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Horizontal coherence in EU social media diplomacy: case of Ukraine

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In the discussion of the EU as an international actor, one of the important aspects is foreign policy coherence. One of the instruments of foreign policy is public diplomacy which in the network society is often embodied in the form of digital diplomacy – use of information technologies for achieving diplomatic goals through reaching the networks of information consumers in the Internet.

The significance of digital diplomacy for the EU was outlined by numerous politicians and researchers and has actualized after the events in Ukraine when the refusal of the government to sign the Association Agreement led to the wave of escalating protests, overthrow of the President, a deep political crisis and territorial losses (annexation of the Crimea by Russia). The EU digital diplomacy has been actively embodied in this process, but sometimes it appeared to be not an example of a concerted action.

The aim of this article is to verify the horizontal coherence of the EU social media diplomacy in the case of the EU–Ukraine relations. The results allow us to conclude that, despite some minor failures (some unsuited rhetoric, lack of references to each other and of interactivity), on the horizontal level the EU is mostly coherent in maintaining its digital diplomacy, which allows to speak about its succeeding in self-presentation as an international actor in the Internet communication.

Keywords*: EU foreign policy, coherence, digital diplomacy, social media, public diplomacy, soft power*

The discussion of the EU as an international actor is not new for modern political science. One of the important aspects of this discourse is coherence as a "necessary precondition for the efficacy of foreign policy not only of the EU but of all international actors" (Koehler 2010: 58).

The Treaty of Lisbon, aimed at making the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) more coherent and visible, is sometimes considered as an alteration which made the EU diplomacy a worthy example of concerted action, yet the question of the EU acting effectively as an international actor remained topical both in academic and political discourse (Howorth 2010: 456).

One of the foreign policy instruments whose analysis may add to the discussion

of coherence is public diplomacy which is often defined as a governmental instrument aimed at impacting the publics of other countries or to broadcast their ideas or ideology (Nye 2008: 95).

In the age of the Internet and social media, public diplomacy has often been embodied in the phenomenon which in the American political discourse is usually referred to as cyber diplomacy (Melissen 2007: 57) and in the European – as e-diplomacy (Nweke 2012: 22), or digital diplomacy (Westcott 2008: 16). Making use of the book of Melissen and articles of Nweke and Westcott, we may define digital diplomacy as an instrument of the application of new information technologies for broadening the diplomatic influence and achieving the goals of public diplomacy through reaching the networks of information consumers in the Internet.

Despite being originally derived from the USA, the digital diplomacy is now used in a varying degree of success by every global political actor, not excluding Europe whose diplomatic agenda has two dimensions: CFSP and the foreign policy of the Member States (Avery 2011).

S. Duke in his analysis of the digital component of the EU public diplomacy admits that EEAS, as well as the major European foreign policy officials and the EU delegations, have established a good presence in the social media. However, he mentions that, in spite of showing some signs of interactivity with consumers, diplomacy is lacking consistency, which weakens the direct dialogue and "risks making this type of e-diplomacy rather wooden and staged" (Duke 2013: 30).

Although digital diplomacy is researched by a number of different schools and in various aspects, there is a gap in the application of the research results to the specific concepts of international relations, e.g., to the discussion of the foreign policy coherence.

This article is aimed at addressing one of the aspects of this gap (namely – horizontal coherence) via conducting a case study aimed at exploring the EU digital diplomacy in social media in the context of the EU policy coherence and international actorness, and the case selected is the Crimean crisis of 2014 where the European public diplomacy and digital diplomacy as its specific case have been actively embodied.

This problem assumes answering several important questions: what is the level of involvement of different EU actors in different foreign policy issues, how do these actors relate to each other in conducting digital diplomacy, and what are the prevailing topics and rhetoric of their messages in relation to the social context?

Upon answering these questions, we may conclude how coherent or incoherent is the EU foreign policy conveyed through social media diplomacy on the horizontal level, thus adding to the discussion about the EU as an international actor. It will also provide some general explanations about the role of social media diplomacy in foreign policy and set the ground for the further research in this area.

For the purposes of the research problem, a mixed method approach was applied: content analysis (for basic quantitative overview of the material) and critical discourse analysis (for the qualitative assessment of the information policy, identifying discourses and their correlation with the context and

social practice), utilizing Twitter messages of the EU officials and agencies.

This article starts with the theoretical review of the concepts of public diplomacy, digital diplomacy, international actor and foreign policy coherence, and the explanation of their interaction for the context of the EU. The methodological part contains the method description and case selection in order to explain the relevance of the case analysis. It is followed by the empirical part presenting the content and discourse analyses. The conclusion sums up the previous chapters, points out what is the impact of this paper, and contains the propositions towards the further research.

The EU foreign policy coherence

The discussions of the EU as a power in international relations are often focused on its unique nature. J. Zielonka writes that, despite strong external borders, the growing list of functional fields and expanding the diplomatic service, the EU is "nothing like a state, nor is it likely to become one" (Zielonka 2008: 473). It is rather an unidentified political object, due to its diverge borders, lack of monopoly and legitimate means of coercion, and existence of independent external policies of member states.

