



2019 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS



**The communication campaign
of Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna
to inform citizens before the vote**

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“Il Filo d’Europa” is an editorial series by



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ABSTRACT

This publication collects the main communication strategies of Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna to inform citizens on the 2019 European Elections.

After a brief introduction on European Commission's and European Parliament's official communication campaigns, the staff of Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna will introduce our communication plan.

We will then present all the activities we did, sorting them by fruition channel:

- the activities with schools and universities - which our Europe Direct carries on every year - where we added various types of focuses on the 2019 European Elections;
- the online strategy, which included the use of our website and our social network profiles;
- the offline strategy, represented by events that we organized, information materials, publications, gadgets and guest speaking interventions.

Finally, we will briefly analyse the results of our campaign using basic KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and we will point out the follow-up activities that we put in motion only after the vote, concluding with our final thoughts on communicating the EU to the European citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

This publication was written by Elia Grassilli and Federica Milioni, winners of the Master's degree Award "L'Europa che sarà" 2018: each year, the Legislative Assembly of the Emilia-Romagna Region awards a prize of € 10.000 as a contribution to a one-year-long professional training in Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna, rewarding the best two Master's Degree graduates on its territory who have written their thesis about the future of the EU.

Our two trainees were involved from the start in our information campaign: they participated in both definition and implementation of communication strategies to create awareness about the 2019 European Elections, with a particular focus on reaching the youth and on the use of social networks.

For this reason, together with our trainees, we decided to collect in this publications the communication strategies that we implemented before the European Elections: as one of the almost 500 Europe Direct Information Centers on EU territory, it was in fact our responsibility to create awareness about this electoral appointment, supporting the communication efforts of European institutions in order to create more visibility for their messages. At the same time, we tried to stimulate the active European citizenship in our Region, pointing out what European Union has done on our territory and the importance that it plays in our lives.

In the following pages we would like to show you this journey that we had the honor of experiencing firsthand.

Stefania Fenati,
Chief of Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna



CHAPTER 1

EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

Between 23 and 26 May 2019 the citizens of European Union elected 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), who would have represented more than 512 million people from 28 member states.

To invert the negative trend of voter turnout - only 43% voted in the 2014 European Elections - the European Commission and the European Parliament decided to firmly focus on communications efforts while improving the coordination of their communication campaigns on the road to the 2019 Elections.

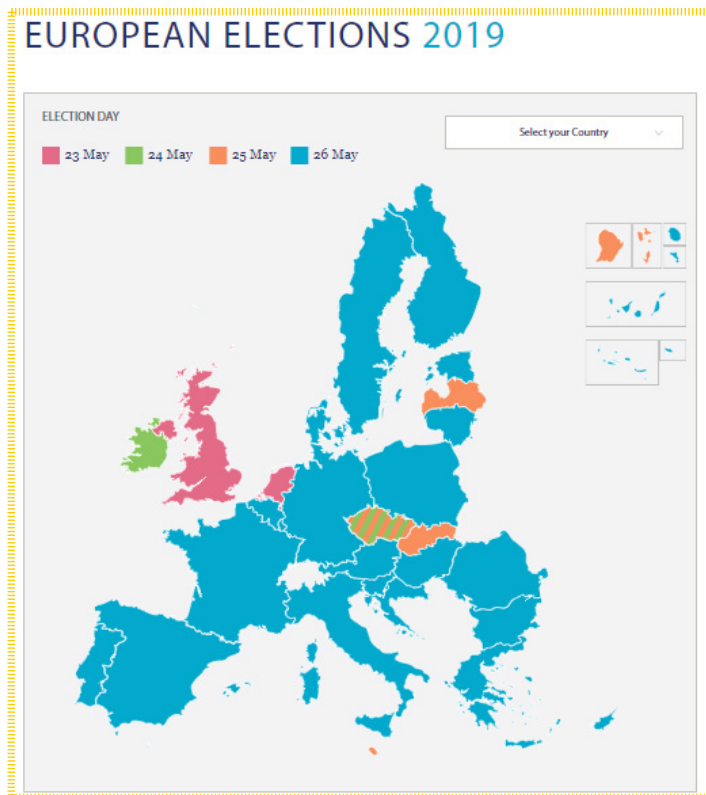


Figure 1.1: The dates of vote in the different EU countries.

Source: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/elections>

Indeed, this institutional collaboration would have increased the impact of the EU's communication strategies, raise awareness on the next Elections and, consequently, get more people to vote.

For example, both institutions agreed on using the terms “European Elections” instead of “European Parliament Elections”, on using the EU branding wherever possible instead of institutional logos, on cross-referring to each other respective campaign, and on coordinating both outreach and mobilization of Erasmus students, trainees, civil society organizations, cinemas, football celebrities, rural communities and so on.

Finally, the Commission in close cooperation with the European Parliament has been communicating on three fronts with the aim to inform and empower citizens: “What the EU does”, “Why and how to vote” and “How to engage”.

The three corporate campaigns of the EU Commission

Regarding the specific communication campaigns on both sides, the European Commission launched - almost one year before the European Elections - its three corporate campaigns: InvestEU, #EUandME and EU Protects, all targeting citizens who were neutral or ambivalent about the EU (don't know/don't care basis).

The first campaign, InvestEU, was conceived to showcase the impact of EU funding and it was divided in two phases: Phase 1 (March 2017 - March 2018) which reached 203 million citizens all across Europe and Phase 2 (May 2018 - on-going) that reached 40 million citizens, recording 112.000 websites visits to and 2.7 million video views.

