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How efficient is the EU's method of localised communication in Britain?

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Abstract

This paper examines the effectiveness of the EU's information and communication policies on a local scale. The desire to sympathise and resonate with local citizens has been an objective for the EU since it became both an economic and political entity in 1992, challenging its original status of creation as a purely economic entity. Therefore my research is two-fold consisting of a critical review of EU information and communication documents and a series of interviews with local EU official representatives who are charged with the implementation of the EU's information and communication agenda, or who are representational of the European cause. The aim here is to decipher how the local EU officials perceive the EU in terms of its democratic legitimacy, transparency and overall relationship with its citizens as initiated in the EU's official policy documents.

Drawing on these findings this paper concludes that the ideal set out in the official policy documents differ to what exists in reality and subsequently that communication remains an objective the EU has not achieved within Britain, arguing further that perhaps the EU should have remained purely economic in existence.

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Introduction Chapter

‘What happened to our democracy?’¹

The normative value of a democracy resides with the government’s investment in its public to achieve legitimate decision-making.² Therefore uninterrupted political communication between these sets of actors is vital for democracy to prevail. This concept of communication is defined by Dahl to be ‘the degree to which information is distributed equally across a public and presented in ways that make it easy for ordinary citizens to assimilate and respond’.³ And it is this prerequisite that calls for citizens to actively engage, deliberate and invest themselves into the politics that govern their lives that makes the concept of communication so equitable. Accordingly the local dimension of politics plays a key part in allowing democracy to achieve its goal of impartiality, since this is where political opinion is inspired and applied.

However, the complexities of this democratic process are intensified when politics and political concerns become transnational. This is a problem that has plagued the European Union (EU) since birth, and hence has caused a deficit in democratic functioning as assumed by its normative value. Subsequently European communication has been of concern in order to achieve a truly legitimate and deliberated form of European governance, which recognises this essential prerequisite for a democratic order. Thus the importance of citizen participation can be seen from the outset, and is an objective the European Commission has clearly committed to.⁴ Therefore, in hope of inspiring citizens of the EU to deliberate on European politics, the communication of Europe must exist at a localised level, since this is where the citizens live and resonate with politics. Indeed, the efforts made by the EU to localise its political agenda and engage its citizens are of fundamental concern for the EU to

¹ A quote taken from a reference made by interviewee MEP Godfrey Bloom in consideration of the EU’s democratic principles.

² "democracy n." in: Soanes, Catherine and Angus Stevenson, *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 12th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

³ Robert A Dahl in: Lance W Bennett and Robert M Entman, *Mediated Politics: Communication in the future of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 470.

⁴ Asimina Michailidou, ‘Constitutionalisation’ of the European public sphere-EU public communication, institutional culture and civil society’, *EurPolCom Working Paper Series, 16/08* (2008), p. i.

be perceived as legitimate in its decision-making procedure, and, as the first supranational political entity the world has seen.

In light of this the following study will look to answer the overarching question: how efficient is the EU's method of localised communication in Britain? Accordingly Chapter 1 will explore the explicit value of the EU's deficit in democracy thereby defining how local politics are important to the notion of deliberation. Chapter 2 will outline my approach to research. Chapter 3 looks into how the EU has begun to define its approach to communication on a regional scale via its official policy documents, and Chapter 4 will challenge this approach. Chapter 4 is the study of a regional locality that has been utilised to discover how the tools of EU democracy function in direct relation to its citizens. My final Chapter determines how much the EU has achieved in terms of creating a viable communication framework and recommends what could further be done in order to achieve this goal.

Exploring the ‘Democratic Deficit’

The EU is a unique hybrid supranational community that unites independent governments under a political and economic partnership of mutual benefit.⁵ Subsequently this allows Europeans to participate in international politics as a singular, and more commanding, entity. However, the EU has neither blueprint to follow nor any expectancy to conform to. Therefore it is unknown in its complexities, and for that reason its transparency or ability to communicate itself is vital for it to gain legitimacy and acceptance by both its Member States and its citizens.

Yet, it appears this has been the EU’s greatest downfall. The EU communication strategy, or lack thereof, has formed the advent of a ‘democratic deficit’ within EU polity. Since its citizens appear not to have a European political consciousness nor a platform to engage in continuous dialogue with European Institutions. It is the case that the EU does not have a relationship with the public that remotely compares to that of the nation-state and thus the EU is perhaps considered to be an illegitimate entity in national affairs.⁶ It is for this reason that EU communication politics have been forced to the forefront of debate.

Therefore I intend to explore the ‘democratic deficit’ in all its principles and the theoretical arguments that have been incited in response to this problem. The key concepts that will take precedence in my study are; the complexities surrounding attainment of democratic legitimacy for the EU, how the ideals of a ‘European Public Sphere’ (EPS) and citizen deliberation can assist the quest for a more democratic EU and how the EU has set out to address its deficit in communication. Furthermore this debate will be placed into context by observing how the EU suffers not only from the deficit of democratic functioning but how this is unlikely to be an easy issue to remedy in light of the UK’s supposedly ‘eurosceptic’ nature. Subsequently I will explore the following questions with the view of addressing themes to be justified in

⁵ Majone in: David Ward, *The European Union democratic deficit and the public sphere: an evaluation* (Oxford: IOS Press, 2002), p.3. And: Europa: ‘Building Europe through Treaties’, *EUROPA > Summaries of EU legislation > Institutional affairs > Building Europe through the treaties*

⁶Cristiano Bee, ‘Evolution and structure of the EU’s information and communication policy: An overview on European Commission’s official documents, *Jean Monnet Working Papers* (2006), pp. 1-27 (19)

this paper: Can the EU gain democratic legitimacy? What is the remedy for the EU's democratic deficit? How has the issue of communication established itself in the EU? And, will the UK's 'eurosceptic' persona in EU relations hinder integration?

A consistent theme in question considers how efficient the EU's mode of communication has been on a local level, since the local dimension of European politics can be defined as the path towards a successful democracy.⁷ Indeed, for democracy to occur the EU needs to be contested by its citizens, therefore they need to be informed about Europe and able to relate to it personally. This is why I have prioritised the local dimension of EU communication. It is not a void in current research per se that has inspired this search but the dawning of a new chapter in European studies. It is one that goes beyond speculation over Europe's deficit and instead, looks to how Europe is communicated to its diverse and distant publics.

1.1 Can the EU gain democratic legitimacy?

In the wake of the formal creation of the European Union under the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 European integration slowed down by a considerable degree. This feat was provoked by a series of impediments to European coherence, of which included the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the French and the Dutch, a low turn out in elections, and the necessary revision of the main 'future project' the Lisbon Agenda. Nonetheless the Union had experienced significant developments in the way of inciting European integration and therefore has a success story to tell. The Union has created the single European market, established the Euro as the common currency, enlarged to twenty-seven members, and most importantly, has witnessed times of peace and prosperity. In spite of this the Union's consistent strategy of integration has faltered with regards to its citizens. It appears not enough provisions have been made to connect 'Europeans' to the European political entity and so the notion of a European 'demos', or a political community, is weak in subsistence.⁸

Indeed, it is perceived that the Union suffers a deficit in legitimacy. In his early work Meyer argues that 'legitimacy as a property of governance consists of an empirical component (public trust and support) and a normative component

⁷ Angelika Vetter, *Local politics: a resource for democracy in Western Europe? : Local Autonomy, Local Integrative Capacity and Citizens' Attitudes Towards Politics (New Directions in Culture and Governance)* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), p. 1.

⁸ Hannah Cosse, *Increasing the Citizens EU Awareness: The European Commission as a driving force for policy?* (Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2008), p. 1

(justifiableness according to norms, values, traditions)', therefore 'governance can be considered legitimate in so far as its subjects regard it as proper and deserving of support'.⁹ For the EU it appears this is not the case, as the EU's relationship with its citizens has been coloured by an absence of communication now labeled the 'democratic deficit'.

This deficit is defined as a lack of democracy on behalf of the European Union and its various bodies, which appear somewhat inaccessible to the ordinary citizen due to the complexity of procedures.¹⁰ Though, what lies at the core of the deficit is the already established reputation of the ideally democratic nation-state. And subsequently what has been overlooked is the notion that the EU could, or in fact should, stand alone as a unique political entity. Hence as an acting international organisation, it perhaps has a sufficient amount of democracy. The EU can be seen as 'a regional state with shared sovereignty, variable boundaries, composite identity, compound governance, and a fragmented democracy in which the EU level assures governance for and with the people through effective governing and interest consultation'.¹¹ Justifiable in its own terms for what it is. Therefore Schmidt argues that the primary obstacle for EU democracy is in regard to its 'institutional fit' within the nation-state. For example countries such as Britain and France, who adopt a *simple* polity of governance prefer a single authority and therefore find it difficult to integrate Europe into national politics, where Germany and Italy, who adopt a *compound* polity of multiple institutional bodies of power, are perhaps more receptive to EU input.¹²

Additionally Schmidt places blame with the national leaders who have failed to lend to a possible 'democratic compromise' in their lack of communication regarding Europe, and have prevented the establishment of a European presence in national politics.¹³ Bijmans and Altides concur arguing that the national government is guilty of using the EU to shift the blame for unpopular political decisions, accepted simply because the national parliaments and publics are confused about the political

⁹ Christoph Meyer, 'Political Legitimacy and the Invisibility of Politics: Exploring the European Union's Communication Deficit', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37, 4 (1999), pp. 617-39 (619)

¹⁰ Europa Glossary, 'Democratic Deficit', in *Europa: Index*

¹¹ Vivien Ann Schmidt, 'The European Union: Democratic Legitimacy in a Regional State?', *Center for European Studies Working Paper No. 112* (2004), p. 1.

¹² Vivien Ann Schmidt, *Democracy in Europe: the EU and national politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 3-4.

¹³ Schmidt, *Democracy in Europe: the EU and national politics*, p. 4.

relationship between the EU and the nation-state. What is more, competition posed by national political actors makes EU visibility difficult, as they consistently hone their professionalism and comply with news values that go on to shape national and local media coverage of political affairs, alternatively the EU has no ‘real’ government and its divisions of responsibility and accountability are blurred.¹⁴ It should therefore be a priority for the EU to enhance its transparency by communicating what it *is* and *is not* responsible for. But as of now, whilst it is the case that much national policy is created at European level, the nation-state remains the hub of collective identity and political engagement, and alternatively the Union faces mass discrepancy in its institutional development.¹⁵ Therefore, somewhat ironically, the EU is subjugated by the nation-state and its dominance over local politics.

To further expand on the role of the media as a vital portal for communication.¹⁶ It appears that the presence of the EU in national media and its exposure on a local level is somewhat confusing for citizens. Certainly there is a key role to be played by the media industry, whether it is the Europeanisation of national medias or the creation of a supranational equivalent. Bijmans and Altides argue for the fundamental role of the media as an essential prerequisite for the stimulation of public debate on European issues, but the question remains as to whether it is the role of the nation-state to extract relevant information for discussion or whether the EU should specifically communicate the nations interests.¹⁷ This dilemma and inefficiency of EU communication has perhaps seen the void of an inclusive and multi-level deliberative framework that seeks to inform and include its citizens.¹⁸ Recent research by Cosse expands on this instrumental value of the media in gaining the EU a vital incitement for communication, but neglects to discuss how the local persons involved in and affected by the implementation of the Commissions communication strategy consider its effectiveness and transparency.¹⁹ Consequently this will be a source of interest in the forthcoming study.

¹⁴ Patrick Bijmans and Christina Altides, ‘‘Bridging the Gap’ between EU Politics and Citizens? The European Commission, National Media and EU Affairs in the Public Sphere’, *European Integration*, 29, 3 (2007), pp. 323–340 (325)

¹⁵ Ruud Koopmans and Jessica Erbe, ‘Towards a European public sphere? Vertical and horizontal dimensions of Europeanised political communication’, *Discussion Paper SP IV 2003-403* (2004), p. 1.

¹⁶ Julie Firmstone, ‘Approaches of the transnational press to reporting Europe’, *Journalism*, 9, 4 (2008), pp. 423 – 442 (424)

¹⁷ Bijmans and Altides, p. 336.

¹⁸ Bijmans and Altides, p. 337-8.

¹⁹ Cosse, p. 66.

Indeed criticism has developed in regards to this absence of transparency. Thus whilst a measure of inter-European solidarity is desirable, the essentialist theory argues that ethnic and linguistic homogeneity are the natural precondition for democracy and therefore condemns the EU to fatality.²⁰ This theory aspires towards a ‘European identity’ or a European ‘foundational myth’ to unite the European Community, but this rigid view of democracy is not designed for the EU and thus could never be achieved. Therefore Meyer argues that ‘meritocratic legitimacy’ is most suited to the EU where the measure of performance takes different forms, attained via ‘citizenship practice’, the promotion of cultural diversity and more transparent and responsive decision-making which, of course, are the EU’s main priorities to date.²¹

What is more, further research suggests that the EU can in fact become an independent political entity, distinct from the nation-state. Gabel and Anderson prove that EU citizens systematically organise their opinions regarding European politics on a single continuum independent from the nation-state and the political spectrum of left and right wing politics. Nor are voters engulfed by authoritarian speculations of the nation-state versus the EU, but are in fact more focused on European-wide, socio-economic or interventionist and non-interventionist polity.²² This points to two conclusions, first, the EU needs to make independent headway on a local level to engage its citizens and secondly that the EU does have the capabilities to resonate intimately with its citizens. Accordingly, there becomes a need to understand European politics at a localised level to distinguish whether citizens are exercising their democratic right and how much headway the EU has made with regards to gaining local visibility, and therefore, legitimacy. Indeed legitimacy can only exist if there is engagement with the EU at a local level.

1.2 What is the remedy for the EU’s democratic deficit?

In pursuit of democratic legitimacy the citizens of Europe need to take an instrumental role in the deliberation over European policy and arguably the EPS can provide the solution. A public sphere looks to create a communicative arena for

²⁰ Meyer, p. 620.

²¹ Meyer, p. 620.

²² Matthew J Gabel and Christopher J. Anderson, ‘Exploring the European Demos (or lack thereof): the Structure of Citizen Attitudes and the European Political Space’, *CEuS Working Paper no. 2001/4*, p. 19.

unconstrained debate, analysis and criticism of the political system: a precondition for the EU as much as the nation-state.²³ It is important for citizens to have the channels to address common issues across state borders and have the opportunity to shape the laws they are subject to. The EPS not only can achieve this but can also act as an exemplar model for democracy on a post-national spectrum.²⁴ What is more, the character of an EPS is definitive to the notion of democratic legitimacy. The notion of an EPS encourages transnational communication and institutional integration, epitomizing the logic of European institution building whereby governance is adopted from the outset via the negotiation of what best fits this new supranational entity.²⁵ Hence the EU is in a consistent democratic transition.²⁶

In pursuit of this goal, the EU tactfully endorses Europeanism via its emblem, a chosen lingua franca, an official European anthem, the annual nomination of a European cultural capital and the celebration of Europe Day.²⁷ And recently the EU has made head way via media innovations such as *EUTube*, *Europa* and *Euronews*.²⁸ Developments like these hark toward the overall dedication Europe has had over building itself an identity and a sense of belonging for its citizens. But the EU is bestowed with a complex role, since the Treaty establishing the European Community states that, ‘the community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore’.²⁹ Certainly there is difficulty in promoting both *diversity* and *unity*, and, both its *ultimate* and *limited* role in national politics. Therefore it is questionable how efficient the EU is or can be as a uniting political entity.

Though Chaloun argues that the emergence of an EPS is important for European integration in that it enables participation in collective choice, it allows for the production, reproduction or transformation of a ‘social imaginary’ and provides

²³John Erik Fossum and Philip Schlesinger, *The European Union and the public sphere: a communicative space in the making?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 1.

²⁴Fossum and Schlesinger, p. 2.

²⁵ Hans-Jörg Trenz and Klaus Eder, ‘The Democratizing Dynamics of a European Public Sphere Towards a Theory of Democratic Functionalism’ *European Journal of Social Theory* 7, 1 (2004), pp. 5–25 (5)

²⁶ Trenz and Eder, p. 21.

²⁷ Hobsbawm and Anderson in: Michael Bruggemann, ‘How the EU constructs the European Public Sphere: Severn Strategies of Information Policy’, *The Public*, 12, 2 (2005), pp. 57-74 (61)

²⁸ Definitions in respective order: a video sharing community, a website and a newspaper.

²⁹ Bruggemann, p. 61.

the medium for social integration and solidarity.³⁰ This idealist vision of a public sphere is driven in principle by assumptions made by Habermas. Habermas introduces this notion of ‘communicative power’ as a counter balance to administrative power and political economics.³¹ According to Habermas institutionalised democratic lawmaking and judicial review do not constitute political legitimacy.³² It is the public sphere that consents to and deliberates legitimate decisions. Ideally deliberative politics provide normative reasoning behind the process of lawmaking and thus can ‘rationalise’ the distribution of power.³³

It is argued that we now live in an age of constitutional politics and expansive democracy, characterised by an increase in participation that has pushed democracy beyond its traditional political spheres and now relates decision-making to those who are affected.³⁴ This gives the capacity of citizenship a chance to respond to, contribute to and deliberate politics. But, this does not mean the traditional hierarchical institutions of governance are replaced, it simply means they are obligated to become more accommodating and therefore representational of the public. As a result, policymaking, though carried out with some uncertainty, becomes more aware of the interdependence of participants and the attention to diversity, trust and identity becomes increasingly important.³⁵

Citizen deliberation can be considered the remedy for Europe’s democratic deficit. Recent work by Greab suggests that a mode of deliberative democracy would in fact be a viable solution to Europe’s shortfalls. The notion behind this principle is that deliberation does not try to hegemonise the European public, and instead looks to negotiate with them. Therefore deliberation can be ‘a tool to acknowledge difference and a attempt to build dialogue and understanding through discussion, storytelling and explanation’.³⁶ Subsequently a deliberative approach to EU politics could allow the citizens of Europe to become better informed and involved in the political system.

³⁰ C. Chaloun in: Bee, p. 6.

³¹ Jeffrey Flynn, ‘Communicative Power in Habermas’s Theory of Democracy’, *European Journal of Political Theory*, 3, 4 (2004), pp. 433-454 (434)

³² Flynn, p. 440-1.

³³ Flynn, p. 444.

³⁴ Warren in: Maarten A. Hajer and H. Wagenaar, *Deliberative policy analysis: understanding governance in the network society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 3. And: Frank Fischer, ‘Policy analysis in critical perspective: The epistemics of discursive practices’, *Critical Policy Studies*, 1, 1, (2007), pp. 97-109 (103)

³⁵ Mary Hamilton and Yvonne Hillier, ‘Deliberative policy analysis: adult literacy assessment and the politics of change’, *Journal of Education Policy*, 22, 5 (2007), pp. 573–594 (575)

³⁶ Carmen Gabriela Greab, *Deliberative Democracy in a Diverse Europe* (Romania: Iasi, 2008), p. 92.

Therefore, there has to be a forum whereby deliberation can exist. Yet the establishment of communicative areas for debate is still in its infantile state. Accordingly the idealist notion of a platform for citizen deliberation needs an outlet, an outlet intimate enough to engage citizens in their own locality and to bring the concept of Europe to the people. Ultimately transnational deliberation has at first to be inspired at a local level.

1.3 How has the issue of communication established itself in the EU?

Progression towards an arena for citizen deliberation has always been on the EU agenda. The EU's evolution from an economic entity into a politically interdependent Community has bestowed new complexities onto the Union with regards to its perceived transparency. The early Adonnino Report, committee for the 'Citizen's Europe' 1985, indicated a desire to build a European consciousness and 'Europeanise' the cultural sector.³⁷ New concepts were established including the notion of a European Citizenship that had the overall intention of getting 'Europe closer to its citizens'. Though, as commented on by Ward, 'the peoples of Europe are now citizens of Europe; a pleasant touch, but of limited practical value' and this fairly abstract notion, charged with expectations, was soon to be considered part of the democratic deficit.³⁸ Thus this notion of community the EU aspired towards was clearly entwined with the need for wide scope information and viable communications methods.

Practically speaking it is widely conceived that the first time the European Commission made attempts to devise a EU communication strategy was after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. In 1993 Member of the European Parliament, Wily deClercq, accomplished the first report realizing an information and communication policy, coupled with Arie M. Oostlander's document that included discussion on 'a motion for a resolution of the information policy of the European Community'.³⁹ At the time deClercq's document received mass attention for its controversial and propagandist base. He outlined two missions; 'the struggle for a better Europe' and the aim of building 'a better future together' – the message was

³⁷ Shore in: Bee, p. 13.

³⁸ Ward in: Bee, p. 15 – 16.

