Communicating Europe in third countries

SUMMARY

Work on implementing the EU's global strategy for 2016-2017 includes stepping up public diplomacy efforts as one of the priority areas. A number of factors motivated this move. Firstly, the substantial resources committed for relief and recovery assistance to Syrian refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt have had little impact on public awareness of the existing European cooperation programmes. The visibility of EU funds has also been limited in the 10 EU strategic partner countries, where the profile of EU programmes is still low. Secondly, the need for a strategic EU approach to communication also results from intensified propaganda and disinformation campaigns seeking to discredit the EU and eventually undermine its position. Thirdly, effective EU communication in third countries plays a key role in countering jihadist propaganda in the EU's neighbourhood and its spilling over into EU territory.

This briefing has been adapted from an earlier one prepared for the annual meeting of EU Ambassadors and Members of the European Parliament on 'Support to democracy in third countries: the EU's added value', held in September 2016.

In this briefing:
- Why does effective communication matter?
- Public diplomacy and strategic communication in the EU's external actions
- Communicating with the neighbours
- Engaging strategic partners
- Lessons and possible ways forward
- Role of the European Parliament
- Main references
**Why does effective communication matter?**

The need for more effective communication and promotion of EU policies and values is the result of a number of factors. The EU has a relatively broad global presence, maintained by means of a network of 139 delegations employing more than 1,200 officials and 4,100 other staff, and a €66.26 billion financial envelope dedicated to strengthening its role as a global player. Nevertheless, recognition for the EU's contribution remains relatively low, raising questions as to how to achieve better value for money. For instance, under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), for the 2014–2020 period the EU has set aside an indicative amount of €7.5 – €9.2 billion to fund media cooperation, civil society, youth exchange programmes and intercultural dialogue in the Southern Neighbourhood region. In addition, so far the EU and its Member States have committed €8 billion for relief and recovery assistance to Syrians within their country, and to Syrian refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. Meanwhile, the EU's response to the migration crisis has been harshly criticised as insufficient. Public awareness of the existing European cooperation programmes is also relatively low, measuring an average of 42.5% in the Maghreb countries, 37.5% in the Mashreq countries and 8.75% in Egypt. The visibility of EU funds in the EU's 10 strategic partner countries is limited too, despite EU programmes such as Horizon 2020, Erasmus and others related to development aid.

The universality of the values that the EU stands for – democracy, human rights and the rule of law – is also increasingly being challenged by alternative models of interaction between the state and society. According to watchdog Freedom House's 2016 report on freedom in the world, 40% of the countries around the globe are described as 'free', while 36%, primarily in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, are not. The struggle for freedom in the latter countries is very much alive, as illustrated by the democratic revolutions that have swept across the Arab world, yet the EU's normative power in some of the countries is losing its appeal (see Figure 2). The EU's international standing has suffered as a consequence of the EU's financial and migration crises, the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership, and the limited capacity of European governments to address these issues. There is also growing scepticism towards the Western models of democracy in general, which feeds into the alternative narratives and political models being developed. For instance, Russia's evolving discourse on multipolarity and focus on sovereignty contest the imposition of liberal values and aim to contain the dominance of the West. The 'Beijing consensus' – a hybrid model of development in China combining capitalist ideas with government control but very limited political liberalisation – won admiration by generating economic growth of almost 9% in 2009 while the rest of the world struggled in the face of economic slowdown. State-backed proselytisation efforts by Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, have been instrumental in spreading a particularly rigid brand of Salafism and in turning it into a state doctrine that is highly critical of Western values.

The need for a more strategic EU approach to communication also results from the intensified propaganda and disinformation campaigns seeking to discredit the EU and eventually undermine its position. In recent times, disinformation has been used extensively in the context of Russia's operations in Ukraine, as well as in media coverage of the conflict in Syria. Such campaigns usually play down the EU's achievements while magnifying those of Russia by exposing the alleged divisions between EU Member States or the limited effectiveness of EU measures. Moreover, Russia has used the EU's hardships stemming from the migration crisis and terrorist attacks in its territory to
emphasise the flaws of the European integration project and to question its legitimacy. At the same time, given that more and more people have access to new technologies, information now circulates faster and more freely than ever, which implies, among other things, that the EU can do little to counter the questionable views and opinions expressed each time they appear.

