6), pp. 690-707.
- Camus, A. (1947) *The Plague*. Translated from French by R. Buss. 2013. London: Penguin Books.
- Carey, S. (2002) "Undivided loyalties: Is national identity an obstacle to European integration?", *European Union Politics*, 3 (4), pp. 387-413.

- Carrubba, C. J. (1997) "Net financial transfers in the European Union: Who gets what and why?", *The Journal of Politics*, 59 (2), pp. 469-496.
- Carville, J. and Begala, P. (2002) *Buck Up, Suck Up... and Come Back When You Foul Up*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Casasús, J. and Ladevéze, L. (1991) *Estilo y Géneros Periodísticos*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel.
- Casillas, C. J., Enns, P. K. and Wohlfarth, P. C. (2011) "How public opinion constrains the U. S. Supreme Court", *American Journal of Political Science*, 55 (1), pp. 74-88.
- Cazeneuve, J. (1972) *La Société de l'ubiquité, communication et diffusion*. Paris: Édition Denoël Gonthier.
- Chen, M., Wang, L., Wang, J., Sun, S. and Xia, C. (2015) "Impact of individual response strategy on the spatial public goods game within mobile agents", *Applied Mathematics and Computation*, 251, pp. 192-202.
- Chopin, T. (2018) "Europe and the identity challenge: who are we?", *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 466, pp. 1-6.
- Chopin, T. and Macek, L. (2018) "Reforming the European Union: A political and democratic imperative", *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 463, pp. 1-8.
- Chouliarki, L. (2005) "Media Discourse and the Public Sphere", in Howarth, D. and Torfing, J. (eds.) *Discourse Theory in European Politics. Identity, Policy and Governance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 275-297.
- Cini, M. (2013) "Intergovernmentalism", in Cini, M. and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N. (eds.) *European Union Politics*. 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 71-84.
- Cini, M. and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N. (2013) "Introduction", in Cini, M. and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N. (eds.) *European Union Politics*. 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-8.
- Cohen, B. C. (1963) *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Conrad, M. (2014) *Europeans and the public sphere: Communication without community?* Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag.

- Costa, C. (2019) “A construção da União Económica e Monetária - A introdução do Euro”, in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 179-198.
- Cœuré, B. (2018) “Taking back control of globalisation: Sovereignty through European integration”, *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 468, pp. 1-6.
- Creswell, J. (2003) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Crombez, C. and Hix, S. (2015) “Legislative Activity and Gridlock in the European Union”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 45 (3), pp. 477-499.
- Crusafon, C. (2012) “The European public sphere. An overview on perspectives of identity and citizenship building”, in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 43-50.
- Cruz Vilaça, J. L. (2019) “Portugal na justiça europeia: 30 anos de jurisprudência ao serviço da construção europeia”, in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 199-226.
- Cunha, A. (2019) “Portugal a aderir, a Europa a mudar: a primeira década como Estado-membro”, in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 33-39.
- Dahl, R. (2000) *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Damásio, A. (1994) *O Erro de Descartes. Emoção, Razão e Cérebro Humano*. Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América.
- Dance, F. (1967) *Human communication theory: original essays*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Dangalchev, C. (2006), “Residual closeness in networks”, *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, 365 (2), pp. 556-564.
- De Vreese, C. H. (2003) *Framing Europe: Television News and European Integration*. Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publishers.
- De Vreese, C. H. (2007), “The EU as a public sphere”, *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 2 (3), pp. 1-22.
- De Vreese, C. H. and Boomgaarden, H. G. (2005), “Projecting EU referendums: fear of immigration and support for European integration”, *European Union Politics*, 6 (1), pp. 59-82.

- De Vreese, C. H. and Boomgaarden, H. G. (2006), "Media effects on public opinion about the enlargement of the European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44 (2), pp. 419-436.
- De Vries, C. E. (2007) "Sleeping giant: fact or fairytale? How European integration affects national elections", *European Union Politics*, 8 (3), pp. 363-385.
- De Wilde, P. and Trenz, H. J. (2012) "Denouncing European integration: Euroscepticism as policy contestation", *European Journal of Social Theory*, 15 (4), pp. 537-554.
- Dehousse, R. (1995) "Constitutional reform in the European Community: Are there alternatives to the majoritarian avenue?", *West European Politics*, 18 (3), pp. 118-136.
- Dellmuth, L. M. and Tallberg, J. (2020) "Elite Communication and the Popular Legitimacy of International Organizations", *British Journal of Political Science*, 2020, pp. 1-22.
- Demo, P. (2000) *Metodologia do conhecimento científico*. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Devuyst, Y. (2012) "The Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties", in Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill, S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 163-178.
- Díez Medrano, J. (2003) *Framing Europe: Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dinan, D. (2012) "How Did We Get Here?", in Bomberg, E., Peterson, J. and Corbett, R. (eds.) *The European Union: How does it work?* 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 23-43.
- Druckman, J. N. and Lupia, A. (2000) "Preference formation", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, pp. 1-24.
- Easton, D. (1965) *A Framework for Political Analysis*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Easton, D. (1975) "A re-assessment of the concept of political support", *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (4), pp. 435-457.
- Ehin, P. (2001) "Determinants of public support for EU membership: Data from the Baltic countries", *European Journal of Political Research*, 40, pp. 31-56.
- Eichenberg, R. C. and Dalton, R. J. (1993) "Europeans and the European-Community – the dynamics of public support for European integration", *International Organization*, 47 (4), pp. 507-534.

- Elias, N. (2000) *The civilizing process: sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Elías, J. and Mascaray, J. (1998) *Más Allá de la Comunicación Interna: La Intracomunicación*. Barcelona: Ediciones Gestión 2000.
- Epstein, D. and O'Halloran, S. (2008) "Sovereignty and Delegation in International Organizations", *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 71 (1), pp. 76-92.
- Eriksen, E. O. (2007) "Conceptualising European Public Spheres: General, Segmented and Strong Publics", in Fossum, J. E. and Schlesinger, P. (eds.) *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A communicative space in the making?* London: Routledge, pp. 23-43.
- Eriksen, E. O. and Fossum, J. E. (2002) "Democracy through Strong Publics in the European Union?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40 (3), pp. 401-424.
- Eriksen, E. O. and Fossum, J. E. (2004) "Europe in search of its legitimacy: strategies of legitimation assessed", *International Political Science Review*, 25 (4), pp. 435-459.
- Esmark, A. (2005) "The Europeanization of Public Spheres - modes of resonance and institutional anchorage", *Conference paper of the CONNEX workshop: A European Public Sphere: How much do we have and how much do we need?* Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Unpublished.
- European Economic Advisory Group (2014) *The EEAG Report on the European Economy 2014: The Road Towards Cohesion*. Munich: CESifo Group.
- EU Monitor (2004) *Annexes to COM(2004) 196 – Implementing the information and communication strategy for the EU*. Brussels: EU Monitor.
- Featherstone, K. (1994) "Jean Monnet and the democratic deficit in the European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32 (2), pp. 149-170.
- Feldman, R. and Dagan, I. (1995) "Kdt – knowledge discovery in texts", *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Knowledge Discovery*, pp. 112-117.
- Ferejohn, J. (1986) "Incumbent performance and electoral control", *Public Choice*, 50, pp. 5-25.
- Ferin, I. (2002) *Comunicação e Culturas do Quotidiano*. Lisboa: Quimera Editores.
- Figueiredo Lopes, A. (2019) "Os portugueses de Bruxelas", in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 151-160.

