Scientific Report

The main objective of the first stage of the project was the mapping of the present tendencies of the process of shaping of networking Europe. The research team aimed:
(1) to study and systematize the literature on the online communication of/about the UE;
(2) to reveal the multidimensional opportunities for each debate area on the Debating Europe platform;
(3) to organize and participate in the international workshop focused on the online communication of the UE.

(1) Studying and systematization of the relevant literature

The research team focused on the following aspects prevailing in the literature:
(a) the European public space and the communication, symbolic and democratic deficit of the EU;
(b) the European space and the European elections;
(c) the online communication and the EU platforms;
(d) discourse analyses on various European themes.

On the project website (https://sites.google.com/site/eeurociti), under Results – References, there could be found three categories of documents about the EU themes (books, articles and working papers).

Within the context of online communication, the research team studied the online platforms of the EU. A sythensis of these EU platforms could be found on the website. The literature review revealed that so far the studies focused on the following EU online outlets:
- the *Futurum* platform (Wodak & Wright, 2006; Wright, 2007);
- the *EUROPA* website (Hoppmann, 2010);
- the *Interactive Policy-Making* tool and the online discussion forum, used by the Commission to inform citizens about the multilingualism policy (Smith, 2010);
- the *Debate Europe* online discussion forum (Karlsson, 2010; Just, 2010) etc.

(2) The multidimensional opportunities for each debate area
on the Debating Europe platform

The eight members of the research team aimed to study the Debating Europe platform (2011- November 1, 2015) taking into account the following categories: themes, diachrony, comment frequency, EU representatives invoved in debates and transversal areas. There were formed four groups, each group formed of a senior researcher and a postdoctoral researcher or PhD student:
- Cmeciu Camelia and Manolache Mădălina – *Future channel*
- Coman Cristina and Bardan Alexandra - *Asia & Europa* and *Global* channels;
- Lazăr Mirela and Vidrașcu (Munteanu) Raluca – *Greener and Security channels;*
- Păun Mihaela and Cășvean Tulia – *Quality and Smarter channels.*

The findings of these analyses were presented during the *e-Communicating of Europe* workshop (organized in December 2015). We will provide some insights into the FUTURE and GREENER channels.

On the FUTURE channel[1], the first category (LIVEBLOG) included 27 debates, 20 of them being achieved in 2013, declared the European Year of Citizenship. As Figure 1 shows, the maximum values registered were in 2013 when the debate about the election of the President of the European Commission (213 comments) took place and when the elections for the European Parliament also took place (118 comments). The comment values were registered within the interval [2;61], a fact which may show two possible situations: either the users posted their comments on their Twitter or Facebook pages directly or the topics and the special guests of these dialogues did not stir the debaters' interest. The citizens' dialogue with the highest number of comments (41 comments) is the one which took place in Italy.
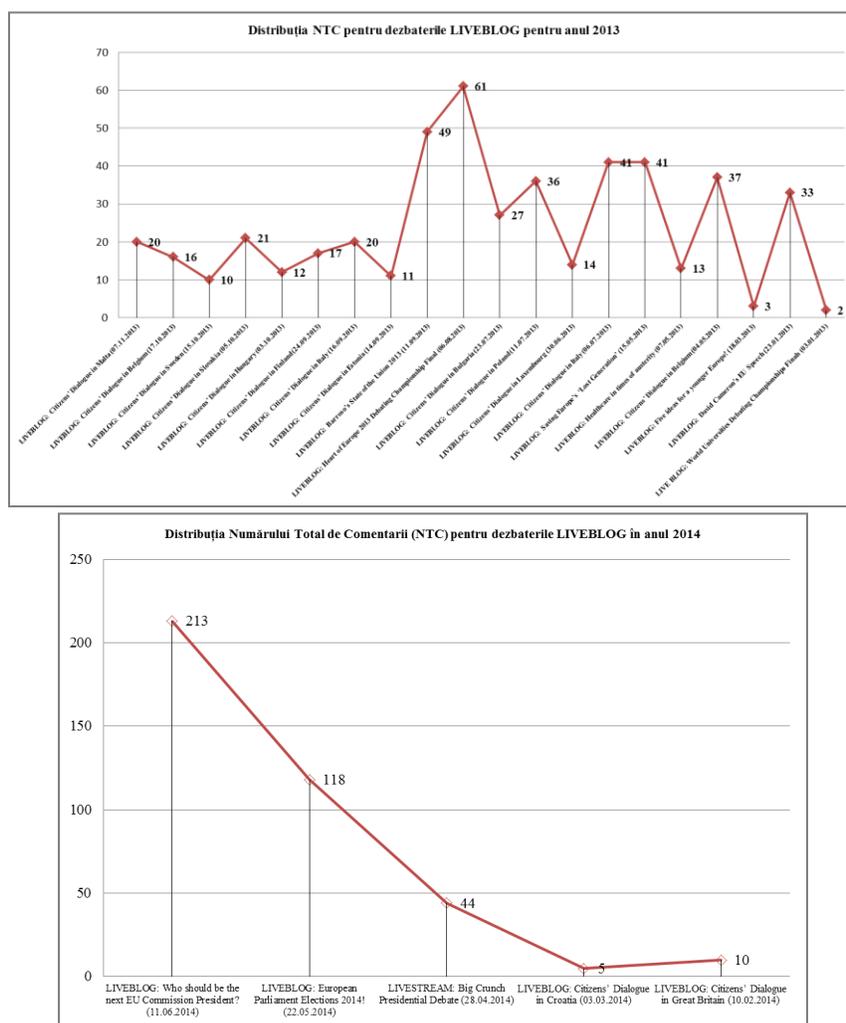