Finally, effective EU communication in third countries plays a key role in countering jihadist propaganda in the EU's neighbourhood and its spilling over into EU territory. Global jihadist movements have used misrepresentation and rejection of Western culture and values to increase their influence with the ultimate objective of establishing a caliphate and a societal order founded on a rigid interpretation of the Quran. While the vast majority of Muslims around the world hold a negative opinion of religious extremism and jihadist organisations, polarisation along sectarian lines has been exacerbated and exploited by the takfirist orientation (the practice of excommunication, where one Muslim declares another Muslim as a kafir, or non-believer) of the major jihadist groups.

Figure 1 – Global landscape of online population

The number of people with internet access is still highest in developed countries. But most of the growth takes place in the developing world. English is the language most commonly used online, but Arabic and Russian are growing fast.


Public diplomacy and strategic communication in the EU’s external action

The EU has been actively involved in promoting the European integration model as an inspiration for regional cooperation worldwide – based on respect for national diversity and committed to the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance. The main motivation for these activities, in addition to promoting EU values, has been to broaden the recognition of the EU as a partner and an important player on the international arena. Until recently, the EU's engagement with stakeholders in third countries (such as governments, civil society, the research community and business associations) was organised under three main pillars: public diplomacy, economic partnership and business cooperation, and people-to-people links. However, as a result of the propaganda and disinformation practices observed in relation to the conflict in Ukraine and the recruitment efforts promoted by ISIL/Da'esh, strategic communication, a high-powered version of press and information work, has emerged as a dominant new approach.
Consequently, the overarching objectives of the EU’s communication with third countries can be grouped under two main pillars – public diplomacy and strategic communication – with a focus on five main areas of activity:

- effective communication and promotion of EU policies and values;
- development of positive and effective messages regarding EU policies;
- support for freedom of the press and the media environment;
- raising public awareness of disinformation activities by external actors; and
- improving the EU’s capacity to anticipate and respond to disinformation and propaganda campaigns.

**Public diplomacy**

Public diplomacy refers to 'the process whereby a country (or an entity) seeks to build trust and understanding by engaging with a broader foreign public beyond the governmental relations that, customarily, have been the focus of diplomatic effort'. To that end, the EU has engaged in a whole range of long-term activities, including education and research cooperation, policy outreach and partnerships, as well as civil society engagement. In implementing these activities, the EU has engaged with a variety of actors, including academics and students, policy influencers and multipliers, civil society organisations and cultural actors, to promote the fulfilment of the EU’s foreign policy objectives, improve the perception of the EU and its policies and ultimately facilitate future cooperation. Within public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy plays an increasing role in supporting meaningful engagement with actors from third countries. Accordingly, in June 2016, the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) adopted a joint communication entitled ‘Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations’ with three main objectives: supporting culture as an engine for social and economic development, promoting intercultural dialogue and the role of culture for peaceful inter-community relations, and reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage. EU delegations play a particular role in implementing the public and cultural diplomacy strategy as 'matchmakers' between the EU’s foreign policy priorities and the interests of the target audiences with which the EU wishes to engage. At the same time, more coordination is needed within the EU to achieve the 'joined-up' public diplomacy approach hinted at in the 2016 global strategy.

**Strategic communication**

Strategic communication goes beyond the mere objective of influencing public attitudes towards the EU by fostering a better understanding of its goals, policies and activities through dialogue with individuals, citizen groups, institutions and the media. It acts on the understanding that public attitudes do not only result from people’s limited access to information, but are also formed by the use of information as a strong public disinformation and manipulation tool. The EU action plan on strategic communication, presented in June 2015 on the basis of the mandate from the European Council of March 2015, recognised the importance of outreach and engagement as a tool in furthering the EU’s overall policy goals, and highlighted the need to develop positive and effective messages on EU policies addressed to its neighbours and international partners. The joint framework on countering hybrid threats further stresses the essential role of a 'sound' strategic communication strategy. Furthermore, the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy mentions strategic communication as one of the EU’s security priorities.
Figure 2 – The EU’s financial support and public opinion worldwide

The EU’s financial commitment in the world is significant...