The second campaign #EUandME - launched in May 2018 - was conceived to reach out to young Europeans, showcasing the core European values and achievements. Until May 2019, it has reached nearly 40 million citizens, with 43% of them who felt proud to be European and 51% who claimed to trust the EU.

The last campaign, EU Protects, was launched in October 2018 and wanted to showcase the ordinary heroes of the EU; until May 2019 it has reached 10.4 million citizens, recording more than 10 million views of short films and almost 300 million paid digital advertising impressions.

The EU Parliament's campaign *This Time I'm Voting*

One year before the 2019 Elections, the European Parliament launched its own information campaign called *This Time I'm Voting* to raise awareness and increase the next voter turnout. The main peculiarity is that the name of this campaign was declined in the native language of each EU Country (e.g. it was translated in *Stavolta voto* in Italian, *Esta vez voto* in Spanish, and so on).

This campaign targeted above all the youngest citizens and tried to stimulate their active participation while engaging them in a peer-to-peer way, considering that only 28% of young voters participated in the 2014 European Elections - the lowest turnout of any age group.

The campaign consisted of three levels:

- the first one was signing in on the official *This time I'm Voting* platform and staying informed with a periodic newsletter;
- the second level implicated writing on social networks the personal reasons to vote and sharing them to relatives and friends, in order to encourage them to vote as well;
- the third level involved active participation in the campaign. Indeed, through the platform everyone could signal to the nearest EU Institutions Representation Office their availability and have been contacted back to organize something (including join efforts with "activists" coming from the same area).



Figure 1.2: The official *Stavolta voto* banner



CHAPTER 2

EUROPE DIRECT EMILIA-ROMAGNA'S COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

Following the steps of European Parliament, Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna started developing the information campaign one year before the European Elections of May 26th 2019.

Each year, Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna promotes several educational activities for schools and universities; specifically, for the 2018-2019 school year our catalogue focused on the European Elections and the importance of promoting active European citizenship. We completed the catalogue before September 2018, in time for the resumption of the educational activities.

As for the communication campaign per se, we completed the plan in November 2018, while following the precious advice and guidelines of Rome and Milan's EU Representation Offices. Our main goal was to engage in the *Stavolta voto* campaign, sharing and giving visibility to the branded content that both EP and the Italian Representation Offices created, but also creating our own content - declined locally and adapted to our territory.

In addition to the official EP campaign, we would have also shared the content of the three corporate campaigns by the EU Commission (InvestEU, #EUandME and EU Protects).

In this way, we had programmed the strategies for the following six months to inform our citizens about the vote in May.

The choice of the target audience was quite interesting too: we were aware that many Italian citizens would have voted for the first time in a European Parliament election and this would have required a focus on young voters. At the same time, we could not leave out all the rest of the citizens - of course - and we decided to inform about European Elections citizens of all ages, from young people to adults.

In the following pages we would like to give you an overview of the main activities that we did to inform citizens about European Elections: we will start talking about the activities we organized for Schools and University on our Region territory; then we will move on illustrating our online strategies - which include actions on our social network profiles and our website - and our offline strategies - which include the main events that we planned but also the printed material we created, the gadgets we distributed and the face-to-face meeting we attended as guest speakers.



CHAPTER 3

ACTIVITIES WITH SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

As we anticipated, we completed the Catalogue for the 2018-2019 school year in the Summer 2018. The activities with schools and universities on our territory would have reflected our will to raise the awareness in young people about the importance to vote in the European Elections and about the decisive role that European Union plays in our lives - pointing out the great opportunities that it offers to young citizens.

From September 2018 to May 2019, we carried out various types of activities: “Crossing Europe” and “Short Crossing Europe”, “#stavoltavoto peer-to-peer”, the “EurHope 2019” photo contest and the “EuLab” university laboratory.

“Crossing Europe” and “Short Crossing Europe”

These thematic meetings are intended for 17 to 19-years-old students and aim to offer knowledge of the European Union, its institutions, the integration process of our Continent and European policies.

Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna promotes this kind of events each year in collaboration with University professors and we try to engage students through interactive activities, fun facts and curiosities about these arguments.

In the 2018-2019 school year we added a detailed focus on the *Stavolta voto* campaign in order to explain to first-time voters the importance of participating in the European Elections.



Figure 3.1: A “Short Crossing Europe” in the city of Piacenza



Figure 3.2: A “Crossing Europe” held in Emilia-Romagna Region headquarters

“#stavoltavoto peer-to-peer”

This series of meetings were intended for 17 to 19-years-old students to increase awareness of the process of European parliamentary democracy, the electoral mechanisms and the role that the European Union has in our lives.

The peculiarity behind this project is the dissemination of knowledge by promoting peer-to-peer education through the active involvement of young people: a group of students - who previously carried out a course on the European Elections theme - talked directly to their peers, explaining them the importance of active European citizenship and passing on what they have learned. The students also created an Instagram account to show their ongoing efforts through posts and stories.

This project was realized with the precious collaboration of “Istituto per la Storia e le Memorie del ‘900 Parri”, an institute located in Bologna that promotes, preserves and disseminates contemporary History with particular attention to the history of the liberation movement in Emilia-Romagna and age of anti-Republican.

The “EurHope 2019” photo contest

The photo contest EurHope 2019, which reached its third edition, was created to promote in 17 to 18-years-old students a reflection about Europe, the sense of belonging to the EU and the active European citizenship.

The photo contest’s topics were connected to the *Stavolta voto* campaign and every class could submit at most five photos about “What Europe does for me?” and “Europe united in the diversity”.

