



UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITOLOGY

**FROM LIKE TO MILLENNIAL DIPLOMACY  
- EU STRATEGY CAMPAIGNS IN ENGAGING  
YOUNG EUROPEANS  
- master thesis -**

Candidate  
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Index number: 835/II-PIR

Mentor  
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Sarajevo, September 2023

2023

Lejla Čamo

From like to millennial diplomacy  
- EU strategy campaigns in engaging young Europeans



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## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my thesis supervisor Prof. dr Nedžma Džananović Miraščija. Her guidance, support, and commitment throughout the entire journey of my master's thesis have been irreplaceable. Her insightful feedback, constructive criticism, and encouragement have pushed me to strive for excellence and reach new heights in my research and my academic growth.

In this unpredictable expedition called life, we rarely walk alone. My every twist and turn felt a little easier knowing I had an ensemble of people who have guided, supported, and believed in me. To all who have laughed with me, carried me in silence during my low notes, and cheered for my high ones, my heart brims with gratitude. Through all the challenges and sweet moments, your persistent presence has been the gentle nudge guiding me forward. For the love, faith, and countless much needed hugs, while “I stubbornly did it my way”- from the depths of my heart, thank you.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUD</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>EUIC</b>	EU Information Centre (network)
<b>EUIP</b>	EU Info Point
<b>EU MS</b>	EU Member State (embassies)
<b>EUNIC</b>	European Union National Institutes for Culture
<b>EU Office</b>	EUD and EUSR
<b>FBiH</b>	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>HoD</b>	Head of Delegation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>PR</b>	Public Relations
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Questions and Answers
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QC</b>	Quality Control
<b>RS</b>	Republika Srpska
<b>SM</b>	Social Media
<b>TG</b>	Target Group

## **1. Introduction**

In the chronicles of diplomacy, engagement strategies have constantly evolved, adapting to social and technological innovations. The world watched as the telegram, once the most important communication tool in diplomacy, made way for the telephone, which, in turn was soon overshadowed by the email. Today, in an era dominated by social media and characterized by the rise of the millennial generation the rhythm of international relations and diplomatic dialogue is often set to clicks, shares, and likes on platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. With a single tweet or an Instagram post, diplomatic opinions can be broadcasted instantaneously to millions, provoking real-time responses.

Millennials, often addressed as the “digital generation” grew up in an era of rapid technological development and possess distinct values, goals, and challenges compared to their ancestors. Their way of engaging with the world, shaped by social media and immediate connectivity, demands a reimagining of traditional diplomatic strategies. As the European Union seeks to remain relevant and foster a sense of unity among its present and future member states, understanding this generational shift is principal and only way to go. This master thesis” From Like to Millennial Diplomacy- EU Strategy Campaigns in Engaging Young Europeans” tries to explore the metamorphosis from traditional outreach to “millennial diplomacy.

For instance, the impactful tweet from Estonia's then-president Toomas Hendrik Ilves in 2014 defending his country’s digital advancement against a sceptical journalist, or the European Commission's use of Instagram stories in 2019 to highlight behind-the-scenes preparations for the State of the Union Address. Such instances illustrate how diplomatic dialogues and narratives have expanded beyond closed-door meetings and into the public digital domain.

This seismic shift in communication brings to the front an unique challenge and opportunity for institutions like the European Union (EU), a corporation built on the principles of cooperation, unity, and shared identity, that a communication with this digitally-native generation becomes imperative. Through this lens, it will be explored how the EU is not just adapting, but reshaping its diplomatic narrative to resonate in the age of likes, tweets, and shares. Because the world has a new tactics and diplomacy has just been added to the chat group.



## **2. Theoretical Framework and Research Design**

### *2.1. Research problem and context*

The present research endeavours seek to critically review the European Union's (EU) ventures into public diplomacy, particularly those initiatives directed at the millennial demographic. Given the millennials' unique position as the bridge between a pre-digital age and a dominantly digital present, their perceptions of and interactions with institutional entities like the EU offer invaluable insights into the broader effectiveness of diplomatic happenings in the digital age.

We find ourselves at a unique stage in history, characterized by rapid advancements in technology and an all-encompassing digital metamorphosis. This is not just an era of digital natives but is also marking the dawn of an age dominated by artificial intelligence and hyper-connected realities. Diplomacy, as a historically rooted practice, has conventionally revolved around human interaction, negotiation, and face-to-face engagements. However, the current digital environment demands a re-evaluation of these age-old practices. This study endeavours to determine how such traditionally rooted diplomatic practices are evolving to accommodate the imperatives of the digital age.

Central to this academic exploration is the expanding realm of social media which incorporates reaching out to the public and preserving the democratic legitimacy of the EU. These platforms, characterized by their immediacy, vast reach, and dynamic user engagement, represent both a challenge and an opportunity for institutional diplomacy. How does an institutional entity like the EU, with its bureaucratic mind-set and need for consistency in messaging, navigate such an unpredictable landscape? For the EU, this question assumes particular significance due to its exceptional institutional structure. Not like the nation-states, the EU's institutions do not have a direct democratic mandate or fundamental legitimacy in the traditional sense. Instead, the EU creates its legitimacy straight through the consensus and support of its member states and, importantly, the European population. As such, the EU must constantly work to engage with the public, demonstrating its relevance, and build trust. On one hand, they offer incomparable access to vast parts of the global population and allow for instantaneous communication. On the other hand, their short-lived nature, coupled with the rapidity with which narratives can shift, presents a unique set of challenges. Furthermore, how do these virtual engagements compare with traditional forms of diplomacy? Do they complement, or disrupt the established diplomatic paradigms?

Millennials, having come of age during this seismic shift from analogue to digital, occupy a unique vantage point. Their experiences, perceptions, and interactions with the EU's public diplomacy initiatives provide a microcosm into the broader successes and challenges of digital

diplomacy. It is this demographics' perceptions and their derived implications for the EU's diplomatic architecture that this study seeks to explain and analyse in-depth.

## *2.2.Theoretical framework*

This research will be based on the substantial content analysis of the existing body of research that explores public diplomacy and millennial engagement, especially in the context of technological advancements. Leveraging insights from prior studies, which have critically evaluated the evolving nature of public diplomacy in the digital age, the aim is to extend the discourse by emphasizing the unique dynamics that characterize the EU's outreach towards its younger demographic. This theoretical grounding not only offers a contextual lens through which it is possible to assess current strategies but also serves as a comparative starting point for the given findings.

## *2.3.Scientific Objectives*

The European Union's diplomatic strategies have always been immense and diverse, but engaging with millennials presents unique challenges and opportunities. This research aims to explore deep into this relationship, with the following key objectives such as looking at the trace of the evolution of the EU's diplomacy tools and strategies, exploring how they have adapted to meet the needs and habits of a younger, tech-savvy generation and assessing the current state of the EU's diplomatic efforts targeting millennials but it will also shed light on the degree of success achieved in building democratic legitimacy within new generations through the EU diplomacy strategies. This involves understanding the depth and nature of these campaigns, and evaluating their impact. This research is not just about trying to understanding the present; it is also about preparing for the future and potential shifts in public diplomacy. After all, in the ever-evolving world, it is crucial for diplomacy to stay ahead of the curve, ensuring it remains relevant and effective.

## *2.4.Social Objectives*

The digital era has dramatically shifted the way millennials interact and perceive the world, and institutions like the European Union must adapt accordingly. As the lines between traditional and digital diplomacy are unclear, understanding the tools and strategies that resonate with this generation becomes imperative.

At the beginning, it will be attempted to balance the new and the old thorough analysis of diplomacy itself and social media's role in diplomatic engagement. The pros and cons of these platforms will be shown, especially when compared to classic diplomatic ways. This will show a clearer picture of how millennials perceive and engage with different forms of communication and EU's strategies.

Most researchers are most valuable when they are driven by actions. Using available findings, a set of best practices, personalized for the digital age, will be presented. This thesis will offer the EU tangible strategies to enhance their public diplomacy efforts with millennials. By focusing on this, the hope is to bridge any existing communication gaps and help the EU establish a resonant and enduring connection with the next generation of leaders and thinkers.

### *2.5.The system of hypotheses*

European Union's diplomatic strategies, especially reaching out to millennials, have new transformed methods and tactics. This transformation is partly attributed to the growing complexities of geopolitical situations and the rapid advances in communication technologies and its analysis demands a comprehensive historical and socio-political overview. In the context of strategies, a clear distinction arises between contemporary and traditional approaches. Modern EU diplomatic efforts, characterized by the use of social media and interactive content, provide a contrast to established methods that relied heavily on face-to-face interactions and official communications. However, the combination of these strategies presents both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms offer broader outreach, they also introduce complexities, notably the dissemination of misinformation and the constant need for adaptability to technological trends.

A noteworthy observation is that the EU's public diplomacy campaigns have diverse impact across different regions. This inequality is not illogical but is deeply embedded in each region's distinct socio-political environment. Factors such as the present democratic framework, dominant media consumption patterns, the established political culture, and specific historical affiliations with the EU significantly influence these variations. In addition, it will be explored if Bosnia and Herzegovina, being a transitional society, demonstrates unique elements that contribute to these variations, resulting in distinct patterns or challenges in its democratic development, media landscape, political culture, and relationship with the EU?

Besides, it is important to reflect on the specific variables that affect millennial perceptions towards the EU. Here, characteristics such as national identity, socio-economic background,

and educational accomplishment appear as dominant elements. Each of these factors plays a crucial role in shaping millennials' attitudes and perceptions, thereby influencing their overall temperament towards the EU.

The narrative and motivation of diplomatic campaigns play an important role in their success. For millennials, certain themes resonate more, including education, environmental concerns, cultural engagement, social justice, digital rights, and the broader concept of European integration and identity. Campaigns that align with these themes tend to have a deeper connection and understanding. Along with authenticity, that is making genuine engagement an imperative factor. Thus, any diplomatic campaign targeting this demographic should prioritize authentic engagement over sophisticated, corporate-style messaging.

Furthermore, it is important to illustrate that millennials are not merely passive observers but integral actors and influencers in the achievement of EU strategy goals. With the advanced technology platforms, which they did not possess during their childhood, millennials have significant influence in shaping political, social, and economic narratives. As such, they represent not just the future, but a vital and influential segment of the present European narrative, and their active participation and genuine engagement are essential components in accomplishing the EU's strategic objectives.

## *2.6. Research methodologies*

To research of European Union's public diplomacy strategies, especially concerning millennial engagement, demands a multidimensional research approach. This thesis will incorporate several research methods to ensure a holistic understanding and provide needed insights.

To begin with, a demanding literature review is foundational. This step involves a comprehensive examination of both academic and policy-oriented literature relevant to public diplomacy, millennial engagement, and the consumption of social media in diplomatic contexts. The objective here is not merely to familiarize oneself with the existing knowledge but to separate established theories, operative concepts, and recognized best practices. A clear understanding of previous works offers a platform upon which fresh insights can be created and contextualized.

The second methodological approach involves survey and focus groups. These tools provide an overview deeper into their attitudes and perceptions about the EU. By evaluating their level of exposure to EU public diplomacy initiatives and understanding their media consumption patterns, the research aims to extract the essential factors shaping their perceptions.

Following this, a case study analysis will be looked at. This method seeks to explore deep into select EU public diplomacy campaigns. By using techniques such as content analysis, the study will critically assess the core messages relayed in these campaigns. Furthermore, evaluating the response and impact of these messages among young audiences will offer insights into their effectiveness and relevance.

Lastly, expert interviews were conducted with a people who are present in public diplomacy and millennial engagement, these interviews will offer invaluable insights. They have shed light on the best practices in contemporary diplomatic strategies and explain potential challenges when positioning innovative campaign tactics to captivate young audiences.

In essence, this comprehensive research methodology endeavours to provide an all-inclusive view of the EU's millennial engagement. By putting together literature, practical case studies, direct audience feedback, and expert insights, the thesis hopes to offer new findings that can refine the EU's future diplomatic strategies.

### *2.7. The research timeline*

In essence, this half-year endeavour, while succinct in its span, is expansive in its depth, striving to offer a comprehensive perspective on the EU's diplomatic dialogues in a millennial-dominated era in the last decade.

## **3. Diplomacy: roots, relevance, and revision**

The course of European diplomacy since its inception in the 13th century lightens a fascinating evolution of strategies and tactics. As diplomacy transformed, the ancient tools that once defined it became insufficient for the difficulties of contemporary international relations. Today, modern diplomacy is a complex playground of strategies that stand as part of different relationships and objectives.

Defined briefly, diplomacy captures a non-violent method of managing international relations, emphasizing dialogue to facilitate bilateral communication, negotiations, and compromise. Yet, as the 21st century unfolds, it presents a range of challenges including conflicts between states, internal and external clashes, and the rising influence of powerful non-state entities. A prominent figure, Copeland, attributes the vague nature of lasting peace to the underutilization of diplomacy, emphasizing the need for dialogue.

Historically, diplomacy exceeds simple negotiation. It embodies discreet operations, including information assimilation, creating agreements, exercising unspoken judgment, cultivating goodwill, and prioritizing human connection. Tracing its roots, the Greeks initiated a modernization wave in the fourth and fifth centuries BC, which was later cultivated by French and Italian nobilities. In contemporary settings, the essential role of diplomacy in maintaining mutual state relations highlights its continued significance.

Since antiquity, diplomacy has been the key player of a political system, guiding state relations. (Lentner 1997) opined that traditional diplomacy centred on fostering bilateral state relations via representatives. The essence of this lies in the articulation of ideologies between governments and increasingly, with global organizations. This communication could be direct or facilitated through ambassadors.

In both domestic and international spheres, language emerges as a primary tool, encapsulating intentions and guiding international affairs. Despite its evolving nature, the core elements of diplomacy – its audience, language, and communication – have remained persistent, adapting to the ever-changing global scene.

The contrast between classical and contemporary diplomacy is predominantly characterized by the global shifts and challenges. While language remains the basis, its role has amplified, particularly in “talking to” newer generations, like the millennials.

### *3.1.The evolution of diplomacy: from renaissance courts to digital outreach*

Diplomacy, as a formal governmental system, is thought to have begun in Northern Italy during the early period of Renaissance, with the establishment of the first embassies in the 13th century.

It was not long before this Italian innovation flooded across Europe, with Milan groundbreaking the diplomatic outreach by posting a representative to the French court in 1455. This set a precedent, encouraging other major European nations to respond with similar gestures. The resolutions that underpin today’s diplomacy owe their genesis to this epoch. By the 18th century, the eastward expansion of this model saw Russia integrating these diplomatic practices. However, the strong changes in nations given by the French Revolution and following wars challenged this establishment, with Napoleon’s impatience with the particulars of diplomacy and his denial of diplomatic immunity causing outstanding commotions. Nonetheless, post-Napoleon Europe saw the Congress of Vienna in 1815 canonizing the hierarchy of diplomatic

ranks, a system that faced contention until the aftermath of World War II when the title of “ambassador” became standardized.

Historically, even in its most elementary form, diplomacy was always a response to mutually acknowledged political necessities. The variety of diplomacy, from its earliest beginnings, has reflected evolving political paradigms. While modern diplomatic norms have been heavily influenced by European systems, owing to their global domination over the past centuries, their genesis can be traced to the Greek city-states and their further improvement in the Italian city-states. This historic journey culminated around World War I, a turning point moment distinguishing “traditional” from “contemporary” diplomacy (Rourke and Boyer 2009).

The 19th century signalled the beginning of an end of the old-guard diplomacy that had, for so long, been characterized by European dominance, executive authority, bilateral negotiations, confidentiality, and an elitist approach (Nicholson 1972). The cataclysmic impact of World War I was a symbol of a transitional phase. This war not only indicated the decline of European imperial hegemony but also the fragmentation of powerful empires like the Ottoman, Austrian, Russian, and German. As the dust settled, growing powers, including the United States, Japan, and China, began to rise in the global world, either complementing or displacing the disappearing European powers. The transformation from “old diplomacy” to “new diplomacy” entailed a more expansive geographical outreach, increased multilateral engagements, democratization, open diplomacy, direct leader interactions, and public diplomacy. While these shifts were hailed as progressive, they were not lacking new challenges.