...but it does not always translate into public support

Data sources: EU Neighbourhood Eurobarometer, European Commission, EEAS.
According to the strategy, 'the EU will enhance its strategic communications, investing in and joining up public diplomacy across different fields, in order to connect EU foreign policy with citizens and better communicate it to our partners'. This objective will be translated into improved consistency and speed of messaging on the EU's principles and actions, more rapid and factual rebuttals of disinformation, and promotion of an open media environment.

**Communicating with the neighbours**

The 2015 Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) placed better communication and promotion of EU policies at the heart of the EU's actions in its neighbourhood. Cooperation with partner countries in the neighbourhood will focus, among other things, on exposing disinformation and responding whenever it targets the EU; monitoring and analysing media content; understanding perceptions and narratives in the partner countries; and explaining the benefits of each country's cooperation with the EU with the ultimate goal of creating a positive narrative. The EU will pay particularly close attention to partnerships with young people as a means of promoting people-to-people contacts, including through increased exchanges between schools and universities. Concrete outreach activities will also include setting up 'Friends of Europe' clubs, alumni networks for those who have participated in EU activities, 'youth ambassador' networks and exchanges between young leaders and future opinion formers from across the EU and its neighbourhood. Some of these steps are already being implemented under the OPEN Neighbourhood initiative, which aims to support the ongoing process of democratisation in the neighbourhood countries as well as to strengthen relations with people by explaining to them in simple terms the high political relevance of the Union's neighbourhood policy. The initiative focuses on three clusters: strengthening the capacities of the main multipliers of information, such as independent journalism; listening to people, for instance, collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative feedback on public perceptions about the EU, the European Neighbourhood Policy and EU values, policies and cooperation programmes; and engaging with people, for instance, by holding public information and advocacy campaigns, including the production, aggregation and targeted dissemination of high-quality, relevant and accessible information and communication materials. The initiative also allows for the involvement of countries other than those covered by the ENI, such as Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Yemen, Oman, Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia, Iraq, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Russia.

**The EU's neighbours to the east**

In its communication with its neighbouring countries to the east, the EU pursues two main objectives: to challenge Russia's disinformation campaigns aimed at destabilising the region, and to make messaging about the EU's engagement and policies in the region more effective. These objectives are implemented mainly through the East StratCom Task Force, which monitors and analyses media in Russia as well as in the Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia). Simultaneously, the EU's efforts in the east focus on proactive strategic communication campaigns and ad hoc communication on topical and relevant EU policy issues. Their aim is to demonstrate the EU's commitment to the region's security, stability and prosperity, by highlighting the tangible benefits of closer cooperation with the EU, including in education, training and research, youth employability, innovation and entrepreneurship through the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Horizon 2020 programmes. These efforts are particularly relevant in
the context of reforms driven by formal arrangements concluded with the EU. Examples include the comprehensive association agreements that are already in place (with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) or are in the pipeline (with Armenia and Azerbaijan), where progress is often not fast enough and the tangible positive impact on people’s daily lives is difficult to observe over a short time span. Sometimes, because of the nature of an EU-supported project, it is not possible to demonstrate quick gains. One such example are the EU's efforts to strengthen the media environment in the Eastern Partnership region. To achieve this, the EU works in close collaboration with other EU actors and the European Endowment for Democracy to develop networks of journalists and media representatives and build the capacities of independent media and civil society players. It also supports the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, with a view to strengthening its role as a 'watchdog' for media and government activities.