Every photo was posted on Europe Direct’s Facebook page to receive likes from the users. The winners were decreed by a jury and according to the numbers of Facebook likes.

The first four ranked class received cash prizes that would have been used for laboratory equipment, educational travels and so on.



Figure 3.3: The photo who won the first prize was “Taking a decision makes the differences” by the 4° B GC class of the “I.I.S. Aldini Valeriani” high school (from Bologna).

Figure 3.4: The second ranked photo was “Melting pot” by the 4° F class of the “I.T.T. Marco Polo” high school (from Rimini).



Figure 3.5: The third ranked photo was “Diven(ti amo) Europa” by the 4° U Tur class of the “I.T.C.S. G.Salvemini” high school (from Casalecchio di Reno, Bologna province),

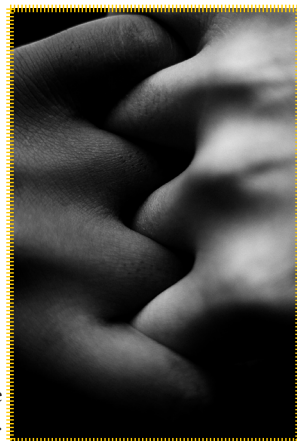


Figure 3.6 The fourth ranked photo was “Unione” by the 4° A Graf of the “I.T.S. A.Oriani” high school (from Faenza, Ravenna province).

The “EuLab” university laboratory

“EuLab - Informing and communicating Europe” is a laboratory of the University of Bologna (Department of Political and Social Sciences), coordinated by Professor Pina Lalli and carried out in collaboration with Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna.

The laboratory has professional goals and wants to be an opportunity of practical learning of key competences and of reflection and dialogue on the most current European issues. The EuLab laboratory usually foresees the realization of a final public event.

For the a.y. 2018-2019, EuLab was centred on the European Elections: a first group of students - from September to December 2018 - would have interviewed their fellow colleagues in order to produce valuable data on which a second group of students - from February to May 2019 - would have created a communication campaign in order to better respond to the target needs.

The participating students showed the ongoing communication campaign during the event called “Io Cittadino europeo?” held in Emilia-Romagna Region’s headquarters on “Europe’s Day” (9 May 2019).

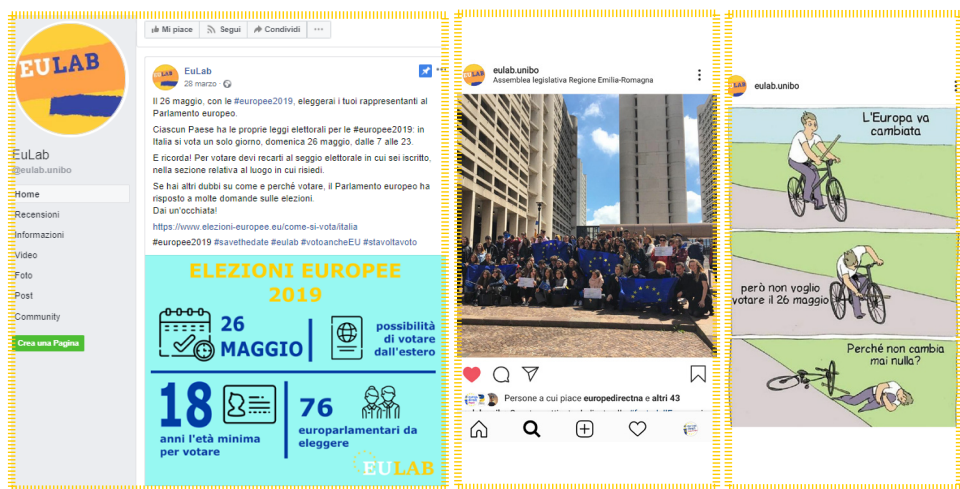


Figure 3.7: Examples of social content made by EuLab students for their information campaign



CHAPTER 4

ONLINE STRATEGY

Website

One of the main online tools that we used to inform about the European Elections was our website: each day we try to make it as user-friendly as possible, with a clear Home Page where citizens can easily find what they are looking for, (from EU-linked events to the latest news, from the Communication campaigns' section to our periodic newsletter, and much more).



Figure 4.1: Our website's Home page

The News section

Located in the Home Page, this section creates an updated flow of information about European Union: until May 2019 the news were particularly focused on the European Elections.

In this section we write a short title and description of the news; then, depending on the newsworthiness of the content, we could decide to write a short article about it on our website or just link to the original source.

Moreover, in collaboration with the organization EU Events, we usually write two articles per month about EU-related events, both in English (published on the EU Events website) and Italian (published on Europe Direct Emilia-

Romagna's website). The articles were centred on purpose on events that helped citizens better understand what Europe does for us and its policies - for example the article *EU and co-creation: building a "greener" Europe with citizens* - while some of them were centred exactly on the European Elections - such as *Digital strategies to mobilize citizens, can EU really get people to vote this time?* and *European Commission debate: who will lead EU in the next 5 years?*



Figure 4.2: One of our articles, written in collaboration with EU Events

The Event section

This section collects in the Home Page all the events we organize and some EU-related events realized by our local partners. During the months towards May 2019 we had many events and educational activities focused on the European Elections (we will illustrate them in the following Chapters).

The Communication campaigns section

This section allowed citizens to have in one simple page the main information campaigns created by European Commission and European Parliament, completed with links.

The Newsletter section

This section collects all our newsletters' issues and the ones sent by our decentralised help desks, showing the latest updates regarding the EU universe. We send our newsletter every 15 days or every month, depending on how much contents we have; during our campaign, we tried to put in each issue several pieces of information about the European Elections.