One of the milestones in this developing scene was the Peace Conference in Paris, which showcased the potentials of high-level multilateral diplomacy. The diplomat’s role expanded beyond simple political strategy, challenging skills in complex matters like international economics, arms control, and global communications. No longer was diplomacy the sole domain of the aristocracy; professionals, nevertheless of their social background, were welcomed based on their expertise. Women, breaking centuries-old barriers, began their venture into this male-dominated playground. Commitment to national ideologies became principal, and the one-time norm of using force in external relations was gradually reduced. Multilateralism overshadowed bilateralism, with international organizations becoming the point of diplomatic engagements. In certain specialized scenarios, the diplomat was not a career diplomat but a representative from specialized governmental bodies.

However, the last decades of the 20th century motioned even more transformative changes. The purity of state sovereignty began to decrease, expanding the diplomatic sphere to involve engagement with ordinary citizens. The digital revolution, characterised by information

technology and the internet, revolutionized diplomacy. Diplomats could now maintain real-time connections with their counterparts and international institutions. The technological boon not only improved the monotony of routine tasks but also improved the diplomat's efficiency, enabling them to focus on their ideal role: initiating and nurturing personal relationships. It is this digital transformation that promises to shape the future of diplomacy, making it more inclusive, direct, and impactful (Kappeler 1998).

### *3.2. Nature and essence of diplomacy*

Diplomacy, as a term, resonates as part of foreign affairs national and international areas. It captures a spectrum of concerns – from culture, economics, digitalization, to peace. International treaties, a product of meticulous negotiations by diplomats, further support the significance of diplomacy in shaping international relations.

Hayward (2018) articulately captured the essence of diplomacy as a domain influencing the fate of humanity. Its effective influence can either culminate in tragedies or blessings. Often dubbed as an art, diplomacy requires a particular blend of empathy, persuasion, and negotiation to navigate changing situations for mutually beneficial outcomes (Aiken 2016).

Historical literature reveals that the practice of diplomacy has its roots in various ancient civilizations, including the Middle East, China, Greece, the Roman Empire, Byzantium, medieval Europe, and the renaissance hubs of Italy (R. Cohen and Westbrook 2002) (Hamilton and Langhorne 1994) (Queller 1967) (Mattingly 2009) (Batora 2008).

In a world characterized by different states, diplomacy becomes a vital bond. The simple presence of multiple states demands their interaction under wide-ranging circumstances, thus giving rise to diplomatic engagements. Every state, driven by its fundamental need to dictate its fate and destiny, must necessarily factor in its interrelationships with neighbouring states (Watson 2013). States, understanding the wider implications of their external surroundings, must engage beyond pure observational distances, embracing diplomatic dialogues.

This discourse among states, highlighted by the mechanisms their governments arrange and a complex system of promises, treaties, and conventions, is the very essence of diplomacy (Watson 2013). Shared cultural heritages, mutual values, and active exchanges promote a higher level of interconnection (Bull, Hurrell, and Hoffman 2012).

Historically, sustained diplomatic conversations required more than just tangled interests among states. Successful diplomatic interactions typically emerged among state clusters located within confined geographical zones with a rich history of interconnections.



The 20th century indicated a more vibrant diplomatic dialogue that shaped global relations. As the threads of interdependence grew deeper, nations recognized the cruciality of collaboration. This era marks the birth of modern, collective diplomacy directed by specialized international entities, highlighting that while diplomacy's mechanisms may evolve, its essence remains unchanged (Watson 2013).

The digital revolution in recent decades has catalysed a communication paradigm shift. This transition has not only completed diplomacy but also propagated the shift from “hard power” to “soft power.” While both traditional and modern diplomacy have distinct characteristics, communication remains their common denominator. Modern diplomatic endeavours communication as a primary tool, modifying their message for millennials.

### *3.3. Diplomacy in a millennial world*

The post-Second World War era led to seismic changes in the international relations scene. However, the transformations seen during the second half of the twentieth century have been deepened in today's complicated, multi-layered, and hastily growing global environment. As we direct at the start of the new millennium, and as international challenges appear, extending from international terrorism, Covid, human trafficking to increasing environmental crises, migrations, and the persistent flow of globalization. These contemporary issues not only underline the nature of today's global challenges but also define the growing atmosphere of international affairs in 21st century.

Parallel to these up-and-coming challenges are changes in both national and global actions. The standard for conduct in international diplomacy and inter-state relations has been raised in response to these newfound difficulties. Moreover, the stage of global affairs is no longer monopolized by traditional state actors. The number of participants has multiplied, and the nature of these actors has undergone significant transformation. This has led to a deeper, more dynamic interactions, signalling a departure from previous diplomatic agreements.

Furthermore, the agenda governing international public policies has been reshaped dramatically, reflecting the evolving zeitgeist of this age. With the birth of digital media and the rise of millennials and Gen Z as influential cohorts, there is an undisputable push for diplomatic strategies, including those of the EU, to be reimagined. Such strategies now need to be more inclusive, dynamic, and responsive, fit to a generation that values immediacy, authenticity, and global connection.

Essential to the structure of the global scene is the need for diplomacy among states. Given a world interrupted by multiple self-governing entities, the actions of one consistently affect the others. This interconnection denies the possibility for states to operate in isolation, focusing solely on their internal affairs. The imperative of self-determination and the pursuit of national interests, in such an environment and world pandemics, forced states to be aware of their neighbours and the values of mutual relations.

Diplomats, the guardians of these conventions, find their roles and their strategies redefined. Contemporary diplomatic involve emerging international concerns, such as environmental conservation, technological advancements, and arms control. Communication and public diplomacy, more than ever, remains at the heart of these efforts.

### *3.4.The evolving role of communication in diplomacy*

Central to the effectiveness of diplomacy is communication, acting not just as a medium but also as an integral part in shaping diplomatic interactions. This interaction between diplomacy and communication drives foreign policy objectives, helping to both complete and shape these strategies. Diplomacy, as a long-standing institution, thrives on a foundational set of norms and practices that guide its communicative processes (Neumann 2002). Grasping this communication framework is fundamental to understanding the essence and evolution of diplomacy (Berridge 2022). The readiness to communicate stands as the starting point in any diplomatic engagement.

The digital revolution and globalization have significantly redefined the channels and nature of communication in contemporary diplomacy. Where once written dispatches and formal communiqués reigned supreme, the rise of digital platforms like Twitter, Instagram, podcasts, and television broadcasts have ushered in an era where every spoken word and shared post assumes heightened significance in new-age diplomacy.

However, these evolutions don not conceal the fundamentals of diplomacy; they merely refine and expand its outlines. At the heart of both traditional and modern diplomacy, effective communication remains dominant, guiding nations towards mutual understanding and consensus. The evolving political scene and the imperative of soft power have propelled nations to be more deliberate in their communicative strategies. This is even more pronounced in the domain of Public Diplomacy, which, aiming to resonate with diverse audiences, necessitates a conscious calibration of language and medium. In this context, engaging millennials and younger generations becomes critical, underscoring the role of digitally-enabled diplomacy in today's interconnected world.

### *3.5. Adaptation in the age of technology*

One cannot overlook technology's essential role in reshaping diplomacy in the age of globalization. The classical state-to-state interactions have been revitalized through breakthrough technologies. This tech-driven evolution gives voice to the masses, ensuring their perspectives shape the path of modern diplomacy. As the EU seeks to resonate with the digital natives, understanding and navigating these changes become principal.

Diplomacy, in its essence, serves as a communication bridge between nations. Over time, it has grown and improved, reflecting improvements in communication and transportation practises. The digital age, particularly with the rise of the internet, has revolutionized access to global news and information, making real-time updates the norm. This digital shift has raised questions about the relevance of traditional diplomatic roles, especially ambassadors. With instant connectivity diplomatic exclusive role in cross-border communications, the landscape of international relations has seen a change.

The profound impact of modern media - especially television and social media - on diplomacy cannot be understated. In our globalized society, visual media play a key role in forming perceptions. As Cohen and Westbrook (2002) explain with the metaphor of diplomacy as theatre, a diplomat's role has transitioned into a performance that relies not just on spoken words but also on visual signs like body language, photos, speaking performances, etc. Another challenge in today's interconnected world is the blurring distinction among audiences. Traditional diplomacy had the luxury of modifying messages to specific, well-defined groups. However, the knowledge of television and social media platforms is for a broad public, leaving little room for audience-specific messaging. As Eban (1983) aptly puts it, in an era of never-ending media and in real-time communication, messages intended for one audience are invariably intercepted by another. This transparency has reshaped the dynamics of diplomatic discussions, pushing Western nations, particularly the USA, towards a more public-facing diplomacy. Therefore, the concept of "media diplomacy" has gained traction (Cohen 1986). The media's inclination towards state narratives, especially in foreign affairs, offers diplomats a strategic view to shape global narratives. While the inconstancy of media and social media's influence on diplomatic conversations position challenges, skilful diplomats have used this medium effectively to communicate their narratives to the world of all generations and millennials in particular.

### *3.6.EU public diplomacy: connecting the academic divide*

A fundamental side of this diplomatic metamorphosis is the dominance of public diplomacy. Remarkably, the phrase “public diplomacy” was not predominated for a considerable part of the twentieth century. Instead, terminologies such as information, public affairs, cultural relations, international broadcasting, and, notably, propaganda dominated the discourse. The 1970s marked a departure from this trend in the United States, as public diplomacy began to gain power, triggered by legislative discourses and insights from the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. For operatives within the US Information Agency, “public diplomacy” became a surrounding factor, reflecting the blend of government-endorsed information, cultural initiatives, and international broadcasting. This term also provided an alternative to the most controversial term “propaganda.” However, as the world became increasingly aware of the dangers and manipulative nature of propaganda, especially post - WWII and “German soft diplomacy,” there was an evident need to distance from its evident and hidden mechanisms. It was within this context that “public diplomacy” emerged as a more accepted and neutral term, especially in the U.S., denoting state-backed information dissemination, cultural exchanges, and international broadcasting.

Yet, it is crucial to understand that while the terminologies evolved, the underlying principles of influencing public opinion remained. As analysed, the numerous sides of public diplomacy, it is 's imperative to separate the thin line between genuine information sharing and twisted narratives, ensuring that we remain cautious against the shadows different sides of propaganda hidden as fact. The 1990s were time of introspection, where diplomats and scholars began examining the ever-changing paradigms of diplomacy. Set against the backdrop of escalating globalization, the beginning of innovative information know-hows, and the delay of non-state actors' influence, this introspection was both timely and relevant. Occasionally termed “The New Diplomacy,” it became evident that this renewed form of diplomacy demanded an heterogonous mix of skills, methodologies, and mind-sets, separating considerably from its traditional history (Stein 2011). As the European Union looks to engage the millennial demographic, understanding these changes become a must.

While public diplomacy has gained power as an advanced mode of international relations, it does not imply a uniform understanding or implementation of its principles and methodologies. The framework and objectives of public diplomacy vary significantly across nations, highlighting the notion that there is not an universally relevant design for its implementation (Hocking 2002). Nations control public diplomacy to support continuing foreign policy ideas

to strengthen monetary projections, rise perceptibility, direct, and resolve crises, promote national identity, and counterbalance principal stereotypes.

Especially for smaller and mid-tier nations, public diplomacy presents both an opportunity and a challenge. Given their limited resources for expansive diplomatic strategies, their endeavour is to effectively harness public diplomacy to ensure they are not overshadowed on the global stage. A compelling example in this context is Yugoslavia (Konta 2019), a mid-tier nation that once existed in Southeast Europe. Through its existence, and especially during the Cold War, Yugoslavia showed a unique form of independent diplomacy, motivated to maintain balance between the Western and Eastern blocs. This subtle balancing act was characterised by its leading role in the Non-Aligned Movement, which sought to have a voice for nations that did not wish to align strictly with either of the superpower blocs. Until its very end, Yugoslavia used its public diplomacy tools, to place itself as a bridge between the West and the East. Nevertheless, as the political scene changed with the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia was challenged with internal and external pressures, that lead to its disintegration. This uncontrolled period highlighted the inherent challenges from the past of public diplomacy: while it can build bridges and foster understanding in times of stability, it can also be subject to manipulation and misinformation in times of crisis.

The case of Yugoslavia underlines the importance for mid-tier nations to create a well-calibrated public diplomacy strategy. Such a strategy must not only resonate with the global audience but also be reflective of ground realities and the aspirations of their own citizens, ensuring authenticity and credibility in their diplomatic engagements.

Broadly, public diplomacy serves as a multipurpose tool used by states, inter-state alliances, non-governmental entities, and even individuals to. Its aim is to comprehend attitudes, cultures, ideas and media settings of possible different events and matters. Through public diplomacy, dialogue is fostered between various peoples and institutions, providing insights to political leaders, policymakers, and practitioners about public opinions and the communicative implications of policy choices. Moreover, it seeks to shape perceptions, actions, and social behaviour using communication tactics and authoritative narratives to adapt to the changing world (Cooper, Hocking, and Maley 2008).

Public diplomacy stands out as a strong political and analytical instrument in the massive range of tools used by political entities. This tool is not just a medium of influence but can also adopt forced measures to represent and promote interests and values. Public diplomacy, therefore, becomes a crucial aspect for political figures when they set out their objectives, evaluating the costs, risks, and benefits of their decisions. The function of public diplomacy extends to shaping

global agendas, contextualizing threats, and opportunities, guiding civil society discourses, advocating policies, and rewriting political consensus. Furthermore, it serves as a pillar to other socio-economic and military strategies, enhancing their efficacy.

With the rise of democratic values and the amplified role of mass media in this digital age, communication with the masses takes on unprecedented importance. Modern champions of public diplomacy emphasize a transformative approach for diplomats. Instead of merely being observers or advocates in responsive scenarios, they must become active participants, steering global dialogues (Leonard, Stead, and Smewing 2002). Public diplomacy captures government efforts to shape public or elite perceptions in another state. The principal aim is to steer foreign audiences towards a positive reception of its ideals, concepts, and policies (Potter 2002).

Thus, the contemporary diplomatic task is no longer about purely spreading information. Instead, it is about capturing the collective imagination, making diplomatic engagements more dynamic, significant, and impactful (Leonard, Stead, and Smewing 2002). As the EU creates its strategies for the millennial Europeans, understanding and employing these sides of public diplomacy is becoming crucial.

The empire of public diplomacy, especially within the context of the European Union, has witnessed an explosion of diverse methods and practices personalized to engage different segments of society, particularly the millennials. As the EU endeavours to strengthen its image and enhance communication with its audience, understanding the core components of its public diplomacy becomes fundamental. However, the academic scene in this domain is marked by debates, variations, and, at times, uncertainties regarding the definitive elements that create public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy exceeds the traditional boundaries of closed-door, government-to-government interactions. Instead, it places emphasis on cultivating relations directly with the public, thereby promoting mutual understanding, influencing public opinion, and fostering an environment conducive to the realization of policy objectives. The EU, with its rich pool of cultures and nations, controls public diplomacy not only to explain its policies and actions but also to build a unified identity that resonates with its diverse public.

Public diplomacy remains a many-sided area, with academia still reflecting over its precise outlines. Nevertheless, specific core elements consistently emerge as its foundational pillars.

