Przegląd **E**uropejski
Nr 3 (41), 2016

Michał Piechowicz
Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu

The use of new media in the European Commission's information policy

The significance of the new forms of communication

The Internet is continuously influencing and driving exceptional changes in the approach to communications and public relations. It is a dynamic realm that promotes the exchange of information and views. Recent years confirm this trend (Sajithra and Rajindra 2013: p. 69–74), within which new media have become one of the basic elements of creating communication strategies for brands, institutions and public figures. They enable direct interaction with message recipients such as clients, partners or fans (Davies 2007: p. 224–227). Thanks to new media tools, even small businesses have gained the possibility of creating a unique type of communication (Miotk 2007: p. 66–67). However, the effectiveness of the adequate use of social media's potential depends mainly on the efficiency of the people responsible for its development and administration (Piskorski 2011: p. 116–122).

It is worth noting from the outset that the institutions of the EU have classic, constantly updated websites. They are used by officials to efficiently inform citizens and partners, and simultaneously to promote the institution itself. To enhance the attractiveness of EU institutions' websites, they are supported by databases (of information and documents) available free of charge. The real-time nature of the Internet communication sphere of the EU's institutions, as well as the expected gain in time and the improved flow of information – all of this encourages stakeholders to use both the contact opportunities and the databases offered on the EU's specialised websites. However, these are unilateral, classic Web 1.0 actions.

In addition to these classic actions, the EU's institutions, officials and main decision-makers are increasingly involved in the realm of social media. Such activities add new

dynamics to European communication policy (Imre and Owen 2014: p. 120–134). The new technological possibilities influence the changing structure of media consumption and the use of the Internet itself. These changes drive the expansion of opportunities in the field of communication, public relations and marketing (Gati et al. 2014: p. 48–55), while also creating new challenges.

This demonstrates that the sender of a message in contemporary communication is the crucial part of the puzzle, and various forms of online presence are inspiring new models for journalists and publishers. The ability to recognise a community (Arora 2012: 599–606) created around an institution, its characteristics and expectations towards the created message, seems to be essential for the effectiveness of a communication strategy. The Internet changes the face of PR (Fabjaniak-Czerniak 2010: p. 15–17) from an orientation toward generating publicity to one of direct communication with desired groups of recipients. This necessitates not only a new approach to creating a strategy, but also a new language of communication, which leads to a re-examination two aspects of building relationships. First, it requires more openness and honesty, and second, it requires a simpler, direct vocabulary, which should be tailored to the style of the potential recipients. Such changes, and the new rules in the world of PR, can cause problems for the representatives of traditional thinking about the ways and forms of building external relationships (Kaznowski 2008: p. 159).

In such diversity of the Internet, social media require special attention. These channels are designed for two-way communication. In recent years, a group of the most popular websites worldwide has emerged, becoming valuable brands and simultaneously unquestioned leaders in providing platforms for the exchange of information and opinions. At the level of Internet communication by the EU institutions, the most visible ones are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In this article the activity of the European Commission will be analysed, as it seems that on the one hand its position in the institutional system (Maliszewska-Nienartowicz 2010: p. 135–49), and on the other the political dimension of the commissioners' activity, determine its central role in the information policy of the EU.

Methodology, literature and theory review

The subject of the analysis is the communication strategy of the European Commission and the institutional communication policy developed on this basis, which ta-

kes into account the realm of social media. Thus, the subject of research is the tools/websites used by the EC, both institutionally and individually by the commissioners themselves. In order to define the research problem, we must ask: To what extent the use of new media is now a necessity and a complementary element to the EC's classic institutional communication activities? Associated with the research problem, the research goal is to determine the role of Web 2.0 tools in the Commission's communication policy and an indication of the factors determining and influencing communication strategy. Therefore, the main research question is: How have the possibilities of social media modified the institutional communication activities of the European Commission? The main hypotheses were formulated as follows: The more social media tools are used in the communication activities of the EC, the more accessible the decision-making process and decision-makers themselves are to citizens. Another hypothesis is the assumption that the overall implementation of EC's communication strategy depends on extensive use of social media.

The main research method is analysis of data on the EC's core social media tools. In particular, this refers to the channels that commissioners use, and the number of fans (and likes). Moreover, the topics of entries/tweets were also taken into consideration, as well as their frequency, language and their adaptation to a given channel of communication. The results are mainly quantitative and partly qualitative according to usage of social media by the commissioners themselves.

In this paper the analysis of the content of web pages and social media profiles of the European Commission and commissioners was aplied. However it was reduced to its essential meanings like: most frequent form of entries, its language, main thread and mostly used visual forms and multimedia.

According to literature and theory review, Pinho and Soares (Pinho, Soares 2011: p. 116–117) studies investigates the determinants of adoption of social networks, which are different from traditional information technologies because they address collective behaviours and interdependence among community members. They built on the perspective that social networks derive from an information technology innovation and thus investigate the determinants of adoption behaviour of such platforms from an adoption of innovations point of view. Although few theories (see: Bagozzi 2007: p. 244–254) have been proposed to explain the adoption of innovations, the technology acceptance model (TAM) successfully explains the adoption of different information technology instruments (Pinho, Soares 2011: p. 117). To be more precise, the present research develops and tests a theoretical extension of the technology acceptance mo-

del (see: Lorenzo-Romero, Alarcón-del-Amo and Constantinides 2014: p. 44–55) that explains perceived usefulness and usage intentions in terms of social influence and cognitive instrumental processes (Venkatesh, Davis 200: p. 186–204).

The TAM could be useful in the discussion conducted in this article; however, its multithreading requires more analysis, in greater depth than provided for by the main foundations of this work. It is mentioned here to be kept in mind if further analysis is conducted. Hence, it seems more appropriate to apply the concept of dialogue and relational communication, which is in line with the EC's current communication strategy (European Commission 2016a, p. 6–7).