In May we also issued a special edition about the European Elections that collected all the information that citizens needed to know.

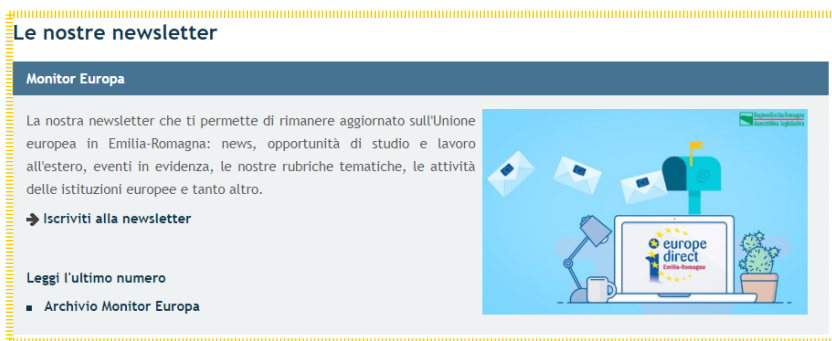


Figure 4.3: The section of our website with our newsletters

Social Networks

Facebook

Facebook is the main social network we used to keep citizens updated about the EU and about our day-to-day activities.

During our campaign we shared contents from European institutions - adhering to the *Stavolta voto* official campaign - while creating our own contents.

An example was the European Elections' countdown that we posted twelve days before 26 May 2019: starting with an EU flag with grey stars, each day we "lit up" a star and brought up different topics to prepare citizens to the vote.



Figure 4.4: The “countdown” on our Facebook page

Twitter

Our Twitter account supports the Facebook one: we try to share the best news regarding the EU universe, usually retweeting European institutions’ accounts and tweeting about our best day-to-day activities. We also use this social network to do live tweeting sessions of events.



Figure 4.5: A live tweeting session on our Twitter account



Figure 4.6: An example of tweet

Instagram

Our Instagram account aims to a younger public (age 18-30): for this reason, it is very important to constantly keep up the engagement. During the campaign we posted 2-3 times per week and tried to make Instagram Stories everyday: the objective was to bring the young citizens to understand the importance of voting in the European Elections.

Among the content we produced, we would like to point out two recurring engagement actions:

- “La mia foto per l’Europa”, a photo contest where we invited citizens to take photos/selfies with the European flag, post them on social networks and tag Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna (@europedirecter);
- the poll “Vota come il PE!”, where we invited citizens to be a MEP for 5 minutes and vote on societal trending issues (such as immigration, environment, etc).

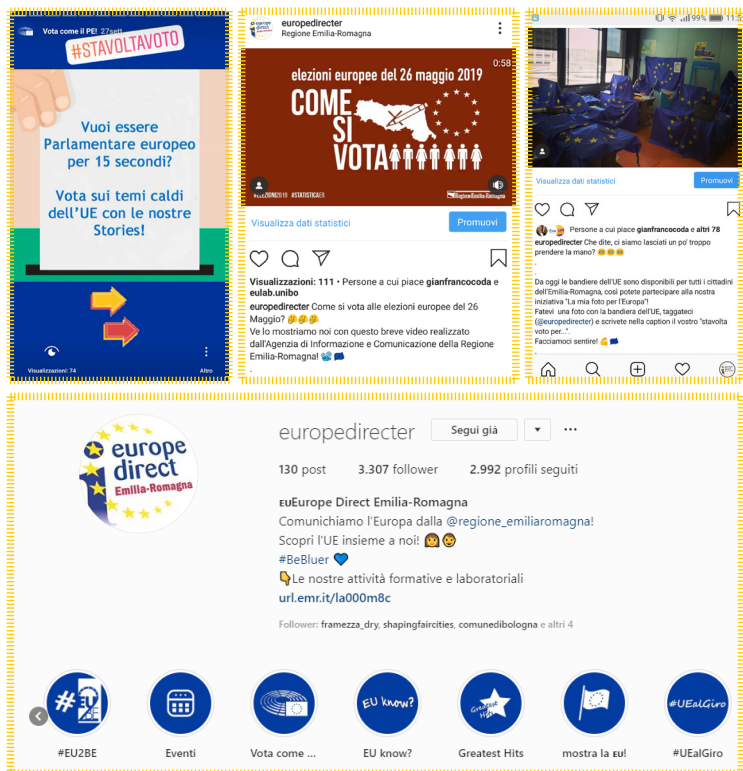


Figure 4.7: Social content on our Instagram profile



CHAPTER 5

OFFLINE STRATEGY: OUR MAIN EVENTS

As a Europe Direct Information Centre, we organized a series of events - starting from November 2018 - to raise awareness about the 2019 European Elections and the importance of voting.

The first two events (November-December 2018)

EP side event in “La Democrazia è donna” (Bologna, 22-23 November 2018)

On the UN Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the conference “Democracy is a woman” was held in the Emilia-Romagna Region’s headquarters, dedicated to strategies and actions for the gender equality and for gender-based violence.

In collaboration with the EP Representation Office in Milan, Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna organized a side event where we presented the *Stavolta voto* campaign and meet the most active supporters of its official platform.

“Citizens’ Dialogue” on Fake News (Bologna, 13 December 2018)

The objective of this event was to explore the influence of fake news on democracy in the EU and on active European citizenship. It was structured following the “Citizens’ Dialogue” format and several members of the European Commission’s Representation Offices in Italy took part in it, answering the questions of the public.

