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87

Chiara Valentini

Promoting the European Union

Comparative Analysis of EU Communication Strategies in Finland and in Italy

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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ABSTRACT

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This study is an analysis of EU information and communication policies developed from 2001 to 2006 and their possible impacts on the communication strategies of two member states, namely Finland and Italy. In particular this investigation focuses on how EU directives affected the communication activities of these two member states toward their national publics. The public organizations analysed were the European Commission and its DG Communication, the Finnish and Italian representations of the European Commission and Finnish and Italian EU offices at regional and local levels. A multi-level (European versus national) and comparative (Finnish versus Italian) approach resting on public communication and public relations theories, but also including some of the theories on public diplomacy, community relations and marketing communications, was adopted. The methodologies applied were based on the triangulation of different techniques such as content and document analyses, qualitative analyses of an online survey and of face-to-face interviews, and a meta-analysis of existing public opinion surveys. The multi-method study is in five parts: a study of six EU documents on information and communication policies and their implementation in member states; an analysis of EU officers' activities and their communication strategies at the local level; a study of different Eurobarometer surveys on citizens' EU perceptions; an investigation of EU media relations and an examination of some EU information campaigns. The results of this research revealed a similar trend with respect to EU communication strategies both in Finland and in Italy. During the period 2001 and 2006 EU communication strategies were not sufficiently tailored to the needs of national publics and they mostly were one-way-symmetrical communications. The stated aim of EU policies on information and communication was a decentralisation of tasks and functions which was not completely delivered in terms of local involvement in communication decisions. The effects on improving citizens' EU perceptions and on a positive EU image and trust were rather low and journalists' opinions of the interest of the European Union in establishing mutual and beneficial media relations scored very poorly in both countries.

Keywords: public organization, EU, Finland, Italy, communication strategy, community relations, citizens' opinion, journalists' opinion, media relations

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Jyväskylä, spring 2008 Chiara Valentini

CONTENTS

LIST OF ORIGINAL PAPERS

This dissertation is based on the following original publications that will be referred to the text by their respective Roman numerals.

I **Valentini, C.** (2005). 'The Promotion of European Identity'. In Lehtonen, J. and Petkova, D. (Eds.), *Cultural Identity in an Intercultural context*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä University Press, p. 196- 213.

II **Valentini, C.** (under review). 'Propaganda and the EU - only a matter of definition? EU communication activities under scrutiny'. In *Journal of International Communication*, special issue on International Political Communication.

III **Valentini, C.** (2006). 'Manufacturing EU consensus: the reasons behind EU promotional campaigns'. In *Global Media Journal - Mediterranean edition*, 1(2), Fall, p. 80-96.

IV **Valentini, C.** (under review). 'EU Communication in the Member States: Comparative analysis of Finnish and Italian communication strategies'. In *International Journal of Strategic Communication*.

V **Valentini, C.** (2007). 'EU media relations: views of Finnish and Italian journalists', In *Global Media Journal - Mediterranean edition*, 2(2), Fall, p. 82-96.

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PREFACE

My dissertation is the result of a long and complex process which started back in 2002 when I was working for the International European Movement, a civil society organization which coordinates the efforts of associations and private individuals desiring to work towards the construction of a united Europe. As an assistant manager at the International European Movement, I had the possibility to experience directly the problems and challenges of communicating for, with and to different people in different countries. This dissertation is also a continuation of my master's thesis, the theme of which was the analysis and evaluation of the national advertising campaigns for the introduction of the euro in twelve member states.

Despite my experience in communications and public relations at the European level, comparing EU communication strategies in Finland in Italy has been a challenging task. The biggest challenge has been to understand the mental constructions and societal perceptions of Finnish and Italian cultures regarding the European Union while at the same time maintaining an unbiased and detached view of the phenomenon. As an Italian, my national values were not wholly acceptable in Finnish society. I needed to learn from daily experience what Finns consider important in the society they live in. The process of learning a new culture it is a long road, and the journey along it could take many years. I have by no means reached a full understanding of this Nordic culture, and thus I do not pretend to have a complete portrait of Finnish perceptions of the EU. Instead this study should be seen as a personal attempt to interpret an important phenomenon of our time in two different countries. As a result, this work inevitably bears the imprint of my own intellectual development over the years, and is perhaps less of a neat whole than I imagined when I started. All the findings are interpreted in the light of the theories that influenced the analysis most in their respective stages. My work draws on various theories in the domains of public relations, mass communication, public communication, marketing communications and cultural studies. I found a multidisciplinary approach the only alternative in a situation where different research traditions give valuable insights into the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Moreover this is not a comprehensive and representative study of all the problems associated with EU communications in Finland and Italy. It is primarily a collection of insights into how European institutions communicated with their different publics and into how cultural differences affected the receptions of EU messages among different groups. The European Union is a clear example of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnical and multi-national confederation which is shaped by different global trends but which influences the process of Europeanization as well. In this type of society the role of communication and, in particular, of public relations should not be underestimated. Public relations, in its societal and reflective function, provide answers and means concerning fundamental questions about how we should communicate with different international publics. For public institutions, such the European institutions, PR functions can help to solve delicate questions about preserving an organization's significance, helping in negotiating diverse standpoints with different publics and can offer some balance between the diverse interests of modern societies.

1 INTRODUCTION

> *"I strongly believe in the utility of communicating with people. If you can reach a public, make yourself understood, share your ideas, you will easily obtain the favour and support of everyone"* (Ivy Lee quoted in Cutlip and Center 1982, 57).

The importance of communication in human affairs was recognized at the dawn of scholarly inquiry, when Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates undertook major treatises on its role in politics, the law courts and epistemology, but the study of communication can be traced back at the beginning of the twenty century. Its development was stimulated by the rise in the need of industry to communicate, inform, educate and promote a variety of matters of contemporary economic, cultural and political relevance, and by the necessity to find out the best methods of mobilizing people towards desired actions. With reason, the twentieth century is known as the century of mass communication.

Communication studies started to diversify and specialize according to specific themes and approaches. They became customized to the increasing obligations of different types of organizations. As a management practice, communications have become extremely important for public institutions, particularly in the last twenty years during their transformation from a traditional bureaucratic system of public administration to a market-oriented, results-driven system of public management (Eskelinen 2005, 26). The New Public Management approach saw citizens much like customers and as such it required more knowledge on what citizens' expect and want from their institutions. This new management philosophy gave more decision-making power to citizens and emphasized the importance of better public communication actions. For public communication is meant any type of communication by a public organization. In recent years the increase in computer-mediated communications has introduced a new dimension into governance and public participation. It is now recognized that communication programmes are today more and more important for public institutions in creating positive opinions among the general public regarding changes made by those institutions themselves (Hoggett 2006). For institutions, which base their development and sometimes existence on positive opinions, public acceptance of the decisions taken by organizations is indispensable. For certain public organizations which do not have a well established image or reputation, nor unanimous legitimisation, learning how to communicate with their different publics is a fundamental issue. Public organizations with these characteristics are normally the results of political decisions on governmental issues which require a new structure. In the case of the European Union, the decision to create a common market and atomic community in 1957 between six countries was mostly determined by economics. Today the reasons which are bringing 27 countries together are much more complex and involve other domains.

Although fifty years have passed, for many the reasons behind the European Union and of its institutions are not yet clear. Questions on how the European project should be legitimated are on the daily agenda of European politicians. Legitimating a public institution in democratic societies means obtaining the involvement and support of its citizens through different communication actions. In a democratic and unified Europe the citizens should have direct influence on the positions, policies and attitudes of their elected supranational and national governments. Since Europeans are called to play an active role in the future of the European Union, there is a necessity for European institutions to consider citizens' views and help them to understand the history and ideals of the European Union along with the full spectrum of its opinions. However, the importance of a democratic and shared approach to communication in a restructured foreign affairs community can only be maintained and, ideally, strengthened, by ensuring its programmatic and organizational integrity.

The EU information and communication policies of the past few years are a clear sign of the importance of communications for the European Union. Proper communication actions can mobilise different active and supportive publics. Recent special actions, such as the information campaigns planned by the national governments and by the European Commission to inform EU citizens about the changes and issues of extreme importance include, for example, the campaign for the introduction of the euro, the campaign for EU enlargement, the campaign on behalf of the EU Constitutional Treaty etc. All of them have in common the creation of positive perceptions and support among European citizens as well as other more informative goals.

The aim of this study is to analyse EU information and communication policies developed between 2001 and 2006 and their possible effects on the communication strategies of two member states by looking at EU organizational structures, goals and activities involving information directed at citizens. The two countries studied were Finland and Italy. The reasons for this choice were both practical and strategic. Finland and Italy are culturally, geographically and historically different and have joined the EU in different periods and for different reasons. The researcher believes that comparing EU communication strategies in countries which are essentially different can provide useful indications on how diverse cultures influence the receptions of

EU communications and thus the relevance for supranational organizations, such as the EU, to take into account cultural variables when planning their communication actions. Finland and Italy were also chosen because of the researcher's feasibility of gathering data.

This investigation focuses on how EU directives on information and communication policies introduced from 2001 to 2006 affected the decisions of Finland and Italy regarding their communication activities towards their national publics. The public organizations studied were the European Commission, its national representations and local offices in Finland and in Italy. The Finnish and Italian communication strategies were studied to assess how EU institutions communicate with their publics in order to acquire legitimation and to discover whether there were many similarities or differences in the way activities were developed, what methodologies of communication were used, what effects they had on public opinion and how EU institutions interrelated with the national mass media in order to achieve their goals. EU institutions and their affiliate offices in Finland and in Italy are specific examples of public organizations operating in international contexts. These organizations thus come into the category of international organizations. By international organizations are meant those entities that "promote voluntary cooperation and coordination between or among their members" (McCormick 1999, 10). In this investigation public organizations operating in international contexts have been studied according to theories of public organizations and public communication. As Figure 1 shows, the focus of this investigation is the communication streams between public institutions and their publics.

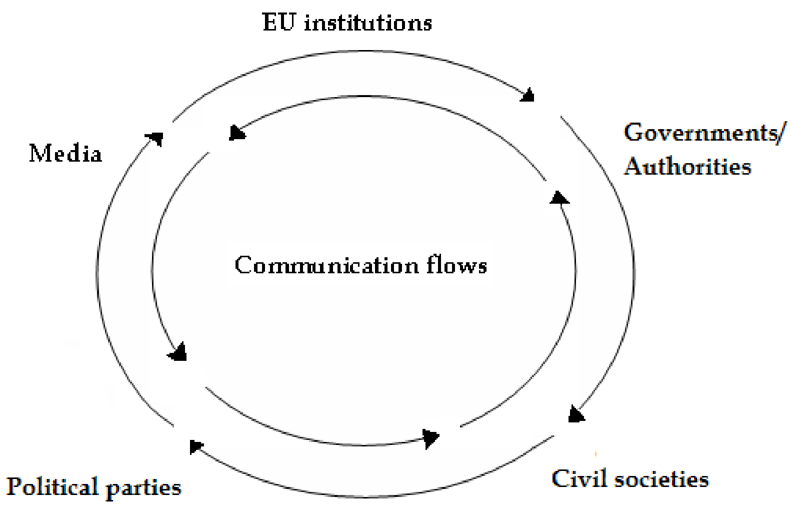

FIGURE 1 EU communication flows

Inside this framework and of great importance for citizens is the role of the mass media as a vehicle for the diffusion of EU- selected information. More and more national institutions are currently facing the difficulties that an open market and a more integrated Europe bring with it, and the media is surely one of the fastest ways to build the trust and support of citizens. For this reason public institutions need to establish tighter relationships with the national mass media. For these organizations, especially, it is very important to understand communications from all its angles so as to promote their image and work both in individual countries and also internationally.

Finally, in addition some EU information campaigns are studied as these are a tool for enhancing organizational credibility and citizen support. These campaigns, which seem to have a promotional tone in common, have been criticised by several scholars and politicians as the new propaganda of the European Union. For others, the EU campaigns have had an educational purpose. This ethical question on the fundamental purpose of EU campaigns is discussed according to the classical epistemological definitions of propaganda, education, promotion, and information and according to the contextual values that such terms exemplify in the Finnish and Italian cultures. For the comparative analysis of the subconscious meanings Finns and Italians associate with EU campaigns, ideas developed within cultural studies were of great value.

To conclude, this study examines specific public communication actions based on promotional and campaigning techniques and their effects on public opinion. It also demonstrates the power and importance of communications in EU political games. The results show that the question of promoting public institutions raises further debate on the legitimacy of governments' use of the mass media to achieve their political goals, and also the great importance in the European process of integration of communications as a tool for constructing new pro-European ideologies among the publics of Finland and Italy.

1.1 Raison d'être of this study

At the beginning of the 21st century problems such as environmental threats, financial pressures, epidemics, immigration and terrorism have no borders and thus affect the whole world. The solution to these challenges often depends on the level of collaboration and agreement between countries and their established relations. It is thus the responsibility of governments to engage in good communication flows with different governmental and non-governmental groups. As a result, governments become major communicators in international communication and by trying to communicate not only with their counterparts but also with global publics beyond their borders, they are performing public diplomacy. These global publics have become strategic factors for the success of foreign governments in dealing not only with traditional foreign policy concerns, such as national security, but also with increasingly important economic ones, such as promoting exports, tourism and investment.

The case of the European Union is a case where supranational governance needs to deal with internal diversified communications and external, non-EU, international communications. The latter can be considered a typical case of public diplomacy/international relations, while the former is a more complex phenomenon since it falls in part under public diplomacy studies and in part under public communication studies. European Union communication is considered a hybrid phenomenon since its institutions are not comparable in terms of power and public acceptance with national institutions nor they can be wholly considered outsider entities distinct from the national ones which seek to promote their national interests in other countries. The European Union is the most advanced regional political and economic entity in the world. It is more than a traditional international organization but less than a traditional nation state. It has some of the attributes of a federation—such as a central bank—but lacks sovereignty in the "high politics" areas of internal and external security, including defence. Nevertheless the EU is central to the lives of its 500 million citizens because of its extensive regulatory authority. Consequently, this study is mainly grounded in public communication, public relations, and public diplomacy theories and thus the concepts, methods and implications of these are examined from the point of view of public organizations operating in international contexts. The organizations analysed are, at the European level, the European Commission and its Directorate General Communication, at the national level, the Finnish and Italian governments and the Finnish and Italian representations of the European Commission, and at the regional and local levels EU offices. All these organizations exemplify a type of public organization and thus they are analysed according to public organizations' needs of publicity and of the support of their citizens.

Research on organization - public relations often emphasizes communication: what the organization communicates to its publics, how publics react and what the order should be in which publics are ranked in importance. However, communication alone does not define public opinion, but it is formed through experience, time and expectations (Vos and Schoemaker 1999). This makes relations with publics difficult to measure and monitor, since changes in expectations or negative experiences in the past may be more influential than present communication. Moreover, relations with publics may be more difficult when public organizations are not grounded at the national level, nor have been established according to national regulations. In this case it is even more difficult to evaluate the process of opinion formation and to assess the quality of communications between supranational organizations and their publics.

This study on public organizations' approaches to legitimising and promoting their existence has being conducted for several reasons. First, there are only a few studies on communication of public organizations and public relations which address the question of promotion and of communication for public support and involvement. For example, Eskelinen (2005) has analysed citizens' attitudes and involvement in public consumer information in Finland from the perspective of citizens, while Luoma-aho (2005) addressed questions on the relationships existing between Finnish public organizations and their frequent stakeholders. Vigoda (2000) examined the relationship between citizens' demands and the public administration's responsiveness in Israel, and Jackson (2001) studied the public involvement of a Canadian public organization and proposed a strategic approach for identifying and analysing stakeholders, for setting objectives and for subsequently choosing the most appropriate level of public involvement. Pedersen and Rendtorff (2004) presented value-based management as an efficient way to make the organization more open to stakeholders' expectations and demands, in particular to the increasing request by citizens for efficiency in public organizations. Most of these studies addressed local, regional or specific fields of action, and thus are not comparative.

Second, the comparative approach has been even less discussed in studies of public communication (Grunig and Jaatinen 1998), except in the domains of public relations practices (Rhee 2002; Sriramesh et al. 1999; Ninkovich 1996; Grunig et al. 1995; Grunig 1993a) or cultural/intercultural communications (Lehtonen and Petkova 2005; Hofstede 2001; Vaahterikko-Mejía 2001; Vaahterikko 1997; Sampson III and Walker 1987; Mitchell 1986). These studies represent comparative analyses of communication, negotiation and behaviour practices between different cultural realities.

Third, under the umbrella of public diplomacy, the majority of studies have had a historical framework and have aimed at describing public diplomacy as a tool in international power politics (Leonard 2003; Kunczik 1997; Tuch 1990; Fisher 1987; Barghoorn and Friedrich 1956) or they have analysed public diplomacy programmes in policy communication and cultural communication (Mikhailova 2003; Killmer 2002; Maack 2001; Smyth 2001; Bu 1999; Kunczik and Weber 1994; Vincent 1993). More recently interest has been shown in the impact of information and communication technology on public diplomacy practices (Berry 2003; Greene 2003; Potter 2002) and the media effects of strategic campaigns on target audiences (Wang and Chang 2004; Kunczik 2003; Zhang and Cameroon 2003; Manheim 1994a; Albritton and Manheim 1985; Manheim and Albritton 1984). On the comparative level, Wyszomirski and others (2003) compared American cultural diplomacy with that practiced by nine different countries to extract similarities and differences in terms of philosophy, priorities, programmes, structure, funding, and scale of operations. Notably, comparative studies on public diplomacy have evaluated practices between two or more nation-states or between a nation-state and a supranational entity (Meunier 2000) but they have not necessarily dealt with "internal public diplomacy", that is information and communication programmes made by and for member states of a supranational association, such as the European Union.

Fourth, in terms of the topic of this investigation, the European Union, the majorities of studies have taken socio-political or economic approaches (Kumar 2003; Burgess 2002; Darnton 2002; Sánchez-Cuenca 2000; Scharpf 1999; Weiler

1999, 1996; Curtin 1997; Close 1992). In recent years the interest of communication scholars in the European Union has grown generating some interesting findings on the political implications of EU communication strategies. However, the theoretical frameworks of these analyses have been based more on mass and political communication than on public communication and public relations. Most of the literature in communications and the European Union deals with the analysis of news reporting as a factor either of the visibility or of the tonality of the news (Peter et al. 2003; de Vreese 2001; Le Torrec et al. 2001), as a vehicle of political participation and/or legitimation (Sánchez-Cuenca 2000; Shore 2000; Meyer 1999; McLeod et al. 1999; Glotz 1995), as an essential tool for creating a European public sphere (Brüggemann et al. 2006; Statham and Gray 2005; Trenz and Eder 2004; Della Porta et al. 2003) and as a form of media culture (Machill et al. 2006; Sievert 1998; Wiesner 1990). Looking on the national research of the two countries selected for the present study, in Finland the focus of EU research has been on membership and integration (Ojamies 1996; Törmä et al. 1995; Widgrén 1995; Pesonen and Särkiaho 1994), on the effects of membership upon agricultural and regional policies (Laurila 1996; Kivimäki 1996), on media content/journalism (Pollari 2004; Mörä 1999; Kivikuru 1996) and on European public debates (Kantola 2001; Stenberg 1999). Ruottinen (2000) analysed Finnish and French euro campaigns mounted during the years 1997-1998 and explained them through concepts of trust building and propaganda. This study is one of the few investigations which are comparative and take a public relations standpoint. In Italy the focus of the majority of studies has been on socio-political and historical questions relating to European integration (Lattarulo 2005; Santaniello 2003; Olivi 2001). Some scholars (Rossi 2002; Greco and Matarazzo 2003) have worked on the topic of Italy's European policy, others (Visconti 1998; Sepe 2004; Gallo 2006) have analysed the impact of the euro, the common agricultural policy and fiscal issues in the Italian economy and markets. In the field of communication Venarini (2004) studied the representation and tonality of EU news in four Italian magazines, while Todaro (2005) analysed the mediated discourses broadcast on two Italian political television shows before the elections for the members of the European Parliament in 2004. Bonvicini (2003) conducted a similar analysis of Italian debates on EU issues with a political relevance. Valentini (2003) analysed the euro information campaigns developed by the national banks of the twelve member states from a public relations perspective. Hence, comparative studies on public communication and public relations centred on the European Union are few and those that exist generally address a single theme.

Since there is no research which, at the same time, is about the European Union, takes a public communication and public relations perspective, is comparative and deals with public diplomacy, it is reasonable to claim that the present analysis is original in its theme and approach and makes a contribution to the development of studies on the public relations of public institutions working in intercultural/international contexts.

1.2 Structure of this study

This dissertation is composed of five published articles accompanied by the present summary that draws the texts together and presents the objectives, the research questions, the methods and results of the research. Each publication deals with a specific aspect of EU communication and, like a jigsaw puzzle, all the pieces are extremely important for the whole picture. The published articles are referred in the text by their Roman numerals, as given in the list of original publications. For the sake of the clarity a brief summary of the contents of these five articles is given in the next section before the chapter on theory.

The present Introduction states the main research problems, considers the scholarly contribution of this dissertation, clarifies its epistemological frame and summarises the main contents of each of the five scientific publications. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of this study, which partly deals with organizational and partly with communication theories. In the first part of Chapter 2 organizations, specifically public organizations and their objectives are presented as well as the models of the management of public organizations. The second part focuses on models of communication in public organizations, on diplomatic communication and on community relations. Chapter 3 describes the structure and organization of EU communication as well as that of the two countries selected for the comparison, Finland and Italy. Chapter 4 presents the research objectives and questions addressed in each article according to their sub-themes. Since each publication has its own questions and goals it was necessary to re-organize them according to specific thematic groups. This new structure is explained in more detail in the corresponding section. Similarly, in Chapter 5 the methodologies and samples are introduced and discussed using the same sub-division as in the previous chapter. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition Chapter 6 presents a summary of the findings. The full version of the results in each case is available in the Publication section at the end of this dissertation, where all five scientific publications have been appended. Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion section on the significance, implications and limitations of the findings and it also presents some final observations about what has been achieved and suggestions for further research.

1.3 Brief summary of the original publications

The first article studied one of the most complex and at the same time fundamental themes of the European Union, that is, European identity. There are many studies on this subject, but few have tried to look behind its definitions and question the communalities between the citizens of the European Union which the term European identity implies. Study I reviewed some of the existing definitions of European identity and the origin of the term, but it also considered European identity as an EU objective achievable through promotional activities. The importance of understanding the concept 'European identity' is regarded as a starting point for investigating EU communication strategies and their purposes. While it was clear that behind any EU campaign there was a specific goal to be achieved, it had not been yet defined what that goal was or how to define EU communication strategies. Study II addressed these issues by reference to current debates on EU communication strategies and allegations that they are propaganda. EU communication campaigns were discussed in relation to the increasing use of the mass media to publicise the EU project and inform about/promote the European institutions and their work. After defining EU communication strategies as promotional, it was necessary to understand the reasons behind these strategies.

Some possible reasons were given in Study III. This article aimed at providing a new interpretation of EU information and communication actions, as developed in the last five years, by focusing on the results achieved in public opinion formation and the consolidation of positive attitudes. A specific effort was made to understand whether EU campaigns have produced the desired changes in the public image of the EU and trust in its institutions, and whether they have increased Europeans' commitment and involvement in EU affairs. Since the majority of the actions were taken at the national level, it was important to study EU policies on information and communication and what responsibilities and decision-making power each member state has with respect to creating, developing and implementing specific information activities. In Study IV, six EU documents on information and communication policies developed between 2001 and 2006 were explored. The analysis of these documents focused on understanding the goals of EU policies and what functions and responsibilities were given to member states.

Study V deals with EU media relations. Its main result is that the negative or null coverage of EU affairs on national mass media depends on the quality of the EU-national media relationship. Both Finnish and Italian journalists are generally dissatisfied with EU practices of dealing with media relations. This finding is based on the data gathered from December 2005 to April 2006 from interviews with thirty journalists from Finland and Italy. The findings showed a persistent relationship problem between journalists and EU institutions, and thus underline the necessity to improve media relations between EU institutions and national mass media.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since this study is about public organizations communicating with different publics, it is especially important to understand what a public organization is and which the subjects of its communication actions are. The following sections can be divided in two frameworks; the first introduces theoretical concepts relating to public organizations and the second communication theories. The first part of this chapter starts with a brief introduction of what an organization is, what its objectives are, and why organizational legitimacy is important, and continues by presenting the bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic models of management in public organizations and the subjects of the communication of public organizations. It ends by explaining the primary reasons for establishing good organization-public relationships. The second part focuses on models of communication, that is, on the possible tactics used by public servants to achieve their organizational goals through communication actions. According to which model of communication is applied by an organization, it is possible to talk about propaganda, marketing communications, diplomatic communication and/or community communication. These concepts are described and discussed.

2.1 Organizations and their objectives

The interest of sociologists, economists, and political experts on organizations underlines the importance that organizations have in all societies. Studies of organizations generally refer to studies of organizational behaviour or its analysis and their unit of investigation is the organization, either as process-related, that is in its (re)organizational actions, or as a function of how entities like businesses or state authorities are used, or as an institution, that is, its purposeful structure within a social context. In this study organizations are considered as the last of above units and the interest is in institutional communication.

The term organization derives from the Greek word ‘organon’ which means ‘tool’. In modern terminology it refers to a formal group of people with one or more shared goals. In sociology organization is understood as the planned, coordinated and purposeful action of human beings to construct or compile a common tangible or intangible product or service. This action is usually framed by formal membership and formal institutional rules. Organizations are generally defined by the elements that constitute them, their communication, their autonomy and their rules of action compared to events outside them. According to Parsons (1956) an organization is thus a social system orientated to the attainment of a specific type of goal, one which contributes to a major function of a more comprehensive system, usually society. Hatch (1997) sees the function of organization as an essential element of societies. People organize, because it is functional and efficient and because efficiency, as Williamson (1985) states, means a reduction in transaction costs between parties interacting repeatedly, even if their interests conflict. Hence, society cannot exist in the absence of organization.

Organizations have traditionally been understood to operate on two levels: technical and institutional. The technical level refers to the operating environment where the transaction and interaction take place and thus also the level of efficiency estimation and measurement. On this technical level the organization is dependent on its environment for survival. The institutional level is the more abstract level of rules and regulations that the organization has to adapt to in order for it to become legitimate (Luoma-aho 2005, 27). The classical distinction among different types of organizations is between private and public organizations. This distinction is based on the objectives of organizations, which are considered the reason or legitimation for the existence of organizations. Among the most general organizational objectives there is the necessity to survive, to accomplish the organization’s mission and to exist in order to affect others (ibid, 31). Depending on the field and area of interest these objectives may vary, though they all are considered to be present to some degree. The institutional framework of each society affects the objectives of organizations (North 1990, 5) and the objectives of organizations also vary according to the type of organization in question.

Olins (1990) distinguishes four areas of organizational activity: 1) products/services, i.e. what the organization makes or sells, 2) environments, i.e. where it physically makes or sells, 3) information, i.e. how the organization describes and publicizes its activities and 4) behaviour, i.e. how the organization’s members behave towards each other and those who are not members. Meyer and Rowan (1977, 354) place all organizations on a continuum according to their objectives. At one end of the continuum are production organizations and, at the other, institutional organizations. According to Luoma-aho the major difference between production organizations and institutional organizations is the level of control over the organization’s outputs, which is higher in production organizations and lower in institutional organizations. Institutional organizations depend most for their success on public confidence and stability. Institutional organizations often exist to provide services. Stability and legitimacy are achieved through organizational isomorphism and institutional rules (ibid, 33).

In this study the main interest is in relationships between public organizations and their publics. Thus the organizations studied represent the institutional type. It should be emphasised that institutions are not equivalent to public organizations. The term 'institution' is commonly applied to formal government and public service organizations, these institutions are more abstract and more established; they are stable units of social action that control and limit social action by providing preset models of behaviour. Sometimes the two terms are interchangeably used mostly because institutional rules may affect organizational structures and even their functions through expected behaviour and rewards (North 1990, Meyer and Rowan 1977). In this study the focus is on European institutions and EU offices in member states. The former are examples of institutions, the latter of public organizations. For reasons of simplicity the organizations analysed are called public organizations, a term which includes different types of organizations as well as institutions.

2.2 Legitimacy for public organizations

For public organizations legitimacy is extremely important, perhaps more important than it is for private organizations. It can be said to be the very essence of the organization's existence. The more an organization is legitimised, the more it is institutionalised and thus recognised and accepted. Legitimacy enhances both the stability and the comprehensibility of organizational activities, and stability and comprehensibility often enhance each other. Legitimacy affects not only how people act towards organizations, but also how they understand them. Thus, publics perceive the legitimate organization not only as more worthy, but also as more meaningful, more predictable, more trustworthy (Suchman 1995). Suchman defines legitimacy as "a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (ibid, 574). Legitimacy is a construct which requires time and experience. It is not an absolute and timeless concept; instead an organization needs time to gain public legitimacy, it needs capital to maintain it and it can also damage it and thus it need to find some repair strategies. People give legitimacy to organizations for different reasons. These reasons can be pragmatic, moral or cognitive. All three types involve a generalised perception or assumption that organizational activities are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions. The difference among them lies in their behavioural dynamics.

Pragmatic legitimacy is the most practical type of legitimacy for an organization. Organizations look at their influential publics and their needs in order to arrange some sort of exchange with them. The influential publics may support an organizational policy because of the policy's expected value to them or because they perceive the organization as responsive to their larger interests or because they feel the organization embraces values and norms that they share. An organization acquires moral legitimacy on the basis of personal judgements about what it is the correct thing to do. People tend to grant moral legitimacy when they believe that the organization promotes societal well-being. This judgement is thus based on perceptions. Cognitive legitimacy is the legitimacy given to an organization as result of a combination of personal organizational experiences with organizational acceptance of the predominant values and beliefs in the society in question (Suchman 1995). Table 1 shows the main legitimation strategies discussed in literature, according to Suchman's summary.