- Finke, D. (2009) "Challenges to intergovernmentalism: an empirical analysis of EU treaty negotiations since Maastricht", *West European Politics*, 32 (3), pp. 466-495.
- Fiske, J. (1993) *Introdução ao Estudo da Comunicação*. Porto: Edições Asa.
- Fonseca, J. J. S. (2002) *Metodologia da pesquisa científica*. Fortaleza: UEC.
- Fontaine, P. (1990) *Europe: A Fresh Start. The Schuman Declaration, 1950-1990*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Fortna, V. P. (2004) *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Føllesdal, A. and Hix, S. (2006) "Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU: a response to Majone and Moravcsik", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44 (3), pp. 533-562.
- Franklin, M. and Wlezien, C. (1997) "The responsive public: issue salience, policy change, and preferences for European Unification", *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 9 (3), pp. 347-363.
- Franklin, M., Marsh, M. and McLaren, L. (1994) "Uncorking the bottle: Popular opposition to European unification in the wake of Maastricht", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32, pp. 455-472.
- Franklin, M., Van Der Eijk, C. and Marsh, M. (1995) "Referendum outcomes and trust in government: Public support for Europe in the wake of Maastricht", in Hayward, J. (ed.) *The Crisis of Representation in Europe*. London: Frank Cass, pp. 101-117.
- Freitas Rodrigues, R. (2023) "The future of Asia-Europe cooperation? Leonor holds the key", in Chua, T. K. and Suparman, D. (eds.) *Voices from Asians and Europeans on the Future of Asia-Europe Cooperation*. Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation, pp. 213-216.
- Gabel, M. and Hix, S. (2005) "Understanding public support for British membership of the single currency", *Political Studies*, 53 (1), pp. 65-81.
- Gabel, M. and Palmer, H. (1995) "Understanding variation in public support for European integration", *European Journal of Political Research*, 27 (1), pp. 3-19.
- Gabel, M. and Scheve, K. (2007) "Estimating the effect of elite communications on public opinion using instrumental variables", *American Journal of Political Science*, 51 (4), pp. 1013-1028.

- Gao, Y., Liang, W., Shi, Y. and Huang, Q. (2014) "Comparison of directed and weighted co-occurrence networks of six languages", *Physica A*, 393, pp. 579-589.
- Gerbner, G. (1956) "Toward a general model of communication", *Audio Visual Communication Review*, 4 (3), pp. 171-199.
- Gerhardt, T. E. (2009) "A construção da pesquisa", in Gerhardt, T. E. and Silveira, D. T. (eds.) *Métodos de Pesquisa*. Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, pp. 45-66.
- Gerhardt, T. E. and Souza, A. C. (2009) "Aspectos teóricos e conceituais", in Gerhardt, T. E. and Silveira, D. T. (eds.) *Métodos de Pesquisa*. Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, pp. 13-31.
- Giddens, A. (2014) *Turbulent and mighty continent: What future for Europe?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giere, R. N. (1999) *Science Without Laws: Science and its Conceptual Foundations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gil, A. C. (2007) *Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa*. 4th edn. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Gil, A. C. (2010) *Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa*. 5th edn. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Gil, A. C. (2019) *Métodos e técnicas de pesquisa social*. 7th edn. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Gill, D. and Adams, B. (1998) *ABC of Communication Studies*. 2nd edn. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- Giraud, J.-G. (2020) "The European Council: a self-proclaimed "sovereign" off the rails", *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 574, pp. 2-5.
- Goodin, R. (1996) *The Theory of Institutional Design*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gosciny, R. and Uderzo, A. (1959) "Astérix le Gaulois", *Pilote*, 1, p. 20.
- Gramberger, M. R. (1997) *Die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Kommission 1952-1996. PR zur Legitimation von Integration*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Graziotin, L. S., Klaus, V. and Pereira, A. P. M. (2022) "Documentary historical analysis and bibliographic research: study objects and methodology", *Pro-Posições*, 33 (4), pp. 1-20.
- Griffiths, M., O'Callaghan, T. and Roach, S. C. (2014) *International Relations: The key concepts*. 3rd edn. New York: Routledge, pp. 124-126.

- Griffiths, R. T. (2012) "The Founding Fathers", in Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill, S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 181-192.
- Gripsrud, J. (2012) "Critical ideas and reflections on the European public sphere", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 31-39.
- Gruber, L. (2000) *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Haas, E. B. (1958) *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1962) *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Translated from German by T. Burger and F. Lawrence. 1989. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Habermas, J. (1981) *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Translated from German by T. A. McCarthy. 1984. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Haftel, Y. and Thompson, A. (2006) "The Independence of International Organizations: Concept and Applications", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 60 (2), pp. 252-275.
- Hakhverdian, A., Van Elsas, E., Van Der Brug, W. and Kuhn, T. (2013) "Euroscepticism and education: a longitudinal study of 12 EU member states", *European Union Politics*, 14 (4), pp. 522-541.
- Halimi, S. (1997) *Les nouveaux chiens de garde*. Paris: Éditions Raisons d'Agir.
- Häussler, M. (2014) "The popular press and ideas of Europe: The Daily Mirror, the Daily Express, and Britain's first application to join the EEC, 1961-63", *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (1), pp. 108-131.
- Hearst, M. A. (1999) "Untangling text mining", *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, University of Maryland.
- Heft, A. and Pfetsch, B. (2012) "Conditions of the emergence of a European public sphere. Political actors and mass media under scrutiny", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 147-164.

- Held, D. (1980) *Introduction to Critical Theory. Horkheimer to Habermas*. London: Hutchinson University Library.
- Hellström, J. (2008) "Who leads, who follows? Re-examining the party-electorate linkages on European integration", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15 (8), pp. 1127-1144.
- Hepp, A., Elsler, M., Lingenberg, S., Mollen, A., Möller, J., Offerhaus, A., Sword, K. and Pospielovsky, D. (2016) *The communicative construction of Europe: Cultures of political discourse, public sphere, and the Euro crisis*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Hepp, A., Lingenberg, S., Offerhaus, A., Möller, J., Elsler, M. and Mollen, A. (2012) "Europe beyond the crisis? Citizens' (re)actions on the multi-segmentation of the European public sphere", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 69-84.
- Hermet, G., Badie, B., Birnbaum, P. and Braud, P. (2008) *Dicionário de Ciência Política e das Instituições Políticas*. Translated from French by E. Pestana. 2014. Lisboa: Escolar Editora.
- Herzer, M. (2019) *The Media, European integration and the rise of euro-journalism, 1950s-1970s*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hieronymi, R. (2003) "Medienpolitik in Europa. Für Vielfalt und wirtschaftliche Dynamik", in Rinsche, A. (ed.) *Aspekte und Perspektiven der Medienpolitik in Europa*. Hamm: Gebürder Wilke GmbH, pp. 35-46.
- Hix, S. (2014) "The EU as a new political system", in Caramani, D. (ed.) *Comparative Politics*. 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 387-406.
- Hobbes, T. (1946) *Leviathan*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2007) "Taking cues on Europe? Voter competence and party endorsements in referendums on European integration", *European Journal of Political Research*, 46 (2), pp. 151-182.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2012) "Public opinion and integration", in Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill, S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 716-733.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2014) "Ever closer or ever wider? Public attitudes towards further enlargement and integration in the European Union", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21 (5), pp. 664-680.