Figure 1. Number of debates and comments – LIVEBLOG (Future Channel)

[1] The results were presented at the e-Communicating Europe (December 2016) in the study "Mapping the Future on the *Debating Europe* Platform" (Mădălina Manolache & Camelia Cmeciu)

DEBATING SCHOOLS was the second category analysed on the FUTURE channel. Tthe evolution of the total number of debates (tnd) for 2011-2014 is proportionally reflected in the evolution of the number of comments for the same period of time. If we analyse the passing from year 2014 to year 2015 for the total number of debates, we observe that from 93 debates with a total number of comments (tnc) of 13.304, the year 2015 has 48 debates up to November 1, with a total number of comments (tnc) of 12.122. These findings reflect the following aspects: (a) 2015 tnd represents 51.61% of the 2014 tnd and (b) 2015 tnc represents 91.12% of the 2014 tnc. These values highlight the users' attachment to the *Debating Europe* platform and the addictive character of this dialogic technology (Feller & Yengin, 2014). As Figure 2 shows, the maximum number of comments (133) was registered for the debate about the situation of schools in France (2014), followed by 53 comments for the debate launched by pupils in Latvia and 41 comments for the debate launched in Italy (2013).
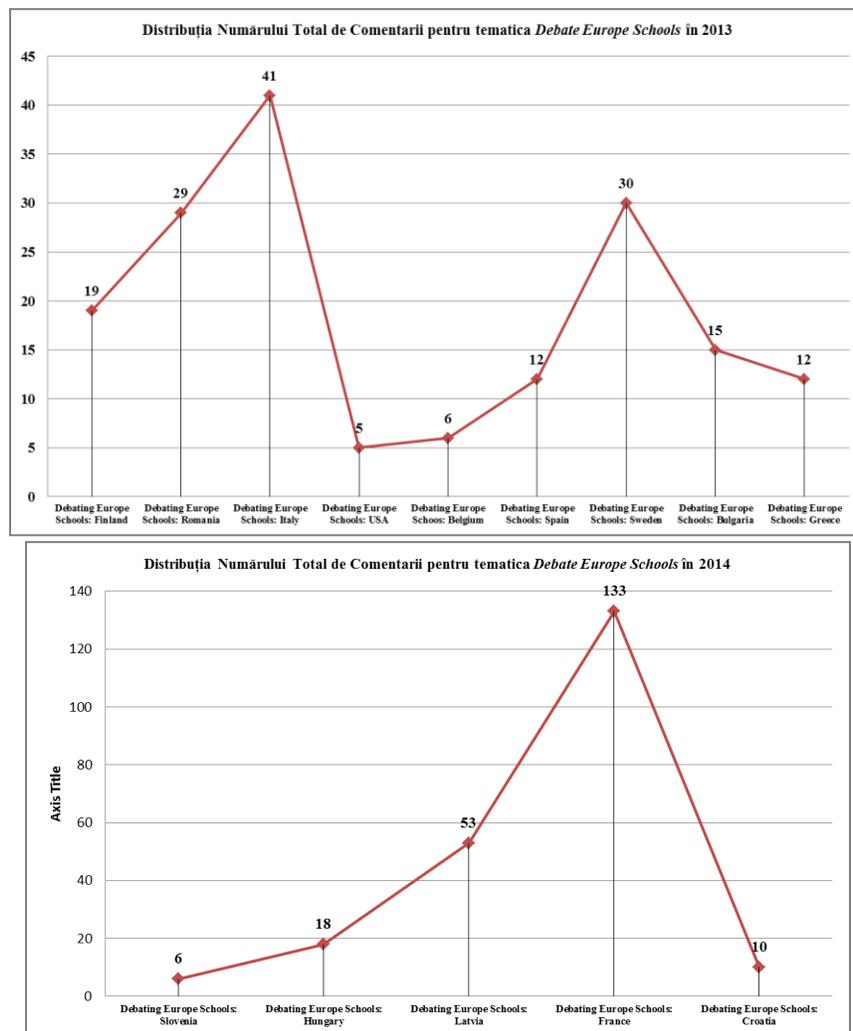