The EU's neighbours to the south

The task force for outreach and communication in the Arab world (Arab StratCom Task Force) is focusing on a number of practical initiatives. These include supporting international initiatives to counter radicalisation and terrorism (for instance, the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, in Abu Dhabi) and building regional partnerships through the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network. It is also working on improving strategic communication and outreach to the Arab world (for instance, by developing counter-narratives to terrorist propaganda, promoting fundamental rights, engaging through social media and enhancing communication in Arabic). Lastly, it aims to facilitate inter-faith dialogue, civil society dialogue and people-to-people contacts, and address the underlying factors of radicalisation. This list of tasks was expanded and refined in the European Neighbourhood Policy review. The primary aim of the revamped approach to outreach and communication spelled out in the document is to 'win the hearts and minds' of Arab societies by offering a better explanation of the aims and rationale behind EU policies and actions. Practical actions focus on strengthening the capacities of all stakeholders to improve their understanding of public opinion and thereby help them to design effective outreach campaigns; building partnerships to expose disinformation and to respond decisively whenever it targets the EU; developing an appropriate mix of proactive strategic and tactical communication tools allowing to better monitor and analyse the media and thereby to create a positive narrative about support and cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Policy; and engaging with young people by creating partnerships promoting people-to-people contacts and networks in the EU and neighbouring countries. In addition, the Arab StratCom Task Force is involved in a number of outreach activities and programmes, including support for Arab journalists and bloggers; dialogue with young Arab leaders and future opinion formers (for instance, by establishing 'Friends of Europe' clubs and youth ambassadors); cultural diplomacy (for instance, support for film festivals); and people-to-people dialogues (for instance, online student exchanges and better use of the EU Visitors Programme).

A separate aspect of the EU's communication with the Arab world is countering radicalisation and recruitment for terrorism, which goes beyond traditional public diplomacy and communication. Efforts to criminalise certain activities that might lead to radicalisation and terrorism, have led EU law enforcement and judicial bodies to become increasingly involved in developing strategic communication and counter-narrative policies as a response to terrorist propaganda. This is a regular topic of discussion among EU Member States and institutions and is reflected in a number of documents, including...
the EU strategy for combating radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism and the Agenda on Security. The Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of February 2015 stressed the importance of mainstreaming counter-terrorism into EU foreign policy and offered a detailed roadmap for cooperation with Arab countries, including through initiatives aimed at countering radicalisation and violent extremism. The EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat listed the following among its objectives: countering the ISIL/Da'esh ideological influence, including countering violent extremism in broader terms, and strengthening EU public diplomacy and the visibility of EU aid. To that end, the strategy proposes, among other things, to: a) develop a joint internal and external security approach and related expert networks to address evolving ISIL/Da'esh communication and propaganda methodologies; b) support communication campaigns carried out by partner countries with the objective of discrediting ISIL/Da'esh ideology and denouncing its human rights violations; and c) enhance communication about EU humanitarian and development assistance, both in the region and in the EU. As part of its objective to defeat jihadist groups, the EU intends to curb the use of the internet for terrorist recruitment and dissemination of terrorist practices. In December 2015, the EU launched an EU internet forum, the European Parliament being among its participants. The forum aims in part to counter terrorist content and hate speech online through further engagement with internet companies.

Engaging strategic partners

The EU's engagement with selected developed countries and emerging economies worldwide constitutes another axis of its public diplomacy and outreach strategy. Support for public diplomacy and outreach activities in such countries stems from the recognition that in an increasingly 'connected, contested, and complex world', the EU needs to forge bilateral and multilateral partnerships with a broad spectrum of governmental and non-governmental actors to advance its strategic interests. To that end, the EU has established the Partnership Instrument (PI), which has a global reach but is primarily focused on those of the EU's strategic partner countries that are not eligible for funding under any other instrument. In addition, flexibility allows for complementarity between different EU financing instruments. The work of the PI focuses on four main objectives, which are of relevance to bilateral relations or in which the EU has a strong interest: global challenges, the international dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy, economic partnerships and market access, and public diplomacy. Public diplomacy actions under the PI are organised around four strands, each of which addresses a specific cluster of target audiences: students and academics to increase understanding of the EU among younger generations and future policymakers; policy-makers, influencers and multipliers, in order to convey the EU's key messages more effectively and to make them more comprehensible; civil society actors, in order to reinforce the actions of those players already engaged in activities reflecting the EU's core principles; and cultural stakeholders, in order to increase mutual understanding among people through culture. Particularly relevant are the activities carried out worldwide to engage with policy makers, influencers and multipliers through a coordinated approach (EU Policy and Outreach Partnership – see Box 1) and work carried out through the Cultural Diplomacy Platform, implemented in coordination with the Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), the EEAS and the EU delegations.