A primary component is the dissemination of information. This refers to the transparent communication of policies, objectives, and actions. For the EU, this translates to creating clear narratives about its initiatives, decisions, and goals, ensuring that its citizens, especially the

millennials, are well-informed and can engage in constructive dialogue. Rooted within this sphere is the practice of cultural diplomacy. This involves leveraging the arts, sports, and other cultural tools to foster mutual understanding and build bridges between communities. Given the EU's rich cultural heritage, initiatives such as student exchange programs, cultural festivals, and art showcases play an essential role in promoting intercultural appreciation and fostering European unity. Educational diplomacy offers yet another part of diplomacy, represented by initiatives such as Erasmus+, which enable students to study in different EU countries, exemplify this side of public diplomacy. Such programs not only facilitate academic growth but also promote interpersonal relationships and engender a sense of European identity. In a time, subjected by technology, the digital space offers utmost opportunities for engagement of digital diplomacy. Social media campaigns, online forums, webinars, and interactive platforms allow the EU to connect instantaneously with its audience, particularly the tech-savvy millennial demographic. Lastly, collaborations and partnerships intensify the efficacy of public diplomacy by building associations with non-state actors, CSOs, academic institutions, and the private sector improves public diplomacy, agreeing with a complex and all-inclusive approach of engagement of different target audiences.

Democratic legitimacy within the EU also takes on a significant importance on this matter as it explores the concept of the EU's role in the future and its identity as either a nation-state or a regional entity. Understanding this is vital for the EU, as it has far-reaching implications for its governance and acceptance by its citizens, particularly among millennials.

When seeing the EU as a potential nation-state, it is possible to talk about its democratic legitimacy. Traditional nation-states have historically showed characteristics such as continuous sovereignty, secure territorial boundaries, a sharp national identity, established governance structures, and a cohesive form of democracy. In stark contrast, the EU is more aptly understood as a work in progress towards becoming the prototype of a regional state. In this context, sovereignty is shared among its member-states, subject to internal acceptance and external recognition. Boundaries are flexible, and they dependent on policy scope rather than geographical rigidity. Identity is multifaceted, encompassing elements from the EU, national, and sub-national levels. Governance is intricate, given the multi-level, multi-centered, and multi-form nature of its institutions. This fragmented democracy within the EU can be seen even more obvious. Without the innovative concepts to reframe their national democracies and public diplomacy within the evolving framework of a regional EU state, national populations continue to hold their political leaders accountable for decisions over which they may have limited influence and may not even be fully committed to. In this context, millennials in Europe

appear to have a distinct perspective. They tend to view traditional democracy as less relevant than older adults, showing support for alternative systems, that may be seen as a warning signal, showing unmet demands and expectations in the political playground.

While the above elements provide a structured overview of EU public diplomacy, it is essential to recognize the flexibility essential in this domain. Public diplomacy's dynamic nature means that its practices must continually evolve in response in line with changing social trends, technological developments, and global challenges. It is this flexibility, it is a core commitment to mutual understanding and collaboration that ensures the EU remains effectively connected with its citizens, particularly the young Europeans who are vital to its future.

#### **4. Understanding the millennial generation: context and characteristics**

##### *4.1. Is there millennial diplomacy?*

The phenomenon of globalization has stimulated significant evolutions in conventional diplomacy. Beyond the corridors of traditional elite diplomacy lies an expanding diplomacy rooted in civil society. This new diplomatic essence leans heavily on social persuasion and fundamentally possesses a more neutral imprint. Today, this evolving diplomacy witness's participation not just from governments but also from academicians, businesses, think tanks, and media entities, giving diplomacy a more democratic and inclusive character.

Digital advancements have not stayed behind. As the world gravitated toward a digital reality, diplomacy reflected this shift. Classic means of diplomacy, while still relevant, are now enhanced with digital techniques. Terms like e-diplomacy, network diplomacy and social media diplomacy capture the essence of this new era of digital diplomacy (European External Action Service 2023).

Digital diplomacy, at its heart, is the act of influencing foreign public opinion through platforms like Twitter and Facebook. While the means of delivery might differ, the essence remains the same: facilitating communication and information sharing with governments, CSOs, or foreign communities. This form of diplomacy is interactive, precise, and targeted, prioritizing individuals over vast, undefined audiences. Trump's tweets (Šimunjak and Caliandro 2019) serve as a perfect illustration of how they have altered the political communication norms among America's elite, redefining the apparent role of social networks in politics. These shifts



not only transformed U.S. diplomacy but also challenged conventional diplomatic language in international politics.

This wave of digitization introduces concepts like soft power, power visualization, digital cultural diplomacy, and digital country branding, united with futuristic ideologies like online dialogues and cybersecurity. While traditional diplomacy remains irreplaceable, it is being rewritten in a world dominated by information technology. This transformation underlines the shift from traditional procedures to innovative channels of communication that prioritize efficiency, reach, and immediacy.

In essence, diplomacy has retained its art of persuasion but has experienced a transformation in representation. However, the ground rules remain the same: influencing global perception, governments, tourists, investors, or businesses. Platforms might change, but the ultimate objectives are relentless.

The social media platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are reshaping communication as we know it. Millennials, the pioneers of the Information Age, are leading this transformation. Born in an era of rapid technological growth, they have become synonymous with digital skills. Their worldview, fundamentally sceptical point of view, due to the influx of information, challenges pre-established norms. Neil Howe and William Strauss in “Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation” theorize that millennials are set to correct the apparent mistakes of previous generations. Their analytical nature, tied with a fresh perspective, shows the way for a more balanced, informed, and proactive approach to global challenges.

In the immense and complex variety of global diplomacy, understanding the audience's pulse is a must. The millennial voice, informed, critical, and digitally proficient, is a testament to the future's diplomatic future endeavours, making it crucial for diplomatic entities to adapt, evolve, and resonate with this dynamic army of people.

So, there is no wonder if in today's digital world, we witness a remarkable shift from conventional methods of diplomacy to what may be referred to as “millennial diplomacy.” The beginning of twiplomacy (Chhabra 2020) and informal negotiations has shaped the way for imaginative and unconventional solutions, although they cannot completely replace traditional diplomacy. While some argue that classical diplomacy has lost its place in the contemporary era, relying solely on informal channels to strike deals, others faithfully believe that all diplomatic discourse should remain formal. Both views, when isolated, seem narrow-minded. Effective diplomacy in today's era is a thoughtful union of both traditional and new-age tactics.

In the “old days” all diplomatic documents had to be double-checked up to the last exclamation sign. Every word and piece of punctuation carries significance. From a millennial viewpoint, every tweet should be studied down to the final emoticon (Bai et al. 2019). Diplomatic notes being read out to ministers or ambassadors are a thing of the past, today, they are dispatched through emails or instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp. Indeed, the channels and audiences have undergone radical transformations.

In our modern Information Age, the world faces swift changes. Accelerated technological advances and the beginning of artificial intelligence (AI) necessitate swift adaptation. As we wrestle with overwhelming information influx and fast-paced processes, there is an imperative to streamline operations, enhance efficiency in consular services, and innovate in our communication strategies.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and Big Data stand at the front of this revolution. While the transformative power of AI can be a double-edged sword - serving both as channel for mass misinformation campaigns and as valuable tools- embracing AI can pave the way for better management of extensive data. AI's capability to process vast data through complex algorithms can be harnessed not just for predicting humanitarian crises or election outcomes but also in shaping multilevel negotiations and enhancing public services. For the millennial diplomat, leveraging these technological tools while maintaining the essence of traditional diplomacy will be principal.

#### *4.2. Who are millennials*

Generations, like people, have different personalities, and millennials are one of a kind. They are shaping their unique identity by being self-confident, loud about their beliefs, progressive, optimistic, and adjustable. This generation stands out for its strong racial and ethnic diversity compared to their predecessors. While they lean more towards secularism, fewer have military experience, and they are poised one of the most academically accomplished generation worldwide.

Often referred to as “millennials” (Dimock 2019), these demographic individuals are born between 1981 and 1997. They appeared after Generation X, which consists of those born between 1965 and 1980, and the baby boomers who were born between 1946 and 1964. It is worth noting that there exists some variation in the exact year brackets attributed to the millennial generation, depending on the researcher or a study. Notably, millennials are not only characterized by their substantial number, estimated 1.8 billion (Neufeld 2021), but also by their distinctive demographic features, preferences, and lifestyles. Significantly, millennials are

recognized as the pioneering generation to step into adulthood in the 21st century, potentially indicating a standard shift in social norms and trends for the following generations.

Potentially influenced by a numerous factor, including overprotective parenting, the era marked by terrorist happenings, and a media culture that emphasizes threats, they are more inclined to opine that governments should take a proactive role in addressing today's challenges.

At the threshold of the 21st century, millennials' perspectives have been shaped by different life events.

#### *4.3. Is there tradition in a world traditionally*

The European economic landscape in the 21st century combined with profound social and technological transformations, driven by digital revolutions, global communication networks, and changes in society has influenced millennials to re-evaluate traditional life milestones and not to follow the steps of previous generations.

This inner and social introspections are not purely a momentary trend but a deeper manifestation of their adaptive responses to the world around them. As they navigate through this different terrain, it becomes evident that milestones such as marriage, parenthood, and homeownership, which once served as almost prescriptive stages in an individual's life, are now being approached with more caution, flexibility, and deliberation.

Furthermore, when compared with their ancestors - such as the baby boomers or Generation X - it becomes clear that millennials are not just delaying these commitments. Instead, they are redefining them, creating paths that align more with their life experiences and the contemporary challenges they face (Powell et al. 2023).

#### *4.4. Diversity as the consequence of migration and policy choices*

The era of globalisation but also migrations has imposed profound changes to the socio-cultural face of Europe. Millions of refugees and migrants reached European borders, undertaking dangerous journeys from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries torn apart by war and torture. European Union needed to adapt its policy ("EU Migration and Asylum Policy" 2023) on the free movement of people, an ambitious and unparalleled attempt to facilitate continuous migration within its member states. The direct outcome of such a policy, coupled with broader global migration trends, has transformed contemporary Europe in ethnically and racially diverse continents in recorded history.

But Russia's war against the Ukraine has led to another European refugee crisis but the solidarity and immediate protection given to Ukrainian refugees was very different from the treatment given to non-European migrants and refugees from regions such as the Middle East, Africa, and Afghanistan. Both public and political discourse have shown double European standards like never before (Vallianatou 2023).

Nevertheless, this diversity presents itself most vividly within the millennial generation. Born and raised within this union of cultures, millennials have experienced first-hand Europe where traditional ideas of borders and national identities are fluid and constantly negotiated. For them, diversity is not a simple political or sociological concept, but a lived reality. The streets they walk, the schools they attend, and the digital spaces they inhabit are all reflective of this heterogeneous mix of cultures, languages, and values.

It is essential to note that this diversity extends beyond racial or ethnic categorisations. The "melting pot" that Europe has evolved into shows a complex interaction of languages, traditions, culinary habits, artistic expressions, and religious beliefs. For millennials, these diverse interactions have fostered a unique worldview, characterized by adaptability, multicultural empathy, and understanding of global connection.

It becomes crucial to question how this diversity shapes millennials' identities, their perceptions of citizenship, and their attitudes towards concepts like nationalism, belonging, and community.

#### *4.5. Education and millennial aspirations*

Historical educational data reveals a telling trend: millennials stand as the most academically accomplished generation to date. In Europe, the data is particularly revealing; approximately 40% of individuals have culminated their educational journey with university degrees. Remarkably, when disaggregated by gender, this trend stresses further among women (Ferrer 2018).

The prodigious educational attainments of millennials can be deciphered from two intertwined lenses. Firstly, it shows the transformation of Europe into a predominantly knowledge-driven economy. As industries evolve and prioritize specialization, the demand for advanced qualifications and domain-specific expertise has rushed. Simultaneously, the broader European economic environment, particularly the periodic spikes in unemployment rates, has indirectly engendered a culture that views higher education as both a safeguard and an enhancement of employability.

This union of economic imperatives and personal aspirations, especially within the context of Europe's dynamic socio-economic landscape, indicates further analysis. It warrants exploration into the broader implications of this trend, particularly concerning labour markets, gender dynamics in academia, and the future trajectories of European economic growth.

#### *4.6.The digital world of millennials*

The millennial generation stands out as the first generation to have truly matured alongside digital technology. With the rise of the internet and the mobile devices, their formative years were intertwined with rapid technological developments. Therefore, millennials not only adapted to these innovations but also played a fundamental role in shaping and driving them, continuously altering global paradigms of interaction, work, and entertainment.

Often referred to as the “Facebook Generation,” (Tatham 2023) their digital tendencies go beyond mere consumption. They have been instrumental in re-envisioning communication structures, transitioning from traditional forms to digital and social media platforms. This shift has not been trivial, as the very tenets of communication – from the dissemination of information to interpersonal interactions – have been reshaped by the digital innovations spearheaded and embraced by millennials.

Moreover, the political landscape has been indelibly marked by the digital activism of this generation. Utilizing tools inherent to their digital experiences, such as “likes” and “shares,” they have pioneered new modes of political engagement (Freedman and Sgueo 2015). These digital expressions are not just symbolic gestures but have manifested in concrete political actions. By initiating the era of “viral” campaigns, they have leveraged the power of digital platforms to mobilize and amplify their voices. This digital enthusiasm occasionally finds its echo in the physical realm, with online campaigns catalysing strong on-the-ground protests, channelling the collective frustrations and aspirations of a digitally-savvy generation.

#### *4.7.Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina - millennials impacted by past, economic, energy and worldwide disorders*

Europe, with its complicated history, political cultures, and socio-economic impact, presents a complex stage for any diplomatic outreach, particularly when it targets millennials. The European Union, as an ideal of democratic values and unity, often finds itself treading the delicate balance of outreach in such a multifaceted environment.

For start, one cannot talk about millennial engagement without diving deep into their beliefs about democracy. In the Western bastions of Europe - countries like France, Germany, and the UK - millennials have grown up in the circle of mature democracies. Their interactions with the EU's campaigns often stem from a foundational trust in the democratic ethos. However, move eastward, and the narrative shifts. In countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Romania, millennials have a different historical background - one painted with the colours of communist rule followed by a transition to democracy post the Cold War. Their engagement with EU campaigns is often coloured with a layer of scepticisms, inherited from witnessing their nations' struggles with democratic values.

The paradigm of media consumption, too, plays an important role. The digital revolution has redefined media landscapes, shifting millennial attention from traditional outlets to the ever-evolving kingdom of digital platforms. But here again, regional variations come into play. While the trust in media remains high in the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, it wavers in the Southern and Eastern spectrums of Europe. Such varied levels of media trust imply that the EU, in its diplomatic campaigns, must often reshape its message and medium based on the regional trust percentage.

Moreover, the political culture of a nation, which is often seen in its history, heavily influences millennial perceptions. In the Western countries, the political field, although witnessing shifts, has generally drifted around centrist values. This often makes the EU seem like a natural extension of the political and cultural character. On the other side, in parts of Eastern Europe, rising nationalist sentiments sometimes cast the EU in a more confrontational role, especially if its campaigns are perceived as too “Western-centric” or detached from local realities.

Lastly, the historical ties a country shares with the EU cannot be overlooked. Founding members of the EU, like France and Germany, are a home to millennials who have always viewed the EU as a fundamental part of their geopolitical reality. On the other hand, in newer member states, such as Bulgaria or Croatia, millennials have had front-row seats to the tangible impacts - both positive and challenging - of EU membership. Their engagement is often a reflection of their lived experiences. Meanwhile, in countries like Norway or Switzerland, which remain outside the EU membership, millennials evaluate EU strategic campaigns with a distinctively different lens, often weighing the pros and cons of deeper affiliations.

EU, in its pursuit of unity and shared progress, wrestles with a European landscape that is as diverse as it is interconnected. As it struggles to engage millennials, it must not only recognize but also respect the multi-coloured historical, political, and cultural forms that shape each

European nation. Only through a specially created approach can the EU hope to resonate effectively with the dynamic millennial army across Europe.