Moreover, we organized a side event with the EP Representation Office in Milan to inform about the *Stavolta voto* campaign.

“Primavera dell'Europa” (Europe’s Spring), 18-29 March 2019

In March 2019, the European Commission’s Representation Office in Milan launched this initiative: a series of events in middle schools, high schools, universities and cities, with the aim of bringing Europe among citizens and promoting their active participation in its democratic life.



Figure 5.1: *Primavera dell'Europa* official logo

This initiative involved the Europe Direct Information Network and the Eurodesk Network; each player was asked to organize events or activities while using the same hashtags on social networks, in order to gain visibility and channel all the contents in a coherent flow.

In the following paragraphs we will illustrate the main initiatives that we organized during the *Europe’s Spring days*.

Distribution of EU flags (Emilia-Romagna Region, 20 March - 26 May)

With the initiatives called “Mostra la bandiera!” (*Show the EU flag!*) and “La mia foto per l’Europa!” (*My selfie for Europe!*), we made available in different places all over the Region hundreds of EU cloth flags (that people could display on balconies, windows, etc) and little EU plastic flags (that people could wave), asking citizens to take photos/selfies with them and tag Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna (@europedirecter) on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



Figure 5.2: Some of the photos we received for the initiative “*La mia foto per l’Europa!*” (My selfie for Europe!)

“L’Europa viene da te”: six meetings with citizens (Bologna, 21 February - 28 March)

Europe comes to you was a series of itinerant meetings in the various districts of Bologna to talk with citizens about European civic education, active citizenship, European policies for immigration and the future of the EU.

These meetings were organized in collaboration with our decentralized help desk hosted by Municipality of Bologna and took place in neighbourhood libraries to reach those citizens who live in the most peripheral areas of the city.

“EU Back to University”: meeting with university students (University of Bologna, 21 March)

This is an initiative whereby EU officials visit universities in their home country and share their personal experience of Europe with students. On 21 March

2019 we went to University of Bologna with Dr. Angelo Salsi (Head of Unit of the LIFE Programme & CIP eco-Innovation at the *Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises* - EASME) to talk about careers in EU institutions and opportunities for young people, in particular in the environment field.



Figura 5.3: With Dr. Angelo Salsi in “EU back to University”

Citizens' Dialogue (Parma, 26 March)

The event was organized by Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna local network in Parma (located at the Chamber of Commerce) with the participation of the EP Representation Office in Milan, to make known the meaning and the importance of voting in the incoming European Elections.



Figure 5.4: The Citizens' Dialogue in Parma

Meeting “Vivere e costruire la cittadinanza europea” (Bologna, 25 March)

This event can be translated as *Living and building active European citizenship* and it was held in the Emilia-Romagna Region’s headquarters to bring citizens and territories closer to Europe and promoting their active participation in both formulation and implementation of European policies.



Figure 5.5: A photo from the event “Vivere e costruire la cittadinanza europea”

The Emilia-Romagna Region makes constant efforts to reach this goal thanks to the “Program for the promotion of European citizenship”, which plans to invest one and a half million euros in the three-year period 2019-2021, implementing the Regional Law 16/2008.

The event was an opportunity to learn about some of the Emilia-Romagna schools and local authority projects funded in 2018 and to get more information about the activities planned for the coming years.

Fridays for Future (Bologna, 15 March and 24 May)

The 16-years-old Greta Thunberg has rapidly become the symbol of the fight against climate change. She managed to touch the hearts of millions of people around the World, waking up the conscience in many of us about the preservation of Planet Earth.

As Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna we took part in two *Fridays for Future* manifestations in Bologna: we joined the march with the “picture frame” of *Stavolta voto*. While taking photos, we urged people to make their voices heard in the best way possible, that was voting on 26 May 2019.

At the same time, we explained that European Union is making great efforts to protect the environment, such as the recently approved law that forbids single-use plastic on its territory.



Figure 5.6: Our participation to the “Fridays for future” in Bologna

May 2019, Europe’s Month

Each year Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna organizes a series of initiatives to celebrate the EU during the entire month of May; due to the incoming electoral appointment, those were useful occasions to raise awareness about the importance of voting on May 26th.

Comedy-trial “Processo all’Europa” (Bologna, 7 May)

The Europe’s Month began with this comedy-trial - staged by professional actors - in which Europe was called to answer for its work: organized by the Italian branch of the *European Movement* and based on its original format, the trial aimed to encourage citizens’ participation in the European Elections while increasing the level of knowledge, interest and confidence in the European Parliament and its mission.

This was the second “Processo all’Europa” organized in Bologna: the first edition, held in May 2018, focused on migration policies and was realized in the previous edition of EuLab university laboratory by the students of the University of Bologna in collaboration with Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna.

In the 2019 edition the public held the role of popular jury and it was invited to vote to determine whether to approve or condemn the work of the EU. After this final verdict, the spectators could actively participate in a Q&A session with several European policy experts.

Europe’s Day (Bologna, 9 May)

- Io cittadino europeo? (Am I a European citizen?)



Figure 5.7: A photo taken with all the young participants at the event “Io cittadino europeo?”

This major event would have been the culmination of several projects we carried on during the previous months, spaced out by the marvellous performance of the EUYO (European Union Youth Orchestra, whose headquarters were recently moved from London to Ferrara, a city near Bologna, as a result of Brexit) and the precious speeches about European Union made by councillor Lia Montalti and assessor Patrizio Bianchi, in representation of the Legislative Assembly of the Emilia-Romagna Region.

The event was intended as a journey on active European citizenship, explained by young people through music, photography and social media.