³⁹ Arie M Oostlander, 'Report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media on the information policy of the European Community. Session Documents', *A3-0238/93, 14 July 1993. EU European Parliament Document* (1993), p. 4.

one of progress, prosperity, protection and peace. Subsequently, both these documents provided the foundations for Commissioner Joao Deus Pinheiro to publish a document entitled 'Information, Communication and Openness'.⁴⁰

Also at this time, and to date, the European Parliament's information campaign, PRINCE, for 'policy information programs for the citizens of Europe' became the most pro-active strategy towards creating citizen inclusion. Emerging in the late 1990's its first programs were 'Citizen's First', 'Building Europe Together' and the Euro. More currently PRINCE is largely involved in dealing with enlargement, the discussion about the future of the EU, the 'Area of Freedom, Security and Justice' and 'the Role of the EU in the World'. However, these campaigns are considered to have promotional undertones in order to achieve justification for the EU and its perceived benefits.⁴¹ Upson reviews the role of PRINCE in the quest for efficient communication as a remedy for the democratic deficit. He argues that information provided should be factual and non-propagandist, since the Commission has a responsibility ensure complete and impartial communication prevail as the guardians to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.⁴²

Thus the nature of EU information has often been criticized for its certain lack of impartial communication. The EU has seemingly ventured into a 'hard sell' of the European ideal spending billions of Euros each year promoting itself and the 'ever closer union', the connotation being that the EU is the only path for future progress.⁴³ It appears to be the case that, instead of working towards resolving imminent problems, such as, the lack of accountability, transparency and independent policy concerns, the EU chooses to devote time and money to promotional exercises.⁴⁴ Conclusively communication becomes less about making available factual information and more about selling the concept of the European Community. However, there are reasons why this tactic is dangerous. Primarily the EU is not in a position to be spending its resources on what is essentially advertising, whilst other problems slip under the radar and are stored up for the future. Not to mention that EU advertising essentially falls short of UK standards, in that it fails to distinguish

⁴⁰ Bee, p. 15.

⁴¹ Bruggemann, p. 67.

⁴² In reference to the 2001 PRINCE campaign. Richard Upson, 'Information for the European Citizen' *Europa* (2003), p. 3.

⁴³ Expenditure was €2.4 billion in 2008. In: Lee Rotherham and Lorraine Mullally, 'The Hard Sell: EU communication policy and the campaign for hearts and minds', *Open Europe*, (2008), p. 1.

⁴⁴ Rotherham and Mullally, p. 5.

between providing information and promoting its ‘benefits’.⁴⁵ In the UK there are rules for public information campaigns to assure the public get value for money and are not subjected to propaganda, for example New Labour was criticised in 2002 by the BBC for using taxpayers money to fund their political campaign in the run up to the 2001 general election.⁴⁶ Therefore, a focus on legitimate information and communication should be of the highest concern for the EU in this context.

In light of this, there has been a series of formal commissions with a considered strategy for impartial communication, the Santer Commission of 1995, the Prodi Commission of 1999 and the Barroso Commission of 2005. And it was the 2005 Communication Strategy lead by Commissioner Margret Wallström that initiated a new campaign entitled ‘Plan D, for Dialogue, Debate and Democracy’. This campaign marked something new for European communication since it intended to facilitate a horizontal platform of communication between the EU and its citizens.⁴⁷ Plan D highlighted the importance of listening to its citizens, communicating in non-complex terms and ‘going local’ with European communication.⁴⁸ Thus the importance of a European presence on a local scale was of the utmost importance for this communication and is to date.⁴⁹ Endorsed with the second Barroso Commission the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Viviane Reding is holding the floor for a new communication strategy. The Fourth European Communication Summit has been held with a clear assurance that legitimate communication remains a priority for the EU.⁵⁰

Indeed, the newfound priority of ‘going local’ with European politics could be of great gain for the EU. Hence the legitimising potential of local politics is large, as they can strengthen political attitudes that can then reach beyond local boundaries.⁵¹ Thus Vetter offers a contemporary insight into this field of interest, expanding on the arena of traditional political culture that has always been rooted in national politics and she defines how local political orientations may serve as a resource for higher systems of governance, like the EU, by establishing political opinion and a desire to

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁷ Cosse, p. 5.

⁴⁸ Cosse, p. 45.

⁴⁹ For this reason the priorities of Plan D will be later expanded on in this project - Plan D will be analysed in Chapter 3 and the role of the European Intermediaries in Chapter 4.

⁵⁰ European Commission: ‘4th European Communication Summit 2010: extracts from the keynote speech by Viviane Reding on Communicating Europe’ (June 2010), p. 1.

⁵¹ Vetter, p. 139.

participate. Yet whilst this research validates the reason for focusing on local politics as a foundational product for democracy, the question that remains is how efficient the EU has been with regards to the engagement of the local citizens in this pursuit? Therefore a focus on the local presence of Europe can determine how successful the EU has been in gaining the deliberated politics as intended by the Barroso Commission.

1.4 Will Great Britain's 'eurosceptic' persona in EU relations hinder integration?

However what seems to prevent citizen engagement in the EU is Britain's innate bias towards the context of EU-UK relations. It appears that Europe's lack of two-way dialogue and provision for a citizen's communicative space has subsequently resulted in waning support for Europe. A downward trend in the perceived benefits of being a part of Europe and thus being European are evident. It is certainly the case that the UK has earned the reputation of being the most eurosceptic of the twenty-seven Member States, although the most recent Eurobarometer survey reveals 42% of Europeans think the word 'inefficient' is apt to describe the EU and just 50% of Europeans think their country has benefited from being a part of the Union.⁵²

That said the UK still stands out as cynical with just 27% of its citizens that think membership to the EU is beneficial.⁵³ It is also the case that a large 60% of UK residents think the EU is predominantly inefficient and just 45% believe it is democratic.⁵⁴ However, in the UK 56% of citizens admit that they do not know how the EU functions.⁵⁵ Therefore it may be the case that the notion of Europe is ill communicated in the UK, and this serves to exemplify already prevalent questions over the efficiency of the EU's information and communication strategy on a local scale.

Indeed euroscepticism is an inescapable truth for Britain, and consequently could hinder UK engagement with the EU and other Member States. However, the skeptic disposition in Britain is an opinion not taken in vain, in fact there are considerable

⁵²European commission, EUROBAROMETER 74, Public Opinion in the European Union (AUTUMN 2010), p. 50 and 36.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 50 and 49 respectively.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

reasons that can be offered to explain why Britain is a eurosceptic nation by majority. Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform, suggests that Britain's geographical distance from mainland Europe, its rather grand imperialist history and reputation as one of the leading economies in Western Europe makes it difficult for Britain to surrender to the European bloc.⁵⁶ Furthermore, with regards to European interpretation on a local degree, Britain has a uniquely powerful eurosceptic popular press, where three quarters of newspaper readers in Britain read papers that are eurosceptic and the other quarter read papers that are openly critical about the Community.⁵⁷ Therefore the EU is not renowned for its positive attributes, further exaggerated by the parochial ruling classes who have not felt obligated to inform the British public about the benefits of EU membership.⁵⁸ Hence Britain remains cynical and perhaps ill informed about the EU.

Though, it is not the conclusion from Grant that Britain is predestined to calamity with regards to its role in Europe. Perhaps what is most frequently indicated to, is that Britain is in fact the last nation to realise the benefits of the EU and just how much it has evolved. With EU expansion in 2004 and 2007 the dynamics of the entity have changed to a considerable extent. The EU no longer seeks a highly integrated system of European Governance or a Union to counterweight the power of the U.S.A, therefore Britain's normative values are akin to those of Europe. Many agreeable issues are assumed to shape EU development in the forthcoming years, such as, 'the need to tackle climate change, enhance energy security, co-operate in the fight against crime and terrorism, manage migration, respond to the rise of China's economic power and stand up to Russia', these are certainly topics that Britain can get on board with and similarly are issues one nation cannot tackle alone.⁵⁹ Therefore these issues of communication can find synergy in Britain and are issues that could resonate locally with the British citizens.

⁵⁶ Charles Grant, 'Why is Britain Eurosceptic?' *Centre for European Reform: essays* (2008), p. 2.

⁵⁷ Grant, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Grant, p. 5.

⁵⁹ Grant, p. 7.

Research Method

2.1 Research Question (RQ)

In vision of addressing the issues that have been identified in relation to Europe's democratic deficit and Britain's perceived rebuff of EU permeation, a question can be posed that asks how efficient the EU has been at constructing itself a viable information and communication policy that embodies a notion of transparency and seeks legitimisation in the eyes of its citizens. Therefore the aim of this research is to discover, **how efficient is the EU's method of localised communication in Britain?** Initially it is possible to hypothesise that the EU is poorly viewed and is potentially considered as an imposter in local affairs, thus concurring with Britain's eurosceptic persona and contributing to Europe's deficit in communication. However in pursuit of this validation the posed question can be separated into four RQ's that will be explored respectively in this report. The RQ's acknowledge the official line towards public communication and then seek to understand how successful this has been at a local degree.

RQ1: How have the EU's priorities for local communication emerged?

The intention here is to recognise what have been the central concerns for the EU's communication agenda, and to identify the emerging importance of localising European politics.

RQ2: How do European Intermediaries envision the EU on a local scale?

This question intends to uncover how European officials view their own role in the communication of Europe and seeks to understand how they evaluate the evolution of European integration from a local and intimate level of interaction with the public.

RQ3: Does the EU appear transparent at a local level?

This section defines how the EU is understood at a local level and how accessible the European officials view EU in its quest for transparency.

RQ4: Do the local Intermediaries view local citizens as Europeanised?

In contemplation of Europe's desire for an all-inclusive European demos, this section looks into how this ideal is progressing at a grass-root level and reveals what connotations Europe has on a local scale.

2.2 Research Design

In order to address **RQ1** I will undertake a policy analysis of interlinking White Papers introduced from 2001 to date. This section is intended to reveal the priorities set forth by the EU, specifically, the European Commission, on its information and communication agenda. The analysis will be driven by the normative values of deliberative democracy (as outlined in the introduction) that perhaps can help remedy the defining characteristics of a democratic deficit that the EU is plagued with, since the deliberative model is often considered as a plausible ideal that can be used as a practical guide for shaping democratic institutions.⁶⁰ Though the ideal of deliberative democracy is criticised for its ideological bias in favour of liberalism and encouragement of an adversarial relations between society and its government, its benefits are most profound.⁶¹ Its inclusivity of public participation and relentless quest for legitimate policymaking, a current theme for the EU political agenda, is what makes deliberative democracy an aspiration detectable in EU policy.

RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4 will form the second strand of my research of which is rooted in the presence and significance of European policy on a local degree. Therefore I have chosen the region of Yorkshire and Humber to represent my research interest. My approach to research has been strategically considered to legitimately represent the EU and local concerns. I achieved this goal by conducting a series of semi-structured open-ended interviews with EU officials who, of course, have a stake in Europe and in the local region. This method of interviewing was chosen to allow for depth and exploration in the interview process, therefore an interview guide has been used but the questions were not rigidly adhered to for every interviewee.⁶² I interviewed both personnel from the EU 'Information Networks' and Members of the European Parliament (MEP's) in the region. Thus, carrying out a number of in-person

⁶⁰Samantha Besson and José Luis Martí, *Deliberative Democracy and its Discontents* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), p. 6.

⁶¹Charles Blattberg, 'Patriotic, Not Deliberative, Democracy', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 6, 1, (2003) pp. 155–174 (160)

⁶² See Appendix A & B for Interview Questions (acting interview guides), p. 52 – 53.

interviews local to the Yorkshire and Humber region, from the 16th February to the 1st July 2011 and received two written correspondences. The interviews lasted between 10 – 40 minutes in duration.

My first set of interviews were with the ‘Information Networks’. The EU Information Networks are official institutions recommended by the European Commission, under the European Information Association, as a local resource for EU information. The three major networks common to all Member States are, Europe Direct - targeting a general audience (with both a central contact point and outlets throughout the Member States); European Document Centre (EDC) - primarily for those learning or teaching in higher education institutions; and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) - aimed at the business community (specifically small and medium enterprises).⁶³ Together they embody the need for a more explicit and personal approach towards communication in Europe and, most importantly, they are locally active players in the implementation of the priorities set out by the European Commission in its White Papers (as will be addressed under **RQ1**).

My first correspondents were:⁶⁴

<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Information Network</i>	<i>Position</i>
Lynette Falconer	Europe Direct	Information Services Manager
Rose Gibson	“	Area Development Librarian
Tracy Hopkinson	“	Area Development Librarian
Simon Robinson	EDC	Official Publications and European Information Officer at the University of Leeds
Kathleen Pitt	“	Senior Information Services Librarian at Leeds Metropolitan University
Tim Barraclough	EEN	Business Professional
Nik Sennhauser	“	Business Professional

My interview questions addressed the role of the Information Networks within the region, their interaction with local citizens, contact and guidance they may or may

⁶³European Information Association: ‘EU Information Networks’, *EU Focus*

⁶⁴Interviewee’s hereafter referenced by name – quotations to be found in transcripts Appendix C, p. 54.

*not receive from the European Commission and general considerations over Britain's unique role in the EU.*⁶⁵

My second set of interviews were with local MEP's. Since MEP's are often seen as the local face of Europe and elected regionally by the citizens I felt this added a unique insight to research. Although the MEP's are not directly responsible for the communication of the Commission's White Papers, they are responsible for the deliberation of legislation that affects each nation-state and each individual citizen. Therefore they offer an invaluable insight into the internal functioning's of the EU's policymaking process. For this reason I carried out a further two interviews and received two written correspondences from MEP's representing Yorkshire and Humber.

My second correspondents were:⁶⁶

<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>National Affiliation</i>	<i>Position</i>
Linda McAvan	Labour Party	MEP
Godfrey Bloom	UK Independence Party	MEP
Anthony Brons*	British National Party	MEP
Diana Wallis*	Liberal Democrat Party	MEP

*Written correspondence.⁶⁷

*My interview questions composed of three themes, the MEP's role in the local region, and their view on the exchange of communication between EU officials and EU citizens and more general considerations over Britain's unique role in the EU.*⁶⁸

Lastly the innate bias of my interviewees is noted. For instance the Information Networks will probably value the ideal of the EU on a professional level, as will Labour affiliated MEP Linda McAvan and Liberal Democrat MEP Diana Wallis. However, MEP's Godfrey Bloom and Anthony Brons are likely to project an

⁶⁵ Interview questions for the Information Networks can be found in Appendix A, p, 52.

⁶⁶ Interviewee's hereafter referenced by name – quotations to be found in transcripts Appendix D, p. 87.

⁶⁷ Written correspondence can be found in Appendix D, p. 111.

⁶⁸ Interview questions for the MEP's can be found in Appendix B, p. 53.

anti-European view, thus favouring British independence. This simply reflects national affiliation and professional choice, but this difference of opinion will help mould a more balanced resolution to my posed research questions, and is representational of views expressed in this locality.

A factor purposely not included in my research design is direct interaction with the local public. This is the characteristic of my top-down approach to research that seeks to understand the opinions of EU officials, since the intention of my research is to observe the execution of the EU priorities for communication specifically themes indicated in the White Papers. However, with regards to any conclusions made about local citizens, the Information Networks and the MEP's are useful to my research given their extensive contact with local citizens.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.a

My first stage of research is focused on the content of EU White Papers central to its information and communication strategy. For this section of my investigation a '**deliberative policy analysis**' will be utilised as a framework of study as negotiated by Hajer and Wagenaar under the concept of deliberative policy science. For deliberative policy science is indicative of the mode of deliberative democracy that has come into consideration and thus notes the prominent role of the 'network society' in contribution to the policymaking process.⁶⁹ The network society refers to the growth of non-governmental entities that seek to have a stake in the policymaking process, and subsequently, this results in a more open-minded and diverse policymaking that in the past was centralised and regulated by the elite. However there are significant complexities that surround how deliberation comes into play. Indeed, specialists have argued that the EU is 'an experiment in finding alternative forms for developing public policy'.⁷⁰ Therefore the question is posed, what kind of policy analysis might be relevant to understand governance in the emerging network society?⁷¹

The answer, deliberative policy analysis, since its epistemological features

⁶⁹Hajer and Wagenaar, p. 9-10.

⁷⁰Hajer and Wagenaar, p. 2.

⁷¹Question taken from: Hajer and Wagenaar, p. 13.

correspond to the main features of modern democracy, these being, interpretation, practice and deliberation, and accordingly this method of analysis can help understand these difficulties in governance.⁷² Therefore deliberative policy analysis has a dual role, at first it studies how deliberation emerges as a priority for governance, and secondly it plays an instrumental role in the policymaking process. Subsequently I intend to use the former of its two roles to study the EU's information and communication strategy in order to deduce what mechanisms the EU has prioritised in quest of a deliberative approach to EU policymaking, and in the creation of a collective capacity for productive inquiry.⁷³

2.3.b

My second stage of research is my interviews. I used a qualitative research method for its rich data content, though qualitative research is not without its flaws, primarily that it is difficult to achieve objectivity, make generalisations or to replicate research.⁷⁴ But this is not the intended goal for my research. Indeed the interviews conducted are in fact unique to the individual, the time of interview and the path of topic the interview took. Alternatively a quantitative approach to research would have been restricting to a project such as this, for quantitative data can often be strictly pigeonholed into categories that offer no explanation or interpretation of meaning.⁷⁵ However to ensure validation of my research I conducted prolonged engagement with my interviewees and practised interviewer corroboration by asking similar questions to interviewees from the same officialdom, therefore I hope to of achieved auditability in carrying out my research.⁷⁶

To analyse my interview data I used the technique of '**analytic coding**', a design of coding that derives from interpretation and reflection on meaning.⁷⁷ This methodology allows for research data to appear initially as wide-scope categories that can later be refined to accommodate any shift in connotation or meaning within the data analysis. Furthermore, analytic coding stands up against frequent criticism applied generally to the method of coding in that, coding tries to transform qualitative

⁷²Hajer and Wagenaar, p. 23.

⁷³Hajer and Wagenaar, p. 24.

⁷⁴Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse* (Oxon: Routledge, 2003), p. 14.

⁷⁵Davis Leshan, *Strategic Communication* (London: Pangpang, unknown), p. 52-3.

⁷⁶Leshan, p. 58.

⁷⁷Lyn Richards, *Handling Data* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), p. 94.

data into quantitative data draining it of its rich and vast qualities.⁷⁸ Hence, interpretive methods of coding, like that of analytic coding, can overcome this critique by fortifying the method with sound data and thereby making provisions for extended discussion and debate during the interview process. Therefore, in utilisation of this method my final themes are represented via **RQ2**, **RQ3** and **RQ4** and developed in Chapter 4.

⁷⁸Leshan, p. 55

Identifying the EU's priorities for local communication

It has come to the forefront of consideration that an inclusive and deliberative approach to policy-making holds the ability to tackle the EU's deficit in communication. Therefore a meticulous study of recent policy documents from the European Commission on the determination of an effective information and communication policy can highlight the emerging importance of citizen deliberation as a fundamental part of European policymaking. Indeed, the notion of deliberation is definitive to the idea that European policies need to become accessible, therefore local. Yet this necessity is what has proven most difficult. Subsequently the following analysis of legislation can be explored with the intention of identifying the perceived remedy the Commission prescribes to its deficit in communication. This chapter will discuss the evolutionary importance of citizen deliberation within the EU's infrastructure, followed by an evaluation of the importance of 'going local' with EU communication initiatives and why this has not been successful to date. Thereby addressing **RQ1: How have the EU's priorities for local communication emerged?**

3.1 The importance of citizen deliberation for EU policy-making

The shaping of an efficient information and communication agenda is key to the conception of a truly democratic approach to policy-making. Headway toward this ideal became evident in 2001, assuming itself as a complexity that the European Institutions, and especially the European Commission, would have to engage with. The early approach towards the strategy appears to be very much an obligatory move to conform to the notions of 'good governance', outlined early on by the Commission to be that of *openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness* and *coherence*; a theory that should underpin democracy at every level.⁷⁹ Equally, this criterion is ambitious by principle and clearly derivative from the expectancies of *typical* governing procedure.⁸⁰ In so, the early White Papers read as an assertion of urgency rooted in the acknowledgement of the EU's deficit in good governance:

⁷⁹ European Commission: European Governance, a White Paper, COM (2001) 428, Brussels, 25.7.2001, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Such as the nation-state, see Chapter 1, p. 5.