Despite that, Zielonka considers the EU as an effective international actor, and his explanation rests on the notion that in modern conditions "typical Westphalian nation-states are not the only influential actors in global affairs" (Zielonka 2008: 472), mentioning Gazprom or Microsoft as corporations, or the World Trade Organization as an international intergovernmental organization.

N. Wright divides the EU international activities into two aspects: economic policy and security policy. In regard of the first, "the EU has consequently developed the ability to have global impact, although not without challenge" (Wright 2011: 27), but in regard of the second its "international actorness is far less developed and remains controversial" (Wright 2011: 28).

An elaborated research of coherence in the EU policy is presented by C. Gebhard who defines coherence as "the challenge and ambition to coordinate the multiple parts of the EU's international relations in order to increase both strategic convergence and procedural efficiency across several strands of the EU external action" (Gebhard 2011: 101).

According to her study, the EU is vertically and horizontally a multilayered system with an enhanced need for coordination, yet without built-in institutional framework for a concerted external action. The historical background of incoherence in the EU policy is the existence of a "dualism between supranational integration and intergovernmental cooperation" (Gebhard 2011: 104). The different dimensions of coherence cover vertical (concertation of Member States policies with the common at the Community or Union level), horizontal ("coordination between the supranational and the intergovernmental sphere of external action" (Gebhard 2011: 107)), internal (within each of the foreign policy domains), and external (between the EU and the third actors), which are closely interconnected.

C. Gebhard stresses that the most important among others for representing the EU as an international actor and partner in the external dimension is horizontal coherence which "is very much an institutional

issue – both in respect of its policy/content dimension and its procedural/administrative dimension" (Gebhard 2011: 109). It makes the ensuring of horizontal coherence a pressing challenge for the EU politicians and agencies.

The EU social media diplomacy as an instrument of public diplomacy

It is recognized that official communication aimed at the overseas auditory is not new for international relations. If the traditional diplomacy is "about relationships between the representatives of states, or other international actors, [public diplomacy] targets the general public in foreign societies and more specific non-official groups, organizations and individuals" (Melissen 2007: 3).

Regarding the embedding the concept of public diplomacy into the framework of some foreign policy strategy, it is usually labeled as an instrument of something contra-posed to hard power, e.g., "soft power", "smart power", "social power", etc.

In the contemporary political science, the understanding of soft power has been developed by Joseph Nye who explains it as the ability to attract actors rather than coerce or pay, and which "rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others" (Nye 2008: 95). He argues that in the modern conditions of the excessive development of information technologies the "paradox of plenty" has occurred when an overwhelming amount of information is distracting people, preventing them from focusing on important things. This means that nowadays "attention rather than information becomes the scarce resource" (Nye 2008: 99).

Another important outcome of the "paradox of plenty" is the growing role of credibility. Public diplomacy should be objective and refrain from false claims (e.g., the US statements about Hussein's possession of mass destruction weapons), in order not to turn to harsh propaganda and undermine the source's credibility (Nye 2008: 101).

The main implications of digital diplomacy are service delivery, ideas, networks, and information. According to Westcott, the concept of interactivity, i.e. the possibility to cooperate with the target audience in the real-time regime and to respond to its needs is what makes public diplomacy efficient (Westcott 2008: 16).

One of the instruments ensuring interactivity, which allows spreading first-hand information, discuss it and get the feedback, is social media. The existence of a wide network of people with shared interests, a certain level of mutual trust and public authority simplifies the spread of an idea. In the functioning of social media as an information source, the "paradox of plenty" remains actual, and for some groups of users, especially conservative, information "posted by any individual is less credible than other types of information sources" (Ismail & Latif 2013: 255). With this regard, it is important to work on the reputation of the sources, what leads us to the discussion: could we consider the Twitter or Facebook posts of officials as those in the course of official diplomatic strategy, namely of the EU?

In the modern environment, personalized public diplomacy activities have given the target audience an opportunity to directly communicate with the foreign policy agents

who are now perceived as being ordinary, "someone-like-me" people, not like an impersonal statehood machine (Zhonga & Li 2013: 543). Still, it may be considered that social media fall in a grey zone of what is official and private.

The European Commission has elaborated social media guidelines for its staff (EC: 2014). This document states that the employee's statements "will remain personal and cannot be regarded as representing the Commission's official position", and that they "do not speak on behalf of the Commission and you should point this out in the appropriate manner".

However, this regulation has also the following statement: "As a general rule, only Commissioners, Spokespersons, Heads of Representations and Press Officers in Representations are entitled to speak on behalf of the European Commission and to relay political messages. In response to the growing interest in social media, 'mandated staff' working in close cooperation with the Spokespersons have now been added to this group".

To sum up the above, digital diplomacy is functioning within the framework of public diplomacy, and social media are one of its tools. Its research will let us make suppositions about policy coherence and the EU as an international actor.