The first project to be presented was “Onda solare”, developed in the educational initiative called “A Scuola di OpenCoesione” (which was co-created by the Italian Government and the European Commission): the students of the High School “Paolini Cassiano” located in Imola (Bologna province) showed to the public how solar energy can become the most important source of energy for urban and extra-urban mobility, fighting urban pollution and global warming while improving our lives.

The project focused on data journalism and the class of students was assisted and supported by our Europe Direct, while involving numerous subjects from the University of Bologna to private companies, from research centres to simple enthusiasts.



Figure 5.8: Photos taken during the event “Io cittadino europeo?”

Then, the students of EuLab - the communication laboratory about Europe by University of Bologna - presented their ongoing communication campaign created with the help of their communication-savvy tutors: the campaign fit into the official *Stavolta voto* flow and aimed to raise awareness in their peers on the incoming European Elections.

The forty students of the laboratory created contents for three social networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), exploring different ways to engage their fellow colleagues - e.g. combining memes to snatch a smile with infographics that showed data and technical contents.

At the end of the event we revealed the name of the four classes that have

won the EurHope photo contest: as we explained in the dedicated chapter, 17 to 18-years-old students competed presenting a maximum of five photos on themes that perfectly fit in the *Stavolta voto* campaign, such as “What Europe does for me?” and “Europe united in diversity”.

Finally, we must point out the collaboration with the EUYO: besides performing live in our event, during May we co-created a video together - launched on May 23rd on our social networks - in which the young musicians shared their thoughts about the opportunity that the EU was giving them and the great power of music, capable of making people play instruments together despite speaking different languages and coming from different countries.

We noticed that EUYO was definitely a perfect metaphor of the EU, because music is a universal language capable of bringing people together while uniting them in diversity; for these reasons we wanted to create a video to document the experience they were living and be an example of all the opportunities that Europe is giving to youth.



Figure 5.9: The EUYO performing live in the event “Io cittadino europeo?”

- Citizens' Dialogue on Development Cooperation

The main objective of the European Union development policy is the reduction and subsequent elimination of poverty. Development cooperation is a fundamental part of the EU's contribution in

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 UN Agenda.

The event “Global world, unequal world: what is development cooperation useful for?” was a Citizens’ Dialogue created in collaboration with the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and it illustrated the importance of development cooperation in achieving the SDGs.

The guest speakers were Stefano Manservigi (Director of DG DEVCO) and Matteo Zuppi (Archbishop of Bologna), who tackled the issue and gave the public - mainly NGOs and citizens - the opportunity to ask them questions and create an open dialogue.

#UEalGiro (Bologna, April-May)

As you may know, one of the most popular sporting events in Europe is *Giro d’Italia*, the famous annual bicycle race.

During its course, the entertainment project called “Carovana” offers an opportunity of visibility and promotion to the *Giro d’Italia* partners.

Coordinated by the European Commission’s Representation Office in Milan - which was the institutional partner of the event - several Europe Direct Information Centers took part in it: we were asked to be physically present at the stages on our territory to entertain the public (for example we took many pictures using the *Stavolta voto* photo frame) and also to prepare videos in advance to document projects on that specific territory that were made possible thanks to EU funds.

The 2019 edition of *Giro d’Italia* started on May 11th exactly from Bologna, the city where we have our headquarters: the official start (called *La Grande Partenza*) is a significant occasion and cities invest lots of resources to prepare for it.

Those days were frantic - but also exciting - because of the amount of work to do in order to cover the event while coordinating with other players such as the Emilia-Romagna Region’s POR FESR office, the players in our network and the young journalists of Europhonica - the project funded by the European Parliament where European university radios cover EU topics and broadcast them to their peers.



Figure 5.10: Our participation at the Giro di'Italia 2019

Street theatre performance “Come crepe nei muri” (*Like cracks in walls*; Bologna, 16 May)

This initiative concluded our series of events for the European May; the citizens had the opportunity to enjoy a preview of this street theatre show, born within the European cooperation project MAUERSPRINGER (co-financed by the Creative Europe programme).

Thanks to the collaboration among Teatro Due Mondi, our Europe Direct and our decentred help desk inside the Municipality of Bologna, the show premiered exactly in our city, creating a moment of reflection on important topics such as walls that divide, breaches that unite, human rights, peace and the mutual respect of diversity.



Figure 5.11: The theatrical performance by Teatro Due Mondi



CHAPTER 6

OFFLINE STRATEGY: PRINTED MATERIAL, GADGET, GUEST SPEAKING

Information material

In order to explain the importance of the European Parliament's Elections to our citizens, we designed a card (A5 paper size) that could be easily handed in the events we organized and attended to.

This card resumed the *Stavolta voto* official campaign: on the front we pointed out the challenges that Europe was currently experiencing and importance of voting being fully aware of the importance of the European Union; on the back we reported some technical details about the vote (e.g. how to vote, in which circumscription Emilia-Romagna Region's voters belong to, the name of the current political groups that formed the outgoing European Parliament).

Coma dirigenti ci troviamo di fronte a molte sfide, dall'immigrazione al cambiamento climatico, dalla disoccupazione giovanile alla protezione dei dati. Viviamo in un mondo sempre più globalizzato e complesso. Alle sfide non si può sfuggire e il referendum sulla Brexit ha dimostrato che l'UE non è un progetto irreversibile. Molti nostri leoni danno per scontata la democrazia, questa sembra essere sottoposta a crescenti minacce, sia nei principi che nella pratica.