Connecting the European Union to its citizens means identifying clear policies and objectives within an overall vision of where the Union is going. People need to understand better the political project which underpins the Union.⁸¹

The European Union is facing the full force of public disaffection with politics. This crisis of representation is even greater at European level since there is no clear public perception of the legitimacy of the European institutions.⁸²

The development of an appropriate information and communication strategy is a *sine qua non* for the success of the EU's policies and initiatives.⁸³

It appears the policy documents are fixated with the perceived vision of EU affairs, hence demonstrating the overall desire to address what the EU perceives to be its primary deficit – *public disaffection*. Indeed this is also an indication of the perceived urgency to allow public involvement, and thus deliberation into the policymaking process.

The White Paper, 'A New Framework for Co-operation' outlined in 2001, looked to ensure both the European Institutions and the Member States co-operate with each other and develop new ways of working together to gain efficiency and, for the benefit of its citizens, create a coherent and understandable vision of how the Union functions.⁸⁴ In conjunction with this request, the 2001 Working Groups Paper concluded that *the Convention method* applied in preparation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights could be utilised to encourage citizen participation, since the method used was widely recognised for its success and strengths, one of which was citizen involvement.⁸⁵ The numerous advantages of citizen involvement can be seen under this strategy as the Convention produced a clear, concise and integrated

⁸¹ European Commission: European Governance, a White Paper, COM (2001) 428, Brussels, 25.7.2001, p. 28.

⁸² European Commission: Communication on An information and communication strategy for the European Union, COM (2002) 350 final/2, Brussels, 2.10.2002, p. 6.

⁸³ European Commission: Communication on Implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union, COM (2004) 196 final, Brussels, 20.4.2004, p. 6.

⁸⁴ European Commission: A new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union, COM (2001) 354, Brussels, 27.6.2001, p. 4.

⁸⁵ European Commission: White Paper on European Governance: Report of Working Group on Broadening and enriching the public debate on European matters (Group 1a), June 2001, p. 6.

document whereby the citizens were able to shape its content.⁸⁶ What is more, this strategy outlined a sustainable approach to policymaking that would become ever more useful as the Union expanded and deliberation became more complex.

Alongside this considered approach toward citizen engagement is a conceptual strategy that continuously underpins the policy documents. Indeed the aim for a deliberative approach to democracy is reiterated by the EU's construction of *citizenship* and thus the capacity of citizenship in the deliberative process. The official view of the Commission is that citizenship can be strengthened by a wider consideration of what defines democracy. The ideal of democracy is inseparable with the idea of belonging to a political community and thus exercising the right to participate in political deliberation.⁸⁷ Therefore the notion of citizenship has the ability to appear inclusive to the European citizen and is self legitimizing for the EU:

We have the European Union but citizenship of the Union is much more a legal than political reality. Despite well- established supranational political institutions, citizens have little in the way of a European political consciousness and are not given much encouragement nor facility to engage in a consistent political dialogue with these institutions.⁸⁸

The Union's institutions do not have a relationship with the general public that remotely compares with that of national institutions.⁸⁹

We are faced by some very serious structural obstacles to communication and dialogue between the institutions and the citizen. They are linguistic and cultural, political and institutional.⁹⁰

Democracies have to create the conditions for an active exercise of citizenship. In the European Union, the institutions need to respond to demands from civil society for more open, participatory decision-making processes.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Florence Deloche-Gaudez, 'The convention on a charter of fundamental rights: a method for the future?' *Research and Policy Paper No. 15* (November 2001), p. 45.

⁸⁷ Bee, p. 19.

⁸⁸ European Commission: White Paper on European Governance: Report of Working Group on Broadening and enriching the public debate on European matters (Group 1a), June 2001, p. 7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

This clearly demonstrates the EU as promoting a vision for Europe, an imagined political community, whereby the EU is considered both inherently and sovereign, and hence can escape its stereotype as an elitist project. The notion of an imagined community is very powerful for the citizen, as by generating a collective identity and thus a collective consciousness the idea of Europe and the responsibility that comes with citizenship depicts a real investment in the EU and the European Community.⁹² Accordingly, deliberation becomes fundamental and a desired feature of this investment in Europe.

However, in this early phase the ideas for citizen deliberation in the policymaking process are largely *theoretical* by nature. It is in the slightly later documents introduced by 2005 where the mode of deliberation becomes most *practical*.

3.2 The importance of ‘going local’ with EU communication initiatives

The increased focus on ensuring European policies work at a national and regional degree demonstrates a commitment to making European politics more accessible and transparent for the nation-state and its citizens. The attention given to generating workable partnerships with the Member States and the use of Information Relays is arguably a more tangible and workable approach to gaining a viable information and communication strategy. Vast improvement becomes visible as the issue is taken more seriously and communication becomes a policy in its own right. Illustrated in the 2005 ‘Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe’:

This Commission has made communication one of the strategic objectives for its term of office, recognising it fully as a policy in its own right. A renewed commitment to communication with Europe's citizens is of vital importance and this is a task that goes beyond the Commission's remit. Its success depends fundamentally on a partnership with all other key players in European politics inside the EU, and particularly with Member States' governments. Politicians and institutional stakeholders at all levels have to trust through good policies and good communication about those policies.⁹³

⁹² Udo Wichmann, *A European Identity Sets Limits to EU Expansion* (Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2010), p. 5-7.

⁹³ European Commission: Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission, SEC (2005) 985 final, Brussels, 20.7.2005, p. 3.

Communication is more than information: it establishes a relationship and initiates a dialogue with European citizens, it listens carefully and it connects to people. It is not a neutral exercise devoid of value, it is an essential part of the political process.⁹⁴

Hence, the importance of communication resonates within the policy document and strategy becomes more profound. The Action Plan highlighted the flaws of prior initiatives, which were rooted in the fragmentation of communication activities, the neglect of citizen's interests and inadequate implementation techniques. The aim was now to become more modern and professional. The Action Plan identified three main priorities; *enhanced communication, listening to the citizen voice* and 'going local' with EU affairs. The desire was to reach citizens in their own localities and inspire two-way communication on a horizontal platform.⁹⁵ The Action Plan was coupled with the policy initiative 'Plan D: for Democracy Dialogue and Debate', theoretically deliberation was to become a vital concern for European policymaking.⁹⁶

Plan D is recognized for its concern with European politics as identified on a local level. The policy document considers the explicit requirements that the EU must take to resonate with its citizens locally. The main priorities were to stimulate wider public debate, promote citizen participation in the democratic process and to deliver tools to generate public dialogue on European policies.⁹⁷ The core intention of this policy document focused on eroding the sense of distance and unfamiliarity the EU has come to personify. Therefore in order to localise European politics the EU would need to make itself recognisable and accessible to its citizens. This is what Plan D attempted. Visits by Commission Representatives to Member States and *Information Relays*, put in place by the Commission were a bid to create a localised focal point for information and feedback on European concerns. Likewise, the European Round Table for Democracy extended the level of communication to explore methods of cross-border debate and promote citizenship.⁹⁸ The Commission appeared to be in full support of transparency and keen to listen to its citizens.

And it is the Information Relays that are of specific interest here. Since they can

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁹⁶ European Commission: The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, COM (2005) 494, Brussels, 13.10.2005, p. 2.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 8 – 10.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

be deduced as most instrumental to the EU's quest towards localised citizen deliberation. Plan D explicitly states that:

This network 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.⁹⁹

The Commission's vision for its approach towards communication can be held as one of consideration and diversity. The additional idea to streamline the Information Relays when addressing the general public to help facilitate access, then to prioritise the 'cascade' concept of advice to offer different information depending on the target audience is a tactful and tailored approach to this policy field.¹⁰⁰ Indeed we see a real push from the Commission to get local recognition, also demonstrated via its stated use of a marketing campaign to push awareness.¹⁰¹

Likewise, the importance of *listening* to the citizens takes precedence in this phase of communication. Therefore the feedback process is of high consideration in the functioning of the Information Relays:

Data will be analysed in order to identify target audiences and to better adapt messages and to convey them through the appropriate communication means, as an essential contribution to the drawing up of communication plans of the communication agenda.¹⁰²

Essentially this is where the deliberative aspect comes into play, as information and communication becomes a two-way process. In many ways this is what makes the Information Relays a portal for *democracy, dialogue and debate* instead of a mode for European advertisement.

Thus, the 2005 Action Plan and the associated Plan D seemed to offer a sense of clarity in the midst of a poorly focused information and communication agenda. What this initiative offered was a chance to realise Europe and its communication means at a recognisable level. Allowing for a more precise expectancy of EU policies in any specific locality. And in doing so, representing a shift from the EU as an elitist project

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ European Commission: Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission, SEC (2005) 985 final, Brussels, 20.7.2005, p. 17.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 23.

to the EU as a European citizens' project, generating a path towards deliberative democracy.¹⁰³ What is more, the successive 2007 White Paper 'Communicating Europe in Partnership' furthered this theme, highlighting the advantages of working with the Member States on a viable communication strategy, to gain an invaluable personal touch to supranational politics. Thus a successful partnership with the EU Member States can remedy both the geographical and language barriers that the EU is faced with in the arena of communication. Therefore the significance of a EU presence at national level and the innovation of the Information Relays, are reiterated as a vital portal that connects Europe to its citizen's and the citizens to Europe.¹⁰⁴

In addition to the designed advances being made on the ground the EU began to utilise communication connections offered by the online medium:

The Internet can help EU institutions to understand public opinion by supporting a genuinely European public debate, with common themes, discussed openly and in real time by people from different countries who recognise each other as EU citizens with a legitimate stake in the debate. The Commission needs to speed up its awareness of issues and respond if necessary and appropriate.¹⁰⁵

Indeed this theme was carried forth under the extension of Plan D in 2008, the policy was extended to include an online forum 'Debate Europe'; in many ways this was an ideal solution for Europe. Online discussion could provide instant access and continuous debate and deliberation.¹⁰⁶

3.3 Critique and concerns

However, fundamentally Plan D did not meet its purpose of design. Shortly after the initiative the Lisbon Treaty was ratified without citizen contribution or recognition.¹⁰⁷ Likewise the online forum was archived in February 2010 and a

¹⁰³ Sanja Ivic, 'European commission's plan D for democracy, dialogue and debate: The path towards deliberation?', *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, 3, 2, pp. 14-19 (17)

¹⁰⁴ European Commission: Communicating Europe in Partnership, COM (2007) 568, Brussels, 3.10.2007, p. 12 – 13.

¹⁰⁵ European Commission: Communicating about Europe via the Internet, engaging the citizens, SEC (2007) 1742, Brussels, 21.12.2007, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ European Commission: Debate Europe – building on the experience of Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, COM (2008) 158, Brussels, 2.4.2008, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Ivic, p. 18.

replacement is yet to appear.¹⁰⁸ Subsequently it appears that the innovative Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate did not include that of deliberation. Therefore an arena for citizen deliberation, and thus an EPS or European ‘demos’, remained in its infantile state or even just a theoretical goal. Indeed, ‘going local’ had not produced the coherent and inclusive approach to policymaking it was intended for, but instead risked the chance of becoming an instrument of EU propaganda.¹⁰⁹

However, despite the failure of Plan D, communication remains a fundamental priority for the EU, as demonstrated by the 2010 reinstatement of the Barroso Commission for a second term, therefore allowing for potential development of the EU’s agenda in this arena. Commissioner Viven Reding stated:

Good communication is a means, a tool which helps you develop the integration of the society into policy making, and the explanation of the results of this policy to your voters. Good communication is about telling a good story as a part of the policy process.¹¹⁰

Likewise, the EU’s Common Communication Priorities for 2012, outlined by the European Council, focus on the importance of the Member State and the flexibility of communication priorities to ensure they fit with citizen’s interests and expectations. In addition, the Commission is due to reveal its communication priorities when President Barroso gives his speech this year, traditionally in September.¹¹¹ Therefore whilst policy aspects show a continuing commitment to communication, optimism should be considered with how far progress has been made.

However, it is certainly questionable as to whether the EU will reach its goal of democratic legitimacy or indeed create a platform for political exchange and deliberation. Most specifically it is difficult to distinguish just how familiar the EU is with its citizens. The unquestionable focus on the desire to work in close conjunction with the Member States and capitalize on the local existence of Information Relays has been a running theme in policy documents and therefore the communication strategy has appeared both flexible and reactive by nature. Thus the EU’s

¹⁰⁸ [Hyperlink to the inactive discussion forum](#); Europa: ‘Democracy – Dialogue – Debate’, *Europa > Debate Europe > Forum*

¹⁰⁹ Ivic, p. 19.

¹¹⁰ European Commission: 4th European Communication Summit 2010: extracts from the keynote speech by Viviane Reding on Communicating Europe (2010), p. 1.

¹¹¹ Council of the European Union: Communication Priorities for 2012, 10969/11, Brussels, 31.05.2011, p. 1.

communication strategy depicts Europe's constant battle to fight the issue of distance with its citizens, and the complexities involved in addressing a multi-national audience. For these reasons a focus on decentralisation and subsidiarity of EU policy are required to render this mode of network governance viable.¹¹² Hence, White Papers cannot be seen as the magic cure for everything and headway remains a slow process.¹¹³

Indeed, perhaps an exploration of the EU's ideal version of an information and communication strategy that prevails in the policy documents, is rooted in rhetoric as opposed to substance. Whilst intentions are honorable, action is niche in progression and Europe's citizens remain disengaged.¹¹⁴ Therefore this study of the evolution of EU policy has demonstrated that although the EU has moved from a phase of theoretical ideas about how to engage European citizens towards more practical ideas of how to create and use citizen deliberation, it is still difficult to see how efficient the EU has been in the creation of a successful information and communication agenda that inspires citizen deliberation.

Therefore the following chapter concentrates on the EU's information and communication strategy at a localised level focusing on the Information Relays, now known as the Information Networks of Europe.¹¹⁵ Thus intimate research can perhaps evaluate how successful the EU has been at 'going local' and how the local perceptions of the EU fit with those presented by the policy documents.

¹¹² Bee, p. 23.

¹¹³ European Commission: European Governance, a White Paper, COM (2001) 428, Brussels, 25.7.2001, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Chapter 1 outlined the general disengagement of citizens, p. 13 – 14.

¹¹⁵ Outlined in Chapter 2.

Determining the local approach of the EU communication strategy

The questionable consistency and viability of the EU's information and communication strategy that was considered under **RQ1**, leaves much to be desired by the nation states and the citizens of Europe. Thus, it would be in keeping to suggest the EU has a weak representation on a regional level despite Commission initiatives. However, to agree or disagree with the evaluation made in the last chapter does not naturally mean it will be the conclusion of the following chapter. Accordingly, the following study is fundamentally concerned with uncovering the importance of the EU and its assumed image at a local degree. Subsequently looking to answer **RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4** via the interview responses from EU officials.

The indicated research questions embody the themes set out by the policy documents, and are definitive of the characteristics Europe values such as, citizenship, legitimacy, transparency, inclusivity and recognition, all topics that can comfortably be discussed via these questions. Furthermore it will be possible to consider whether the practical element of the EU's information and communication agenda has contributed to the 'vicious circle of non-communication that coloured the history of EU functioning?'¹¹⁶ Or alternatively has inspired, or even forced, its publics into a virtuous circle of communication?

4.1 Research findings

RQ2: How do European Intermediaries envision the EU on a local scale?

As a 'brand' they need to build and sell to the local citizens.¹¹⁷

The concept of a 'brand' can be a useful term used to discuss the attachment Europe is trying to build on a local level, since a brand, by definition, serves the purpose of identification. Thus, the Commissions method of engagement with its citizens, academics and local businesses is instrumental via a European Information Network carrying one vital principle, the imperative to identify Europe and relate it to

¹¹⁶Bruggemann, p. 70.

¹¹⁷Concept introduced by Tim Barraclough.

local citizens. Whether it is Europe Direct, the EDC or EEN, these intermediary bodies are a representation of Europe and hence the European ‘brand’.

What is most useful though is the depth of familiarity and reassurance that a well-established brand can bring. Europe Direct is particularly instrumental in the promotion of Europe and generating recognition, placing a great deal of emphasis on inclusion and adaptability. The Commission assigns key communication priorities to the Europe Direct centres and each year has a specific theme, for instance this year was the ‘European Year of Volunteering’. But what takes preference at a local level are activities used to gain public interest. The European message is most definitely secondary to this. The dilemma of communication is ‘how do you make it interesting to citizens?’¹¹⁸ After an incredible sixty events carried out last year, the constant updating of a website, blog, Facebook page and Twitter feed, the centre appears to be immersed in a constant quest to make its events appealing to the public interest.¹¹⁹ Therefore the Europe Direct centres appear as a publicity mechanism for the European brand.

Though the push for EU identification may correspond to its youthful character. The Europe Direct centres only took on this second phase in 2005 whereby they considered a more hands on and regulated approach to communication, and the EDC measures its success via an already endorsed knowledge of the Network and its function.¹²⁰ Likewise the EEN has only been up and running for three years and so has little in the way of establishing a national reputation.¹²¹ Therefore, the brand or this notion of identification is important to Europe on a local basis since the Information Networks can only be useful if they are known to local citizens, and for this publicity is crucial if they are to facilitate the goal of ‘*going local*’ with EU politics.¹²²

They believe that fundamentally the EU suffers from an absence of democracy.

Though the push for engagement or increased familiarity with the EU is most definitely not a priority for local MEP’s. Linda McAvan reiterates, ‘I don’t see my job as to promote Europe, I see my job as being, to let people know what I am doing [...]

¹¹⁸ Lynette Falconer

¹¹⁹ Rose Gibson

¹²⁰ Tracy Hopkinson and Kathleen Pitt respectively.

¹²¹ Nik Sennhauser

¹²² As referred to under the 2005 initiative in Chapter 3, p. 26.

I'm not here to sell Europe'.¹²³ Yet, there is a candid acknowledgement that Europe suffers for its various shortfalls one of which is *trust*. Indeed the motivation toward building a European brand is fuelled by the lack of trust in the EU and European Institutions. McAvan states that people know little about Europe and are therefore reluctant to trust it, although honestly, she argues, people do not know much about their House of Commons or local town hall, but because they are old and well-established institutions they are trusted and hold public confidence. Like this, Europe needs to establish itself to build credibility and reputation over time before it can hope to engage the British public. Yet, the chance of this happening is unlikely since the European vision is not incited on a national scale, indeed the dubbed eurosceptic Conservative Government did not even fly the European flag this year on Europe Day. So to expect EU to gain trust on a local level is unlikely when the British Government does not appear to have faith in, or indeed a sense of commitment to, the EU.

Yet, aside from the void of trust in the Union, anti-European MEP's Godfrey Bloom and Anthony Brons see Europe's institutional deficits most exaggerated on a local scale. Brons enforces, 'I don't promote the EU, I promote our withdrawal from it by pointing out its costs, its democratic deficit and its intrusive legislation and undermining of our sovereignty'.¹²⁴ These attitudes coupled with national press feeds perhaps shape the British conscious and therefore could undermine efforts of the EU communication strategy. Indeed, Bloom is of the strict belief that local democracy is dead in the face of unelected European bureaucrats citing the example of the wind turbines that have gone in for planning permission at Spaldington. Bloom argues that every level of local democracy was against it, yet the locality was overridden in favour of the Unions own directive that pledges to get 25% of our energy via renewable resources, he proclaims, 'What happened to our democracy?'.¹²⁵ And certainly when local protest is brutally overlooked by a European bureaucracy there is of course reason to doubt the ability of a supranational Government to govern efficiently on a local scale. It appears, in this case, that listening to local citizens has been neglected in favour of wide scope EU policy objectives.

¹²³ Linda McAvan

¹²⁴ Godfrey Bloom

¹²⁵ Godfrey Bloom

In essence the EU is envisioned as highly complex, true to the official definition of the democratic deficit, and therefore assumes secondary importance. Interview responses reflect the tone set in Chapter 1, focusing on the lack of trust associated with the EU and its multiple shortfalls. But perhaps the deduction to be made here is that whilst theoretically the European Intermediaries should mediate between Europe and its citizens, the incitement of communication is limited.

RQ3: Does the EU appear transparent at a local level?

Fundamentally it does not, so people need to understand why we are in the EU.

For many reasons the international climate demands we remain a part of Europe. Our chance to participate in a political arena of emerging superpowers depends on our ability to work with our neighbour states and invest in the European Union. Yet, it is unlikely Britain will relinquish its independence anytime soon, especially whilst the EU lacks trust in the face of public opinion and national scepticism. Fundamentally this premise is founded in the EU's lack of transparency and poor communication skills.

Although by large the European Information Networks appear comfortable with the daily running of their specific organisation one cannot help but notice the absence of communication with the Commission, which undermines the official goal of *listening* to the citizens.¹²⁶ For the Information Networks there is minimal opportunity for feedback with just one form sent to the Commission annually. And direct correspondence with the Commission themselves is sporadic. Europe Direct claims to receive feedback after large conferences and EEN, although not citing communication with the Commission, appears comfortable to carry out a contract defined as the EU's 'method of engagement for businesses'.¹²⁷ However the EDC claims to have never had any response from the Commission.¹²⁸ What is more, communication training offered to the Europe Direct centres are limited to just two places per country, perhaps not enough to accommodate the communication priorities

¹²⁶ As referred to under the 2005 initiative in Chapter 3, p. 26.