Figure 2. Number of debates and comments – Debating Europe Schools (FUTURE channel)

One of the findings of the analysis of the GREENER channel[2], which embedded 80 debates, is the following: a diverse thematic encompassing of the GREENER channel. The five major categories were: Environment, Finance, Energy, Food and Climate Change, each of these categories having sub-categories. For example, the environment theme was framed through biodiversity and pollution. As Figure 3 shows, the most promoted category was Energy (28%), followed by Climate Change, Food and Environment, whereas the most commented category was Food.
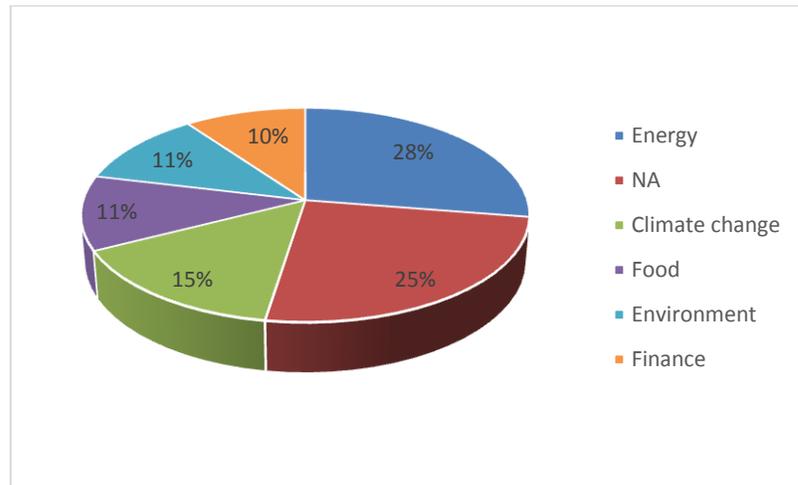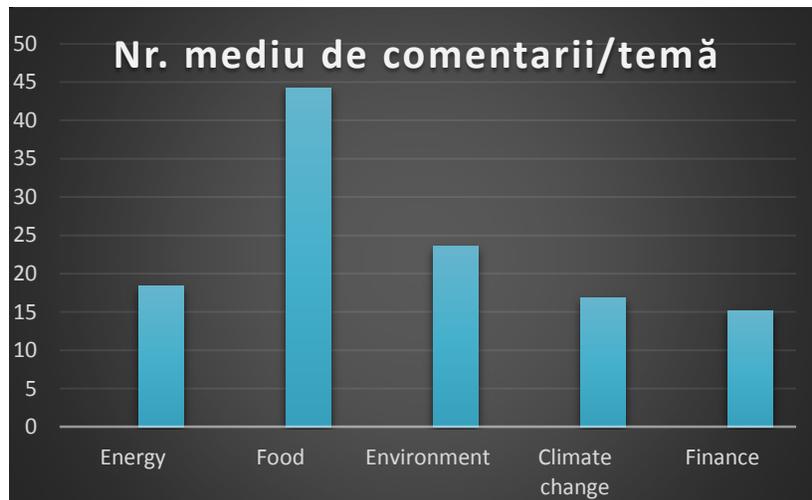