TABLE 1 Legitimation strategies

Types of legitimacy	**Types of Strategies**		
	Gaining	**Maintaining**	**Repairing**
General	- Conform to the environment - Select the environment - Manipulate the environment	- Perceive change - Protect accomplishments (communicate subtly)	- Normalise - Restructure - Don't panic
Pragmatic	- Conform to demands/build reputations - Select publics - Advertise	- Monitor tastes - Protect exchanges (communicate honestly)	- Deny - Create monitors
Moral	- Conform to ideals - Select domain - Persuade	- Monitor ethics - Protect property (communicate authoritatively)	- Excuse/Justify - Disassociate/ Reconfigure
Cognitive	- Conform to models - Select labels - Institutionalize	- Monitor outlooks - Protect assumptions (communicating facts)	- Explain

Source: re-elaboration of Suchman's table 1, 1995, p. 600

Organizations decide which type of strategy to develop in the light of their current situation, that is, the present status of their organizational legitimacy and the type of legitimation they want to achieve. Of extreme importance is the role that communications play in the process of gaining, maintaining and repairing legitimacy. According to Habermas (1990) legitimacy can be achieved through discourse and consensus, i.e. via communication. The quality of communications of organizations is thus one of the public parameters for assessing organizational legitimacy. Organizations are legitimate when they are understandable, when they are able to communicate with their publics.

Nevertheless the legitimacy of public organizations depends very much on the accomplishments and quality of organizational outputs. Rothstein (1994) believes that the legitimacy of public institutions is best achieved if they can prove that they function, reach their decisions and implement them in a democratic way.

According to Lehtonen (2004), organizations are eager to obtain legitimation and thus they implement strategies which strive more to convince their publics than to change their organizational culture and/or management style. The strategies that Lehtonen has in mind are very alike those of public relations theories and refer to education, staging, manipulation and persuasion strategies. The education strategy is the organization's attempts to inform and educate its influential publics about different features of the organization. In the staging strategy communications and actions of organizations aspire to changing public perceptions of the organization without actually changing its structure and management. In the manipulation strategy the organization tries to shift public attention away from unpleasant issues so as to avoid confrontation, while in the persuasion strategy organizations tend to change external expectations. Lehtonen believes that all these strategies are somehow employed by different organizations not only as techniques to achieve organizational legitimacy but as a base for their public relations activities. However these strategies are questionable in terms of long lasting and effective results.

2.3 Models of management in public organizations

For centuries public organizations all around the world operated according a bureaucratic model based on an authoritarian, top-down management style with a high degree of control and little communication (Claver et al. 1999, 459). A bureaucratic model is characterised by stability, obedience and conformity with established rules and procedures of working and by little initiative, innovative processes or change. Bureaucracy as such refers to the French word 'bureau', which means 'office' and thus it stands for office power or office rule, the rule of officialdom. The term began to be used in the early 19th century in Western Europe and many of the earlier studies on this subject refer to Max Weber and his idea of the bureaucratization of society. The bureaucratic model was considered the best functional model for managing public administrations and it has played a vital role in fostering economic and social development and sustaining our democratic institutions. However, the decision-making process of a bureaucratic organization is extremely repetitive and centralized, and it is hostile to changes in approved and accepted ideas and models (Luoma-aho 2005, 66). This repetitive mechanism of managing public organizations is no longer suitable nor efficient for organizations operating in a rapidly changing environment and the challenges it posses. This environment calls for new approaches to organizing and managing public organizations. According to various scholars (Kernaghan et al. 2000; Barzelay and Armajani 1992) several characteristics of the bureaucratic model seem inadequate to meet the new challenges facing the public sector.

It was during the 1980s that a new post-bureaucratic model of public management, called New Public Management (NPM), was developed with the aim of modernizing the public sector. This approach is based on the public choice and managerial schools of thought and seeks to enhance the efficiency of the public sector and the control that government has over it. The main hypothesis is that a greater market orientation in the public sector will lead to greater cost-efficiency for governments, without having negative side effects on other objectives and considerations. NPM, compared to other public management theories, is more oriented towards outcomes and efficiency through better management of public budgets. It is considered that this is best achieved by applying competition, as it is known in the private sector, to public organizations, emphasizing economic and leadership principles. NPM sees citizens much like clients while the authorities are like entrepreneurial investors. This kind of market-oriented thinking is however problematic. If citizens are treated like clients, they will not be treated equally (Eskelinen 2005).

In the New Public Service (NPS) approach, unlike in the NPM model, citizens are involved in a dialogue; they are helped in understanding and participating in public discourses and decision-making rather than controlled. In the NPS approach relationship building is important because the public interest and responsibility are shared and thus the goal is not just to find quick solutions but to create stable and reliable collaboration between citizens and their institutions. Here citizens are treated and valued as partners (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000). Both NPM and NPS are considered post-bureaucratic models of public organizations, although NPM is more customer-oriented while NPS more citizen-oriented.

Table 2 summarises the main characteristics of the bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic organization. The main difference between the bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic models is that in the latter the focus is on people rather than on the organization and that the emphasis is on managing performance. Good public performance is recognised as vital for the functioning and existence of any public organization. According to Kernaghan, Marson and Borins public organizations should define what their business is, set clear objectives and goals, establish their priorities, define how performance is to be measured, and subsequently use these measures to obtain feedback on their efforts, and to check and review their main objectives so as to provide a basis for abandoning obsolete and unproductive activities (2000, 16).

TABLE 2 From the bureaucratic to the post-bureaucratic organization

Characteristics of the bureaucratic organization	*Characteristics of the post-bureaucratic organization*
POLICY AND MANAGEMENT CULTURE	
ORGANIZATION-CENTRED Emphasis on the needs of the organization itself	CITIZEN-CENTRED Emphasis on the quality of service to citizens (and clients/stakeholders)
POSITION POWER Control, command and compliance	PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP Shared values and participative decision-making
RULED-CENTRED Rules, procedures and constraints	PEOPLE-CENTRED An empowering and caring milieu for employees
INDIPENDENT ACTION Little consultation, cooperation or coordination	COLLECTIVE ACTION Consultation, cooperation and coordination
STATUS-QUO-ORIENTED Avoiding risks and mistakes	CHANGE-ORIENTED Innovation, risk-taking and continuous improvements
PROCESS-ORIENTED Accountability for process	RESULT-ORIENTED Accountability for results
STRUCTURE	
CENTRALISED Hierarchy and central control	DECENTRALISED Decentralisation of authority and control
DEPARTMENTAL FORM Most programmes delivered by operating departments	NON-DEPARTMENTAL FORM Programmes delivered by wide variety of mechanisms
MARKET ORIENTATION	
BUDGET-DRIVEN Programmes financed largely from appropriations	REVENUE-DRIVEN Programmes financed as far as possible on cost recovery basis
MONOPOLISTIC Government has monopoly on programme delivery	COMPETITIVE Competition with private-sector programme delivery

Source: Kernaghan et al. 2000, 3

This approach, based on ‘managing performance’, is a typical business approach, but public organizations should not completely emulate private-sector organizations. Hoggett (2006) claims that public organizations are inherently more complex than private ones and thus it is not possible to reproduce a management system which cannot respond to the existing exigencies of public organizations. This complexity, Hoggett asserts, is determined by two factors. The first factor is related to the problem public organizations have in delivering what they have promised. This is extremely difficult for public organizations since questions regarding values and policies are continuously contested in the public sphere. The second factor is the social role of public organizations. Because government partly acts as a receptacle for the alienated subjectivity of citizens, public organizations have to contain much of what is disowned by the society in which they are situated. It follows that the fate of the public official is to have to contain the unresolved value conflicts and moral ambivalence of society. Such a perspective has implications for all of those who, in their different roles, seek to bring about improvement in public organizations.

Moreover, the rise of the new technology has created new forms of public discourse on the internet and of public participation through internet forums, including web blogs and web communities. E-governance and e-democracy are the core elements of the new public communication. E-governance refers to governmental use of information and communication technology (ICT) to exchange information and services with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. E-government may be applied by the legislature, judiciary or administration, in order to improve internal efficiency, the delivery of public services, or processes of democratic governance. The most important anticipated benefits of e-government include improved efficiency, convenience, and better accessibility of public services. E-democracy concerns the use of electronic communications technologies in enhancing democratic processes within a democratic republic or representative democracy. It is a political development still in its infancy, and thus the subject of much debate and activity within government, civic-oriented groups and societies around the world (Alexander 1998; Hacker and van Dijk 2000; Hoff et al. 2000; Kamarck and Nye 2002). Typically, the kinds of enhancements sought by proponents of e-democracy are framed in terms of making processes more accessible; making citizen participation in public policy decision-making more extensive and direct so as to enable broader influence on policy outcomes as the involvement of more individuals could yield smarter policies; increasing transparency and accountability; and holding government closer to the consent of the governed, thereby increasing its political legitimacy. Both e-governance and e-democracy are new tools that could lead to the further development of the NPS model and thus to improvements in the managing of organizational performance.

2.4 The influential groups for public organizations

Public organizations according to the NPS model aim at helping citizens to articulate and meet their shared interests rather than attempt to control or steer society in new directions (Denhardt and Denhardt 2001, 400). Their goal is to create shared interests and shared responsibilities and the public interest is considered the result of a dialogue about shared values. According to Kantanen

(2006, 62) public organizations and their networks are more likely to be successful in the long run if they are operated through a process of collaboration and shared leadership based on respect for all people. However public organizations should not forget their obligation to be result - and performance - oriented. The creation of a dialogue with citizens and shared responsibilities and interests should be considered as part of a larger strategic plan, inclusive of other influential groups. Although extremely important for public organizations, citizens are only one of the organization's publics. Other publics are composed of, for example, employees, consumers, the community, investors, civic societies, non-profit organizations and the media. Public organizations should develop communication actions specific to all their various publics.

For long time studies on public relations and communications of organizations have mostly concentrated on stakeholders' needs and relationships. Yet, stakeholders represent only some of the possible publics of an organization and are thus only representative of a particular group. Using the term stakeholders interchangeably with the term publics is inappropriate. Rawlins (2006) asserts that there is a clear distinction between these two terms and consequently research on stakeholders has a different interest from that on publics. Stakeholders have been identified in the business literature according to their relationships to organizations. Publics, in the public relations and other mass media literature, are often identified according to their relationship to messages (ibid, 2). Grunig and Repper have also differentiated the two terms. For these scholars organizations choose stakeholders by their marketing strategies, recruiting, and investment plans, whereas publics arise on their own and choose the organization for their attention (1992, 128). Nevertheless, in the 2005 *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* Grunig and Hunt's well-known 1984 work is quoted to affirm that groups and individuals with any of the four type of linkage to an organization - enabling, functional, diffuse, or normative - can all be described as some sort of 'stakeholders' (Rawlins and Bowen 2005, 719). Mackey (2006), instead, argues that the term 'stakeholder' frames people as having a pre-existing relationship with the governments or business organizations which name them as such. Whereas public relations is also about people who do not have necessarily a stake or relationship with such organizations. In this sense the notion of 'public' fits better the idea of acknowledging that some citizen groups are uncontrollable and may be only thinking audiences, that is, they are people with opinions but not necessarily grateful reciprocators (Mackey 2006, 11).

In situations when the general public has some interest in organizations, it is possible to define it as stakeholder by virtue of having a legitimate stake in a public decision. However, it is useful to make a distinction between the public and stakeholders in the context of participation. The term 'public participation' in contrast to 'stakeholder participation' refers to engagement with members of the public in their capacity as citizens rather than as in a professional or formal role as stakeholders generally are. For this reason, the term 'public' to define a group of people to whom organizations need to give their attention is more appropriate in the context of public organizations, which generally take care of functions that are not suited to private enterprises and of clusters of society which may feel themselves as only thinking audiences or simply involved citizens.

The origins of the concept 'public' can be traced to the mid-18th century when courtiers to Louis XV and Louis XVI were dispatched to listen to the thoughts of successful business men and influential political leaders in the salons of Paris (Herbst and Beniger 1994). The term 'public' regained attention in the 1920s with the recognition of the importance of public opinion (Lippmann 1922, 1925) and the concomitant emergence of public relations (Bernays 1923). A public (Dewey 1927) is defined as a set of conscious and aware people who are affected by the consequences of organizational decisions or objectives in which they did not take part. This definition underlines the importance of considering a public as a group of people that face a similar problem, recognize the problem exists, and organize to do something about it. Blumer (1946/1960) similarly described a public as a group of people who have confronted an issue, are divided in their ideas about to how to meet the issue, and who engage in discussion over the issue. Significantly, Blumer (ibid, 46- 47) contends that a public is a spontaneous grouping that lacks prescribed traditions or cultural patterns, any form of pre-established organization or fixed status roles, and any 'we-feeling' or consciousness of identity among its members. Along the same lines are the definitions by Grunig and Hunt (1984), who suggest that a public is a "loosely structured system whose members detect the same problem or issue, interact either face-to-face or through mediated channels, and behave as though they were one body" (ibid, 144). From a public organization perspective, the concept 'public' can be generalized to mean all persons not directly associated with an organization. This is called the reflective approach to public relations, an approach which is more public -oriented (Holmström 2004, Verčič et al. 2001).

Publics are important elements of an organization, especially modern organizations which are characterized more and more by complex relationship dynamics. Managing such dynamics – if they are based on a continuous and efficient delivery of transparent and accountable information - contributes to the existence of the organization also in situations of incertitude or lack of information. Publics are important because they have a specific capacity to create public opinion and to generate shared or negotiated consensus. Through this consensus they can exercise their influential power upon decision making. According to this view managing good relationships with their publics is one of the main priorities of organizations, privately and publicly owned.

To form a public, people need to share common values, interests and eventually culture. Hence organizations generally have multiple publics, such as a media-public, stakeholder-public, community-public, customer-public etc., and with each of them they need to establish specific relationships. Bruning and Ledingham (1999) conceptualised three types of relationships according to the organization's goals. The relationships between organizations and their publics can be of the professional, personal or community types. A 'professional relationship' is required for those publics who look for services delivered in a businesslike manner and who address their concerns directly to the organization. A 'personal relationship' supports the construction of a sense of trust between the organization and the members of its key publics. The organization's representatives in this type of relationship need to invest time, energy and personal interest in interactions with their publics and to show willingness to demonstrate commitment to individual needs. Finally, a 'community relationship' requires that organizations are open to their communities by supporting events that are of interest to the community members, engage in activities that can be used to improve social and economic aspects of the community and take an active role in developing the community (ibid, 166). Each of these relationships requires specific strategies.

2.5 Mass Media

One of the most influential groups for public organizations is the mass media, the relationship with which is part of the personal relationship strategy of public organizations. The importance of establishing constructive and successful communications between an organization and media influence has been widely recognised as essential element in the acquisition of a positive image and reputation for any organization. The average person's real contacts with events in society are limited, and so it is the media that constructs the public's knowledge of organizations, politicians, companies and situations (McQuail 2000). Citizens' opinions are formed and shaped by the information they receive through the media. If such information is scarce or is mediated in a generally negative tone, there is little chance of improving an organization's image and reputation. Achieving cooperation with journalists is one of the tasks of an organization's public relations, as this is what the organization's reputation depends on (Tampere 2006, 39), hence media relations form one of the pivotal aspects of public relations activities worldwide. Media relations have been defined as the function of public relations that attempts to establish positive and fruitful lines of communication between an organization and the media (Lahey 2003, 98). This relationship must be assiduously cultivated, for example by collaborating with the media when they require information, so as to be assured that attention will be paid to the organization's news releases.

Media relations activities have been widely used by private and business organizations in order to enhance their image and create positive opinions. Nevertheless, influencing individuals, groups and organizations is not the prerogative alone of market-driven organizations, but it has become a necessary tool for governments in explaining their objectives and gaining public consent or support for their actions. In a democratic society citizens express their views through their participation in the decision-making process and ultimately, by exercising their right to vote. For this reason, today's authorities must provide information and the opportunity for public participation in government affairs in order to achieve their goals. By establishing good relations with the media, the authorities provide information to citizens, convey specific messages to concerned publics, and generate dialogue that can influence strategic planning and future activities. This is truer still when organizations have multiple publics and have a supranational structure such as in the case of the European Union and its institutions.

Previous studies on media relations have dealt with source-reporter relationships (Schoemaker and Reese 1991; Giber and Johnson 1961), the evaluation of PR influence in news content (Curtin and Rhodenbough 2001; Sallot 1990; Aronoff 1976; Cutlip 1962), interpersonal relationships, organizational dynamics and their societal impacts (Shin and Cameron 2003; Cameron et al. 1997), and perceptions and cross-perceptions between practitioners and journalists (Sallot et al. 1998; Lee and Solomon 1990; Belz et al. 1989; Jeffers 1977; Aronoff 1975). Studies on PR influence in news content revealed the importance of the role of PR in the media coverage of the news and thus in building the reputation and image of organizations (Turk 1986; Stocking 1985; Sachsman 1976). However, for organizations, having a great impact on news reporting depends on how journalists view their sources of information. Baxter (1981) argued that public relations sources have little direct influence on the news, but indirectly influence journalists' perceptions; that is, the influence is not on the news per se but it depends on the nature of the personal relationships between journalists and PR officers. Several studies show that journalists' perceptions of PR officers are generally negative and that the reluctance of the news media to use public relations information subsidies stems from adversarial relations between journalists and practitioners: "to listen to journalists and public relations practitioners talk about each other is to get the impression that the field of media relations is a battleground" (Hunt and Grunig 1994, 43). Heath (1992) presents public relations officers as 'influential rhetors' whose aims are to "design, place, and repeat messages on behalf of sponsors on an array of topics that shape views of government, charitable organizations, institutions of public education, products and consumerism, capitalism, labour, health, and leisure; they write, speak and use visual images to discuss topics and take stances on public policies at local, state and federal levels; and they create images and publicize business and special interest events" (ibid, 38).

Yet, journalists need the help of PR officers to do for their job. With the commercialization of the media over the past years, caused by economic pressures on the industry, the increasing concentration of media ownership in publicly owned corporations, and the overall decline in profit margins, journalism has become more market-driven and has abandoned its traditional journalistic values in part by using more commercially subsidized materials, such as public relations information subsidies (Curtin 1997, McManus 1994).

This aspect has increased the interdependency between the two professions. PR officers aim at getting their press releases published by journals, while journalists in turn need material to feed their newspapers. Gans (quoted in Walters et al. 1994) defines the journalist-PR relationship as a dance, where "sources seek access to journalists and journalists seek access to sources. Although it takes two to tango, either can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading" (ibid, 346).

For public organizations, especially, the quality of the source-reporter relationship plays a fundamental role in getting news reporting of a valuable type for the organization. In their investigation on the poor visibility of EU news in UK news coverage, Morgan (1995) and Gavin (2001) discovered that the problem was related to the type of source-reporter relationship. Their findings showed that the working relationship of UK correspondents with EU institutions was very problematic and that it compromised the quality of the information available. Morgan claimed that this problematic relationship was a consequence of the lack of special orientation training for EU correspondents. Similarly, Gleissner and de Vreese (2005) found a negative relationship between British, German and Dutch correspondents and EU information officers. Their study on how news media in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands covered the Convention's preparation of the European Union Constitution was based on interviews with Brussels correspondents and a content analysis of television news and national newspapers. They analysed the source-reporter relationship mainly by looking at journalists' relationships with EU institutions and their press work, the home organization, and audience/readership. Heikkilä and Kunelius's (2006) study on journalists' professional imagination in connection with EU news provides additional information on the source-reporter relationship. Their analysis on the issues of how journalists perceive their professional role towards their audiences and their relations to the European Union and how journalists would describe the political and communication problems within the EU adds other parameters relevant for assessing the quality of the source-reporter relationship. According to these studies the parameters most frequently considered for the analysis of the source-reporter relationship were the journalist's relationship with the organization and its press work, the journalist's relationship with his/her home organization and with his/her audience, the journalist's perception of his/her professional role vis-à-vis to his/her audience, and the opinion of the public organization and of the journalist on political and communication problems within the organization.

Finally, in studying the source-reporter relationship, it is important to take into consideration the role that social representations have in journalists' opinions regarding PR officers. The utility of the social representation theory, according to Moscovici (1984), is that social representations concern "the content of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that gives coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe. It is through representations that we are able to classify, compare and objectify people and objects around us" (ibid, 67). Moscovici argues that how we think and what we think are intrinsically and intricately linked. The significance is that these social representations become capable of influencing the behaviour of the individual participant in a society. Thus a journalist's acceptance of PR officers may be linked to what they think in general about these information officers, which can ultimately affect press coverage or even press attention. The social representation theory has been proven to be useful in explaining journalists' social representations of PR officers and their practices (Bollinger 2000).

2.6 Primary goals for establishing good organization-public relationships

According to the NPS model public organizations are more and more citizen-oriented as well as performance-oriented. The two elements should go side by side during the planning of the organization's strategy. A public organization can achieve high performance results if it is able to respond to citizens' demands and needs, if it is legitimized and supported, and so on. Good levels of organization-public relationships aim at producing positive organizational images, trusting publics, and employing transparent and accountable information, but also they create the organizational capacity to commit and involve different publics in the organizational decision-making processes and the expertise to enhance citizens' collective identification with the organization itself. Previous studies (Eskelinen 2005; Luoma-aho 2005; Sztompka 1997; Fombrun 1996) have shown the importance for public organizations of having good levels in all five aspects (image, collective identification, trust, involvement and commitment) in order to survive in challenging environments, to be recognized/legitimated as democratic by its publics and to provide some sort of security and protection for them. The following subsections detail these factors in relation to the assumed communication goals of public organizations of creating beneficial and mutual relationships and sharing interests with their different publics.

2.6.1 Image of and collective identification with public organizations

The concept of image, and moreover that of collective identification, are considered to be elements of key importance for public institutions. Public organizations need to communicate their identities to their publics, in order to establish good relationships. These communication actions create different opinions of and attitudes towards the organization in each public. Opinions and attitudes form the images of organizations. An image is conceptualized as any and all opinions, pieces of information, attitudes, and behaviours that an individual holds regarding an organization (Moffitt 2001, 348). Image is an entity composed of experiences, assumptions, information and impressions (Lehtonen 1998; Rope and Mether 1991). With time, various images of the organization are formed, and together they form the perceived organizational image. These images are theorized as historical events or as products of personal, environmental, and organizational factors that are nevertheless changeable because they always are historically and culturally contextualized (Moffitt 2001). For an organization it is important to understand how its publics receive and process the organization's intended images, since this understanding will lead the organization to plan effective campaign strategies and to design campaign messages. Organizations look to creating positive images among their different audiences, for example to receive support in conflict issues, to be legitimatized and to have a competitive advantage. Positive images can also lead to the creation of a collective identification of public organizations' publics with the organizations themselves. Simon and Klandermans (2001) consider collective identification as first and foremost a statement about categorical membership. For them a collective identity/identification[1] is one that is shared with a group of others who have, or are believed to have, some characteristics in common; it is "a place in the social world" (ibid, 320). Such commonality may be based on ascribed characteristics, such as ethnicity or gender, or on achieved states, such as occupation or political party (Deaux 1996; Sedikides and Brewer 2001; Simon and Klandermans 2001). This shared position does not require direct contact or interchange with all the others who share category membership; rather, the positioning is psychological in nature.

According to the social identity approach, social or collective identity represents a more inclusive form of self-definition ('we' or 'us') than does personal or individual identity ('I' or 'me'). A person can have many different collective identities depending on the number of groups to which he or she belongs. However, not all of these collective identities are salient at the same time. Which specific collective identity moves into the perceptual foreground is a joint function of personal variables and more immediate social contextual variables (Turner and Reynolds 2001; Oakes et al. 1994; Turner et al. 1987). Collective-identity salience also depends on the immediate social context because a particular in-group/out-group categorization is more meaningful in some contexts than in others (Oakes et al. 1994; Turner et al. 1994).

A strong sense of collective identity is necessary for in-group members to engage in collective behaviours aimed at improving their in-groups' situation (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Tajfel 1981; Brown 1978). Support for this hypothesis comes from a range of empirical studies that strongly suggest that highly identified group members are prepared to stand and fight collectively when

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1 In this study the concepts 'collective identification' and 'collective identity' are considered synonymous. Although the idea of identification does not generally imply the creation of an identity among people who identify themselves with a specific group, it does contain all the elements required for the possible acceptance of the group's identity as its own. In these terms identification with a group is a process that can lead to the acquisition of the group's identity as well.

their in-group is disadvantaged or threatened, whereas low identifiers typically attempt to disassociate themselves from the in-group to improve their personal situation (Mummendey et al. 1999; Ellemers et al. 1997; Lalonde and Silvermann 1994; Wright et al. 1990). Past research has suggested that three components of social identification - cognitive, evaluative, and emotional - are empirically distinct and relate differently to key outcome variables (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000; Ellemers et al. 1999). Of these three components, the emotional component has been shown to most clearly "supply the motivational force" leading to action or the "readiness to engage in or disengage from interaction" (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000, 563).

2.6.2 Trust, involvement and commitment to public organizations

According to the different literature, trust is a firm belief in the honesty and reliability of another. Trusting a person means believing that when offered the chance, he/she is not likely to behave in a way that damages us (Gambetta 1993, 219). Trust, in this definition, is situational and/or rational, something that develops between two or more actors in a particular context or relationship. Trust is formed as a result of past experiences, the history of interaction (Kramer 1999) and reputation (Luoma-aho 2005; Pizzorno 2004; Misztal 1996). Trust can also be seen as a result of attributes of the other party such as that party's competence, concern, openness and reliability (Rousseau et al. 1998). Trust and social capital have also been seen as key ingredients underlying good government (Putnam 1993; Braithwaite and Levi 1998), good schools (Schneider et al. 1997; Coleman 1998), the provision of quality health care (Cattell 2001) and even the resolution of ethnic conflicts (Varshney 2001).

Trust in public organizations is essential for good functioning and is a sign of democracy. It has been said that democratic societies are trusting societies. In fact trust leads to better governance and to a public that is happier with the performance of the government. Or maybe good government makes people more likely to trust each other. Thus government can also produce trust (Rothstein 2000; Levi 1996). Trusting publics will also produce more responsive governments and these are more likely to adopt policies that will promote economic equality and thus create more trust. Trusting societies have governments that redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor, spend more on education, and pursue policies that will stimulate economic growth. Trusting societies in democratic regimes pursue programmes that indirectly boost faith in others. Nations capable of creating a culture of trust are reported to be on many levels the most successful (Ilmonen and Jokinen 2002, 20). Trust also affects the level of public involvement.

Trustworthy organizations are more willing to cooperate with communities and to listen to their publics. Public organizations, especially, are required to become more responsive to citizens as clients and engage in effective collaboration with them as partners. The NPS model assumes the kind of collaboration where citizens are treated as partners (Eskelinen 2005, 40). Citizen involvement as part of the collaboration process is an important element for public organizations. Besides this it determines the visibility of the institution and its legitimacy. The interest of publics in what a specific organization is doing and how it is doing, determines the quantity and type of information sought. High involved publics seek for information more than do low involved publics. High involved publics believe that their voice makes a different in the decision-making process. In fact public participation is considered to be the "involvement of the public in the process of decision-making" (Stewart and Claker 1987, 172). High involved publics, who either participate in the decision process or affect it through different actions, legitimate the organizations' existence. Legitimacy means here "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995, 574). According to Peltola (2006) public involvement is the key factor for public organizations if they are to communicate properly with their different publics. Involvement is defined by this scholar as "the level of personal importance and interest shown toward an object in a specific situation" (ibid, 95). Citizens' involvement can be described according to a high-to-low scale, according to its typology, that is as cognitively-based, individual-state-based and response-based (Eskelinen 2005; Laaksonen 1994) or in relation to the issue of interest. In this case involvement is defined either as position involvement, issue involvement or decision involvement (Palm 1994). Palm's definition of involvement better describes the situation of public organizations since it emphasizes the contextual factors which create citizen involvement.

Position involvement is described as the type of involvement which occurs if a citizen is actively interested in a specific target or a social issue about which there is conflict (ibid, 201). A citizen with a clear position on an issue filters out all the information which contradicts his/her position and gets involved with information which supports him/her. Issue involvement in turn occurs when a citizen decides to get involve only in a specific matter. In such cases highly issue involved citizens are willing to handle all the information connected to the issue of interest (Lehtonen 2002, 83). In decision involvement, the involvement is relevant only in specific cases, such as during an election period or during referenda. A highly decision involved person is willing to search for and compare information before making a final decision.

Knowledge of involvement dynamics is also important for the selection of public information and for the method of its diffusion. In fact the first aim of public information is to turn low involvement citizens into higher involvement citizens (Eskelinen 2005), and for these reasons all public organizations should offer different kinds of information to citizens with different levels and typologies of involvement.

Public involvement and support are important factors, perhaps more for public organizations than for private organizations. Good levels of public involvement and support affect a public organization's existence for three main reasons. They legitimate the organization and its work, and by so doing they give both credibility and power to the organization. They attract shareholders and investors which may increase the funds available for further activities. They are pre-requisites of democratic and effective systems. Public organizations, which care about public involvement and support, also view the participation of their publics as helping them to grow and improve.

For public organizations the concept of commitment has a special connotation and relation with the concepts of support and involvement. Commitment is defined as "force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets. As such, commitment is distinguishable from exchange based forms of motivation and from target-relevant attitudes and can influence behaviour even in the absence of intrinsic motivation or positive attitudes" (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001, 301). In commitment theories, individuals choose the action they would most prefer everyone to choose (Laffont 1975; Harsanyi 1980). Thus they choose the action which maximizes their private payoff assuming that everyone else chooses the same action they do. Commitment has been studied as voluntary cooperation in social dilemmas such as water conservation (Laffont 1975), tax evasion (Baldry 1987), and voting (Struthers and Young 1989) as well as voluntary contributions to public goods (Ledyard 1995; Davis and Holt 1994; Marwell and Ames 1979). The most highly studied domain of commitment is organizational commitment. Theories of organizational commitment have been utilised in order to explain employees' relations with organizations (Tett and Meyer 1993; Mowday et al. 1982), employees' involvement and commitment to organizations (Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg 2003; Meyer and Herscovitch 2001; Meyer and Allen 1997; Keller 1997) and career development (Allen and Meyer 1993).