Per questo stiamo creando una comunità di sostenitori che incoraggerà una maggiore affiliazione degli elettori alle elezioni europee. Il nostro obiettivo non è di raccomandare questo o quel candidato. Sostengono il voto in sé, cioè l'impegno nel processo democratico con l'opinione di cosa è la cosa migliore. Vogliamo rafforzare il valore dello scambio di idee e costruire una comunità di sostenitori in tutta Europa che si impegnano per il futuro.

Defendiamo il concetto di democrazia affinché tutti insieme abbiamo la possibilità di decidere in che Europa vogliamo vivere.

Elezioni europee

23-26 MAGGIO 2019

stavoltavoto.eu

Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna ha preparato un brevissimo sondaggio anonimo per raccogliere le opinioni dei cittadini che incontriamo durante le nostre attività. Partecipa anche tu attraverso il QR code oppure al link: <https://goo.gl/forms/Q0UuWuWu0tGtUK2>

I risultati verranno resi noti il 9 maggio 2019

GRAZIE!!!

Il Parlamento: la voce dei cittadini nell'Unione europea

Nel Parlamento europeo siederanno, per 5 anni, 705 deputati in rappresentanza dei cittadini degli Stati membri dell'UE

Perché votare?

- per cambiare la maggioranza o difendere quella attuale
- per proporre un nuovo presidente della Commissione europea
- per aiutare un partito a superare la soglia di sbarramento del 4%, se a rischio

Istruzioni di voto

- una X sul simbolo prescelto
- massimo 3 preferenze, di cui la terza di genere diverso

La nostra circoscrizione

Con il nostro voto, potremo eleggere europarlamentari da una lista comune a tutta la circoscrizione nord-est, che include Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige e Friuli Venezia Giulia

Questi i gruppi politici della presente legislatura

Il 26 maggio 2019 eleggeremo 76 europarlamentari italiani

E dopo il voto?

Si insedia il nuovo Parlamento, il quale voterà il nuovo Presidente della Commissione europea

stavoltavoto.eu

Figure 6.1: The card we made to inform citizens about the 2019 European Elections

Publications

As we explained before, the catalogue for the 2018-2019 school year was completed in the Summer of 2018 and in each activity we proposed we tried to bring up the European Elections. Moreover, we dedicated a section to explain their importance while making available some useful links to multimedia, teaching materials, websites and PowerPoint presentations we use in our activities with schools.



Figure 6.2: The cover of the catalogue for the 2018-2019 school year

Gadget

During the events we took part in, we distributed *Stavolta voto* branded gadgets such as bags, stickers and pins. We also handed out the “branded card” - provided by the EP Representation Office in Milan - where you could write your personal reason to vote, take a picture and share it.

At the same time, we distributed our Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna's branded gadgets like pens, pencils and cloth bags.

As we mentioned before, for the initiative called “Mostra la bandiera!” (*Show the EU flag!*) - that we planned for “Primavera dell’Europa” - we also made available hundreds of EU cloth flags (that people could expose on balconies, windows, etc) and EU plastic flags (that people could wave and maybe take a selfie with).



Figure 6.3: Our gadgets

Guest speaking

Besides the events we organized, we were asked to participate as guest speakers in other organizations' events.

Meeting with the students of the “Primo Levi” third-age University (Bologna, 16 February)

In February we held the meeting “Parlamento europeo: come funziona” (*The European Parliament: how does it work?*) in collaboration with the EP Representation Office in Milan; it was an occasion to show to a more mature target the functioning of the European institutions and the importance of voting in May.



Figure 6.4: The students of the “Primo Levi” third-age University

Public interview with Professor Piero Ignazi (Bologna, 13 May)

The meeting “Italia-Europa: destini comuni?” (*Italy and Europe, a common destiny?*) was held in the Istituto Parri’s head office in Bologna and it consisted in a public interview with Piero Ignazi, Professor of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Bologna. At the end of the event, the public - composed by teachers, students and young historians - had also the opportunity to ask questions about the EU.

When we took the floor, we presented the ongoing EuLab University laboratory’s communication campaign to raise awareness about the 2019 European Elections.



CHAPTER 7

RESULTS

To show the impact of our activities we decided to consider a reference period for measurements, starting from 26 May 2018 to 31 May 2019.

To count the number of attendees to our events, we must highlight the objective impossibility of collecting an exact number; for instance, it was impossible for us to collect the actual number of people who received our gadgets (e.g. flags) and took photos with them.

We have also identified some basic KPIs (key performance indicators) to help us understand the impact of our activities, such as:

- the number of events and the number of attendees (with the word “events” we are referring to the events we organized, the events we took part in as guest speakers and the activities with schools and universities);
- the insights collected from our social network profiles.

In the tables below there are the collected indicators, divided according to the type of strategy.

Table with the results of the online strategy

Facebook

Type of data	Lifetime Post Total Impressions	Lifetime Engaged Users	Lifetime Organic Video Views	Lifetime Organic Video Views
<i>Explanation of the data</i>	<i>Lifetime: The number of times your Page's post entered a person's screen. Posts include statuses, photos, links, videos and more. (Total Count)</i>	<i>Lifetime: The number of unique people who engaged in certain ways with your Page post, for example by commenting on, liking, sharing, or clicking upon particular elements of the post. (Unique Users)</i>	<i>Lifetime: Number of times your video was viewed for more than 3 seconds without any paid promotion. (Unique Users)</i>	<i>Lifetime: Number of times your video was viewed for more than 3 seconds without any paid promotion. (Total Count)</i>
Data from 1 January 2019 to 26 May 2019	180.335	8.380	6.812	9.381
Data from 26 May 2018 to 31 December 2018	197.943	6.689	6.752	7.614
TOT	378.278	15.069	13.564	16.995

Source: Facebook insights, measurement date 8th July 2019.