However, it is important not to overlook the nation situated at the core of the Western Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina's relationship with the EU is deeply entwined with its uninhibited recent history. Emerging from the brutal war of the 1990s and the following Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been left in an exceptionally complicated governing structure. This structure has often manifested as bureaucratic delays and political ties, shaping the political perceptions of its citizens, particularly the millennials. They have grown up in a post war era, and their belief in democracy is deeply connected with their hopes for a brighter, cohesive future for their homeland. For some of them at least.

The media scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina further complicates this narrative, along with new defamation law in Republika Srpska (“BiH: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Defamation Law in Republika Srpska | EEAS”) that often separates along ethnic lines, different media can unpredictably influence the response and perception of EU campaigns. Successfully communicating with millennials in Bosnia and Herzegovina therefore requires a careful navigation of this complex media setting. The emphasis should be on sending unifying messages that do not unintentionally lean towards one ethnic group, thereby ensuring a broad, all-inclusive appeal.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's political culture, resonant the aftershocks of its war scars and never-ending ethnic divisions, poses challenges and opportunities for the EU's public diplomacy. Determined nationalist sentiments among certain parties occasionally manifest as scepticisms towards the EU, sometimes seen as an external entity with its own agenda. However, it is essential to understand the contradiction: many millennials, detached from the direct experiences of the war but living with its legacy, are thirsty for change and progress. To them, the EU could represent a beacon of hope, possibly a solution to the challenges their nation grapples with. For the nation's millennials, the EU's sparkling image can represent both an attractive opportunity and a frightening challenge. Observing their first neighbours, such as Croatia, they might have hopes for similar trajectories for Bosnia and Herzegovina. But the new milestone on the country's EU integration path happened alongside formation of government coalitions on the State level with a programme of key priorities, including agreements on reforms in line with the EU integration process. The upcoming period will be thus especially important to continue this momentum and ensure progress on the EU path that might lead my millennials.

Thus, to effectively resonate with Bosnia and Herzegovina's millennials, the EU's strategy would benefit from a deep understanding of the nation's social and political background. Diplomatic campaigns should not only acknowledge the past but should also be created to cast a vision for a brighter, united future.

But no matter where European millennials live in the west, south, east, or north of Europe, they are witnessing the economic depression starting in 2008 and again with global crisis in 2023, and not to mention accumulating shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have developed a critical perspective on political and social structures. These economic disorders, united with challenges in employment, has fostered a common sentiment of doubt and began their lack of confidence in governing bodies. The series of terror events, both within European boundaries and beyond, with notable beginnings at the heart-breaking 9/11 event in the United States, has deepened their hesitations. Furthermore, the EU's divergent approaches to the refugee and migrant situation seeking safety within Europe have provoked different definitions of its inherent EU stability and “open border” principles (EUAA 2022).

And the geopolitical world never rests (Beddoes 2022), Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine, that has restored the idea of “the West” and the rest of the world, never-ending Middle- East crisis (Ali 2023) from Palestine to Syria, events linked to climate change, unpredictable trade policies, and persistent economic anomalies due to the pandemic are affecting everyone on the planet, millennials included. These tensions manifest in various economies, as seen through inflation, consequent adjustments in interest rates, interruptions in supply chains, increased energy costs, and a competitive job market.

The different sides of globalization and the EU's policy on abandoned movement have reduced contemporary Europe as the personification of racial and ethnic plurality. In such rich diverse environment, millennials are evolving, interacting with a variety of cultures and dialects.

Long-standing beliefs, encompassing the unity of borders, the restraint from using nuclear weapons, the uniformity of low inflation, and the continuous power supply in wealthy political players, are now collectively under question. Millennials included.

#### *4.8. European democracy: millennials' perspectives and implications for the EU's future*

Throughout contemporary European political discourse, there has been a repeated evaluation affecting region's so-called “democratic deficit.” This so-called disconnection, where ordinary citizens feel distanced from the primary decision-making processes in Brussels and Strasbourg,



resonates across all parties. Although the reasons for this sentiment differ between the political right and left, the principal theme remains consistent: a noticeable gap between European bureaucratic mechanisms and the everyday experiences and ambitions of its citizens.

Interestingly, despite these reservations, public sentiment across member states and the ones hoping to become one generally leans pro-European. However, there is an apparent lack of clarity among the citizens concerning the complex web of EU decision-making procedures. This gap is understandable, for some, it raises alarms about potential threats to their socio-cultural and economic way of living.

The UK's 2016 decision to depart from the EU, informally called “Brexit,” (European Commission 2020b) amplified these concerns around the democratic deficit. This seismic event not only underscored existing issues but also projected a universal sense of uncertainty over the European Union's future. The following challenge has been two-fold: restoring faith in the EU's democratic legitimacy and addressing profound dissatisfaction.

This challenge is further highlighted as certain Member States showed growing fearlessness in confronting Europe's multinational jurisdiction and the foundational principles of European rule of law. Nations like Poland, Hungary, and lately, Italy, have initiated actions and policies that seemingly conflict with established European norms. These challenges implicitly question the very ethos of the European project.

Analysing various discussions and narratives offers insights into the majority perception of the European Union among millennials, it is clear that a significant number of this demographic values the freedoms associated with European membership, such as the rights to travel, work, and study across the continent. These privileges, in many minds, are intertwined with the EU's founding principles and initiatives.

Moreover, the EU's contribution to regional economic development has not been unnoticed. Many millennials recognize the tangible benefits brought by EU-funded projects in strengthening their local communities.

While millennials might not have experienced Europe's unrestrained history first-hand and some of them have, the significance of the peace and stability the EU has as one of her main pillars resonates deeply. This sentiment was further emphasized when the global community acknowledged the EU's role in maintaining continental peace by awarding it the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 (“The Nobel Peace Prize 2012”).

However, this positive perception is shaded with concerns about the perceived democratic deficit within the EU. A significant proportion believe that there is a communication gap

between the political elite and the citizens. They discourse that better articulation is needed regarding the EU's activities and their direct and indirect impacts on the lives of Europeans. A limited number of millennials feel that the present communication adequately captures the EU's multifaceted roles, obligations, and advantages.

After that period, Europe has been confronted with a series of challenges, including economic downturns, rigorous fiscal modifications, social disorders, and a devastating pandemic responsible for over 2 million fatalities within its boundaries.

The current conflict in Ukraine (Borges 2022) presents yet another critical examination for the European Union and sends after-effects through the very core of the global multilateral framework.

Many in Europe, millennials included, who once envisioned a harmonious continent, are now observing profound shifts in the international equilibrium of power, with potential long-lasting implications for the global order.

Given this backdrop, understanding millennials' perspective becomes imperative. As the generation poised to inherit the legacy of current decision-making, what are their reflections on European democracy, its vitality, and its trajectory? Preliminary insights suggest a nuanced attitude. While millennials exhibit a general appreciation for the European Union's ideals, there is palpable discontent with its operational efficiencies and uneasiness regarding its long-term prospects (European Parliament 2016).

In an era where accusations of “fake news” (European Commission 2018) frequently make the news, it is expected that some millennials express scepticism towards the media. Through various discussions, there was a profound sense of discontent with news coverage that, in their view, occasionally lacks impartiality and factual accuracy.

Within the recent global economic downturn, decisions made by EU leaders regarding fiscal policies continue to resonate in the daily experiences of its citizens. While these actions may have contributed to the revitalization of the Eurozone, they also suggested sentiments that the EU had overreached in its jurisdiction. A significant number of millennials and for young individuals in general is for citizens to have a more direct influence over the EU's economic choices, while having the need for EU representatives to engage in grassroots interactions, seeking conversations with the general public about fiscal matters, rather than limiting discussions to privileged circles.

For millennials the European Union, in many respects, symbolised the quintessential brand, centering its appeal on the pledge of fostering unity and bridging divides across Europe. Yet,

as mentioned above external dynamics have persistently shaken its foundational brand philosophy, casting shadows on its promise. At the heart of this branding was the communal belonging and digital interconnectivity, characteristic of millennials – known as the first digital generation. To millennials, the EU resonated on a deeper level compared to the older generations. Infused in the comprehensive world of the EU since birth, they grow up in the diverse cultures, establishing connections beyond territorial borders – a core that truly defines a resonant brand. Familiar to the privileges of seeking employment across 27 nations or becoming digital nomads (Hannonen 2020), or benefiting from the EU’s “Erasmus” student exchange program, and availing numerous pan-European opportunities, this generation was a personification of globalized goals. Their interconnectedness was further strengthened by the future united single European digital market for movies and music streaming and the and soon terminating cell phone roaming charges within the EU borders.

However, drawing parallels with the U.S., European millennials have, remained on the edge of solving its transformative potential in the political realm. A universal sentiment of mistrust towards governmental bodies, corporate leaders, and politicians is tangible amongst millennials worldwide. The persistent question remains whether their worthy ideals can ever transform into important socio-political and economic shifts on both continents, especially in domains like climate changes, delicate corporate ethical responsibility, and persistent transparency in governance and commerce.

Ironically, this patronising idealism of millennials is compared against a backdrop of pervasive hopelessness, starting from a belief that institutional and political machinery may remain unchallengeable. Today's millennials, while standing as the most numbered voting demographic group with the potential to lead transformative changes, remain to be seen is their ideals will ever come to life, to start their active participation in government process making them a “game changers” (Betz et al. 2023).

Does this mean diplomacy needs an evolution, especially the way how it communicates?

## **5. EU Strategy Campaigns in engaging millennials: tools, means and knowledge transfer**

In the digitally connected age, the European Commission is in a continuous journey of evolution, adapting its communication strategy to resonate with its citizens. While its primary focus has always been to legitimize the EU, there is a notable shift towards a more audience-

centric approach, aiming to connect with the “hearts and minds” of its general public. This transition highlights a move towards utilizing online tools more effectively. Yet, remnants of the old bureaucratic, top-down information styles are still persistent.

Historically, the European Commission has played a vital role in elucidating EU policies to external audiences. Established in 2004, the Directorate-General for Communication might be relatively new, but the act of informing citizens about the Union's activities dates back much further. As European integration progressed, the EC was consistently tasked with bridging the gap of legitimacy and earning the loyalty of European citizens. Over time, the strategies, methods, and tools have evolved.

The strategic orientation of the EC took a significant leap with the appointment of Margot Wallström in 2004, emphasizing the importance of communication. Moreover, the 2006 White Paper on a European Communication Policy (European Commission 2006) highlighted the interconnection between the European Public Sphere, the EU's communication policy, and citizen engagement or disengagement. This journey, while progressive, has had its fair share of challenges as the Commission faced with the necessity of creating a dialogue-centric strategy that prioritizes citizen engagement.

### *5.1. Enter the information revolution*

The internet has dramatically transformed the European communication playground. From a modest 55% of households having internet access in 2007, by 2023, the figure had risen to 92% (Cassetti 2023) as it was stated in the European E-commerce Report. Traditional media like radio and print press have seen a decline in favour of digital platforms. The rapid rise of social media platforms has further reshaped how Europeans use and share information.

Even in the late 1990s, the EU recognized the potential of new media technologies. The shift from traditional media to digital is not just about leveraging new communication channels; it underscores the transformation in political campaigns and general involvement. The millennials are seen not just as passive consumers but as active contributors, shaping public discourse and political narratives.

Neil Postman (Postman and Postman 2005), in his critically acclaimed work “Amusing Ourselves to Death,” argued about television's profound impact on public discourse during its peak. In today's context, the role television played in influencing public opinion has been covered by social media platforms. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become the “first place to go to” for news dissemination and public discourse. Traditional

media, both electronic and print, have had to integrate social media strategies to remain relevant.

Born as a student-centric networking platform, Facebook or now Meta has transformed into the world's most extensive social media monster, boasting over 2.5 billion monthly users. It serves as an expansive canvas for sharing varied interests, be it for personal connections or promotional undertakings. YouTube, which debuted in 2005 as an amateur video collection, has transformed into the foremost digital video hub, showcasing a diverse content from music to investigative journalism. By 2019, its user count surged to approximately 1.68 billion, making it a favourite, especially among the younger demographic.

In the popularity contest, Instagram, with its global base of one billion, finds strong resonance among the millennials. While Snapchat attracts a niche audience, Twitter has been recognized as a significant communication channel in the global political theatre. Various elected representatives, international governments, and official bodies use Twitter for policy announcements and public engagement.

Social media, representing the prototypical millennial medium, has become essential, influencing every aspect of social discourse. As such, it is imperative for institutions like the EC to effectively use these platforms in their ongoing pursuit for dialogue and engagement.

### *5.2.The digital world: social media as “soft power” in millennial diplomacy*

Credit for the dominant rise of social media platforms is owed significantly to the millennials, digital natives birthed in the heart of the Information Age's bloom. These individuals are indissolubly linked to digital technologies and online networking. However, their extensive online engagement does not make them naive. On the contrary, the information overflow sharpens their critical abilities. Their worldview is remarkably distinct from the preceding Generation X and Baby Boomers.

About thirty years ago, Harvard University's well-known political expert, Joseph Nye, introduced the concept of “soft power” (Nye 2004). This idea gained power and significantly influenced the post-Cold War period. Unlike “hard power,” which is part of military competences, soft power focuses on influencing others without using force or intimidation. Recently, a display of entities, including organizations, CSOs, businesses, and political parties, have engaged in diplomatic strategies that find its strengths in soft power. This evolution aligns with the expansion of public diplomacy, which addresses various non-institutional audiences.

Such diplomacy involves different techniques to shape foreign perceptions, advancing national programmes.

With the beginning of the digital age and social media, moral dilemmas essential to public diplomacy are highlighted. Social media's expanding mark is rewriting global soft power dynamics. More politicians now participate in digital diplomacy, making global interactions at the same time simple and complicated. This shift tests conservative influence models and long-standing power struggles. Platforms like Facebook offer immense data resources, highlighting the developing idea that knowledge is the new global power.

Social media platforms emphasize transparency, though they come with the inherent risk of reduced control. Effective social media use is not just about knowing existing platforms; it is about capability in adapting to new technologies while showing sound judgment for swift responses and managing crises. Leveraging social media for public diplomacy indicates a beginning, not an end. These platforms are redefining interactions, influencing both business-customer and citizen-government communication. Identifying appropriate digital ways for diplomatic missions requires an understanding of the main ideas, needs and expectations of different nations, tied with a visionary approach (Mavrodieva et al. 2019).

However, in today's digital ecosystem, the essence is not just about broadcasting information but curating it for the target audience. The power of communication now lies not in the importance of the speaker but in the relevance of the message. Selecting the appropriate platform and language tone is crucial. The ubiquity of social media, for today's generation, is undisputable and it is here to stay.

Neil Howe and William Strauss, in their work “Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation”, lectured that millennials are set to recompense what they see as the oversights of the preceding generations. They value positivism, community spirit, science, duties, and activity insights. This millennial ethos, shaped in part by their digital interactions, highlights the evolving nature of diplomacy in the 21st century.

### *5.3.Social Media Trends in 2023: through the millennial's lens*

In the dynamic world of the 21st century, where digital threads create together different narratives from across continents, the European Union finds itself at a crossroads of traditional diplomacy and the unstoppable rise of digital citizen engagement. As the generational leadership transitions to millennials, the EU finds itself with the challenge and opportunity of creating a genuine connection with generation. The heart of this connection lies in the immense

and constantly evolving landscape of social media. The EU's strategic campaigns, try to find its way in different hashtags, likes, shares, and viral challenges to communicate its vision, values, and policies to its young Europeans. But to understand this different path one must first be acquainted with the prevailing social media trends that dictate the rules of this digital game in 2023.