- Hobolt, S. B. and De Vries, C. E. (2016) "Public Support for European Integration", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, pp. 413-432.
- Hobolt, S. B. and Klemmensen, R. (2008) "Government responsiveness and political competition in comparative perspective", *Comparative Political Studies*, 41 (3), pp. 309-337.
- Hobolt, S. B. and Leblond, P. (2013) "Economic insecurity and public support for the euro before and during the financial crisis", in Bermeo, N. and Bartels, L. M. (eds.) *Mass Politics in Tough Times: Opinions, Votes and Protest in the Great Recession*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 128-147.
- Hobolt, S. B. and Wratil, C. (2015) "Public opinion and the crisis: the dynamics of support for the euro", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22 (2), pp. 238-256.
- Hoffmann, S. (1966) "Obstinate or obsolete? The fate of the Nation-State and the case of Western Europe", *Daedalus*, 95 (3), pp. 862-915.
- Hoffmann, S. (1982) "Reflections on the Nation-State in Western Europe", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 21 (1-2), pp. 21-37.
- Hohlfeldt, A. (2001) "As origens antigas: a comunicação e as civilizações", in Hohlfeldt, A., Martino, L. C. and França, V. V. (eds.) *Teorias da comunicação*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, pp. 61-98.
- Holtz-Bacha, C. (2006) *Medienpolitik für Europa*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Hooghe, L. (2007) "What drives Euroscepticism? Party-public cueing, ideology and strategic opportunity", *European Union Politics*, 8 (1), pp. 5-12.
- Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (2005) "Calculation, community and cues: public opinion on European integration", *European Union Politics*, 6 (4), pp. 419-443.
- Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (2009) "A postfunctionalist theory of European integration: from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus", *British Journal of Political Science*, 39, number 1 (2009), pp. 1-23.
- Hotho, A., Nürnberger, A. and Paaß, G. (2005) "A brief survey of text mining", *Journal for Language Technology and Computational Linguistics*, 20 (1), pp. 19-62.
- Howarth, D. (2018) "European Union", in Brown, G. W., McLean, I. and McMillan, A. (eds.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*. 4th edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 190-193.
- Huntington, S. P. (1975) "The United States", in Crozier, M. J., Huntington, S. P. e Watanuki, J. (eds.) *The crisis of democracy: Report on the governability of*

- democracies to the Trilateral Commission*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 59-118.
- Hurd, I. (2007) *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hurd, I. (2014) *International Organizations: Politics, law, practice*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Inaba, M. and Kakai, H. (2023) "Grounded Text Mining Approach: An Integration Strategy of Grounded Theory and Textual Data Mining", in Poth, C. N. (ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of mixed methods research design*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., pp. 328-360.
- Jackson, R. and Sørensen, G. (2013) *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and approaches*. 5th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jasanoff, S. (2014) "A mirror for science", *Public Understanding of Science*, 23, pp. 21-26.
- Jensen, C. S. (2013) "Neo-functionalism", in Cini, M. and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N. (eds.) *European Union Politics*. 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 59-70.
- Johnson, C., Dowd, T. J. and Ridgeway, C. L. (2006) "Legitimacy as a Social Process", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 32, pp. 53-78.
- Johnson, T. (2013) "Looking beyond States: Openings for International Bureaucrats to Enter the Institutional Design Process", *Review of International Organizations*, 8 (4), pp. 499-519.
- Johnson, T. (2014) *Organizational Progeny: Why Governments are Losing Control over the Proliferating Structures of Global Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, A. (2008) *A Glossary of the European Union*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Jones, C. (2018) "Neofunctionalism", in Brown, G. W., McLean, I. and McMillan, A. (eds.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*. 4th edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 383-384.
- Just, S. N. (2010) "There can be no EU without the support of the citizens: Debate and dialogue on the Debate Europe website", in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and*

- Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 293-315.
- Kahneman, D. (2011) *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Kalinowski, S. T. and Pelakh, A. (2024) "A hypothetico-deductive theory of science and learning", *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 61 (6), pp. 1362-1388.
- Kaltenthaler, K. C. and Anderson, C. (2001) "Europeans and their money: explaining public support for the common European currency", *European Journal of Political Research*, 40 (2), pp. 139-170.
- Kane, J. V. (2021) "The Empiricism Strikes Back: Strategies for Avoiding a Post-truth World", in Ankersen, C. and Sidhu, W. P. S. (eds.) *The Future of Global Affairs: Managing Discontinuity, Disruption and Destruction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 71-98.
- Karns, M. P. and Mingst, K. A. (2010) *International Organizations: The politics and processes of global governance*. 2nd edn. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Karp, J. A., Banducci, S. A. and Bowler, S. (2003) "To know it is to love it: satisfaction with democracy in the European Union", *Comparative Political Studies*, 36 (3), pp. 271-292.
- Kent, M. L. (2013) "Using social media dialogically: public relations role in reviving democracy", *Public Relations Review*, 39 (4), pp. 337-345.
- King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba, S. (1994) *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kitchen, P. J. (1997) *Public Relations: Principles and Practice*. London: International Thomson Business Press.
- König, T. (2007) "Discontinuity - Another source of the EU's democratic deficit?", *European Union Politics*, 8 (3), pp. 411-432.
- Kritzinger, S. (2003) "The influence of the nation-state on individual support for the European Union", *European Union Politics*, 4, pp. 219-241.
- Kruger, J. and Dunning, D. (2000) "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77 (6), pp. 1121-1134.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Kuhn, T. and Stoeckel, F. (2014) "When European integration becomes costly: The Euro crisis and public support for European economic governance", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21 (4), pp. 624-641.
- Kumar, L. and Bhatia, P. K. (2013) "Text Mining: Concepts, Process and Applications", *Journal of Global Research in Computer Science*, 4 (3), pp. 36-39.
- Kurpas, S., De Clerck-Sachsse, J. and Brüggemann, M. (2006) *Informing European Citizens? Evaluating the Activities of the European Commission in the field of Information*. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.
- Lakatos, E. M. and Marconi, M. A. (2017) *Fundamentos da metodologia científica*. 8th edn. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Lasswell, H. (1948) "The structure and function of communication in society", in Bryson, L. (ed.) *The communication of ideas*. New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies.
- Laursen, F. (2012) "The Treaty of Maastricht", in Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill, S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 121-134.
- Leclerc, S. (2013) *L'essentiel du Droit des institutions de l'Union européenne*. 4th edn. Paris: Gualino éditeur.
- Leconte, L. (2010) *Understanding Euroscepticism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lefebvre, M. (2013) *La construction de l'Europe et l'avenir des Nations*. Paris: Armand Colin éditeur.
- Leichty, G. and Esrock, S. (2001) "Change response on the corporate web site", *American Communication Journal*, 5 (1).
- Lendrevie, J., Lindon, D., Dionísio, P. and Rodrigues, V. (1996) *Mercator - Teoria e Prática do Marketing*. 6th edn. Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote.
- Lewandowsky, S., Smillie, L., Garcia, D., Hertwig, R., Weatherall, J., Egidy, S., Robertson, R. E., O'Connor, C., Kozyreva, A., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Blaschke, Y. and Leiser, M. (2020) *Technology and Democracy: Understanding the influence of online technologies on political behaviour and decision-making*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Lindberg, L. N. (1963) *The political dynamics of European economic integration*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lindberg, L. N. and Scheingold, S. A. (1970) *Europe's Would-be Polity: Patterns of Change in the European Community*. Princeton: Prentice-Hall.