The European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) works to secure complementarities and synergies between the various activities in close cooperation with the EEAS, EU delegations and other Commission services and agencies working in 'cluster
mode'. These activities complement the EU delegations’ press and information team initiatives, which are generally focused on informing the local public, responding to current affairs and raising the EU’s overall profile.

**Lessons and possible ways forward**

The EU's approach to public diplomacy and strategic communication is undergoing a profound shift from viewing these activities as a mere public relations exercise, to using them as a strategic tool serving EU interests and promoting European values. The complexity of this task results, among other things, from the disproportionate attention being paid in third countries to the EU's internal problems compared to the contribution it makes to advancing human development worldwide. Therefore, to ensure that the EU's investment in social, economic and political development is adequately recognised, various studies on public diplomacy and strategic communication (see main references), as well as past experience and ongoing commitments, have allowed for a number of lessons to be drawn and possible ways found to advance the EU's communication efforts.

Firstly, the constant need to adapt in relations with third countries calls for well-functioning learning mechanisms, in terms of processes, information gathering and information exchange. This is particularly important in order to make the best possible use of the broad network of EU delegations, institutions and Member State embassies around the world. Information exchange (for example, about disinformation campaigns or regulatory changes that might influence the EU adversely) is essential in order to scale up efforts undertaken by individual delegations and harvest knowledge about valuable models and practices employed in other parts of the world and potentially worth supporting.

Secondly, no two countries or contexts are the same and therefore there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the challenges of strategic communication. This implies that the key challenge is to properly define the priority targets of engagement and identify a 'local hook'. As the main burden of engaging the public in partner countries is borne by the EU delegations, it is crucial to reflect on the most effective methods for building partnerships with a wide array of local stakeholders, including civil society, government agencies, the media and academic institutions. Ensuring better coherence and efficiency by putting in place appropriate organisational structures and policy-coordination instruments such as an EU public diplomacy and communication strategy, prepared through close cooperation between all EU institutions, could provide a sense of direction and serve as an example of a structured, joined-up and cross-silo approach to public diplomacy, which could be extended to other instruments and services.

Thirdly, it is important to ensure that initiatives supported and promoted by the EU become sustainable and continue to benefit the target group even after their funding has ended. In that sense, the monitoring of ongoing, finished and planned initiatives might be particularly useful in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that various efforts are scaled up properly. Building sustainable structures and mechanisms for public diplomacy and strategic communication also takes time and a certain degree of situational awareness about who to engage with, on which issues, and under what conditions. EU delegations in third countries and Member State embassies are critical for successful 'matchmaking' between EU objectives and a country’s needs, values, and traditions. At the same time, they play a critical role in managing expectations on the ground in order to prevent a capabilities-expectations gap from emerging or widening. A multi-stakeholder approach to communication involving government bodies, research
institutes and non-governmental organisations is a key element of communication. Reaching future leaders across different communities is also an important element of successful communication. This is currently the aim of several EU programmes: the European Parliament’s Young Political Leaders Programme, the European External Action Service’s Young Ambassadors Programme, and the interinstitutional EU Visitors Programme.

**Box 1. Examples of good practice in the EU’s public diplomacy and strategic communication**

- Since October 2015, through its 'myth-busting network' of over 400 experts, journalists, officials, NGOs and think-tanks in over 30 countries, Task Force East has collected over 1,600 stories in 18 languages published under the title *Disinformation Review* (examples of pro-Kremlin disinformation across Europe and beyond) or *Disinformation Digest* (analysis of pro-Kremlin media worldviews and independent Russian voices).

- The **Radicalisation Awareness Network** (RAN) comprises frontline and grassroots practitioners from around Europe who work daily with people who have already been radicalised or are susceptible to radicalisation. Practitioners include members of the police and prison authorities, but also others not traditionally involved in counter-terrorism activities, such as teachers, youth workers, civil society representatives, local authority representatives and healthcare professionals. The Communication and Narratives Working Group (**RAN C&N**) gathers insights on the content of the narratives, their target audiences, credible messengers (varying from national governments, civil society, victims and young people) and varying means of dissemination (face-to-face, blogs, chat-rooms and social media).

