

EU must better communicate its success stories

Written by Lambert van Nistelrooij on 9 October 2017 in Opinion
Opinion

The EU must not only communicate more on its success stories - it must also communicate differently, explains Lambert van Nistelrooij.



Lambert van Nistelrooij | *Photo credit: European Parliament audiovisual*

Over the past few years, many stones have been thrown at Europe. However, its success stories remain largely untold. Particularly in light of Brexit, a lot of fake news and exaggerations were spread, while the EU's more positive side remained underexposed.

It's not just that Europe is used as a scapegoat for everything that Europe goes wrong. The EU lacks a modern communication strategy that highlights its positive sides.

In his State of the Union address, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker discussed the importance of the citizens' dialogues.

Together with eight fellow EPP group members, I launched 'Let the stars shine'. Our goal is to engage with citizens and find ways to improve communication about and by the EU. We want to encourage citizens to share their experiences with the EU programmes.

There are countless of examples: companies who were able to develop innovative new technologies thanks to EU support, as well as the thousands of students who are able study in other European countries thanks to the Erasmus project.

These personal narratives are our 'stars'. With our initiative, 'Let the stars shine', we want to highlight projects and proposals from our member states that tell a story to the community.

My action started in the Netherlands in the small rural town of Diessen on 30 August together with European regional policy Commissioner Corina Crețu. Over the coming months, my colleagues will take this action further. We invited beneficiaries of EU funds to step forward and submit their proposals.

By the end of this year we will collect the submitted proposals and look at their innovative ways of communication used to involve citizens, cities and regions in the project.

In my booklet, 'Let the stars shine: Engaging citizens in the EU', we invited several communication experts to share their fresh perspectives on how to tackle this communication issue. Their conclusion was clear: it's important not just to communicate more, but also to communicate differently.

Martijn Groenleer, professor of Law and Governance at Tilburg University, said, "I believe it is not about better communication on the EU, but about more and better internal communication within the EU. It is expected that this will lead to a more coherent and visible EU policy with a more uniform impact throughout the Union".

Ryan Heath, senior EU correspondent at Politico, shares this opinion: "The EU flag and signs attached to EU projects are a good visual clue to the EU's wide impact.

"Another way for the EU to have more of its impact felt is to focus on what only it can do well. Instead of having a finger in every pie, the EU could afford to focus more on projects that simply couldn't happen without it".

Luckily this view has been gaining momentum lately. The 'Let the stars shine initiative does not stand on its own. The European Commission recently launched a call for proposals on new communication strategies on EU cohesion policy.

Moreover, Parliament's recent proposals on communication in the Omnibus-trilogue have been positively received by the Commission and Council. The aim is to enable beneficiaries to communicate on the effects of the EU programmes and measures, including in the years following the completion of a project. This is clearly what was missing during and after the Brexit referendum.

The EU flag has 12 stars, a symbol of unity. I believe the EU has many more stars out there, waiting to shine. There is much more to Europe than the talks in Brussels. If we do not tackle these issues seriously, we will ruin the support the EU has gained. Let the stars shine.

About the author

Lambert van Nistelrooij (EPP, NL) is a member of Parliament's regional development committee

Tags

[Regions](#) [1]



Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [Climate Crisis](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2020](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[CompanionVacher's](#)
[Quarterly The](#)

[European Union and
Public Affairs
Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster
BriefingDigital
Health & Care
ScotlandMEP
AwardsThe Skills
SummitScottish
Public Service
AwardsPublic Sector
Procurement
SummitPublic
Sector ICT
SummitCyber
Security
SummitCyber
Security
2017Training
Journal Awards](#)

Partnership events

[The Health and
Care Innovation
ExpoCivil Service
LiveCivil Service
AwardsChief
Nursing Officer for
England's
SummitWomen into
LeadershipThe
Youth Justice
ConventionSocitm
Spring
ConferenceNHSCC
Annual Members'
EventDods at Party
Conference](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/eu-must-better-communicate-its-success-stories>

Links

[1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/regions>