The concept of dialogue (see: Wortham 2011: p. 71–76) has its roots in a variety of disciplines: philosophy, rhetoric, psychology, and relational communication. Philosophers and rhetoricians have long considered dialogue as one of the most ethical forms of communication and as one of the central means of separating truth from falsehood (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 22). As an example, Pearson's work on dialogue as a practical public relations strategy is the earliest substantive treatment of the concept. He understood dialogue as a tool of public relations ethics, and claimed, that it is morally right to establish and maintain communication relationships with all publics affected by organisational action and, by implication, morally wrong not to do so (Kent, Taylor, 2002: 21). Moreover, according to Pearson, public relations is best conceptualised as the management of interpersonal dialectic. What is important to the practice of ethical public relations is to have a dialogic "system" rather than monologic "policies" (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 23). It is also worth to mention, that Buber (see: Buber, 1970; Buber 1985) suggested that dialogue involves an effort to recognise the value of the other, to see him/her as an end and not merely as a means to achieving a desired goal (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 22).

The field of relational communication also has considered at length the concept of dialogue as a framework for thinking about ethical and fulfilling relationships. In this aspect, Stewart focused on relationship building, while Johannesen (Johannesen 1990: p. 63–64), drawing on several intellectual traditions, identified five characteristics of dialogue: genuine, accurate empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presentness, spirit of mutual equality, and a supportive psychological climate (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 22).

Focusing on public relations sphere, dialogue sometimes is described as communicating about issues with Publics. According to Heath (see: Heath 2000: p. 69–91), dialogue consists of statement and counterstatement. Evident in this conception is the

advocacy function of organisational communication in the public policy process (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 22).

At the end of theory review dedicated to the main topic of this article, it is worth to mention Botan (Botan 1997: p. 192). He claimed that traditional approaches to public relations relegate publics to a secondary role, making them instruments for meeting organisational policy or marketing needs; whereas, dialogue elevates publics to the status of communication equal with the organisation (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 24). This remark might be treated as a vital part of the European Commission's communication policy.

In such a meaning, dialogue involves creating a climate in which others are not only encouraged to participate but their participation is facilitated. That is, meetings are open to all interested participants, conversations are held in easily accessible locations, materials are made available to all, and efforts are made to facilitate mutual understanding (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 27).

Moreover, because of the fragmentation of the mass media precipitated by an increase in the number of media outlets (mainly Internet), public relations is shifting to (or perhaps merely rediscovering) interpersonal channels of communication (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 23). Accordingly, Kent and Taylor (see: Kent, Taylor 1998: p. 321–334) addressed dialogic relationship building on the Internet and argued that dialogue is product rather than process. They viewed the symmetrical model as a procedural way to listen or solicit feedback (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 23). Similarly, Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg (Newsom, Turk, Kruckeberg 2000: p. 399) tell future practitioners, that it is virtually impossible to practice effective public relations today without using the Internet. The Internet is one place in particular where dialogue can inform relationship building. Indeed, of all of the mediated communication channels available to the public relations practitioner, the World Wide Web comes closest to the interpersonal ideal (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 31).

The websites used in the EC's communication activities

EU institutions' online communications efforts use tools including blogs, microblogs, social networks, wikis and video content. Hence, it is useful to take a closer look at the ones that seem significant in the execution of the European Commission's communication strategy and that help gather information for those participating in the decision-making process.

Blogs seem to be the easiest tools to use in communications. They have diverse characters and forms, and in the context of the use in the Commission's communication strategy most prominent is the classical text-based traditional blog (Colombo et al. 2013: p. 1–14). As the blogosphere gives more possibilities for creating effective communication than it seemed to at the beginning, the institutions and decision-makers of the EU are also making use of messages based on the idea of videoblogs – using, for example, recordings of speeches. There are also photoblogs and microblogs.

The best example of the latter is Twitter, which has revolutionised information policy in Brussels in just a few years. Twitter's buttons and widgets can be integrated with other websites or Facebook pages, to encourage users to follow a particular person or institution on Twitter. The basic sign for users is the hashtag (Szabo 2014: p. 113–130), thanks to which content is more clearly organised and connected. The attachment of keywords to an entry enables other users to search and filter tweets based on specific tags (Evans et al. 2013: p. 35–45).

Twitter offers a form of communication not presented by other social media applications. It is believed that microblogging will continue to be an essential part of integrated communications campaigns, as simplified digital media are a major element of mainstream communication today (Lawrence et al. 2014: p. 789–806). Furthermore, live tweeting is becoming more popular in Brussels and is readily used by EU institutions during events they organise. Twitter allows users to follow several simultaneous debates or conferences, and even to take part in a round of questions, without being physically present. Users can tweet a conference speaker's main points, or debatable issues, along with audience reactions and their own comments. Sharing tweets from other users taking part in the event also helps the organisers to create buzz (De Cock 2011: p. 153–155). Furthermore, communicating with a group of people consciously involved in real time may turn out to be the key element of the execution of the information policy of a particular Directorate or units of the European Commission.

Twitter users have a different approach to the creation of content and usage of Twitter's functionalities. It is believed that they have created quite specific profiles based on specific expectations, as compared to other Internet communities (Eun-Ju and YeWeon 2014: p. 296–301). Twitter fans popularise the comparison: „Facebook is an advanced tool for simple users, whereas Twitter is a simple tool for advanced ones". Therefore, the majority of microbloggers are not interested in passive consumption of content, and regard constructive interaction as a fundamental value (Saez et al. 2015: p. 1–13). This is why the platform has become a daily tool for exchanging information between

officials, politicians, journalists and PR specialists. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is actively used not only by the European Commission, but also at various levels of other EU institutions.