Organizational commitment is defined as loyalty to, and the acceptance of, organizational goals and values; willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization; and acceptance of the choice of organizational membership (Morris and Sherman 1981; Mowday et al. 1979; Porter et al. 1974). In the study of organizational behaviour, organizational commitment measures the extent of an individual's commitment to an organization. In Meyer and Allen's three-component model of commitment (1997, 1991) there are three major types of organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. In affective commitment, an individual strongly identifies with the goals of the organization and desires to remain a part of the organization. In continuance commitment, the individual remains with an organization because of a perceived loss of sunken costs if he/she should leave. The individual believes that he/she has invested a great deal of effort/time and therefore has to remain in the organization. And in normative commitment, the individual remains with an organization out of feelings of obligation. For instance, the organization may have invested resources in training an employee who then feels obliged to stay with the organization to 'repay the debt'. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), in a comprehensive review of the workplace commitment literature, found that despite the use of different labels, considerable empirical support has been established for the three dimensions of commitment originally proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997) - affective, continuance, and normative - and that these dimensions were appropriate regardless of the target of commitment.

2.7 Models of communication for public organizations

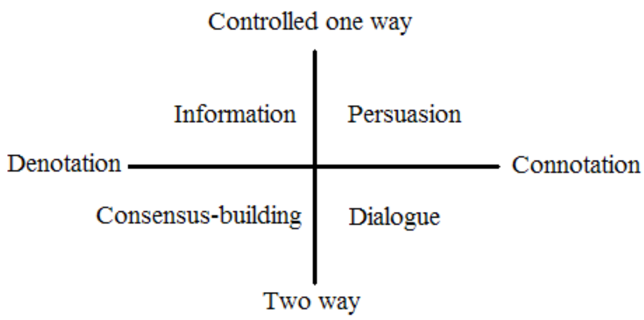
In the new millennium, the importance of communication for public organizations has increased and become an integral element of policy and organizational change. As an integral management instrument, organizational communication is perceived to contribute to changes in an organizational structure and culture. For organizational communication is meant "the study of sending and receiving messages that create and maintain a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons" (Tompkins 1984, 662-663). For instance, the involvement of stakeholders and the creation of mutual and beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics are part of the assumption that the knowledge and experience of these publics can be better utilized so as to broaden the base for making decisions and enhance the effectiveness of the organization itself. According to the NPS model described in the previous sections citizens and other publics are at the core of the management of public organizations and thus public organizations are increasingly seeking policy solutions in interaction with them. The implementation of organizational rules has become a matter of tailored solutions. However, for public organizations communication is not only about involving citizens and other stakeholders in their organizational and strategic decisions, but has a social role in providing specific information as well as a political role in promoting its cause among influential groups. For organizations of this type communication can thus have three different functions: *information on policy*, *information/communication as policy* and *communication in policy*. Gomis (2000) defines information on policy the type of communication which aims at providing knowledge on a specific matter, information/ communication as policy as the process of using information/communication as instrument to influence public groupings in their attitudes and behaviours towards social problems and required actions, and communication in policy as a strategy of consultation and dialogue with the organization's influential publics (ibid, 24-25).

These three understandings of communication functions for public organizations resemble those of the earlier PR models proposed by James Grunig (1983) and others (Grunig and Grunig 1992; Grunig and Hunt 1984). Grunig conceptualized four models of public relations behaviour in organizations: *press agentry/publicity* (a one-way asymmetric model); *public information* (a one-way symmetric model); *two-way asymmetric* and *two-way symmetric*. In this press agentry/publicity model communication is one-way from sender to receiver. In this model there is little interest in research on receiver's opinion. The public information model is one-way communication from sender to receiver used to disseminate information. Research may be undertaken to establish whether the information to be transmitted is understandable by the target public, and data may be collected to determine who and how many members of the public received the information. The two-way asymmetric model uses scientific persuasion, as propounded by Edward Bernays (1952). Communication is two-way, from sender to receiver and with feedback from the receiver. However, the power lies with the sender, whose intention is to persuade the receiver to approve and support the sender organization. The organization is not changed by the process, but intends that the attitudes of the receiver shall be. Research is undertaken to establish what attitudes the public have so that the campaign can be designed to be as effective as possible. The purpose of the feedback organizations receive is solely to help them to target their messages in a way acceptable to their publics. The two-way symmetric model is based on the ideal of mutual understanding. It is truly two-way, taking the form of a dialogue between the organization and the public; both parties are capable of being persuaded to modify their attitudes or behaviour as a result of the public relations activity. Research attempts to evaluate understanding.

These models of public relations can be considered a first attempt to explain public relations practices and can be criticised. In J. Grunig's work, it remains unclear what is exactly meant by one-way, specifically whether this term includes a receiver or not and whether there is a difference between one-way asymmetrical and two-way asymmetrical in terms of the receiver's function in the process of communication. Another problem lies in Grunig's symmetrical model of public relations. Accordingly, public relations practices should follow the symmetrical model in order to enhance mutual and beneficial relationships with different stakeholders. Symmetrical communication means that each participant in the communication process is equally able to influence the other. In reality organizations have more power than their publics. Organization's publics rarely feel they have influence and power equal to that of the organization and thus their relationship with the organization is not a wholly symmetrical one.

A different re-elaboration of Grunig's models of public relations is the communication grid proposed by van Ruler (2004). The communication grid presents four models of communication strategies which were developed according to communication theories and public relations practices. The differences from Grunig's models of public relations are more semantic than they are in actual practice. Van Ruler differentiates the types of communication with publics according to the degree of involvement of 'the other' in the communication process and the view of meaning. Communication, as an involvement factor, can be of the types *emission, controlled one-way process* (Grunig's two-way asymmetrical model) and *two-way process* (Grunig's two-way symmetrical model). With regard to meaning van Ruler identified *denotative* and *connotative* positions. The first refers to open and shared meanings, the latter emerges through personal feelings and associations.

Taking into consideration previous concepts, van Ruler developed a four-square-communication grid representing an illustration of the bases of public relations competencies and strategies (Figure 2). In the first square, the information strategy is denotative and controlled one-way and aims at providing information in order to help people in forming opinions or decisions. In the second square, the persuasion strategy is one-way and connotative and it characterises advertising and propaganda communication actions as well as corporate communication, in the sense of presenting the organization so as to generate a favourable basis for further relationships with relevant stakeholders (van Ruler 2004, 140). The consensus building strategy of the third square builds bridges between the organization and its publics. This strategy can be deployed when there are conflicting interests at stake among interdependent parties, and it covers the process of mutual agreement. The dialogue strategy means consultation with stakeholders with regards to policy development.



Source: van Ruler 2004

FIGURE 2 The communication grid

A criticism of van Ruler's communication grid concerns the lack of a power factor as a determinant variable of communication processes. Organizational power, whether real power or perceived, determines the level of involvement and participation of the other party. Publics that perceive they have little power of influence are not necessarily willing to share their views and actively participate with the organization.

Nevertheless, both Grunig and van Ruler's models provide extremely useful tools for understanding public organizations' behaviours with respect to their communication actions. Previous studies on this theme (E. Pollack 1984; R. Pollack 1986; Grunig and Grunig 1992) have revealed a tendency for public organizations to increasingly apply a public information model. According to Turk's study (1985) on some American state agencies, public relations practices in the fields of sports, theatre and product promotion follow the press agentry/publicity model; government, non-profit, associations and business usually prefer the public information model; while the two-way asymmetric model is typical of competitive business and agencies, and the two way symmetric model characterizes regulated business and agencies. The division, in reality, is not so strict since in general organizations combine two or more models, with most including some degree of press agentry/publicity public relations in their behaviour.

Since WWII communication in public organizations has evolved from a more persuasive and propagandistic connotative position towards a more transparent, accountable and responsible type of communication. The ongoing tendency is to move away from sender-driven information to receiver-oriented communication (Gomis 2000). Although the current tendency is toward the two-way symmetrical model of communication proposed by Grunig or the dialogue model according to van Ruler's grid, for public organizations, and specifically governments, a mixed model is the most used approach. Public organizations, and especially governments, are in fact influenced by a variety of factors. These in turn require the adoption of different types of communication models according to the situation/policy at stake and to the phase of the policy process. Sometimes government needs to market new developments, at other times its communication aims at setting an agenda, at informing, convincing/persuading its publics, and as well as communication for creating consultations and/or participation. Depending on the purposes of communication a different model is applied. A distinctive aspect of modern public communication is the increasing necessity to conduct research so as to evaluate public needs and questions, to be transparent on organizational activities and decisions, and to provide accessibility of public information.

2.8 Strategic communication for public organizations

> *"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country"* (Edward L. Bernays 1928, 2).

Strategic communication is a term often applied to planned communication campaigns (Botan 1997). Strategic communication campaigns are conducted under many labels, including public relations (Albritton and Manheim 1985), community relations (Grunig 1989), public diplomacy (Bu 1999; Kunczik 1997; Signitzer and Coombs 1992), crisis and issue management (Hoover and Garmon 1990), investor relations and membership relations (Karim 1989; Pratt 1985), public affairs (Manheim 1994b), public information and the promotion of public health (Anderson 1989; Flora et al. 1989; Reardon 1989) risk communication, strategic advertising and strategic marketing (Crable and Vibbert 1985; Jones and Chase 1979), etc. Although the models of communication employed can vary, strategic communication is characterised by the use of research to identify a problem or issue, relevant publics, and measurable goals and objectives. A strategic communication plan is drawn up to address that problem vis-à-vis target publics and employs a series of measurable tactics through which to implement those strategies (Botan 1997, 188).

Strategic communication for public organizations has mainly been used to influence publics in their attitudes and behaviours towards social problems and required actions, such as health, transport and environmental problems, etc. The assumption is that this type of communication can make a useful contribution to the process of influencing their different publics that public organizations ought to have in place. In particular, information/communication as policy is a communication model which is variously interpreted by different receivers. The use of communication and public relations practices with the aim of influencing public attitude and behaviour is considered a legitimate action for organizations perceived to be social and educational in scope but not necessarily for public institutions whose goals may be politically oriented. For such organizations, using communication as an instrument for the promotion of their policies is considered by many as propaganda. However, the distinction between the two connotations is very thin. In the following section the concepts of propaganda, persuasion and education are discussed and compared together with the idea of promotion. This is followed by a section on marketing communications, public diplomacy and community relations, which presents and discusses the correlations between public relations practices and models with those of marketing communications, public diplomacy and community relations.

2.8.1 Propaganda, persuasion and education

> *"The only difference between propaganda and education, really, is the point of view. The advocacy of what we believe in is education. The advocacy of what we don't believe in is propaganda"* (Edward L. Bernays 1923, 212).

Since the last half of the 20th century, government and public institutions have increased their use of advertising as a public policy tool in non-electoral settings so as to attain political and image enhancement goals. The purpose of such advertising can be seen as offering information and viewpoints on a political issue, but it is also often the case that its ultimate purpose is to influence a policy that may have good political or economic implications for the promoter (Lee Kaid 2004). Political communication scholars call this type of strategy the 'modern publicity process', which implies, among other things, the deployment of political marketing and professionalism in campaigning. A major role in developing this modern publicity process is awarded to public relations activities. It is hardly surprising that public organizations that use public relations practices may be accused of propaganda. There is in fact an increasingly vocal and resonant body of critics (Miller 2004; Stauber and Rampton 2004; Chomsky 2002; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Ewen 1996) who argue that public relations is propagandist in nature and in its promotion of corporate and business interests over societal values. An example, of government propaganda is the Bush administration's promotional activities on American involvement in the war in Iraq (Rampton and Stauber 2003). Yet, in the light of the current shift in the style of public organizational management towards a more citizen-oriented approach and with a more transparent and accountable information policy, the propagandistic connotation can be considered part of the practices of policy promotion which can serve as an important asset in the decision-making processes of public institutions.

Originally propaganda did not have any negative connotation. The term comes from Latin word 'propagare' which means 'to propagate, to extend, to spread'. It was derived from the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Church, which promulgated a *Sacra Congragatio de Propaganda Fidei* in the 17th century for the purpose of coordinating its missionary activities. From the very beginning, one of the hallmarks of propaganda has been the fact that the concept's positive and negative connotations are held in constant tension against one another. In fact, Catholics positively perceived Roman Catholic propaganda, while Protestants regarded it as an unwelcome use of persuasion.

The negative connotation of propaganda increased in the second part of the twentieth century, specifically after Goebbels's propaganda and during the Soviet era. The term, which is characterised by the agenda-setting function of discourse and the partisan nature of language, acquired the negative meaning of the dishonest spreading of a bad doctrine (Marlin 1989). In general, propaganda is seen as the communication of a point of view with the ultimate goal of having the recipient of the appeal come to voluntarily accept this position as if it were his or her own. Commonly propaganda is defined as:

> *…a technique for influencing human actions by the manipulation of representations* (Lasswell 1934, 521)
>
> *…the deliberative and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist* (Jowett and O'Donnell 1999, 4).

The goal of modern propaganda is not to inform and enlighten but rather to move the masses toward a desired position or point of view. For example, people who listened the Voice of America broadcasts behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War found satisfaction for their hunger for information, and thus it appeared that the Voice of America had altruistic motives. The information they received through this medium, however, was ideologically injected to shape positive perceptions about the United States and its allies and to manipulate attitudes towards democracy, capitalism and freedom (Jowett and O'Donnell 1999, 9).

Information refers to any data that is demonstrably true. For Jacques Ellul (quoted in Cole 1998) information is "addressed to reason and experience - it furnishes facts". How it is used gives the term a much more complex meaning; technically 'information', when communicated, is intended to inform rather than to persuade. However, when it is communicated in value-laden form it becomes propaganda, the purpose of which is to persuade. Persuasion is defined as an activity or process in which a communicator attempts to induce a change in the belief, attitude, or behaviour of another person or group of persons, through the transmission of a message in a context in which the persuadee has some degree of free choice (Perloff 1993). Persuasion is frequently used in political campaigns to influence the voter decision and in social campaigns to convince target audiences to change their behaviours, for example to convince smokers to quit smoking. In this later meanings persuasion is a core characteristic of social marketing and promotion. These two concepts will be discussed in the next chapter.

Another concept which shares many features with propaganda and persuasion is education. According to Barlett (1954) education is defined as a practice that "influences thinking and conduct in such a manner that those influenced are stimulated to seek to understand for themselves why they do what they do" (ibid, 465). In this definition, education implies the necessity to influence and perhaps persuade someone. The Roman Catholic Church use of the term 'propaganda' was mostly linked to 'education'. The Church's goal was to educate people about Christianity and persuade them to accept this belief. As Cole (1998) underlined if one believes that the doctrine one is spreading is true and good even though it is being propagated in a somewhat deceitful manner then one might invoke the idea that propaganda is serving a valuable educational function (ibid, 183). In this case the line between propaganda and education is very small.

Although propaganda is mostly related to ideology, persuasion to behavioural change and education is mostly used in the context of learning, these concepts have so much in common, that it is very difficult to draw a clear distinction between them (Table 3). For instance, both propaganda and education typically use the communication of a given source to change the views of a target receiver (McGuire 1973, 225). One distinction that is sometimes made is that education aims only at changing the person's beliefs or cognition while propaganda aims also at changing his feelings and disposition to action. Others might deny the possibility of changing the one without the other but would perhaps recognize that there is a gradation in the extent to which belief change necessarily involves a change in feeling or action (McGuire 1969). Another distinction is that education aims at changing personal beliefs about matters of taste with factual and verifiable beliefs. The term education may be reserved for situations in which the source is disinterested in the topic and does not stand to gain by the target's acceptance of the communication, and propaganda for situations where the source is prejudiced and stands to profit from the success of his/her communication (Smith and Casey 1946). According to Max Wertheimer, a psychologist and a refugee from Nazi Germany, propaganda tries to keep people from thinking and from acting as humans with rights; it manipulates prejudice and emotion to impose the propagandist's will on others. Education, in contrast, should provide the skills for people to stand on their own two feet and to make their own decisions; it should encourage critical thinking (Luchins and Luchins 1978).

The question of defining something, assigning a special role/position within common understandings of such terms is difficult and sometimes superfluous, when the terms in question, in this case propaganda, persuasion and education, can sometimes be interchangeable depending on the connotative meanings and ideologies which they are based on. According to McGuire (1973) in pairs of terms such as information and propaganda, education and persuasion, knowledge and belief one is simply the alter ego of the other. The similarities concern the methods and activities deployed to change the views of a target receiver. The distinction between these pairs of terms is mostly to do with the purpose of communication, the reason for the source's view, which can be based on the presentation either of objective facts and/or multiple opinions on a specific matter or of a single and unverifiable opinion, and personal judgement. The distinction between these pairs of terms is also a matter of how we value them.

McGuire claims that the first member of each pair (information, education and knowledge) is often positively evaluated and the second (propaganda, persuasion and belief) frequently has a certain pejorative or, at best, neutral implication. These implications depend on how we perceive these terms. Perception is the process of extracting information from the world around us, as well as from within ourselves. Each individual has a perceptual field that is unique to that person and formed by the influences of values, roles, group, norms and self-image. Each of these factors colours a person's perception (O'Donnell and Kable 1982, 171).

For instance, public organizations, which are considered to pursue social goals, may decide to promote their cause among influential groups through communications with means of persuasion. If those organizations or their communications are negatively perceived by a certain group, they are labelled as propaganda, whereas for those who hold positive opinions of those organizations or their communications, this type of communication is mostly seen as a way to educate citizens about important issues. Hence, it is possible to argue that implicitly propaganda, persuasion and education refer to a similar phenomenon, but they have different connotations. Culture, among other variables, plays an important role for the definition of personal connotations. Personal connotations can become public opinion, when they are shared by many members of a community. For public organizations understanding the cultures of their influential publics is an essential element for addressing important issues and, at the same time, avoiding great criticism by their community.

TABLE 3 Comparing terms and definitions

Propaganda	Persuasion	Education
The deliberative and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist (Jowett and O'Donnell 1999, 4).	A successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom (O'Keefe 2002, 5).	One common view is that the purpose of education is to help students acquire knowledge; in this view, knowledge is generally equated with facts (Cole 1998, 187).
A propaganda model… traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news, to print, marginalise dissent and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public (Herman and Chomsky 1988).	Persuasion is an activity or process in which a communicator attempts to induce a change in the belief, attitude, or behaviour of another person or group of persons, through the transmission of a message in a context in which the persuadee has some degree of free choice (Perloff 1993).	The term "education" refers neutrally to those institutions and practices society has established for instructional purposes, especially for the instruction of the young; to call practices educational in this sense does not imply any evaluation of them, favourable or unfavourable. In a second and evaluatively positive sense, the term "education" refers to instruction as it should ideally be conducted; to call a practice educational in this sense is to praise it (Cole 1998, 184).
The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic societies (Bernays, 1928, 38).	Ethos (the credibility or charisma of speakers) + logos (the nature of the message) + pathos (the response of the audience) Aristotle.	Education is the imparting of knowledge or skill considered to be scientific or to have survival value in a society at a particular time (Doob 1948, 240).
Propaganda is any systematic attempt to influence opinion on a wide scale. It is a form of communication that seeks to promote or discourage attitudes as a means of advancing or injuring an organization, an individual or a cause (Cole 1998, 606).	Persuasion is the process that centres on exerting symbolic control over certain aspects of the environment (Miller 1989, 47).	Education influences thinking and conduct in such a manner that those influenced are stimulated to seek to understand for themselves why they do what they do (Barlett 1954, 465).

(continued)

TABLE 3 Comparing terms and definitions (continued)

Propaganda	Persuasion	Education
Propaganda is the deliberative attempt by some individual or group to form, control or alter the attitudes of other groups by the use of communication with the intention that in any given situation the reaction of those so influenced will be that desired by the propagandist (Qualter 1962, 27).	Persuasion is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs of both persuader and persuadee (Jowett and O'Donnell 1999, 1).	Education endeavours to show people why they think and act as they do (Albig 1956, 276).
Propaganda is a technique for influencing human actions by the manipulation of representations (Lasswell 1934, 521).	Persuasion is based on debate, discussion, and careful consideration of options to discover better solutions for complex problems (Pratkanis and Turner 1996, 191).	Education […] should provide the skills for people to stand on their own two feet and to make their own decisions; it should encourage critical thinking (Wertheimer, M. cited in Pratkanis and Turner 1996, 266).
Propaganda represents the work of large organizations or groups to win over the public for special interests through a massive orchestration of attractive conclusions packaged to conceal both their persuasive purpose and lack of sound supporting reasons (Sproule 1994, 8).	Persuasion can serve others well so long as the communicator attempts to bring about voluntary change in the attitudes and/or actions of…receives (Andersen 1978, 41).	The word "education" is derived from the Latin *educare* meaning "leading out" or "leading forth". This reveals one of the theories behind the function of education - of developing innate abilities and expanding horizons (Wikipedia encyclopedia*).

* Wikipedia- free Encyclopedia, at URL: www.wikipedia.org

2.8.2 Marketing communications

Strategic communication for public organizations may also imply the use of specific marketing techniques, such as branding and promotion. Branding and promotion are part of the so called marketing communication mix. Marketing communications describe "all the promotional elements of the marketing mix which involve the communications between an organization and its target audiences on all matters that affect marketing performance" (Pickton and Broderick 2001, 3). In this definition the activities of marketing communications are activities addressed to specific publics with the aim of achieving specific marketing goals. Public organizations started to use marketing techniques during the transformation period from a bureaucratic management-type of organization towards organizations with private model of management, called New Public Management. Despite the fact that the NPM model has been replaced by a more citizen-oriented model (NPS), concepts related to marketing communications are still widely used. For instance branding and promotion play an important role in certain type of public organizations. Concepts like marketing, promotion and branding are applied in this investigation specifically to present and discuss EU campaigns.

Marketing communications is considered one of the various forms of corporate communication, which is defined as "an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonised as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favourable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent "(Van Riel 1995). In marketing terminology 'branding' is defined as the strategy to differentiate products and companies, and to build economic value for both the consumer and the brand owner (Pickton and Broderick 2001, 23). It is about the values generated in the minds of people as a consequence of the sum total of marketing communication efforts. The concept of 'branding' is frequently discussed in studies on public diplomacy, specifically in relations of branding the image of a nation. In the context, this concept will be presented in the following chapter on public diplomacy.

The concept of 'promotion' may refer to a product, product line, brand, or company. When associated with public organizations, it also refers to public communication campaigns. Public communication campaigns use the media, messaging, and an organized set of communication activities to generate specific outcomes in a large number of individuals and in a specified period of time (Rogers and Storey 1987). Public communication campaigns are an attempt to shape behaviour toward desirable social outcomes (Weiss and Tschirhart 1994). Examples of public communication campaigns are campaigns against smoking, drug consumption or criminality, etc. These types of campaigns are also known as social marketing. The term social marketing was first coined by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971 to refer to the application of marketing to the solution of social and health problems. These scholars defined social marketing as "the design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research" (ibid, 5). Since social marketing implies the use of persuasive techniques for achieving the behavioural change of a specific group, social marketing is considered to share several features with the concept of social propaganda. Both seek to achieve specific behavioural goals for a social good (Kotler et al. 2002). Yet, although both are organized efforts to persuade others to accept, modify, or abandon certain ideas, attitudes, practices or behaviour, we do not consider social marketing as unethical as social propaganda. According to Jamieson (1985) advertising, another element of the marketing communication mix, can be considered a form of propaganda, in this case an economic one.

2.8.3 Public diplomacy

> *"Communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body. Whenever communication ceases, the body of international politics, the process of diplomacy, is dead, and the result is violent conflict or atrophy" (*Tran 1987, 8*).*

A specific type of strategic communication for public organizations is public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is defined as 'government-sponsored programmes intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries' (US Department of State 1987, 85). According to the Planning Group for Integration of USIA into the Department of State (June 20, 1997), US public diplomacy has been defined as 'seeking to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences'[2]. An inherent goal of public diplomacy is to communicate and cultivate on behalf of a nation a desired image and reputation among foreign publics. The main instruments of public diplomacy have included TV and radio broadcasts, books and magazines, speeches, films, cultural and education exchanges, etc. Its tactics aim at promoting a nation image and reputation. In order to promote the nation's image and reputation abroad, marketing theories, especially brand communication, have been widely used. For example, current US public diplomacy has been characterised as a type of 'marketing communications' (Kruckeberg and Vujnovic 2005) which is defined as "sharing information or meaning that helps to identify, stimulate, satisfy costumer wants or needs" (Hutton and Mulhern 2002, 2).

The concept of branding is extremely relevant for public diplomacy since it addresses questions of people's loyalty, trust and relationship towards a brand or, in the case of governments, towards a specific country. Brand communication is defined as a type of communication that seeks to develop consumer awareness and liking, to motivate purchase action, and ultimately achieve customer loyalty (Wang 2005, 17). Strong brands enjoy the trust of their customers and inspire their loyalty. They are able to establish and strengthen a long-term and sometimes life-long product-customer relationship. According to

2 Quoted from United States Information Agency Alumni Association, "What Is Public Diplomacy?" Washington, D.C., updated September 1, 2002. Online at http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm.

Wang (2006) managing national reputation is becoming ever more important and challenging as a result of the increment of political pluralism, the exponential widespread of communications technology and access to information, market and economic globalization, and the rising prominence and power of a host of new players in the world. This scenario has generated a high amount of information and access to it as well as escalating competition for the global public's attention. In this situation, managing effective relationships in public diplomacy requires the maintenance of beneficial and mutual relationships between the country and its differentiated external publics.

The use of brand communications to promote a country's image abroad is also applied by dictatorship which spread their credo through propaganda. In fact Cole (1998) asserts that public diplomacy can become propaganda when leaders of nation-states engaged on foreign policy find it useful to project images of their countries that will evoke willingness or even an active desire on the part of other countries to be cooperative. Depending on what the foreign policy formulators think would be most effective, an image might be one of irresistible power, great benevolence, a healthy economy or reliability. The result is usually, though not exclusively, propaganda aimed at the educated and influential classes, who are in a position to influence the larger society they lead. For this reason, an important distinction between public diplomacy and propaganda is that the former should always deal with the known facts, whereas propaganda is typically based on some combination of falsehoods and untruths mixed in with facts (Wolf and Rosen 2004).

As for propaganda and education, the correlations between public diplomacy and propaganda are many. For example both involve the use of symbols to cultivate and maintain national identity and to facilitate state policy agendas (Zhang 2006, 26). Studies on symbols and their interpretation by human beings led at the beginning of 20th century to the creation of a school of thought on symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism looks at symbols and their interpersonal interactions; how meanings emerge, are negotiated, established and transformed (ibid, 27). Its conceptual applications are not only in interpersonal interactions, but also in research on collective behaviour and public communications (Howard and Hollander 1997) and as well as research in public relations. Gordon (1997) conceptualized public relations as active participation in the social construction of meaning, in which the organization is cast as one player among many in a larger social dynamic that continually forms meanings. Leiss et al. (1997) suggest that the role of marketing communications, referring to advertising, in modern industrial societies is to verbalize and to imagine the possible meaning of things, and to facilitate the exchanges of meanings occurring in social interactions.

Additionally, public diplomacy shares with public relations such roles as advocacy, dialogic and advisory roles (Signitzer and Coombs 1992; Weiss 1988) as well as theories of communication. Both fields apply mass media theories such as cultivation and agenda setting and theories of image management to investigating the processes of influence on a target audience (Wang and Chang 2004; Zhang and Benoit 2004; Zhang and Cameroon 2003; Kunczik 1997; Manheim 1990; Manheim and Albritton 1984). Studies on the processes of influence on a target audience are also known as studies on 'strategic public diplomacy' (Manheim 1994a, 7). Public diplomacy and public relations share similar models of communication. Yun (2005) tested whether it was possible to apply Grunig's models of public relations to the communication context of 113 foreign embassies in Washington D. C. She found that public relations models could be utilised in conceptualizing and measuring public diplomacy behaviour and excellence in public diplomacy.

2.8.4 Community relations

> *"Our theory is that public relations is better defined in practice as the active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community"* (Kruckeberg and Starck 1988).

One of the important functions for public organizations is to be able, through specific communication actions, correctly to inform the community in which they operate about organizational decisions and activities which affect that community. Public organizations, even more than private organizations, come under public scrutiny. In fact publics can directly influence the structure of public organizations, for example, by electing their governing members and/or by supporting them through taxation. To survive in a community, an organization needs to be welcomed. Public organizations by definition are thus concerned about the opinion of their different key publics and are worried about how they can communicate with them so to achieve support and legitimation. Addressing these questions through specific community relations programmes are part of the strategic communication plan of public organizations.

Community relations, as a public relations function, is defined as an institution's planned, active, and continuing participation with and within a community to maintain and enhance its environment to the benefit of both the institution and the community (Lesly 1998). The goal of the community relations function should be for organizations to become 'neighbours of choice' (Burke 1999). This requires building relationships, establishing practices and procedures that anticipate and respond to community expectations, concerns and issues, and focusing on support programmes that respond to community apprehensions and strengthen the quality of community life. As a major audience for the communication of public organizations, the community consists of all people in all walks of life who are affected significantly by the organization and who, in turn, affect it (Wells and Spinks 1999). Their opinion, as aggregate views of the individuals in a community on a given issue, is not static; rather, it is dynamic, with each component of its existence in a relation of interdependence with all the other components.

Community relations is thus a central component of public communication and involves the study of how organizations at all levels use responsible behaviour and two-way communication to influence public opinions and the behaviours of key publics as well as respond to and adapt to their concerns. Key publics are diverse and can include groups such as employees, consumers, government, community, investors, and the media among others. Strategic communication for community relations is thus the study of how and why organizations and individuals use communication to negotiate their role in society.