The research of the EU digital diplomacy should be linked to the specific case which is closely connected with the European diplomacy and has generated a reaction of the diplomatic circles.

One of the most recent examples of the events where the EU digital diplomacy has been actively implemented is the situation in Ukraine when after the wave of social protests (referred to as "Euromaidan")

against the government, which has suspended preparations for signing the Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013, the President of Ukraine Yanukovych fled, and Russia annexed part of the Ukrainian territory, justifying it by the protection of ethnical Russians. During 21 February – 21 March 2014, Russia managed to occupy the territory of the Crimea (the Russian-speaking autonomous republic in the south of Ukraine), organize an illegal referendum to make the Crimea an independent country, and incorporate it as a subject of federation.

The case of the EU digital diplomacy during the Crimean crisis of 2014 is an example of diplomatic actions in the conditions of a large information flow, mass spread of disinformation and propaganda, and rapidly changing terms of action.

In theoretical terms, it is an example of diplomatic work in the conditions of the "paradox of plenty", active involvement of various actors of interest and the necessity of a rapid reaction, which is making the selected case a representational example for answering the research questions. Its analysis will allow detecting the interests, actors, and ideas conveyed, identify power relations, and point out if the EU manages to act in the social media as an international actor with a coherent foreign policy.

Research method: content analysis and critical discourse analysis

In order to elaborate the research design, it is necessary to reflect on different methods of the research of communication, which are the content analysis and different kinds of the discourse analysis.

It is generally considered that content analysis is closer to the sphere of quantitative research as it focuses on the frequency of the wording, "examining trends and patterns in documents" (Stemler 2001), typically used for getting what messages and categories are prevailing in quantity, and discourse analysis is used for understanding their connection with the context, noticing the positions of the stakeholders expressed through the discourse and realizing how the discourses interact.

One of the types of discourse analysis is the critical discourse analysis which "provides theories and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains" (Jorgensen et al. 2010: 60). The reason to use it for analyzing the EU digital diplomacy is its strong emphasis on understanding the ideological influence on power relations, which is the foremost component of diplomacy. According to Fairclough, discourses might be more or less ideological, but ideological ones contribute more to the transformation of power relations (Jorgensen et al. 2010: 75).

It comprises a three-dimensional model: analysis of the linguistic features (how discourses are performed), analysis of discursive practice (how the text is produced and consumed, and how the discourses interrelate), and analysis of social practice (how the discourses interact with the wider world and what implications they have to relevant actors regarding power relations).

An exercise of the discourse analysis has already been conducted for the study of the EU public diplomacy messages in 2009 by Steffen Bay Rasmussen. He ar-gues that although the EU is lacking hard power, its major means of external influence is soft power which is represented in the communicated values and ideas. It makes analyzing communications the best way to understand the EU international actorness via comparing how its messages correlate with self-image, i.e. how successful is the EU in its soft power efforts (Rasmussen 2009: 11).

The sources of the material are the Twitter accounts of the EU officials and institutions which are the instruments of the EU diplomacy. Twitter has been preferred to Facebook for several reasons: first, Twitter accounts of the subjects of research are more active and, as a rule, have more followers and reach a broader audience; secondly, not a every important actor of the EU foreign policy is active in Facebook, which makes the comparison irrelevant; thirdly, Twitter is a broader sphere of the EU communications as most of the messages from Twitter are also repeated in Facebook while far from all Facebook messages are also tweeted.

As soon as the research will be focused on the horizontal and internal coherence, it does not cover the pages of the officials representing the Member States. The choice of these particular officials and institutions is explained by their formal status, active engagement in the EU–Ukraine relations and a high intensity of comments, what make them representative objects.

Results

The quantitative part of the analysis encompasses the general content analysis – namely, the absolute and the relative num-

*Table 1. **Results of the content analysis of the messages of the EU foreign policy actors in Twitter in the period from 21 February to 21 March 2014***

Actor	Overall number of tweets and re-tweets	Number of tweets and re-tweets on Ukraine (of that – on Crimea)	Percentage of tweets and re-tweets on Ukraine (of that – on Crimea)
European External Action Service (EEAS)	278	101 (14)	36.3 (5.0)
EU Delegation to Ukraine	405	317 (57)	78.3 (14.1)
Michael Mann	130	41(8)	31.5 (6.2)
Maja Kocijancic	152	101 (16)	66.4 (10.5)
EU Council	55	12 (1)	21.8 (1.8)
Herman van Rompuy	73	33 (3)	45.2 (4.1)
European Commission	535	104 (18)	19.4 (3.4)
José Manuel Barroso	127	46 (6)	36.2 (4.7)
Stefan Fule	97	50 (11)	51.5 (11.3)
European Parliament	277	39 (20)	14.1 (7.2)
Martin Schultz	67	4 (0)	6.0 (0)
In general	2809	1169 (237)	41.6 (8.4)

bers of references to the specific topics in the material under study, which will allow to identify the intensity of the topics in the discourse of different actors and in general. It is presented in Table 1.