It can be added that the essence of a social network is not the creation of content itself, but concern for the holistic development of a platform of communication among users and engaging communities around a specific idea/person/institution, the same as within the decision-making process. One can note that a social network is a new way of cultivating non-committal relationships. Virtual bonds will surely not replace real ones, but they can complement the physical world in interesting ways, for example by building attachment or loyalty (Wyrzykowska and Sadowska 2012: p. 44). The information element is still important, though it is not dominant. Thus, by including emotional aspects in a communication strategy, social techniques utilise interpersonal relations on the Internet. Elements such as profiles of users, forums, private messaging, groups of people with similar interests, chats, file sharing, microblogs and additional applications or widgets are effective and continuously improved tools that cultivate and even strengthen these relationships. It is important that the biggest communities globally are open to all, and no fees are charged for their basic functions and use. This guarantees common access and makes them easy and fast entry points (Kaznowski 2008: p. 101).

In connection with the growing number of profiles in which followers are counted in the tens or hundreds of thousands, the everyday administration of an account is a challenge. It is all about maintaining high-quality interaction with followers, daily narration and communication that engage them (Małecki 2010: p. 66–67). Misguided actions (Ward and Wylie 2013: p. 32–34) on social networks have a direct influence on opinions and image in the real world (Tomkiewicz 2010: p. 63).

Social media in the information policy of the European Commission of José Manuel Barroso

For years, the European Commission had a problem with cohesion and identity in the communication sphere. In order to change this image by creating a consistent external message for the institution and implement the concept of dialogue, the EC tried to connect with citizens through on-line debates, an extended process of consultation and promotional campaigns (Kociubiński 2012: p. 539–562). Of course, the institution has a classic website; every commissioner or General Directorate has one

as well. Moreover, dedicated websites are created for special projects (Patrut 2014: p. 245–250). These elements are crucial, but they can be compared to a labyrinth, making it hard to create a cohesive communication identity for the institution. Such a maze also complicates the effective communication of information, as well as the actual process of locating information searched for by interested parties[1]. It must be noted that the Commissioners rarely participated interactively, and official channels did not include innovative websites and social media in their communication policy. It was only in the second term of the Barroso Commission that Web 2.0 started to be treated with much greater commitment. EC officials observed that this gave them greater opportunities to inform and engage parties in multilateral dialogue (de Cock 2011: p. 163). Therefore, the social media strategies of EU institutions (Europan Commission 2016b: p. 6–13). and the EC in particular, and the tools they used, can be seen as an addition to the classic activities.

Determination to change the institution's form of communication with stakeholders had been expressed in 2010, when the editors and administrators of the Web wrote an open letter to the then-President of the EC. They suggested the new Commission include socialplatforms, both individually and in its institutional communication strategy (De Cock 2011: p. 170–172). This appeal became the first step to creating a complex plan of communication for an institution that keeps up with technological progress (Łukasik-Duszyńska 2014: p. 198–205). The approach was to give timely information on official positions, statements and press releases, but also to give condensed and thorough information concerning the EU's policies, programmes and decision-making process. The success of these activities was dependent on launching the new strategy consistently and cohesively.

Despite the instructions from administrators and the actions of the institution's officials, social media platforms were not always used by the most important decision-makers in the second Barroso Commission. Interestingly, as many as six commissioners did not use these opportunities at all, and the remaining 21 selectively chose social networks and included them in their individual activities. Twitter was the most popular among members of the European Commission in 2009–2014 (used by 19 commissioners). Other websites were less popular, including Facebook (used by 10 commissioners) and YouTube (three commissioners). Some of them also had consistently updated blogs (six commissioners). However, in comparison with the blogs run by politicians at the country level, the "European" ones were mostly not in-

[1] See: http://www.epdigitaltrends.eu/s2011/results-2011 (11.06.2016).

teractive and were much less "spontaneous". Communication on the commissioners' blogs was rather formalised and frequently based on official analyses and statements. To sum up the Commission's 2009–2014 term, only the President of the EC and 10 commissioners included a Web 2.0 website, or a similar tool, in their communication strategies (Piechowicz 2013: p. 269).

In this context, Catherine Ashton – then the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – merits special attention. She was not active on social media, though at that time this decision seemed justifiable. The European External Action Service (EEAS) was and remains very active on social media, and has several dozen profiles worldwide. For instance, the EU's delegations in various countries ran a total of 46 profiles on Facebook in that period (including in Afghanistan, Belarus, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Brazil and Ukraine). There were 16 active accounts on Twitter, mainly in big third countries, or run by delegations to international institutions (for example the U.S., the Philippines, Brazil and the EU delegation at the UN). There were also eight profiles on Flickr, six accounts on YouTube and one each on Vimeo and on the Chinese websites Sina Weibo and Tencent Weibo[2]. The high degree of specialisation and regionalisation of social-media communication justified the lack of similar actions at the executive level of the EEAS (Piechowicz 2013: p. 270). This approach changed with the arrival of the new Commission in 2014, when the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, along with other members of the Commission, started to execute the institutional communication strategy.

Social media in the information policy of the European Commission of Jean-Claude Juncker

Since 2014, the new EC has fully adhered to the social media rules in „The EU Internet Handbook". Directorate-General For Communication (DG COMM) is responsible for these actions (Thiel 2008: p. 342–349).

The Commission highlights three reasons for using social media. First is communication on political priorities: delivering official announcements, press releases and statements consistently and coherently. This communication will be led "on behalf of the Commission" by a designated group of staff members of the Social Media Network**.**

[2] See: http://eeas.europa.eu/social_media/index_en.htm (21.06.2016).

The second purpose is for a stakeholder to lead communication related to a particular campaign. The purposes of this type of communication include informing citizens, sharing experiences, promoting policies and campaigns, and dealing with other stakeholders. This form of communication is conducted by the director-general of a DG, a service or an agency, in close co-ordination with DG COMM and in co-operation with the Social Media Network. Social media provide scope for interaction and involvement with interested groups on EU-related themes and activities, but each DG has to take into account the specific policy, its context, target audiences and available resources.

