



Dear participants, dear guests,

Already for the 11th time in a row, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is organising its Civil Society Media Seminar. For this 2017 edition, we are guests of the Spanish Economic and Social Council, and I would like to thank again our Spanish friends for their hospitality and for providing the venue for this event.

Every year our communication department chooses a topic for our seminar, which is prominent in the European media, but which is also relevant to European people: topics that influence people's views, people's opinions, but also people's everyday lives. European media, European development policy and migration have been recent topics of the EESC media seminar, always with a special focus on their communication aspects.

The debates at the 2017 event will be centred on the globalisation of media and news, particularly in connection with the rise of social media. Nearly every internet user also has a social media account, and social media allow nearly everybody to become a "journalist". On the one side, this development is seen as an enrichment as it brings more pluralism to our media landscape. On the other side, social media also enable people to give free rein to their frustration, negative feelings or even hate. Offending, belittling, insulting people or even pushing them into desperate, sometimes life-threatening situations cannot be tolerated. Fortunately this issue has attracted closer attention and the big internet platforms have already started – partly voluntarily, partly compelled by stricter rules – to tackle these nefarious tendencies.

In our seminar we will also look at these issues. We will discuss hate speech, smear campaigns and mobbing, and on the other side we will examine how culture could be set against these unacceptable excesses. Particularly, in the eve of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, we want to look at culture as a kind of counterweight to undesirable developments on the net.

The first two panels will focus on topics which are not totally new – populism and fake news - but what is new about them is their scale and distribution, together with the speed at which they spread.

We have invited speakers from all over Europe, with different backgrounds and different expertise and a wealth of knowledge on the topics that we will discuss in these two days in Madrid.

In this brochure, you will find our programme and a short introduction to our speakers.

I encourage you to join the discussions and raise questions, contributing to a lively exchange of views and an interesting debate, so that we can all benefit from this seminar.

Yours faithfully,

Gonçalo Lobo Xavier

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 23 November 2017

09.30 – 10.15 a.m.

Registration & Welcome Coffee

10.15 – 11.15 a.m.

Opening session

Chair: *Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier, EESC Vice President*

Welcome:

- *Bernardo Aguilera Sánchez-Garrido, Vice President of the Spanish ESC*
- *Jorge García Castaño, City Councillor of the City of Madrid*

Key note and opening:

- *Íñigo Méndez de Vigo y Montojo, Minister of Education, Culture and Sport and spokesperson of the Spanish government, former MEP*

11.15 a.m. – 12.45 p.m.

Panel I: Populism – How should civil society meet the challenge of populism?

Moderator: *Gabriele Bischoff, EESC Member & Group President, Workers Group*

This panel will look at both populism in the sense of support for the concerns of ordinary people and in the sense of demagoguery. It will elaborate on the contrast between "the people" and "the elites" in politics and the role civil society can play in a changing political landscape. Panellists will also discuss populism in the context of the economic and social impact of globalisation. How to avoid possible rifts in European societies - between different social groups, but also between ordinary people and the elites.

Speakers:

- **Claudia Chwalisz**, *Consultant and Crook Public Service Fellow Expert at the University of Sheffield*
- **Albert Garrido**, *Spanish journalist and professor at University at Pompeu Fabra and University Internacional de Barcelona*
- **Michael Hartmann**, *German Sociologist and Political Scientist, Germany*
- **Fernando Vallespín Oña**, *Spanish professor and political scientist*

12.45 – 2.15 p.m.

Lunch

2.15 – 2.45 p.m.

Opening session

Chair: **Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier**, *EESC Vice President*

- **Jordi García Viña**, *Director for Labour Relations of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organisations (CEOE)*
- **Cristina Antoñanzas Peñalva**, *Vice-Secretary General, General Union of Workers*
- **Empar Pablo Martínez**, *Secretary of Communication, Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions*

Introduction to the panel:

Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier, *EESC Vice President*

2.45 – 4.15 p.m.

Panel II: Fake news – the new anti-media weapon?

Moderator: **Violeta Jelić**, *EESC Member & Group Vice-president, Employers Group*

"Alternative facts" seems to be the new word for lies and as such is becoming socially acceptable. With the help of social media practically every user can be a "journalist" and in the quasi absence of a code of ethics nearly any information can be spread worldwide. This panel will look at the trend for using the web to spread fake news and what means could help to counteract this development. Does quality journalism still have a chance and how can it be supported? The debate will also focus on filter bubbles and bubble communication, their impact on people's opinion making, but also on the possibilities for civil society to use filter bubbles for their own interests

Speakers:

- Stamos Archontis, *Ellinikahoaxes, Greece*
- Izabella Cooper, *Spokesperson, FRONTEX, Warsaw*
- Tabea Wilke, *Digital Strategic Communication*
- Giovanni Zagni, *Senior analyst at Pagella Politica*

4.15 – 4.30 p.m.

Wrap-up of the day

Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier, *EESC Vice President*

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Guided tour "The Madrid of the Austrians/the Habsburgs" Plaza de la Villa, followed by a reception at the kind invitation of the Mayor of Madrid, Mrs Manuela CARMENA

8.00 p.m.

Networking dinner

Friday, 24 November 2017

10 – 11 a.m.

Opening session

Chair: Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier, *EESC Vice President*

- Carmen Comos Tovar, *Director, Confederación Empresarial Española de la Economía Social (CEPES), Madrid*
- Maria Belovas, *Director, Department of Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Tallinn*
- Luis Planas, *EESC Secretary General, Brussels*

Introduction to the panel:

Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier, *EESC Vice President*

11 – 12.30 a.m.

Panel III: Code of culture – the driver's licence for social media use?

Moderator: Luca Jahier, EESC Member and Group President, Various Interests Group

The third panel will seek to identify the influence social media have on people's behaviour. The anonymity of the internet unfortunately also provides room for hateful, violent, xenophobic or sexist comments, smear campaigns, mobbing, even terrorist recruitment. Does globalisation with all its consequences, including migration, intensify this negative trend and what can civil society do to counter it? Do we need a code of conduct for the internet and what role can culture and an enhanced focus on culture in people's education play? Also, how can the internet be more effectively used in a positive way for cultural exchange and education?

Speakers:

- Ingrid Brodnig, Austrian journalist and writer
- Thibault Lesénécal, Head of Parliament's web communication unit and social media specialist, EP Brussels
- Alexander Damian Ricci, President of the Paris-based NGO, Babel International, publisher of the European Magazine, Cafébabel, reporter at EuVisions Observatory
- Jon Worth, TechPolitics-UK Blogger

12.30 – 12.45 p.m.

Wrap-up of the day and farewell

Gonçalo Lobo-Xavier, EESC Vice President

12.45 p.m.

Take away lunch