- Lindeman, E. C. (1949) "Discussion", in Seligman, E. R. A. and Johnson, A. (eds.) *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. Volume Five. New York: The MacMillan Company, pp. 166-167.
- Linklater, A. (2011) "A European civilizing process?", in Hill, C. and Smith, M. (eds.) *International Relations and the European Union*. 2nd edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 435-457.
- Lippmann, W. (1922) *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Lipson, C. (1984) "International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs", *World Politics*, 37, pp. 1-23.
- Littlejohn, S. (1978) *Fundamentos Teóricos da Comunicação Humana*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Guanabara.
- Loitz, T. (2001) *Europäische Öffentlichkeit? Politische Öffentlichkeitsarbeit am Beispiel der Kommission*. Münster: LIT Verlag.
- Lucas Pires, F. (2007) *A Revolução Europeia*. Lisboa: Gabinete em Portugal do Parlamento Europeu.
- Machiavelli, N. (1532) *O Príncipe*. Translated from English by C. Carvalho. 2012. Lisboa: Clássica Editora.
- Maitland, I. (1999) *Perfect PR*. London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Majone, G. (2010) *Dilemmas of European integration: The ambiguities and pitfalls of integration by stealth*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mann, M. (1986) *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 1, A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mann, M. (2012) *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 3, Global Empires and Revolution, 1890-1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1964) *One-dimensional man: studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Marino, V., and Lo Presti, L. (2018) "From citizens to partners: the role of social media content in fostering citizen engagement", *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*, 12 (1), pp. 39-60.
- Marquart, F., Goldberg, A. C., van Elsas, E. J., Brosius, A. and de Vreese, C. H. (2019) "Knowing is not loving: Media effects on knowledge about and attitudes toward the EU", *Journal of European Integration*, 41 (5), pp. 641-655.

- Marquart, F., Goldberg, A. C. and de Vreese, C. H. (2020) "This time I'm (not) voting: A comprehensive overview of campaign factors influencing turnout at European Parliament elections", *European Union Politics*, 21 (4), pp. 680-705.
- Marshall, T. (2018) *Divided: Why we're living in an age of walls*. London: Elliott and Thompson Limited.
- Martín González, Y. and Terra, A. L. (2013) "Need for, Demand for, and Use of European Union information", *Libri*, 63 (4), pp. 320-338.
- Martino, L. C. (2001) "Interdisciplinaridade e objecto de estudo da comunicação", in Hohlfeldt, A., Martino, L. C. and França, V. V. (eds.) *Teorias da comunicação*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, pp. 27-38.
- Martins, V. (2005) "Integração Europeia", in Coelho, C. (ed.) *Dicionário de Termos Europeus*. Lisboa: Alêtheia Editores, pp. 184-187.
- Martins, V. (2019) "A primeira presidência portuguesa", in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 123-138.
- Mashaw, J. (1985) "Prodelegation: Why Administrators Should Make Political Decisions", *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 1 (1), pp. 81-100.
- Mazower, M. (1998) *The Dark Continent*. London: Allen & Lane.
- Mazower, M. (2012) *Governing the world: The history of an idea*. London: Allen & Lane.
- McCormick, J. (2021) *Understanding the European Union: A Concise Introduction*. 8th edn. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- McLaren, L. (2006) *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McLaren, L. M. and Guerra, S. (2013) "Public Opinion and the European Union", in Cini, M. and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N. (eds.) *European Union Politics*. 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 354-366.
- McLuhan, M. (1962) *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McLuhan, M. (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London: Routledge.
- McQuail, D. (1994) *Mass Communication Theory. An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

- Meriläinen, N. and Vos, M. (2010) "Can online communication strengthen the EU's relationship with young citizens in Finland?", in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 317-332.
- Meyer, C. (1999) "Political legitimacy and the invisibility of politics: Exploring the European Union's communication deficit", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37(4), pp. 617-639.
- Meyer, J.-H. (2010) *The European Public Sphere. Media and Transnational Communication in European Integration 1969-1991*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Michailidou, A. (2008) "Democracy and new media in the European Union: communication or participation deficit?", *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4 (4), pp. 346-368.
- Millard, F. (1999) "Polish domestic politics and accession to the European Union", in Henderson, K. (ed.) *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*. London: UCL Press, pp. 203-220.
- Miller, J. (2012) "What colleges and universities need to do to advance civic scientific literacy and preserve American democracy", *Liberal Education*, 98 (4), pp. 28-33.
- Milward, A. (1992) *The European rescue of the Nation-State*. London: Routledge.
- Minayo, M. C. S. (2007) *O desafio do conhecimento*. São Paulo: Hucitec.
- Montero, M. (1993) *La Información Periodística y su Influencia Social*. Barcelona: Editorial Labor Barcelona y Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Moore, S. and McDonald, S. (2012) "New borders, new citizens. Virtual communication strategies for remaking European Union citizenship", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 51-68.
- Moravcsik, A. (1993) "Preferences and power in the European Community: a liberal intergovernmentalist approach", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31 (4), pp. 473-524.
- Moravcsik, A. (1998) *The choice for Europe. Social purpose and state power from Messina to Maastricht*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Moravcsik, A. (2002) "In defence of the "democratic deficit": reassessing legitimacy in the European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40 (4), pp. 603-624.
- Moravcsik, A. (2008). "The new liberalism", in Reus-Smit, C. and Snidal, D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 234-254.
- Moravcsik, A. and Schimmelfennig, F. (2019) "Liberal intergovernmentalism", in Wiener, A., Börzel, T. A. and Risse, T. (eds.) *European integration theory*. 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 64-84.
- Morrison, M. and Morgan, M. S. (2010) "Models as mediating instruments", in Morgan, M. S. and Morrison, M. (eds.) *Models as Mediators*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 10-37.
- Morse, J. and Keohane, R. O. (2014) "Contested multilateralism", *Review of International Organizations*, 9 (4), pp. 385-412.
- Moussis, N. (2005) *Guide to European Politics*. Rixenart: European Study Service.
- Muñoz-Cañavate, A. and Hípola, P. (2016) "Information resources for competitive intelligence: An approach to the information available on the European Union's websites", *Journal of Business and Finance Librarianship*, 22 (1), pp. 32-45.
- Nancy, J. (2016) *Major changes in European public opinion regarding the European Union. Exploratory study, updated November 2016*. Luxembourg: European Parliament Research Service.
- Newcomb, T. (1953) "An approach to the study of communication acts", *Psychological Review*, 60, pp. 393-400.
- Niemann, A., Lefkofridi, Z. and Schmitter, P. C. (2019) "Neofunctionalism", in Wiener, A., Börzel, T. A. and Risse, T. (eds.) *European integration theory*. 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 43-63.
- Nieminen, H. (2006) "What do we mean by a European public sphere?", in Carpentier, N., Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, P., Nordenstreng, K., Hartmann, M., Vihalemm, P. and Cammaerts, B. (eds.) *Researching Media, Democracy and Participation. The Intellectual Work of the 2006 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School*. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, pp. 105-120.
- Nissen, S. (2014) "The Eurobarometer and the process of European integration: Methodological foundations and weaknesses of the largest European survey", *Quality and Quantity*, 48, pp. 713-727.

- Noh, J. D. and Rieger, H. (2004) "Random walks on complex networks", *Physical Review Letters*, 92 (11), pp. 1-11.
- Norris, P. (2014) "Political communication", in Caramani, D. (ed.) *Comparative Politics*. 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 318-331.
- Nugent, N. (2010) *The Government and Politics of the European Union*. 4th edn. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Oakeshott, M. (1975) *Hobbes on Civil Association*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Oreja Aguirre, M. (1995) "Prólogo", in Pelegrín, E. A. *El Lobby en la Unión Europea. Manual sobre el buen uso de Bruselas*. Pozuelo de Alarcón: ESIC Editorial, pp. 17-18.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2005) Wehmeier, S., McIntosh, C., Turnbull, J. and Ashby, M. (eds.) 7th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 435.
- O'Neill Jr., T. P. (1994) *All Politics is Local*. New York: Times Books.
- Pandey, P. and Pandey, M. M. (2021) *Research methodology: Tools and techniques*. Buzau: Bridge Center.
- Patten, M. L. (2016) *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Pausch, M. (2009) "Eurobarometer und die Konstruktion eines europäischen Bewusstseins", in Weichbold, M., Bacher, J. and Wolf, C. (eds.) *Umfrageforschung. Herausforderungen und Grenzen*. Wiesbaden, VS, pp. 539-552.
- Pfetsch, B., Adam, S. and Eschner, B. (2010) "The media's voice over Europe: Issue salience, openness, and conflict lines in editorials", in Koopmans, R. and Statham, P. (eds.) *The making of a European public sphere: Media discourses and political contention*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 151-170.
- Piketty, T. (2013) *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Translated from French by A. Goldhammer. 2014. Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press.
- Pinder, J. and Usherwood, S. (2013) *The European Union: A Very Short Introduction*. 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pinheiro, J. D. (2019) "Portugal face aos desenvolvimentos internos europeus e mudanças internacionais", in Rosa Lã, J., Cunha, A. and Sampaio Nunes, P. (eds.) *As Décadas da Europa*. Torres Vedras: Letras Errantes, pp. 103-122.