The final reason for using social media is private use by staff members. Active users should note in their profiles that statements and opinions are personal, and do not represent the official standpoint of the Commission, if their employer is mentioned in the profile.

Commission officials' participation in social media is subject to the Staff Regulations and the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour (European Commission 2010: p 3–7), just as participation in other media is. DG COMM and DG for Human Resources and Security have set particular guidelines[3] for all the staff on the use of the social media[4].

Table 1. The use of social media by Juncker's European Commission

Commissioner	**Domain**	**Twitter - followers**	**Facebook - fans**	**Blog**	**Flickr**	**LinkedIn**	**YouTube**
Jean Claude-Juncker	President	261 000	47 300	-	-	-	-
Kristalina Georgieva (Vice)	Budget & Human Resources	82 500	127 600	**x**	-	-	-
Federica Mogherini (Vice)	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	227 000	62 000	**x**	-	-	-
Frans Timmermans (Vice)	Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law	34 400	219 000	-	-	-	-

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/docs/guidelines_social_media_en.pdf (21.05.2016)
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/go_live/web2_0/index_en.htm (21.06.2016).

Maroš Šefčovič (Vice)	Energy Union	20 700	6 200	**x**	-	-	-
Valdis Dombrovskis (Vice)	Euro & Social Dialogue	58 500	1700 *friends	-	-	-	-
Jyrki Katainen (Vice)	Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness	26 600	5500	**x**	-	-	-
Andrus Ansip (Vice)	Digital Single Market	27 400	-	**x**	-	-	-
Karmenu Vella	Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	13 500	9 200	**x**	-	-	-
Christos Stylianides	Humanitarian Aid &Crisis Management	15 400	7 800	-	-	-	-
Carlos Moedas	Research, Science and Innovation	14 800	7 200	**x**	-	**x**	-
Vytenis Andriukaitis	Health & Food Safety	8 600	6 450	**x**	-	-	-
Pierre Moscovici	Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs	163 000	33 000	**x**	-	-	-
Věra Jourová	Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality	9 200	=	-	-	-	-
Violeta Bulc	Transport	16 200	5 100	**x**	-	-	-
Marianne Thyssen	Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility	15 300	4 250	-	-	-	-
Neven Mimica	International Co-operation & Development	14 300	1850	**x**	-	-	-
Phil Hogan	Agriculture & Rural Development	14 300	1650	**x**	-	-	-
Corina Crețu	Regional Policy	10 900	21 500	**x**	-	-	-
Günther H. Oettinger	Digital Economy & Society	38 100	-	**x**	-	-	-
Miguel Arias Cañete	Climate Action & Energy	32 500	-	**x**	-	-	-
Cecilia Malmström	Trade	46 700	11 700	**x**	-	-	-
Margrethe Vestager	Competition	149 000	50 250		-	-	-

Johannes Hahn	European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations	24 800	-	**x**	-	-	-
Tibor Navracsics	Education, Culture, Youth and Sport	11 400	-	-	-	-	-
Jonathan Hill	Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union	9 450	-	-	-	-	-
Dimitris Avramopoulos	Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship	14 900	-	-	**x**	-	**x**
Elżbieta Bieńkowska	Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs	8 000	-	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Source: own study (data as of May 2016).

The profiles of the most important personages in the European Commission can be analysed in terms of their compliance with the guidelines contained in the „EU Internet Handbook". Juncker's message on Facebook is mainly based on photographs from his daily work, occasional quotations or entries connected with events that are important for given nations of the EU. The purpose of the latter is to present Juncker's involvement in important events, showing him experiencing both happy and difficult moments in the company of other Europeans. Notably, Juncker also posts video materials on his fanpage: short statements, sometimes lasting just a few seconds. Juncker uses Twitter to provide information on his daily activities, and often retweets (Lux-Wigand 2011: p. 215–220; Barthel et al. 2015: p. 13–16) entries from other commissioners that he considers important. Significantly, the video materials placed on the Facebook page are also tweeted. English is the dominant language, but some entries are in French or German. If an event concerns a specific Member State, the tweet appears in the national language. One example is a tweet in Polish from 1 December 2014 on the occasion of Donald Tusk's election as President of the European Council. Juncker tweeted in Italian on 31 August 2014 when Federica Mogherini was designated as a candidate for High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Juncker tweets four to six times a week, a moderate frequency.

Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans runs his Facebook fanpage in Dutch. The message is less formal, featuring pictures from his travels and personal comments concerning his destinations, including smartphone photos. He also includes pictures from working meetings and even videos recorded during sports events he attends. Timmermans uses Twitter, especially to tweet pictures and information related to

his official participation in events, joining the information buzz. It is difficult to determine a typical frequency for Timmermans: there are times when he posts five to seven tweets or even more on a single day, and then tweets only sporadically for several days. His Twitter profile is in English, and entries in Dutch are rare.

The fanpage of Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a vice president of the Commission, usually features reports and photographs of official meetings, combined with very short comments. Twitter seems to be an extended version of her fanpage, as the tweets are generally only pictures from meetings combined with a few hashtags. Although there are more pictures than on Facebook, the message is rather monotonous and un-engaging. Mogherini often retweets pictures about her activities from other users. It appears that Mogherini doesn't make a conscientious effort to implement the guidelines on Web 2.0 communication. Two reasons for this approach can be pointed out. First, as in the case of her predecessor, Catherine Ashton, is the scope of the accounts run by the European External Action Service itself. The second reason is the very active social media presence of EEAS Spokesperson Maja Kocijancic with nearly 18500 followers. Her Twitter feed includes announcements, pictures and interviews related to Mogherini's everyday activities as well as the EEAS itself, posted with high frequency. Thus, if Mogherini adopted a similar formula, it would duplicate Kocijancic's efforts.