¹²⁷ Rose Gibson and Tim Barraclough respectively

¹²⁸ Simon Robinson

outlined by the Commission each year?¹²⁹ Thus, coupled with low levels of guidance, Europe Direct argues that the European Commission does not understand its clientele on a local scale. ‘People that work for the Commission... they’re very well educated and articulate and they understand, and they are immersed in that’, but in local communities Europe needs to be aesthetically attractive, ‘sometimes I’m not sure they’re aware of the people that come in that would be our natural clientele’.¹³⁰ Therefore, the chance of the EU engaging its citizens is slim since the indication is that EU politics remain complex and somewhat impenetrable on a local scale, suggesting that the likelihood of the ordinary British citizen understanding why we are part of the EU is low.

But, to understand our membership to the EU is to be enlightened to the dynamics that have led to the construction of this political entity. McAvan neatly summarises, communicating Europe is about ‘creating political understanding about the modern world, the nature of economic interdependency and the nature of being a relatively small country in a big world’.¹³¹ Indeed the onset of transparency is required mostly to appreciate the things Europe can offer that the national Government cannot. Most specific to the understanding of these interlinked states is, the importance of the single market, common policies, the economic and monetary union and external relations the EU can achieve as a united entity. But what must not be lost sight of is that Europe also belongs to the citizens, therefore provisions must be made for *enhanced communication* as outlined in the EU’s official policy documents.¹³² However, McAvan is most focused on the role of the national Government in the communication of this premise. She argues ‘I think [what] we have to have in Britain is not people like the European Commission and me talking about it we need the Governments, that is all parties to just have a honest debate with people’.¹³³ So whilst some parties play with the idea of euroscepticism it is, by fundamental, not in our national interest. Perhaps then, there should be an increased investment into communicating Europe at a national level in place of EU rebuff.

Since Britain has made the commitment to be part of the EU it becomes evermore important to see its benefits. The entwined nature of UK and EU relations

¹²⁹ Lynette Falconer

¹³⁰ Lynette Falconer

¹³¹ Linda McAvan

¹³² European Parliament, ‘Fact Sheets (Index)’ *European Parliament*. And: focus on *enhanced communication* as referred to under the 2005 initiative in Chapter 3, p. 26.

¹³³ Linda McAvan

proves our long-standing investment into the European ideal. MEP Diana Wallis argues this point, ‘with our current level of integration on an everyday level, it would be impossible to pull out now’.¹³⁴ Therefore public opinion needs to be onside since it is pivotal to democratic functioning. But for the EU to make any headway towards reversing the preconceived vision of the EU, increased transparency is vital. Wallis argues that it is difficult to condone how much the EU spends of the British taxpayers money, however she argues that the cost of non-integration is greater, and this argument is a theme Brussels is trying to voice across Europe. Therefore she argues that the primary goal is to make sure all information is accessible and available, and to ensure both the costs and gains of integration are demonstrated.

A further dynamic that pushes for a more clear and concise understanding of the EU is found in its own unique selling point. It is the desire for the EU to have a democratic decision-making mechanism that makes this supranational body so original. Thus, regardless to whether the EU is a good thing or a bad thing by principle, decisions have to be made at a transnational level. The only new decision European citizens are faced with is whether or not they want a democratic say in how that happens. Indeed democracy is a new ideal presented at this level of governance. ‘The EU is the only transnational body that takes decisions, which actually have a democratic decision making mechanism, decisions are taken at NATO, decisions are taken at the UN but they are not particularly democratically taken’.¹³⁵ Though the character of the EU is most personal and infiltrates many more avenues of daily life, so perhaps this is why the democratic ideal has become important, for there have always been decisions taken at transnational level, the only choice now is whether you want them to be open to more scrutiny?

It seems the answer to this question is yes. Therefore the most important aspect may not be for the EU to be accepted, just understood at a local level and perhaps this is a consideration that has been void from the EU’s information and communication strategy to date. To understand that Britain needs Europe for its international clout and in turn why some decisions are best taken at a European level. Likewise, this would facilitate the rational of European interdependence and why when Europe is under strain, either militarily in Libya or economically in Greece, we need to help because we have a stake in Europe’s wellbeing as it is entwined with our

¹³⁴ Diana Wallis

¹³⁵ Linda McAvan

own. In so McAvan argues ‘I don’t think communication is the problem, I think it’s confidence in the EU as an institution’.¹³⁶ But I would argue it is both, since to invest in communication and transparency is to increase the potential for increased confidence in the Union.

The complexities of EU governance make the ideal of transparency difficult.

Yet, this conclusion is far from simple. The complexities of the EU run much deeper than a basic understanding of the Unions fundamental goal. Bloom argues that the problem lies with the central issue that is, people do not know how they are governed. Hence, it is not the citizens elected European Parliament that make the laws it is the European Commission. Therefore, the lawmaking procedure becomes somewhat legalistic and bound to the vision of an unelected bureaucracy. This premise is further reflected in the added complexity of prescriptive lawmaking, whereby the Union tells people what they can do as opposed to what they cannot. Subsequently laws become abundant and opaque. Bloom states, ‘...we have 2000 rules and regulations that go passed automatically un debated by the Westminster chamber into law in this country...which gives us 75% of our law [that] now comes from Brussels’.¹³⁷ Although this is not explicitly proven, the alternative argument is that just 8-10% of British legislation has origin in Brussels, and rather than it being imposed onto Britain, it is officially to be debated by British ministers.¹³⁸ But what is of larger concern is that EU driven policies are exposed to little scrutiny, and, are rarely changed once constructed by the Commission.¹³⁹ Indeed the Commission are increasingly exercising an exclusive directive over lawmaking, whilst Britain appears to be loosing its sovereignty and democratic mandate.

But it is also the British tendency to be ‘prim and proper’, to obey and rarely question law that lies at the root of the problem.¹⁴⁰ Bloom reiterates ‘because we are used to English law... It is in our nature then to obey the law because we have been used to not having very much law so we then do enforce it’.¹⁴¹ Therefore whilst the British take law seriously they are challenged by the abundant and intrusive nature of European laws. Furthermore he argues that European law is, conveniently, confused

¹³⁶ Linda McAvan

¹³⁷ Godfrey Bloom

¹³⁸ European Movement UK, ‘The Extent of EU Legislation’, *EuroMove* (2009)

¹³⁹ Philip Johnston, ‘EU: is Britain still a sovereign state?’, *The Telegraph* (2009)

¹⁴⁰ Tim Barraclough

¹⁴¹ Godfrey Bloom

at a local level as national bodies are elected to execute European policy principles, Bloom cites Defra's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) standardisation of agricultural equipment or the local council's bin collection services, as examples of national local bodies that are blamed for EU policy changes. Similarly, the phantom 'Euro myths' of the straight banana and the curvy cucumber marketing laws, resemble a marked invasive and excessive approach to law as perceived on a local degree.¹⁴² Quite simply this approach is both unfamiliar and obscure to the British, and therefore the EU and Britain are incompatible due to this innate tendency.

Furthermore lawmaking appears to be a secretive act, Bloom confirms, 'I do not have, as a Parliamentarian, access to the minutes of the meetings, I do not have any more information than you do on the legislation that is passed'.¹⁴³ Hence this notion of transparency, as so frequently alluded to by the information and communication policy documents, is not active even for the EU officials. Brons reiterates this notion, 'EU organisations claim to be promoting transparency but the impenetrable language of their reports and legislation would make it difficult for a reasonably intelligent bystander without prior knowledge of the subject to understand what is being proposed'. Instead, he argues, 'The EU spends vast sums on self-congratulatory propaganda - but not very successfully'.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, this alludes to the idea that perhaps propaganda is misread as EU communication and transparency, and true transparency is just an illusion, and maybe not even a real intention. Thus the EU remains ambiguous despite its drive to become interpretable on a national level and its incentive to appear legitimate in its authority. Indeed the European Institutions and the citizens are lost in the way of mutual understanding.

RQ4: Do the local Intermediaries view local citizens as Europeanised?

Essentially European Citizenship does not appear to be a reality.

It is difficult to argue the case for European citizenship, though its role in taking Europe from a free market to a political entity is vital. But to experiment with the ideal of citizenship in policy documents and to utilise what is essentially a social

¹⁴² Referring to the various directives that state some fruit and vegetables should be certain shapes. Godfrey Bloom and: Stuart Notholt, *Britain and the European Union - Frequently Asked Questions*, version 14.5 (London: SN Communications Ltd, 2007) p. 4.

¹⁴³ Godfrey Bloom

¹⁴⁴ Godfrey Bloom

construction is perhaps somewhat misleading in comparison to what mode of citizenship, if any, exists on the ground. Since it is both enthusiasm and engagement that fuels the role of citizenship in the information and communication policy documents, this is how citizenship can be identified locally.

The Information Networks of Yorkshire and Humber identified different levels of enthusiasm with regards to the local community they came into contact with. Arguably factors such as, age, location and subject correspond to how enthusiastic people are about the EU. The argument being that areas of low voter turnout in national elections is mirrored at a European level, ‘when you go out and your talking about Europe and taking vacations out, it reflects different areas geographically as to their interests, their interest will be fairly low were in areas voting in the UK is fairly low’.¹⁴⁵ From a European perspective, this conclusion could be indicative of voter apathy that is linked to lack of understanding about European politics, an absence of EU related media coverage or the inherent sense of party loyalty that is not present at this level. In reinforcement of this speculation, the Information Networks appear not to push the political message for fear that people or companies will be deterred from using the facilities, therefore the Networks function as a facility for help and information needs as and when required, thereby becoming apolitical in nature.¹⁴⁶

Though there is a clear void of political understanding amongst the public and thus a clear dimension yet to be exploited by the Information Networks. Europe Direct identifies a fundamental problem of voting and how it is understood on a local dimension, ‘some people think that if they vote in the European elections then they are voting for Europe and that’s not necessarily the case...its having a voice there in the European parliament’,¹⁴⁷ what is more, ‘if people don’t have the thought that they should be voting or can go out and vote then, Europe is another step on, so its just getting them engaged in that way’.¹⁴⁸ Indeed although the Information Networks do not claim to push the political agenda they can be instrumental in identifying the problem of engagement and therefore could be useful in remedying this problem. Arguably, then, the public are not eurosceptic by any means but simply fail to recognise, or have not had the encouragement to recognise, how Europe affects them on a daily basis. EEN suggest that Britons are quite sceptical by nature and

¹⁴⁵ Tracy Hopkinson

¹⁴⁶ All Information Networks: Rose Gibson, Tim Barraclough and Kathleen Pitt.

¹⁴⁷ Tracy Hopkinson

¹⁴⁸ Rose Gibson

comparatively their European counterparts appear much more open minded to the EU business strategy.¹⁴⁹ Thus at a local level citizens in Britain are estranged from European politics and the ideal which fuels European citizenship.

Though Wallis relates much of this to the lack of media coverage on EU relations, 'It's more about an absence of 'story', and therefore lack of interest by the press', however to conquer this problem she argues that 'the only way forward can only be through issue-based news, and getting the information out to the right groups at the right time'.¹⁵⁰ Theoretically, a media tailored method of communication would perhaps help EU integration in Britain, for issue-based news provides understanding through background and context, and therefore would give British citizens a chance to understand 'why the EU?'.¹⁵¹ What is more this method is not exclusive to television reporting, for the role of social media can certainly assist this goal. In fact Wallis argues 'I think we will see a massive focus on campaigns through Facebook and Twitter, which will hopefully help to reconnect with people'.¹⁵² Perhaps then a new focus on issue-based exposure would help people associate with Europe and thus generate some form of attachment. However Brons contradicts this premise, arguing that the EU 'claim that Euro-scepticism is the result of insufficient information and that if they inform people sufficiently, their Euro-scepticism will disappear. The truth is that the more people learn about the EU, the more Euro-sceptic they become'.¹⁵³ Thereby placing the fundamentals of critique with the EU as a political institution not with its inefficiency of communication. Yet, although this conclusion is difficult to ratify considering the diversity of EU relations, it does have sustainability in consideration of Britain's growing skeptic tendencies towards the EU.

Britain's new identity in the EU is difficult to establish on a local scale.

As it stands, the EU has struggled to resonate with local citizens. This probably corresponds to the wider notion that Britain is struggling with its historical association, and therefore grappling with its new identity. McAvan explains, 'Britain associates its decline with the EU, other countries associate their growth with the EU',

¹⁴⁹ Nik Sennhauser

¹⁵⁰ Diana Wallis

¹⁵¹ John Owen and Heather Purdey, *International news reporting: frontlines and deadlines* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 138.

¹⁵² Diana Wallis

¹⁵³ Anthony Brons

thus Britain's membership to the EU coincidentally coincided with Britain's decline as a world power.¹⁵⁴ Alternatively in Eastern Europe the EU represents the end of Communism, for the Spanish end of the Franco dictatorship and the Greeks end of the Generals. Thus it is these different histories that determine how the EU is perceived. So, the EU determines Britain's new international status, and it is now one of many countries and works within a Union it cannot dominate. But, evidently, the current political climate means Britain needs to work with its neighbours for its international clout, indeed even the current eurosceptic Government had to work with Europe in Libya. Moreover, in the same breath Europe works as a scapegoat at a national level, 'Europe tends to get the flack when it goes wrong but doesn't get much of the credit when it goes right'.¹⁵⁵ This concurs with the earlier premise that national politician's have a stronger voice on a regional degree and thereby undermine EU attempts for a positive message, or reputation at a local level. And perhaps the EU suffers even more under the added complexity nation states have in trying to promote the dual message of a united Europe and an independent national identity.

A further obstacle is that the EU attempts to execute intimate laws from a very distant and unfamiliar lawmaking mechanism. And this impact at a local level can be devastating, since the EU has little knowledge to the implication of its actions. Bloom talks of local examples that have caused small business to fold, such as the local wine seller who could not afford a bottle plant to coincide with EU bottle sizing regulations. Consequently he argues, that the EU 'want to invade every part of your life, they assume that your stupid', indeed, Bloom views the EU as immoral 'I'm just horrified that I'm living in a world where people are telling me what I can and cannot do', and this all derives from the absence of ability for such a wide-scope institution to understand a small locality in a nation-state.¹⁵⁶

For the authoritative nature of the EU was not the original intention when Britain first became a member. Thus Bloom looks to the democratic legitimacy of our membership to the EU, he argues that in actual fact it is illegal because nobody rescinded the Act of Settlement and it is a direct breach of the Queens Coronation speech.¹⁵⁷ But most specifically when Britain joined the EU it was called the common market, a no red tape free trade association and was supported by the public under the

¹⁵⁴ Linda McAvan

¹⁵⁵ Linda McAvan

¹⁵⁶ Godfrey Bloom

¹⁵⁷ Godfrey Bloom

1975 referendum.¹⁵⁸ And this is inherent to the British understanding of the EU and its fundamental role. Thus, ‘nobody voted for political union...nobody talked about political union, nobody talked about a president of the EU, nobody talked about 75% of our law, a flag, an anthem’.¹⁵⁹ Neither did they vote for European citizenship. In this sense perhaps Europe does not intrinsically belong to the people and therefore it is rejected as it has grown in its purpose.

The desire for European citizenship and national attachment is certainly not the case at a local degree. There is the notion that the public are disengaged, neither Europeanised nor Eurosceptic in character, but simply detached from European polity.

4.2 Summary of research findings

It appears the subject of Europe and desire for a truly integrated European Community still remains an institutional objective. It is the certainly the case that the European Intermediaries are sceptical about the level of engagement that exists on a local level. Fundamentally the issue that prevents citizen deliberation from becoming a reality is the lack of EU transparency. And this lack of transparency means that the communication of Europe’s new identity and its benefits within national and international politics remain absent. Indeed the EU is a double-edged sword with regards to our membership: we know we need it but we do not necessarily want it. And this is what transpires at a local level. Thus, my research findings would concur with the proposition set out in the introduction to this chapter, in that communication remains somewhat limited and the ‘vicious circle of non-communication that coloured the history of EU functioning’ despite attempts to remedy this flaw.

¹⁵⁸The public supported to remain in the EU (then the Economic Community) by a majority of 67%, in: On this Day, ‘1975: UK embraces Europe in referendum’, *BBC News* (1975)

¹⁵⁹ Godfrey Bloom

How to define the EU's method of localised communication in Britain

5.1 Discussion

The conclusion made at the beginning of this study was that the niche of EU communication at a local degree required investigation and clarity. My study outlined the official line to the EU information and communication priorities and demonstrated that the EU had acknowledged the need for localised representation, and therefore 'going local' with EU communication was prioritised. I then investigated just how efficient the EU ideals had been on a practical level. Now some conclusions can be made.

After the analysis it was evident that the European Intermediaries idea of EU communication differed from the official ideal outlined in the EU's information and communication documents. Initially the policy documents aspired to obtain an integrated system of democratic lawmaking defined by the notion of transparency. This prioritised enhanced communication alongside two major developments of 'listening' and 'going local' that would together define the new phase of policy initiatives. However the Intermediaries perceived the EU as 'impenetrable' and EU elites 'immersed' in politics that were seemingly difficult to translate on a local level. Alternatively the EU was considered somewhat inefficient in this field, the indication being that Europe needed to focus on building credibility and trust.

What is more, there was a distinct difference of opinion presented by the Intermediaries with regards to how the EU is or should be communicated locally. The Commission's own European Information Networks ventured into a 'sell' of the European 'brand' in hope of advertising themselves and therefore the EU. But due to the complexities of EU functioning the conclusion was made that the Commission did not specifically cater for its clientele in terms of transparency, therefore the political agenda was not pushed, therefore engagement was not pushed and citizenship not exercised, dubbing the Information Networks as purely information centers, or even help centers, since there was little inspiration for public deliberation. In contrast the Members of the European Parliament are not selling Europe, they simply are letting

people know what they are doing, either by working towards the European ideal or promoting withdrawal. The general rhetoric argues for a national explanation of why we are members of the EU and the nature of political interdependency. The underlying goal is to make information accessible, to make sure the costs and gains are illustrated, to be forthright with the public and inspire awareness.

Though, as frequently alluded to in this research, a platform for deliberation has not been delivered. This leads to the speculation that perhaps it is the status the policy field itself can bring as opposed to the actual practice of policy that is appealing. Indeed, is simply the *intention* for an efficient mode of information and communication the political and democratic answer to Europe's democratic deficit? This is the resolute conclusion made in Chapter 3 that argues policy had thus far been rooted in rhetoric and is void of substance and practical policy outcomes. To avoid this conclusion I would recommend the extension and push for the full execution of Plan D and the accompanying initiatives, in that the Information Networks assist deliberation under an increased contact with the Commission. Furthermore the exploitation of new media should be once again utilized as was the case under the now dormant forum 'Debate Europe'.

A further pattern in research has also identified the difficulties EU communication faces even at a local level. Difficulties are derivative from the clash between Britain's traditional values versus the EU's normative character. Often it is seen that the innate characteristics of Britain are a problem for EU integration. The interviewee data argued the British are *skeptical* by character. Subsequently the British mentality seems something difficult to buy into. Additionally Britain's lawful nature appeared to be a problem, the British are *law abiding* and *prim and proper*, therefore the issue that the British may be the only nation to take the EU's laws seriously saw a rebuff of EU integration.

What follows this temperament of euroscepticism is increased difficulty rooted in EU institutional structure. Simply, the EU is a poor 'institutional fit' with typical British governance. The EU has multi-governing bodies - Britain is familiar with a singular governing body of ultimate authority; the EU favours prescriptive lawmaking - for the British law defines something that you cannot do; the initial EU lawmaking body, the European Commission is unelected - in Britain lawmaking is

carried forth exclusively by elected bodies under parliamentary sovereignty.¹⁶⁰ Yet, changing global dynamics means that Britain needs Europe for its international clout, but perhaps this could simply remain a system of interdependency whereby a nation can call on their neighbouring states for support. Does integration need to go as far as trivial lawmaking and the creation of citizenship, essentially, could the EU remain as what it was designed for? Fundamentally perhaps we have been pressured to appear like our international counterparts that are a vast singular entity, like America or China, but as Europeans we have always been of the tradition and pride that we can work together and call on each other for help, but can still remain nationally independent. It is different not wrong. So maybe excessive levels of EU integration inspired by other international players are the root problem for the EU.