1. **The Age of Short-lived Content:** Platforms like Snapchat started with the concept of content with an expiration date. By 2023, short-lived content has become the primary content of almost every major social platform, from Instagram Stories to Twitter Fleets. For millennials, who value authentic and “in-the-moment” interactions, these type of content offers a sense of immediacy and intimacy with the content creator, making them a prime tool for further engagements.
2. **AR and VR Integration:** Augmented and Virtual Reality have moved beyond gaming. Social platforms now offer AR/VR features allowing users to immerse themselves in experiences. The EU, recognizing the potential, has started to host virtual events, especially in the time of Covid, allowing young Europeans to “step into” EU institutions or historical sites, fostering a deeper connection to their heritage and the union's contemporary function.
3. **Rise of Social Commerce:** Direct purchasing through social media platforms has gained massive power. Millennials, known for their perceptive consumer habits and preference for accessibility, are driving this trend, making social commerce a potential path for the EU to promote its campaigns.
4. **Video Content:** Be it short-form videos on platforms like TikTok or long-form content on YouTube, video has become the preferred medium of content consumption. The EU's campaigns are following this trend, by producing engaging video content that describes European stories, both historical and contemporary, specially created for the millennial attention span.
5. **Sustainability and Authenticity:** The millennial audience in 2023 places a premium on authenticity and sustainable practices. Social media platforms have seen a flow in content promoting eco-friendly lifestyles, responsible consumption, and grassroots activism. Recognizing this, the EU's strategic campaigns have started to highlight their green initiatives and sustainable projects more obviously.
6. **Mental Health Awareness:** As discussions around mental health destigmatize, platforms have begun to promote well-being. The EU, too, has added this into its campaigns,

focusing on the mental health benefits of its youth programs and the importance of a supportive community.

7. **Decentralized Social Networks:** With concerns over data privacy and the dominant nature of big technological companies, decentralized social networks, have gained popularity. These platforms give users greater control over their data and content. For the EU, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity, requiring flexibility in their digital outreach strategies.
8. **Interactive Content:** From polls to quizzes and interactive videos, engaging the audience is no longer about simple content consumption but active participation. The EU has started to use these tools to get feedback, understand youth perspectives, and make them a part of the policy-making narrative.

Some of these trends can be seen in the EU Info centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina Nation-Wide Public Opinion Survey conducted in November 2022<sup>1</sup>, focusing on the European Union and BiH television remains the primary medium for news, with the Internet and social media closely following. Patterns in media preferences often align with specific demographic characteristics. Particularly, younger, and better-educated individuals tend to receive news from online sources. In contrast, an older demographic and those with less formal education largely rely on television for their daily information.

The social media landscape of 2023, driven by millennial preferences and technological innovations, is both diverse and dynamic. For the EU, effectively leveraging these trends is not just about digital diplomacy; it is about creating a bond with its next generation, ensuring that the European dream resonates in the digital age just as powerfully as it did in the age of print and broadcast, strengthen their participation but also strengthen the foundation of political mandates and strengthen trust in public offices like the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> The EU Info Centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina carried out a country-wide public opinion survey in November 2022 for internal use. This document was graciously provided for the purpose of this thesis and is not intended for wider distribution.



## **6. EU institutions and their essential role in Europe's communication strategy towards the millennials**

### *6.1. All for one - One for all*

Creating a shared public sphere in Europe is not something that can be achieved merely by the isolated efforts of Brussels. It requires the joint support and progress from all crucial players across every level of governance and the wider society. Primarily, discussions at the national level are the essential first step into meaningful political debate, giving governments and different national levels and EU Member States a seat at the table. They have the responsibility to use national mediums to promote vigorous European discussions. A unified European public sphere can only come to life through an inclusive partnership approach that includes all crucial participants. Member States, due to their ongoing commitment to work together with European institutions, have a crucial role in sharing information about Europe and creating relevant links with Brussels.

It is crucial to synchronize and improve communication strategies among the EU institutions placing EU communication on a more local level and inspire Member States to increase their initiatives to inform citizens about EU matters.

It should not be forgotten that political parties, as key influencers of public opinion on EU, that have a significant role in starting debates and contributing to the European public sphere. Their participation is crucial in directing public opinions and discussions on EU. Equally, civil society organizations, along with professional and sectoral entities, have an important role to raise public awareness about EU and policy dialogues. They need to be leaders of active public participation in European dialog, bringing citizens' perspectives, the final mechanisms of the public sphere, to the first row.

Enhancing communication strategies and improving connections and discussions among citizens and institutions are crucial to reducing the gap between European bureaucratic offices and its citizens, by creating a clear voice of different stories and dialogues from different sectors and social levels, ensuring a more inclusive European public sphere. In doing so, the European Union can support a truly integrated and interconnected continent where every voice is acknowledged, and every opinion is respected.

All this is done through different actors. The European Commission stands as the main actor when we speak about European communication, functioning as the executive body of the European Union. First, it acts as the “inspirator of the integration process,” having the authority

to propose legislations and shape the political agenda, and to create a coherent long-term strategy (Foret 2014). This role empowers the European Commission to set and guide the narrative surrounding the Union's integration process, shaping public perception and discourse.

Second, the European Commission bears the responsibility for the administration and implementation of EU policies that have tangible impacts on the daily lives of its citizens. This responsibility positions the Commission as the “primary interlocutor of all social actors” (Foret 2014), creating a direct link between the institution and the various social mechanisms of the EU.

Third, as the “guardian of the treaties and the legal order”, the European Commission monitors the implementation of European law and advocates its integration, presenting itself as the defender of a harmonized Europe. This function underlines the Commission's role as the guardian of European values and legal norms, ensuring compliance and consistency across EU Member States.

Lastly, the European Commission operates as the “builder of consensus.” It champions the collective interests of the European Union, creating the perspectives of regional, national, local, private, and public entities to create a harmonized viewpoint that represents the Union's diverse perspectives crossing regional, national, and local ranges, along with voices from both the public and private sectors and different generations.

In essence, the European Commission's diverse roles highlight its supreme significance in both shaping and communicating the main principles of Europe.

The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, equally, communicate in a more “apolitical, non-aligned and enactive manner.” These entities predominantly play a simplifying role as politicians and EU Member States are the key communicators, defining the dynamics of European discourse (Stroeker, Buiskool, and Graaf 2014).

While EU Delegations serve as the European Union’s diplomatic representations in third countries, functioning as counterparts to the traditional embassies of sovereign nations. As of the most recent data, the European Union has 140 delegations globally. Although the role of each EU Delegation is pretty much the same, adapting to its local context and conditions, is part of its universal responsibilities and characteristics that they share. These include the coordination of Member State missions, representation, and execution of the EU’s foreign policy through an online and offline activities, while acting as the link between third countries and EU institutions. Their roles are crucial in strengthening awareness, visibility, and understanding of the European Union in third countries, that is a critical component of the EU's

external representation. In this effort, an important aspect of EU Delegations' public diplomacy role is to interpret the nature of the EU. The delegations strive to clarify the distinction between the EU and its Member States and differentiate it from other international organizations like the UN or NATO. Another significant message taken by public diplomacy is the projection of an amiable image of the EU. This communication is completely linked to the concept of soft power, state, and nation branding. By fostering a favourable image, EU Delegations not only strengthen ties with host countries by portraying the EU as a supportive international ally but also underline the EU's contributions to the host countries' better future. The integration of art and culture in this dialogue serves to construct a universal connection, emphasizing shared values and interests regardless of geographical distances.

For delegations located in developing nations, a particular emphasis is placed on underlying the EU's commitment to local development cooperation projects and highlighting their tangible benefits to the local populations. In addition to these messages which aim is to strengthen the bond between the EU and the host country, a universal core in the communication are the EU values. The task for the EU involves adjusting the broad themes and agendas of the European Union, such as its role in promoting peace, the Green Deal, and the Digital Agenda, to resonate with and engage the public in Bosnia as stated by Ferdinand Koenig (interview annexed). These encompass human rights, gender equality, the fight against climate change, and the advocacy for rule of law and most of all peace.

The European Union Information Centres (EUICs) serve as an extending hand of EU Delegations for disseminating knowledge and awareness about the European Union, its institutions, and its agreements, particularly focusing on the Stabilization and Association Agreement and its consistent implications. The EUICs acts as crucial access points for a diverse range of individuals including, but not limited to, students, academics, local policymakers, and the wider public, offering structured and extensive information about various aspects of the European Union.

They provide insight into the EU's structures, undertakings, policies, legal frameworks, documents, publications, programs, and decision-making procedures. This initiative is aimed at enabling a comprehensive understanding of the European Union and its numerous programmes, strategies, and campaigns.

To facilitate a reciprocal exchange of information between the European Union's representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the intended recipients of this information, the EUIC host a diverse range of activities. These include strategic campaigns, debates, seminars, and roundtables, designed to foster a dialogic environment where information, ideas, and

perspectives can be exchanged, discussed, and analysed. Moreover, EUICs actively organize outreach activities and engage with various stakeholders through EU-related events across the host countries. This approach is not only aimed at promoting the knowledge and comprehension of the EU but also at public discourse on various EU-centric topics, such as the accession process, specific EU policies and EU institutions. By doing so, their goal is to have a place for open dialogue and debate about the European Union and its countless components and processes. EUICs are not merely information dissemination points but are instrumental in shaping perceptions, opinions, and understandings about the European Union, its institutional framework, potentially impacting the integration process and fostering a conducive environment for collaborative engagements, mutual growth, and shared values between BiH and the EU.

### *6.2.The EU's millennials vision: an engaging youth strategy for tomorrow*

Since 2002, the EU has recognized the growing potential of its young population, creating an EU Youth Policy that centres on principles of active engagement and equal access to unique opportunities (Council of the European Union 2009). Working effortlessly with initiatives focusing on education, employment, and training, the EU Youth Strategy aims to resonate with the youth, addressing the obstacles they encounter in today's Europe.

Millennials, the digital era's leaders, confront different challenges that are facing as their generation. Powered by an essential desire to shape their destinies, they navigate key life transitions - from academia to the professional world, from personal independence to imitating partnerships, and setting the cornerstone for families. Yet, this journey is often shaped with uncertainties, from global phenomena such as technological revolutions, socio-economic shifts, climate change, and the alarming rise of populism and disinformation. These challenges raise questions about the very essence of our societies, as well as the domain of employment, skills, or democratic structures.

However, it is imperative to understand that socio-economic marginalization and democratic estrangement are tangled problems (NEETs 2022). Europe stands on the abyss of change, and putting off its young talent or encouraging a climate of apathy among its youth is not an option. Millennials, filled with energy and vision, ought to be the developers of not just their stories but also the broader social scene. To truly be the sentiments and ambitions of this animated demographic, EU interventions must be a reflection to their dreams, creativity, and inborn talents, aligning with their immediate needs.

Validating the EU's faith in its young citizens, the EU Youth Strategy Report (European Commission 2022b) highlights the ability of this generation. Labelled as the most educated generation yet, millennials exercise unmatched proficiency in Information and Communication Technologies, effortlessly combining their world with the boundless views of social media. In essence, they do not just embody the promise of tomorrow, but creating its foundations of today.

### *6.3. The millennial take on the EU's "Engage. Connect. Empower" approach (2019-2027)*

The EU Youth Strategy's motto of "Engage. Connect. Empower" (2019-2027) (European Commission 2022b) resonates deeply with the millennial philosophy. It not only shows the millennial spirit of global connection but also advocates for concrete experiences. In today's rapidly shifting world, actualizing these strategic ambitions is more essential than ever.

While the youth information policies differ across EU Member States, there is a collective understanding: access to truthful and relevant information is foundational to facilitating open youth participation and inclusion. In a digital age shaped with misinformation, youth information services stand as ideals of reliability. They do not just present information; they curate it, ensuring its authenticity and relevance for the millennial audience.

These even goes a step further by offering personalized guidance, empowering young Europeans to navigate their choices with judgement. Such structured support cultivates a generation capable of critical thinking, and encouraging an independent decision-making mind-set. As millennials navigate an era marked by digitalization and AI, such tools and resources become invaluable, ensuring they remain informed, engaged, and empowered in the European narrative.<sup>2</sup>

The EU Youth Strategy is not just a document; it is a pledge - to ensure young people's active civic, economic, cultural, social, and political engagement.

The primary belief of this modern policy is "Inclusivity in Action." The vision here is not just about ensuring participation; it is about advocating for common democratic participation where every young voice is given the same importance. Nevertheless, of their backgrounds, whether socio-economic, ethnic, or otherwise, every youth should feel represented and heard. This approach addresses a ongoing issue in many democratic systems where certain groups often feel marginalized or left out of the decision-making process.

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<sup>2</sup> Youth information derived in 1960 as a service that would support and guide young people in making important decisions. It was unique in the way that it addressed young people, in a youth-friendly language, through channels and settings that would speak to them and that would take into account their transitioning in life; ERYICA, EYCA and EURODESK joint position paper "Engage. Inform. Empower." 2016

Next, “Collaborative Policymaking” takes centre stage. This highlights the imperative need for the unity and collaboration of various youth-centric entities. By bringing together youth organizations, young political representatives, and individual young voices, a more all-inclusive and comprehensive approach to policy creation can be achieved. This collaboration ensures that decisions made at local, regional, national, and even European levels are both for and by the youth.

“Empowerment through representation” further strengthens the agenda of youth inclusivity. The policy recognizes the essential need for youth representation across various sectors and forums. It is not just about granting them the right to be heard; it is about legitimizing their presence, allowing them to self-organize, and ensuring that their opinions resonate in decision-making spaces crossing from local authorities to European platforms.

Adding richness to the dialogue is the emphasis on “Enriching the EU Youth Dialogue.” This initiative underlines the importance of pervading diverse youthful perspectives in policy decisions. Furthermore, to ensure the sustainability of such participation, there is a pressure on public literacy through robust citizenship education. A well-informed youth can not only understand policies but also meaningfully contribute to them.

Moving ahead, “Democratising Participation” addresses the practicalities of engagement. It is not enough for the youth to be excited about participation; they also need the tools and skills to do this effectively. Therefore, by giving them different skills you give them key tools for their meaningful involvement.

Lastly, the “Revolution in Engagement” is perhaps the most moving aspect in today's digital era. As we step further into the digital age, the policy calls for leveraging digital transformation in democratic processes. Developing tools like digital democracy channels can potentially increase youth engagement. However, there is a possibility of digital gap, an inequality between those with and without access to digital resources, is still very much a reality. It is of greatest importance to ensure that every young individual, especially those on the borders of the digital revolution, is included in this transformative journey.

By linking these threads, we create a space where the young European not only feels heard but also becomes a co-creator of their destiny, in a Europe that celebrates their voice, opinion, energy and potential.

#### 6.4. *The European youth goals: creating a millennial-inspired plan for Europe*

In the Europe's future lies the vibrant generation of millennials. Central to the EU youth involvement is the vast potential of youth-centric policies. Representing the spirit of Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (Council of the European Union 2008), this vision centres on motivating youth participation in the democratic field and advocating for their public roles.

The strategy that describes this vision is seen in a complex combination of goals and objectives, each designed to provide to the unique needs and ambitions of the millennial generation. First and foremost, the EU recognizes that the modern-day millennial desires more than just a passive existence. The contemporary millennial seeks more than mere existence. The EU aims to encourage them to curate their life's narrative, fostering personal growth, resilience, and autonomy. Equipped with dynamic life skills, they will be skilled at navigating the ever-evolving global world.

Drawing inspiration from the numerous EU values and a shared European identity, the strategy also aspires to cultivate young individuals as agents of solidarity and catalysts for transformative change but to do so “*We need to create engaging, sincere, and dynamic stories that speaks to the heart, not just the intellect.*” as Renad Čelik mentioned in his interview (interview annexed).

Recognizing the intertwined nature of various sectors, the strategy highlights different policies across employment, education, health, and social integration, ensuring they resonate with the aspirations and needs of the millennials.

As well as advocating inclusion and fighting discrimination, the strategy's mission is to fight youth poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, while ensuring every young individual finds their rightful place in the European continent.