As one can see, in quantitative measures the topic of Ukraine is spotlighted, logically, in the tweets of the EU Delegation to Ukraine. The second place is taken by Maja Kocijancic who is a spokesperson of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and is responsible for Eastern Partnership, and she is followed by Stefan Fule, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy.

The low level of the presentation of the topic of Ukraine and the Crimea in the discourse of the European Parliament and its President Martin Schulz is logical due to them being unengaged in the foreign policy issue of the EU. It is also visible that Ukraine and the Crimea are more often mentioned in the messages of the Chairmen of the organizations than on the official Twitters (36.2% Barroso – 19.4% the Commission, 45.2% Rompuy – 21.8% the EU Council). It may be explained by the active personal participation of these persons in the settlement of the crisis.

The critical discourse analyses of the tweets of each actor have been conducted separately, but it will be concluded with the general overview[1].

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[1] The discourses identified below in the section "discursive practice" are only those which correlate with the topics "Ukraine" and "Crimea" in order to limit the research.

EEAS actors

EEAS (European External Action Service)

Language features

The EEAS tweets are lapidary and official, have an informative character, and contain a very diplomatic rhetoric and formulations.

Discursive practice

The selection of tweets presents the discourse of "**international assistance**" which comprises steps for political assistance and economic support of Ukraine, and "**territorial integrity**" which is weaker and less specified. It also contains a significant amount of messages of **declarative discourse**, i.e. congratulations and condolences.

Social practice

EEAS is reacting to the events in Ukraine operatively and focuses on both the economic and political issues. The re-tweets of all EU actors are present, although the re-tweets of Ashton spokespersons are prevailing.

Conclusion. The CDA of the EEAS account is complicated due to its official style. Still it is possible to conclude that it is writing about Ukraine rather actively and with a moderate level of focus.

Michael Mann and Maja Kocijancic (Spokespersons of Catherin Ashton)

The Twitter accounts of Mann (Chief Spokesperson of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and Kocijancic (Spokesperson responsible for the European Partnership) are very similar, which provides the possibility to describe them in one section. However, they have some differences which shall be specified below.

Linguistic features

The accounts of Mann and Kocijancic are conducted in the same style as that of the EEAS. The language is also very lapidary and formal, as well as careful, leading to a low transitivity and modality.

Discursive practice

The discourses present in the messages are the same as within the EEAS Twitter: "**international assistance**", "**territorial integrity**", and **declarative discourse**.

Social practice

As well as EEAS, these two are focusing both on political and economic issues, but with the more emphasis on the first, and use a lot or re-tweets of each other and the other EU actors. Due to the segregation of duties, it is clear that Kocijancic is writing far more about the Ukrainian situation than Mann, but in the qualitative dimension their way of conducting Twitter is not differing.

Conclusion. The analysis of these two accounts, taking into consideration also the previous analysis of the EEAS Twitter, allows speaking about the high level of internal coherence within this institution: coincidence of the rhetoric, discourses, and even social practice.

The EU Delegation to Ukraine

Linguistic features

The rhetoric is official and formal. The languages used are both English and Ukrainian, and important messages are usually bilingual. As well as that of the EEAS and Spokespersons, the Delegation's Twitter is mostly informative, but it sometimes

contains quotes of value judgments by the EU politicians. However, most of the messages with such terms as "aggression" and "military intervention" are re-tweets. Unlike messages of the EEAS, transitivity and modality are rather moderate than low, as the Delegation more often uses personal forms and words of strong commitment. Still, the form "should" still bypasses the form "will" in the amount.

Discursive practice

Beside the discourses which present in the EEAS Twitter and that of Ashton's spokespersons (**"international assistance"**, "**territorial integrity**", and **declarative discourse**), the Delegation also pays substantial attention to the "**restoration of Ukraine**" and "**importance of dialogue**". The political and economic issues are discussed almost equally, making it different to set up a difference.

Social practice

The reaction of the Delegation to the events in Ukraine was most operative and interactive. The messages are very focused on the events going on in Ukraine and in the world with regard to Ukraine. The Delegation's Twitter frequently re-tweets different EU and Ukrainian politicians, media, etc., with no particular preference to the agency or country. It has a lot of links to Facebook, publications in the media, and photos.

Conclusion. The digital diplomacy of the EU Delegation to Ukraine in the Twitter is highly interdiscursive, active, and interactive. Numerous re-tweets make it clear that the Delegation cooperates effectively in its public diplomacy with different actors regardless which agency or Member State they represent, with the only criterion of a message being relevance. Still, as well as other accounts of the EEAS and its officials, the Delegation's Twitter is lacking a narrative component, or an official spokesperson that could provide narrative messages in his or her own account, making the communication more readable.

The EU Council actors

The EU Council

Linguistic features

The language of the EU Council Twitter is lapidary and official. It usually provides information about meetings or events, without any value judgments. The transitivity and modality of most messages is very low.