Figure 3. Themes – *GREENER CHANNEL*

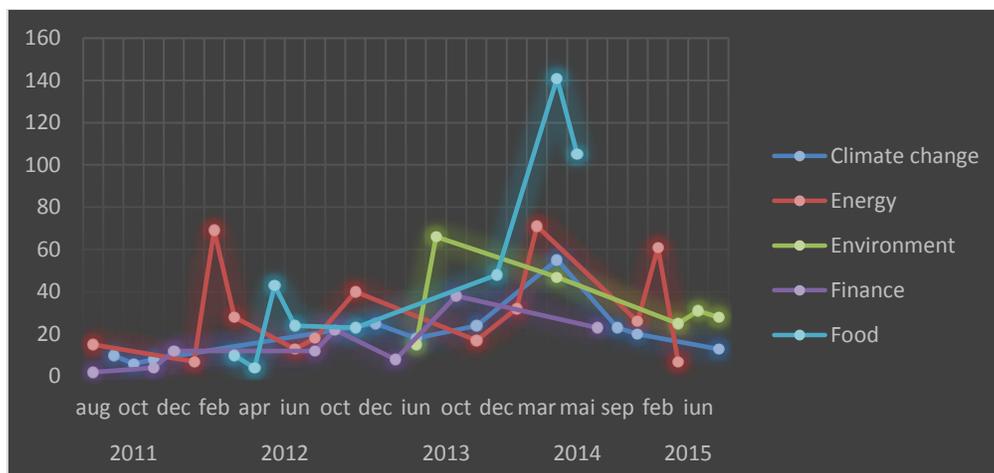Figure 4. Avereage number of comments/ theme (*GREENER channel*)

Figure 5. The evolution of comments/ theme - *GREENER channel*

➢ **DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS**

➢ **Two oral presentations at international conferences in Romania**

Four members took part in the international conference in Romania **LUMEN - MEPDEV 2015.** The two papers were sent for evaluation for the ISI conference proceedings.

1. The study "Citizens' E-Involvement into the (De)Legitimation of the European Education's Future " (Camelia Cmeciu, Tulia Casvean, Madalina Manolache) was presented at the scientific conference 7th LUMEN International Scientific Conference MEPDEV 2015, Targoviste, November 12-13, 2015.

In this paper we intended to analyse two strands of debate on the *Debating Europe* platform, related to the future of the European education: the skill gap in education and the role played by MOOCs in the shaping of a new type of education. The two aims of this paper were: (1) to determine the word associations and co-occurence networks delivered by EU citizens in their comments; (2) to identify the types of discursive (de)legitimation associated with the MOOCs and the skill gap, using the framework of critical discourse analysis. We employed a network analysis and a discursive analysis of the comments posted by EU citizens on the 'Debating Europe' platform two important issues for the future of education: (1) How will Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) transform education? (launched June 11, 2015) and (2) Are Europe's education systems 'fit for purpose'? (launched September 30, 2015). Using *text mining* (KH coder), we generated diagrams through word association with the word "education" and co-occurrence networks for the debates on MOOC (Figure 6) and the gap in digital abilities (Fig. 7).
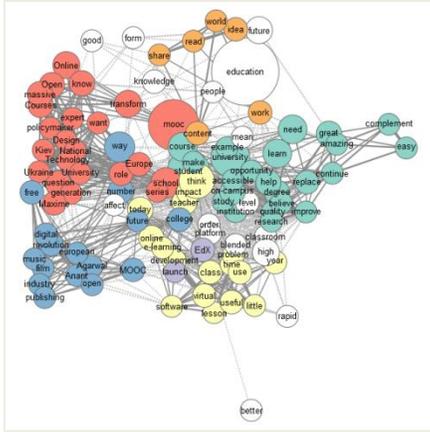
Fig.6.
Co-occurence Network for the MOOC strand, where Nodes=104
(out of 104), Edges=1030 (out of 1728), Density= 0,192, Jaccard≥ 0,2
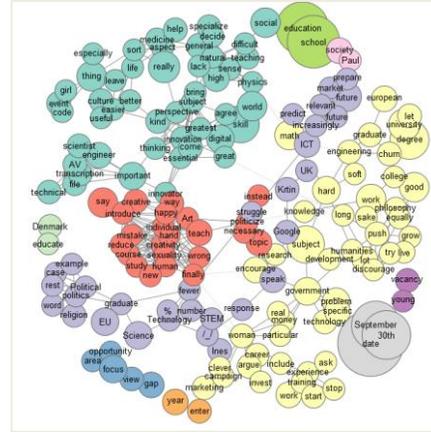

Fig.7.
Co-occurence Network for the Education Systems strand,
where N =171(out of 217), E = 389(out of 4400),
DENSITY – 0,027
JACCARD≥ 0,4

Another important aspect that this paper brought was the insights provided by European citizens and the EU policy-makers on the future of education through the interaction on the 'Debating Europe' platform. The analysis showed that the EU citizens, policy-makers and other European representatives make a plea for a blending between traditional education and online courses and between hard sciences and soft sciences. The main difference between EU citizens and policy-makers and other European representatives lies in the usage of the polarization strategy. Some EU citizens clearly highlight the dichotomy 'human versus online interaction' and 'Eastern versus Western education' as the 'good versus evil' polarization.