The interest in community relations is linked with studies on active citizenry, on participation, on the impact of communication and community integration on local political participation (McLeod et al. 1999). Previous studies reveal important links between pairs of all three variables - community integration and media use (Emig 1995; McLeod et al. 1996; Neuwirth et al. 1989), community integration and participation (Nowak et al. 1982; Vedlitz and Veblen 1980), and media use and participation (Smith 1986; Wattenberg 1984). In the public relations literature community relations has been investigated within the context of relationship management (Bruning et al. 2006; Wilson 1996; Grunig 1993b), public-organization relationship (Hallahan 2004; Ledingham 2001; Bruning and Ledingham 1999) and functions/roles of public relations (Holmström 2005; Huang 2004; Ferguson 1984; Broom 1982).

Community relations as part of an organization's strategic communication share much with public relations theories and practices. Since public relations ought to be conceptualized as the active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community (Kruckeberg and Starck 1988), community relations are an integrated part of public relations activities, specifically on the two-way symmetrical and dialogic model previously presented. Ledingham's (2001) study on the reasons for citizens' decisions to leave an American metropolitan area for another community reveals a direct correlation between citizens' participation in community activities and choice behaviour. His findings confirm that citizens tended to remain in the community when they perceived that local government benefits citizens, acts in the best interest of citizens, and dedicates resources to support matters of importance to citizens in the exchange relationship between the local government and the citizenry (ibid, 292). Ledingham's work validated previous studies on the importance of good community relations through mutual and beneficial organization-public relationships.

Public organizations are considered to have a special societal function. They are perceived to operate in an environment which promotes and protects the wellbeing of the people. They are generally seen as socially responsible and thus indirectly reactive to the community's needs. Yet, public organizations on the NPS model require greater citizen participation and need to be more citizen-oriented. They need to establish better community relations through a range of different actions. By implementing more community-oriented practices public organizations can make community members conscious of their common interests.

3 THE SETTINGS OF THE STUDY

This study is a multi-level (European and national) comparative analysis (Finland and Italy) of EU communication strategies. It is thus necessary to understand certain historical developments relating to the main EU player, the Directorate General (DG) Communication, which formulates of the main EU information and communication policies. These policies are considered the main guidelines that member states, regional and local authorities as well as other public and private organizations involved with EU should follow in creating, developing and implementing local activities. The effects of such policies upon Finnish and Italian communication activities also depend on the historical position of the two countries towards European integration, their cultural differences and their media systems. This chapter deals with these aspects by briefly outlining the main EU developments towards a more accountable and transparent type of European Commission, including a section on EU media relations activities and discussing the history of Finnish and Italian involvement in the European Union. Some general features of Finnish and Italian cultures together with the structure of their mass media will be presented to complete the description and explain the choice of these two countries. The following factors provided a frame within which to begin this study.

3.1 EU institutions as a type of public organization

The European Union is composed of nine public organizations, namely the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank[3]. The most important institutions are considered the European Parliament and the European

[3] More information on the structures and functions of these nine EU institutions are available at URL: http://europa.eu/abc/panorama/howorganised/index_en.htm.

Commission. The former has the main legislative powers and is elected every five years by Europeans, while the latter has executive powers and represents the nation-states. The European Commission is of particular importance for Europeans, since its main actions are addressed to and for EU citizens. The European Commission is divided into 27 Directorates General (DGs) and 14 services, which are in turn divided into directorates and the directorates into units. The European Commission also has one or more offices of representation in each member state whose main functions are to speak for the European Commission at the national level and prove background briefings for the media as well as on-the-record comment on issues relevant to the Commission, report back to the Commission in Brussels on national political, economic and social developments and provide information about the European Union in each country through recognised outlets such as public libraries, business advice centres and education services.

EU institutions represent a clear example of public organizations operating in an international context since they share many of the characteristics of public organizations in general and they are affected by the same forces, such as bureaucracy versus efficiency, cost saving versus social model expenditures, high versus low management relationships with different publics, transparency and accountability of information versus security and high versus low public involvement. Public organizations operating in international contexts are classified either as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) or as supranational organizations (SNOs). An intergovernmental organization is composed of nation-states and it promotes voluntary co-operation and coordination among its members. Decisions and agreements reached in this type of organization however are not enforceable, and the members remain independent (McCormick 1999, 10). IGOs are usually based on international treaties, which formally bind member-states to uphold the organization’s charter and to pursue its official goal of interstate economic, political, security, or cultural cooperation. The crucial aspect of an IGO is that the member states do not surrender any power or sovereignty to it (Lucas 1999, 7). An example of an intergovernmental organization is the United Nations. A supranational organization is different because the member states do surrender power in specific areas to the higher organization. Decisions taken by a supranational organization must be obeyed by the member states. Often there are courts to determine when violations have occurred, although frequently enforcement mechanisms are not as effective as they are within nation states (ibid, 8). A supranational organization has the following characteristics: (a) it has powers that its member states do not have because they surrendered those powers to it; (b) it may enact rules that pre-empt the laws and regulations of its member states; and (c) it can grant rights and privileges to the nationals of its member states, which those nationals may directly invoke.

The European Union is partly an intergovernmental organization and partly a supranational organization. Because of the European Union’s multi-layer structure and combination of supra-national and intergovernmental elements in decision-making, the will of citizens is mediated much more on the European than on the national level of each member state. This is one of the basic reasons for the lack of democratic legitimacy and credibility of EU institutions (Köchler 1999). Moreover, EU institutions are accused of being extremely bureaucratic and complex and having low visibility among their different publics. Some scholars (Anderson 2004; de Vreese 2003; Meyer 1999; Featherstone 1994) claimed that EU invisibility and relationship problems are partly caused by its information and communication actions, which have not been sufficiently tailored to the different audiences. From an public organization and public relations point of view, these problems are a consequence of a lack of proper internal and external communication planning in the EU (Valentini 2006). Additionally the use of new technologies for enhancing public participation and dialogue was limited during the period analysed. The first official acknowledge of the importance of a dialogue with citizens through the use of new technologies was the while paper on Plan D, published on October 2005. Since then more specific actions have been implemented. During the period 2001- 2006 the political development of activities for e-governance and e-democracy was still at its infancy and thus the researcher decided not to include a specific analysis of e-governance and e-democracy activities in this study.

EU actions regarding the information and communications of new policies, laws and decisions taken at the European level are one of the main tasks of the European Commission Directorate General Communication. Because of this particular function, DG Communication plays a key role in the creation of the reputation and image of the EU among its different publics. DG Communication is considered to be responsible for the 'face of the EU'. Thus the public organizations studied in this investigation comprise DG Communication, the representations of the European Commission in Finland and in Italy and some of the regional/local EU offices in those two countries.

3.2 EU information and communication policies

Since in the majority of EU white papers and documents the European Commission refers to its different communication actions either as information and communication policies or as strategies, it is important to explain their meaning and what they denote before presenting the historical development of EU policies in this regard.

The term information and communication policy/strategy is a hybrid which attempts to combine the characteristics of information with those of communication. The first term implies an objective, factual and accurate transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver, while the latter focuses more on the communicative process which is not necessarily objective and accurate. The first term is generally unidirectional from sender to receiver, while the latter can be a bi-directional flow of messages, from sender to receiver and from receiver to sender. Defining a policy or strategy as information and communication is appropriate in that it admits that informing citizens is not only a technical exercise of sending factual information or instrumental tool for creating support for EU policies but it also assesses the need to respond to the problem of how public institutions should inform citizens. On the one hand this definition indicates that institutional communication, like political communication, is never purely factual and on the other it stresses the duties of public institutions to be responsible, accountable, reliable and transparent towards their citizens. All these aspects presume to a certain extent a level of exchange between the different parties involved in the communication process.

In this study the term "information and communication policy" is used to denote the aims and means of the information and communication practiced by a political institution. According to Brüggemann (2005) information and communication policy comprises three elements: the first one concern rights and practical questions of access to information and documents, and is basically discussed in the EU under the label of transparency. The second element is professional public relations, that is, strategic communication efforts on behalf of, i.e., the European Commission and the third is political rhetoric, i.e., the communication activity of the political management floor of the European Commission (ibid, 15). Since the aim of this study is to investigate EU communication strategies and their implementation in two member states, the focus of this investigation is mostly on the strategic communication efforts of the European Commission.

Despite the fact that from the beginning the EU has defined its communicational actions as information and communication policies/ strategies, the development of a structured directorate, DG X, dedicated to communication has for many years had less relevance than other directorates. It had a secondary role owing both to inadequate funding and the type and quantity of the actions undertaken. At the beginning of the process of integration, communications were intended only to be between EU institutions, national governments and influential groups, while citizens and civic societies in general were left out. Until 1979, the first year when European citizens were called to vote for the members of the European Parliament, there was no interest in involving citizens in EU decision-making processes. Operational and strategic decisions were taken directly between member states and EU institutions. EU information, which was coordinated by a specific Directorate of the European Commission called DG X (Culture, Information, Audiovisual), was thus limited to communicating with national administrations and influential economic and social groups, and it did not provide any open access to or collaboration with any group at the level of European civil society (Santaniello 1999). This situation of sporadic and inconsistent EU information lasted more or less until 1985. During this period information and communication actions were generally performed in connection with debates and papers on the major EU themes; they were explained rather briefly and were discussed here and there in no consistent and specific form (Rivoire 2000, 7).

In 1993 the European Commission began a review of its internal and external communication activities in order to make them more efficient and effective (Polledri 2003, 64). Three years later a new framework for communication with the general public, the PRINCE programme, was introduced. PRINCE is considered to be the first attempt to address citizens' concerns with a structured information programme. PRINCE programme was composed of three campaigns: *Citizens of Europe, Building Europe Together* and *the Euro campaign*. All three campaigns were based on principles of subsidiary, decentralisation and partnership. Among these campaigns, the Euro was the most successful in terms of reaching different publics, mostly because it addressed tangible aspects of the life of Europeans (Valentini 2003).

Following a request by the European Council of Helsinki in 1999, the European Commission was asked to adopt a new framework of cooperation for future activities concerning information and communication policy. This framework became the first systematic initiative in the creation of a common EU communication agenda. The document, published in June 2001, which embodies the principles discussed in 1999, was *On a new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union* (European Commission 2001). From this document onwards the European Commission has taken a more active role in communication. Also the structure of the directorate in charge of communication activities has changed. DG X became DG Press and Communication. Some scholars (Polledri 2003; Topan 2002) believe that the change in the name and in part in the structure of this directorate was a consequence of the resignation of the Santer's Commission. The Santer Commission, led by Jacques Santer, took office in 1995. After an investigation into allegations of corruption concerning individual EU commissioners, the entire Commission resigned on 15 March 1999. The allegations were first made by Paul van Buitenen. The Commissioner most criticised was the French appointed Édith Cresson, who was accused of faking and of personally benefiting from EU contracts. Due to her refusal to step down alone, alleging that all the commissioners were involved in the same kind of nepotism as she was guilty of, the entire Commission resigned (Jones 2002). After this crisis the new DG Press and Communication, which was established by the new President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, needed to restore its image and reputation among its different publics. It was under the Prodi Commission that many information and communication policies were developed and implemented at the national levels. Different agreements between EU and national governments, media organizations and civil societies were established with the intent to decentralise EU communication activities targeted at its citizens and to create a strong partnership with different influential publics.

Although during the Prodi Commission great efforts were made to modernize and re-organize the European Commission, expectations were higher than the results. Some scholars (Christiansen and Gray 2004) believe that the main weakness of Prodi's reforms was to focus on accountability and control mechanisms rather than on a reform-based approach bringing the staff along with it. It seemed that Commission's staff complained that these reforms added additional tasks to an increasingly heavy workload, and during the reform process numerous evaluation mechanisms were developed without simplifying procedures or providing a clearer sense of the demands being placed on the unit or the individual concerned (ibid, 21).

In November 2004 a new President of the European Commission, José Barroso, was installed. As first vice-president Barroso appointed a Swedish officer, Margaret Wallström, who is also in charge of EU institutional relations and communication strategy. The position given to Ms Wallström represents an important acknowledgement by the EU of the role that communication has in the integration process. Under the new Commission, DG Press and Communication has changed its name to DG Communication. The mission of DG Communication is "to inform the media and the general public about the Commission's activities and to communicate the objectives and the aims of its policies and activities and to inform the Commission about the developments and discussions on the EU in the Member States"[4]. It also assesses its role as "official voice of the European Commission in its relations with the media and as first port of call for journalists reporting on affairs concerning the Commission". It points up the importance of open, transparent and as accessible as possible communication.

The new restructured DG Communication represents the latest shift towards a more bi-dimensional type of communication. The communication framework focuses on the gap between EU institutions and their publics. However this shift can be considered a management solution to the DG Press and Communication crisis as well as to the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in June 2005. This constitutional crisis demonstrated to the European Commission the inadequacy and lack of preparedness of the European Union in informing and communicating with its citizens.

The new approach, announced first in July 2005 with the *Action plan to improve communicating Europe* and then in February 2006 with a *White paper on a European Communication Policy*, aims at putting citizens at the heart of European policies. Nevertheless, the communication initiatives of Wallström as commissioner have not always received full support within the Commission itself. According to a high-level official this is because the executive "still has a bureaucratic culture of non-communication where the making of legislation is more important than the communication with citizens" (EurActiv 2006).

3.3 EU activities for media relations

Among one of the most important activities of DG Communication is media relations. The importance of media relations within this Directorate has

4 URL: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/guide/index2_en.htm

increased in the last few years along with the increasing general discontent of EU publics with the EU and the constant level of unawareness/ ignorance of different publics regarding EU activities and policies. In fact the way that journalists handle European issues is related to how European citizens locate themselves in relation to the EU. An increase in the visibility of the European Union through fair news coverage can improve citizens' knowledge of EU institutions and policies and at the same time can boost the distant and hostile feelings that citizens have (Friends of Europe 2004). Fair news coverage is characterized by information which is as clear and objective as possible and provides acknowledged facts, which have to be at the core of any improvement in citizens' participation and support for the European project.

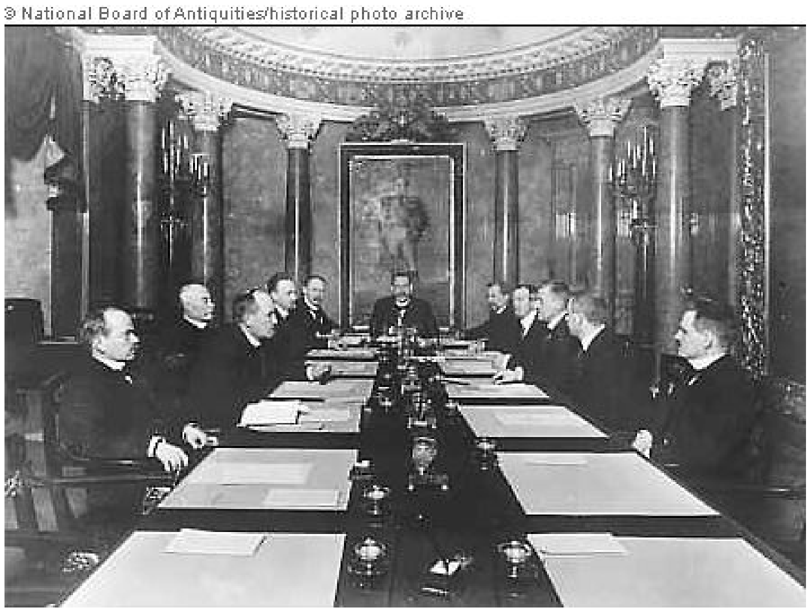
Since the establishment of the Barroso Commission many organizational and communication changes have taken places at the European and national levels. More emphasis has been placed on the transparency, accountability and responsibility of EU officers towards their publics. These principles have been put in place through different communicative actions. Today, DG Communication provides the media with different types of material and services according to a new and specific media relations plan. For the news media, the EU plan can be divided in two types of actions.

The first action is to become the official and most direct and reliable provider of EU information. As DG Communication states in its introductory web page its mission is to "inform the Commission of the evolution of opinion in the member states; co-ordinate the activities of the Representations in the member states; centralise all contacts with the media; seek to ensure a coherent approach to communication and information issues within the Commission. This involves contacts with Directorates General and Services within the Commission that have information units responsible for sectoral information". In the last five years, especially, the quantity of material available via the internet for journalists has vastly increased. Accredited journalists can access press releases and background material posted on the European Commission's virtual press room, download audiovisual material from different EU web links and participate in meetings and seminars whenever they are in Brussels. They can live-stream the daily briefing in Europe By Satellite which also covers sessions of the European Parliament and some of the Council of Ministers' press conferences. The second action is to provide concrete tools and to support knowledge diffusion. For those journalists operating from Brussels well-equipped press rooms and media services are available free of charge and the contacts of different spokespersons are supplied. The European Union also supports the costs of implementing training programmes for the media and, through its different call for tenders, finances media projects aiming at enhancing EU visibility. National and local institutions and organizations can apply for funds to implement such programmes.

3.4 Finland and the EU

Finland was for more than a century an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire, when at the end of 1917 it obtained its independence. Because of its geographical position and small population, Finland sought to preserve its independence through cautious and skilful diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Finnish neutrality was seen as a mean of establishing a distinct security position for the nation outside the rival superpower blocs (Arter 1995). At the same time Finland aimed at accommodating its economic imperative of access, along with Norway and Sweden, to crucial Western export markets to the political imperative of preserving the credibility of its neutrality and special relationship with the Kremlin (Rehn 1993). The political imperative dominated the period of the Cold War, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing autumn Revolutions of 1989, Finland's geo-political position reoriented towards alliances with the Western world and the EU. At the beginning of 1990s Finland's interest in and relations with the European Union intensified, and the first big step was taken with its application to join the European Economic Space, subsequently known as the European Economic Area (EEA). In March 1992 Finland applied for EU membership.

Accession was preceded by a referendum in October 1994 which showed that 57% of voters were in favour of their country's membership. Parliament made the decision to join the European Union on 18 November 1994, but was officially admitted on 1 January 1995. Although the European project was generally popular in Finland, knowledge of precisely what it entailed remained relatively modest in the period between application and referendum (Pesonen 2002). The reasons which moved Finland to apply for EU memberships were multiple but in general were related to the economic situation of those years. During the period 1990-1993 Finland experienced the worst recession since War World II with an economy that shrank by 15% and an unemployment rate of up to 20%. According to Pesonen and Sänkiaho (1994) for many Finnish voters joining the EU was seen as increasing the prospect of jobs. Another important reason was ideological. For many voters EU accession was viewed as a way of institutionalising and conferring on Finland the status of a West European country (Alter 1995, 378). For others, membership would enable Finland to exert influence in decision-making in a way not possible through the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, which came into force on 1 January 1994 (ibid, 362). Its supporters believed in the positive effects of EU membership on economic growth, employment, social welfare, national security and Finnish influence on European policy making. Its opponents alleged that the EU would harm economic growth, employment, social welfare and security as well as undermining Finland's independence (Paloheimo 1994).



Source: Virtual Finland

FIGURE 3 The Senate of Finland drew up the declaration of independence in 1917

Finns have retained a fairly positive view of EU membership. However, a certain dualism has remained visible since the 1994 referendum. Surveys show that people in urban areas continue to see positive aspects in EU membership, while people in rural areas focus on the problems caused by it. For farmers, EU membership meant the loss of productivity, increasing bureaucracy and the fall in prices to half their previous level or even less (Mörttinen 2004). Before accession, Finnish farmers received public subsidies through high import duties and high producer prices. With EU membership, Finnish farmers were suddenly obliged to make a far greater proportion of their living through direct aid per hectare or per animal. In the early years of membership, the number of active farms decreased rapidly. From about 100,000 farms in 1995, only slightly over 75,000 were left seven years later. Despite these concerns, few are of the opinion that Finland should secede from the Union; many are more indifferent regarding EU matters today than during the accession period. A general apathy has been seen in the last elections for the European Parliament. In summer 2004 only about 39.4% of Finnish voters bothered to vote at all (Flash Eurobarometer 162 2004, 9).

3.5 Italy and the EU

Italy's position upon the European Union is rather different from that of Finland. Italy was one of the founder countries of what it is now the European Union and over the last fifty years it has played a key role in building a Europe without borders and trade barriers. The idea of an area without borders, where economic stability, peace and security govern was already in the minds of some Italian politicians at the beginning of War World II. It was in 1941 when Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, interned at *Ventotene* by the Fascist government, established the principles for a Manifesto for European Federalism. Spinelli's ideas were disseminated around Italy as well as other European countries and were embraced by different political personalities; one of this was Alcide De Gasperi, the first post-war Italian Prime Minister. The *Ventotene* manifesto has been recognized as the first expression of a desire for a common area in Europe (Cotta, Isernia and Verzichelli 2005).

Source: Photo Archive RCS of the Italian Government webpage

FIGURE 4 Signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957

Less than a year after the death of Alcide De Gasperi - one of the European community's founding fathers, along with Jean Monnet, Robert Schumann and Konrad Adenauer - a conference laying the basis for the Treaty of Rome was held in Messina. The six foreign ministers of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) from Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg decided to adopt economic integration as a forerunner of a political union. The ministers agreed to the idea of a common market and approved the creation of the European Atomic Community in June 1955 (Olivi and Santaniello 2005). It was not until 25 March 1957 that representatives of the six countries signed the two treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), initially called the European Common Market (ECM) and the European Atomic Community. The two treaties went into effect in January 1958 after ratification by the six Parliaments. This important step was taken in Rome's City Hall, *Il Campidoglio*, a place which for Italy has historical and political importance.

The reasons that moved Italy towards the decisions of joining the other five countries in the creation of common European area were economic as well as ideological. After the brutalities of the Second War World, Italy was looking for stability, peace and prosperity and the idea of a common European area was regarded by the new government as means towards these objectives. Italy came out from the war as a defeated and weak country. The Italian economy had been destroyed, the level of literacy was pretty low, and the majority of Italians were still farmers with rather out-dated agricultural methods. There was a considerable emigration, especially to America. In a situation where the Italian international reputation had been undermined by its recent political history, many politicians believed that the European project could help the economic situation of Italy and return some dignity to the country (Vinci 2005). Among the governing elite many sympathized with the federalist ideas expressed in the *Ventotene* Manifesto. It was no surprise that the founding fathers of the European Union were devout Catholics and that the first ten legislatures in Italy were governed by the Christian Democratic Party. Catholic intellectuals such as Christopher Dawson, Jacques Maritain and Don Luigi Sturzo all saw European integration as a way of restoring spiritual values to post-totalitarian Europe (Gilbert 2005, 28).

Italian politics has never concealed its support for the European Union. Centre and left-wing parties have historically been more pro EU than right-wing parties. Italian governments have generally promoted EU policies in the country, also through the diffusion of ideological aspects related to the national pride of being one of founding countries and thus one of the key players in European integration. According to Triandafyllidou (2003, 260) Italian national identity and sovereignty was represented as compatible with the emergence of an autonomous EU sovereignty and identity. In the media the historical role and national consciousness of Italy and Italians has been represented as inseparable from the project of a United Europe. Thus, early Italian Europeanists became important national figures and a pro-European attitude an issue of national pride.

Italians are considered to be the most sympathetic to the European Union; however, in the last five years some concerns and dissatisfactions have emerged among the general public, in part because of the current economic crisis in Italy (Berselli 2005) and in part because of EU democratic and communication deficits, which feature in the Italian news much more frequently as a reason for Italy’s current Italian predicament.

3.6 The Finnish and Italian cultures

In this study a particular position was reserved for culture in understanding Finnish and Italian attitudes towards the European Union. In order to compare the perceptions that Finnish and Italian people have about EU communication activities and campaigns, it was necessary to know what was behind their cultural understanding of these issues. Culture is the way in which a group of people solve problems and reconciles dilemmas (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997). Culture provides the frames for the interpretations of messages and actions. This section aims at presenting some of the major cultural differences between these two countries. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of the two cultures, but it aims at pointing out the differences between these member states which share common EU legislation but not a common cultural perception of the European integration.

The Finnish culture is considered a Nordic culture while the Italian a Southern or Latin culture. This classification locates these two countries to two extremes for cultural understanding and behaviours. Hence, it provides an extremely interesting sample with which to study the effects of EU communication strategies on general opinion formation. Looking at the core aspects of these two populations, their differences in proximity/language usage are very visible. Finnish people have been described as very inscrutable and taciturn. Both their culture and their education encourage them to keep their counsel until they feel they have something suitable to say and when they say it, it is likely to be direct (Hill 2002, 233). Finns give considerable weight to the spoken word. Words are chosen carefully and for the purpose of delivering a message. Verbal agreements and promises are binding and the value of words remains essentially the same, regardless of when and where they are uttered. Small talk, which Finns notoriously lack, is considered suspect by definition, and is not especially valued (Alho 2002). Finns prefer to listen before they speak, and interrupting another speaker is considered impolite. Unlike Finns, Italians are very talkative and use words to fill up silent moments. Silence is considered appropriate in only a few situations. The ability to make small talk is highly valued and used to create a friendly atmosphere and make acquaintance with people. It is widely used in business as well during negotiations and/or contracts. Since the Roman Empire eloquence has been regarded as an extremely important skill for a future chief and thus it has been promoted since early studies in schools.

Finns have a very strong sense of national identity but they are also aware of the lack of international knowledge about their country. This is why Finns are chronically insecure about whether others are aware of the achievements of their nation (Alho 2002). Italians are quite proud of their nation as well, but they are more individualistic in their relations to their country's well-being than Finns. This explains in part their reluctance to pay taxes. As Flora Lewis says "Italy has a weakly organised state and an intensely clannish society whose people do not easily identify the national interest with their own" (quoted in Hill 2002, 127). Italians prefer to look for themselves and they generally do not trust their public institutions and governing elites. Most Finns are fairly secular in their views, and religion plays no significant part in everyday life in Finland, while in Italy religion still plays an important role in the life of people. There is a high degree of equality between sexes in Finland, as can be seen in the relatively high number of women holding high positions in politics and other areas of society (Alho 2002). The same cannot be said of Italian women, who are not fully equal with Italian men. Italian women are still less represented in higher positions and still do not receive the same wages as their male counterparts.

Finns are also quite punctual and captive to time. Appointments are punctually kept, and being more than 15 minutes late is considered slovenly and rude, even in an informal meeting among friends. People like to address to each other by their first names and maintain informal relations. Unlike Finns, Italians have a habit of addressing to each other by their professional titles and using the last name more than first name, except for close friends. The use of 'Lei', the formal counterpart of 'you', is a sign of respect, and it is considered extremely rude to address to someone outside the circles of family and friends by their first name or informal 'you'. Time also is a relative concept for Italians. Delays are common, although in business activities are not welcomed. In general Italy's code of good manners is much more formal than Finland's. Italians who fail to observe these practices are labelled 'cafoni', roughly translated as 'bad mannered oafs'. In Italy it is important to acknowledge the presence of another person by always shaking his/her hand and among close friends and family by kissing each other on each cheek. At any gathering, no matter how large, Italians are expected to greet each person in the room when they arrive and when they leave, shaking hands or kissing each time, depending on the relationship. Italians pay quite a lot attention to appearance, since the first impression is the one that counts. According to Barzini (1964) Italians give more importance to show and appearance than substance, not only through a maniacal search for personal perfection in appearance and manner, but through careful attention to detail in their surroundings. This sense of the aesthetic is reminiscent of the history of fine arts in Italy, which nowadays is represented in particular by international recognition of its fashion and cuisine. Despite the common stereotypes of being too much mother's boys and even lazy and more concerned with a joyful and easy life, Italians are generally hard workers (Hill 2002, 129), in line with the average Europeans. There are also some substantial historical, economic and social differences between the north and south of Italy. However, with improved economic and social conditions in the south and the influence of the media, such differences are declining. Nevertheless some still exist. For example, Italians in the industrial north value punctuality, reliability, organization and financial success. They do not want to waste time. They also have a low tolerance of organised crime and official corruption. Southern Italians value family more than economic success. They are more tolerant about punctuality, enjoying a more leisurely life with a more relaxed attitude to the pressure of time. Subsequently, they appear to have a warmer character and to be friendlier to visitors. Below in Table 4 a summary of the main country characteristics and important historical event dates.