Discursive practice

It is hard to speak about discourse regarding Ukraine in the tweets of the EU Council due to their earlier mentioned informative nature. Nevertheless, they all may be deemed within the framework of "**international assistance**". All the formulations are very broad and general, i.e. Russian actions in Ukraine are called "actions", not an "aggression", and no sanctions or other methods of influence are mentioned.

Social practice

The social media diplomacy of the EU Council regarding Ukraine is not very active. It may seem that Ukraine and the Crimean crisis do not present much interest in this regard. The EU Council also doesn't re-tweet the other EU politicians.

Conclusion. Due to the style of the EU Council Twitter account the CDA is hardly useful for its analysis. Yet, connecting the results which we get with the results of content analysis, we may conclude that the

EU Council is not very active in regard of Ukraine and very poorly react towards the Crimean crisis.

Herman van Rompuy (President of the EU Council)

Linguistic features

The tweets of the President of the EU Council Herman van Rompuy are closer to the official style, but not too formal. It is typical of him to write a lot about a certain issue in a series of tweets (i.e. 7 one by one tweets about the EU–Ukraine–Russia relations dated 6 March). The transitivity is high – the messages are typically personified ("I welcome the agreement", "we decided to"), as well as the modality which demonstrates a strong commitment (but the specific suggested steps are limited and rather vague). The formulations about the behavior of Russia are diplomatic, but not concealed: he mentions such words as "aggression" and "violation".

Discursive practice

Although the amount of tweets about Ukraine during the period under study is not excessive and a lot of them are issued on the same day and time, there can be identified two discourses in Rompuy's tweets. These are "**international assistance**" and "**territorial integrit**y", which in his messages are so closely interconnected that it is difficult to part them. They are both focused on providing a "strong financial backing" to Ukraine and simultaneously sanctions against Russia ("far-reaching consequences, incl. broad range economic areas"), and aimed at demonstrating the commitment of the EU Council to support Ukraine in the situation of the Crimean annexation.

Social practice

Rompuy doesn't demonstrate a rapid reaction towards events in Ukraine, but we may not say that he is not reacting at all. His tweets on the situation are rare, but they express a serious attitude towards the Crimean crisis and the particular responsibility of Russia for it. Re-tweets of the other EU actors are not typical of the Rompuy Twitter.

Conclusion. Rompuy's reaction to the events in Ukraine covers both economic and political issues. However, he is not very actively involved in commenting the events (the high percentage of his tweets on Ukraine in the content analysis is explained by several series of tweets on the same day and time, discovering one broad issue) and lacks the understanding of the situation and the speed of reaction towards the events.

The European Commission actors

The European Commission

Linguistic features

The communication of the Commission in Twitter is lapidary and official. Like the account of the EU Council, it provides only news without any value judgments. Thus, the transitivity and modality of most messages is very low.

Discursive practice

The main discourses regarding Ukraine are "**international assistance**" and "**territorial integrity**".

Social practice

The EU Commission frequently re-tweets the other EU politicians – focusing on its own employees, but not exclusively, as it also re-tweets Ashton, EEAS, and others.

Conclusion. Like in the case of the EU Council, the style of the European Commis-

sion Twitter makes CDA not representative for explaining it. Still, it is possible to say that the Commission Twitter pays scarce attention to the political and security issues, focusing more on the economic aspects of cooperation.

José Manuel Barroso (President of the European Commission)

Linguistic features

The language of Barroso's messages is lapidary and official. It is far from being narrative: just posting some points of view, hyperlinks to documents, or informing on some event. The transitivity of most tweets is high, as he uses personal forms ("we can do today for", "we stand by a united and inclusive"), yet he mixes it with impersonal forms ("EU is willing to do everything in its powers to contribute to a negotiated solution which respects the will of the Ukrainian people") almost equally. However, the modality is typically low as the formulations are general and vague, without even suggesting concrete steps and personalities or bodies responsible for the developments. The emphasis is put on the "negotiations", "reconciliation", "mutual respect" and other general words. Barroso frequently uses hashtags "Ukraine" and "EU" in his tweets.

Discursive practice

The main discourse in Barroso's tweets is "**international cooperation**". He is writing a lot about financial assistance, European integration and support of Ukraine ("package of support measures", "international community should mobilize to help Ukraine stabilize its economic and financial

situation"). Nothing specific but for general declarations and intentions is expressed. Still, the Crimean crisis is not a frequent topic for Barroso, as he focuses more on the economic issues. The Crimea is mentioned seldom, only in the context of refusal of the EU to recognize a "referendum", and Russia is explicitly mentioned only once, in a tweet on "calling on Russia to cease all efforts to annex Ukraine's autonomous republic of Crimea".

Social practice

The reaction towards Ukrainian events is not very operative, as it is usually presented in the form of links to the long statements, and their production is time-consuming. Barroso is very careful in his messages and tries to keep the balance in the power relations of the EU, Ukraine, and Russia.