Commission Vice President Kristalina Georgieva posts Bulgarian-related information on her fanpage in her mother tongue, while posts on European matters are either bilingual, or only in English. The message is not always formal; she also posts about culture and sport. Longer statements and comments concerning EU policy appear sporadically, as do video materials, most often promoting actions by EU institutions. The Commissioner's Twitter page includes comments on the Commission's current proceedings, as well as the activities Georgieva herself manages. Messages are short and high-frequency: several tweets a day. As opposed to Georgieva's Facebook page, her Twitter feed is almost exclusively in English, and tweets about Bulgarian matters appear only rarely.

Vice President Andrus Ansip uses only one social network, Twitter. Thus, the frequency of the tweets is high – several each day, mostly concerning his on-going activities. However, the character of the narration is quite different, as Ansip's message is framed in terms of the benefits citizens can reap from a particular action.

Vice President Maroš Šefčovič's entries on Facebook are mainly in Slovak; bilingual English/Slovak entries are rare. They concern formal and informal meetings, accompanied by many photographs of the commissioner, and links to the programmes and

activities of EU institutions. Materials include family photographs and video materials connected with public campaigns. The page seems like a classic profile on FB, on which information from different fields of the person's life interweave, both more and less important. In turn, Twitter seems to be the tool Šefčovič uses to provide information related to his official position, which he does in English.

The case of Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis is interesting, as he does not use an official Facebook fanpage, and links from the institutional websites of the European Commission connect to his private profile. This page features English entries concerning EU matters, and Latvian items on national policy. Dombrovskis posts pictures and information from work meetings, but with only slightly more than 1700 friends, the potential for interaction and discussion is limited. The commissioner's Twitter profile, on the other hand, is similar to those of other commissioners. It is run in English, and less frequently features Latvian entries. Therefore, it can be concluded that Dombrovskis uses tweets mainly as a way of communication and informing on his action at the EU level.

Vice President Jyrki Katainen uses Twitter, on which one can find a report from his everyday activities, mainly pictures from meetings and a few words of summary. Considering this formula, the high frequency of his tweets is not surprising, often reaching five or even seven per day. His Facebook fanpge is based mainly on narrative part, with descriptions of Katainen activities. Posts are supported by few photographs or infographics. Usual language is English, however some posts also appears in Finnish.

In executing a communication strategy using social media tools as described above, the President and Vice Presidents of the European Commission have set a de facto information policy that is followed by the remaining members of the Commission. It should be pointed out that while their actions are similar in their basic nature, each of the commissioners gives an individual character to his or her profiles.

Photographs are the unifying and the most popular element of all the profiles: both official ones and those presenting the daily work of the commissioners. Here Migration, Home Affairs & Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos deserves a special mention: he also runs a Flickr profile on which he has posted nearly 3000 photographs showing him at official and informal meetings.

There is no single rule for commissioners' choice of language in social media. For instance, Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström alternates between Swedish and English in her Twitter and Facebook entries. Economic & Financial Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici runs Facebook in French, and entries on Twitter are often both

in French and in English. Justice, Consumer & Gender Equality Commissioner Věra Jourová uses only Czech on her fanpage. In turn, her tweets are divided depending on the content: those concerning European matters are in English, while those on events in Prague are always in Czech. Similarly, Regional Policy Commissioner Corina Crețu uses English on Facebook for European matters, and her mother tongue for Romanian issues, while tweeting only in English. Research, Science & Innovation Commissioner Carlos Moedas has no apparent rule and switches between English and Portuguese, just as Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager does between English and Danish. Education, Culture, Youth & Sport Commissioner Tibor Navracsics stands out by not using his mother tongue, delivering all of his messages in English.

In terms of the frequency of entries, the leaders among the commissioners in using Web 2.0 tools are Moscovici, Mimic, Bulc and Crețu, who posts as many as seven or eight tweets a day. Twitter is a basic tool of communication for Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan, who uses it as often as Crețu. Although he has a fanpage, it seems Hogan's message on Facebook is very formalised, with about three entries per week – a stark contrast to his activity on Twitter. In turn, Employment & Social Affairs Commissioner Marianne Thyssen has the lowest frequency of fanpage entries among all commission members: just a few entries each month, and the message seems to be somewhat forced.

Commissioners use video materials variously – both their own materials and those they retweet, such as materials promoting specific institutions' campaigns and events. In this aspect, Environment Commissioner Carmenu Vella stands out, using video materials on his fanpage more often than others do. However, the unquestioned leader is Avramopoulos, who has a dedicated channel on YouTube, featuring many of his interviews and statements at conferences. At the other end of the spectrum is Thyssen, whose profiles are devoid of video.

Compared with others, Vestager leaves something to be desired, too often posting the same information and pictures on both of his Facebook and Twitter profiles, which doesn't seem to be a professional approach.

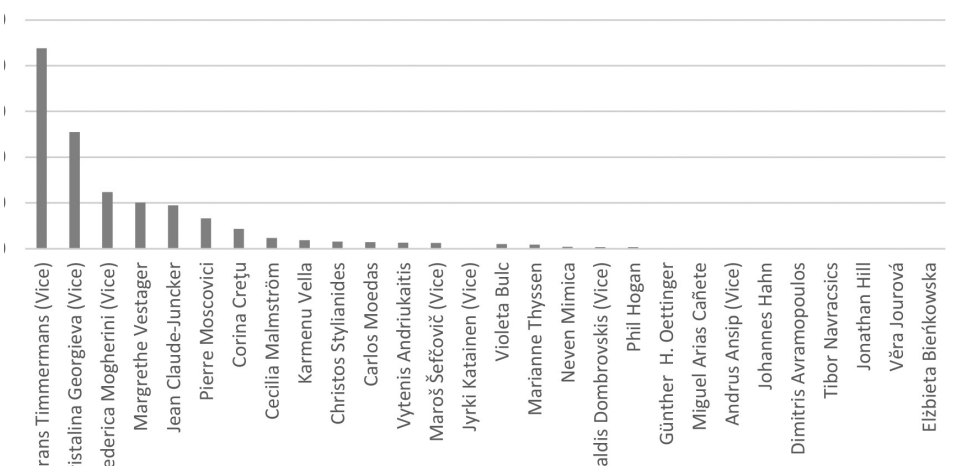
It is interesting to note that since 2006 the European Commission has also had its own institutional channel on YouTube, called EUTube[5], as well as the Internet television channel Eux.tv. EUTube aims to inform about the programs and activities of the European Commission. Published material are dedicated videos, which in simplified form are intended to explain the nature and purpose of these activities. These are ma-