TABLE 4 Finland and Italy main characteristics

	Finland/Suomi 	*Italy/Italia* 
Geographic location	64 00 North 26 00 East	42 50 North 12 50 East
Territorial area	338,145 sq km	301,230 sq km
Climate	Cold temperate; potentially sub arctic but comparatively mild because of moderating influence of the North Atlantic Current, Baltic Sea, and more than 60,000 lakes	Predominantly Mediterranean; Alpine in far north; hot, dry in south
Religion	Lutheran National Church 84.2%, Greek Orthodox in Finland 1.1%, other Christian 1.1%, other 0.1%, none 13.5% (2003)	Roman Catholic 87.8% (about one-third regularly attend services); Muslim 1.4%; Orthodox 1.2%; Protestant 0.8%; Jewish 0.07%; other 8.73%
Ethnic group	Finn 93.4%, Swede 5.7%, Russian 0.4%, Estonian 0.2%, Roma 0.2%, Sami 0.1%	96% Italian (includes small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian-Italians and Greek-Italians in the south); 4% others (mostly north Africans, east Europeans - Non EU members)
Capital	Helsinki	Rome
Population	5,231,372 (July 2006 est.)	58,133,509 (July 2006 est.)
Independence	6 December 1917 (from Russia)	17 March 1861 (Kingdom of Italy proclaimed; Italy was not finally unified until 1870)
Constitution:	1 March 2000	Passed 11 December 1947, effective 1 January 1948
Language	Finnish 92% (official), Swedish 5.6% (official), other 2.4% (small Sami- and Russian-speaking minorities) (2003)	99% Italian (official), 0.5% German (parts of Trentino -Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking), 0.2% French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), 0.14% Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area)
Government type	Republic	Republic
Governing parties	From 1917 the majority of governments were coalitions of left/centre-left parties. The current government is centre-right.	From 1947 until the second republic the centre coalition determined Italian politics. During the second republic (from 1994) centre-right and centre-left coalitions have alternated. The current government is centre-left. (Continued)

Legal system	Civil law system based on Swedish law; the president may request the Supreme Court to review laws; accepts compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, with reservations	(Continued) Civil law system; appeals treated as new trials; judicial review under certain conditions in Constitutional Court; has not accepted compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice
Women right to vote	Passed 1 June 1906; first vote 15 March 1907	Passed 1 February 1945; first vote 2 June 1946
EU membership	Signed on 18 November 1994; effective from January 1995	Signed on 25 March 1957; effective from January 1958
NATO membership	No membership; history of neutrality; critical position towards NATO	Member since 4 April 1949; supportive of strong EU-NATO relationships
UN membership	Member since 14 December 1955	Member since 25 September 1957
Economy - overview:	Finland has a highly industrialized, largely free-market economy. Its key economic sector is manufacturing - principally the wood, metals, engineering, telecommunications, and electronics industries. Trade is important; exports equal two-fifths of GDP. Finland excels in high-tech exports, e.g., mobile phones. Except for timber and several minerals, Finland depends on imports of raw materials, energy, and some components for manufactured goods. Because of the climate, agricultural development is limited to maintaining self-sufficiency in basic products. Forestry, an important export earner, provides a secondary occupation for the rural population.	Italy has a diversified industrial economy. This capitalistic economy remains divided into a developed industrial north, dominated by private companies, and a less-developed, welfare-dependent, agricultural south, with 20% unemployment. Most raw materials needed by industry and more than 75% of energy requirements are imported. The economy experienced almost no growth in 2005.
GD - real growth rate	4.9% (2006 est.)	1.6% (2006 est.)
GDP - per capita (purchasing power parity)	EUR 25,350 (2006 est.)	EUR 22,950 (2006 est.)
GDP - composition by sector	agriculture: 2.7% industry: 30.3% services: 67% (2006 est.)	agriculture: 2% industry: 29.1% services: 69% (2006 est.)
Unemployment rate	7% (2006 est.)	7% (2006 est.)
Public debt:	37.7% of GDP (2006 est.)	107.8% of GDP (2006 est.)
Internet hosts:	1,633,614 (2006)	1,731,165 (2006)
Internet users:	3.286 million (2005) (62,81% of all population)	28.87 million (2005) (49,66% of all population)

Sources of data: CIA- The World Factbook; Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia; Finnish Government webpage and Italian Government webpage.

3.7 The Finnish and Italian mass media

Another important element which can be considered a mirror of Finnish and Italian culture is the mass media. The mass media are not only the vehicle of diffusing information but their structure, their function in society and their perception by the public embody many of the cultural features that differentiate Finns and Italians. A brief description of Finnish and Italian mass media is given below.

3.7.1 Structure of Finnish mass media

Finland has 26 daily newspapers which are published seven days a week - the highest figure in the Nordic region. The total circulation of dailies is 2.3 million copies and average circulation 42,000 copies. Some 170 newspapers are issued one to three times a week with a total circulation of 1.1 million copies and an average circulation of 6,200 copies. There are about 100 free newspapers on the market with a total print-run of 3.3 million copies[5]. The publishing of dailies is concentrated in three newspaper chains: *Sanoma-WSOY Corporation*, Alma Media Group, and Intermediate-Finland Media (*Väli-Suomen Media*), which control over two thirds of the net sales of dailies in Finland. Outside the three chains there are 11 dailies with a circulation of 490,000 or 21% of the total. Sanoma-WSOY publishes the two most sold newspapers in Finland, Helsingin Sanomat and the afternoon newspaper Ilta-Sanomat, and a further four dailies. Sanoma-WSOY also own seven non-daily papers (Jyrkiäinen 1999).

Alma Media is a 1997 merger between the Aamulehti Group, the country's second largest newspaper publisher, and MTV Oy, the Finnish commercial television company. The new conglomerate combines three businesses, newspaper publishing, printing, and broadcasting. Alma owns four dailies published seven times a week: *Aamulehti* in Tampere, *Satakunnan Kansa* in Pori, *Lapin Kansa* in Rovaniemi and *Pohjolan Sanomat* in Kemi, the business newspaper *Kauppalehti*, the afternoon tabloid Iltalehti as well as three other dailies. In addition, Alma Media publishes 15 newspapers and seven free delivery papers. The biggest publishers are *Yhtyneet Kuvalehdet, Helsinki Media Company* and *A-Lehdet*, which are in domestic ownership.

In 1993, the commercial television station MTV3 Finland started full service operation on its own channel. Previously, from 1957, when regular television broadcasting began in Finland, MTV3 had broadcast its programming in blocks between the programmes of the two channels operated by Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). In May 1997, the first nationwide commercial radio station, *Radio Nova*, went on air. In June 1997, a second commercial national television network, Channel Four (*Nelonen*), started broadcasting. The number of cable television connections totalled 906,000 or 39% of households in 1998 (Jyrkiäinen 1999). Cable services are primary

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5 Data from http://www.stat.fi/

distribution networks for non-domestic free and pay channels. Satellite channels are available to nearly all cable television households. At the moment the supply in the Finnish language by satellite is limited to a few pay television channels and a sports channel. Among the most popular foreign channels are MTV Europe, Eurosport and TV5 Europe. The biggest pay television channel, Canal Plus, is estimated have 80,000 subscribers. The increasing number of television, satellite and cable channels have changed and broadened the video content available to Finns. Channel Four broke MTV3's monopoly on national TV advertising as well. Channel Four belongs to the Sanoma-WSOY group. It is owned by Helsinki Media Company (50%), Egmont Holding (25%), and the newspaper *Turun Sanomat* (14%) and *VBH Television* (11%). The public service company YLE broadcasts radio signals on four nationwide channels and other regional radio channels. The national public service channels still dominate the market, accounting for 61% of all listening time, the 39% listening time for private radio divides up into 15% for Radio Nova and 24% for other private stations.

3.7.2 Structure of Italian mass media

There are 177 daily newspapers in Italy, most of them owned or controlled by a small number of publishing trusts including *L'Espresso, La Stampa, La Repubblica, L'Unità, Il Resto del Carlino, La Nazione* and *Il Giorno*, to mention some of the most important. Italy does not have tabloid daily newspapers. This is mainly due to the existence of a successful weekly press of genuine popular character. The real popular dailies in Italy are undoubtedly the sporting papers (*La Gazzetta dello Sport*), vis-à-vis the remaining types which are more like the so-called quality papers. In Italy there are two major broadcasting groups, RAI and Mediaset. RAI is a publicly owned company, governed by a board appointed by the Speakers of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate. It enjoys the financial privilege of getting its income from both the household licence fee (50% of revenues in 1998) and advertising (43%) (Molle and Pruzzo 2001). Besides broadcasting, through a number of subsidiary companies, RAI undertakes a series of related activities: publishing, advertising, programme sales, recording industry. While the commercial channels have for years been heavy importers of foreign programmes, RAI has traditionally maintained a consistently high level of in-house production. Nowadays all national broadcast channels are obliged by law to reserve 30% of their programming for the production or acquisition of Italian or European works. Furthermore, RAI is obliged to reserve 20% of its licence fee revenue for the production of European fictional works. RAI is also involved in the satellite business through the RAISAT consortium.

Mediaset is part of the Berlusconi broadcasting empire. Mediaset, together with RAI, almost completely controls the domestic television market, which explains why the term 'duopoly' is currently used. Compared to the variety of the programming on the public channels, the commercial stations scheduling appears to be geared towards entertainment and advertising. In January 1991, however, the three commercial channels inaugurated a regular daily news service, thus also presenting themselves as key information outlets, in competition with public television, which previously had the monopoly of news. There is also a third broadcasting group called La7, which is now controlled by SEAT, owned by Telecom Italia.

The radio sector has a structure similar to that of television. The public broadcasting company, RAI, runs three AM/FM nationwide channels, RADIO1, RADIO2, RADIO3. Altogether the RAI channels account for more than 50% of the national audience (Molle and Pruzzo 2001). The 14 commercial networks share the other 50% of the national audience on an average day. These commercial radio networks, as well as the approximately 1,300 local stations, depend exclusively on advertising and offer mostly music, heavily packed with commercials, and very little news, mostly headlines.

4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The focus of this research is on Finnish and Italian communication strategies for the dissemination of EU information. The main objective is to analyse how the European Union communicated with its different European publics during the period 2001 – 2006 in order to involve more and more EU citizens in the development of the European Union, and consequently to acquire more legitimation and further integration. This investigation is a multi-level (European versus national) and comparative analysis (Finland and Italy) of EU communication strategies. Its main goals can be divided into two levels: international and national. The international level deals with the European Union, intended as a collection of public institutions, and its problems in securing public support and commitment. This problem is known as the EU democratic deficit and it has also been associated in recent times to the so-called EU communication deficit. From a public relations' standpoint these deficits can be perceived as a consequence of inadequate organizational and strategic programmes. On the international level EU policies on information and communication actions and EU communication campaigns were studied and analysed in order to assess EU organizational and strategic programmes and thus find out possible explanations on the reasons for the EU limited capacity to strengthen its reputation and credibility in a five year period (2001-2006). The objectives of the international level also include considerations of the legitimacy of the EU on using promotional techniques as means towards achieving specific goals and a review of the current debate on whether certain campaigns have propagandistic or educational aims. The national level deals with EU communication strategies at the national level. The national level analyses how the European Union and its national representations in Finland and Italy have implemented EU information and communication policies, what methodologies of communication were used in these two countries, what effects EU communications had on the general public and how the European institutions in question interrelated with the media in order to achieve their communication objectives.

The objectives of both the international and national levels include five types of players: EU institutions, governments/authorities, the political parties of two member states, civil societies/citizens and the national media. Each player is involved in different questions and each has a specific function in the communication frame. In this study the questions involving governments/authorities and political parties were discussed and analysed within a similar frame. Although there are many differences in terms of their relative holding power in political decision-making and support for the EU and in EU information and communication activities, both groups represent an EU communication framework at the national level and thus were examined together in Study IV.

In the classical sender-receiver model of communication, a message is created by a sender (generally the EU but it can be a member state/regional and local authority and political party), diffused and mediated by a vehicle (generally the national mass media but government/political parties can set the tone of the agenda too), and delivered to receivers (citizens) who, by taking specific decisions according to their interpretation of the message, indirectly answer the sender's message. The general research questions concerning these five main players are:

- *EU institutions:* What are the main characteristics of the communication strategies used by the EU to enhance EU credibility and trust?

- *Governments/Authorities:* What activities have the Finnish and Italian governments/authorities developed and implemented for EU communications? Are there any similarities between the Finnish and Italian communication actions?

- *Political Parties:* What is the role of Finnish and Italian political parties in relation to their country's attitude towards EU policies?

- *Civil societies/citizens:* How does the EU communicate with Finnish and Italian civil societies and what are the effects of EU communication strategies on citizens' opinions? How do Finns and Italians and civil societies in general in these two countries perceive EU campaigns?

- *Media*: What is the role of the mass media in these countries in opinion formation, in the support and legitimation of EU policies, and in criticism and evaluation of EU activities?

Figure 5 presents the international and national levels and the above-mentioned five players. This structure allows the main problems to be addressed one at a time and hence it prevents simplifications and distortions which can occur if the research themes and levels are analysed simultaneously. By considering one aspect at a time the present researcher was better able to investigate the

European and national questions. In the next sections the objectives of the international and national levels are described according to how they were developed in each single study.

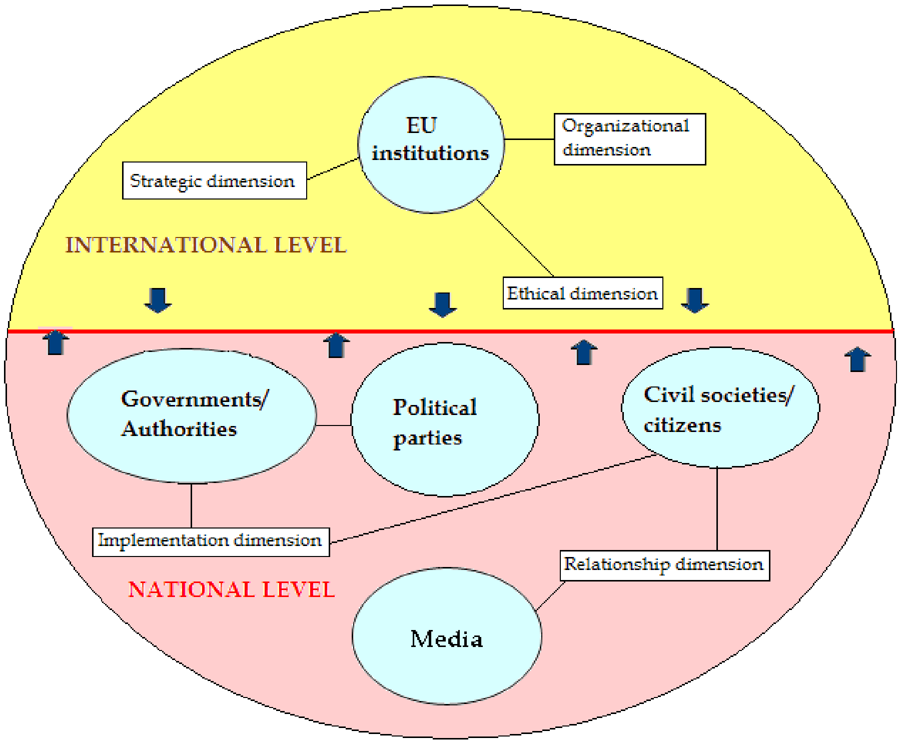

FIGURE 5 The structure of the study: sub-objectives, sub-questions and sub-problems

4.1 International level: objectives and questions

The objectives and research questions at the international level fall into three main dimensions of inquiry: the organizational, the strategic and the ethical. The organizational dimension deals with EU institutions and their decisions on their communication goals. It assesses EU organizational choices through parameters such as the level of image, collective identification, trust, involvement and commitment. The strategic dimension analyses EU policies on message content (what to communicate to citizens), the official senders (who should communicate these messages) and the communicative means/ strategies (how the messages should be communicated). It presents EU policies towards the general public. The ethical dimension explains and discusses some important questions about the process of European integration, such as the legitimacy of the EU using promotional tools and approaches in pursuit of its goals.

A) Organizational dimension

The organizational dimension of this investigation is discussed in Study III. There the European Union is considered as a supranational entity embodying different public organizations and affected by the same characteristics as other public organizations. The goal of Study III is to understand and to interpret EU organizational decisions in relation to specific communication activities according to theories of image, collective identification, trust, involvement and commitment to public organizations. Study III assumes that EU promotional campaigns aim at creating greater consensus by trying to strengthen positive images of the EU and trust in its two major institutions, the European Parliament and the European Commission, and trying to enhance citizens' identification with EU and its institutions. For this study, the period of investigation was reduced to four years, that is, from January 2002 to December 2005 and the main research questions were:

RQ1: Did citizens' opinions change during the period 2002- 2005 regarding their image of the EU? If so, how?

RQ2: Did Europeans trust the European Parliament and the European Commission more or less in 2005 than they did in 2002?

RQ3: How did citizens of Europe identify themselves? Did they feel more "European"?

RQ4: Were Europeans more committed and involved in EU affairs in 2005 than they were in 2002?

RQ5: What can we infer from these data in relation to the EU promotional campaigns of the period 2002-2005?

B) Strategic dimension

The strategic dimension is discussed in the first part of Study IV. The second part of this study treats some concepts that fall by definition, under the implementation aspect on the national level. The purpose of the first part of this study was to analyse six EU documents on information and communication policies published between 2001 to 2006 in seeking to understand the effects of such policies on member states' decisions on national activities. These policies are considered EU communication guidelines for member states, and thus are regarded as EU strategic plans on information and communication activities for those states. The purpose of the researcher was to look at EU guidelines on information and communication policies to find out the goals of these policies, whether they affected member states' communication actions or not, and in what way and how member states implemented such policies. Two of the four research questions addressed in this study dealt with this strategic objective. These were:

RQ1: What do EU policies on information and communication tell us about EU communication strategies?

RQ2: Who are the key players in making these policies? What responsibilities and functions do they have?

C) Ethical dimension

The ethical dimension is discussed in Study I and II. Both studies start by assessing current debates and criticisms of the legitimacy of the EU using promotional tools to persuade citizens about the benefits of EU membership and encourage them to participate more actively in the EU integration process, and to support the EU project. Therefore for both studies the question was whether public organizations should or should not use promotional tools in pursuit of their goals, whether EU communication strategy could be labelled propaganda or not and whether there was a specific hidden agenda behind EU campaigns. In particular the objectives of Study I were to demonstrate the meaning of European identity and its importance for the European Union as well as to analyse EU communication activities and their effects on European citizens. Study II aimed at understanding how the EU communicated with its publics by comparing EU approaches in communication with those of the classical literature on propaganda, education, information and persuasion. It also aimed to understand whether these promotional tools were the correct solution to EU communication problems or not. The main questions of this study were divided in two frameworks, which aimed at:

a) determining the characteristics of propaganda and whether EU information and communication policies fit into this concept or not:

   RQa1: What is propaganda?

   RQa2: *Can EU information and communication policies and activities during the study period be classed as propaganda?*

b) explaining the implications of labelling EU information and communication policies and analysing the effectiveness of these strategies:

   RQb1: What are the implications of labelling EU information and communication policies as propaganda?

RQb2: Have EU communication activities been successful in fostering the process of European integration?

4.2 National level: objectives and questions

The objectives and research questions at the national level concern the implementation and relationship dimensions of EU communication actions. The implementation aspect analyses Finnish and Italian communication strategies from 2001 to 2006 and the outcomes of Finnish and Italian communication activities on national public opinion. The two countries' activities and strategies were compared in order to determine whether or not there were similarities in the implementation of EU directives and whether or not the cultural and local perspective was taken into account. The relationship aspect deals with a specific aspect of EU information and communication policies, which is the diffusion of EU information through national mass media. Principally the researcher aimed at understanding what kind of relationship EU officers and national mass media had and whether and, if so, how this relationship affected the visibility and tonality of EU news in the Finnish and Italian media.

A) Implementation dimension

The second part of Study IV is dedicated to the implementation dimension, that is, to a description and analysis of how Finland and Italy implemented EU information and communication policies and their effects on citizens' opinions. The research questions addressing in this part of the study are the following:

RQ1: What kind of communication actions are implemented in the two member states?

RQ2: What effects did EU information actions have on the knowledge of the EU as perceived by Finnish and Italian publics?

B) Relationship dimension

The relationship dimension characterised Study V. The main objective of this study was to understand journalists' views about EU information, perceptions of EU visibility in the newspapers/magazines and perceptions of their role in opinion formation. It aimed at discovering what journalists thought about media training in terms of utility, efficacy and learning, their opinion of the EU material they received in terms of quantity and quality, the real and desired coverage of EU news in their newspapers/magazines, different aspects of the EU agenda in relation to the Finnish and Italian agenda and their role in the opinion formation of citizens regarding the European Union. The general research question for this section is:

RQ1: How do Finnish and Italian journalists assess EU media relations?

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND SAMPLES

The present research can be regarded as a multi-method-study with integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches which seeks to conceptualise, understand and analyse well-known EU communication problems from a public relations perspective, bearing in mind the impossibility of providing a detailed description of all the EU-related problems in the two countries studied. The choice of a multi-method-study was also determined by the type of investigation, which is a comparative analysis of EU communication activities and their effects in two different cultures. According to Polkinghorne (1991) qualitative methods are especially useful in the "generation of categories for understanding human phenomena and the investigation of the interpretation and meaning that people give to events they experience" (p. 112). This study aims at investigating the meaning and the outcomes of EU communication strategies in two member states. It tries to understand the interpretations and meanings that two different cultures give to EU communication activities.

At the same time this study is based on quantitative data, which have mostly been used as secondary data. Many scholars believe that distinguishing quantitative from qualitative research can be misleading, for the reason that qualitative researchers do not possess a distinct set of methods of their own (Daymon and Holloway 2002; Denzin and Lincoln 1998). The general approach in this study is inductive; it does not aim to prove or test a theory, but rather to look at the effects of events on human behaviours and on the way different cultures construct their interpretations of facts. To a certain extent it can also be considered a type of action research. By action research is meant a "form of research that generates knowledge claims for the express purpose of taking action to promote social change and social analysis" (Greenwood and Levin 1998, 6). In this research the proposed social change deals with the necessity for the EU to modify its communication strategies towards its different publics and to address plans tailored more towards them. The low popularity of the EU, the rejection of EU Constitutional Treaty, questions over the future enlargement are some of the main problems which require social analyses and social changes. The author acknowledges the limits of applying mixed research methods to this study; limits that mostly depend on her own position within it. However, for research subjects on cultural differences it is essential to take a naturalistic view as well as applying different data, methodological and theoretical techniques. These mixed methods are known as triangulation.

Data triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources, such as collecting data from different groups, settings or at different times. Theoretical triangulation refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data. Methodological triangulation applies two or more methods in the same study data, such as interviews, documents, questionnaire and survey (Daymon and Holloway 2002, 99). The choice of applying a triangulation approach in this study mostly depended on the nature of the research, which is a multi-level (European and national) and comparative analysis (Finland and Italy) of EU communication strategies. It was neither possible nor reliable to base this investigation on only one type of data source or one type of method. Previous studies in different fields have shown that triangulation can provide a more complete picture of the case under examination (Ma and Chuang 2001; Bruhn 2000; Lewis and Grimes 1999; Glasser and Zamanou 1987); thus different triangulations were considered the best options for this research.

The main data of this study can be divided into primary and secondary data. The primary data included qualitative analyses of documents and qualitative analyses of interviews, while the secondary data mostly included quantitative statistical data (Table 5).

TABLE 5 Source of data – classification of data on national and international levels

Type	Specification	Classification
Qualitative document analyses	EU documents, press releases, speeches of the Vice-President of the Commission Margot Wallström and other reports made by Gallup Europe and other NGOs, material available on EU webpages, EU leaflets, brochures, and external organizations' links.	Primary
Qualitative interview analyses	Interviews with several officers working for national EU offices in Finland and in Italy and on-line questionnaire addressed to Finnish and Italian journalists	Primary
Quantitative statistical data	Eurobarometer and Flash Eurobarometer surveys	Secondary

The selection of the method/s and data to be employed was decided according to the international and national level structure presented in the chapter on research objectives and questions. First, the two main problems were deconstructed into sub-problems. The international level contained the organizational, strategic and ethical sub-problems and the national level the implementation and relationship sub-problems. It was determined what data and what methods of investigation were better suited to answering these sub-problems (Table 6). The decision to apply certain methods rather than others was a result of several considerations drawn from the researcher's personal experience of the EU and of the results of previous studies in similar disciplines and contexts. The following sections explain in detail what data and methods were applied to each sub-problem. The sections are divided into international and national levels.

TABLE 6 Overview of the research methods

Study	Title	Method	Specification
I	*The promotion of European identity*	meta-analysis, documentation analyses	EU documents, material from NGOs, material available on EU webpages, EU leaflets, brochures, and external organizations' links; Eurobarometer.
II	*Propaganda and EU - only a matter of definitions? EU communication activities under scrutiny*	deductive methodology, content analysis through Walton (1997) 10 parameters	EU documents, press releases, speeches of the Vice-President of the Commission Margot Wallström, material available on EU web pages, EU leaflets, brochures.
III	*Manufacturing EU consensus: the reasons behind EU promotional campaigns*	meta-analysis	Statistical data from Eurobarometer 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64
IV	*EU communication in the member states: comparative*	content analysis, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis	6 EU documents realised between 2001 to 2006, face-to-face interviews with 6 officers working for national EU offices in Finland and in Italy, statistical data from Eurobarometer 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66
V	*EU media relations - views of Finnish and Italian journalists*	qualitative analyses	On-line questionnaire addressed to pre-contacted Finnish and Italian journalists

5.1 International level: data and methods

The international level problems deal with EU organizational and strategic deficits and include ethical questions in relation to the legitimacy of public institutions in democratic societies to use promotional strategies in seeking to achieve their institutional goals. It was thus necessary:

A) to assess the possible effects of EU campaigns on public opinion in terms of EU image, reputation and involvement following the implementation of EU communication directives (*organizational dimension*),

B) to study EU information and communication policies published between 2001 and 2006 in order to understand the subdivision of responsibilities and duties between European, national and local levels and their effects during the implementation of such policies (*strategic dimension*),

C) to discuss the legitimacy of the use by the EU of promotional strategies and tools to promote the cause of the European identity by presenting an ongoing multi-level promotional programme (*ethical dimension*).

A) Organizational dimension

The organization dimension was analysed in Study III. In this study the European Union was seen as an association of different public organizations and thus was understood from an organizational perspective, that is, the aim was to find out what the main concerns of EU are when the need arises to communicate with different publics. According to the literature modern public organizations are affected by similar constituencies of private organizations. Among these constituencies a particular interest is devoted to creating good images of a public organization and to enhancing citizens' collective identification, to building trust and to involving and committing citizens to the organization. Public organizations with good public-organization relationships aim at producing positive organizational images, trusting publics, and employing transparent and accountable information, but also they create the organizational capacity to commit and involve different publics in the organizational decision-making processes and the expertise to enhance citizens' collective identification with the organization itself (Valentini 2006). The questions of EU image and collective identification, Europeans' trust in European institutions and Europeans' involvement were thus examined using a meta-analytical approaches since, for pragmatic research reasons, it was not possible to interview to all the relevant groups in the EU member states. Meta-analysis enables a large part of the existing studies on this topic to be summarized systematically and drawn on with regard to the research questions. A meta-analytical research strategy has been little applied in communication and media science (Machill et al. 2006). In related disciplines, (Hunter and Schmidt 1990; Glass et al. 1981) meta-analyses frequently relate to the comparative evaluation of the results of almost highly similar investigations. For this study meta-analysis was considered a good method for comparing the situation in two different EU member states. The time-frame for this study was a four-year-period, from beginning of 2002 to the end of 2005. The choice of this time-frame corresponds to the specific acknowledgement by the EU of the importance of communication for its process of integration (Brüggemann 2005). The 2001 White Paper of the European Commission is considered to be the first attempt to involve citizens and member states in EU decision-making through different communication actions. Additionally, the choice represented the author's interest in evaluating data from a period of time where concepts such as image, collective identification, trust, involvement and commitment became important factors for EU decisions in information and communication actions. On the other hand, the choice of this time-frame limited the selection of the countries studied to the 15 older member states, since the 12 member states from the Easter and Mediterranean European Community joined the EU in May 2004 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and in January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania).

The subject of this meta-analysis were existing reports on the opinions and concerns of Europeans, which, in the widest sense, deal with the phenomenon of the European Union, its institutions, its policies and its information programmes. The selection criteria were as follows:

1. the report should deal with questions relating to the topic under study

2. the report should consider for its sample more than one EU member state, possibly all 15 member states

3. the report should include data from 2002 to 2005 and/or the report should be available on an annual basis and follow same patterns of investigation

4. the report must be in a language which the researcher has a mastery (English, French and Italian).

Eight reports produced by Eurobarometer surveys were selected, since they matched the selection criteria. Each Eurobarometer survey comprises 15,000 face-to-face interviews with a random sample of respondents, representative of the population in each country. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in the appropriate national language. The interview method used and the large size of the sample, which was characterised by individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, enabled a good deal of reliance to be placed on the results. In addition each Eurobarometer survey contained some questions which were repeated on a regular basis in order to provide systematic data about the extent to which attitudes are changing with respect to various aspects of the EU.

In this analysis only the answers related to the image of the EU and trust in the European Parliament and the European Commission and those of citizens' collective identification with the EU were considered and compared over the four-year-period. Involvement and commitment were not considered as there was no specific data on them. Only in Eurobarometer 64 were some questions about involvement of the citizens included. In this study the data on the support among Europeans for EU membership was added as well as a dependent variable consisting of concepts of involvement and commitment. Involvement and commitment both imply a certain level of citizen support for the European project, levels of involvement most of the time depend on the trust of publics in EU institutions and EU images. Additionally good images together with proper organizational behaviours lead to citizens' support and commitment. Consequently the researcher considered important to analyse also the data on support among Europeans for EU membership. Thus analysing the data on support showed some possible correlations with these concepts and it provided some possible explanations of the effects of EU promotional campaigns.

B) Strategic dimension

The strategic dimension is discussed in the first part of Study IV. The purpose of this study was to analyse six EU documents on information and communication policies published between 2001 to 2006 in order to understand the effects of such policies on member states' decisions upon national activities. The method applied was content analysis. The analysis of these documents was based on a consideration of the deeper meanings of EU messages. This approach involves study of the network of interrelationships among concepts. Several scholars (Neuendorf 2002; Litkowski 1999; Carley 1997a, 1997b, 1993) believe that it is more reliable in the analysis of documents not to extract concepts from the texts but to focus on concepts and on the relationships among them. The content analysis was related to four specific topics. The analysis aimed to find out:

1. what was/were the main theme(s) presented and discussed in these documents,

2. who were the key players in EU information and communication policy-making,

3. what responsibilities and functions did the key players have, and

4. whether or not their role affected the implementation of EU policies at the national level.

In this study 'key players' were considered to be those institutions, groups of people and organizations that played an important role in EU information and communication policy-making. The six EU documents selected were produced between 2001 and 2006. As with the organizational aspect the choice on this time-frame corresponded to the specific acknowledgement by the EU of the importance of communication for its process of integration (Brüggemann 2005). These six documents were considered EU guidelines on information and communication actions for member states, and they clarified the European Commission's position with respect to its communication activities towards its citizens, civil societies and other organizations. The guidelines were very important for all the institutions engaged in EU activities, for the reason that they determined the duties, responsibilities and types of relationships between the European, national, regional and local levels. The analysis of these documents provides information on how member states and other EU partners incorporated EU regulations into their national strategies for informing their citizens about EU policies and affairs.