Conclusion. Due to his position and the responsibilities of the European Commission, the President in his tweets is focusing more on the economic aspects of interaction with Ukraine. Barroso is modest and to some extent vague in his appeals and claims.

Stefan Fule (Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy)

Linguistic features

The language of Fule is official, yet it has some narrative elements and displays emotion. He frequently demonstrates a strong commitment to the intentions (**"**once cameras leave streets, we should continue our engagement & not forget promises"), even being self-critique about the EU in this regard (though not in his own tweet, but re-tweeting the journalist and researcher Judy Dempsey on 21 February: "The EU

raised hopes in Ukraine, but failed to act when those hopes met Russia's resistance"). Yet the formulations are diplomatic, and Fule avoids using labels like "aggressor" of "violator" regarding Russia.

Some of the tweets actual for Ukraine and Russia are posted in Ukrainian and in Russian. For instance, the tweet about the Association Agreement signed on 21 March was given in Ukrainian before than in English, which might have been aimed at demonstrating the friendly attitude and partnership.

The transitivity is mostly low, as personal forms regarding the Ukrainian crisis are used very seldom (still, it is characteristic of all Fule tweets, not only regarding Ukraine). Instead, the modality is high, with specific actions taken and actors mentioned ("Commission proposed measures to help Ukraine amounting to €11bn", "High Commissioner on Minorities alarmed by the situation in Crimea").

Discursive practice

The prevailing discourses are "international assistance", "territorial integrity", and "importance of dialogue". The discourse of "**international assistance**" is filled with specific steps taken and actors mentioned. It is most meaningful regarding the financial help issued by the EU, trade preferences, and political support. Instead, in the latter part, it does overlap with the "**territorial integrity**" discourse where he is writing general words about "importance of territorial integrity" of Ukraine. Still, Fule is not making a focus on the EU actions against Russia till 18 March when Putin signed an "interstate treaty" with the Crimean insurgents. Even in this context, his remark is

rather pro-European than anti-Russian: "President Putin's actions in & around the Crimea provide a clear answer what is the main difference between the EU & the Euroasian Union".

What is notable for Fule is the "**importance of dialogue**" discourse mentioned both regarding internal developments in Ukraine ("**new administration in Ukraine should be inclusive politically, geographically, and in terms of stakeholder participation**") and the interstate dimension ("**Ukraine needs Russia, Russia needs Ukraine. Moscow has a chance to become part of efforts to bring stability and prosperity to Ukraine**"). This discourse might be aimed at reducing critique towards the European community in some media for the reckless support of one party in the conflict in Ukraine.

Social practice

In his tweets, Fule is writing mostly about Ukraine and other countries–partners of the EU, which is logical due to his position and responsibilities. The reaction about events in Ukraine is timely. However, Fule is mostly writing about assistance provided to Ukraine and is not extensive on the topic of the Crimean crisis. His comments in this regard are limited only to claiming that the referendum will not be recognized. The only comment about Putin personally is made after the interstate agreement of Russia and the Crimean insurgents. Fule re-tweets Rompuy, Barroso, and EEAS tweets about Ukraine, but only in line with the Agreement dated 21 February.

Conclusion. Stefan Fule in his messages focuses equally on the economic and political aspects. He is careful in his rhetoric, and his messages are unlikely to interrupt power

relations of the EU, Ukraine, and Russia via putting a lot of responsibility on Russia.

The European Parliament actors

The European Parliament

Linguistic features

The style of the European Parliament messages is narrative. It is more typical of a collective voice of a multidirectional collective. It contains numerous tweets with the interrogative intonation ("What lies ahead for Ukraine?"), calls for discussion and mutual decision ("Actions, sanctions or diplomacy: how should the EU handle the situation in Ukraine?"). Hence, both the transitivity and modality of the majority of messages is low: the EP is not usually mentioned as an actor of some serious processes in foreign relations, all the statements are presented in the impersonal form; moreover, they usually "call for" and "wonder" than "condemn" or "demand".

Discursive practice

The prevailing discourse is the "**importance of dialogue**". The EP is calling to the discussion, suggests decisions and expresses support, avoiding the tough rhetoric, and calls for actions. This discourse is aimed at demonstrating the role of the Parliament as an impartial body with moderate judgments and no political bias.

Social practice

The reaction to the Crimean crisis and the developments in Ukraine is very moderate due to the nature of the parliament itself as a collective legislative body. It may be explained by the EP desire to keep a balance of Member States' interests and not to be involved in foreign policy.

Conclusion. The European Parliament, due to its nature, is very careful when speaking about the situation in Ukraine. Its discourse is limited to the general suggestions on the importance of the dialogue and general understanding.

Martin Schultz (President of the European Parliament)

Linguistic features

The style of Martin Schultz tweets is mostly plain and narrative. The prevailing language is English, but there are also tweets in German, Greek, French, etc. The posts are very personalized. He is avoiding any disputable remark or assessment.