- Pinto Cardoso, C., Ramos, C., Costa Leite, I., Casqueira Cardoso, J. and Vila Maior, P. (2017) *A União Europeia: História, Instituições e Políticas*. 5th edn. Porto: Edições Universidade Fernando Pessoa.
- Podkalicka, A. and Shore, C. (2010) "Communicating Europe? EU Communication Policy and Cultural Politics", in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 93-111.
- Poiares Maduro, M. (2006) *A Constituição Plural. Constitucionalismo e União Europeia*. Cascais: Principia Editora.
- Pollack, M. A. (2012) "Realist, intergovernmentalist, and institutionalist approaches", in Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill, S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-17.
- Prodanov, C. C. (2006) *Manual de metodologia científica*. 3rd edn. Novo Hamburgo: Editora Feevale.
- Prodanov, C. C. and Freitas, E. C. (2013) *Metodologia do trabalho científico: métodos e técnicas da pesquisa e do trabalho acadêmico*. 2nd edn. Novo Hamburgo: Editora Feevale.
- Rabier, J.-R. (1976) "European barometer and socio-political research", *European Journal of Political Research*, 4 (1), pp. 141-146.
- Radaelli, C. (2008) "Europeanization, Policy Learning, and New Modes of Governance", *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 10 (3), pp. 239-254.
- Radhakrishnan, S., Erbis, S., Isaacs, J. A. and Kamarthi, S. (2017) "Novel keyword co-occurrence network-based methods to foster systematic reviews of scientific literature", *PLoS ONE*, 12 (3), pp. 1-9.
- Ragab, M. and Arisha, A. (2018) "Research Methodology in Business: A Starter's Guide", *Management and Organizational Studies*, 5 (1), pp. 1-14.
- Rajoy, M. (2019) *Una España Mejor*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores.
- Ramonet, I. (1999) *A Tirania da Comunicação*. Translated from French by J. Sarabando. 1999. Porto: Campo das Letras Editores.
- Raube, K., Marx, A., Van Aken, W. and Soares, J. (2013) *Going local: the communication potential of local and regional authorities*. Brussels: Committee of the Regions.

- Rauh, C. B. (2016) *A Responsive Technocracy? EU Politicization and the Consumer Policies of the European Union*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Rhodes, B. (2019) *The world as it is: Inside the Obama White House*. London: Vintage, Penguin Random House.
- Ringe, N. (2010) *Who decides, and how?: Preferences, uncertainty, and policy choice in the European Parliament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosamond, B. (2014) "The European Union", in Weiss, T. G. and Wilkinson, R. (eds.) *International Organization and Global Governance*. London: Routledge, pp. 251-264.
- Russell, B. (1949) *Am I an Atheist Or an Agnostic? A Plea for Tolerance in the Face of New Dogmas*. Girard: Haldeman-Julius Publications.
- Rüdiger, F. (1998) *Introdução à Teoria da Comunicação*. São Paulo: Edicon Editora.
- Rüdiger, F. (2001) "A Escola de Frankfurt", in Hohlfeldt, A., Martino, L. C. and França, V. V. (eds.) *Teorias da comunicação*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, pp. 131-147.
- Sakyi, K. A., Musona, D. and Mweshi, G. (2020) "Research Methods and Methodology", *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7 (3), pp. 296-302.
- Sánchez-Cuenca, I. (2000) "The political basis of support for European integration", *European Union Politics*, 1 (2), pp. 147-171.
- Sanders, D., Magalhães, P. C. and Tóka, G. (eds.) (2012) *Citizens and the European Polity: Mass attitudes towards the European and national polities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Santaella, L. (2001) *Comunicação e Pesquisa*. São Paulo: Hacker Editores.
- Santaolalla, F. (1989) *El parlamento en la encrucijada*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad Complutense.
- Santos, J. L. G., Erdmann, A. L., Meirelles, B. H. S., Lanzoni, G. M. M., Cunha, V. P. and Ross, R. (2017) "Integração entre Dados Quantitativos e Qualitativos em uma Pesquisa de Métodos Mistos", *Texto Contexto Enferm*, 26 (3), pp. 1-9.
- Santos, R. (1998) *Os Novos Media e o Espaço Público*. Lisboa: Gradiva Publicações.
- Sarasvathy, S. D., Kumar, K., York, J. and Bhagavatula, S. (2013) "An effectual approach to international entrepreneurship: Overlaps, challenges, and provocative possibilities", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38 (1), pp. 71-93.

- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 9th edn. London: Pearson.
- Scharpf, F. (1999) *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schmitter, P. C. and Brouwer, I. (1999) "Conceptualizing, Researching and Evaluating Democracy Promotion and Protection". European University Institute (EUI) Working Paper SPS No. 99/9.
- Schneeberger, A. I. and Sarikakis, K. (2008) "Media and Communication in Europe: Babel Revisited", *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 4 (4), pp. 269-272.
- Schoonenboom, J. and Johnson, R. (2017) "How to construct a mixed methods research", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 69 (2), pp. 107-131.
- Schopenhauer, A. (2010) *Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.
- Schramm, W. (1954) "How communication works", in Schramm, W. (ed.) *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 3-26.
- Schuck, A. R. T., Vliegenthart, R. and de Vreese, C. H. (2016) "Who's afraid of conflict? The mobilizing effect of conflict framing in campaign news", *British Journal of Political Science*, 46 (1), pp. 177-194.
- Schuck, A. and De Vreese, C. H. (2006) "Between risk and opportunity: news framing and its effects on public support for EU enlargement", *European Journal of Communication*, 21 (1), pp. 5-32.
- Seabra, M. and Nazaré Pereira, A. (2005) "Declaração de Laeken", in Coelho, C. (ed.) *Dicionário de Termos Europeus*. Lisboa: Alêtheia Editores, pp. 100-101.
- Seidl, R., Moser, C., Stauffacher, M. and Krütli, P. (2013) "Perceived risk and benefit of nuclear waste repositories: Four opinion clusters", *Risk Analysis*, 33 (6), pp. 1038-1048.
- Seitel, F. P. (1998) *The practice of public relations*. 7th edn. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Seoane Pérez, F. (2013) *Political communication in Europe: The cultural and structural limits of the European public sphere*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shane, S. and Venkataraman, S. (2000) "The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research", *The Academy of Management Review*, 25 (1), p. 217.