C) Ethical dimension

Although ethical questions were considered throughout this project, Study I and Study II were wholly dedicated to this issue. Study I is based on a meta-analysis of previous studies on European identity from different theoretical perspectives, such as sociological, political, historical and cultural theories of demos, language and state. By comparing different definitions of and standpoints on European identity it was possible to discuss the validity of its origins, its implications and connotations and to present some of its effects on the integration process. Study I also considers what the European Union has done to promote the concept of a European identity and how. This was achieved through documentation analyses of internet material available on EU webpages, EU leaflets, brochures, and external organizations' links. The material examined was obtained through a meta-keys search. The meta-keys words used were: Europe and identity, Europe and citizenship, Europe and unity or diversity. An additional selecting criterion was the presence in the above-mentioned documents and webpages of descriptive material and presentations of different activities pertaining to European identity, such as the "European Day" celebration, "Twinning city", "Socrates" and "Leonardo" programmes etc. Additional source data about what citizens of Europe think about a European identity were collected through several Eurobarometer surveys.

Study II examines the competing definitions of propaganda, education, information and persuasion to explore their different meanings and associations in the context of the European Union. The sample used in this study consisted of six documents on EU information and communication policies, two internet links where different anti-EU publications were available, one book and four articles published in relevant journals. This documentary source provided some insights and comments on current debates about EU policies and governance (Table 7). The method selected for the analysis was the critical and rhetorical approach and Walton's ten parameters of propaganda (1997). The critical and rhetorical approach, particularly perspective criticism, assumes that useful insights can be obtained by revealing the perspective advocated by each rhetor. This mode of criticism does not require the critic to advocate that one perspective is superior to the other, but sets perspectives against one another for comparison (Heath 2001). On the other hand Walton's ten parameters of propaganda offer a possibility to set some perspectives as these parameters help to distinguish propaganda from other forms of communications. These parameters are: *dialogue structure, message content, goal-directed structure, involvement of social groups, indifference to social reasoning, one-sided argumentation,* *involvement of persuasion dialogue, justified by results, emotive language and persuasive definitions, eristic aspects* (Walton 1997).

TABLE 7 Source of data - documents for Study II

Author	**Year**	**Title**	**Typology of publication**
CEC	2006	COM 35 final; White paper on a European Communication Policy	Report
CEC	2005	COM 494 final; Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions on *The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*	Report
CEC	2004	COM 196 final; Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions on *Implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union.*	Report
CEC	2002	COM 350 final/02. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions on an *Information and communication strategy for the European Union.*	Report
CEC	2001a	COM 354 final. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions on a *New framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union.*	Report
CEC	2001b	COM 428 final. *European Governance- White paper.* Commission of European Communities, Representation in Finland (2004a). *Information and communication work of the Representation;* Ministry for Foreign Affairs/Europe Information	Report
The Bruges group	n.a.	www.brugesgroup.com	Internet webpage
Free Europe	n.a.	www.free-europe.org	Internet webpage
Mullen & Burkitt	2004	*Spinning Europe: Pro-EU Propaganda Campaigns in Britain, 1962-1975.* Published by Democrat Press	Article

(continued)

TABLE 7	Source of data- documents for Study II (continued)		
Prokopijevic	2004	*Alice is not missing wonderland. The eastward enlargement of the European Union*. Published by ICER, International Centre for Economic Research, Working Paper no.32/04.	Article
Sima	2001	*The political implication of the rise of Eastern Europe. The relation of the Eastern-European countries and Western-Europe*. Presented at the conference "Science in service of the consumer" on April 6-8, 2001 at Theodor Heuss Akademie in Gummersbach, Germany.	Article
Atkinson	2001	*Fascist Europe Rising*	Book

CEC= Commission of the European Community; n.a. = not available

5.2 National level: data and methods

The national level problems concern the ability of EU to empower citizens by providing the specific knowledge about the EU required for citizens to exercise their constitutional role of voting, deciding, and criticizing the work of the governing elites. Empowering citizens demands an effective communication process; this is possible only if the receiver of EU messages passes through four stages of communication process. From the EU view point these include establishing awareness of the European Union, its policies or issues, building sufficient knowledge and understanding of EU institutions, its policies or issues in order to make an informed decision, creating a level of interest in and preference for the European Union, its policies or issues or at least a recognition of their relevance to the message recipient and, finally, a change in behaviour or intent or commitment to take a specific action on the basis of the messages received. The national level problems concern all four stages of EU communication process in two member states, Finland and Italy. Hence, the national level focuses on:

A) how Finland and Italy implemented EU information and communication policies, what methodologies of communication were used in these two countries and what effects EU communication activities had on the general public (*implementation dimension*)

B) how EU institutions interact with the national media in order to achieve their communication objectives (*relationship dimension*).

A) Implementation dimension

The second part of Study IV concerns the implementation of EU policies in the member states. The data were collected through qualitative interviews with the main officers working for the national representations of the European Commission and in other EU local offices in Finland and Italy. Previous studies have shown that, when collecting information about public-organization relationships, especially when interviewees are leaders of activist groups, government officials, or journalists, qualitative methods are better since they can provide greater depth of information (Daymon and Holloway 2002). The method used was the Single Respondent Organizational Survey (SROS), which has proved to be an effective method when organizations under study are neither complex nor heterogeneous (Yun 2006, 2005). The SROS method consists of interviewing a key informant for each organization about global and configural constructs—mainly the objective properties of the organizational process and structure (Kozlowski and Klein 2000). It is believed that in organizations which are small and homogeneous in size and structure the key informant, in this case the EU officer in charge of public information has accurate knowledge on the topic of inquiry. During the period October- December 2004 six EU officers, three in Finland and three in Italy were interviewed (Table 8).

These interviews aimed at investigating the Finnish and Italian planning of EU guidelines on communication activities, specifically the nature of the activities developed, the quantity/type of printed material available in the two countries studied and at the European level, the financial sources of local offices, their partnership with other civic groups for implementing such activities, their educational activities and the types of contact with the general public. The decision to interview EU officers for the purpose of gathering this type of material was related to the necessity of studying in depth EU officers' opinions on and perceptions of EU information and to assess the quality of EU communication strategies.

TABLE 8 Frequency Distributions of Demographic Characteristics - Interviews with EU officers

N°	**Date**	**Sex**	**Country**	**Type of centre**	**Job position**	**Level of responsibility**
1	4/11/2004	Female	Finland	Info Point	manager	local
2	8/11/2004	Male	Finland	Carrefour	manager	local
3	12/11/2004	Female	Finland	Finnish Representation of the European Commission	press officer	national/ institutional
4	8/10/2004	Male	Italy	European Documentation Centre	director	local/regional
5	18/11/2004	Male	Italy	Department for the Community Policies, Section communication, media and publication	director	national/ institutional
6	20/12/2004	Male	Italy	Italian Representation of the European Commission	press officer	national/ institutional

In relation to explain the possible effects of EU activities in the member states, quantitative data provided by Eurobarometer reports from spring 2001 to autumn 2006 were used (Table 9). As with the organizational dimension, Eurobarometer surveys were considered reliable and valid secondary data for assessing, to a certain extent, the effects of EU campaigns at the national level. However, this data set should be carefully considered in the light of its limitations. First, the period of investigation, five years, was too short to measure the real effects of EU campaigns on citizens. Second, it was not possible to make direct comparisons between EU activities and changes of citizens' opinions on EU. Assuming that behavioural/opinion changes upon a specific matter are a result of a combining action of forces and inputs, among which were the effects of EU campaigns, the present data aim at providing the basis for some general observations upon the way EU campaigns have or have not influenced the creation of present-day public opinion in these two countries.

TABLE 9 Source of data - public opinion

Title	**Fieldwork**	**Published on**	**URL:**	**N° pages**
EB 55	April- May 2001	October 2001	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb55/eb55_en.pdf	101
EB 56	Oct.- Nov. 2001	April 2002	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb56/eb56_en.pdf	107
EB 57	29 March- 1 May 2002	21 Oct. 2002	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb57/eb57_en.pdf	256
EB 58	Oct.- Nov. 2002	March 2003	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb58/eb58_en.pdf	301
EB 59	March- April 2003	July 2003	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb59/eb59_rapport_final_en.pdf	264
EB 60	Oct.- Nov. 2003	Feb. 2004	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb60/eb60_rapport_standard_en.pdf	282
EB 61	Feb.- March 2004	July 2004	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_en.pdf	310
EB 62	Oct.- Nov. 2004	May 2005	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb_62_en.pdf	166
EB 63	May- June 2005	Sept. 2005	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63_en.pdf	440
EB 64	Oct.- Nov. 2005	December 2005	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_en.pdf	415
EB 65	March- May 2006	January 2007	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb65/eb65_en.pdf	373
EB 66	Sept. - Oct. 2006	December 2006 (first results)	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb66/eb66_highlights_en.pdf	84

EB= Eurobarometer

B) Relationship dimension

Study V is entirely dedicated to the relationship dimension. Previous research on source-reporter relationships has demonstrated the enormous influence that a source can have on the content and on the way news is reported by journalists when relations between source of the news and journalists are good. Having some power over what is said about the European Union and how in national news media can thus help the integration process by increasing the positive feelings, support and eventually involvement of citizens. Study V aims at analysing this relationship. The method used to analyse EU-national media relationships was a qualitative analysis of the data gathered by an online questionnaire sent between December 2005 and April 2006. The pre-selected sample included N= 54 interviewees of which N= 14 from Finland and N= 40 from Italy. The actual sample was N=30 journalists of which N=10 from Finland and N=20 from Italy (Table 10). The number of interviewees was limited to press journalists who were working within the country. National correspondents in Brussels were excluded from this study since their proximity to EU institutions and their easier access to EU information and media facilities were considered to have an effect on how they evaluate EU media relations. Moreover, correspondents in Brussels have much more in common in terms of news rules and needs than journalists working at the national level. Given that one of the aspects of EU communication investigated in this study is to find out whether EU press officers provide tailored and customized materials for their different publics, the sample consists of journalists who have little access to EU media facilities, are not particularly familiar with the EU news system and have specific national constraints to keep in mind when reporting EU information.

TABLE 10 Source of data – the size of the sample of journalists who received and replied to the questionnaire

Country	Target group of the questionnaire (N. of people)	Journalists who replied				
		N.	Percentage %	Sex	Answers/ Sex (n.)	Answers/ Sex (%)
FIN	14	10	71.4%	Female	2	14.3 %
				Male	8	57.2 %
ITA	40	20	50%	Female	7	17.5 %
				Male	13	32.5 %

The aim of this questionnaire was to gather qualitative data to understand the role that news media have in the process of European integration. It was addressed to journalists reporting on the EU and working for national/regional newspapers/magazines in Finland and in Italy. The questionnaire was translated into the Finnish and Italian languages and double-checked with the help of native speakers to verify the coherence and correspondence of the meanings between the two languages. The majority of questions were close-ended (N= 32), while some were open-ended (N= 12). The questionnaire was divided into three sections plus a fourth optional section. The first section (7 questions) concerned general information about the interviewee; the second section (11 questions) dealt with media training for journalists and sought to discover what journalists thought about media training in terms of its utility, efficacy and learning. The third section (25 questions) considered different aspects of EU communication such as the EU agenda in relation to the national agenda, national media coverage of EU issues and journalists' possibilities for gathering information about the EU. The fourth section (1 question) was open to comments and remarks.

The method was qualitative rather than quantitative. Journalists were pre-contacted by telephone in order to establish whether they write or have written articles about the EU and whether they were interested in participating in the survey or not. Only journalists writing about EU affairs were interviewed. Additional selection criteria were sex, geographical area, political view and circulation of the journal/magazine and quantity of readers. The Finnish sample was composed of journalists working for *Aamulehti, Helsingin Sanomat, Ilkka, Kainuun Sanomat, Karjalainen, Kauppalehti, Keskisuomalainen, Lapin Kansa, Suomen Kuvalehti* and *Turun Sanomat* (Table 11).

TABLE 11 Source of data - characteristics of the Finnish journals/magazines

Publication	**Circulati on n.**	**Readers n.**	**Geographical area of distribution**	**Type**	**Ownership**
Helsingin Sanomat	430785	1058000	Helsinki area/national	newspaper	chain-owned
Aamulehti	136743	319000	Tampere area	newspaper	chain-owned
Turun Sanomat	111547	263000	Turku area	newspaper	independent
Kaleva	82005	206000	Oulu area	newspaper	independent
Keskisuomalainen	75865	186000	Jyväskylä area	newspaper	chain-owned
Savon Sanomat	65053	170000	Kuopio area	newspaper	chain-owned
Ilkka	55356	139000	Seinäjoki area	newspaper	chain-owned
Karjalainen	47288	122000	Joensuu area	newspaper	chain-owned
Lapin Kansa	34402	91000	Rovaniemi, Lappland area	newspaper	independent
Pohjalainen	30816	93000	West coast, Pohjanmaa	newspaper	chain-owned
Kainuun Sanomat	22490	63000	Kainuu area	newspaper	independent
Suomen Kuvalehti	101069	397000	Helsinki area/national	magazine/ weekly	chain-owned
Kauppalehti	81006	224000	Helsinki area/national	newspaper	chain-owned

Source of data: Levikintarkastus Oy, http://www.levikintarkastus.fi and Kansallinen Mediatutkimus KMT: KMT Lukija Autumn05/Spring06, http://www.levikintarkastus.fi/mediatutkimus/KMT%20Lukija%20S05-K06.pdf.

The Italian sample consisted of journalists working for *Avvenire, Corriere della Sera, Il Campanile Nuovo, il Foglio, il Giornale, Il Giorno, Il Mattino, il Messaggero, il Sole24ore, L'Espresso, l'Unità, Panorama*, and *Venerdì di Repubblica* (Table 12).

TABLE 12 Source of data - characteristics of the Italian journals/magazines

Publication	**Circulation n.**	**Readers n.**	**Geographical area of distribution**	**Type**	**Ownership**
Avvenire	151991	100759	Milano area/national	newspaper	independent
Corriere della Sera	843111	677988	Milano area/national	newspaper	chain-owned
*Il Campanile Nuovo**	5000	5000	Rome area	newspaper	independent
il Foglio	2500	n/a	Torino area	newspaper /monthly	independent
il Giornale	307890	208407	Milano area/national	newspaper	independent
Il Giorno	113887	113887	Milano area	newspaper	chain-owned
Il Mattino	120271	87777	Napoli area	newspaper	chain-owned
il Messaggero	326098	240778	Rome and other areas of central Italy	newspaper	chain-owned
il Sole24ore	454580	373723	Milano area/national	newspaper	chain-owned
L'Espresso	550272	390177	Rome area/national	magazine/ weekly	chain-owned
l'Unità	128041	66034	Rome area/national	newspaper	independent
Panorama	726038	514336	Milano area/national	magazine/ weekly	chain-owned
Il Venerdì di Repubblica	765921	617862	Rome area/national	newspaper	chain-owned

Source of data: Accertamenti Dati Stampa (ADS), http://www.adsnotizie.it
*Source of data for *Il Campanile Nuovo*: information directly provided by the Director of the journal

The answers to the open-ended questions were classified according to the definitions used by the participants themselves (Patton 1990). All the open-ended questions, apart from the last question on comments and remarks, implied very short answers, typically to name either three adjectives pertaining to a specific issue asked in the question or to name three important topics on the national agenda or three personal opinions on their job and on EU-supplied information. These answers were grouped according to shared features (for example similar meanings and/or similar associations) and then analysed.

6 FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings are summarised separately for the international and national levels described in the previous chapters. The international level is composed of the organizational, strategic and ethical dimensions. In each case the results are presented as answers to the corresponding research questions. The national level consists of the implementation and relationship dimensions. As with the international level, the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions. The aim is not to illustrate all the outcomes of each single study, as these can be found in the five articles in the Appendix. This chapter is thus a brief overview of the main outcomes of the research.

6.1 International level results

The international level provides results on three main dimensions: the organizational, the strategic and the ethical. The organizational dimension deals with EU institutions and their decisions on their communication goals. It assesses EU organizational choices through parameters such as the level of image, collective identification, trust, involvement and commitment. The strategic dimension analyses EU policies published between 2001 and 2006, EU key players and their functions. The ethical dimension explains and discusses some important questions about the process of European integration such as the legitimacy of the EU using promotional tools and approaches in pursuing its goals. The outcomes in this section are thus of three types: organizational, strategic and ethical.

6.1.1 Organizational results

Study III presents and discusses specific EU organizational decisions in relation to its communication campaigns according to theories of image and collective identification and trust, involvement and commitment to public organizations.

The organizational dimension provided some results on the effects of EU promotional campaigns on the image and trust of citizens in its two major institutions, the European Parliament and the European Commission and on citizens' identification with the EU and its institutions. It was assumed that public organizations with good public-organization relationships aim at producing positive organizational images, trusting publics, and employing transparent and accountable information. In addition organizations create the capacity to commit and involve different publics in their decision-making processes and the expertise to enhance citizens' collective identification with them. The organizational dimension aimed at assessing EU organizational choices through these parameters. The data were collected through meta-analyses of eight Eurobarometer surveys produced between 2002 and 2005.

RQ1: Did citizens' opinions change during the period 2002- 2005 regarding their image of the EU? If so, how?

The first parameter was the image of EU held by EU citizens. A sample of EU citizens had to chose between either a positive, neutral, negative image or opt for a 'don't know' answer where they did not have a clear opinion on the issue. The meta-analysis of the eight Eurobarometer surveys showed that citizens' opinions on the EU changed slightly during the period investigated. The percentage of those who had a positive EU image decreased from 49% in spring 2002 to 44% in autumn 2005. More significant is the rise in a negative image of the EU from 14% to 21% over the same period. The percentage of European citizens who had a neutral image of EU remained almost unchanged. In spring 2002 it was 31% and in autumn 2005 it was 33%. The group of 'don't know' decreased to almost zero: from 7% in spring 2002 to 2% in autumn 2005.

RQ2: Did Europeans trust the European Parliament and the European Commission more or less in 2005 than they did in 2002?

In relations to citizens' trust in the two main European institutions, there was an increase in the 'don't trust' group. The European Commission was not trusted by 25% of people in spring 2002 and by 33% in autumn 2005. For the European Parliament the 'don't trust' percentage increased from 24% to 34% over the same period. For both institutions the percentage of 'don't know' fell by six points. The percentage of those who trusted these institutions decreased by only a few points and thus can be considered almost unchanged. Although the differences in citizens' opinions are small the increase in negative results could represent a first sign of citizens' dissatisfaction with EU work.

RQ3: How did citizens of Europe identify themselves? Did they feel more "European"?

The third parameter analysed was the collective identification of Europeans with Europe. A sample of European citizens was asked to define how they see themselves in a near future in terms of identity. Four options were given: I see myself 1) national only (i.e. identification with the country of origin; 2) first national and then European; 3) European and then national and 4) European only. The data showed no consistent variation during this four-year-period. The majority of respondents felt national first and then European (48% in spring 2002 and 47% in autumn 2004), followed by the group that saw itself as national only (38% in spring 2002 and 41% in autumn 2004). A small number felt first European and then national (7% in spring 2002 and 7% in autumn 2004) and even fewer European only (4% in spring 2002 and 3% in autumn 2004).

RQ4: Were Europeans more committed and involved in EU affairs in 2005 than they were in 2002?

Data on Europeans' commitment and involvement were not available in the reports analysed, and the data on Europeans' support for EU membership were used as the dependent variable of the concepts of involvement and commitment. The results showed a similar trend with the other parameters, that is, European support for the European Union did not increase during this period of time. In spring 2002 the percentage of those who believed their country had benefited from EU membership was 51% and in autumn 2005 it was 52%. The percentage of those who did not think so rose by 10 points. In spring 2002 26% of citizens did not see any benefits in their country's membership of the EU, while in autumn 2005 the percentage who thought had risen to 36%. Over the same period the percentage of 'don't knows' fell from 23% to 12%.

RQ5: What can we infer from these data in relation to the EU promotional campaigns of the period 2002-2005?

The results depicts a situation where different EU information campaigns developed by the European Union did not affect a major improvement in producing a positive image of the EU, in trust in its two major institutions, and in citizens' identification with Europe. There have been some slight shifts between positive, negative and neutral images of the EU, but the findings were generally unchanged. The only effect, although on a small scale, that EU promotional campaigns may have produced, was related to the reduction in the number of people with no opinion. We might then assume that more Europeans have added to their knowledge of the EU in order to position themselves either as supportive or unsupportive. This does not necessarily mean that Europeans were much more involved in EU affairs in 2005 than in 2002, or that their knowledge corresponds to a clear comprehension of EU decision-making processes, the functions and duties of different EU institutions and so on. The fall in the percentage of the 'don't knows' was most likely related to the rise in EU visibility among Europeans' information networks.

6.1.2 Strategic results

The Strategic results are discussed in the first part of Study IV. The strategic dimension is on the international level and the analysis is a content analysis of EU documents on *Information and Communication Policies* produced from 2001 to 2006 by the European Commission[6]. These documents are the expression of EU policies and strategies towards their different publics. The findings of this section refer to the identification and analysis of four specific parameters. These are: the main theme(s) presented and discussed in these documents, the key players in EU information and communication policies, their responsibilities and functions, and their role in the implementation of EU policies at the national level.

RQ1: What do EU policies on information and communication tell us about EU communication strategies?

Five out of six EU documents (excluding the last white paper) studied revealed a general EU tendency to propose ideas but not concrete actions. Typically these documents affirmed the importance of communication for the process of integration and the willingness to improve the communication with Europeans through an open and transparent dialogue but they did not suggest nor propose how it should happen and neither did they present or explained the concrete actions undertaken or planned to be undertaken. The documents were rather general on the actions to be taken and more specific in describing the responsibilities and functions of the European institutions to the detriment of those that national players should have had. Although in all six documents about information and communication policies there was a clear statement about mutual collaboration and synergy between the European, national, regional and local levels, in their practical implementation, the centralized EU approach to communication with its citizens was the preferred choice in the majority of cases.

RQ2: Who are the key players in making these policies? What responsibilities and functions do they have?

The six policy documents referred to five larger groups and described them as well as provided information on their different responsibilities

[6] The list of EU documents on *Information and Communication policies* was presented in the methodology and sample chapter.

and functions in accordance to their more or less active roles in the decision-making process. Table 13 summarises the classification of the five main key players according to their role in these policies.

TABLE 13 Classification of EU key players by group and role

Groups	**Specification for each group**	**Role**
EU institutions	European Commission, European Parliament, and European Council	active
Governments/ authorities	a) member states, EU representations, b) national, regional and local authorities	a) active b) semi-active
Civil societies	a) NGOs, employers' organizations and trade unions; etc. b) citizens	a) semi-active b) passive
Political parties	national and European parties	passive
Media	public and private broadcasting and press companies, new media (mainly internet providers), European media and professional groups	passive

The role ranged from active to passive. An active role means full participation of the key player in the communication actions, including their proposal, creation, implementation and evaluation. A semi-active role denotes partial participation, that is, the key players do not participate in the proposal and creation of communication policies, but merely implement them, adapt actions to the local context and evaluate them. Finally, a passive role characterises those key players who are either considered as vehicles of diffusion of EU information or simply as target groups of such policies. The results of the analysis revealed that only the EU institutions, its representations and its member states were actually considered active players; national, regional and local authorities and civil societies, excluding citizens, were semi-active players, while citizens, media and political parties were simply passive players. According to the literature on the organization-public relationship, mutual and beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics imply active participation between the different parties. The description that EU documents give about EU key players shows that all the key players do not have an equivalent active role.

6.1.3 Ethical results

The ethical dimension on the international level treats the question of the legitimacy the use by the European Union of marketing strategies and tools to promote its cause by presenting an ongoing multi-level promotional programme such as the promotion of a European identity. Study I and Study II dealt with these aspects. The findings of this section deal with the critical analysis of the concepts of propaganda, education and promotion with reference to EU documents on information and communication policies and activities, the meta-analysis of previous work on European identity from different theoretical perspectives and the documentation analysis of the internet material available on EU webpages, EU leaflets, brochures, and links to external organizations in relation to the concept of European identity.

RQa1: What is propaganda?

The review of the literature and comparison of definitions of propaganda, education and promotion reveal the ambiguity of these terms, since they have many characteristics in common but they arouse different perceptions and feelings among people. Propaganda has a rather negative connotation, promotion has a more neutral nuance and education is generally positively perceived.

RQa2: Can EU information and communication policies and activities during the study period be classed as propaganda?

The results of these studies present a rather ambiguous portrait of EU information and communication polices since whether EU communication towards its publics is seen as either propaganda or education or promotion is a matter of how these terms are defined. The analysis of the material studied depicts a type of communication which has many of the characteristics described by the literature as propagandistic. However, as Walton (1997) and Messina (2007) claim, similar parameters apply to infomercial and commercial ads, that is, they aim at persuading people to change their behaviour, e.g. buy a specific product, by using emotional appeals more than rational facts. Thus, labelling EU information and communication policies and activities as "propaganda" depends on whether or not we accept the idea that public institutions can use marketing techniques to promote their organization, policies and people and whether or not we see in such activities a social reason for so doing. Thus there is little distinction in defining a communication policy as forms of propaganda when discussing whether a public organization is entitled or not to market its policies and activities for the purpose of gaining public legitimacy. Promotional activities are widely used by organizations to promote a product, service, concept or simply the legitimacy of the organization. By organizational legitimacy is meant the "extent to which the array of established cultural accounts provides explanations for the organization's existence" (Meyer and Scott 1983, 201). The interpretation and classification of EU communication strategies, either as propaganda, education or promotion, apply a label to EU information and communication policies but do not provide any assessment as to the feasibility and effectiveness of EU actions in terms of improvement of an organization's image, reputation and trust. Hence, public organizations, whose goals are related to reinforcing the organization's credibility and legitimacy, are required to have a system for evaluating organizational performance rather than a performance label.

RQb1: What are the implications of labelling EU information and communication policies as propaganda?

Labelling EU information and communication policies and activities is a rather difficult task. As many of the characteristics of propaganda are also shared education, branding and other discourses. Hence, the claims of certain Eurosceptics that the EU integration project is political propaganda in the negative sense cannot be completely true. Nevertheless, it is possible to notice that EU information and communication policies were not information in the sense of objective, impartial and critical communication between two parties, but more a brand concept with considerable use of promotional activities. A similar problem exists between those who believe that promoting EU is necessary for the process of integration and those who claim that such communication strategies are propaganda and thereby against democracy.

Moreover, propaganda does not necessarily imply deceitful and fallacious discourse; it can also be used to present opposed views, if the presentation of such views reinforces the propagandist's main argument and helps to achieve his/her goal (Walton 1997, 410). Yet, we should remember that most of the political discourses in modern democracies are propagandistic in nature and this does not make political argumentation bad propaganda, as defined by some scholars (e.g. Lasswell 1934; Marlin 1989). There are other scholars like Messina (2007) who believe that the use of persuasive techniques may have an ethical justification that removes the negative connotation from propaganda. Persuasion can have a positive connotation when the reason for applying it has a social purpose, that is, it is in the public interest that persuasion is used. In these terms EU information and communication policies and activities could be classified as a form of ethical persuasion. Nevertheless, there is no usefulness of labelling EU information and communication policies and activities as propaganda, education or promotion in advancing knowledge and understanding of EU methods and approaches towards EU publics and stakeholders. Study II showed that it is more important to apply an utilitarian approach in studying EU information and communication policies and activities. The utilitarian approach implies that an action is only worthwhile if it provides a contribution to overall utility, and thus it is determined by its outcome (Jeremy Bentham discussed in Rosen 2003). Therefore, it is more important to understand whether past EU activities have been successful in fostering the process of European integration than labelling them and to understand the reasons for the EU choice of communication and the implications for its citizens.

RQb2: Have EU communication activities been successful in fostering the process of European integration?

In relation to the EU's promotional strategy the present analysis of the promotion of only one of the main EU themes cannot provide a full assessment of the outcomes of all EU campaigns, but only a partial glimpse. In the light of these considerations the findings reveal above all the complex nature of the concept of European identity, its origins and historical development. Previous studies on European identity differ in their interpretations of the origins and historical development of a European identity as well as in their different theoretical and conceptual standpoints. Yet, a common trade mark was visible in the meta-analysis. The majority of authors agreed on the fact that European identity is a social and not an evolutional construct of self identification. This provides a first explanation for the reason for EU promotion. Second, the analysis of some of the material on EU activities in education, culture, languages, symbols, publications and the Internet combined with the statistics from the Eurobarometer surveys present a situation where EU information actions in these fields had in general a low-medium impact on citizens' positive feelings on a European identity. The most evident and direct impact on Europeans is related to education. For example, exchange programmes have proved to be a great personal demonstration for students and teachers of different countries of how Europeans share common values (Table 14). The other activities, however, had little impact on the promotion of a European identity.

In relation to the ability of the EU to involve its citizens in political matters, the fact remains that the political involvement of Europeans has progressively decreased since 1979, the lowest turn-out occurring with the European Parliamentary elections in 2004. EU citizens' support for the Constitutional Treaty has declined since its rejection by France and the Netherlands in 2005. Additionally, there is a general negative perception of the euro among the countries that introduced it in 2002 (Flash EB 193 2006). With respect to citizens' attitude towards the EU, during the period investigated in this study the level of trust in the European Commission as well as in the European Parliament has decreased, the perceptions of the EU have also shown a decline and the number of those reporting that they have not benefited from EU membership has increased by 10 percentage points (Valentini 2006).