Discursive practice

The discourse of Schultz tweets (not only regarding Ukraine but overall) is mostly **declarative**, i.e. mostly contains congratulations ("welcome Ukraine deal on early elections, inclusive gvt, const. reforms") and condolences ("the EP marks a minute of silence in the memory of all the victims of Ukraine protests"). He doesn't write anything about the Crimean crisis, even in the context of interaction with Ukraine.

Social practice

Schultz's twitter does not represent any interest for analyzing events in Ukraine. It doesn't contain a single word about the Crimea, Russia, sanctions or even the EU–Ukraine cooperation. The President of the European Parliament is focusing mostly on ceremonial declarations and personal observations of some aspects of the European policy.

Conclusion. The discourse of the President of the European Parliament regarding

Table 2. **Results of the critical discourse analysis of the messages of the EU foreign policy actors in Twitter in the period from 21 February to 21 March 2014**

Actor	Prevailing discourses	Language characteristics	Re-tweets of the other EU actors	Level of focus	Inter-activity
The EEAS	International assistance, territorial integrity, declarative discourse	Strongly official style, general formulations	Frequent	High	High
The EU Delegation to Ukraine	International assistance, territorial integrity, declarative discourse, restoration of Ukraine, importance of dialogue	Strongly official style, general formulations	Frequent	High	High
Michael Mann	International assistance, territorial integrity, declarative discourse	Strongly official style, general formulations	Frequent	High	High
Maja Koci-jancic	International assistance, territorial integrity, declarative discourse	Strongly official style, general formulations	Frequent	High	High
The EU Council	International assistance	Strongly official style, general formulations	Absent	Me-dium	Low
Herman van Rompuy	International assistance, territorial integrity	Moderate official style, diplomatic rhetoric	Absent	Me-dium	Low
The European Commission	International assistance territorial integrity	Strongly official style, general formulations	Frequent	Me-dium	Low
Jose Manuel Barroso	International assistance	Strongly official style, general formulations	Frequent	Me-dium	Low
Stefan Fule	International assistance, territorial integrity, importance of dialogue	Moderate official style with narrative elements, diplomatic rhetoric with rare emotional observations	Rare	Me-dium	High
The European Parliament	Importance of dialogue	Narrative style, diplomatic rhetoric	Rare	Low	Low
Martin Schultz	Declarative discourse	Narrative style, diplomatic rhetoric	Absent	Low	Low

Ukraine is very careful and limited to general declarations. The topic of the Crimea is never mentioned.

Above, there is a table summarizing the results of the CDA.

The detailed explanation and conclusions on the research, based on both quantitative and qualitative components, will be presented in the following chapter.

Conclusions

Relations of the EU foreign policy actors to the different issues

The quantity of the topics "Ukraine" and "Crimea" in the tweets of the EU actors have been specified in the content analysis. It is visible that the actors affiliated with the EEAS (EEAS itself, Maja Kociijancic, and the EU Delegation to Ukraine) and Stefan Fule as the Commissioner for ENP are writing more extensively about it. It is easily explained by the direct responsibilities of the mentioned actors to focus on the neighboring countries.

If we speak about the prevailing discourses, it is notable that the assumption of Nick Wright that the EU is more effective as an international actor regarding economic issues has some validity. The economic component of the "international assistance" discourse is dominating throughout the selection of tweets, and all the actors were usually more specific in their messages on the economic aspects. Most prominently the economic aspect is represented in the communications of the Commission actors, but it is present in the other sources as well. Nevertheless, the security and political component of the same discourse is lacking in the Commission's messages and to some extent is presented in the messages of the others actors. The Parliament and its President, who are not foreign policy actors, were passive in all their communications regarding Ukraine and the Crimean crisis.

Interaction with each other

The interaction of the EU actors with each other in digital diplomacy is also non-equal.

It has been noticed that the Parliament and the Council actors are not re-tweeting other actors in their communications, while the EEAS and the Commission actors are succeeding in this regard. And if the case of the Parliament is clear, as it belongs to a completely different branch of power, the absence of the re-tweets of the colleagues in the communications of Herman van Rompuy and the EU Council, who are foreign policy actors, allows speaking about some lack of policy coherence in this direction.

Prevailing topics and rhetoric within the social context

Although some topics are common for the majority of the actors, the others are prevailing in one or another selection of messages. For instance, the European Commission actors are focused more on the economic aspects of cooperation, while the EEAS actors are presenting security and economics more equally.

As some of the actors are institutions and the others are persons, some difference is spotted in this regard. The language and rhetoric of the institutions is obviously more formal that those of the individuals, while the individual persons are also differing in their way of communication. Moreover, sometimes individuals may be using their accounts for the purposes of domestic interest, i.e. presenting its views on the foreign policy as part of the electoral campaign. It is also notable that Fule is speaking in a more narrative manner, which is positive for his readability and the level of support within the target public.

Regarding the level of focus, the EEAS actors are outstripping the others in produc-

ing significant targeted messages in the communication. They are succeeding to present information on the most important topics, while the Council and the Commission actors are less concentrated and produce a lot of "information noise", i.e. writing about events which are less important for the target audience, or limiting the communications to a declarative discourse only.