- **Adoption** of the 2014–2017 information and communication strategy of the government of Georgia in the sphere of EU integration, and of the EU integration communication and information strategy implementation action plan (2015).

- Since 2005, the EU has funded various projects focusing on information and communication in the Mediterranean partner countries: the EuroMed Info Centre (2005–2009), the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre (2009–2015), and currently, the Commission’s Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations-managed **OPEN Neighbourhood Programme** (2015–2019), which finances the EuroEast and EuroMed portals, available in English, French, Russian and Arabic, as well as the **Media Hub**. The **Projects in Action magazine** for the EU’s southern and eastern neighbourhood provides an overview of ongoing or completed projects.

- The **EU Prize for Journalism** in Georgia was launched in 2012 by the EU delegation to Georgia. This annually awarded prize encourages professionalism and ethical conduct in Georgian journalism by singling out the best work in print, broadcast, online, and photo journalism. In addition, the EU Monitoring Mission awards a special prize for conflict-sensitive journalism contributing to confidence building and peace.

- The discontinuation of the EU Centres Programme formerly funded by the FPI and the streamlining of its outreach and education activities through the **Jean Monnet Programme** through the creation of a ‘PI window’, building in the EU’s public diplomacy objectives, have significantly bolstered the programme's global dimension and have further reinforced dialogue between the EU and third country stakeholders. This is also contributing towards the development of a truly joined-up public diplomacy effort as outlined in the EU global strategy, whereby existing EU programmes are reinforced in order to magnify their public diplomacy impact.

- In 2015, the FPI launched a **study**, Analysis of the perception of the EU and the EU’s policies abroad, which focused on trends in public opinion in the strategic partner countries covered by the PI. With its robust methodology and questions focused on the EU’s role, the way the EU is perceived within the partner countries, and the desirability of EU leadership in specific policy areas, this study provides a solid base and recommendations for similar initiatives to be carried out in other regions as a way to inform EU public diplomacy efforts.
• In 2012, the EU launched the Neighbourhood Barometer covering 16 partner countries. Ad hoc neighbourhood barometers were produced to monitor specific topics of importance (energy, environment, civil society, media, mobility and migration) across the region.
• As part of the efforts to engage with policy makers, influencers, multipliers in strategic partner countries in a coherent manner, FPI.4 launched ‘EU Policy and Outreach Partnership’ service contracts in Brazil, Canada, China, India, Russia, Mexico, South Korea, Japan and the USA. The objective is to empower delegations with sufficient resources and coherent methodology and objectives in order to develop long-term public diplomacy initiatives reflecting the interests and perception of local audiences as well as EU policy priorities. The work is coordinated by the 'Global' wing of the EU Policy and Outreach Partnership', which provides tools to monitor the results of the various activities carried out across the world. Most initiatives will start to deliver in the first half of 2017.

Role of the European Parliament

The European Parliament has expressed its views on various aspects of public diplomacy and strategic communication in a series of resolutions. In its resolution of 19 January 2016 on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values, the Parliament called on the Commission to mainstream cultural diplomacy and intercultural dialogue in all EU external instruments and in the EU development agenda. The resolution on EU strategic communication to counteract anti-EU propaganda by third countries contains several provisions focusing on EU strategic communication, recognising and exposing Russian disinformation and propaganda warfare, and also understanding and tackling ISIL/Da'esh's information warfare, disinformation and radicalisation methods.

In response to the joint communication on EU strategy for intercultural relations presented by the Commission and the EEAS, the European Parliament decided to present an own-initiative report. Prepared by the CULT and AFET Committees, the joint report authored by rapporteurs Elmar Brok (EPP, Germany) and Silvia Costa (S&D, Italy) proposes several concrete initiatives grouped under four strands: objectives, governance and tools, a people-to-people approach, and the EU global strategy. The European Parliament is expected to vote on the report in plenary in July 2017.
Main references

Azpiros, Maria Luisa, (2015), Soft power and public diplomacy: the case of the European Union in Brazil, USC Center for Public Diplomacy, March 2015,


European Commission, (2015), Analysis of the perception of the EU and of EU's policies abroad, Final report, 7 December 2015.


Endnotes

1 Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, South Africa and the USA.

2 This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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