TABLE 14 Impact of the promotion of a European identity by field of activities

Field of activities	Activities	Impact on citizens' positive feelings on European identity
Education	Bologna process; teaching EU integration in schools, Exchange programmes	high
Culture	The European City of Culture, The European Cultural Month, the European Union Youth Orchestra, and the European Community Baroque Orchestra	low
Languages	Promoting language learning through different channels	medium
Symbols	Europe Day on the 9th of May, Twinning cities	low
Publications	Leaflets, brochures, books about EU institutions and activities	low
Internet	EU web page in all the official languages	medium among web users, low for computer illiterate people
Media	Pan-European media broadcasting	low

6.2 National level results

The national level results concern the implementation and relationship dimensions. The implementation dimension was studied by analysing Finnish and Italian communication strategies from 2001 to 2006 and with the effects of Finnish and Italian communication activities on national public opinion. The two countries' activities and strategies were compared in order to determine whether there were similarities in the implementation of EU directives or not and whether the cultural and local perspective was kept or not. The aim in studying the relationship dimension was to understanding what kind of relationship EU officers and national mass media had and whether and how this relationship affected the visibility and tonality of EU news in Finnish and Italian media.

6.2.1 Implementation results

The second part of Study IV is dedicated to the implementation dimension, that is, to the description and analysis of how Finland and Italy have implemented EU information and communication policies and their effects on citizens' opinions. Two aspects of implementation were considered and compared in order to assess the status of the Finnish and Italian communication strategies. These were:

1) the main communication strategy adopted in Finland and in Italy and the structure of the EU information network in those countries,

2) the effects of local actions on citizens' general knowledge of the EU.

The results of the analysis of the two clusters are briefly described according to the corresponding research questions.

RQ1: What kind of communication actions are implemented in the two member states?

Both Finland and Italy have applied a type of communication strategy aimed at promoting EU institutions and policies through various means. The Finnish strategy represent a typical example of a 'building awareness strategy' (Valentini 2003), which implies the massive use of mass media in order to bring the EU closer to its citizens and to produce positive feedback from the general public. In Finland, among the countries with lower involvement in and support for EU matters (Pesonen 2002), this strategy has been implemented since the beginning of Finnish membership by diverse actions, for example, the campaign pre-referendum for membership, the campaign for the introduction of the euro, the campaign for enlargement and the new campaign for the new Constitutional Treaty. These actions were carried out increasingly in strategic partnership with the Government of Finland, the European Parliament, and other stakeholders. Although the Finnish Government and the Representation of the European Commission in Finland reported their willingness to maintain their neutral position and retain some freedom in decision-making regarding the implementation of EU communication policies, the results show great dependence on EU guidelines and decisions to the disadvantage of more tailored strategies. These should have taken more into consideration the Finnish climate and the special circumstances. Almost along the same line, the Italian communication strategy was based on the re-enforcement of interinstitutional cooperation and on the development of coordinated partnership, which implied active and attentive collaboration on all levels - institutional, European, national, regional, local (Department for Community Policies 2004). One of main characteristics of the Italian communication strategy was the massive use of television as mean of diffusing information about the EU. Newspapers were less used as a vehicle of EU information, since news readers are proportionally fewer in Italy than in Finland. Consequently the Italian communication officers focused their attention on this medium as means of diffusing their messages. Additionally, Italian communication strategies were more bound to the national context than the Finnish ones, for the reasons that they were associated with the internal political situation of the country. In fact an important role in the development of communication strategies is played by the Department for Community Policies in connection with the Italian Government (Santaniello 2004). Among the main activities developed by this Department from 2001 to 2006 was the creation of TV commercials on the main EU themes, which were broadcast on the national television channels, specific print ads published in the main national newspapers, the creation of two web pages with general information on the EU and one specifically dedicated to the European year for disabled people and, finally, the organization of seminars, meetings and conferences on several EU-related topics. The structure of the EU information network up to the end of 2004 was very similar in both Finland and Italy. Six out of ten structures had exactly the same name and functions (Table 15).

The other four structures were specifically created by the national governments in cooperation with the European Union. The EU supply of information was based on active and systematic co-operation between the national Representation of the European Commission, each national government, and the different relays and networks. From the beginning of 2005, a new EU structure, called Europe Direct, has been in operation (European Commission 2004). Europe Direct has replaced the previous structures by merging and re-organizing them within a single and common organizational policy.

TABLE 15 EU information network in Finland and in Italy

EU structure	**Characteristics**	**Finland**	**Italy**
Carrefours	Aim is to serve people living in rural areas. They are co-financed by the European Commission.	9	20
Euro Info Centres (EIC)	Operate in regional Employment and Economic Development Centres; focus on advising and assisting businesses in their attempts to build local, national, and European business networks.	5	n.a.
Media Desk Italia	Created in the framework of MEDIUM Programme II (1996-2000), in order to support and promote the European Audiovisual industry.	n.a.	1
Centre of Information and European Documentation (CIED)	Established through an agreement between the Italian Republic and the European Community as European economic interest group (g.e.i.e.), and aims at monitoring continuously EU institutions, laws and policies.	n.a.	1
Info Points Europe (IPE)	Hosted by local organizations and decentralised administrations such as municipalities, provinces, regions and prefectures. Their aim is to inform and orient citizens about EU activities, policies, and programmes and also to help citizens to understand EU institutions.	20	22

(cont.)

TABLE 15 EU information network in Finland and in Italy (continued)			
Business and Innovation Centres (BIC)	Provide multi-disciplinary professional support to SMEs. Their aim is regional economic development and regeneration through effective internationalisation and "Europeanization" of the SMEs.	7	n.a.
European Documentation Centres (EDC)	Usually located in connection to university libraries, and were established by an agreement between the European Commission and the universities requesting the EDC status. The university bears the costs of establishing and running the centre, whereas the Commission undertook an annual evaluation of its operation, leading to a decision to continuing its operation. They provide material about EU and community's publications.	12	43
Euroguichet	Part of the Consumer Protection Service both in Italy and in Finland. It assists citizens in their consumer concerns, and acts in close co-operation with several municipal consumer service points, different organizations, the media, and the European Euroguichet Network.	1	1
Team Europe	An EU-wide network of independent lecturers specialising in certain aspects of the European Union. The members, chosen by the Representations of the European Commission in each member state, were asked to participate in seminars, conferences, panel discussions, and training courses associated to their area of expertise.	1 (approx. 14 members)	1 (approx. 90 members)
Antenna Culturale Europea	Italian Cultural Contact Point for the programme Culture 2000 of the European Commission. It aims at providing information at the national level of the opportunities promoted by Culture 2000 for cultural co-operation. Such opportunities are related to the framework of cultural heritage, literature, music, visual and performing arts.	n.a.	1

n.a. = not available in this country

RQ2: What effects did EU information actions have on the knowledge of the EU as perceived by Finnish and Italian publics?

The data of several Eurobarometer surveys between 2001 and 2006 on citizens' general knowledge of EU can provide some explanation of the possible effects of EU information actions at the national level. Within the limits that Eurobarometer data have, it was possible to see some changes on citizens' general knowledge of EU in the two countries studied. The responses of Finnish and Italian citizens were expressed within the range from 1 'know nothing at all' to 10 'know a great deal'. The scores were calculated as mean of all responses. According to the analysis Italian and Finns' perceptions of EU have followed a similar path. In spring 2002 Italians' perceived knowledge of EU continued to be the same as in autumn 2001 at approximately 4.6, while that of Finns fell from 4.8 in autumn 2001 to 4.5 in spring 2002 and then they rose again. In spring 2004 the two scores converged, that is Finns' scores decreased to 4.54 and Italians' scores increased to 4.35 between autumn 2003 and spring 2004. In autumn 2005 the scores in both countries decreased again: in Finland it was 4.5 and in Italy 3.9. The Italian percentage is substantially lower than that between autumn 2001 and 2002, the time when the euro currency was introduced. In spring 2006 both countries experienced a consistent increase in terms of perceived knowledge. Finland reached its higher score within the five-year-time (5.1), positioning itself as the EU country with the most knowledge of EU. In autumn 2006 the situation has changed again, going this time down once more to 4.44 for Finland and 3.99 for Italy. Regarding Finland, the drop in score which characterized the period autumn 2002- autumn 2004, and also the recent drop of autumn 2006 may be an effect of the loss of interest in EU issues by the general public and consequently the tendency to search less for such information (Interview n°3- 12/11/2004).

6.2.2 Relationship results

In Study V, EU media relations in the Finnish and Italian news media were investigated in order to assess the type of relationship that EU institutions have with national media. This section briefly presents the main results of this study. The data were collected through a qualitative questionnaire sent to journalists working for national/regional and local newspapers/magazines in Finland and in Italy (Table 16).

TABLE 16 Frequency Distributions for Demographic Characteristics - Journalists interviewed

Characteristic	**Category**	**Percentage %**
Gender	Female	30.0
	Male	70.0
Total		100.0
Age	20-30 years	0.0
	30-40 years	27.0
	40-50 years	50.0
	> 50 years	23.0
Total		100.0
Education	High school	30.0
	Bachelor degree	23.0
	Master degree	40.0
	Licentiate degree	3.0
Total		100.0
Years of activity	< 10 years	7.0
	10-20 years	27.0
	> 20 years	63.0
	N/A	3.0
Total		100.0

(cont.)

TABLE 16 *Frequency Distributions for Demographic Characteristics - Journalists interviewed (continued)*		
Position hold	Columnist	3.0
	Correspondent	7.0
	Editor	3.0
	Editor-in-chief	23.0
	Journalist	30.0
	Reporter	20.0
	Other	13.0
Total		99.0
Type of contract	Permanent	100.0
	Temporary	0.0
	Free-lance	0.0
Total		100.0

RQ1: How do Finnish and Italian journalists assess EU media relations?

The results of the questionnaire show general dissatisfaction among Finnish and Italian journalists with EU media relations. The two main actions on EU media relations were mostly dismissed for the reason that they did not help to build up credibility and trust among EU sources of information and national reporters. EU news was perceived as still too distant, too difficult, too boring and not valuable in terms of attracting local readers. Journalists expressed their interest in giving more space to EU news at the national, regional and local levels, but other contingencies prevented this from happening. There was slightly more criticism among Finnish journalists since they tended not to trust EU sources. For journalists on national, regional and even local newspapers it was quite difficult to interpret and understand the huge amount of information there was online without knowing on how EU information was created. It was even more difficult to consider reliable a source which supplied material that was presented with little or any relevance for the national, regional or local context. A fairly favourable rating was given by the majority of journalists of both countries to EU media training courses. EU media training courses have been valued as tools for learning more about EU institutions and policies and how EU news reporting works. Moreover, some of the Finnish and Italian interviewees who had attended a media training course admitted that their opinion of EU has generally improved since the course.

7 DISCUSSION AND CRITIQUE

> *"If we strive to be successful in our efforts to create understanding for our society and for our policies, we must first understand the motives, culture, history, and psychology of the people with whom we wish to communicate and certainly their language." (Malone 1988, 12)*

In this final chapter the findings of this investigation are discussed and some observations on EU communication strategies are presented. The aim in this discussion is to summarise and link together all the themes introduced so far. This section should thus be primarily considered as a collection of insights into how European institutions communicate with their different publics and how cultural differences affect the reception of EU messages among different groups. Some theoretical and practical implications for public relations theories and practices are also examined. This is followed by a critique of the study and consideration of the validity and the generalizability of the findings. The chapter continues with a section on suggestions for future research in which some ideas and considerations arising out of this study are discussed. The chapter concludes with some general observations about doing comparative research and implications of the Finnish and Italian cultures for qualitative studies.

7.1 Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyse how the European Union communicated with its different European publics during the period 2001 – 2006 in order to involve more and more EU citizens in the development of the European Union, and consequently to acquire more legitimation and further integration. Specifically, the European Commission and its national representations and local offices in Finland and in Italy were the subjects of this study. The question on how EU communicates with Finnish and Italian citizens was approached through the analysis of different factors such as EU agreements and policies on information and communication for member states, national public officers' assessment of EU activities at the national level, EU media relations with local news reporters, and analyses of some EU information campaigns. The research questions posed sought both to contribute to a better understanding of EU-national government relations and to broaden the existing areas studied in public communication and PR. The answers to these questions were approached through theoretical argumentation and empirical data in relation to the aforementioned factors. The results of the five studies can be summarised as follows.

During the period 2001 and 2006 a similar trend was observed in Finland and in Italy for EU communication strategies. The two countries, which differ for their historical relations with the EU, for their geographical position, culture and economy, applied similar communication strategies for developing specific EU activities and communication actions at the national level. In fact, the comparative study showed that no significant differences were visible between the communication strategies implemented in Finland with those implemented in Italy, whereas the responses of Finnish and Italian publics to the activities and actions developed in their respective countries were substantially diverse. Public opinion in Italy was more favourable to EU actions than public opinion in Finland. The lack of specific and tailored communication strategies in countries which are extremely distinct from each other, can result in different communication outcomes, which are not necessarily satisfactory for all parties.

In this respect, EU communication strategies in Finland and in Italy were not sufficiently tailored to the needs of the national publics and they were mostly of the one-way-symmetrical type. The claims of decentralisation of tasks and functions made in EU policies on information and communication of the period 2001- 2006 were not completely realised in terms of local involvement in communication decisions. The effects of these policies on improving citizens' EU perceptions and on building a positive EU image and trust were pretty low, and national journalists' opinions on EU interest in establishing mutual and beneficial media relations scored very poor in both countries. Thus, it is possible to conclude that during the five-years-time (2001- 2006) the European Union achieved mediocre communication outcomes since the general opinion of Finnish and Italian citizens on EU matters did not sufficiently reflect EU communication goals and the outcomes were limited both in the level of support for the EU and for the level of citizens' participation.

Specifically, Study IV revealed the main effects of the examined EU communication campaigns in Finland and in Italy. The positive aspects of the Finnish communication campaign can be summarised as an increment in EU general knowledge within the five-year-time. In terms of changing citizens' opinions, the EU campaigns produced some change but not necessarily of a positive kind. Despite some positive changes in EU perceptions during the study period, Finland was one of the countries that showed the lowest support for the EU. Behind Finns' scores on EU images and trust in the main EU institutions, there was a fear of losing national power, of the EU voting system, the EU regulations for agriculture and the EU Constitutional Treaty. These results are not surprising, since public organizations operating in international contexts, such as the European Union, do not necessarily implement policies for the sake of a single region or country, but they look more at the general interest. Compared with national governments, public organizations operating in international contexts are under more constraints. Negotiations within supranational organizations, such as the European Union, require a give and take that might make the outcome of the agreement not easy to explain to citizens. For instance, the case of wolf culling and Finland is an example where EU decision upon a specific issue was in contrast with the Finnish position (Valentini 2007). Regardless of political affiliation, EU policy makers have to make choices that please a certain group while being opposed by another. Hence, Finns' preoccupations regarding EU political developments are not only an expression of these short-term decisions, but they may also be a product of EU politicians' incapacity to properly communicate the outcomes of their negotiation processes.

In Italy the effects of the EU campaigns were neutral. Some high scores for support for EU membership and trust in EU institutions were found before and after in contrast to the Finns, but the level of self-perceived knowledge of the EU was among the lowest in Europe. Although Italy continued to show great interest in Europe and remained the country with the greater number of solid European supporters, Italians have nevertheless begun to manifest a greater scepticism with regards to the European Union.

Study III illustrated some of the possible reasons for modest EU communication outcomes. EU promotional campaigns did not succeed because they were based mostly on a press agentry model of communication and less on the two-way-symmetrical model. According to Grunig (2001), press agentry and two-way asymmetrical models are not effective in establishing either good relationships or a good reputation. The job for public organizations that aim at establishing a good relationship with their publics is based on mutual dialogues between the organization and its different publics and not only on the tactic of persuasion. Several scholars (see i.e. Kantanen 2006, Kruckeberg and Vujnovic 2005, Ledingham 2001) have stressed the importance of a more dialogical type of public relations, but in the practice it seems extremely difficult to implement.

The weakness of the two-way symmetrical model is its failure to consider other important systematic factors such as the weight of power and information holding in the dialogic relationship. In all societies power and the holding of information play a key role in establishing relationships with different publics. The two-way symmetrical model can work in a society where everybody is equal and everyone perceives that they have the same power and influence as other people. In reality the pure two-way symmetrical model of communication is not possible for the European Union. Europeans do not feel completely equal among themselves - some countries are perceived to be more influential than others -, nor on an equality with EU officers and politicians, who are considered to hold more power and information, or other private and public organizations, which may have stronger organizational interests/values that can be pushed on the EU agenda. Since it is voters or supporters who allow the policy maker to stay in power and represent them in a democratic or representative system of government, and implement policies, it is in the policymaker's interest to try to please those who give him/her that power as much as possible, and this is difficult to balance with the more general interests of a region, a country or even a continent. What is good for the community or the system is often not so for the individual or at least that is how it is usually perceived by the latter. Individuals, as part of a system, whether biological, political, social, etc., make choices based on their experience, beliefs, needs, or desires, and tend to be short-sighted, prejudiced and narrow-minded. It is perfectly understandable, even a natural rule, that the fight for the survival of the individual comes before anything else, even before the fight for the survival of the group. But in order for an increasingly global economy to prosper, the individual interest must sometimes be overridden by the general interest. Yet, the question of how to communicate what it is good for a community should not be reduced to mere information/communication as a communication policy. It is through mutual and continuous dialogue with different groups of EU societies that it is possible to negotiate diverse interests and needs. In order to balance public interests with organizational ones, the findings of this investigation suggest that the most suitable model for the European Union would be a combination of two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models. This model would have been more effective if EU goals on information and communication actions took into consideration the needs and cultural values of EU publics and their levels and types of involvement and commitment.

At the core of the modest outcomes of the EU to change citizens' opinions, improve its EU image and reputation and increase citizens' support and involvement, is the EU communication strategy. Study IV the analysis of six EU documents together with the qualitative interviews with EU officers working in Finland and in Italy showed two major problems with the EU communication strategy, one organizational and the other strategic. The organizational problem is already conceptualized in these EU documents on information and communication policies and was confirmed through the interviews with those national players who base their daily work on those policies. First, the six EU documents studied revealed a general EU tendency to propose ideas but not concrete actions. Typically these documents affirmed the importance of communication for the process of integration and a willingness to improve the communication with Europeans through open and transparent dialogue but they did not suggest nor propose how it should have happened and neither did they present or explain the concrete actions undertaken or planned to be undertaken. In fact, in most of the white papers published between 2001 and 2006 there was little consideration of citizens' perspectives and no specific mention was made about possible actions to be implemented in order to involve citizens in shaping the future of Europe. Only in recent years, specifically after the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by French and Dutch people in June 2005, EU has realised the importance of involving citizens and of creating a dialogue with them. Except for the last two documents considered in this investigation, where a shift towards more citizens-oriented communications starts to be visible, it appears that for many years EU has forgotten the importance of citizens' support in order to further develop its integration project, whereas for public organizations public support and involvement should be at the core of their communication actions. Additionally, these documents were rather generic regarding actions to be taken and being more specific in describing the responsibilities and functions of the EU institutions and less precise in defining the responsibilities and functions that national players should have had. Second, while the EU proposed in the White papers the decentralization of information activities and messages for EU different publics, it also established a common organization of networks and relays (Europe Direct) with similar responsibilities and functions for implementing such actions but with little decision-making power for local key players over the proposal and creation of different localized actions. In fact, the 2002 EU document, establishing a signatory agreement between the European Union and member states concerning collaboration for information and communication actions has limited the freedom of decision-making of the other players. This is in contradiction with the EU interest in decentralizing its information activities, but it expresses the necessity for the EU of controlling complex structures composed by national, regional and local players.

The second problem that emerged from this study was strategic and it derived in part from the idea of controlling all information networks and in part from the requirement of homogeneity. The European Union appeared to believe that any communication with citizens should be targeted at each public's characteristics but nevertheless should be presented in a similar way. However, journalism in Finland, for example, is not the same as in Italy nor are news reporting practices. As Study V shows EU media relations were based on a common and similar approach to news reporters of all countries and they were not sufficient for the purpose of establishing mutual and beneficial relationships between EU and national mass media. Viewing EU actions on media relations it is not possible to consider them as a proactive approach towards news reporters since they require the proactive interest of the reporter in looking for EU information. In fact it was the media that approached the EU institutions so to have the information and the material needed; it was the media that expressed its interest in using the EU funds for developing programmes at the more local level. It was the media that tried to establish contact with EU spokespersons and other EU officers. The role of the European Union was seen as merely to grant material and tools to everyone who asked. There was not a proactive, real approach to the development of mutual cooperation between source and reporter. The effort to establish a shared relationship was generally unidirectional. Additionally, for journalists working outside Brussels, relationships with EU officers existed most of the time only through emails and general pre-packed information. The actions undertaken so far towards establishing better relationships with national news media did not completely solve the problem of understanding the needs of journalists nor did it create mutual and active cooperation between source and reporter. In a situation of 27 member states it is not possible to be communicatively effective with all publics if the information and communication actions are prepared at the European level and then made to fit into the local context.

The analysis of the source-reporter relationship in Study V confirmed previous results on relationship problems between journalists and EU officers as a reason for journalists' limited and somehow negative attitudes towards the coverage of EU topics (Gleissner and de Vreese 2005; Gavin 2001; Morgan 1995), but it also offers a different perspective on the problem. The problem of negative or null EU coverage did not depend only on journalists' skills and knowledge about EU policies and news reporting, but it depended on journalists' relationships with EU officers. Finnish and Italian journalists are prepared to deal with the political pressures of their job at the national level, but they were not so prepared when it came to EU campaigning in their countries. This could be interpreted as another reason for limiting the coverage of EU information. Hence, EU institutions should improve their media relations activities by learning more how to deal with the different types of media systems and cultural backgrounds of news reporters. In fact the condition of relationships with journalists can determine the quality and quantity of the information available at the national level. For the European Union, investing in media relations and thus investing resources in understanding journalists' information needs can improve its image in the media and make a continuous flow of information available to Europeans. More EU coverage in national media will have a positive effect on readers' knowledge and involvement in EU matters.

On the other hand, communicating to different groups of people is not an easy task. There are questions of cost and efficiency which may oblige EU commissioners to utilise more practical and sometimes simplistic ways of informing citizens. These methods do not necessarily produce successful results. Applying a common communication strategy in all member states may save costs and be more practical to implement, but it does not take into account the differences between Europeans in perceiving EU messages. While all six documents on information and communication policies presented in Study IV contained a clear statement about mutual collaboration and synergy between European, national, regional and local levels, in practice, the centralized and traditional EU method of dealing with communication towards citizens was the preferred choice in the majority of situations. The two countries taken for this investigation, Finland and Italy, although very different, have been treated as similar and comparable strategies for EU information and communication policies have been applied. If the aims of these information actions were to increase knowledge and awareness about EU, then the results were rather mediocre in both countries, especially if compared with the results of the Eurobarometer statistics.

This study also investigated the perceptions behind governmental information activities and their legacy of having either educational or propagandistic purposes. Governmental institutions are a type of public organizations whose aims should be social and oriented towards the well-being of citizens. This social reputation of public organizations is typical of democratic societies but it is not immune from allegation of propaganda, especially in the case of public organizations that are supra-national and a compromise with traditional and approved national policies. Promotional tools and techniques, either for educational or for propagandistic purposes, have long been used in public diplomacy and governmental communications (Kunczik 1997). Communication strategies of this type fall within the press agentry/publicity and public information models proposed by Grunig (1992) and within the information and propaganda models proposed by van Ruler's grid (2004). In the case of the European Union, the use of such communication strategies was viewed as a good method for improving the image and credibility of the EU and for increasing citizens' support and commitment. Previous studies on governmental communications (Zhang and Cameron 2003; Hill 1999) have underlined the impact of the on-going globalization upon governments' increasing concerns with their images and the actions they undertake to project a sense of identity and/or discover an appropriate identity for image making. Although such image improvements are unlikely to immediately translate into political advantage or policy gain for the government which promotes them, it is believed that, over time, the creation and manipulation of information settings can exert a positive influence on public opinion and political outcomes (Albritton and Manheim 1985).

Promotional campaigns work on image formation and consolidation. Understanding how organizations plan and deliver their images considering their power and their limitations, and understanding how the members of the audience receive and process intended and unintended images serve as guiding principles for organizational planning (Moffitt 2001). Along these lines, the different promotional campaigns implemented by the EU seek to improve its image and to secure legitimation with respect to its different publics. Legitimacy for public institutions means the right to exist and conduct operations. It is established, maintained, challenged and defended through dialogue between an organization's activities and their relation to the prevailing social norms and values. Thus, organizational publics grant legitimacy to the organization and make the organization dependent on them in this respect (Metzler 2001, 322). Promotional campaigns were considered the solution for EU image problems since they were feasible activities, they have been successful in different business contexts, they have been largely implemented in political campaigns with rather positive effects on citizens' voting decisions, and because they were based on image management and not on reputation management, they were somehow easier to plan and to manage. Yet, previous studies demonstrated that image management is not effective in establishing mutual and beneficial public-organization relationships (Grunig 1993b).

Additionally, according to van Leuven et al. (1988) the effects-based planning approach towards EU communication strategies, which is a PR evaluation model based on the analysis of the organization's objectives and sub-objectives by type of public in relation to communication and behavioural effects, has not been successful in changing EU citizens' opinions and behaviours.

Study II discussed the promotional aspects of EU campaigns in the light of the current allegations of EU communication strategies as a new form of propaganda. On the basis of previous work on propaganda, education and information, Study II showed how defining EU information and communication activities as propaganda is not useful for advancing our knowledge or understanding of EU methods and approaches towards EU publics and stakeholders. Additionally defining a communication activity as propaganda is also a matter of personal and cultural understanding. It is in fact impossible to construct communication that people on both sides of the issue would agree is fair and impartial. The mass communication literature confirmed that the difference between education and propaganda is more cultural than semantic. Thus, there is nothing to be gained by defining a communication policy as propaganda; instead it is more useful to determine the effects of such policies on citizens and their consequences for the concepts of democracy and public information.

Nevertheless, employing marketing approaches, such as branding EU through specific symbols and programmes, to reach a specific goal raises ethical questions concerning the legitimacy of EU applying promotional strategies in seeking to improve its image and in relation to the quality of public information. When it comes to ethical questions, research can only provide possible interpretative scenarios; it cannot supply scientific and objective answers. The answers to ethical questions are found in cultural norms and values. Cultural norms and values are by definition culturally/personally bounded and they differ between countries, political groups, and publics. There are no unanimous answers to the question whether it is ethical or not to use marketing approaches for EU goals whether the idea of promoting EU is acceptable. Promotion works only when certain prerequisites are present and when the content of the promotional message is reflected in output, that is, when EU institutions deliver on their promises. Hence, promoting EU can be useful for the image and reputation of the EU but it must be considered within a larger organizational plan. The European Union needs, first, to listen its citizens and their problems, second, to react to such issues by finding a range of possible solutions, third, to implement policies and plans of action which take into consideration those problems and solve them, and only at the end, to communicate clearly and effectively with its publics by promoting its work and its institutions.

Public organizations' communications that have an educational/social orientation, enhance public debate and public participations. They reinforce the organizational structure by improving its communication capacities through the analysis of public feedback. Public organizations' communications can be based on mutual and beneficial dialogues with their different publics respecting national and cultural differences. The cultural perspective has been much considered among communication and business scholars in the last twenty years in relations to the globalisation phenomenon. The importance of cultural understanding and cultural practices for doing business abroad as much as in public diplomacy is, in fact, well recognised (Wyszomirski et al. 2003; Vaahterikko-Mejía 2001; Vaahterikko 1997; Coombs and Mitchell 1986).

The EU approach can consider mutual understanding and negotiating discourses as primary aspects of communication strategies. EU communication actions might also include good governance and coherent organizational behaviour. The EU cannot promote the benefits of membership to its publics if it cannot show by its actions that it can cope better than national governments alone with difficult problems. In addition EU collective identification depends on the reputation and trust of those who work for it. According to Peters three components are critical for establishing, maintaining and increasing trust and the credibility of officials: 1) perceptions of knowledge and expertise, 2) perceptions of openness and honesty, and 3) perceptions of concern and caring. Each of this is closely connected to communication (Peters et al. 1997 in Drevensek 2004). In order to convince the citizens of Finland or Italy of the positive aspects of EU, the communication strategies applied in these countries should have taken more into consideration the general attitude and knowledge of people about the issue at stake of discussion, the types of discourse on the EU created by national politicians, media and relevant experts, and the effects of EU messages vis-à-vis cultural differences. In such ways, the EU information actions in the member states should have been more local and tailored to the relevant publics.

The most effective communication strategy can be considered to be a composition of both vertical (each public needs a strategy) and horizontal (each member state needs to have more than one strategy depending on the group and ethnic differences of its citizens) sub-strategies. By crossing vertical with horizontal sub-strategies a matrix structure for communicating the EU to different publics can be created. This matrix structure permits many more tailored and effective strategies for EU publics. However such a matrix structure is hard to implement at the centralized level. It is thus recommended that the European Union decentralizes its organizational and strategic processes upon information and communication actions even more towards its national players in order to benefit from this matrix structure. Moreover, the European Union should give local centres more decision-making power on proposals and activities. By so doing it will recognize its national, regional and local players as having the status of active players and thus be in a dialogue with its different publics. In addition national, regional and local players are by far the best group to understand citizens' needs and to better involve them in the process of integration.

7.2 Theoretical and practical implications

The results of this investigation have several theoretical implications. First, and most important, the results indirectly provide further support for the community-building theory of public relations proposed by Kruckeberg and Stark (1988). By assessing the importance that communication has for democratic societies and thus the essential role of public relations in supporting the communication activities of public organizations, this study claims that community relations is not only an imperative for corporations but also for public organizations. Public organizations more now than in the past have a full status as a player in the game of globalization and they need to demonstrate they are efficient, accountable, responsible, transparent and above all worthy of the support of their tax payers.