As a final conclusion my research contradicts one premise set out Chapter 1. It was clarified that Britain was the most eurosceptic of its EU counterparts, and it was also concluded that Britain knew the least about Europe, this led to the assumption that sufficient information on Europe could in fact erase euroscepticism in Britain. However my research argued that this is not the case and instead concurs with Britain's increasing eurosceptic nature even whilst EU information becomes readily available. So euroscepticism as concluded at a local level is not through a lack of a EU education per se, its more derivative from the above arguments in that the EU does not fit with British practice, and, the intimate lawmaking the EU persists to engage in is simply a step too far.

There are certainly further questions that I would like to explore in this arena of study. Likewise the expansion of research into other regions and with added interviews that correspond directly with the local European citizens would add further insight. Furthermore a separate study of national and local media and its communication of the EU would most definitely complement my research.

¹⁶⁰ Alistair Jones, *Britain and the European Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 82.

5.2 Conclusion

A certain decision can be made to decipher how efficient the EU's method localised of communication is in Britain and it is one that highlights EU inefficiencies in this arena of policymaking. Unfortunately the conclusion made regarding Britain's eurosceptic persona to EU affairs is one that has not been disproven in this study. Whilst the EU has made headway to remedy its communication efforts with the nation-state its clear communication has not involved the two-way dialogue it aspired towards.

It is certainly the case that enhanced tools of communication have been generated and deployed on behalf of the EU, and the European information and communication policy has been considered both theoretically and practically. Yet the largest resistance to EU infiltration is simply the local familiarity of national politics and the alien nature of EU politics. Therefore it is not the intention or fundamental necessity the EU has in its objective for a more commanding voice in international politics, it is the overwhelming concerns with local governance and the EU's desire to hegemonise European Member States and their very diverse localities. Subsequently the economic value of Europe is not the problem it is the EU's political role, and communication has suffered under this assertive relationship.

For the Intermediaries, they resemble a good attempt to make information accessible and thus interpret supranational politics to become relevant on a local scale. However, essentially the goal of democratic politics is to engage citizens into deliberation and this is something that is not pushed at a local level. The EU is communicated as more of an information centre, not as a fluid political entity that depends on its citizens for both its character and efficiency. Subsequently the EU's information and communication priorities are void of its fundamental characteristic, and this is that independent parties discuss, debate and deliberate the future of Europe on a horizontal and two-way platform, therefore *communication is absent* from the agenda and thus the EU's information and communication priorities can be more accurately viewed as, simply, *information priorities*.

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Interview Questions for the European Information Networks

1. What are your main priorities at [name of Information Network]?
2. What role does social media play within this organization?
3. How enthusiastic are people, you come into contact with, about the EU and European based ideas?
4. How flexible can the institution be when dealing with demands from citizens?
5. How specific is the European Commission in regards to the daily running of the [name of Information Network]?
6. How much contact does [name of Information Network] have with the European Commission? Is there a feedback process?

In your own opinion...

7. Does [name of Information Network] bring Europe closer to its citizens?
8. Do you think institutions such as this aid European integration?
9. Does the Europe [name of Information Network] and its associated activities assist the legitimization of Britain in Europe?

Interview Questions for the MEP's

Personal

1. What is your role as an MEP?
2. What strategies do you use to promote the EU?
3. Have you been involved in any EU inspired local initiatives?
4. How do you keep up with local enquires? And who are they from?

Exchange of communication

5. Do you think there is a communication deficit between the EU and EU citizens? And what do you think are the main reasons for this?
6. Does the European Parliament specify any communication policy between EU citizens and yourself?

General – in your own opinion...

7. Are MEP's and EU organisations accessible to the British public?
8. What is the EU doing in the way of promoting itself in Britain?
9. What has the EU done to try and reverse any preconceived opinions British citizens have about UK integration?

Interview Transcripts and Consent Forms for the European Information Networks

I will refer to myself as the Interviewer (INT) - *Questions recorded in Italics.*

Europe Direct:

Interviewee: Lynette Falconer (LF)

INT: What are your main priorities at Europe Direct?

LF: Well, I think I'd say most of our enquiries are by e-mail rather than personal caller or telephone, I think one of the things we try to do is use social media to sort of push information out so one of the aims is to try and get people to sign up to facebook, well twitter even more so...because there is so much information...we respond to enquires they vary quite a lot...

INT: How is Europe looking to make British citizens feel a part of Europe?

LF: In terms of our reporting every month we have to say what, out of the selection of enquiry topics, what has been the most requested information for that month, but when we are putting a bid in to get funding for Europe Direct and how it worked is... you do a basic module selection which is to be an information service and you get paid 12,000 Euros for that, but you have to make up 12,000 Euros in what they call matched funding so that's usually staff time, and then on top of that you can bid for what they call specific modules and some of those will be for events or conferences, and at the beginning...of the work program, you have to submit the work program and tell them what you going to do in that, you have to focus on the communication priorities that they give you for the year. So they change every year and I think that's sometimes the difficulty for us been in libraries because this year its totally almost focused on the recovery whereas say back in 2008 there was a year of intercultural

dialogue which was brilliant for libraries...the dilemma of communication it to citizens is how do you make it interesting to citizens...we do things around help job seekers, and giving business advice and various other things, but its sort of how do you get European policy, and telling them well the EU does this and that to help you, so that's a bit of a challenge...

INT: Do you think its people who are already interested in Europe that come here or does it attract people in its own right?

LF: There are some specific enquiries...I think on the events side we try to make the events attractive and get people in and then bring Europe into it, so if they come into a event around trying to get people a job...we give them that [a booklet] and answer any questions on it, I mean if its for kids, I guess you can make that more interesting and you bring in a bit of language, we've got a little workshop we do around, you know sort of selling things in a market and we do different languages and things, so its quite wide-ranging. Oh we might do some of the European day languages and have something around learning a language and looking at newspapers in different languages. Because we do about 60 different events a year...The last big event we did was around volunteering, because next year is the European Year of Volunteering and we work we Leeds volunteer co-coordinator, got some national type people to come. Basically its around benefits of volunteering, how do we get more people to volunteer. Can we write up some actions and give them to Leeds City Council? ...

INT: Do you have any contact with the MEP's of Yorkshire and Humber?

LF: A little, the next event coming up is called 'Food For Thought' which is going to be at the museum, and its around climate change, food sustainability, grow your own you know, and we've got Linda McAvan coming to that so that's quite good. And that's for kids but we're trying to make it inter generational as well, so she'd come and give a European Perspective and then we'd try and make it fun, we have got a market place even in the afternoon...There is lots we do be its as and when, its on a ad hoc basis, if its something like that we get in touch with an MEP because schools would like that we think, like to have a panel discussion with a MEP on it. But if its something like a conference we'd probably contact the Commission and say please

can you send us an expert...sometimes it ends up being the same person...you know an expert on volunteering or migration...But for smaller events, well these people may not be interested in coming but we have got something for international women's day, we'll try to book an appropriate speaker...depends what it is.

INT: These different activities are making Europe appear quite diverse aren't they?

LF: Some of my colleagues out in community libraries will ask for a bit of funding and they'll do an Irish evening or a Polish evening, we've had Holocaust Memorial Day, it depends where in the city they are, it depends, if you've got an Irish community...

INT: Would you say it is the Commission that gives you an agenda then you are free to mould it to the community?

LF: Yeah, I mean we have to submit a work plan, which they have to approve in terms of funding...at the end of the financial cycle we have to submit a big report saying what we've done. And if they think we've met what we said then they pay us.

INT: Are there any other facilities of this scope?

LF: There is 16 Europe Directs in the UK and nearly 500 across Europe...[referring to a non-European Institution in comparison to the Europe Direct centers]... I don't think there's necessarily the same pride in being a European.

INT: A lot of literature argues Britain in eurosceptic and the election turn out in 2009 was low. So are people interested in Europe?

LF: we did a lot of work around the election and...we used this trailer and went to Briggate and the University with it and some of the comments on Briggate were quite negative, 'oh I only vote in my local election', I mean if you try and say well a lot of legislation derives from Europe. I mean one Italian man said, 'I don't know, your Government lets in too many foreigners'...Just lots of strange comments really, but that was part of last years work program to try and to make people aware of the

elections...I should say they always send us loads and loads of materials for the election we'd have badges, pens, all sorts of stuff to give out to try...

INT: Have they asked you to focus on the flaws of the last election ready for the next election?

LF: They haven't said anything about that. Usually they set these communication priorities and you put your bid in they'll offer what they call specific training, so you trundle off to Brussels and we've often taken it up... what I'm saying is they'll try to give you some training on how to communicate the priority say March time...they'll be two places for the UK, there is 16, so you not guaranteed anyway to get on it, you tell them why you think you should be on it and then if you get on it to trundle off, and you come back and you try to apply it, my only thing about it is, the people that work for the Commission or whatever, they're very well-educated and articulate and they understand, and they are immersed in that. But you go to a library into Seecroft and try and do something about policies, you know, if you've got something to give away, a community evening...but...its quite hard...Sometimes I'm not sure they're aware of the people that come in that would be our natural clientele, in way...

INT: You have to cater for anyone who wants to use the facility, haven't you?

LF: Yes, if it's a conference people know what they are in for so they expect to have a discussion...if I was honest, we give them all our promotional stuff, we give them the booklet...but after that we don't know then what impact it has, we don't necessarily measure that impact to a massive degree...if we do a big event we will have some evaluation sheets, but it is quite difficult.

INT: Do you think Europe is an ideal and not really a reality for people? How easy is it for people to be involved?

LF: I think, because we are in libraries...we work in information services...I see it as part of the information services, we make the material available and people should make their own mind up. Even if they are eurosceptic, if they don't have the facts...we do take things like European Sources Online and European Voice, which

we buy out of the grant which aren't directly published by the Commission, they do have other views if you like. So as a service we try and keep it neutral and say well we now have a lot of information, make your own mind up about it. There is a conflict of interest sometimes because the Commission want us to promote things through the media and through articles and that ends up been quite hard because I have to put everything through Leeds City Council, and unless there's something in it about Leeds City Council they quite often send it back and say, I'm sorry we not putting it out...

INT: So your trying to appease two sets of people aren't you?

LF: Yeah that's I the context of our organization. Personally I don't think it's a special thing for Government, I mean I think its important people understand it but I don't know, I think the level it operates at is, man on the street not that interested, I mean they might be interested in 112 the emergency number, you could bring it to that, or Europe's 'work together' so if you fall off a cliff in Austria and your mobiles dead you can still dial 112 and that all thanks to Europe...I think its bringing it down to some kind of practical level, when you can. I mean that's another thing...Caroline [Lynette's colleague] tries to make the Facebook and Twitter fun...she puts things on it about the Eurovision song contest...I mean they pay us to do a website and they pay us to do a news letter as well, you don't have to do it, again you take the module if you want to do it, so, to some extent I'm not saying we dumb it down, but we have to be sort of, do you know the European Information Association? They are a national organization... I think they think we dumb it down...

INT: Is that so it's more accessible for people?

LF: Well they're dealing with information professionals so they're more, I say we are dealing with the public aren't we so we have to target it according to, you know the request or the audience if you like.

Interviewees: Rose Gibson and Tracy Hopkinson (RG and TH)

INT: What are your main priorities at Europe Direct?

RG: The main thing about an information centre is basically about disseminating any information about Europe, we've got the information centre on the second floor...its really about letting people know about the information around Europe, letting them know about our communication priorities, organizing events and engaging with people in that way.

INT: What role does social media play within this organization?

RG: Yes, a part from the website, we've got a blog, we're on facebook, twitter feed, so its any different ways of communicating really.

TH: and they're very popular as well the twitter feed in particular...

INT: How is that promoted?

RG: Its on the website, on your leaflets, anything we give out about the centre, its got all the twitter link, facebook link, the website link as well, so that's all on there so we're just pushing it, any event we go to, we make sure that's displayed as well...

INT: How enthusiastic are people, you come into contact with, about the EU and European based ideas?

RG: Its mixed isn't it

TH: Yes it is

RG: We've had a various events where people are very enthusiastic and maybe haven't known about stuff or are keen to know more, but we have had event where people are like 'oh EU, don't want to know', sort of thing, so it does vary.

TH: It depends on the location and what type of event it is because I was saying to Rose earlier, I did an event out in Roundhay Park for Europe Day, and we had lots of positive interest then because had more time on their hands, you know, and were able to stop and look at the information provided, and they were quite enthusiastic in European issues, where as sometimes you might do to more deprived areas and they don't see what relevance Europe is to them, and different people of different ages as well are interested.

RG: When you do see how it does effect you, you've got people who are interested obviously, there is a big communication priority around economic growth and job seeking and that type of thing. I think when people sort of realize how it can influence, its not just UK based, its people wanting to work abroad and things like that, people can see the positive value. And perhaps sometimes its if it becomes more political in a way, we don't push the political agenda. But I'm just thinking of an event about the MEP election last year, we had a store on Briggate didn't we, you know again there was quite a lot of positive comments, a lot of people didn't know they could vote, sort of well yes they could vote after that, so that was the whole point of doing it. But then we obviously did get some negative comments about, you know 'the EU is that for me' sort of thing...it's just trying to get over that.

TH: People were confused, really confused about the elections, and it was nice to be actually be out there and be like yes you can vote, and other people we not actually aware that there was going to be a European election, so it was really interesting to be out there and be like well this is actually happening, you can take part in this.

RG: Its when you do get involved in something like that, you do realize that sometimes messages that people probably assume everybody's aware of, people just aren't...

INT: What comments do you get from people who aren't interested?

TH: They generally don't want to engage

RG: ...they don't come and are like really against it, or put up any sort of arguments

against it, its just sort of, you know, 'I'm not interested'...I mean its our role to try and inform people that why we try and do events in all different areas, to encourage people really and make sure they know about it, we have so much information, that's our role to sort of get the information out there.

TH: People aren't necessarily anti-Europe, I'd say a very small percentage maybe, but it is very small, I'd say the larger percentage of people just aren't aware how Europe affects them on a day-to-day basis. And that's probably why they're not so interested.

INT: How flexible can the institution be when dealing with demands from citizens?

RG: We have a budget that we bid for certain key events, so we bid for, to do three major events which tend to be on the sort of conference light, I think we have to get 100 delegates, it has to be a pretty big event to do that, but then the rest of the funding is more flexible, we can, in that we can do a lot more smaller events and we can do, it really depends. If somebody came to us and said we really want you to do an event, it depends what scale it is, if they wanted us to organize another conference we probably wouldn't be able to, but if it was something about going to support an event that was already happening, we could provide a stall to provide information, a lot of it is about having a presence at other events, any community events we would get invited to, like Kirkstall festival is coming up, we've got a stall booked there so we're going out and using it as a combined role of promoting libraries and promoting European information, it depends what is it...its about fitting it in with the work plan

TH: and I suppose it depends on the topic as well. To how relevant it would be. Because obviously if there is topics around anything in the EU agenda, then its much easier for us to link in to it.

RG: So if it links, so we've got the communication priorities...the one we're focusing a lot on is economic growth...so as long as we can show that we're doing that then, I mean we have a monthly report, we report back to the commission and that details all the events we've done and publicity we've done, any press releases and anything like that, so the Commission is obviously fully aware of what we're doing as part of our funding. But if there was you know a particular event we don't have to get permission

from them to do it, if we feel its in scope of promoting European information we can go a head and do that.

INT: Is there a feedback process from the Commission?

RG: Lynette has had some feedback at conferences or if something has been particularly successful...but they are not feeding back all the time, but when Lynette...does the bids for the next years funding she often get feedback at that point about what's gone on the previous year, just so we're successful in the next year, and building on what's gone before.

TH: ...The commission has been quite positive about what we do here, Lynette has said when she goes to annual conferences they often use Leeds as an example, and that might be the social networking side of that, perhaps events and such like that we do.

RG: Well having a look at the number of events across all the Europe Directs, I think there is one that's done 65 events I think it was, and we did 60 last year, and I think there is only ourselves and Plymouth that are actually based with the library services as well, so, its around fitting that in with, you know the rest of the library. Some of the others of sort of core, just Europe Direct.

INT: How specific is the European Commission in regards to the daily running of the Europe Direct?

RG: Well they know the set up, they know what we're providing on a daily basis. We get, as I say we put in the reports every month, so they are clear what we do and what we deliver, and we've got an annual plan of what we planning to do. We have already put a bid in for the key events, so they know... you know an outline of those events, we feedback more when the time comes of what its exactly going to be. So they're aware over the year of what we are planning to do, and they get a monthly update of things that have happened. So they are not sort of involved on a daily basis because they do know what is going on, and we do have a facility where we get enquiries, and they are answered directly, sometimes they are maybe referred onto other people, so

there may be an awareness there. But as long as they can see through the reports that everything is, you know, following the guide lines and the plan...

TH: then they are happy. I think they do give guide lines as to how we publicize ourselves, we've got to have so many signs internally, so many staff able to work on projects, access to a computer for European type things, a telephone line...a European hotline for enquiries, so in that respect then they do, as we say for other things...

RG: I mean that's not really on a daily basis that's set up at the beginning of it and that's in place, and people have been and had a look at the centre so they are aware that that's in place and we have got things...

INT: Was this Europe Direct centre established in 2005?

TH: Yes I think we were established in 2005

RG: Yes because I think we are the second phase now, yes because we had the first lot, and there was quite a few Europe Directs that were in library services and a lot were cut down, and I cant remember the number now, but we were one of the few that continued into the second phase.

TH: We were a public information centre, and which we'd been since 1990's where you always had access to your publications and such like, but then obviously in 2000 onwards that's when things changed, I think the name changed from public information relay to European publication information centre in the late 1990's and that continued for a few years and then they brought this new system in where is was much more hands on and regulated and things...

TH: ...it was our choice as to whether we went onto this level, I mean...I think there is still a few EPIC's [European Public Information Centre] still around the ones that are quite hands on but don't receive funding, we applied to actually become a Europe Direct centre...

RG: This particular one is part of the four year bid, but you still have to re-apply

every year so this is sort of 2009-13 but you still have to put in a bid on an annual basis, even though its part of a four year program.

INT: Is there any people you work with a lot of the time?

RG: Again it depends what we are doing because we have worked with...we have worked with volunteering groups... adult social care...various groups, job centers...jobs and skill within the Council, climate change, international relations with the Council...so all different parts of the council are involved, again it depends which event. I mean we've had the 'Food For Thought' event...again it was both groups in and outside the council that were involved in that...I think it is quite known now to different parts of the council.

INT: Does Europe Direct bring Europe closer to its citizens?

RG: ...well yes definitely, I think we have certainly found, I mean what we were saying about events, we go out and talk to people and quite often they are not aware and obviously, I think it's a non threatening environment isn't it, the library service, its part of the information we deliver and people are usually happy to talk about things, you know, and we can pass on information, and make them aware of things perhaps they wouldn't of been before. And its very much hands on, people on the ground who are able to give you know the European angle on things...

We have got so many leaflets and booklets or whatever, so whatever they are interested in there is usually something they can take away and follow up on.

TH: Well that's it because it covers all areas, so it's the environment, its health living, there is usually a subject that somebody is interested in and then, publicity... the booklets actually shows how Europe links to the topics, so I think in that's sense, then people really relate to it on a daily basis, so yeah...

INT: Do you think institutions such as this aid European integration?

RG: Again I think generally what we are doing is about getting the messages across,

and how it affects people in their regular lives and just generally it can be almost anything that they're involved in, there can be some European connection and it is just through the different events I think and making people aware.

INT: Does the Europe Direct and its associated activities assist the legitimization of Britain in Europe?

TH: I think it enables people to make their own decisions, more easily, because it makes them more aware of those connections and whether they agree or not, well at least they are informed and can make a decision themselves.

RG: and I think its just, if we weren't there, to push the information and sort of be involved in events, then I think there would be so many people that we have come across in the last few year that probably wouldn't of picked up on any sort of European connection or, as Tracy was saying, generally be aware of what Europe offers in those sort of terms.

INT: Well the election turn out was low, do you think the Commission will make you work on that?

RG: ...your limited to what you can do, its about getting that message across, and its perhaps more gradual than we can reach, but obviously we put stuff on the website that can reach a certain audience, twitter messages, about the actual events and things, so there is lots of different ways of getting it out there.

TH: I think when you think about the population that can potentially vote, and the proportion that we could probably get in contact with, it's just so small anyway.

RG: It's just the trickle affect isn't it

TH: Yeah exactly, but I think if it makes a difference to just a handful of people and makes them more aware, and their able to make more informed choices

RG: There is a huge percentage that don't vote in the UK elections...you know what

ever small increase we can get for the Europeans is pretty good

TH: And some areas even less...you find in some areas, when you go out and your talking about Europe and taking vacations out, it reflects different areas geographically as to their interests, their interest will be fairly low were in areas voting in the UK is fairly low... because they don't necessarily connect.

