Call for Abstract/Draft Articles

Media and the EU Governance. Democracy, participation, and innovation

Special Issue De Europa
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De Europa

The Background and Rationale

While the European Union (EU) has become increasingly crucial for the life and the work of its 450M citizens, the European integration process itself has historically been characterized by cyclical crises.

While looking back, it is clear that economic and political tensions have previously opened new opportunities for widening and deepening the EU's integration. The present crisis seems different. A long-term falling trend of public trust in national and EU institutions has been undermining the European integration process and more recently "citizen dissatisfaction with national governments and disaffection from the EU has been on the rise" (Schmidt, 2015, p.57). The EU has had to face a long-lasting economic crisis, accompanied by the rise of populist and anti-EU parties that have been present in the European Parliament since the last two legislatures. Today, and on top of the political crisis described earlier, for the first time in the history of the EU, an unexpected force of disruption, such as the health crisis caused by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, has contributed to create an unprecedented critical situation for the European Union.

Aware of this epochal conjuncture, European leaders and Policy Makers have called for "The Future of Europe" conference. This Conference should help to address the crisis openly, enlarge the participation of European citizens in European governance, and ultimately define the fundamental values and principles that have shaped the European communities, whose *building* "has always been plagued by uncertainty" (Williams, 2009, p.551). Following the delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the debate is now restarting with renewed energies.

Recently, the European Commission has launched the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP) to counter disinformation and the rise of extremism and nurture pluralism in the European public space. Media, politics, and Institutions are all involved in contrasting the rise of extremism and reducing the distance between people and politicians, strengthening media freedom, and fighting disinformation. The EDAP tries to connect traditional goals pursued by the institutions over time: citizens' empowerment and participation, transparency, innovation as institutional tools to improve internal cohesion in the European Public Sphere.

Together with the EDAP, the European Commission has also launched the European Media Action Plan (EMAP) to recognize the role of information as a structural aspect to support the recovery and transformation. The EMAP recognizes that the media and audiovisual sectors, heavily hit by the coronavirus crisis, are essential for democracy, Europe's cultural diversity and digital autonomy. In line with this comprehensive approach a NEWS more specific initiative for the support of the news media sector has been announced, with the scope of bundling existing and future actions, to provide a coordinated answer to the most pressing needs of the news sector (European Commission, 2020).

It is evident that the simultaneous launch of the EDAP and the EMAP is a sign of the fact that media and democracy are now seen as tightly connected and essential to the critical re-launch of the European project that puts the citizens and their participation at the center of the debate.

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By acknowledging the importance of citizens' participation and the role of media in making the EU integration process more democratic and participative, the aim of this *De Europa* Special Issue on *Media and the EU Governance - Democracy, participation, and innovation* is to shed light on the essential relations between Media, Democracy and Participation in the particular context of the EU multi-level governance and multi-actors structure. In this complex setting, in which participative practices, actions for the support of the media and EU related information and communication strategies have to find a precise role and place, it is vital to understand and discuss the delicate balance between the EU institutions, the Member States, their citizens and stakeholders at large on the backdrop of a changing media environment.

Call for Abstracts/Draft articles

The *De Europa* Special Issue on *Media and the EU Governance - Democracy, participation, and innovation* is inviting the submission of abstracts/draft articles in <u>Three main themes</u> that broadly concern:

1) *Media, Democracy and participation,*
2) *Media and EU governance*
3) *Innovation in Media*

For **theme 1) Media, Democracy and participation**, the editorial committee welcomes contributions that reflect on the following theoretical and empirical aspects of 1) established news media as enablers of meaningful participation; 2) the impact of Disinformation actions and Disinformation dynamics in the EU and an assessment of the European and national policies and actions to counter-fight disinformation; 3) specific actions and policies implemented by the EU institutions and EU co-financed projects to foster participatory practices. Comparative research (at national, transnational and European level) that address the 3 issues above are also welcome.

For **theme 2) Media and EU governance**, the editorial committee welcomes contributions that reflect on 1) the theoretical and empirical aspects of the role of established news media in Europe in informing European citizens about the EU integration process; 2) the strategies and policies to develop critical (European) thinking through legacy and new media; 3) the critical role of (EU and Member States) institutional information and communication actions and policies to help develop better governance practices in the EU.

For **theme 3) Innovation in Media**, the editorial committee welcomes contributions that reflect on the theoretical and empirical aspects of innovation in the EU media sector and in particular on 1) Innovations happening at socio, economic, technological and business level in and in between media outlets in the EU; 2) new users' appropriation modalities and new communication flows as well as new editorial innovation practices of social media and radio, television and the press; 3) the ethical and policy challenges open by Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in the EU and in EU media.

N.B.: The three themes above indicate thematic areas and should not impede the submission of draft articles and abstracts that are in line with the Background and Rationale and with the Call for Articles indicated above.

Abstract Length, specs and deadlines

- ➢ **15/07/2021 submission of abstracts** (max 600 words, containing the main research question(s) addressed, the methodology used in the study and an indication of the main findings of the research), or draft articles, should be sent via e-mail to: marinella.belluati@unito.it, luciano.morganti@vub.be (subject De Europa Special Issue C/c redazione.deeuropa@unito.it)

- ➢ **01/09/2021** notification of acceptance of abstracts communicated to authors

- ➢ **01/02/2022** submission of papers for review (5,000–7,000 words)

- ➢ **01/05/2022** reviews sent to authors

- ➢ **30/07/2022** final paper submission

- ➢ **31/12/2022** De Europa n. 2/2022 publication.

The complete papers will go under double-blind peer review before publication.

Information about editorial rules can be found here:
http://www.deeuropa.unito.it/content/Submit_an_article