To ensure policies resonate with the complex objectives and challenges of the millennial generation, the following principles have been created:

1. Equality and non-discrimination: At its core, the Strategy prioritizes battling discrimination in all its forms, with a discriminating focus on ageism and gender biases, summarized in the Articles 21 and 23 from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Millennials, known for their advocacy of diversity and inclusion, highlight the importance of recognizing the countless faces of discrimination they confront.

2. Inclusion: Recognizing the different backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations that young individuals bring, the Strategy emphasizes policies that ensure every young voice, especially those on the borders or often unheard, is given a platform and the respect it deserves.
3. Participation: In an era where tweets shape narratives and hashtags drive revolutions, millennials profound engagement with digital media redefines public participation. The Strategy underlines the significance of engaging youth in creating, implementing, and refining policies that directly impact them.
4. Global, European, national, regional, and local dimension: Beyond the borders of Europe, the Strategy emphasizes the interconnection of global, national, regional, and local areas. Grounded actions that resonate at grassroots levels are crucial, and simultaneously, the global chorus of young voices must influence discussions on persistent worldwide challenges.
5. Dual approach: Millennials live in a world where must act in different sectors, from education to the environment. This approach balances sector-specific youth initiatives with an overarching integration across various policies. This duality is principal in creating a holistic, effective, and contemporary policy that we see in complex, and first of all connected reality of millennial life.

#### *6.5. The millennials connect: an united European experience*

In the age of globalization and digitalisation, European millennials are forming connections like never before. This combination of connections, engagements, and shared experiences are shaping a new era of solidarity and creating the path ahead for the European Union. At the heart of this evolution mobility is essential in all its forms.

Millennials need experiences that allow them to expand their horizons, dive into diverse cultures, and ultimately shape their multifaceted identities. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that every young European, regardless of background, has equal access to exchanges, cultural activities, and public action within a European framework. Such experiences not only strengthen personal and public skills but also encourage critical thinking, creativity, and employability. Moreover, in a connected world, they shape them into meticulous European citizens.

Programs like Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps stand as powerful tools to the potential of intercultural engagement, especially for the marginalized youth. The strategy



should rise above boundaries, deleting boundaries not just within the EU but also with associate nations and partners from regions like the Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, and other strategic collaborators (European Commission 2023a). Through this, it is possible to facilitate a global millennial connect, strengthened by relevant EU funding frameworks.

For this vision to become a reality, a call to action for the Member States and the European Commission is essential. The roadmap is clear. Primarily, the concept of “Universal Mobility” leads this vision with the ideal Europe the one without borders. Every millennial and youth worker should have the liberty to traverse across states, taking diverse opportunities that come their way. Whether it is a wish for volunteering in a neighbouring country or pursuing higher education across borders, these aspirations should be met with encouragement rather than administrative obstacles. By ensuring seamless mobility, Europe can become a gigantic, integrated community for its young minds, teeming with opportunities and experiences.

Next, the principle of “Solidarity in Action” is crucial. Engaging youth in solidarity initiatives can play a fundamental role in developing their sense of community and responsibility. Such engagement can be amplified when the EU's funding instruments align with regional and local efforts. This synergy can lead to more impactful and widespread projects, channelling the collective energies of the youth towards progress of their community. Moreover, the strategy states that young individuals should not only be on the receiving end of benefits. “Inclusivity in Design” ensures that they play an essential role in the conceptualization, execution, and evaluation of relevant EU funding projects and future strategies. After all, who better to craft policies for the youth than the youth themselves? By involving them actively in decision-making processes, Europe can benefit from their fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and basic understanding of their generation's needs.

Lastly, the roadmap recognizes the changing models of learning. In an era where informal modes of education often hold as much significance as formal ones, “Acknowledging Informal Learning” is crucial. The value that non-formal and informal learning bring, especially in sectors like solidarity and volunteering, is enormous. As such, Europe must establish healthy systems to validate and recognize these skills. By doing so, it acknowledges the diverse learning ways millennials bring upon and ensures that their unique experiences and skills find the recognition they truly deserve.

Through these endeavours, with the concerted efforts of the Member States and the European Commission, it is possible to create a continent where millennials do not just connect but also shape the very essence of the European experience.

The EU Youth Strategy highlights the significant role of “Youth Information and Support” as a prime policy instrument. Through robust platforms, including the European Youth Portal, joined with the efforts of pan-European entities, the strategy envisions an available information created for different needs of millennials. This includes insights on their rights, youth-focused services, and EU programs created for them.

However, the main challenge continues: creating a genuine bond between the EU and its millennial demographic. As highlighted in Youth Goal #1, a clear disinterest is still very much present, characterized by a declining trust in the EU, combined by obstacles in grasping the EU’s foundational principles, values, and operational tools. Further complicating this scenario is the traceable democratic void in EU’s processes, which is strengthening Euroscepticism among millennials. Yet, EU initiatives, represented by programs like Erasmus+, have showcased their potential in reigniting a sense of European belonging and fostering proactive citizenship. Therefore, highlighting the imperative of engaging millennials by educating them about the European identity's privileges and allowing them concrete experiences within the European society is a good strategic approach.

EU’s policymakers underline a complete outreach, aiming to resonate with young voices from every social level. This ensures they not only resonate with the numerous EU opportunities but also loudly contribute to policy discourses influencing their lives (Council of the European Union 2018).

The EU's focus aligns with the millennial way of thinking, highlighting:

1. Innovation and Creativity by inspiring peer to peer interactions and networking opportunities and ensuring high quality information.
2. Green Transition by going through a modification towards greener way of thinking and change in behaviour while inculcating sustainable habits within its audience.
3. Inclusive Outreach by strengthening its regional and local hubs, targeting youth often “not seen” in mainstream dialogues.
4. Youth Information by positioning youth information as key field and contributing to policy developments in the field.

But as Berina stated in her interview (interview annexed), this process is ongoing, and with the ultimate objective being not the creation of perfect youth policies, but rather the education and awareness-raising of all societal stakeholders to actively engage in creating programs that address society's needs. While a good and adaptable policy may appear, it is crucial to remember that policies are dynamic and must evolve in response to social changes and

emerging trends. For instance, if new generations engage on new platforms, policies should be updated accordingly to accommodate to their needs.

#### *6.6. Knowing millennials as an audience*

Differing to uniform interpretations, “Youth” captures a spectrum of backgrounds, aspirations, and needs. Therefore, shaping a communication strategy that resonates with this segment demands a strong recognition of the many-sided profiles within its domain.

However, this complexity should not be misinterpreted as an impossible barrier. Quite the contrary. Many overarching themes - education, social inclusion, economic prospects, housing, health, and mobility - resonate across the youth spectrum. Moreover, today's millennials uniquely positioned at the crossroads of global challenges, be it the imminent questions of climate change, escalating inequality, or the never-ending conflicts or economic crisis. Their fundamental resilience and drive have stimulated collective movements, aiming to bring these concerns to the front of EU policymakers and social stakeholders.

While it may seem at first glance that today's youth are less intertwined with traditional political mechanisms—evident from reduced voting tendencies or dwindling memberships in political parties—the reality is far more intricate. The millennial and Gen-Z cohorts (European Labour Authority 2023), born and bred in the age of digital omnipresence, often navigate alternative avenues to voice their political sentiments and priorities.

Modern approaches to millennials engagement start with a tangible movement of “Digital Activism” among millennials. No longer confined with traditional methods of activism, millennials are using the power of online platforms to effect change. From standing behind brand boycotts due to questionable ethics to supporting specific advocacy campaigns, the online world has become a dynamic space for youth mobilization. The power of calls-to-action speaking loudly through digital channels cannot be understated. It is important to recognize these trends. By doing so, institutions can gain profound insights into their concerns and priorities, creating effective responses that can address millennial needs.

Nevertheless, even as the digital sphere seems sensitive when we are speaking about youth involvement, there is a fundamental challenge called the “Institutional Disconnect”. A significant percentage of young Europeans often expresses a sense of estrangement from bureaucratic systems. This phenomenon has many layers, starting from the noticeable age gap dominant in politics to the apparent triviality when we think about institutional processes. It is important to make that the younger generation feels essentially linked to these mechanisms that

are shaping their future. By fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring transparency, institutions can revitalise the trust and interest of millennials in formal structures.

“Policy Reflection” as an introspection aims to evaluate the principal strategies addressing youth-centric issues. By understanding the current *modus operandi*, its successes, and areas of improvement, institutions can improve their approaches. Such a reflective practice ensures that policies remain relevant, effective, and resonate deeply with millennial goals and challenges.

#### *6.7. Understanding how millennials participate in the political debate*

While traditional political playground may have seen a lack of youth participation, the European Union tries to find its revitalization in alternative platforms. Dynamic programmes - from grassroots activism to light content like mobility - have created powerful instruments of political articulation. Together with this approach, online platforms allow millennials to spread their perspectives and demonstration for transformative action, often avoiding conventional institutional ways. This transition from formal to more organic means of engagement often stems from a universal sentiment among the youth: a perception that governmental structures are dominated by disconnected elites, seemingly aloof from the vivid concerns of younger demographics.

As the European Union recreates its communication strategies these evolving forms and spaces of youth interaction cannot be overlooked but should be joined to foster a more inclusive and responsive democratic approach.

#### *6.8. Including socio-economic and demographic diversities into EU communication strategies*

The European Union acknowledges the rich experiences and backgrounds represented by youth. Creating communication strategies that reflect this heterogeneity is not just a suggestion but an imperative. They should not be just created for the “privileged youth elite” that are already wrapped up in political or CSO’s domains – but even the “unreachable” millennials.

Key influencers on a young individual's life path include gender dynamics, racial and ethnic intersections, and socio-economic backgrounds since the early-life inequalities, particularly in education and community environment, can create domino effects, with consequences throughout entire life, increasing feelings of exclusion and detachment (OECD 2018).

Guidelines for Cross-cultural Communication Strategy start from “Inclusivity and Empathy” by valuing diverse perceptions and behaviours without assuming uniformity within cultural

classifications. Assuming uniformity within cultural classifications can lead to overgeneralizations and misconceptions. An effective cross-cultural communication strategy, therefore, encourages diverse perspectives with a large dose of empathy.

By doing so, it fosters a space where individuals feel seen, heard, and respected for their unique experiences and viewpoints. Building on this, the guideline of “Evading Assumptions” becomes a principal, knowing that every millennial is different. Refraining from generalizing based on attributes like race, attire, gender, or sexual orientation is a good way to go.

Lastly, as the proverb goes, a picture is worth a thousand words making “Visual Diversity” in communication is a powerful tool. Increasing the range of communication toolkits means interpreting content in ways that are visually insightful of diverse audiences. Incorporating variously reflective visual materials ensures that the content resonates with a wider audience. This not only enhances the reach of the communication but also underlines the commitment to inclusivity, as audiences can see themselves represented in the content they consume.

Given the characteristic of the European youth demographic, a uniform approach is unsustainable. Communication strategies that only amplify the voices of pre-established elites, focus only on marginalized groups, can unintentionally soften a vast number of middle- or lower-class millennials. Any strategy must avoid one-size-fits-all models and genuinely engage with the multi-faceted challenges that can delay youth participation. Obstacles can be from social stereotypes, lacking youth-centric institutions, rooted political behaviours, familial influences, and personal convictions, to more tangible demographic aspects like gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic levels (Bee and Kaya 2017). Closed-loop communication strategies risk continuing inequalities, therefore there is an obvious the need for a more inclusive, representative approach.

#### *6.9. Communication is a two-way street*

The European Union acknowledges that the information consumption for young Europeans has undergone a seismic change. Contemporary research underlines a notable transition in millennials' approach to obtaining political insights. They no longer view a single source of information as the ultimate authority. The digital native generation, familiar with the immense expanse of the internet, believes not just in consuming content but actively contributing to its creation and dissemination (Wells 2007).

The pillars of trust for millennials have changed as well. Young Europeans tend to prioritize relevance and authenticity over traditional symbols of authority. Their faith hinges less on

hierarchical positions and more on genuine relatability and trustworthiness. Consequently, for the European Union to openly resonate with this demographic, a more interconnected, digital-first communication strategy is a must - one that anticipates and welcomes proactive millennial participation.

Civil society institutions have often been at the front of this change, establishing strong connections with young communities. Their successful frameworks offer capital insights. The European Union, in its endeavour to create a more inclusive and engaged Europe, can control these existing standards, ensuring that channels of communication are not just open but vibrant, like a two-way street.

Foundations for millennial engagement can be seen as:

1. View them as peers: At the front of any youth-oriented communication lies the essential recognition of their active role. Be it leading a protest, innovating as entrepreneurs, or influencing as digital creators, the youth are indispensable contributors. Dismissing them based on perceived immaturity would not only be unjust but also counterproductive. The focus should remain on empowering them as informed citizens, ensuring that official strategies align with their perspectives and needs.
2. Keys to resonant communication:
  - Clarity and Brevity: Simple, uncomplicated messaging.
  - Authenticity: Direct and transparent outreach.
  - Respectful Tone: Avoiding any form of condescension.
  - Engaging Elements: Incorporate music, vibrant visuals, and relatable narratives.
3. Engage, entertain, and interact: Current research indicates the youth's disposition towards community-centric issues and social initiatives. In this context, the EU's communication approach must go from traditional government dialogues to more relevant and relatable subjects. Content should:
  - Be immediately relevant and authentic.
  - Be presented in engaging and innovative formats.
  - Offer value – as entertainment, personal insights, or networking opportunities.
  - Provide prompt feedback. Despite the characteristic bureaucratic pace of governmental reforms, the youth's accustomed speed of digital communication asks for prompt responses.

By imbibing these principles, the European Union can foster a more engaged and informed young European community, resonating with their pulse and promoting active citizenship.

#### *6.10. Approaches, messages, tones of communication, influencers, and trustworthy voices*

In the era of open and digital diplomacy, while traditional means of circulating institutional information continue, there is an increasing need to innovate and adapt to capture millennials European audiences. Previously, communications predominantly ran in a unilateral direction - institutions dictated, and audiences consumed, without much engagement or feedback. Classic examples include authoritative press releases and direct calls to action, where the institutions were presented as sole disseminator of information.

The zeitgeist of today's communication revolves around empowerment, action, and personal resonance. Especially within the framework of the European Union, communication must shift from dictating to collaborating. Open diplomacy strategies, with participation at their core, present an opportunity for the EU to transition towards a more collaborative and personalized communication style. It embodies the essence of empowering citizens, valuing their feedback, and actively involving them in the knowledge and practice of creation process.

Striking the Right Note by ensuring the appropriate tone and style is dominant when reaching out to the millennials. Research suggests (Shanahan and Elliott 2009) the necessity of created messages to consider different age, education, interests, and language. First and foremost, it is important to "Avoid Patronizing and Authoritarian Tones." Millennials have grown up in an era of speedy access to information. Their inherent ability to select content and assess its authenticity makes them particularly sensitive to tones that either underestimate them or come across as condescending. An authoritarian voice is likely to be dismissed as out-of-touch or irrelevant. It is essential to approach them as informed, intelligent equals, ensuring content remains respectful and engaging. This leads to the next guideline concerning "Language and Style." Knowing the right balance is vital. While fake use of slang can push them away, over-complicated jargon or acronyms can do the same. A balanced, colloquial expression creates trust and interest. Multilingual outreach, especially in the diverse linguistic scene of Europe, is essential to ensure inclusivity. Ensuring content is reachable in various languages promotes inclusivity and broadens the reach of communication.

It is also crucial to "Adopt a Relevant Tone." Millennial and Gen Z audiences look for storytelling's that show their daily experiences, challenges, and ambitions. Communication strategies should prioritize long-term relationship building over momentary, short-term

engagement. By making content relevant and relevant, brands, institutions, or agencies can build trust and loyalty with these generations. Lastly, while politics plays a vital role in shaping societies, it is essential to “Steer Clear of Political Parties” in communication strategies aimed at younger demographics. They tend to gravitate towards content centred on broader social or policy issues rather than the promotional agendas of specific political parties. The tone should consistently emphasize respect, empowerment, and aspirational messages.