RG: Its difficult if people don't have the thought that they should be voting or can go out and vote then, Europe is another step on, so its just getting them engaged in that way.

TH: and I think some people think that if they vote in the European election then they are voting for Europe, and that's not necessarily the case because obviously you can vote a MEP in who is not necessarily very pro-European its having a voice there in the European Parliament isn't it, and I think that's what people need to realise and recognise.

European Document Centre:

Interviewee: Simon Robinson (SR)

INT: What are your main priorities at European Document Centre?

SR: Our priorities are our students at the University so it's mainly finding their information resources. So they would usually come to me with a specific request... It is open to the general public but we don't advertise it.

INT: What role does social media play within this organization?

SR: No, not really. We have done things in the past in conjunction with say the LMU [Leeds Metropolitan University] and things like that, information displays and that kind of thing, but in general no. I must admit I think the EDC is quite a low priority. Its something we have but it's not something we push.

INT: How enthusiastic are people, you come into contact with, about the EU and European based ideas?

SR: It mainly is providing the resources, I mean I do some workshops which are like sign up workshops, not part of the curriculum or anything and they are quite popular. There is a lot of enthusiasm out there and they do come across from different schools in the University, there is a fair amount of demand for that kind of information.

INT: What do the workshops consist of?

SR: Its finding online resources how to find the treaties, case law, statistics so its specific categories in the information and the best online resources. We do use some blogs as well.

INT: How flexible can the institution be when dealing with demands from citizens?

SR: Within our budget we would be quite flexible, yeah.

INT: How specific is the European Commission in regards to the daily running of the European Document Centre?

SR: They're not...we have been a document centre since 1973 or something, we do an annual survey and that's about it and they send us annual publications. And I've never had any feedback since I've been doing the job.

INT: So you have answered my next question, is there a feedback process? And it is just the report?

SR: Yeah

INT: Does European Document Centre bring Europe closer to its citizens?

SR: Our document centre is certainly a niche, because we are really just using it like any other library collection, so its staff and students and their information needs and then there is a European studies a lot of politics students use it. Citizens in general no.

INT: Do you think information providers such as this aid European integration?

SR: I suppose it helps are students and staff be more informed about Europe but that's the limitation of it really.

INT: Does the European Document Centre and its associated activities assist the legitimization of Britain in Europe?

SR: Yeah they do because they're quite positive. Obviously a lot of the material we have is the official material so it's the official documents. But we counteract that, we've got something called the European sources online which is an independent database so it's not just concentrating on official recourses. So we try to give a full range. There is a new source which I always point student to which is called Euro Active and its acedemic but its independent, so there is the official resource Rapid and we counteract that with by some critique so some independent work.

Interviewee: Kathleen Pitt (KP)

INT: What are your main priorities at European Document Centre?

KP: This is the Leeds Metropolitan University European Documentation Centre. We serve two groups of users mainly student, researchers, academics that use the collections. I say collections because we have got the main EDC which is all the free documents we receive from the European Commission official publications office, but then we also collect just a few books as well which we hope will help people about the European studies which we buy out of our library budget, its not strictly part of the EDC, but it's a nice addition. So we are serving the academic community which the EDC was set up for, and then also we are open to the public, so I do liaise with the Europe Direct centre down the road at the public library, and if they do get any enquiries which they cant answer because they are too in depth for them or they do need copies of legislation or reports or whatever then they would refer them up to me here. And it works both ways because they get more stuff for the general public.

INT: What role does social media play within this organization?

KP: We don't really get money for that so we don't do much of that at all really. In the library as a whole their are moves a foot to, you know you know use, well we already have an electronic information desk that my college is working on and a telephone enquiry service and we are going to start an online chat, so if people what to use that for EDC questions then that would be ok, but I wouldn't say its particularly used for that at the moment. But otherwise we just have the guides online and the Europe subject pages online for the students to look at. In the European Commission as a whole they are using social media definitely, a lot more, they have a facebook page and so on. And the European Information Association, which I'm on the committee of, you can definitely ask questions of it, I'm not sure if it's a completely online chat but you can certainly as questions online like an electronic information desk.

INT: How enthusiastic are people, you come into contact with, about the EU and

European based ideas?

KP: Difficult to say really. Certainly the groups I teach, about how to access EU information, they've got assignments to complete so they are very focused, so of course they are very enthusiastic in that sense about learning how to access the information because they need it. So it's a case of needing the information. We have had enquiries from you know members of the public who are really desperate to take a case to their MEP you know whether they've got personal problems, you know financial problems, or some sort of access to ground problems or access to some legal problem, we have had those both when we were a Euro Info centre and we have had them now, when people are desperate for the information so in that case are enthusiastic about coming to the EU.

In a way that question is slightly irrelevant in that we have to be unbiased so whether they are enthusiastic or not enthusiastic, whether they describe the EU and don't believe in the EU at all or whether they do believe it, we would give the same service...we are here to give the information and make the information available not to give an opinion...

INT: How flexible can the institution be when dealing with demands from citizens?

KP: Yes, oh yes absolutely, we would go to any lengths to get something, certainly. And be virtue of being a EDC we do have privileged access to certain other stalls of information, like we could go to the European Commission library and they actually do a inter-library loan service, which I've never used but you know its there to be used if you want it, they post books and documents, and of course they can electronically send us stuff, so if we were really desperate to find something we would go to the UK representative in London first and then of course if we couldn't get it there we would go to the European Commission library, and of course we have access to other data bases, these various EU Information Networks... you know like the EIA if we struggle to get a document we might consult one of them. We are members of the EDC network of EDC librarians all over Europe and beyond, what we have is an Intranet where we can ask each other questions...so the networks are very important...

INT: How specific is the European Commission in regards to the daily running of the European Document Centre?

KP: Apart from supplying the documents, well obviously in this case the University is giving the staff and staff time to make the documents accessible, so it is a mutual thing, they provide a lot free but we also have to provide a lot free as well. I mean there are such certain stipulations you know like we have got advertise that we are part of this...we are now part of the Europe Direct Network...obviously there are guidelines to staffing... but by enlarge we can look after the stock, we are allowed to withdraw stock that's out of date...we can take stuff out we don't want, we can pick and chose...we can adapt to things here.

We are not all full EDC's. Simon and I work in conjunction with each other in that we both are specific EDC's instead of full EDC's, so we don't get absolutely everything that is published here and neither does he, we have both chosen certain subject area's to concentrate on and then in the middle there is a bit of an overlap we both get...

INT: How much contact does the institution have with the European Commission? Is there a feedback process?

KP: Yeah, every year we have to fill in a survey, and I have got copies of them all what I've submitted, the questions tend to be the same each year they just add in one or two slightly different questions, its about the number of users we've had, which is difficult to say because we are open access, and the number of hours people are working on the project, which again is slightly difficult to say, but we can certainly gestimate...

INT: Does European Document Centre bring Europe closer to its citizens?

KP: Well it does in the sense that it is there and they can access the information with the help of a intermediary...so yeah in theory it does but we are doing the sorts of promotion exercises the Europe Direct centre is to maybe, I mean you would have to know we were here really. Although I know in some EDC's they do, I know in Italy

they do much more outreach...they have just had a big promotion in the major cities in Italy...they did it for Europa day which is always the 9th May, yeah they did it for that week or fortnight...loads of different events going on...but again it was the Europe Direct Centre's in conjunction with the EDC and other EU information providers as well... so yeah some countries tend to do a lot like that where we don't tend to do so much...here in the UK.

INT: Do you think information providers such as this aid European integration?

KP: Well yes they do, again we have got the information, but there are so many different sources I think it is probably slightly confusing...you tend to know about the Information provider that relates to your field, but overall its difficult because most people would probably go straight to their MEP, but MEP's do come to us sometimes to ask for information, we have had MEP's or MEP's assistants, research assistants. A lot of people if they had a European problem access or visa issue they would probably go to their MEP if they were just some ordinary citizen they might know about the Europe Direct centre, where we are just trying to promote ourselves within the University more...We do get still, even though we have ceased to be a Euro Info centre...we do still get general enquiries...It is part of the job to know where else to go...its getting started, its getting started, so most people would go to an MEP because that is the first person you think of.

INT: Does the European Document Centre and its associated activities assist the legitimization of Britain in Europe?

KP: Difficult to say really...you cant make an informed decision unless you've got information to hand. I mean people could use the information either way. Its up to each individual to make their mind up.

Enterprise Europe Network:

Interviewees: Tim Barraclough and Nik Sennhauser (TB and NS) from the company Targeting Innovation who belong to the EEN.

INT: What are your main priorities at Enterprise Europe?

TB: Targeting Innovation is Glasgow based organization and we deliver different bits of European funding so were are, that is the brand if you like, Enterprise Europe Network, we are the Yorkshire element of it, the network goes throughout Europe 43 countries, 600 organizations...its Europe and beyond... it goes into America, it goes into China

NS: And Korea, Chile

TB: less of a presence but it does go that far, it's the biggest network of its kind globally...and I think because the presence within the regions is quite small people don't realize it, but it's the biggest of its type there. And if you like it's the Commissions...method of engagement for businesses, like the national what was the Business Link, and we support companies from commercial opportunities, technology transfers, so put in a new bit of kit in a different sector or research and developments...we also have what was called, the European Information Centre, which is...if you are a company and you want to know what legislation you need to get your product into that country then you can come to them and they'll do the leg work for you, do the research, identify what it is agreed to you, but one of the other tasks that they are charged with is to actually lobby, if a new bit of legislation comes out the Commission will ask us to engage the business community to actually get feedback on that, if its realistic, what the implication are of that is...that's kind of like not citizens because we are in the business community we are not dealing with individual people on the street...

NS: ... Euro Info centre does have service as a EEN centre as well, there used to be two networks ... the innovation centre which did a technology transfer, and then the Euro Info centre that did the whole legislation and lobbying bit, then they merged as

two networks in 2008 when they created the Enterprise Europe Network. So basically what we are, we are suppose to be a one stop shop for small businesses so any kind of support for a small business we are suppose to be a one stop shop.

TB: we're not just for small businesses. Fundamentally, the majority of any business is, 80% of businesses are small businesses so naturally you are going to be supporting them more, larger organizations have a less of a need for someone like us because that have the resource in house...

INT: What role does social media play within this organization?

NS: Starting now, its something that is still very new and we're getting used to, we have started using it to promote workshops and stuff, but also to engage with our clients on Targeting Innovation not so much the EEN side.

TB: well both... As an organization, that's one of our areas its social media its IT, we have got a lot of expertise in house on that. We actually deliver workshops on behalf of Business Link...its becoming more and more of a tool, that, as an organization...region development agencies funded a lot of cluster groups that were out in place to support companies...now that likes of the regional development agencies are been dispersed ... so all organizations are having to become commercially focused, i.e. they are starting to charge for their services, so...it's a little bit of a feeding frenzy out there because everyone is trying to put on the best package...how do you get that out to the business community? Social media is becoming more and more to engage with it...and there is a lot of choices out there for businesses and that won't last in my personal opinion...

INT: How enthusiastic are people, you come into contact with, about the EU and European based ideas?

TB: They are more enthusiastic now because we are funded through the Commission and in quite blunt terms are services are provided at no cost. I think...companies can be confused quite easily, taken into account they don't have time to get into the red tape of it they just want the support and in the past...a lot companies are just looking

at what support what funding is there to support them do a particular activity. So funding is not varied any more, so its what other tasks...easy accessible, because we do technology transfer, we do... we do commercial, if your message isn't clear for the company then they could get turned off and don't bother, they want to crack on with business. But that is changing because other support isn't there so we're getting more people coming our way at the moment...

NS: also now we're only in our third year [as the new network]...people start to know who we are, they've heard about it through somebody else...and I think people...at the beginning it was difficult just to explain to people what it is and what we do.

TB: It is quite a confusing sell sometimes and if you have the likes of Business Link...everybody knows who they are...if you haven't started a business or your looking to get into a new market its UK Business Link...we are the biggest network of our kind but actually the costs that run us on a regional level are quite low, its not a big amount of money, the network as a whole... obviously is more substantial cost there, and because we are a new brand, we had a lot of work, we had to build a reputation and get out there to the network partners...to make them more aware of us, to make them want to engage, and work with us to engage with business. So we're not duplicating effort and we're getting the best value for money for companies in that sense. So we have come a long way. Obviously the landscape is changing, the government is stripping out a lot of costs and because we're not funding currently through the government, but from the Commission directly, we're in a little bit of a unique situation.

NS: what the network is trying to do now is streamline the brand, what we had up till now was each source from each different countries had different names... what we are doing now is to be more consistent with the brand across all the networks in Europe and just use the Enterprise Europe Network as a brand...a consistent brand and message...

TB: The network is Enterprise Europe network, that the best way to get in companies appreciate that more, the things is Yorkshire it makes you appear as a smaller organization than you actually are, and the other thing is ... the fact it's a public

funded contract delivered by the private sector companies, they have the commercial focus, so that sometimes muddles the water, it shouldn't do but it does, and I would say in England we are very prim and proper and we play by the rule book, but if you go to other European countries they flex those rules.

INT: How flexible can the institution be when dealing with demands from citizens?

TB: ...we get funding from the Commission but in order to draw funding down from the Commission you have to be able to match that with other sources of funding...but Targeting Innovation is here...we're very flexible and the level of input we have with a company to get them into a new market is very much down to the company it can be a light touch, sometimes they just want a contact name and a number and they want to do all the rest of the work, or they might want a little bit more involved assistance. Basically we generate a company profile, on the technology they want to deliver and that profile get submitted into the Enterprise Europe system and in their there is a partner search sheet...there is a lot of profiles...you can look by sector, or by country...

I personally take on a more hands on approach, I've taken a sector approach and I...but you can do it through profile, we do a lot of activities alongside key conferences, so we'll do a brokerage missions outside key conferences, we also do outward missions, so we'll take delegations out to a country to meet with companies out there to do a conference, we'll also have inward missions...its best just to get them talking, if you get them in front of each other then there is a better chance of something happening...so...there is lots you can do, the easiest I always say to a company is...effectively we are here to help facilitate your relationship on a European platform...we're involved as you want us to be...

My approach is the light approach and I'll go away and do it and hopefully we can come back, companies are interested when you come back with a contact or somebody who wants to talk to them. But half the problem, with some people when they engage with a company, will try and explain all the methods and that is when you loose the company, you won't get a second meeting or anymore contact, that is one of the pluses of the network is the diversity of things you can do and the amount

of things you can do, but that's also the negatives of the network because some people can go and try and sell it all...

INT: How specific is the European Commission in regards to the daily running of Enterprise Europe?

TB: Its like with any European contract, you are given a contract and you are, or any funded contract, you are basically they want to see certain things delivered. The biggest thing for us is to get partnership agreements...how we do that, we will say we will do that through two brokerage missions, four conferences, x number of workshops...generating expressions of interest or generating negotiations, generating a number of profiles we put into the system which all lead up to your partnership agreement...how we actually do the nity grity is down to us and that is what we are paid for, that would be fairly standard across any public funded contract...

INT: Is there a formal feedback process?

TB: There is a reporting procedure there are certain documents we need to make sure we complete a catch of that...so there is a reporting procedure and that is crucial to keep them happy, and if we don't do that we don't get paid so that's our incentive...

INT: Does Enterprise Europe bring Europe closer to its citizens?

TB: I think the Enterprise Europe contract is a very good contract, I enjoy the delivery of it, everything has its bureaucracy, but from a company perspective it has a lot to offer, I don't think companies quite realize that, but its in the sell...I think its quite exciting what it can do as long as its delivered in the right way...

NS: but as you say, in Britain in particular they are quite skeptical, because they are always thinking, where's the hook? If we do workshops here, compared to workshops people do in Spain, Italy or Hungary, we only get like 15 – 20 people, where as there their events they have got 50, 60, 70 people coming to events, people I think there are more open.

TB: you have to charge people to make them turn up to see the value. In fairness that has changed, so is slightly wrong, but in the past you would charge people to make sure they turn up, even though you could deliver it for free, but sometimes if you see something that is a free conference you think, oh it can't be very good...but that's changing because we our having to start to charge because we need to be generating out own match as well.

The short answer is yes there is value in it but it is in the sell...some companies think there is a bit more of a hook than there is...

INT: Do you think information providers such as this aid European integration?

TB: It depends on the company... what sector it is, and if it's done any exports before, it might need a little bit of assistance. But all companies are business focused they're all looking at the commercial gain at the end of it so all companies are savvy...there is not a standard answer to that...it depends on their ability as an organization, their experience as an organization, how young they are, how old they are, how large they are, as to what they want us to do...

INT: Does Enterprise Europe and its associated activities assist the legitimization of Britain in Europe?

TB: I would say that this, given that this is, we pay our taxes, Britain pays a sum of money to be part of the Commission, this is the Commission's business delivery model the way they engage with the businesses, I want to see my value come back into Britain, I want to see that businesses get their fair share of support and do the best they can.

NS: If you look at the stats, Britain is getting a lot out of it...

TB: ...if we're putting in... say a million pounds, obviously it would be a lot more than that... into say the research programme, but one company submits a proposal and takes five grand out of it its like well we've just given the rest of Europe a lot of money, and got not much back from it. You want to out that million in and get two

million back...It's the same kind of principle with the whole network schemes, we're funded by the Commission, indirectly by us the tax payer to be here and its to help and do better in Europe and further afield, both from a commercial perspective and on a research basis and technology basis, so I think we need to be here otherwise, what are we doing.

Interview Transcripts and Consent Forms for the MEP's

Interviewee: Linda McAvan (LM)

INT: What is your role as an MEP and how do you communicate with the locals of Yorkshire and Humber?

LM: The main function of a MEP is to represent people in the European Parliament and our main role, what I spend most of my time doing is working on EU legislation, so I spend most my time working on, in my particular case environment food safety and public health legislation, which is...there is not a lot of understanding about the role of MEP's because people don't understand the legislative process, people probably don't understand the Westminster legislative process to be honest, never mind the Brussels one, people probably don't know how you get a law from Westminster through... The difference between an executive and a legislator...the European Parliament is a legislator and the European, in the government, in the British system, the government drafts the laws, ministers with civil servants will draft the laws, they're the executive in our system, House of Commons its Parliament is the legislator and it has to approve the laws but of course in a system like the UK a big majority for one party, or a coalition in this case...normally a law is drafted and doesn't change much because on the floor of the House you've got majorities for a party, they do what they are told to by the Ministers and so a law will not change much from being drafted to finishing and becoming law, so basically when laws are announced by the Government, in normal circumstances, in fact they're changing at the moment because of the coalition, normally you would expect the law to come out much as it was written, because the Government has got majority, the Governments written it, and they can push it through the House, but you know in theory, you've got in law, any legislative system, parliamentary system you there's supposed to be a difference between the executive and the legislator, the legislator hold the executive to account, that's how its supposed to work, but in our system the legislator is weaker because you have big majorities...of course now with the coalition we saw the Liberal

Democrats in the Lords hold up the Police Reform Bill, so coalition a coalition government makes it a bit more interesting. In the European Union, the executive is the Commission, only the EU Commission can draft a European law and they do that on the basis of political signals from Government Ministers, so EU heads of state, meet in Brussels four times a year and they say we need to meet our climate change international commitments, we therefore need laws in common to meet those, we ask the European Commission to draft those laws, the laws then go on the table, the laws are then drafted...but the legislators are MEP's, Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers is one Minister from each country....MEP's have their say first in the first reading and then the Ministers from each country...they meet and decide what they think about what we think, and we negotiate the law. So the separation between the legislative and the executive are much more pronounced, its more like the system in the US system...so we are basically negotiating laws and the difference between the Government and Europe is that the law can change hugely between being put on the table and finally approved, because its got to go through this negotiation between the MEP's and Ministers. And that's what I spend most my time doing...

I think if we asked people honestly, they probably don't know how their House of Commons works, but they kind of trust the House of Commons more because its an old system people are confident. I mean people probably don't know how decisions are taken in their town hall, do people understand how town halls are run? How decisions are made? You know what decisions are made by who at what level, probably not...

So, in a way I think probably because people don't trust the institution that's why they say things like its not democratic, its not this its not that, but I don't think, I think the problem is fundamental trust the systems are not dissimilar to from ones that they would, that happen in Westminster and their local town hall, but they're not, because there's not trust in the institution therefore people, I mean people probably don't know what role their MP's have in legislation and if they not in government then the answer is probably not a lot.

INT: Is this because the EU is such a young institution, because trust is built over time?