[5] https://www.youtube.com/user/eutube (data dostępu).

inly short films based on the structure: goal – action – effects on society and the EU as a whole. Another form of video materials are statements and short interviews with members of the European Commission or the staff of the Directorate General responsible for specific programs and actions that are currently promoted and actively communicated to the public.

Looking at numbers of Facebook fans and Twitter followers shows that a group of commissioners clearly stand out from the rest in terms of engagement in their message. Timmermans and Georgieva are the clear leaders on Facebook. This does not seem to be because they execute the Commission's communication strategy more effectively, but because they involve many more of their compatriots, by devoting more space to national policy than other commissioners do, and posting more spontaneous commentary on current events. Moreover, the message is diversified by various types of content. And, crucially, to a large extent they are run in the commissioners' respective mother tongues.

Graph 2. EU Commissioner's fans on Facebook

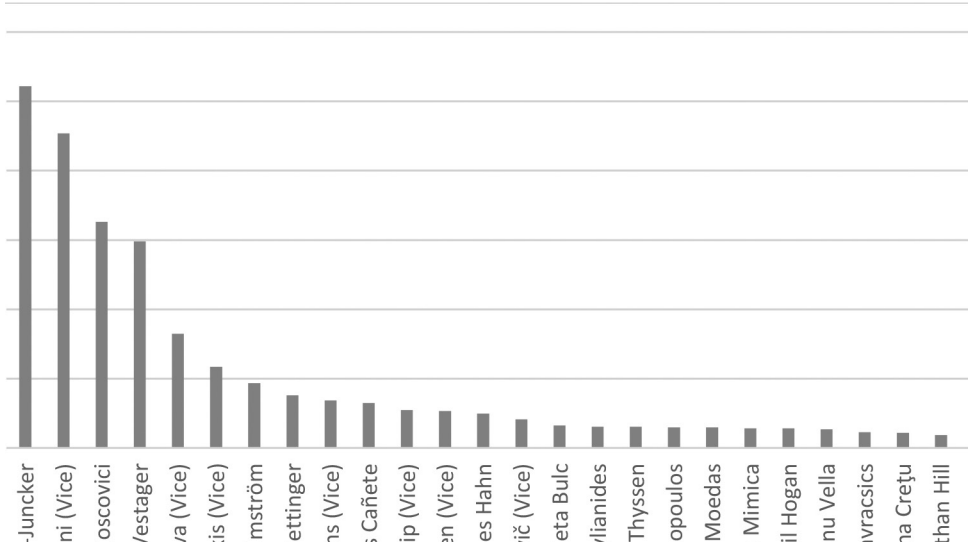


Source: Own study (Facebook data as of May 2016).

Numbers of Twitter followers show a different pattern, with a clear group of six or seven favourite commissioners. Recognising the importance of Twitter as a foundation of the Web 2.0 tools in the EC's new communication strategy, this group can be called the information "locomotives" of the body. However, in contrast to FB, the attractiveness of the profiles of personages like Juncker, Mogherini, Moscovici, Georgieva, and

Vestager may result from interest in information concerning their respective portfolios. This has made Twitter look like a more professional and valuable source of information from the EC than other social media tools, attracting attention by the usefulness of its entries.

Graph 3. EU commissioner's followers on Twitter



Source: Own study (Twitter data as of May 2016).

Little attention has been paid in this study to the blogs run by the Commissioners, as they are not particularly attractive or engaging narratives. Furthermore, they often copy information that can be easily found using the social media tools that have been discussed here.

Conclusion

As this analysis demonstrates, the use of social media is now an essential part of the EC's communication policy. Both the institution and individual commissioners make use of the most popular services, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, while certain individuals use others such as LinkedIn and Flickr. Nevertheless, according to research problem, social media remain a complementary element to classic institutional com-

munication based on websites and blogs. Such conclusion is just partly in line with the second hypothesis which stated, that the overall implementation of EC's communication strategy depends on extensive use of social media.

Meeting one of the research goals, this analysis draws a conclusion concerning factors and determinants influencing the effectiveness of EC communication strategy. The EC's effectiveness in the social media sphere is related to the proper engagement of the sender in the creation of content. Occasional (1–2 times a week), non-engaging entries certainly will not guarantee communication success[6]. Another factor in the effectiveness of social media dialogue would be correct identification of the community. In the case of Facebook, communication success might be achieved by those Commissioners who bring together both European and national issues on their fanpages. In addition to political events in Brussels, they also add entries concerning events, and they comment on the national sphere. In addition, such content obtains better results when the language is more natural (as opposed to official statements) and varied, e.g. use of English concerning European policies, and national politics in the mother tongue.