While young Europeans are at the core of the communication strategy, it is crucial to engage those who shape their worldviews. Their decision-making and perspectives are often an unification of inputs from parents, educators, peers, and other significant figures. Furthermore, the digital age has strengthened the impact of virtual empires - online platforms, pop culture, media houses, and celebrities. To genuinely resonate with the youth, communication campaigns must incorporate these spheres of influence, creating a complex narrative. Listening to millennial influencers, when creating out communication strategies within the European Union, it is a must to understand that the message effect extends beyond these individuals. Young Europeans do not exist in a vacuum; they are deeply intertwined within networks of influence that significantly shape their perspectives.

#### *6.11. Young European Ambassadors - calling for a better future*

The EU has recognized the significance of directly reaching out to its millennials. This recognition created an innovative diplomatic approach: the Young European Ambassadors (YEAs) (WeBalkans 2023b). This initiative, far from being a simple symbolic gesture, serves as a dynamic bridge fostering friendships and community among the young people of EU and Western Balkans countries.

The YEAs are not ambassadors in the traditional sense; they are the new form of diplomacy that prioritizes open dialogue, shared experiences, and mutual growth. Rooted in the core values of non-political, voluntary participation, this vibrant communication network seeks to demystify the EU's endeavours in its Eastern partner nations. By highlighting the tangible outcomes of the EU's cooperative efforts, the YEAs play an instrumental role in shaping an informed millennial perception about the EU.

But the YEAs' mission goes beyond mere information dissemination. They serve as the EU's grassroots diplomats, actively participating in policy discussions across numberless topics. By taking part in civic activism, they not only strengthen the voice of the youth but also create a



path for a more inclusive, participative European future. Their slogan, “#strongertogether”, captures the essence of this collective journey calling for a better future (YouTube [link](#))!

As Armin, Young European Ambassador stated (interview annexed) that the millennial diplomats differ from traditional diplomats and demand "contemporary" skills. This primarily affects effective communication, especially the skillful use of social media, which is vital for disseminating essential messages. Today, creating engaging content is vital to capture the attention and interest of young people in the messages they wish to convey.

Millennials and Gen Z value authenticity. While institutional messages from the EU have their place, endorsements from relatable third-party figures can significantly increase reach and credibility. From celebrated sportspersons and modern artists to visionary entrepreneurs, leveraging these voices can boost the EU's message. Beyond these, grassroots entities - youth-led movements, community organizations, and civil society groups - also serve as effective communication channels. Their local significance and organic connection with young people often make their confirmations more resonant and trustworthy.

#### *6.12. Millennial engagement in the EU*

To genuinely resonate with the millennial generation within the European Union, the method of communication must evolve beyond conventional tactics. While traditional mediums—like press conferences, media appearances, and the like—still hold their value, they often fall short in deeply engaging the youth.

1. Youth councils in the EU context: These are official entities where young members reflect the voice and concerns of their peers to the levels of policymaking. It is crucial to understand that the EU's millennial population is not just passive recipients; they are stakeholders, deserving a seat at the decision-making table.
2. Collaborative EU initiatives: These are platforms where young individuals collaborate with experienced professionals on projects or crucial decisions. Such endeavours not only influence the unique perspectives of the youth but also foster a sense of ownership among them.
3. Deliberative forums: A diverse representation of millennials can be collected to discuss, debate, and influence specific EU policies or agendas. Such engagements allow the youth to actively participate in the democratic processes of the European Union.
4. Digital engagement: The digital world is arguably the most potent tool in this era. Millennials in the EU, much like their global counterparts, are deeply interconnected

online. By using online tools, platforms, and campaign - extending from interactive polls to data exchanges - the EU can reach its young citizens more effectively and in more frequently.

5. Activist inspirations: While direct activism might not always align with governmental communications, the spirit and methods of activism can be directed in a positive sense. By integrating some activist strategies, the EU can inspire millennials to be more proactive in society.
6. Redefining political engagement: Social media platforms, from Twitter to Facebook, have changed the narrative around youth's political involvement. The days when political engagement solely meant voting or joining a political rally are far gone. Today, campaigns, movements, and even boycotts spread like wildfire across digital platforms, organized often by millennials. The rise of “networked young citizens”, as identified by Loader (2014), breaks away from conventional norms of citizenship. They are not just satisfied with voting or volunteering; they are creating innovative paths through decentralized, digital networks to speak up about their concerns and perspectives.
7. Navigating the digital minefield: Digital spaces are not without their challenges. The weakness of social media to manipulation, whether through disinformation campaigns or hate speech, is undisputable. Therefore, any EU digital engagement strategy must be accompanied by strong monitoring and involvement mechanisms. EU communication team members should be dedicated to control online interactions and should be trained to ease potential areas of disharmony, leveraging platform-specific tools to control false or offensive content.
8. Educate to empower: The EU can further strengthen its role as a leader by guiding its millennial audience through the labyrinth of digital information. Campaigns dedicated to enhancing digital literacy, highlighting the identification of fake narratives, and promoting tools to report unpleasant content can reinforce the EU's commitment to a transparent and online environment.

In essence, as the European Union shapes its “millennial diplomacy” through EU strategic campaigns, it is not just about using social media platforms – but redefining engagement, ensuring inclusivity, navigating challenges, and empowering its millennials as game changers.

## **7. The European Union strategy campaigns**

### *7.1. United in dialogue: understanding Europe's strategic campaigns*

Over recent decades, the European Union (EU) has experienced significant transformation, progressively integrating into various aspects of citizens' lives with extended responsibilities and tasks. However, the evolution of its communication strategies has not been equal, leaving a significant communicative disconnect between the EU and its citizens.

This divide is critically acknowledged; numerous Eurobarometer (European Commission 2023) surveys reveal many individuals feeling uninformed and powerless in the EU's decision-making processes. Effective and dynamic communication is principal in maintaining a successful democracy, creating an environment where millennials are informed and can actively participate.

The fundamentals of communication are inseparable from the content that needs to be communicated. The EU is expected to serve as an example of prosperity, solidarity, and security within the global instability, imposing that its communication strategies are reflective of effective policy initiatives. However, mere formulation of the Action Plans and Communication Policies (European Parliament 2023) is not enough; successful implementation requires collective efforts and a partnership approach involving key stakeholders, including various EU institutions, regional and local authorities of the EU Member States, European political parties, and civil society.

Commission adopted the White Paper on European Communication Policy (European Commission 2006) in February 2006. This document created strategies for institutional partnerships, highlighted the imperative of right to freedom of information within the EU, and advocated for the creation of a European communication charter or conduct code. Its primary objective was to initiate collaborative efforts, inviting diverse entities to share insights on bridging the “communication gap successfully” between the European Union and its citizens that is not something new. There has been an enduring question where the EU and Europeans are not “on the same page” when it comes to communication, as it was emphasized since 1992 and Maastricht Treaty.

Since then, while all EU institutions have been trying to improve how they communicate, remains a global consensus that efforts must be intensified. Communication has predominantly remained a “Brussels-centric” phenomenon, primarily cantered around informing citizens of the EU's functions, with smaller importance on public opinions and what the people have to say. Despite progresses, there is still a big gap in communication.

Working with other EU institutions, EU Member States and CSOs, the European Commission has identified five areas of action that will change together with social and technological developments. The key objective of these actions is to increase the ethics of information rights and freedom of expression, recognized as the foundations of democracy in Europe by the EU Treaty and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. As well as to establish common principle focusing on several key principles such as inclusiveness that is ensuring all citizens access to information in their languages through different channels and enhancing the skills needed to use that information. Diversity that is respecting and acknowledging the numerous socio-cultural backgrounds and political views within the EU. Participation that is providing platforms for citizens to express their views and engage in dialogues with decision-makers.

An effective EU communication policy should be citizen-centric, providing tools, place for debate, and communication channels that give access to information and platforms for expression. It should enhance civic education for all ages to enable active participation in public spheres, helping people to use modern tools to access information and join debates; facilitate connection between citizens to develop new forums and promote present initiatives for public debate on European issues to build mutual trust and cooperation; and it should connect citizens and institutions by improving the give-and-take communication between citizens and public institutions at all levels. This makes EU institutions more approachable, open, and accessible.

The European Union often suffers from a lack of identity, coming across as “faceless” to its citizens. There is an obvious need for different actions that can allow citizens to better relate to and connect with Europe (European Parliament 2014). By giving “Europe a human face” allows citizens to understand the relevance of information on a personal level and not just abstract concepts, making the political discourse more significant and impactful. Improved efforts from EU institutions and governmental bodies at all levels are vital to humanize the information EU wish to share, providing it with a more tangible and relatable identity.

However, shaping discussions on European issues within national and local contexts is equally important. This can be achieved through delicate commitment from national and local politicians and institutions, and proactive involvement from EU institutions to put European policies within local frameworks in a common context. Such approach to communication strategy ensures that the discourse surrounding European issues is improved and expanded, reaching millennials in a more personalized and appropriate manners.

## *7.2. Between Tweets and Treaties –The Millennial Call for a More Engaged EU – Europe can you hear us*

To this end, a set of objectives known as the "European Youth Goals" (European Commission 2022) appeared as communication starting point to the continent's future. The creation of these eleven goals was neither random nor by accident. Instead, they were created from the collective voice and vision of European youth, particularly those actively participating in the EU Youth Dialogue.

Firstly, the very first step of these goals is the ambition to bridge the apparent gap between the European Union and its youth. This intent is not simply symbolic; it is an acknowledgment of the importance of grounding EU's gigantic bureaucratic apparatus in the real life and ambitions of its younger population.

Promoting "Equality of All Genders" stands as a testament to Europe's commitment to cataclysmic age-old prejudices and advocating for a world where gender does not determent one's destiny. Parallely, the objective of "Inclusive Societies" (EUIC VedriMo 2021) underlines the importance of embracing diversity, ensuring that no individual feels marginalized due to their race, religion, or background.

In an age where misinformation runs without borders, the goal for "Information and Constructive Dialogue" becomes crucial. It not only underlines the importance of accurate information dissemination but also advocates for a two-way dialogue, ensuring that the youth's voice is not just heard, but actively engaged with.

The emphasis on "Mental Health and Wellbeing" is particularly important. In an era where mental health struggles are finally coming out of the shadows, this goal shows the urgency of talking about them. It also hints at the broader ambition of moving away from pure economic indicators of success to a more all-inclusive understanding of wellbeing.

The focus on "Moving Rural Youth Forward" shows a keen awareness of the urban-rural divide and the unique challenges faced by millennials in rural areas. Joined with this is the objective for "Quality Employment for All" such as Adnan's (EUIC Solvio 2022) and "Quality Learning", reflecting the EU's commitment to ensuring that every young individual has access to not just any job or education, but worthy ones.

In recognizing the importance of active civic participation, the goal "Space and Participation for All" advocates for inclusive platforms where millennials can openly influence policy and social trajectories as we can see in this story of All the Faces of Human Rights (EUIC 2021a). Furthermore, the objective of a "Sustainable Green Europe" (European Commission 2023)

aligns with the global urgency of addressing climate change and environmental deprivation. Lastly, the aspiration towards supporting "Youth Organisations and European Programmes" underlines the importance of institutional structures in increasing youth voices and initiatives such as Youth initiatives for the rule of law in Bosnia and Hercegovina (EUIIC 2022).

However, pure goal-setting, while crucial, is insufficient. The EU Youth Strategy is not just a plan; it is a call for action. It imagines the mobilization of policy instruments and strong strategic campaigns at the EU level while also encouragement initiatives at national, regional, and local level. The success of these youth goals involves everybody – from big octopus' bureaucratic machines to everyday millennial as individuals.

For the purposes of this master thesis, specific strategic campaigns towards the millennials have been methodically selected for further discussion.

### *7.3. European Year of Youth*

In the records of European history, 2022 stands as the "European Year of Youth." (European Parliament 2021). This declaration was not only a symbolic gesture but an acknowledgment of the important role the millennials play in creating Europe's path. The year, however, was not just a passive showcase of appreciation. Instead, it teemed with countless opportunities designed for the youth to learn, articulate their visions, network, and participate in enriching activities spanning the continent's length and breadth. These experiences were not just about personal enrichment; they were created for all youth to engage in the broader narrative of Europe, particularly in an era that has been shadowed by the implications of a global pandemic. Emerging from these tumultuous times, the European Year of Youth symbolized more than just a commemorative title. It served as a clarion call, urging the youth to step into the future armed with hope and confidence. The post-pandemic world, fraught with uncertainties, necessitated a resilient and forward-looking perspective, and who better to lead this charge than the youth. However, while the year was marked by optimism, it also brought some tangible expectations from the younger demographic. The Eurobarometer, in its informative survey (European Commission 2023), unveiled that a dominant feeling among young Europeans was the desire for their voices to be genuinely heard. A stunning 72% expressed the expectation that decision-makers, in the spirit of the European Year of Youth, would not only lend an ear to their demands but would also act decisively upon them. Parallely, there was a near-equal emphasis, at 71%, on the importance of strong support mechanisms for their general development. This involved personal, social, and professional growth, aligning effortlessly with the previously discussed

youth goals that covered crucial areas like mental health, gender equality, and access to quality educational opportunities as seen in this YouTube promotional video (YouTube [link](#)) for the European Year of Youth that showcases the main goals and central themes featuring different young individuals. The aim was to increase awareness of the EYY and to motivate youth involvement throughout the year. This video serves as a promotional tool for the EYY across numerous platforms, including social media.

In this light, European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen sent a strong message (European Commission 2021) to the young Europeans: *“From climate to social to digital, young people are at the heart of our policymaking and political priorities. We vow to listen to them, as we are doing in the Conference on the Future of Europe, and we want to work together to shape the future of the European Union. A Union that is stronger if it embraces the aspirations of our young people - grounded in values and bold in action.”*

In addition to this we must not forget the voices of millennials of Western Balkan countries and the place that is rightfully theirs. Youth representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina had the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with Mr. Josep Borrell, EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, during his trip to Sarajevo in 2020 (WeBalkans 2020). Young European Ambassadors alongside representatives from organizations such as the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), Erasmus, and its alumni, have collectively send a message that *“Young people deserve to be given opportunities to grow and contribute to the Bosnia and Herzegovina of tomorrow.”*

Between diplomatic tweets and treaties millennials became key players to a future that is not just progressive but also greener, more digitally integrated, educated and fundamentally inclusive.

#### *7.4.Erasmus + Enriching lives, opening minds*

The Erasmus Programme stands as a proof to the European Union's commitment to strengthening its higher education systems. Initiated in 1987 under the "European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students," the Erasmus Programme's core was to promote the exchange of students across the European continent. Its path over the years has not been short but it has been transformative. By 2014, seven previous programmes, including notable names like Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, and Youth in Action, were harmoniously integrated into what is now recognized as Erasmus+. As of 2021, #DiscoverEU further expands this variety of educational opportunities.

On the past years Erasmus+ have found itself around three main pillars: policy direction, stakeholder engagement, and communication strategies (European Commission 2023) focusing on creative communication towards its target group millennials.

A striking point of reflection was the recognition that Erasmus+ has expanded far beyond a simple student mobility initiative. It has matured into a European initiative that addresses present socio-economic challenges and aspires to create a greener, more digital, and inclusive Europe. Its narrative has always been one of "enriching lives and opening minds." And now it must carry this legacy while presenting the innovations of Erasmus+ 2021-2027. Yet, as with any large-scale initiative, Erasmus+ has many challenges. A prominent one is navigating the communication labyrinth that sometimes tends to become static rather than inventive. The strategy moving forward emphasizes not just past successes but also telling a revitalized Erasmus+ story. This includes confronting the contemporary challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and ecological considerations, while also breaking free from the "Erasmus+ bubble" and reaching a broader audience.