LM: You wonder, I mean its interesting isn't it, we live in the British state, which includes Scotland, how much trust is there from Scotland in the British state at the moment, interesting question. The British state has existed since what, 1704, don't know I ought to know, the Act of Union with Scotland, that's you know 300 years ago, and there's weakness there. And its partly because, the question, do the Scots trust the British nation, the United Kingdom? So, yeah, nationhood is built over time and at the same time the EU hasn't got the vocation to be a nation, its, people feel much more strongly about their nation than they do the EU, but nationhood is constructed as well.

INT: Is the EU pushing to gain this trust so people have an ideological attachment to it?

LM: I think it probably does try, it works better in some countries than others, I mean on Monday of this week it was Europe week and we had the new government, sort of boasting that it wasn't going to out the European flag up on Europe Day. Yeah so David Cameron 'oh we're not having the European flag up', because traditionally most Government departments on Europe Day, have put the European flag up...whereas Liberal Democrat Ministers were putting it up...but if you watch President Sarkozy make an address to the French nation, or any senior politician from most European countries, they will always have their national flag and the European flag behind them, so in those countries, being part of Europe is seen as part of the, I mean if you are French and German of course being part of Europe was the solution of enormous nation problems, and thats probably, Britain associates its decline with the EU, other countries associate their growth with the EU. If you at how successful Germany has been since the 1950's and still is successful and the most powerful economy Europe by a long way, and despite the unification problems it has had, it is much stronger economy then Britain. But it associated Europe with that. I mean that doesn't go to say that there is no eurosceptism, but Britain joined in 1973, beginning of the oil crisis, we were going to free fall economically, we have to go up the IMF in 1976, nothing to do with the EU but it co-inside with our decline. If your Spanish you know the EU means the end of Franco, if your from Eastern Europe then Europe means the end of Communism, it means you join the democratic family of nations the

end of oppression. If you're Greek, the end of the Generals, you know people forget the different histories and different histories determine how Europe is perceived in those countries. If you were Belgium and you spent the first half of the twentieth century being invaded, occupied, the sight of the first world war, the battle fields, the second world war, you know if you were the Dutch and you were starved by the Nazi's during the war then...the EU was the solution to half a century of conflict division and war and death. In Britain its not like that, we've got a different history and that's one of the most crucial things about how the EU is perceived in the first place....

INT: Identifying with it is on a completely different level isn't it?

LM: Yeah. So trust is not there in any EU institution in Britain, we had our empire and it's gone and we sort of resent it almost as a nation. We resent the fact that we're no longer the big player. To be a big player we've got to play with others...Britain was a late comer to the EU, we had our chance to join in the 1950's and we declined, we joined late, the French then vetoed us for years and wouldn't let us join, then we joined and we're one of a big number of countries. And the French and Germans have already set the scene.

Its interesting we have a eurosceptic government in terms of the Tories, but if you look at since Christmas we've had all these major big international crisis', where has David Cameron had to go to try and resolve them, Brussels. How much time has he spent with his counterparts in Brussels? You know you can't go to war in Libya on your own.

...the whole thing about the question of loss of sovereignty, the question is how much modernity do we have to control global banking system, how could Britain as a country control the global banking system, the answer is it can't. It has to try and work with other people. How can we have climate change plan in this country if we don't work with our European neighbours? How we have a common fisheries policy? People say the common fisheries policy is a problem with are fishing industry but whether or not we have common fisheries policy, we can't have fisheries policy without working with our neighbours, if we don't have a European policy we'd have

to have a bilateral agreement with other countries with fish near our waters. So working with your neighbours isn't really optional. We've always worked with our neighbours, if you look at the history of all these programmes on TV about Tudors and things, what's it about, its about the French ambassador, the Spanish ambassador, should the Queen Elizabeth marry the Spaniard because to make alliances? So really we have always been a European nation, we've spent our whole history negotiating with our near neighbours. But some how nearly at the end of that in the nineteenth century we had an empire and that distorted our view for a while and we've not got over it...having said that there is a growth of eurosceptism across Europe now, which may be a different issue.

INT: How do you keep up with local enquires and with local initiatives? Do you try and impose Europe onto the local region?

LM: There aren't that many local organisations trying to promote Europe. I don't see my job as to promote Europe, I see my job as being, to let people know what I am doing and I do what I can. I represent a region of five million people, which is bigger than many European countries, and I'm the only Labour MEP in this region, so you know I've got a office here, Wath-upon-Deerne, and I live in Sheffield, people say why aren't you more in Hull, well I have to be away in Parliament four days a week, like a MP has to be in London, I'm back in my constituency Friday till Monday again, and I do what I can to go to schools, I have a monthly bulletin which anyone can have, I do press releases, I do an annual report, I am available if people want to come here and meet me or I go and meet them...but I don't see my job to impose, I'm not here to sell Europe to people. In fact I think it's the wrong way of looking at it.

I think the best Europe for, I mean Europe isn't a good thing or a bad thing really, I mean is your town hall a good thing or a bad thing, is the fact we have a House of Commons a good thing or a bad thing? The fact is someone is going to run your city, your country and someone is going to take decisions at transnational level, the only choice is, do you want to have any democratic say in how that happens. In every country in all of time, somebody has always run things, what's changed in modern times is that we have had democratic institutions which actually have a say in that, we have always had dictators, Rome, somebody ran Rome they kind of a semi-

democracy, but somebody's always run everything. Now at European level, what we're trying to do is have a say over how inevitable decisions, where a governments people negotiate, big companies working at European level, we're are just trying to get some democratic control over globalisation where more and more things are becoming outside of the control of Britain...if we've got the World Trade Talks as Britain, we don't count for very much, if we go as Britain with the Germans, the French and the market of half a billion people we have a lot more clout, so its actually in our national interest to work with our neighbours, because only by working with them can we have any clout, on all these big global decisions that are going to affect us. If we just cut off from everybody else people would just say well 'who are you?'

I don't want people to love the EU, I don't see my role as to promote the EU. But what I try and do is have people understand why some decisions are best taken at the now at a European level. I don't want Europe to run hospitals, or schools, or decide what tax you pay...I don't want a super state...I don't think that's right, decisions should be taken at the level they are. I just want people to understand why some decisions are taken at a transnational level. And the European Union is the only transnational body that takes decisions, which actually has a democratic decision-making mechanism, decisions are taken at NATO, decisions are taken at the UN, but they're not particularly democratically taken. [Its unique] because you've got laws that effect people, but at least they are done in a democratic manner, I mean lets not think for minute, that before the European Parliament had more powers these decisions were taken... by Ministers from different countries meeting together, but in reality because those Ministers had not a lot of time to devote to European legislation, because they're Ministers, they would negotiate by civil servants from each country and were not very transparent at all, people forget that, there have always been decisions that are negotiated, and always will be transnational decisions that are negotiated, the only choice is do you want them to be open to more scrutiny.

Its not easy to communication, you know, it's a huge region and everything, but I don't see my job as to sell Europe.

INT: In reflection of what we just spoke about, would you say there is a deficit then between the EU and EU citizens or is it just the case, of a lack in interest maybe from

EU citizens because obviously you yourself are providing information if people want it, but then there's still this whole idea of Britain and euroscepticism?

LM: I think it's a lack of, I think it's the problem, same fundamental problem. People say we don't get enough information, but I wonder how many people read when they get their council tax bill, the bulletin that comes from their local authority which explains how the local authority spends their money, I wonder how many people just put it in the bin or how many read it...

People often say I don't have enough information but information's there, it's just that...why should people be interested in one way? You know, do people read what the MPs, know what the MPs doing? ... They know what's in the papers and obviously national stories are, dominate more but, it's not a deficit, I think it's, the work that we do is often technical, complex. The laws affect people but they don't affect people off until a few years after we make directives. Directives anyway give a lot of leeway to governments on how to implement them and so the implementation will happen a few years later and the implementation will be decided in Westminster not in Brussels...You know, so Brussels sets out broad framework laws, to try and get people working together on common policies like for example minimizing waste, cutting carbon emissions, re-designing cars and vehicles, setting technical standards which clean up the power stations, which mean that we now got fish back in the Dearne river here, we have cleaner air pollution, cleaner air, less pollution, better environmental standards but the implementation is done through the UK government. So it's hard sometimes for people to see who has taken the decisions or when and they tend to, Europe tends to get the flack when it goes wrong but doesn't get much of the credit when it goes right.

How many people in Britain know for example that the fact we got 4 weeks paid holiday by law in this country, is down to a European directive. They didn't have that right 8 years ago, they have now. It's EU law that sets out minimum labour standards across Europe. It's implemented through national Government and so national Ministers take credit for it...They take credit for the good things but blame Europe when it goes wrong...So when people take the credit for the fact we have been cutting

our carbon emissions and the fact that there going down, is all to do with the fact we have signed up to EU wide laws.

INT: Yeah, so what do you think of policy then, like Plan D for dialogue, democracy and debate that's really pushing the communication idea?

LM: We're not involved in Plan D as MEP's and I don't really know what impact it's had and couldn't really comment on it cause I'm not sort of.., it's the Commission project isn't it. For there communication strategy, I would urge the European Commission to do more work on reputing nonsense in newspapers you know, and to actually just tell the truth about things, and just you know. Some of things they do. I don't know, I don't know about Plan D, it doesn't involve us and we are not particularly informed about it.

INT: So you don't have to execute these sorts of policies in a MEP then?

LM: No nothing to do with me...My job is to represent people on the legislation and to negotiate these laws. Commission and Communication strategy, it's a bit like asking a member of parliament are you responsible for the Governments PR strategy...You know, they're not. There not part, they are there to go Westminster and represent their constituency and that's what my job is.

Well no that's the Commissions, I know they've done some projects and things. I don't know much about it I suppose.

INT: Who does the Commission make implement their policies then?

LM: Commission officials...There's an office in London, one in Edinburgh and one in Wales and they do public information. It's a bit like the government has, public information departments. So the Government wants people to know what it's doing about whatever, it will, it will have public information on television about drink driving, whatever, so Governments have, all Governments and all. I mean the United Nations has one, NATO has a public information camp you know, information what it does etc.

So there's an office in London which represents European Commission and they'll do, you know information about Europe, they do information for schools so people know what it is but it's not really my job to diffuse that information... My job is to say, I'm involved in laws and what my role is been, what I think about the laws and how I change them and to listen to people who want to change them, I think that's more my job as an MEP.

INT: Finally, going back to the 2009 elections which had a poor turn out and this whole idea of euroscepticism, do you think there should be a nation-wide promotion of Europe, like perhaps via new media? I know yourself you got Twitter and youtube. Do you think there should be any sort of big push on that?

LM: I don't think that has a... I don't think communication is the problem, I think it's confidence in the EU as an institution and, I mean at the moment things are under a lot of strain in Europe and we have a lot of enormous international problems, you know we've gone out, we now got a war in Libya, we got NATO bombing Libya, well not NATO, France and Britain in theory, you know we got thousands of people, I mean Libya was just an example of the things that are difficult you know, if you watched this mornings news, you know Britain and France wanted to do something about Libya, we have led a military campaign. Colonel Gaddafi had an agreement with the EU that he would stop migrants from all over Africa using Libya as an access to the EU. He's now said that your bombing me therefore you can have the refugees, I'm not going to spend my time and energy stopping sub-Saharan Africans coming to Europe and I have thousands of people trying to get on boats coming to Italy and that, and as a result of that the EU's under a lot of stain because all these people arrive in Italy and the Italians are saying well hang on a minute, France and Britain this is your idea, what are going to do about it. Are you going to take some of these refugees, who are the victims of this, you know of this military action and it is causing enormous strains.

I mean look at this mornings papers, the EU countries are talking about erecting the border controls again, so there's lots of problems in Europe at the moment, economic crisis causing enormous problems... the fact that you know the reality to the modern

world is economies previous independent of each other, you know if the Irish economy collapsed we would suffer enormously, because our banks are linked to Irish banks so therefore we've put money in to prop up the Irish economy, if the Spanish economy collapsed, a lot of our banks are Spanish banks now, Santander. Our economies are so interlinked that we, and that's what the real truth is and that's a truth that Governments don't tell people and therefore people don't see why they should help Irish people or Spanish people or Greek people but the truth is there is a huge economic inter-dependence now. What happens in one country will affect another and it's causing lots of strains at the moment.

INT: Just while I'm thinking, you sat on the committee for the council for the future of Europe didn't you and you've done some work about the reform treaty in 07. How does that reflect this whole idea of transparency of the European Union?

LM: Well the treaty was really designed to, I mean people think what is a treaty, the treaty was, the EU treaties say how decisions should be taken at EU level, they define how you decide a law, how many commissioners there are and that's what I think decided, well the idea was because you've went up from 12, 15 then got 27 countries you have to have better systems to take decisions. People say you know you hear people in this country say any country should be able to block a decision but how does that work when you've got Luxembourg with 400 thousand people and Lithuania with 1.3 million, Germany with 80 million people, can you really have a situation where on something major like a climate change international convention where the EU's creditability is at stake and we've got you know, we want to negotiate with China and America, massive massive countries that Lithuania could block it, you know because Lithuania is having an election next week and there prime minister didn't have the guts to do something a bit unpopular. So they decide, so this is the problem at our decision-making. So the treaties were not about communication, the treaties were about how could the EU work effectively when it's got 27 countries. How do you take a decision when you've got so many actors take that decision in as democratic a way as possible. I mean a lot of international decisions are taken by, the decision to go to war with Libya was taken by who? By David Cameron, by NATO. What say did people have about that, not a lot really? So the House of Commons has a say in theory but in reality because there's Conservative majority it goes through. So

there's, the treaty's are not about promoting the EU, the treaty's are about how do we, in a modern world you have a complex world where economic inter-dependant where everyone's, we all dependant on each other, how can we take decisions about that economic space that we share, that help all of us survive in a world where we've got 1.4 billion Chinese, 785 million Indians who actually are going to be our future competitors on the global market to make goods, trade goods etc. That's you know to have relations with other countries, Britain can't have relations with China, it's not big enough...

... A bigger union and that's why Tory's although there very Euro sceptic have not got a policy coming out because all the major parties in Britain they play the Euro sceptic when it gets them a few votes but deep down they know it's not in our interests and British industry will be very angry and people complain they see this EU law, that EU law but somebody who makes EU laws, the biggest lobbyists for a single EU laws are British company's. There's only one thing worse than the European law firm for the company is 27 national laws, which are different. You want to make this computer for European market, if each country had a different standard that is a nightmare, that's your nightmare, not that's it's one European standard which takes three years to negotiate. You know when the EU, when mobile phones came in the EU negotiated over 18 months the standard for roaming, so you could have your mobile phone and travel anywhere inside the EU. The Americans left it to the free market and within the US you couldn't go from one state to another with the same mobile phone and that caused enormous problems. So a lot of stuff we're doing is stuff like setting a single standard for something, it's about having, imagine if we had a car, in Britain we have this standard for car vehicles but France have a different standard and in Belgium another one, because we said the engine have to be this efficient or that efficient. How would you make cars for those tiny markets and that's why you have laws for 27 countries because you create a big market that enables our companies to sell one product across different markets, obviously cars it will be different, steering wheels will be different sides but that's not a big issue for cars, the engines the key thing for cars. So that's the thing, that's why it's companies who want one law. It's not bureaucrats who want one law, I don't sit around saying I want to have one standard for cars, and it's the companies who make them.

INT: In reflection it seems almost Euro-scepticism isn't really a just cause?

LM: I think we have to have in Britain is not people like the European Commission and me talking about it we need the Governments, that is all parties to just have a honest debate with people and explain to them honestly why it's important to have a single standard for. I mean people laugh about me doing things like cereal standards, you know breakfast cereals but the problem that big companies that make breakfast cereals had is different countries were starting to have there own laws on how much sugar and salt content that you could have. So your making corn flakes in Britain you can't export to Denmark anymore unless you change the way you know, daft things like that and they sound daft but you have to keep changing your ingredients you've got to start, it's costs you more, so costs go up and you can't compete, you can't get your costs down to sell in that market and that's what a lot of it's about.

Well if you're an American company you've got a big market, well they have this problem in America actually now where they've got different standards being set by different states and that's causing enormous problems in the United States, where California for example setting different carbon emission standards because it believes you should tackle climate change and they can't get national, they can't get federal legislation through. So individual states in the US starting to set different standards and that's causing enormous problems in the US because you can imagine companies saying hold on a minute I've got to be that standard in California.

INT: So it's just about uniting Europe to make it compatible with this world of super-powers?

LM: Well yes, it's economic power that goes with political power. The last climate talks, you know the British Prime Minister doesn't get to meet the Chinese leader, the Chinese leader wants to meet the EU, you know...

...Yeah so that's why I think I said David Cameron spends a lot of his time in Brussels, so does George Osbourne they might not like it but that's the truth. So I think I don't think the problem with communicating Europe's about Plan Ds, it's about creating political understanding about the modern world, the nature of

economic inter-dependency and the nature of being a relatively small country in a big world.

Interviewee: Godfrey Bloom (GB)

INT: What is your role as an MEP?

GB: My role is, I'm on the economics and monetary affairs committee, obviously I represent Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire...so obviously as a UKIP MEP we are committed to the return of self government to the United Kingdom, and that's obviously our political goal, so we have this rather paradoxical situation, as far as I'm actually a Member of a Parliament that I don't believe should exist, which does create a certain amount of problems, but we are where we are...so on a matter of political principle, we don't believe we should have any legislation made for this country coming from Brussels, so in the main we vote against everything, because that's, that is our political view. So we vote against everything, anything that comes legislatively. And the difference ...not a lot of people know how they are governed...I sit at dinner parties, I've got friends that are my age who are lawyers, from Oxford or Cambridge, and they just don't know how we're governed, most people do not now know how we're governed.

So the parliament for example is the European Parliament, is an amending chamber, it does not make the law. A lot of people find that difficult to understand, particularly American congressmen find that extremely odd that I'm an elected parliamentarian and I do not make the law, the law is made by the Commission bureaucracy...its prescriptive and is based on...the Napoleonic Code, which means that it is a prescriptive system of government, so that means they tell us that which we may do, not that we may not do, so if you were brought up as you were under the English legal system, which is precedent common law, its statute...so we tell you what you can't do as oppose to what you can do, now ... [the Napoleonic Code] tells you what you can do, which become extremely prescriptive and legalistic. So if you go back, let's take the Bill of Rights in 1688, if you take the amount of legislation we've had on common law or statute up until 1997, you will find that there have been no more, in the last ten years since 1997 there has been more laws passed, you know in the last twelve years than the entire period from 1688, till 1997, because its prescriptive and its telling people what you can do, so we have 2000 rules and regulations that go past automatically, un debated by the Westminster chamber into law, in this

country...which gives us 75% of our law now comes from Brussels, so we actually have 75% of our law made by a unelected bureaucracy. So there is no democratic mandate for 75% of the law we have. Which I would regard, as being shameful, shameful, no other word for it, I mean people have fought and died, to preserve our freedom and yet we have completely secret law made. I do not have, as a Parliamentarian, access to the minutes of the meetings, I do not have any more information than you do on the legislation that is passed, which I find extremely worrying, so I can't actually find out, on the Economic and Monetary affairs committee for example, my amending committee. Thee legislation is made now for the City of London, which was voted through last September, so the City of London now is regulated in secret behind closed doors by a unelected bureaucracy, who of course are lay, they are lay people, so they don't understand financial services, and the other day in the chamber, no not the chamber the committee, I had to spend nearly a quarter of an hour explaining what an investment trust was to members of my committee, who are legislating on our biggest industry, which is financial services industry which accounts for 14% of our GDP, I regard this a not just undemocratic, but extremely dangerous. If we loose 14% of our GDP, financial services in London, the country would be in very very serious trouble.