Twitter

Period	Impressions	Interactions	Retweet	Likes
May 2019	196.770	3.220	280	810
April 2019	110.070	1.110	250	390
March 2019	203.680	2.550	340	460
February 2019	113.820	1.020	120	190
January 2019	9.910	90	10	0
December 2018	52.290	750	110	190
November 2018	56.930	760	150	150
October 2018	58.910	910	50	230
September 2018	97.940	1.250	150	240
August 2018	59.880	1.230	120	210
July 2018	138.530	1.760	230	380
June 2018	176.300	1.990	200	730
May 2018	27.050	180	10	50
TOT	1.302.080	16.820	2.020	4.030

Source: Twitter insights, measurement date 8th July 2019.

Instagram

Measurement period	Number of the posts	Number of videos	Impressions of the videos	Likes
From 1 January 2019 to 31 May 2019	70	23	2.283	2.579
From 1 June 2018 to 31 December 2018	36	5	283	543
TOT	106	28	2.566	3.122

Source: Instagram insights, measurement date 8th July 2019.

Table with the results of the offline strategy and the activities with schools and universities

Type of event	Number of events	Number of attendees
Activities with schools and universities	33	2.748
Activities with citizens (our main events and guest speaking in other organizations' events)	21	2.609
TOT	54	5.357

Source: Europe Direct Emilia-Romagna's monthly reports, measurement date 8th July 2019.



CHAPTER 8

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Once the final results of the ballots came in, we started sharing them via social networks while gradually collecting them in a summary page on our website, so that citizens could have in one place all the information they needed to know. For example, in that page we informed them about the next step of the newly-formed European Parliament (when it would take office, when MEPs would have nominated its new President, when it would have appointed the new President of the European Commission, and so on).

Europe Direct | L'Emilia-Romagna in Europa

Il parlamento europeo 2019-2024

Elezioni europee 2019

Il Parlamento europeo è l'unica istituzione europea i cui membri sono eletti direttamente dai cittadini, e le elezioni sono alle porte. Tra il 23 e il 26 maggio 2019 circa 400 milioni di europei si sono recati alle urne per eleggere i loro rappresentanti a Strasburgo.

Per chi vota in Italia, l'appuntamento è stato domenica 26 maggio in tutti i seggi elettorali.

Di seguito troverete alcuni approfondimenti suddivisi per tematiche.



I risultati in Emilia-Romagna delle elezioni europee 2019

Oltre il 50% degli aventi diritto al voto dell'UE ha partecipato alle elezioni europee, la più grande affluenza mai registrata negli ultimi 20 anni e il primo aumento della partecipazione dalle prime elezioni dirette del 1979. I numeri segnano una crescita nei 21 paesi, con tassi pari anche a dieci punti percentuali in sette stati membri. La crescita più alta si è avuta in Polonia, dove la partecipazione è passata dal 23% al 45%.

L'Italia è leggermente in controtendenza, con un lieve calo generalizzato della partecipazione, ma resta comunque uno degli otto paesi in cui più cittadini si recano alle urne (56,09%). La circoscrizione nord-est si posiziona decisamente sopra alla media, con il 63,93%. L'Emilia-Romagna, con il suo 67,3% di partecipazione al voto, risulta la seconda regione con la maggiore affluenza in Italia dopo l'Umbria.

	Emilia-Romagna	Totale della circoscrizione II Italia nord orientale (comprende anche Veneto, Trentino Alto-Adige e Friuli Venezia Giulia)
Elettori	3.436.541	9.332.243
Votanti	2.313.084	5.966.128
Affluenza	67,31%	63,93%

Partiti, risultati, europarlamentari eletti: qui tutte le informazioni aggiornate

Figure 8.1: Summary page on our website with the results of the ballots and the next step of the new European Parliament

Finally, in October 2019 we completed this publication in order to document what we did in our communication campaign; our hope was to briefly illustrate it during the Annual General Meeting for the Europe Direct Information Network (Prague, October 2019). We created a slide for the shared PowerPoint presentation with a road map showing the activities we did for our communication campaign in this last year.



Figure 8.2: Our PowerPoint slide for the Annual General Meeting in Prague (October 2019)



CONCLUSION

As you could see in this publication, this was a very energy-intensive journey but we are glad to have experienced firsthand the importance to raise awareness about the 2019 European Elections.

It is necessary to point out that we did not embark this path alone. What we achieve was the result of great teamwork: the collaboration with organizations belonging to our network, with other public entities - such as Municipality of Bologna, University of Bologna and the Emilia-Romagna Region - and even with many citizens, made all this possible.

This shows that European Union can really get in touch with its citizens, if all the EU network works together towards a common goal: with all the EU players increasing their communicative efforts we have carved out - day after day - an important space in the media landscape, being highly newsworthy.

But this should not happen cyclically and only every five years: European Union must be newsworthy every day.

We authors think that Europe is the most beautiful place in the World where a human being can be born.

A land where human rights are granted.

A land where you can live, work, retire and be happy wherever you decide.

A land where, if we have our differences, we can meet face-to-face and find a solution with dialogue, not with weapons.

A land where borders are just lines on maps and do not exist in our hearts.

But all of this must be shown through efficient communications efforts on a day-to-day basis, hoping that the collaboration between European Commission, European Parliament and all the organizations in the European network will carry on being fruitful, with the mission of winning both hearts and minds of all European citizens.

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section on our website



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