Speaking about the credibility, this characteristic may not be assessed within the framework of this study. Still we may consider that it has some correlation with the level of the focus.

The interactivity was the highest in the messages of the EEAS. They were the most relevant in regard of the social context and the events in Ukraine and the Crimea. At the same time, messages of the Council and Commission actors were mostly large pieces of information, hard to be communicated rapidly, and sometimes failed to duly reflect the situation in the country. The exception here is the Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Fule who was closely following the events due to his professional duties and reacted towards them rapidly and relevantly.

To sum it up, the EU digital diplomacy in social media is a rapidly developing phenomenon which has already demonstrated its certain characteristics and had both successes and failures. It seeks to promote the EU interests by understanding, informing and influencing, clearly explaining the EU goals, policies and activities and fostering the understanding of these goals through a dialogue with individual citizens, groups, institutions, and the media.

The hypothesis that the EU is failing in realizing its digital diplomacy coherently regarding the relation to the same topics and cooperating with each other has been generally disconfirmed. Although the actors are sometimes more focused on the different issues, it may be explained due to their areas of interest. Moreover, if we speak, for instance, of the EEAS actors, the internal coherence of this agency is very high.

It is possible to conclude that the EU digital diplomacy in the social media during the Crimean crisis was performed as a coherent instrument of foreign policy, with the minor failures such as the differing rhetoric of the actors and, what is more important, some lack of their mutual references to each other. In the latter regard, the EU Council and its President, who aren't normally referring to the other EU actors, are most distinctive.

To speak about the correspondence of the EU social media diplomacy with the principles of soft power, it is clear that it has some weak points, such as the lack of interaction with the audience, excessively formal language, or the lack of focus in the policy of some actors. However, for some politicians and actors, the social media diplomacy becomes a worthy platform to influence the audience, and becomes their effective voice.

The above-mentioned facts allow to say that the EU social media diplomacy is generally succeeding in self-presenting the Union as an international actor in the Internet.

Being part of the public policy, the digital diplomacy is worth further attention and research in order to seek answer to several questions: does the EU manage to act coherently in its foreign policy on the vertical lev-

el, what are the strong and the weak points of the digital diplomacy, and how it may be improved in order to raise the effectiveness of its policy? The further research may be conducted in different directions depending on the perspective: either in regard of the EU digital diplomacy applied towards the Southern Neighborhood, the USA or such other actor, or focusing on another aspect of foreign policy coherence.

Although, as has been mentioned, it is improperly to generalize from this study all directions of the EU public diplomacy, it is clear that this specific difficult period of the Ukrainian history represents a sound case of action in the conditions of chal-lenge and involvement of various powers. This research allows to understand whether Europe really speaks in one voice (at least in social media diplomacy) in regard of the problematic issues of its common interest. It also provides the ground for the further research of the coherence in social media diplomacy, thus providing for generalization towards a wider applicable theory.

The analytical scheme and research methods of this study are transferrable towards any other process of digital diplomacy application in Twitter with a strictly set time framework and the involvement of actively engaged diplomatic actors with the official status.

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EUROPOS SĄJUNGOS VISUOMENINĖS ŽINIASKLAIDOS DIPLOMATIJOS HORIZONTALUS DARNUMAS: UKRAINOS ATVEJIS

Dmytro Jarovyi

S a n t r a u k a

Užsienio politikos darna yra vienas svarbiausių aspektų tarptautinėse Europos Sąjungos (ES) diskusijose. Vienas iš užsienio politikos instrumentų yra viešoji diplomatija, kuri tinklo visuomenėje dažnai įkūnijama skaitmeninės diplomatijos forma – informacinių technologijų naudojimu įgyvendinant diplomatinius tikslus per informacinių vartotojų tinklus internete.

Skaitmeninės diplomatijos reikšmė ES buvo apibrėžta daugumos politikų ir mokslininkų ir tapo aktuali po įvykių Ukrainoje, kai valdžios atsisakymas pasirašyti asociacijos susitarimą lėmė protesto bangų plėtojimąsi, prezidento nuvertimą, gilią politinę krizę

ir teritorinius praradimus (Krymo aneksija). ES skaitmeninė diplomatija buvo aktyviai įtraukta į šį procesą, tačiau ji pasirodė kaip nesuderintų veiksmų pavyzdys.

Šio straipsnio tikslas buvo patikrinti ES visuomeninės žiniasklaidos diplomatijos horizontalią darną ES ir Ukrainos santykiuose. Rezultatai leidžia daryti išvadą, kad, nepaisant kai kurių nedidelių nesėkmių (šiek tiek netinkamos retorikos, tarpusavio informacijos ir interaktyvumo stokos), horizontaliame lygmenyje ES yra darni išlaikydama savo skaitmeninę diplomatiją, kuri leidžia kalbėti apie sėkmingą jos, kaip tarptautinio veikėjo, prisistatymą interneto komunikacijoje.