- Shannon, C. E. and Weaver, W. (1949) *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Shepherd, R. (1975) *Public Opinion and European Integration*. Westmead: Saxon House.
- Sievert, H. (2010) "Not Europeanised after all? European journalism and its differences within the EU Member states", in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 237-265.
- Silveira, D. T. and Córdova, F. P. (2009) "A pesquisa científica", in Gerhardt, T. E. and Silveira, D. T. (eds.) *Métodos de Pesquisa*. Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, pp. 33-44.
- Simões, R. P. (1995) *Relações públicas: função política*. 3rd edn. São Paulo: Summus Editorial.
- Simpson, N. C., Tacheva, Z. and Kao, T.-W. (2023) "Semi-directedness: New network concepts for supply chain research", *International Journal of Production Economics*, 256, pp. 1-12.
- Siune, K. and Svensson, P. (1993) "The Danes and the Maastricht Treaty: The Danish EC Referendum of June 1992", *Electoral Studies*, 12 (2), pp. 99-111.
- Siune, K., Svensson, P. and Tonsgaard, O. (1994) "The European Union. The Danes said "no" in 1992 but "yes" in 1993: how and why?", *Electoral Studies*, 13 (2), pp. 107-116.
- Smismans, S. (2013) "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union", in Cini, M. and Pérez-Solórzano Borrágán, N. (eds.) *European Union Politics*. 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 341-353.
- Smith, A. (2004) "European Commissioners and the Prospects of a European Public Sphere: Information, Representation and Legitimacy", *Conference paper of the Conference on Citizenship and Democratic Legitimacy in Europe*. University of Stirling, United Kingdom. 05th - 06th February 2004.
- Soromenho-Marques, V. (2019) *Depois da Queda - A União Europeia entre o Reerguer e a Fragmentação*. Lisboa: Temas e Debates - Círculo de Leitores.
- Sousa, J. P. (2006) *Elementos de Teoria e Pesquisa da Comunicação e dos Media*. 2nd edn. Porto: Edições Universidade Fernando Pessoa.

- Sousa, T. de (1999) “A invenção de um novo modelo”, in Fernandes, J. M. and Moita, L. (eds.) *Janus 99-2000 anuário de relações exteriores*. Lisboa: Público e Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, pp. 128-129.
- Sousa de Jesus, A. (2005) “Tratado de Maastricht (1992)”, in Coelho, C. (ed.) *Dicionário de Termos Europeus*. Lisboa: Alêtheia Editores, pp. 329-330.
- Spanier, B. (2010) “Trying to square the circle - The challenge of being an EU Commission spokesperson”, in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 191-215.
- Stacey, J. (2010) *Integrating Europe: Informal politics and institutional change*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stachowiak, H. (1973) *Allgemeine Modelltheorie*. Wien: Springer Verlag.
- Strange, S. (1998) “Why Do International Organizations Never Die?”, in Reinalda, B. and Verbeek, B. (eds.) *Autonomous Policy Making by International Organizations*. New York: Routledge, pp. 213-220.
- Sturgis, P. and Smith, P. (2010) “Assessing the validity of generalized trust questions: What kind of trust are we measuring?”, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 22 (1), pp. 74-92.
- Sulis, E, Humphreys, L., Vernerio, F., Amantea, I. A. and Audrito, D. (2022) “Exploiting co-occurrence networks for classification of implicit inter-relationships in legal texts”, *Information Systems*, 106, pp. 1-12.
- Sun, Wu Tzu (circa 500 B.C.) *A Arte da Guerra*. Translated from English by M. Conde. 2013. 4th edn. Lisboa: Bertrand Editora.
- Tallberg, J. and Zürn, M. (2019) “The legitimacy and legitimation of international organizations: introduction and framework”, *Review of International Organizations*, 14 (4), pp. 581-606.
- Tanaka, K., Takahashi, M. and Tsuda, K. (2013) “Comparison of Centrality Indexes in Network Japanese Text Analysis”, *International Journal of e-Education, e-Business, e-Management and e-Learning*, 3 (1), pp. 37-42.
- Terra, A. L. (2009) “The need for information literacy skills among users of European Union information”, *Conference paper of the 17th annual BOBCATSSS symposium (BOBCATSSS 2009)*. University of Porto, Portugal. 28th - 30th January 2009. Unpublished, pp. 1-13.

- Terra, A. L. (2010) "European information users: Topics from a comparative analysis within the European Union", *New Library World*, 111 (5-6), pp. 189-202.
- Toshkov, D. (2011) "Public opinion and policy output in the European Union: a lost relationship", *European Union Politics*, 12 (2), pp. 169-191.
- Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J. and Rasinski, K. (2000) *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Triviños, A. N. S. (1987) *Introdução à pesquisa em ciências sociais: a pesquisa qualitativa em educação*. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Trujillo Ferrari, A. (1974) *A Metodologia da Ciência*. 3rd edn. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Kennedy.
- Tsoukalis, L. (2005) *What kind of Europe?* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tsoukalis, L. (2011) "The Delphic Oracle on Europe", in Tsoukalis, L. and Emmanouilidis, J. A. (eds.) *The Delphic Oracle on Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 205-222.
- Tsoukalis, L. (2016) *In defence of Europe: Can the European project be saved?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tumber, H. (1995) "Marketing Maastricht: the EU and news management", *Media, Culture and Society*, 17, pp. 511-519.
- Tuțuianu, A. and Preda, F. R. (2018) "Aspects on Involvement of Citizens in the Decision-Making Process of the European Institutions", *Proceedings of the 13th edition of the International Conference on European Integration, Realities and Perspectives*. Danubius University of Galati, Romania. 18th - 19th May 2018. Galati: Danubius University Press, pp. 37-53.
- Ultan, M. and Ornek, S. (2015) "Euroscepticism in the European Union", *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4 (2), pp. 49-57.
- Valentini, C. (2006) "Manufacturing EU consensus: The reasons behind EU promotional campaigns", *Global Media Journal - Mediterranean Editions*, 1 (2), Fall, pp. 80-96.
- Valentini, C. (2008) "Political communication in international settings", *Journal of International Communication*, 14 (2), pp. 102-116.
- Valentini, C. (2010) "The European Union, Europe Direct Centres and Civil Society Organisations: An Enchanted Partnership?", in Valentini, C. and Nesti, G. (eds.) *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and*

- Challenges*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 139-163.
- Valentini, C. and Laursen, B. (2012) "The Mass Media. A Privileged Channel for the EU's Political Communication", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, pp. 129-146.
- Van Campenhoudt, L. and Quivy, R. (2011) *Manuel de recherche en sciences sociales*. 4th edn. Paris: Dunod Editeur.
- Van Everdingen, Y. and Van Raaij, W. (1998) "The Dutch people and the Euro: A structural analysis relating national identity and economic expectations to attitude towards the Euro", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 19 (6), pp. 721-740.
- Van Middelaar, L. J. (2016) "Pourquoi forger un récit européen? La politique identitaire en Europe. Nécessités et contraintes d'un récit commun", in Arjakovsky, A. (ed.) *Histoire de la conscience européenne*. Paris: Éditions Salvator, pp. 31-56.
- Van Os, R., Jankowski, N. W. and Wester, F. (2009) "Exploring the online European public sphere: The web and Europeanization of political communication in the European Union", in Harrison, J. and Wessels, B. (eds.) *Mediating Europe: New media, mass communications and the European public sphere*. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 73-98.
- Vaubel, R. (2006) "Principal-Agent Problems in International Organizations", *Review of International Organizations*, 1 (2), pp. 125-138.
- Védrine, H. (2019) *Face au chaos, sauver l'Europe!* 2nd edn. Paris: Éditions Liana Levi.
- Veling, A. and Van der Weerd, P. (1999) "Conceptual grouping in word co-occurrence networks", *Proceedings of the International Joint Conferences on Artificial Intelligence Organization*, pp. 694-701.
- Vesnic-Alujevic, L. (2012) "The European Parliament's online communication strategy. Creation of the European public sphere", in Morganti, L. and Bekemans, L. (eds.) *The European Public Sphere: From Critical Thinking to Responsible Action*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, pp. 85-94.
- Vilelas, J. (2017) *Investigação: o processo de construção do conhecimento*. 2nd edn. Lisboa: Edições Sílabo.
- Villafañe, J. (1993) *Imagen Positiva. Gestión Estratégica de la Imagen de las Empresas*. Madrid: Ediciones Pirámide.