The effectiveness of Twitter is linked with other determinants. The more professional orientation of communities centred around Commissioners on microblogs means that the content will focus on European issues and policies associated with his/her function in the Commission. The most commonly used language is English, and interestingly, the popularity of profiles on Twitter is also linked with the nature and significance of the role that the Commissioner plays on the EC. This is further confirmation of the importance of Twitter as a professional source of information at the EU level. The frequency of entries is also an important determinant of success on Twitter. A few entries per day are a natural level for this environment. But crucially, if such entries are truly important, a pace of even 5–7 a day is accepted. On the contrary, when nothing really important is going on, creating content that is irrelevant for a community of followers might lower the commissioner's credibility and his/her communication effectiveness. It is important to keep in mind that Twitter users are more sophisticated than other social media communities.

To sum up, when it comes to effectiveness of EC's social media communication policy it involves creation of entries that meet fans / followers expectations. It must include proper engagement in recognition of community gathered around dedicated profile. Whether this community is focused on national or European matters? Is it focused on the personality and political affiliation and activities of commissioner or is more

[6] Success measured by number of fans, likes, comments and shares.

interested in function and role he/she holds in the European Commission? Effectivnes is also considered by frequency of entries and its real-time publishing.

While still having on mind the dialogic assumptions, it is important to note that dialogue is not a panacea. For instance, a dialogic approach cannot force an organisation to behave ethically, nor is it even appropriate in some circumstances, as dialogue can be put to both moral and immoral ends. Gunson and Collins (see: Gunson, Collins 1997: p. 277–300), for example, point out, that just because an organisation and its publics create „dialogic" communication structures, does not mean that they are behaving dialogically. If one partner subverts the dialogic process through manipulation, disconfirmation, or exclusion, then the end result will not be dialogic. Dialogue is not a process or a series of steps. Rather, it is a product of ongoing communication and relationships (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 24). What is more, such a procedural approach to dialogic public relations involves creating organisational mechanisms for facilitating dialogue (Kent, Taylor 2002: p. 32).

In order to provide information about their daily official activities using the concept of dialogue, the most important people in the EC tend to prefer Twitter and Facebook, using other social media tools only sporadically. The message on these sites is based on photographs from official meetings, working meetings, statements from conferences, links to press articles, and video materials that are mainly short statements by the commissioners. Links to Commission press releases and information about campaigns and actions related to the EU's programs are also used.

Answerig the main hypotheses, social media services, particularly Twitter, have prompted a re-evaluation of the sense and range of communication plans at the supranational level, including the EC level. Thanks to the new tools, bridges connecting citizens and the broadly understood environment of the decision-making process with officials and decision-makers have started to be more available (Timonen 2013: p. 102–105). This makes democracy real by increasing public participation during the period between elections (Vesnic-Alujevic 2012: p. 466–470) and creates a more direct form of dialogue, in which citizens can join political discussions with decision-makers at any moment (De Zuniga, Shahin 2015: p. 78-87). Thanks to techniques for filtering "information noise", the thoughtful observer can combine pieces of information that seemed to be unrelated, which then, logically and sensibly combined, may give a different view of important issues. Furthermore, a clear advantage of the European Commission's communication rules is that social media are now a complement to conventional informational operations. These are platforms that 24/7, giving a constantly updated look at

what is taking place in Brussels. This becomes all the more significant when we observe that many politicians, journalists, activists, scientists and others taking part in the decision-making and political processes at the EU level make use of Web 2.0 websites in a fully transparent way.

Answering the research question, all remarks and statements based on this analysis of the case of the EC prove that an intelligent institutional/individual communication strategy, which includes social media sphere, raises communication activities to a higher level of dialogic communication, and increases the use of new technology. Such an approach also influences the frequency and suitability of entries, which helps to assemble a community that is more engaged than its predecessors in the traditional Web 1.0 sphere.

References

ARORA Payal (2012), Typology of Web 2.0 spheres: Understanding the cultural dimensions of social media spaces, "Current Sociology", vol. 60(5).

BARTHEL Michael, MOON Ruth, MARI William (2015), Who retweets whom? How digital and legacy journalists interact on Twitter. New York.

BAGOZZIA Richard (2007), The Legacy of the Technology Acceptance Model and a Proposal for a Paradigm Shift, "Journal of the Association for Information Systems", vol. 8(4).

BOTAN Carl (1997), Ethics in strategic communication campaigns: the case for a new approach to public relations, "Journal of Business Communication", vol. 34.

BUBER Martin (1970), I and Thou, New York.

BUBER Martin (1985), Between Man and Man, New York.

CLAMEN Michael (2005), Lobbing i jego sekrety, Warszawa.

COLOMBO Barbara, ANTONIETTI Alessandro, SALA Robert, CARAVITA Simona (2013), Blog content and structure, cognitive style and metacognition, "International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction", vo. 9(3).

DAVIS Anthony (2007), Public Relations, Warszawa.

DE COCK Caroline (2011), iLobby.eu, Delft.

DE ZUNIGA Homero Gil, SHAHIN Saif (2015), Social Media and Their Impact on Civic Participation, in: Homero Gil De Zuniga (ed.) New Technologies and Civic Engagement. New York.

DUTTA Soumitra (2010), What's your personal social media strategy?, "Harvard Business Review", vo. 11.

EUN-JUN Lee, YE WEON Kim (2014), How Social is Twitter Use? Affiliative tendency and communication competence as predictors, "Computers in Human Behavior", vol. 39.

EVANS Angelica, TWOMEY Jane, TALAN Scot (2011), Twitter as a Public Relations Tool, "Public Relations Journal", vol. 5(1).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2000), Code of Good Administrative Behaviour, http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/code/_docs/code_en.pdf.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2016a), Communication to the Commission – Synergies and Efficiencies in the Commission - New Ways of Working, SEC(2016) 170, http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/2/2016/EN/SEC-2016-170-F1-EN-MAIN.PDF.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2016b), Strategic Plan 2016-2020 DG Communication, http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/amp/doc/comm_sp_2016-2020_en.pdf.