We will send this study to be evaluated and published in the ISI Conference Proceedings.

2. The study "Mass media and crisis: realities and challenges for public institutions and e-citizens" (Mihaela Păun) was presented at the scientific conference 7th LUMEN International Scientific Conference MEPDEV 2015, Targoviste, November 12-13, 2015.

Using the framing and attribution theory, Mihaela Paun analysed the ways in which mass-media and PR practitioners presented the crisis situations in two social issues which are highly debated on the Debating Europe platform, namely education and health. She analysed the citizens' comments and observed how they actually created another reality than the one presented by organizations.

  ➢ **Five oral presentations at the "e-communicating of Europe" international workshop (December 2016)**

- "Mapping the Future on the *Debating Europe* Platform" (Mădălina Manolache & Camelia Cmeciu) . The content analysis of the 304 debates took into account the following categories: distribution of debates across time, the EU citizens' degree of involvement through comments, and the degree of co-occurrence between transversal debates. The evolution or involution of these categories were studied in close connection to two important issues that are recurrent on the *Future* debate strand: political communication (LIVEBLOG) and education (Debating Europe Schools).

- "(With and about) European Union I(nternet)-Communication" (Mădălina Manolache & Mihaela Păun) The authors firstly focused on the websites and the virtual platforms of the European Union's institutions, by identifying the purpose and outlining the content; secondly, from the point of view of user-interaction vs. user-participation (Lopez-Gonzalez, 2014), they diachronically outlined the social media platforms used by the EU institutions.
- "E-citizens Debating Smart Europe" (Tulia Căşvean & Mihaela Păun). The authors examined the most relevant frames and issues associated with "Smarter Europe", the most commented upon topics and their relevance in accordance with the political and social problems of the European Union. Based on the framing theory, their analysis offered an overview of ideas and concerns of the e-citizens, with responses and feedback from experts and policies makers.
- "Global and Regional Perspectives in the *Debating Europe* Platform" (Cristina Coman & Alexandra Bardan). This study showed that the comments published on the "Debating Europe" platform approached socio-political phenomena and various events which are grouped into several major thematic fields (possible generic frames). Between 2011 and 2015, the debates on the GLOBAL channel were developing around a series of recurring themes. One of the most important seems the theme concerning the enlargement of the European Union or maintaining it within its current limits, along with discussions on the capacity of Balkan countries or Turkey to meet the European requirements. For the ASIA EUROPE debating strand one could note the following debate directions: the economic crisis and the effects of the crisis on the labor market in the European Union, along with the accelerated development of Asian countries with significant potential for growth, such as China and India, in specific sectors: research, technology and sustainable development.
- "Unity in Diversity" as a Cultural Construct in the Online Debates on the European Union (Mirela Lazăr & Raluca Vidraşcu). The authors selected the research corpus from the "Debating Europe" platform, focusing on the themed sets of posts "Quality" and "Greener". We performed a discourse analysis underlain by essential semantic categories derived from modal logic and the analytic framework of Fairclough (2003) and Wodak and Weiss (2004). The analytic categories that they proposed sprang from the context-dependent negotiation of meanings and ideologies assumed in the discursive interaction.

(3) Organizing the international workshop "e-communicating of Europe"

In December (4-5, 2015) the research team will organize the workshop *e-Communicating of Europe* (http://eeurociti.fjsc.unibuc.ro/events/e-communicating-of-europe_2015_workshop). The workshop will be organized together with the Doctoral School in Communication Studies, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, University of Bucharest. This international workshop aims to bring together researchers presenting a broad variety of approaches to the ways in which European countries and EU institutions have (or have not) succeeded in promoting themselves online, in initiating and/or maintaining an online dialogue with European citizens. After the call for papers, 18 researchers from Romania and abroad will take part in the workshop. The following topics :
  - *online European public space; online advertising of European companies;*
  - *e-communication of European policies and themes;*
  - *e-communication and linguistic aspects;*

- *e-communication and crisis situations*.

The program of the workshop is available at the following link: https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxlZXVyb2NpdGl8Z3g6NDJhYTBkOTIxZmE2MDY2ZQ

In 2016 we intend to publish a volume with the studies presented during the "e-Communicating of Europe" workshop.

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