Second, this study reinforces the idea of integrating the idea of intercultural competence into the community-building theory. Public relations practices for public organizations operating in a wider context require cultural understanding. A communicator's effectiveness, whether verbal or nonverbal, is enhanced through intercultural competence. The findings of the comparative analysis stress the importance of public interpretations and perceptions for assessing image, reputation and trust in the case of public organizations. Citizens' perceptions of what constitutes relevant information about the EU as well as its importance in relation to their lives are culturally determined. Third, this study illustrates how important it is for public relations to be involved in strategic management. Public organizations need to invest more resources in communicating within and outside their own structures. Having public relations counsellors among their management group may contribute to this. Although the NPS model of public organizations is more citizen-oriented than the previous model, public organizations continue to implement a type of communication which either aims at providing knowledge on a specific matter (information on policy) or aims at influencing public groupings in their attitudes and behaviours towards social problems and required actions (information/communication as policy) rather than a strategy of consultation and dialogue with the organization's influential publics (communication in policy). Not forgetting the relevance that these types of communication have for the existence of public organizations it is important to look for solutions other than a one-way type of communication, and standing more on two-way communication and mediation/consultation with their influential publics. The findings of this study also provide further support for the theoretical dimensions of public relations behaviour, which should be reflective and educational. However, the results also suggest that further theorizing on this subject is warranted. Finally, to a lesser degree, this study has also theoretical implications for the relationship between public relations and marketing communications, especially in the case of promoting a policy/ behaviour.

In addition to these theoretical implications, the outcomes from this investigation also revealed several important implications for the individual practitioner in the field, as well as for the public relations profession as a whole. The results indicate that EU programmes, aiming at communicating with publics from more than one country, should take into consideration local and cultural priorities by using research to create two-way communications with publics. In collaborative advocacy practitioners listen as well as argue. Persuasive communication, however educational and well intended, are not suited to the activities of public organizations, which by definition are social oriented towards the well-being of citizens. As a final point, new technologies such e-governance and e-democracy have extended the possibilities for public participation in the political arena. Public relations practitioners would be well advised to learn to use Internet sources better as a tool for enhancing dialogue between parties.

7.3 Limitations of the present study

Comparative analyses in communications for public organizations and public relations have been neither very extensive in terms of the number of factors analyzed nor very plentiful. Unlike research in European studies and political science, studies on the effects of PR activities in different countries are complex and rather difficult to explore empirically. Many variables need to be taken into consideration for the results to be sufficiently reliable. This investigation is one attempt to fill this gap in comparative public relations studies while bearing in mind that create the various limitations that comparative studies may have in terms of validity and generalizability. Criticism of this study may relate to the applicability of the theoretical background in relation to the empirical data, to the formulation of the research question and to the results achieved.

The theoretical background is open to criticism over the models of communications, parameters for assessing public-organization relationships and theories of public diplomacy and propaganda selected. The choices of theories and models were discussed and clarified in the literature review. Many models were available, in particular for assessing public-organization relationships, but the choice in favour of trust, image, involvement and commitment as parameters seemed the best in seeking to explain the specific European socio-cultural context, mostly because these parameters are emotionally bounded. Additionally, these parameters have been employed in other studies on public organizations with relatively good results. Theories of public diplomacy and propaganda were part of the classical literature on political campaigning and the formation of national image abroad thus they were included in theoretical background for the purpose of explaining specific characteristics of the policy decisions by the European Union.

A second criticism relates to the empirical data. Using external data such as reports provided by opinion polling organizations has the advantage of including large populations but the disadvantage of having limited material for assessing changes in citizens' opinions. The data from the EU image Eurobarometer surveys provided only a general idea of what Europeans thought about the European Union. There was no specification of what it was meant by positive, neutral or negative images. Also, the lack of secondary variables did not help in supporting the hypothesis that the decreasing number of people who had a positive EU image was related to the ineffectiveness of EU communication activities and campaigns. A similar problem was encountered with the trust parameter. The data provided by Eurobarometer did not differentiate the level of trust between different EU publics. According to Luoma-aho (2005) and other scholars (Prêtre 2000; Sztompka 1997) there are at least six categories of trust, namely, burning trust or faith, blind or naïve trust, keen or sensitive trust, reasonable or healthy trust, confidence or cool trust and critical or suspicious trust. Each of these implies different levels of commitment and involvement and it determines the status of public organizations' relationships with their publics. It is said that public organizations should aim at a level of trust that is reasonable, healthy, confident or rather cool, where the official body does not aim to achieve total acceptance of all its actions, but rather understanding and reasonable trust (Prêtre 2000, 117). This is called neutral commitment. The idea of neutrality is nevertheless beneficial in understanding public trust in public organizations, as it defines the critical distance for democratic action and equality. The lack of these systematic factors is considered a limitation of this investigation. In fact, the analyses of Study IV parameters were inductively related to the research questions and may be disconfirmed or confirmed by further and more specific studies.

Additionally the five-year frame can be considered a short period for investigating communicational and behavioural changes. It was not possible to conduct a more extensive research on citizens' opinions about the EU for reasons of time, size of the sample and availability of data. Much of the data provided in Eurobarometer surveys is not comparable over longer periods. The issues discussed in those reports change frequently, making meta-analysis extremely difficult and somehow impossible to be performed. Although Eurobarometer surveys has tended to ask the same set of questions each time, this set has changed since Gallup started to survey the European context, some parts of the initial set of questions have been discarded, other questions have been added and some are used only in part, but not regularly tracked. Yet, Eurobarometer surveys are not exhaustive in assessing the effects of EU campaigning on citizens' opinions, but, because of the size of the sample, Eurobarometer surveys were regarded as supplying the best data for comparing different parameters on a large scale. It is important to bear in mind that behavioural changes are the results of complex and multiple variables which would have required the full attention of the researcher. In this investigation data on citizens' opinions was not considered the first and most important variable in analysing EU communication strategies. It was mostly seen as one of the validation variables in support of the main hypotheses.

One of empirical problems encountered was the recruitment of news journalists for the online survey. Recruiting journalists who write about EU affairs was a difficult task. Overall, 14 Finnish journalists and 40 Italians were contacted by phone but only 10 Finnish and 20 Italian journalists actually replied to the questionnaire. After recruitment, a lot of additional time and planning were invested in re-contacting the journalists reminding them to fill in the questionnaire, explaining some questions, and following the results up. The questionnaire was also problematic regarding how journalists interpreted certain questions. The questionnaire was first constructed in English and afterwards translated into the Finnish and Italian languages. Although the translations were double-checked by native speakers for correspondences of meanings, the cultural factor had in part biased the interpretation of the questions. This is a limitation which intercultural research often faces and which may be resolved by re-formulating the questions. Nevertheless, there is no empirical certitude that re-formulating the questions will exclude misinterpretations.

Another criticism may be addressed to the limited size of the sample investigated. Had more journalists been interviewed, the researcher might have obtained additional insights of relevance to the study. However, the questionnaires for journalists reached saturation point, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Toward the end of the analysis, the researcher found that journalists repeatedly selected similar answers and themes and the categories discussed in the open questions were very alike. Thus no significantly different data was emerging. The same criticism of the sample size may be levelled at the interviews with EU officers. Yet, in organizations which are small and homogeneous in size and structure, it is sufficient to interview the key informant to obtain accurate knowledge on the topic of the inquiry. Other studies (Yun 2006; Kozlowski and Klein 2000) on governmental organizations have applied the Single Respondent Organizational Survey (SROS) method to their data collection with good results. The structure and organization of the EU offices in these two countries were very homogeneous and small in terms of workforce. Thus SROS method could be considered appropriate. Further interviews with other EU officers may have increased knowledge of EU activities but it would not necessarily have added more positive or negative assessments on EU information quality and efficacy.

A final area in which this study may be open to criticism is whether the research results are in fact the product of the thinking of the researcher or rather them really represent the facts of the matter. Although the researcher made a conscious effort to maintain an appropriate distance by keeping a research journal and strove to constantly keep the research questions in the forefront, the openness and support of the researcher for this study may have induced the researcher to make favourable interpretations as much as the researcher's previous working experiences has been within the EU context. It is obvious that, during the process of theoretical study, the researcher will have preferred certain theories over others and that these preferences may have even determined the choices made, but as Luoma-aho (2005) has stated in the human sciences such preferences can never be totally avoided and as long as procedures are transparent and clearly presented others can judge for themselves whether the choices made were just or suitable. The role of research is to observe and examine, rather than judge (ibid, 312).

7.3.1 Validity of the findings

The validity of the results of this study is limited to the contexts of Italy and Finland and to the five-year period investigated. EU communication strategies have already changed since the beginning of this study and thus these findings need to be considered as an evaluation of past decisions rather than the current status of EU policy in this area. Thus the validity of the study concerns the analysis of past decisions on information and communication actions and on the possibility of using the findings for learning from mistakes and making changes in future policies, where these have not already been done.

A limitation of the validity of this study is the assessment of EU information activities, which was based more on EU officers' interpretations of assessments of their work at the local level than on EU policies and directives. EU officers tended to discuss EU policy effects on the local population as a personal achievement. Thus it was rather difficult to penetrate the official representation. The construct of validity in this study may also have been hampered by social desirability bias. The results of the EU officers' interviews strongly suggested a tendency towards social desirability, despite some prior actions to address such bias in the wording of items in the final instrument. It should be noted, however, that whether and how much social desirability biased the measurements is unknown.

Although hypotheses were put forward for testing, this study was more of an exploratory one, which attempted to initiate a programme of research for comparative public relations with reference to public organizations. As a first step toward advanced theory building and testing, this study proposed multivariate hypotheses and research questions for each of the contextual variables and the constructs of public relations in order to orient future research. This study, however, acknowledges the inherent limitation of multivariate analyses in that the techniques cannot completely capture the full complexity of the relations between and among the contextual variables in a case like the European Union. Only simultaneous, integrated, and triangulated investigations can approximate the actual size and direction of the association or effect of each contextual variable in the EU context.

7.3.2 Generalizability of the findings

The findings have different levels of generalizability because they came from five different analyses. First, the six EU documents consisted of all the information and communication policies formulated during the period analyzed. Thus, these results may have a high level of generalizability because they represent a whole population. The second case, the analysis of EU officers interviews can be considered generalizable regarding the nature of the communication activities developed, the quantity/type of printed material available at the national and European levels, the financial sources of local offices, their partnership with other civic groups for implementing such activities, and their educational activities and types of contacts with the general public. However, in terms of assessing EU information quality and efficacy there is no guarantee that they represent the general assessment of the citizens of these two countries. The third analysis, EU media relations, is based on the responses of thirty Finnish and Italian journalists, who write/have written about the EU. This sample resulted to be smaller than had been hoped for partly because the specific characteristics of the sample reduced the number of news reporters to be included in the study and partly because of the journalists' low response rate. Overall, this situation may guarantee the high generalizability of the findings to the specific population.

The fourth and the fifth analyses, the findings on the promotion of a European identity and those related to changes in citizens' opinions about EU, cannot be entirely generalized. The studies on the activities relating to the promotion of a European identity were only conducted through selected online and printed materials and thus they were not exhaustive of all EU promotional actions, while the study on citizens' opinions would have required specific questions which were not available in the chosen sources of data and a longer period of data collection.

7.4 Challenges for further research

The challenges for this and other research on the subject are many. In the first place, little public relations research exists on government affairs and less research of this kind has yet been conducted in a comparative manner. Moreover, there is currently a lack of suitable data on public organizations operating in international contexts. The present study has taken the first step in harnessing comparative public relations research for public organizations, yet much remains to be done.

This study was a comparative analysis of EU communication strategies in two member states. The findings are mostly explanatory in nature and provide a general account of the situation regarding EU communication in those countries. Further research on the effects of EU information and communication activities on citizens' opinion formation would provide more insights in the nature and quality of EU communication. It would be useful to extend the analysis on the concepts of image, trust, commitment and involvement by deploying a more detailed questionnaire for Finnish and Italian citizens. Such a questionnaire should investigate in particular the meanings associated with positive, neutral and negative EU images, levels of trust, commitment and types of involvement. This data will be of use in developing new proposals for enhancing the image of EU and trust in EU institutions. In order to collect a wider representative sample of the Finnish and Italian populations, it might be helpful to enlist the technical support of an external survey company.

Although several comparative studies have been published on EU news coverage in national news media, the findings of those investigations have dealt with quantifying the visibility of the EU in national news media and in the tonality of the news reporting. Little work has been done on source-reporter relationships, with the EU as source of information and national journalists as reporters. This study was a first attempt at filming this gap in the research. The impact of source-reporter relationships on organizations' decisions in media relations also requires more attention.

Further research on EU communication strategies is necessary in order to investigate the situation in other EU member states. It would be extremely interesting to analyse the Eastern European context and Eastern Europeans' perceptions and opinions of EU communications. There is still so little qualitative material on a larger and comparative scale on EU communication strategies, and it would be extremely useful to extend the present research to other countries and compare results. Moreover, EU policies are in a state of flux both within each single member state and within the European Union as a consequence of the economic, social and political mutations that characterize the present era. The economic, social and political climates are specific systematic variables which affect the communication of public organizations, especially, the communication of governments. Changes in these variables affect communication models, strategies and approaches. Governments and public organizations at present face many changes and challenges in their functions and funding and consequently research should to some degree follow these trends. It should produce information on the direction of development. The present study has already shown a process of development in the management of EU communication activities between the Prodi and Barroso Commissions. The EU documents analysed represent both presidents' management styles since Barroso was nominated in 2004 and these documents were produced between 2001 and beginning of 2006. The change in the leadership in the European Commission generated an organizational renovation in responsibilities, tasks and vision with respect to information and communication policies. So, what will happen after the Barroso Commission? Will the European Commission change its management style towards a full dialogic approach which aims at building mutual and beneficial relationships with different publics? Will we see some communicational and behavioural changes? If it is true that on both the individual and social levels we are the products of our past, and that the past is always being replayed in the present, a full understanding of political communication today cannot be achieved without reference to past practices and beliefs (Mander 1998, xi) nor can the communication activities of the European Union.

7.5 Concluding observations

Especially in the last ten years, the European Union has increased its power and influence on the decision-making processes of its member states and also outside in the international arena. The process of integration is only beginning and it promises to include many more features and countries. In this process, communicating to EU publics and citizens, is very important. Support for and trust in EU institutions legitimatize EU functions and allow the implementation of more policies. Support and trust depends on citizens' knowledge of the EU and on their involvement. Thus communication and informing citizens about what EU does has become an important issue for EU institutions. This investigation of EU information and communication policies aimed at understanding EU ideas on communicating with its different publics. It looked at EU policies and their effects at the national level on the organization of information activities and the effects they produced on the knowledge of the EU in a five-year time. The study was intended as a comprehensive and representative study of all EU communication problems in Finland and in Italy. It is primarily a collection of insights into how European institutions communicate with their different publics and how cultural differences affect the receptions of EU messages among different groups.

The challenges for the researcher were interculturally manifold. It was extremely difficult to embark on a multi-method-study with integrated qualitative and quantitative perspectives in a situation where the analytical contexts were very different. A general cultural observation can be made in relation to disclosing information to third parties. Collecting material in Finland turned out to be a realistic task. Public officers and journalists were approachable and willing to provide all information required. As is generally known, Finland is among the most transparent and accountable countries in the world. In contrast, it was extremely difficult to get material from Italy apart from of the official documents. There is still a general, tacit rule that disclosing organizational information is not necessarily a good thing to do. Public organizations tend to keep a certain level of secrecy as protection from public criticism. Only in unofficial conversations were the interviewees more willing to share their opinions and thoughts. In the online questionnaire, it was surprisely interesting to read what the interviewees thought about EU information. Especially for the Italian sample, the open-ended answers revealed the need of journalists to be listened, to be able to say frankly what they thought. Yet, the majority of Italian public organizations, especially in the public administrations, have in their vision statements that they embrace the principles of transparency, accountability and responsibility. There is thus a larger difference in both societies in terms of disclosing information and defining what are transparency, accountability and responsibility. This is a difference which goes behind the simple fact of the European Union's membership.

Being part of the European Union has had its impact on organizational structures and regulations, but has little changed the mentality of people. We could argue that the process of Europeanization is affecting the "shape" of people, not the "soul". Even if the younger generations of Finns and Italians are more alike than past generations, this is more a process of globalisation than Europeanization. It is extremely important to emphasise that the main functions of the European Union are not to shape people, but to inform and communicate with people about different aspects of it, bearing in mind local and cultural differences within the aims of promoting transparency, accessibility, and responsibility among its institutions and, above all, public trust in EU institutions and work. Can EU communications help Europeans communicate better and more effectively among themselves about the European Union and with EU officers? We have reason to think the answer to this question has an affirmative answer. At least past history leads us to think it is possible; however, along what precise path EU communications may lead us remains a subject for future studies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - Interview guide for EU officers

Pre-brief
My name is Chiara Valentini and I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. I am collecting information for a research project about the promotion of the European Union. The aim of this interview is to collect data about communication strategies developed by the Finnish and Italian local EU offices towards their citizens. The information gathered will be used for academic purposes. The idea is to obtain more information about the role of each country in the promotion of EU institutions and policies. A similar interview will be carried out with the main (Italian/Finnish) persons responsible for EU information. I may also use this information in professional articles, conference papers, or other publications in the future. However, your name will not be associated with any direct quotations. I will record this interview on audiotape in order to ensure accuracy when I later review and analyze your responses. Do you have any questions before I proceed?

Consent
Do I have your permission to conduct and audio record this interview? (For face-to-face interviews, obtain signature. For telephone interviews, read informed consent form and state date and time.)

Date: ____________________
Signature: ____________________

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *Please tell me your first name and current position, duties, and responsibilities.*

   ____
   ____

2. *What kinds of experience have you had of EU activities?(Number of years? Types of organizations? Positions held?)*

   ____
   ____

3. *How is the EU information network (Finland/Italy) organized? What types of organizations provide information for dissemination to citizens and other publics?(Please briefly describe the structures and functions of the national information network).*

   ____
   ____

4. *In your experience, how would you describe the types of EU information/communication programmes that you have worked with and what has been your role in these programmes? (What were some of the functions and activities that best describe these EU programmes and roles?)*

5. *Please describe the type of communication or public relations strategies and tactics you most often approved or relied on to communicate with your organization's publics.*

6. *Who decide what and how to inform the citizens? Who are the mainly persons responsible for the (Finnish/Italian) communication strategies?*

7. *Please describe the type of communication or public relations activities developed in the last 3 years to inform citizens of EU policies. (Please provide a brief description which campaigns/events/materials were made by who and how).*

8. *How did the citizens perceive EU institutions and communication campaigns?*

9. *What do citizens think about those information strategies? Do they feel well informed or not? Do they feel they have objective information about EU regulations or do they feel the information was not enough or not accurate?*

10. *How did citizens communicate with or respond to you and your organization? How important was it to you or your organization to obtain feedback from them?*

11. *What are the major fears of (Finns/Italians)in relation to EU policies and why?*

12. *How do you evaluate the outcomes of your various public relations and communication programmes or identify lessons learned?*

13. *How much weight do the citizens' opinions have in the development of new communication actions?*

14. *Please describe the types of communication or public relations activities which are planned to be undertaken in the next 2 years to inform citizens of EU policies.*

15. *In your opinion what is the role of the (Finnish/Italian) government in relation to the promotion of EU policies?*

16. *What agreements has the (Finnish/Italian) government signed with the European Union for information and communication activities? And which roles and functions were given to the (Finnish/Italian) government for the national implementation of EU regulations?*

17. *In relations to these 5 themes: EU enlargement, the single currency, the future of the EU, the role of the EU in the world, EU security and defence policy, please mention some positive and/or negative aspects, which, in your opinion, are affecting/will affect (Finnish/Italian) society.*

Debrief
This concludes the interview. Thank you for your participation. Again, the purpose of my study is to collect data about communication strategies developed by the Finnish and Italian governments towards their citizens and to determine how the theories of public relations might be applied to that data. Your participation in this study and the information you have provided has been very useful. Please contact my advisor, Dr. Jaakko Lehtonen, or me, using the information on the copy of the consent form that has been provided to you, if you have questions or comments about this study.

Chiara Valentini, PhD candidate
Department of Communication
University of Jyväskylä
Email: c.valentini@cc.jyu.fi

APPENDIX 2 - Solicitation letter for journalists

Dear Mr./Ms…..
My name is Chiara Valentini and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. The secretary of the newspaper you are working for gave me your contact information. I have been told you have agreed to help me with my project but I would like to ask you to kindly confirm your willingness to collaborate in this survey I am undertaking about the role of Finnish and Italian journalists in European integration. Specifically I am interested in gathering statistical data to better understand the role that Finnish and Italian news media have in the process of European integration.
The survey is part of my doctoral dissertation project and is an online questionnaire addressed to news journalists who write or have written articles on EU affairs in their national/regional/local newspapers and/or magazines. It is composed of 3 sections, and most of the questions have a closed answer. All the information received through this questionnaire will be handled with the maximum respect for privacy. No names or references which may reveal the identity of the respondents will be used. The data collected will be used for academic purposes. Your participation would involve completing the 4-page questionnaire, and it would take about 15-20 minutes.
I would really appreciate if you could confirm your participation in the project. Following your confirmation, I will send you a copy of the questionnaire via email with more detailed information on my research, which is independent of governmental funding. The time scheduled to complete it and send back it is one month from the receiving date. Your collaboration and feedback are considered very valuable for the outcome of the project.
For further information or clarification, do not hesitate to contact me.
Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Chiara Valentini, PhD candidate
Department of Communication
University of Jyväskylä
Email: c.valentini@cc.jyu.fi

APPENDIX 3 - Questionnaire for journalists

Introduction: This questionnaire is part of a research project called "Promoting the European Union", which started in January 2004 as part of my doctoral programme in Organizational Communication and Public Relations at the Department of Communication, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. The main idea is to analyse and compare EU communication strategies in Finland and in Italy to find out what similarities and differences there are in media coverage and citizens' perceptions of EU issues between these countries. The aim of this questionnaire is to gather some statistical data to understand the role that the mass media have in the process of European integration. Hence, your collaboration is essential for the reliability of the research project.
This questionnaire is addressed to journalists reporting EU information in local/ regional/ national journals/magazines in Finland and in Italy. If you have colleagues in a similar situation, please forward this questionnaire to them.

Structure: The majority of questions are closed (you need to put an X in the grey square next to your selection of answer), while some of them are open-ended (you can type your answer in the grey space). This questionnaire is divided into three sections plus a fourth optional section. The first section deals with some general information about the interviewee; the second section deals with training for journalists and aims at discovering how media training for reporting EU issues is perceived at the national, regional and local level. The third section considers different aspects such as the EU agenda in relation to the national agenda, national media coverage of EU issues and the opinion that journalists have about EU-distributed information. The fourth section is open-ended for your comments and remarks.

Time requested: It will take 15-20 minutes to fill-up this questionnaire.

Privacy: All the information received through this questionnaire will be handled with the maximum respect for privacy. No names or references which may reveal the identity of the respondents will be used. The data collected will be used for academic purposes.

If you have any doubts or if you want to know more about this project, you can write me at c.valentini@cc.jyu.fi

1. Section one: general information

1. Sex: F ☐ M ☐
2. Age: 20-30 ☐ 30-40 ☐ 40-50 ☐ over 50☐

3. Level of education:

4. Years of activities in journalism:

5. Position: Journalist ☐ Reporter ☐ Columnist ☐ Correspondent ☐ Editor ☐ Editor-in-chief ☐ Other (please specify)

6. Name of Journal/ Magazine:

7. Type of contract: permanent ☐ temporary ☐ free-lance ☐

2. Section two: EU media training

1. Have you ever participated to any media training for reporting EU information?
   Yes☐ No☐ (If your answer is "No", please go directly to question 8)

2. Who organized it?
   ☐ local authority
   ☐ regional authority
   ☐ national authority
   ☐ European authority
   ☐ other (please specify which type of organization)

3. How did you find this training?
   ☐ necessary
   ☐ useful
   ☐ too generic
   ☐ not useful at all
   ☐ don't know

4. Do you feel you are more prepared to write about EU policies since this training?
   Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

5. Do you think you have changed the way you report EU information since this training?
   Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

6. Your opinion on EU policies and institutions after this training has…..
   ☐ became more positive
   ☐ remained the same
   ☐ became more negative
   ☐ don't know

7. Would you like to attend further training on reporting EU information?
   Yes☐ No☐ Maybe☐

   (Questions 8-11, only if you have answered "No" to question 1)
8. Are you planning to participate in the near future in a media training scheme for reporting EU issues?
   Yes☐ No☐ Maybe☐

9. How important for your job is media training in reporting EU issues?
   ☐ extremely important
   ☐ a lot
   ☐ a plus but not fundamental
   ☐ not so important
   ☐ not necessary at all
   ☐ don't know

10. What do you think media training will give you? (Name 3 aspects)
    a)
    b)
    c)

11. Do you think every journalist who writes about EU issues should attend media training on EU reporting?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

3. Section three: reporting EU issues and the role of the mass media

1. Your opinion on EU policies and institutions is currently…..
   ☐ very supportive
   ☐ positive
   ☐ neither positive nor negative
   ☐ extremely critical
   ☐ negative

2. Name 3 aspects that in your opinion are necessary in order to report EU issues:
   a)
   b)
   c)

3. Name 3 characteristics that a reader would like to find in a good quality news report on EU issues:
   a)

b)
c)

4. By reporting EU issues your journal/magazine wants to…. (you can cross several options)
   - [ ] be the top journal/magazine in your country
   - [ ] increase the number of readers
   - [ ] be pro EU
   - [ ] be anti-EU
   - [ ] be promotional in either a positive or negative way
   - [ ] satisfy readers' need for information
   - [ ] be considered an accredited EU source of information
   - [ ] enhance public debate about the specific topic reported
   - [ ] other (please specify one or more aspects you believe are important for your journal/magazine)

5. For you as a journalist, it is important in reporting EU issues to…(you can cross several options)
   - [ ] be objective
   - [ ] be critical
   - [ ] be supportive
   - [ ] enhance public debate
   - [ ] promote your journal/magazine
   - [ ] do what your journal/magazine expects you to do for it
   - [ ] express your opinion on the topic in question
   - [ ] be as clear as possible in reporting EU issues
   - [ ] report what people want to read
   - [ ] other (Please specify one or more themes you believe are important)

6. In your opinion, what are the main topics on the national agenda of your country? (Please name 3 aspects)
   a)
   b)
   c)

7. In your opinion, what are the main topics of the EU agenda? (Please name 3 aspects)
   a)
   b)
   c)

8. Do you think the national agenda of your country sometimes clashes with the EU agenda?
   Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

(If your answer is yes, please give an example of when this has happened)

9. How important is the EU agenda in your daily/weekly news reporting ?
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ it has a good weight
   - ☐ generally not so much
   - ☐ depends on the issue discussed
   - ☐ depends on the relevance at national/regional/local level
   - ☐ it is seldom covered
   - ☐ it is not discussed at all

10. How much media coverage does your journal/magazine usually give to EU issues?
    - ☐ very much
    - ☐ enough space
    - ☐ some
    - ☐ generally not much, but when big issues are discussed in other journals/magazines the news is covered by our journal/magazine as well.

11. Do you think your journal/magazine should give more space to EU issues?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

12. In your opinion, why do national news media in general not give enough space to EU issues in their daily coverage? (you can cross several options)
    - ☐ most of the topics are not interesting
    - ☐ EU issues are not sensationalistic
    - ☐ nobody is interested in procedural aspects related to EU decision-making
    - ☐ EU issues are too remote from the national interest
    - ☐ coverage of EU news does not pay off
    - ☐ EU issues do not attract as many readers as local issues do
    - ☐ other (please specify one or more aspects)
    - ☐ don't know

13. Do you think reporting EU issues interests your readers?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

14. What do you think are the main reasons for the recent increase in debate on the EU at the national level? (Name 3 aspects)
    a)
    b)
    c)

15. In your opinion, how much do EU institutions have influence on the media agenda in your country?
    - ☐ too much
    - ☐ a lot
    - ☐ the right amount
    - ☐ little
    - ☐ none
    - ☐ don't know

16. Do you think that in the last 10 years the way of practising journalism has changed?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

17. Can you attribute this change or no change partly to the increasing power of European Union and its regulations in media policies?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

18. You see your job as journalist reporting EU issues more as a…..
    - ☐ promoter of the EU cause
    - ☐ facilitator of EU information
    - ☐ opponent of the EU cause
    - ☐ demystiefier of the EU cause
    - ☐ other (Please specify one or more aspects)

19. How much does your way of presenting EU issues influence readers' opinions on that issue?
    - ☐ very much
    - ☐ the right amount
    - ☐ little
    - ☐ no influence
    - ☐ readers of this journal/magazine are not influenced by our news
    - ☐ don't know

20. Do you think that you as a journalist have some responsibilities in relation to possible changes in the opinion that your country has of the EU?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

21. Do you feel external authorities/organizations have influenced or are influencing your choices in presenting EU issues ?
    Yes☐ No☐ Don't know☐

22. How would you characterize EU communication?
    - ☐ informative
    - ☐ promotional
    - ☐ educational

- [ ] propagandistic
- [ ] other (Please specify one or more adjectives)

23. How do you think the general public in your country see EU communication?
    - [ ] informative
    - [ ] promotional
    - [ ] educational
    - [ ] propagandistic
    - [ ] other (Please specify one or more adjectives)

24. Name 3 characteristics that you associate with "propaganda and media"
    a)
    b)
    c)

25. Name 3 characteristics that you associate with "freedom and education"
    a)
    b)
    c)

4. Section four: comments

This section is not compulsory but I would very much appreciate it if you could fill it in. Here you can freely write your thoughts in relation to your job as an EU journalist. Any comments, ideas or issues which are at the moment very important in your journal/magazine and that you believe may also be relevant to the national debate about the EU are more than welcome.

Please send the complete questionnaire to this email address: c.valentini@cc.jyu.fi
Thank you for your collaboration!

Chiara Valentini, PhD candidate
Department of Communication
University of Jyväskylä
Email: c.valentini@cc.jyu.fi

N.B.: The results of this investigation will be available at webpage http://www.chiara-valentini.org/projects.htm approximately in April 2006.