- Vliegenthart, R., Schuck, A., Boomgaarden, H. G. and De Vreese, C. H. (2008) "News coverage and support for European integration, 1990-2006", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 20 (4), pp. 415-439.
- Voltmer, K. and Rawnsley, G. (2009) "The media", in Haerpfer, C. W., Bernhagen, P., Inglehart, R. F. and Welzel, C. (eds.) *Democratization*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 234-248.
- Wallström, M. (2006) *Meeting the communication challenge*, Speech/06/478. Brussels.
- Watzlawick, P., Helmick, J. and Jackson, D. D. (1967) *Une logique de la communication. Proposition pour une axiomatique de la communication*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (1971) Gove, P. B. (ed.) Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, p. 648.
- Weimer, D. (1995) *Institutional Design*. Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Wendt, A. (2001) "Driving with the Rearview Mirror: On the Rational Science of Institutional Design", *International Organization*, 55 (4), pp. 1019-1049.
- Wessels, B. (1995) "Evaluations of the EC: elite or mass-driven?", in Niedermayer, O. and Sinnott, R. (eds.) *Public Opinion and International Governance*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 105-136.
- Wilfert, B. (2020) "Coronavirus: globalisation is not the cause but the remedy", *Fondation Robert Schuman European Issues*, 556, pp. 1-9.
- Williams, C. J. and Bevan, S. (2019) "The effect of public attitudes toward the European Union on European Commission policy activity", *European Union Politics*, 20 (4), pp. 608-628.
- Williams, H. (2021) "The Meaning of Phenomenology: Qualitative and philosophical phenomenological research methods", *The Qualitative Report*, 26 (2), pp. 366-385.
- Wilsdon, J., Wynne, B. and Stilgoe, J. (2005) *The Public Value of Science*. London: Demos.
- Worre, T. (1995) "First no, then yes: the Danish referendums on the Maastricht Treaty 1992 and 1993", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32 (2), pp. 235-257.
- Wynne, B. (2014) "Further disorientation in the hall of mirrors", *Public Understanding of Science*, 23 (1), pp. 60-70.

- Xia, C., Wang, L., Sun, S. and Wang, J. (2012) "An SIR model with infection delay and propagation vector in complex networks", *Nonlinear Dynamics*, 69 (3), pp. 927-934.
- Yang, L., Qi, L. and Zhang, B. (2022) "Concepts and evaluation of saturation in qualitative research", *Advances in Psychological Science*, 30 (3), pp. 511-521.
- Yin, R. K. (2001) *Estudo de caso: planejamento e métodos*. 2nd edn. Porto Alegre: Editora Bookman.
- Zaller, J. R. (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaum, D. (2013) *Legitimizing International Organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zegart, A. (1999) *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Zielonka, J. (2014) *Is the EU doomed?* Cambridge: Polity.
- Zou, P. X. W. and Xu, X. (2023) *Research Methodology and Strategy: Theory and Practice*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Zürn, M. (2018) *A Theory of Global Governance: Authority, Legitimacy, and Contestation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zweifel, T. D. (2002) *Democratic deficit?* Lanham: Lexington Books.

Legal texts

- Council of the European Communities (1983) *Council Regulation (EEC, EURATOM) No. 354/83 of 01 February 1983 concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities L43/1, 15 February 1983.
- Council of the European Communities (1989) *Council Directive 89/552/EEC of 03 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in member states concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities L298, 17 October 1989.
- Council of the European Union and Commission of the European Communities (1993) *Code of conduct concerning public access to Council and Commission*

documents, 93/730/EC. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities L340/41, 31 December 1993.

Council of the European Union (2003) *Council Regulation (EC, EURATOM) No. 1700/2003 of 22 September 2003 amending Regulation (EEC, EURATOM) No. 354/83 concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Union L243/1, 22 September 2003.

European Parliament and Council of the European Union (1997) *Directive 97/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 1997 amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in member states concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities L202, 30 July 1997.

European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2001) *Regulation (EC) No. 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities L145, 31 May 2001.

European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2011) *Regulation (EU) No. 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens' initiative*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Union L65, 11 March 2011.

European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2018) *Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Union L303, 28 November 2018.

European Union (1997) *Treaty of Amsterdam*. Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities C340, 10 November 1997.

European Union (2000) *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*.
Luxembourg: Official Journal of the European Communities C 364/1, 18
December 2000.

United Nations (1956) *General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1086 (XI)*. New York.

United Nations (1959) *General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1405 (XIV)*. New York.

United Nations (1978) *General Assembly Resolution A/RES/33/115*. New York.

United Nations (1982) *General Assembly Resolution A/RES/38/82*. New York.

United Nations (2003) *General Assembly Resolution A/RES/58/101*. New York.

United Nations (2004) *General Assembly Resolution A/RES/59/126*. New York.

Official documents

Commission des Communautés européennes (2004b) *Cahier des charges pour la mise en place de structures destinées à accueillir les relais d'information du réseau EUROPE DIRECT*, Représentation de la Commission européenne en France, October 2004. Paris.

Commission of the European Communities (1988) *Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament on the future of rural society*, COM(88) 501 final. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (1993a) *Communication to the Commission on the information and communication policy of the Commission: A new approach*, SEC(93) 916/9. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (1993b) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee on public access to the institutions' documents*, COM(93) 191 final. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (1994) *Information and communication policy of the Commission: use of audio-visual means*, DG X, 18 January 1994. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (1995) *Communication to the Commission on great priority actions in the area of information*, SEC(95) 1672. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (2000) *Communication to the Commission on the information and communication strategy*, SEC(2000) 2099. Brussels.

- Commission of the European Communities (2001) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union*, COM(2001) 354 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2002) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an information and communication strategy for the European Union*, COM(2002) 350 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2004a) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union*, COM(2004) 196 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2005a) *General Report on the Activities of the European Union 2004*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
- Commission of the European Communities (2005c) *Communication to the Commission on action plan to improve communicating Europe by the Commission*, SEC(2005) 985 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2005d) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*, COM(2005) 494 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2006b) *Call for proposals for the establishment of structures to host the information relays of the EUROPE DIRECT Information Network*, Representation of the European Commission in the United Kingdom, January 2006. London.
- Commission of the European Communities (2006c) *White Paper on a European Communication Policy*, COM(2006) 35 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2007) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic*

- and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on communicating Europe in partnership*, COM(2007) 568 final. Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2008) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on debate Europe: building on the experience of the Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*, COM(2008) 158/4. Brussels.
- De Clercq, W., Beatson, R., Bravo, J., Dondelinger, J., Flesch, C., Guccione, S., Harnischfeger, M., Pilhan, J. and Haber, J.-P. (1993) *Reflection on Information and Communication Policy of the European Community*. Brussels.
- European Commission (2017) *Commission Decision of 18.12.2017 concerning the adoption of the 2018 work programme in the field of Communication, serving as financing decision*, C(2017) 8516 final. Brussels.
- European Commission (2018a) *2019 Management Plan of the Directorate-General for Communication*, Ares(2018) 6545554 - 19/12/2018. Brussels.
- European Commission (2018b) *Commission Decision of 13.12.2018 concerning the adoption of the 2019 work programme in the field of Communication, serving as financing decision*, C(2018) 8454 final. Brussels.
- European Commission (2019) *Commission Decision of 28.11.2019 concerning the adoption of the 2020 work programme in the field of Communication, serving as financing decision*, C(2019) 8514 final. Brussels.
- European Commission (2020a) *Standard Eurobarometer 93 - Summer 2020*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Council (2001) *Presidency Conclusions of the Laeken European Council (14 and 15 December 2001)*. Luxembourg: Bulletin of the European Union, 2001, number 12.
- European Council (2005) *Declaration by the Heads of State or Government of the Member states of the European Union on the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe*, SN 117/05. Brussels.
- Oostlander, A. M. (1993) *Report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media on the Information Policy of the European Community*. European Parliament session document DOC EN/RR/232/232259 PE 203 960 final. Brussels.