So, we do have this...legislation, and I was talking to a member of the...United States Supreme Court, before Christmas, and I was in Washington, and he made a very interesting observation and I noted it down, he said 'Mr Bloom', he said, 'laws should be very difficult to make...because you are binding a fellow citizen in a free democracy, in a free country and the principle of democracy should be primary every single law should be carefully thought through because you imposing legislative will on the people'. Now of course that simply isn't realistic when you are passing 2000 laws a year, which is why prescriptively we have the sort of nonsense that get into the press...you will find that out local village hall here, where we have been having harvest festival suppers, or Christmas carol suppers for hundreds of years...but the law pertaining to fire regulations come from the European now so its prescriptive fire legislation, so you suddenly find that you cannot have more than 50 people in the church hall, which holds comfortably 120, because its in breach of EU fire regulations which have been written prescriptively, by a committee of bureaucrats in Brussels, who say you must have one fire escape, you must have two entrances, you must have

five fire extinguishers at x metres, blah blah blah, there is pages and pages of them. Now because we are used to English law, we are used to our legislation based on system of common law. It is in our nature then to obey the law because we have been used to not having very much law so we then do enforce it, where of course if you went to a French village they would take no notice of fire regulations because they just wouldn't care, or Spain, they just don't take any notice. If you travel, if you go to southern Italy...you won't find anyone wearing a crash helmet on a scooter, but we've all signed up to the same legislation, you ride your scooter in this country without a helmet and you will be pulled over almost immediately...and this is also true of all the prescriptive legislation, it doesn't matter whether its fire regulations, if you look on your website and look up duck eggs for example, you will find there is 27000 words on the retail sale of duck eggs, because the Commission has sat down and come to d for duck eggs, or e for eggs, and so...when I'm speaking at Universities very often, they always talk about, oh you know that old banana thing, you know straight bananas and it's a myth, it isn't a myth, if you look up bananas you will find a EU directive 1997... which runs to thousands of words on bananas, and abnormal curvature, but when I'm speaking at Universities, oppositional speakers say 'oh that's just a myth', that one of the Eurosceptic myths... it doesn't matter if its duck eggs, fire regulations, bottles, when I was on the consumer committee, talking about local affairs, two or three years ago, I was on the consumer affairs committee...and they came to bottle sizes, they said 'we have identified... 120 different size bottles in the EU and we think its too many, we need to get the number of different sized bottles down to about 60 because people are confused', so I said 'well Mr Chairman who is confused about bottle sizes, so there is a pint in it or x litres in it, it doesn't matter what shape the bottle is surely does it? I don't understand why that would confuse, or bother anybody'. And everybody looked at me as if I was slightly mad...they want to invade every part of you life, they assume that you are stupid...you are stupid and you need protecting from bad people, from me a politician, who knows everything. This is the whole concept of it. So they moved to 60 bottle sizes...they worked out what bottle sizes we needed, which was based on the French wine system, no surprise there, and I did an article in a local paper...and it was quite humours and fun, but it was only fun for a couple of days until I got a letter from an English wine maker in Sussex who was forced out of business, because it was a husband and wife business and they only did sort of x number of English wine bottles a year and they needed to

invest in the new bottling plant which would of cost them 30,000 pounds, and they just did not have 30,000 pounds...And there was another one, there was a lady who painted her own handmade lamps, and her husband made the, you know the light fitting and the gizmo, and this was a few years ago...but they had to import the, there was a part of the gizmo that had to come from America that went into the light fitting...it was some sort of metal alloy...and that metal alloy wasn't prescribe by the EU, it was not on the list of things you could make lamps with, because its prescriptive, it doesn't tell you not too use this metal, it tells you what metal to use...it out them out of business...because it was prescriptive, there was nothing wrong with the alloy it just wasn't on the list of things you could import.

There is things that come from Defra, you know, for your local aspect, things come that people don't understand, I know quite reasonably well educated landowners and farmers in Yorkshire, who actually believe the rules come from Defra, they come from Brussels, they are enforced by Defra, but again people don't know how they're governed so, for example, would you believe, that tractor seats have been standardised, there is a standardised tractor seat across 27 countries, because the EU got to T for tractors. So all the farmers, no all new tractors have to have a standard seat, I don't know why they don't make us all have standard arses as well really, but again most farmers think that comes from Defra, because the man from Defra will inspect that, when he has got his box to tick he will go, 'tractor hasn't got the standard seat, you will have to put that right by my next visit', sort of thing, and the farmer thinks its coming from Defra. He doesn't understand its coming from Brussels. Look at basic things like bin collections, people are looking at, 'why can't we have our bins collected once a week like we used to?' Almost nobody knows that comes about because of a EU land directive, so Councils can be fined by the EU for overriding their allowance into landfill. So the Councils way of handling this is, they just don't collect the bins once a week they collect them once a fortnight. So you've got, strangely, this sort of behaviour from Councils...you get this knock on effect. Then you'll see, you know more local stuff, the closure of rural post offices, and you'll see MP's, MEP's, Edward McMillan Scott for example, standing outside you know, his local village post-office saying things like save our post-offices, save our rural post-offices, but of course it was the 1999 EU postal directive which is closing them, because you are not allowed under the EU postal directive...to subsidise more than a

given percentage of your given post office services, so the reason your local post-office is closing is because of an EU directive, almost nobody knows that, almost nobody knows that. And I actually checked it out for Edward McMillan-Scott, he voted in favour, because its electronically recorded in favour of the 1999 EU postal directive and he is there actually standing outside a rural post-office saying save our post-offices, when it was legislation that he voted for and enacted that actually put it out. There is no end to the deceit of politicians, they are scoundrels to a man, every single man jack of them is a cheat, I'm afraid to say. I've only been in politics six years, investment banker, stunned, I was stunned by what I see go on, the intellectual dishonesty is unbelievable, I have never been in such a mucky game, horrible.

INT: Do you think then there is a communication deficit between Europe and its citizens, because they are not aware that these national bodies are enforcing European laws?

GB: Well it doesn't need to be Defra, it could be the food standard agency, its now the financial service authority which of course has now been superseded by Brussels regulation, there is almost nothing now that happens which doesn't have its source of legislating in Brussels, almost nothing that doesn't get its legislation from Brussels...but that is the natural progression of a prescriptive system, so if you look at the democratic legitimacy of this, so we had a referendum in 1975 and I voted, I think in favour, but it was called a common market in 1975, we were told that it would be a no red tape free trade association, the common market as referred to...and the majority of people were 'yeah I think we'll vote for that, I think a free trade association is a good idea', nobody voted for political union it was not on the table, nobody talked about political union, nobody talked about a president of the EU, nobody talked about 75% of our law, a flag, an anthem...and people don't want it...

Our membership is actually illegal, because nobody has rescinded the Act of Settlement, so if you look at it from a legal perspective, our membership of the EU is illegal because nobody has rescinded the Act of Settlement, so if you look at it from a legal perspective, our membership to the European Union is illegal. If you look at the Queen's coronation oath... our membership is a direct breach... and she knows it... she was afraid of political schism if she didn't give session to the Treaty of Lisbon

and the Treaty of Maastricht. Sadly.... its clear as a bell...

INT: Still focusing on this idea of the exchange in communication, does the EU Parliament say that you have to do anything specifically? And do you have to interact with or support people who come to you about the EU?

GB: We are remarkably free agents, the only requirement is that we have to turn up to 50% or more of the plenary sessions in Strasbourg, so we have to actually vote at least 50% of the time, and that's only requirement, apart from that we do pretty much as we choose. Now we all have a different view, and we all tend to do what we like best. Some people actually enjoy sitting in a committee all day in Brussels talking about the standardisation of tractor seats, some people think that is a day-able spend, I think that is a waste of my life, so I don't bother with that sort of stuff. So what I do, I speak at Universities and Sixth forms a lot because I enjoy that, that's fun, and if I'm speaking at a University, I'm a regular guest at Durham University...and connections at other Universities...who invite me to dinners, to speak at dinners, and I say I'll do that if you want but what about, more fun, why don't you hire a big room at a pub and I'll speak for half an hour and I'll take questions for half an hour and we'll all get pissed, and I put two hundred quid behind the bar, and that's great fun...but we have really communicated then, because some people are a bit shy of asking a question from the floor, not everybody wants to stand up in front of 50 people and risk a rebuff, or a put down of some description...whereas after they have had a couple of sherbets at the pub, you know they don't mind coming up and saying 'another thing I wanted to ask you, how much do you earn? Or what are your expenses?' ...

INT: Have you actively tried to promote leaving Europe on a local basis?

GB: ...the answer to that is yes, but not quite specifically, I'll give you an example...we have been committed, well we are committed in this country to getting 25% of our energy through wind turbines so-called renewable sources. So, I'm very often asked to speak locally about that, so it is the enforcement of European energy policy...but wind turbines actually don't work, they just don't work...they only operate at somewhere of 17% efficiency ratings, they produce electricity relatively spasmodically, so for example, no electricity is produced by a wind turbine

today, the entire April – May heat wave we had, they were producing no electricity. From the end of November to the beginning of January when we had that very cold snap, they were producing no energy, so they don't actually function, what they do...they produce electricity spasmodically at round about ten times the cost of a coal fired power station. It goes on the bill so what they do is they put that on the bill because the grid has to buy a percentage of electricity from a so-called renewable source. Again most people don't know this but when they get their electricity bill, the reason it has gone up by 15% in the last two years is because of EU energy policy, but you little old lady in Wakefield on 98 pounds a week pension doesn't know that, she just thinks her electricity bill has gone up and doesn't know why and nobody will tell her...so I go to village halls and explain why. And these monster turbines in Spaldinton...and the reason we have it is because it is EU policy. Planning, its gone in for planning, they are something like 400 feet high, they are taller than the Salisbury cathedral, they do make a noise and they do flicker and you can build them within half a kilometre of any residential property, if it goes forward no body in the village will be able to sell their house ever again. These things dominate the skyline, David Davidson [local MP] was against it, I stood against it, the County Council was against it and the Parish Council was against it, there was no level of local democracy that wasn't against it. Every single elected office regardless of policy and party politics stood firm, it was still overturned by the men in Whitehall. So it didn't matter what I said, David Davison said or the Parish Council or the local County Council said, we were just overridden. So the answer is, what happened to our democracy? How can it be that nobody wants them in Spaldington, no elected member of any political party wants them, and yet we can be overridden by unelected bureaucrat in Whitehall...

INT: It's non-specific then? There is just a blueprint for everyone it seems?

GB: We are a libertarian party, I am a libertarian, I believe that you should be able to do anything you like as long as it doesn't upset me or effect me...why do we have to poke our nose in all the time into other people's business, I doesn't upset me, it doesn't effect me...you do what ever you want to do, leave me alone to do whatever I want to do and we have lost that. In America, there is a rebellion coming in America, the T-party, people are saying 'just a minute I don't want Washington to tell me what to do all the time', you know Washington has virtually torn up their Constitution...I

mean that is a fabulous document the American constitution, it was written by some very wise men, I you'll find that politicians will say 'well its not appropriate for the modern day', oh yes it is, it doesn't suit modern politicians, because it is a libertarian document and if you read you read the American constitution that's basically what it says, you do what you like, as long as it doesn't hurt your neighbour, you are a free American and a free man and you can do whatever you like...and politicians don't seem to be able to cope with letting people do what they want to do. And I think its getting worse and worse and worse.

I mean yeah I know I can't have a cigar in my club at the East India Club in London, its my club, its my club the members own it, we own the real-estate, its ours, we pay our subscription, we have a committee, I think its immoral that politicians can tell me in the privacy of my own club that I cant have a cigar after dinner in the smoking room...it's a personal human right that I should be able to do. And I'm just horrified that I'm living in a world where people are telling me what I can and cannot do...

It's the same with employment legislation...all employment legislation now comes from Europe, so I try to explain this to them, because they do understand it, because there is almost no commercial experience, out of the 750 MEP's there are only about 40 who have any serious commercial experience, which I find appalling and staggering, so they don't know, they are legislating for business that they have no experience in business. So you get maternity leave, which is extremely onerous now on small businesses...and young women...what's actually happening is that they are being discriminated against, covertly, because if you have a small business, a small hotel in York for example or a dental practise...it doesn't matter what it is, but you would have to be barmy, to employ a young married woman, because she can pop up one morning and say 'I'm pregnant, I'm not telling you when I'm coming back, I'm not telling you if I'm having another baby after this', she...you are stuck and you need a dental nurse or a receptionist, or whatever it happens to be, and you simply can't run a small business, if you run the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, you can replace people, post people and move people, if you're a four man business in York?...so that legislation hasn't helped you its hindered you. And what we should have is what is called liberty of contract...liberty of contract is something that actually protects the individual, protects the citizen, liberty of contract not a politician

making up prescriptive rules and regulations, that doesn't help you and doesn't protect you...small employers are just very very frightened, and now of course we've got paternity leave, we've have got a four man press office in London, and a man has just decided to take his paternity leave, I can't believe a man would do that but he has, so he was away for three months, then he took his holiday a fortnight, so we didn't see him for four months, and there's three people in the press office...we can't afford that...we will never employ anybody again in that press office who's children aren't grown up, male or female. We just won't do it, we can't afford to do it. So, its not helping, all this legislation hasn't helped people. We will just employ people whose families have grown up. So what on earth young people are suppose to do I don't know.

Interview Written Correspondence from MEP's

Written correspondence from: Anthony Brons

1. What is your role as an MEP?

Legislation inc. voting on amendments. Investigation by written questions to the Commission and the Council plus questions that I might ask in committee of representatives of the Commission or Council. Making speeches in the European Parliament and in my committees. I attend nearly all of my committee meetings unless there is a clash and my attendance at the plenary is about 95%. Dealing with questions from constituents and sometimes meeting constituents. Research prior to taking legislative decisions and in preparation for speeches.

2. What do you do on a regular basis to raise awareness about the EU?

Making speeches and publicising them on my website and including them in my newsletters that are distributed door to door.

3. What strategies do you use to promote the EU?

I don't promote the EU, I promote our withdrawal from it by pointing out its costs, its democratic deficit and its intrusive legislation and undermining of our sovereignty.

4. Have you been involved in any EU inspired local initiatives?

No

5. In recognition that there is a need to keep up with local enquiries - What are the main issues of concern that you are presented with? And who are they from?

Comparatively few of them are concerned with European Parliamentary matters. Most seem to see MEPs as a last resort when they have already spoken to their local councillors or MPs.

6. Does the European Union specify any communication policy between EU citizens and yourself?

It pays for the distribution of my newsletters (door to door) and will pay for newspaper advertisements and I have produced an annual report which is also paid for by the EP outlining my work over my first year as an MEP.

7. Are MEP's and EU organisations accessible to the British public?

MEPs are easy to contact. How well they respond will vary from one MEP to another. EU organisations claim to be promoting transparency but the impenetrable language of their reports and legislation would make it difficult for a reasonably intelligent bystander without prior knowledge of the subject to understand what is being proposed.

8. What is the EU doing in the way of promoting itself in Britain?

The EU spends vast sums on self-congratulatory propaganda - but not very successfully.

9. What has the EU done to try and reverse any preconceived opinions British citizens have about UK integration?

See 8.

10. With regards to Britain's perceived Eurosceptic quality and low electoral turnout in the 2009 elections - Is there inefficiency in the way the EU promote themselves in Britain or is it, simply, an absence of communication?

Yes there is a deficiency because they claim that Euro-scepticism is the result of insufficient information and that if they inform people sufficiently, their Euro-scepticism will disappear. The truth is that the more people learn about the EU, the more Euro-sceptic they become.

Written consent e-mail on behalf of MEP Anthony Brons

Dear Laura,

You are most welcome. Please feel free to quote Mr Brons by name and use his comments in your dissertation.

best wishes,

Chris

-----Original Message-----

From: Laura Phillips [mailto:hy071mp@leeds.ac.uk]
Sent: Tue 6/21/2011 11:50 AM
To: BRONS Andrew Henry William
Subject: RE: Master's Research Dissertation

Dear Chris,

Thank you very much for your e-mail and thank you to Mr Brons for his time. Do I have permission to use these question responses in my Dissertation? and reference Mr Brons by name in my write up?

Best,

Laura

Quoting BRONS Andrew Henry William
<andrew.brons@europarl.europa.eu>

Written correspondence from: Diana Wallis

1. What is your role as an MEP?

First and foremost to represent the people who have elected me in the Yorkshire and Humber region; help them to get their voice heard in the European lawmaking arena, but also to act as a contact person for all those in the region who have questions and issues with how those laws are being made. Secondly I am a member of the Liberal Democrat party, and I try to represent our party's beliefs and values in the European Parliament. I

belong to the ALDE Group, which is a European political group made up of various liberal and centre political parties across Europe. Our voice is strong in the European Parliament, as the third biggest party, and we have sometimes been called "kingmakers" because we often have the ability to use our votes as a swing vote in the plenary sessions in Strasbourg. Finally I represent the United Kingdom on the European level, although I often feel I have more work to do in the opposite direction, trying to represent the EU in the UK as something valuable and worth being part of.

2. What do you do on a regular basis to raise awareness about the EU?

I try to meet as many people as I can in my region, and play an active part in local events etc, so that people can see that an MEP is someone who is easily accessible - that they can ask me any questions they like, and often I get ideas from the issues people raise on this level. I also try to hold quite regular small events, with themed debates, and produce a leaflet on a regular basis explaining my work. I also try to do as many interviews with local press as I can, so as to inform people of what is going on at the EU level, giving them the chance to get involved.

3. What strategies do you use to promote the EU?

I don't know that 'strategy' and 'promotion' are the right terms. I believe strongly in the EU, and believe that realistically, with our current level of integration on an everyday level, it would be impossible to pull out now. The EU is about freedoms and rights, freedom to move about, the right to pay the same prices at home as abroad, the right to have access to medical assistance or legal protection abroad, the right to buy property anywhere in the EU etc. These are things we easily take for

granted, but each of these freedoms has to be protected and fought for, and a lot of our work on the EU level is about protecting these rights and freedoms. My 'strategy' if you call it such, is to try to make people look at the EU in a different light, in a practical way, and help to see how the EU helps them in particular.

4. Have you been involved in any EU inspired local initiatives?

I am very impressed by a local activist group that campaign for the Palestinian rights on the EU level. They seem to be very aware of what is going on and when to intervene; they often come to visit me in Brussels.

5. In recognition that there is a need to keep up with local enquiries - What are the main issues of concern that you are presented with? And who are they from?

Animal rights is a huge cause for concern in the UK....and we are flooded with emails and letters about these issues. We see more and more activist groups inciting people to get involved, preparing the letters etc. This is a good thing. But on a local level I receive all sorts of varied complaints and requests, from complaints about the UK justice system to problems experienced during holidays abroad. We try to provide an answer (as much as we can) for everyone.

6. Does the European Union specify any communication policy between EU citizens and yourself?

Election of Members of the European Parliament came about in 1979 in order to help connect citizens with the EU, and generally the Parliament is seen as the institution most capable of breaching the gap between EU citizens and 'Brussels'. However, I would say that no particular communication policy exists, if not a personal sense of 'duty' to keep regular contact with one's constituents, which is also necessary for re-election purposes. However some MEPs are elected on the national level, such as in Spain...which makes it more difficult to be in contact, unless one creates some issue-based relations, as the Spanish have tended to do. We are all supported in our work of connecting with citizens, by Parliament's administration, and we can request help from the Parliament's UK information office in terms of media contacts if we need it,

or for organizing seminars/ debates. each Member State has at least one such office.

In your own opinion...

7. Are MEP's and EU organisations accessible to the British public?

They may seem unaccessible in terms of being based further away in Brussels, and seem more untransparent because it is not easy to understand how they work. But in my experience, both MEPs and the EU institutions are MORE accessible and open than their national counterparts. A lot of visitors to Brussels from the region have been really surprised at how easy it was to meet people and get information once one was there, and was talking to the right person. In this way an MEP can and should act as a go-between for their constituents.

8. What is the EU doing in the way of promoting itself in Britain?

This is partly the work of the Parliament's and Commission's information offices, but to be honest, they spend most of their time and energy trying to counter misconceptions and untruths published in the British press. I think it has been realized that it is worthwhile concentrating on major EU achievements such as the Citizen's initiative, rather than make the Treaties more digestible!

9. What has the EU done to try and reverse any preconceived opinions British citizens have about UK integration?

This is very difficult to fight against, as I mentioned before, because of the preconceived opinion in the press, and the periodic scandals that people tend to focus on. A lot of it has to do with money, and how much the EU is spending of the UK taxpayers' money. The only thing we can do is to make sure that all information is accessible and available, and ensure that the EU is as transparent as possible about all the costs and GAINS of integration. A new instrument being used in the Brussels arena, is the so-called cost of non-integration.

10. With regards to Britain's perceived Eurosceptic quality and low electoral turnout

in the 2009 elections - Is there inefficiency in the way the EU promote themselves in Britain or is it, simply, an absence of communication?

It's more about an absence of 'story', and therefore lack of interest by the press. One just has to see how many UK journalists have been pulled out of Brussels, to realize what the problem is. And also who wants good news? It is very difficult to promote the EU through good news stories. I believe the only way forward can only be through issue-based news, and getting the information out to the right groups at the right time. As for the election turn out, well, this is something being experienced all over Europe and by politics in general. In terms of the next EU elections, I think we will see a massive focus on campaigns through Facebook and Twitter, which will hopefully help to reconnect with people.

Yes of course.
Kind regards,
Angela

-----Original Message-----

From: Laura Phillips [mailto:hy071mp@leeds.ac.uk]
Sent: 25 July 2011 16:00
To: Angela Hunter
Subject: RE: Master's interview

Dear Angela,

Thank you very much for your e-mail and all your help. Do I have permission from MEP Diana Wallis to use this e-mail in my dissertation?

Kind Regards,

Laura

Quoting Angela Hunter <angela@dianawallismep.org.uk>