FABJANIAK-CZERNIAK Katarzyna (2010), Nowe zasady działalności PR, in: Anna Miotk (ed.) Social Media Manual – raport 2010, http://annamiotk.pl/social-media-manual-raport (11.05.2016).

GATI Mirko, CSORDAS Tamas, MARKOS-KUJBUS Eva (2014), The Attributes of Social Media as a Strategic Marketing Communication Tool, "Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly", vol. 4(1).

GUNSON Darryl, COLLINS Chik (1997), From the I to the We: discourse ethics, identity, and the pragmatics of partnership in the west of Scotland, "Communication Theory", vol. 7.

HEATH Robert (2000), A rhetorical perspective on the value of public relations: crossroads and pathways toward concurrence, "Journal of Public Relations Research" 12(1).

http://www.epdigitaltrends.eu/s2011/results-2011(21.05.2016).

http://eeas.europa.eu/social_media/index_en.htm (21.05.2016).

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/docs/guidelines_social_media_en.pdf (21.05.2016).

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/go_live/web2_0/index_en.htm (21.05.2016).

http://www.youtube.com/user/eutube (21.05.2016).

IMRE Robert, OWEN Stephen (2014), Twitter-ized Revolution: Extending the Governance Empire, in: Saba Bebawi, Diana Bossio (eds), Social Media and the Politics of Reportage: The Arab Spring. Sydney.

JOHANNESEN Richard (1990), Ethics in Human Communication, Illinois.

KAZNOWSKI Dominik (2008), Nowy Marketing. Warszawa.

KENT Michael, TAYLOR Maureen (2002), Toward a dialogic theory of public relations, "Public Relations Review", vol. 28.

KENT Michael, TAYLOR Maureen (1998), Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web, "Public Relations Review", vol. 24(3).

KOCIUBIŃSKI Jakub (2012), Publiczna recepcja Unii Europejskiej i integracji europejskiej a skuteczność polityki informacyjnej realizowanej przez instytucje unijne, in: Magdalena Tabernacka, Aleksandra Szadok-Bratuń (eds), Public Relations w sferze publicznej – wizerunek i komunikacja. Warszawa.

LAWRENCE Regina, MOLYNEUX Logan, CODDINGTON Mark, HOLTON Avery (2014), Tweeting Conventions,"Journalism Studies", vol. 15(6).

LORENZO-ROMERO Carlota, ALARCON-DEL-AMO Maria-del-Carmon, CONSTANTINIDES Efthymios (2014), Determinants of Use of Social Media Tools in Retailing Sector, "Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research", vol. 9(1).

LUX-WIGAND Dianne (2011), Tweets and retweets: Twitter takes wing in government, "Information Polity", vol. 16(3).

ŁUKASIK-DUSZYŃSKA Monika (2014), Facebook. The European Union on Social Networking Sites, in: Grażyna Habrajska (ed.), Discussing Communication 1, Symbolic Communication Strategies. Łódź.

MALISZEWSKA-NIENARTOWICZ Justyna (2010), System instytucjonalny i prawny UE. Toruń.

MAŁECKI Marcin (2010), Czarna lista zaniechań, „Marketing w praktyce", vol. 6.

MIOTK Anna (2007), PR online mierzalnie, „Marketing w praktyce", vol. 10.

NEWSOM Doug, TURK Judy VanSlyke, KRUCKEBERG Dean (2000), This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations, California.

NOWAK Jakub (2009), Zrób to sam – Web 2.0 jako sfera politycznej aktywności internautów, in: Marek Jeziński (ed.), Nowe media i polityka, Toruń.

PATRUR Monica (2014), Facebook Dispute Concerning the Presidency, in: Bogdan Patrut, Monica Patrut (eds), Social Media in Politics, New York – Dordrecht – London.

PIECHOWICZ Michał (2013), Lobbing gospodarczy w procesie decyzyjnym UE, Torun.

PINHO Jose Carlos Martins Rodrigues, SOARES Ana Maria (2011), Examining the technology acceptance model in the adoption of social networks, "Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing", vol. 5(2/3).

PISKORSKI Mikolaj (2011), Social strategies that work, "Harvard Business Review", vol. 89(11).

SAEZ Alejandro Martin, DE ROSARIO Arturo Haro, DEL CARMEN CABA PEREZ Maria (2015), Using Twitter for Dialogic Communication: Local Government Strategies in the European Union, "Local Government Studies", vol. 41(3).

SAJITHRA Karin, RAINDRA Paul (2013), Social Media – History and Components, "Journal of Business and Management", vol. 7(1).

SZABO Gabriella (2014), GOVCOM 2.0: The Role of Web 2.0 in communicating EU Presidency, in: A. Stepinska (ed.) Media and Communication in Europe, Berlin.

TIMONEN Antti (2013), Digital democracy in the EU, "European View", vol. 12(1).

TOMKIEWICZ Arkadiusz (2010), Panele strategicznych aktywności, „Marketing w praktyce", vol. 6.

THIEL Markus (2008), European Public Spheres and the EU's Communication Strategy: From Deficits to Policy Fit, "Perspectives on European Politics and Society", vol. 9.

VESNIC-ALUJEVIC Lucia (2012), Political participation and web 2.0 in Europe: A case study of Facebook, "Public Relations Review", vol. 38(3).

VENKATESH Viswanath, DAVIS Fred (2000), A Theoretical Extension of the Technology Acceptance Model: Four Longitudinal Field Studies, "Management Science", vol. 46(2).

WARD Anne-Marie, WYLIE Judith (2014), Social Media a Double-Edged Sword, "Accountancy Ireland", vol. 46(4).

WORTHAM Stanton (2012), Wondering About Dialogic Theory and Practice, "Journal of Russian and East European Psychology", vol. 49(2).

WYRZYKOWSKA Iwona, SADOWSKA Magdalena (2012), Marka, która będzie wszędzie, „Marketing w praktyce", vol. 6.