Schuijt, W. (1972) *Report on the Information Policy of the European Communities*. European Parliament Document 246/72. Brussels.

United Nations (2024) *Report of the Secretary-General on Activities of the Department of Global Communications: campaigns and country operations services*, A/AC.198/2024/2. New York.

Online sources

Commission of the European Communities (2005b) *The European Union on your doorstep: new generation of information relays launched*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_05_544 (Accessed: 26 September 2021).

Commission of the European Communities (2006a) *Europe Direct goes live in the UK*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_06_897 (Accessed: 13 November 2021).

Commission of the European Communities (2006d) *Europe Direct Information Relays*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/visit_us/relays/index_en.htm (Accessed: 03 May 2007).

Cunningham-Nelson, S. K. (2019) *Enhancing student conceptual understanding and learning experience through automated textual analysis*. Available at: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/134145/> (Accessed: 18 May 2024).

Eco, U. (2015) *Eco e as redes sociais*. Available at: <https://www.publico.pt/2015/06/15/culturaipsilon/opiniaao/eco-e-as-redes-sociais-1699017> (Accessed: 05 February 2021).

Einstein, M. (2019) *Some Amazing Statistics about Online Data Creation and Growth Rates*. Available at: <https://iorgforum.org/case-study/some-amazing-statistics-about-online-data-creation-and-growth-rates/> (Accessed: 26 November 2020).

European Commission (2020b) *Call for proposals ED-IE-2020 Selection of partners to carry out Europe Direct activities (2021-2025) in Ireland*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/other_eu_prog/ed/wp-call/call-fiche_ed-ireland-2020_en.pdf (Accessed: 20 December 2020).

European Union (2023) *Contact points in your country*. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en (Accessed: 11 January 2023).

- Eurostat (2019a) *Inequality of income distribution*. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/tespm151> (Accessed: 29 November 2019).
- Eurostat (2019b) *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/t2020_50 (Accessed: 29 November 2019).
- Eurostat (2019c) *Media use in the European Union*. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c2fb9fad-db78-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (Accessed: 02 April 2021).
- Fortuna, G. (2020) *Monnet's law*. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/future-eu/opinion/the-brief-monnet-law/> (Accessed: 01 September 2020).
- Francica, M. (2005) *Europe Direct Information Relay Service*. Available at: <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2005-07-10/newspaper-letters/Europe-Direct-Information-Relay-Service-77761> (Accessed: 04 May 2022).
- Francis (2020) *Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis on Europe*. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201022_lettera-parolin-europa.html (Accessed: 18 November 2020).
- Giscard d'Estaing, V. (2019) *Soy el hombre que inventó el Brexit*. Available at: https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/10/12/actualidad/1570913456_723818.html (Accessed: 15 October 2019).
- Gonçalves, L. S. M. (2002) *Categorização em Text Mining*. Available at: <https://teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/55/55134/tde-22062015-202748/publico/LeaSilviaMGoncalves.pdf> (Accessed: 09 December 2021).
- Hanlon, R. J. (1990) *Jargon File*. Available at: catb.org/jargon/oldversions/jarg211.txt (Accessed: 06 February 2021).
- Hearst, M. A. (1999) "Untangling Text Data Mining", *Proceedings of the 37th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*. College Park, Maryland, USA. Available at: <https://aclanthology.org/P99-1001/> (Accessed: 09 November 2021).
- Higuchi, K. (2016) *KH Coder Quantitative Content Analysis or Text Mining*. Available at: <http://kncoder.net/en/> (Accessed: 10 December 2021).

- Iskra, K. A. (2018) *Communication policy*. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/144/communication-policy> (Accessed: 08 March 2019).
- Kaváfis, K. P. (1911) *Ithaka*. Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51296/ithaka-56d22eef917ec> (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
- Loss, F. (2020) *Euroceticismo e o globalismo: narrativas sobre a União Europeia*. Available at: <http://observatorio.repri.org/2020/09/29/euroceticismo-e-o-globalismo-narrativas-sobre-a-uniao-europeia/> (Accessed: 30 September 2020).
- Marinski, V. (2023) *Employer Branding for International Human Resources in Japan. A Text Mining Study*. Available at: <https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/detail/o:1865602.pdf> (Accessed: 18 May 2024).
- Marr, B. (2018) *How Much Data Do We Create Every Day? The Mind-Blowing Stats Everyone Should Read*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2018/05/21/how-much-data-do-we-create-every-day-the-mind-blowing-stats-everyone-should-read/#19080dc360ba> (Accessed: 24 November 2020).
- Matui, N. C. (2020) *Mapeamento semântico do conceito de inovação para a Ciência da informação: uma análise Gramático-Sistêmico Funcional*. Available at: https://repositorio.ufscar.br/bitstream/handle/ufscar/12463/%5BMATUI%2C%20Nat%C3%A1lia%5DUFSCar_Mapeamento%20sem%C3%A2ntico%20do%20conceito%20de%20inova%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20para%20a%20Ci%C3%A4ncia%20da%20informa%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20uma%20an%C3%A1lise%20Gram%C3%A1tico-Sist%C3%AAmico%20Funcional.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (Accessed: 18 May 2024).
- Merchan, J. (2023) *Framing violence in times of peace talks: El Tiempo's news coverage of massacres committed during the 1999-2002 Colombian government – FARC peace process*. Available at: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0430556> (Accessed: 18 May 2024).
- Pacheco Pereira, J. (2018) *O combate civilizacional pelos livros e pela leitura*. Available at: <https://www.publico.pt/2018/03/03/culturaipsilon/opiniaao/o->

- combate-civilizacional-pelos-livros-e-pela-leitura-1805167 (Accessed: 03 March 2018).
- Pacheco Pereira, J. (2022) *Não sabe o que é o nó górdio? Se não sabe devia saber*. Available at: <https://www.publico.pt/2022/07/02/opiniao/opiniao/nao-sabe-gordio-nao-sabe-saber-2012214> (Accessed: 02 July 2022).
- Palomares González, L. (2021) *Actitud de los profesionales sanitarios ante la familia y los procedimientos invasivos en pediatría*. Available at: <https://digitum.um.es/digitum/handle/10201/112743> (Accessed: 18 May 2024).
- Plato (360 B.C.) *The Republic, Book VI*. Translated from Greek by B. Jowett, 2009. Available at: classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.7.vi.html (Accessed: 21 December 2020).
- Schuman, R. (1950) *The Schuman Declaration*. Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en (Accessed: 25 March 2019).
- Smits, A. P. (2017) *Innovating with knowledge. Making efficient use of organizational capabilities in IT projects: a case study performed for Company X*. Available at: https://pure.tue.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/70373944/Smits_2017.pdf (Accessed: 18 May 2024).
- Spinelli, A. and Rossi, E. (1941) *Towards a Free and United Europe. A draft Manifesto*. Available at: <https://www.federalists.eu/uef/library/books/the-ventotene-manifesto> (Accessed: 30 March 2019).
- Teasdale, A. and Bainbridge, T. (2012) *Laeken Declaration*. Available at: https://penguincompaniontoeu.com/additional_entries/laeken-declaration (Accessed: 23 January 2019).
- Waterford Libraries (2021) *Europe Direct Waterford*. Available at: <http://waterfordlibraries.ie/europe-direct/> (Accessed: 12 April 2022).
- Witten, I. H. (2004) *Text mining*. Available at: <https://www.cms.waikato.ac.nz/~ihw/papers/04-IHW-Textmining.pdf> (Accessed: 15 February 2023).