One core objective of the revived Erasmus+ communication is to provide clarity and fight misconceptions. This becomes fundamental, especially as the programme is extended. The focus is on strengthening the programme's accessibility, reducing so-called administrative hurdles, and ensuring that what Erasmus+ has to offer resonate with a diverse range of potential beneficiaries.

To reach millennials different formats are a must. EUIC has organized an Once Erasmus Always Erasmus events (EUIC Erasmus 2021) as a discussion forum, where Erasmus alumni meet with the EU Office in BiH representatives, University professors and new Erasmus pre-departure students, sharing their experiences and specific information. Through organisation of a meet ups and storytelling formats #MyEUPriča (EUIC 2022b) with Erasmus+ BiH alumni and Erasmus+ Office and University of Sarajevo participants, different experiences were shared and mobility promoted.

Erasmus+ has always been more than a programme. To many, like Lamiya Čizmić (interview annexed), it is an experience, a transformative journey, marking a clear distinction of "before" and "after." making her a passionate advocate for the EU's ideals and goals. Its essence, summarised in the motto "Erasmus+ It all starts here," is to offer everyone a strong learning platform that always led to a full individual or organisational development. Not just a student exchange program, Erasmus has become symbolic of the EU's ambitions. References to the "Erasmus generation" are not just about students who have benefited from the programme but represent a demographic that is mobile and that identifies themselves as European citizens, and



is fundamentally more motivated towards the European integration. For them, and many more, Erasmus is not just a program—it is a promise.

### *7.5. Creative Europe – Push Boundaries*

The essence of Europe lies not just in its rich history but in the ever-evolving cultural and creative dynamism. This dynamism is ideally captured by the Creative Europe Programme, the main supporter for the European cultural and creative endeavours.

Creative Europe, with its new strategic mission spanning from 2021 to 2027, is uniquely focused on elevating the European cultural scene. Exploring into its structure, the programme unfolds in three primary domains. Culture a celebration of cross-border exchanges, social inclusivity, art-centric education, and a focus on European values. It emphasizes global outreach and the power of diplomacy. Media where is all about embracing the new – new talents, innovation in the audio-visual landscape, and connecting emerging business models to strengthen European works both on the theatre screen and in the digital sphere. Cross-sectoral as an extensive blend where arts, technology, and business meet. But Creative Europe is not just an isolated initiative; it resonates with broader European objectives, especially the European Agenda for Culture.

This communication strategy agenda radiates within the following vision: Social - using culture as a tool to foster community bonds, revitalize societies, and enhance overall well-being. It is about removing barriers, both financial and social, put also pushing boundaries (YouTube [link](#)) in the countries like BiH, ensuring everyone benefits from the richness of culture and seeing beyond.

Economic as it recognizing the potential of culture and arts as economic drivers. Their influence extends beyond their own sectors, thorough domains like ICT, manufacturing, and tourism, acting as catalysts for innovation and growth like the Sarajevo Film Festival (EUDEL BiH 2023) and through which are empowered young filmmakers (WeBalkans 2023) or if we speak about Tolerance (EUIC 2022) through art work of Mirko Ilic. External as EC is strengthening Europe's "soft power" in the global arena, positioning culture and arts as essential tools for sustainable development. It was Ursula von der Leyen, in her State of the Union speech, who emphasized the essential role of culture. By mentioning the "New European Bauhaus movement," (European Commission 2020) she symbolized the synergy between the worlds of science, technology, art, and culture.

From the millennial's perspective this is especially important. Because the future of Europe's culture and creativity is inherently tied to communication strategies that resonate with today's generation. We are talking about storytelling approaches that empower, inspire, and challenge. Simple design elements, innovative tools, and a consistent narrative are essential to engage with the European youth, encouraging them to contribute to and participate in the cultural world.

Furthermore, Creative Europe's narrative champions pushing boundaries and redefining the status quo, like representing the richness and diversity of the cultural and artistic creativity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUIC 2022). As millennials who seek connections, growth, and innovation with their peers (YouTube [link](#)) and as someone who wish to dream in the Garden of Youth (EUIC 2022) (YouTube [link](#)) – Creative Europe is the world to dream in.

And CE strategic campaigns do just that – they create bridges for cultural sectors, helping them expand their horizons, and amplifying their positive impact. Yet, in all its communications, whether targeting artists, general European audiences, or decision-makers, there is a clear message: stand up for culture. From offering transparent guidelines for beneficiaries to creating engaging content for European citizens, the essence remains the same - to celebrate, challenge, empower, and inspire.

### *7.6. European Year of Skills*

2023 has been dedicated to the European Year of Skills. As society continues to evolve at a rapid pace, one central theory remains unchanged—the importance of skills and knowledge. The bottom line of the European Year of Skills lies in the persistent gap between the skills job markets demand and the competencies potential employees possess. In 2019, 77% of European companies, especially SMEs, reported challenges in hiring individuals with necessary skills. This shortfall is not just a business concern—it is a social one. In 2022, while the general unemployment rate was 6%, youth unemployment was an amazing 20% in some member states. Such statistics signify not only economic implications but also hint at a lost generation of millennials not realizing their full potential. Among this scenario, only 37% of adults are pursuing further training.

Europe is currently undergoing a transformation, both digitally and environmentally. The success of initiatives like the Green Deal industrial strategy centres significantly on having a workforce well-equipped with the necessary skills. For millennials, a generation synonymous with digital revolution and eco-awareness, the European Year of Skills is not just a strategy—it is an opportunity. For them to be the #GenChange millennial generation. An opportunity to

bridge the current skill gap, align their competencies with market demands, and consequently, foster both personal and European economic growth.

For the European Year of Skills to resonate deeply, effective communication is crucial. Central to this strategy is the message "Skills for Competitiveness and Quality Jobs". This motto must permeate the consciousness of SME employers by enriching the narrative from a simple business standpoint to a broader perspective. A skilled workforce is not just about profitability - it is about driving innovation and ensuring sustainability. For professional millennials, like Azra (EUIC 2021) skill enhancement is not just about employability. It is about empowerment, career growth, and creating a place in an ever-evolving workspace. For millennial job seekers positioning skills with market demands can open doors to fulfilling job roles, like Tomislav Pudja who took up the family tradition of cheese making (WeBalkans 2022), offering both stability and satisfaction. For those at the crossroads, from newly graduates or those detached from work and training and wish to prequalified like Katarina (YouTube [link](#)), the message is clear - skills are the foundation of a successful professional journey. For those millennials who stand as policymakers and stakeholders - they must adopt the premise that a skilled workforce is the backbone of social progress and economic recovery. And for those millennials who are training providers, well their role is no longer limited to traditional education. They are the one shaping the European workforce of tomorrow, one module at a time. For millennials, the European Year of Skills 2023 is more than a strategic initiative— this is a call to equip, engage, and elevate. The future of Europe rests on its youth, and this strategy ensures they are well-prepared to steer the continent towards success.

### *7.7. Europe Day - what kind of future and what kind of Europe millennials want*

On 9 May, as the European Union celebrates in annual celebration remembering its foundation, millennials also pause to reflect upon the essence of Europe Day. This occasion is not just a nod to the past but an observation of the present and an optimistic look towards the future. Europe Day traces its origin to the signing of the Schuman Declaration in 1950. Often referred to as "Schuman Day" or "Day of United Europe," it is a celebration of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). This coalition, formed by six countries, aimed to unite coal and steel production. But beneath its economic facade, the ECSC had a profound purpose: to ensure that war among these nations became not just inconceivable but practically impossible. This goal set the stage for the European Union as we understand it today. The horrors of WWII, which claimed the lives of millions and upended the lives of countless more, created a collective

yearning for peace among European leaders. The war's end, known as Victory in Europe Day, aligns closely with Europe Day. The coincidence is no accident. Both occasions signify the turning of a dark page and the beginning of an era supported by unity and shared values. The significance of Europe Day of today is deepened due to the Russia's unjustified war in Ukraine. This reminds millennials of the fragility of peace. It is a call to strengthen Europe's dedication to peace and solidarity. In the face of modern challenges, Europe's commitment to universal values, like democracy and freedom, must remain undiscouraged.

In 2023, the theme “BiH in the Heart of Europe” (WeBalkans 2023) was chosen to emphasize BiH's integral role as the candidate country for EU membership. The celebratory atmosphere was profound in the streets of Sarajevo (EUIC 2023), with cultural events, concerts, film screenings, and interactive sessions illuminating the city. Europe Day was not just celebrated in Sarajevo; the festivities, accompanied by cultural and entrepreneurial highlights, reverberated across the country. Banja Luka, for instance, witnessed grand musical performances, emphasizing the blend of tradition with contemporary beats. The online realm was equally abuzz with Europe Day sentiments. Through online engagement, radio promotions, and a culminating Europe Day video (YouTube [link](#)), the spirit of unity and progress was amplified.

For millennials, Europe Day 2023 stands as a testament to the importance of unity in the face of adversity. It is a reflection on a history of cooperation and the aspiration for a future where peace and shared values remain supreme taking Bosnia and Herzegovina for a political rhetoric that should not be theirs but generations before them. As President von der Leyen stated in her 2023 State of the Union *“this will be a time to decide on what kind of future and what kind of Europe they want.”* (WeBalkans 2023)

## **8. Conclusion: The birth of millennial diplomacy**

The question is not whether diplomacy will persist. Of course, it will. However, the question of the day is: how will it adapt and which channels will it utilize? The once-conventional paradigms of classic diplomatic cables and official letters have their place, but today's diplomacy, both globally and within the European Union, is undergoing a significant growth. The measure of influence now includes metrics like “likes”, “shares”, and “retweets”. It often requires instant tweets, timely posts, and the agility to engage in viral trends where information is instant and global, and the boundaries between traditional state actors and non-state entities

are increasingly unclear. Diplomacy as art of persuasion remains committed, but its tools have undergone a transformative evolution. As appropriately put, while platforms change, the core objectives of diplomacy remain unchanged.

Yet, with all its modern skills, there is an essential authenticity that diplomacy must remember in its memory. This essence, the very core of diplomacy, should remain untouched, regardless of how far technology and trends progress.

The art of persuasion, the subtle tone of influencing perceptions, and the delicate balance of global relations – all these foundational elements of diplomacy should remain sacred. Platforms and tools will continue to evolve, but the mandate of diplomacy, those universal values, and principles it stands for, should be rock solid.

Within the European Union, the role of public diplomacy has taken on utmost importance. It not only serves the purpose of representing the Union's interests abroad but also carries the responsibility of nurturing support and fostering democratic legitimacy, particularly among the younger generations. This dual role highlights the transformative potential of public diplomacy in shaping the Union's relationships, both internally and externally.

In an age where digital communication platforms dominate the social world, the evolution of diplomatic efforts must necessarily reflect these changes. The European Union's strategy campaigns to engage young Europeans have showcased an understanding of this paradigm shift. Traditional diplomatic channels, while still critical, no longer possess the singular influence they once did. Instead, millennial diplomacy, characterized by its fluidity, adaptability, and immediacy, has emerged as an essential complement.

The study of EU campaigns revealed a concerted effort to leverage platforms frequented by millennials. From Instagram stories promoting cultural exchange programs to Twitter threads clarifying policies, rules and laws, the EU is trying to speak the language of its younger citizens. However, as with all new approaches, there are challenges to address and lessons to learn.

Just as today's Instagram might be tomorrow's Myspace, the EU must be prepared to evolve its strategies consistently. Regular assessments of platform popularity and effectiveness are essential. A potential criticism that can be raised is that the assessment processes may not be conducted as frequently as necessary, especially considering the fast evolving nature of trends, which can shift from month to month.

Millennials value authenticity so genuine engagement is obligatory. Any diplomatic campaign aimed at this demographic group should prioritize genuine engagement over polished,

corporate-style messages. Real stories, testimonials, and behind-the-scenes glimpses can resonate more than rehearsed speeches.

Creating space for feedback loops can provide invaluable insights as well as incorporating mechanisms where young Europeans can voice their opinions about EU campaigns, suggest improvements, or even pitch their own engagement ideas. In my view, it is possible that the EU is not adequately taking on mechanisms that give opportunities for young Europeans to express their opinions effectively within the political discourse. This observation implies that there may be limitations or barriers within the EU's existing frameworks or initiatives that hinder the active participation and expression of the views and concerns of the younger generation. Addressing this concern is vital as it relates to ensuring a more inclusive and participatory democratic process where the voices of young Europeans are heard and considered in shaping EU policies and decisions. In addition to this partnering with influencers, who already have the trust and attention of young Europeans, can amplify the EU's message. Though, such collaborations should align with the EU's values and objectives. I understand that there is a question regarding the need to confirm position of certain individuals with the values and objectives of the EU. However, I believe that the EU might not be putting enough effort or may not be willing to take significant risks when it comes to engaging individuals who are already popular among the younger population. Still, the challenge lies in the fact that such engagements come with a certain risk. Nevertheless, this should not discourage the EU from such efforts. Investing in communication with young people through popular ambassadors can be extremely valuable, even with a certain level of risk involved. It is important for the EU to ensure that the messages align with its goals and values.

Knowledge transfer is still one of the most important things so organising workshops and webinars that educate millennials about the particulars of diplomacy and the EU's role on the global stage. Such initiatives can demystify bureaucratic processes and foster a deeper connection between the EU and its younger citizens. In this context their efforts are performing exceptionally well and their work is highly commendable.

But let us not forget - not all millennials are the same. Therefore, recognizing their diversity and tailoring campaigns to recognize the diversity within this demographic, accounting for differences in culture, language, interests, and political inclinations should be one of the most important steps. But there is always ways to improvement.

And while digital campaigns are vital, integrating them with traditional diplomatic events, such as town halls or cultural exchange programs, can create a rounded engagement strategy that is done well.

In the contemporary era where “the world has new tactics, and diplomacy has just been added to the chat group,” it is imperative for the EU to not only understand but adeptly navigate this digital domain. As the digital realm continues to redefine boundaries and blur traditional lines of communication, diplomacy's future will undoubtedly be one that dances gracefully between the echoes of tradition and the dynamic beats of the millennial pulse.

And while the younger generation show content with an irresistible display of ideologies and platforms of democracy that are promising empowerment, they often encourage confusion and detachment. Populism, in its naive attraction, entices disillusioned segments, sowing the seeds of discord within democratic discourse. Anxiety, collective tiredness, and insecurity contribute to a spectrum of potential outcomes, ranging from radicalization to apathy among young individuals.

The complexity of the EU's diplomatic strategies, especially in relation to millennial engagement, is influenced by historical backgrounds, regional differences, individual bases, and thematic relevance. But today, the bottom of the matter remains anchored in trust. However, trust in the efficacy of systems, including democracy itself, has decreased for many individuals. A tangible disconnect exists between young people and traditional institutions such as EU, media and political parties. These institutions, in turn, struggle to effectively represent and engage with the younger demographic. So there is no wonder when the contemporary discourse is widespread with discussions on the crisis of democracy and the loss of trust, often outlined in articles and publications. Millennials, whose life experiences include witnessing conflicts, displacement, political leadership, and corruption, harbour distinct perspectives shaped by their unique historical context. In times of uncertainty, the struggle to make sense of a world damaged with intellectual discord have profound challenges.

In the digital age where a tweet can shake nations and a hashtag can mobilize millions, the kingdom called diplomacy has been escorted into a new paradigm – millennial diplomacy. Born out of the era of rapid technological evolution, this new breed of diplomacy is not just a plagiarism of the previous one but has a unique identity of its own. It is the age where those who were once pure spectators and consumers of information, strategies, and even propagandas, have become active participants. They have transformed from the audience into the influencers and, indeed, the new diplomats.

Taking countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as an example, it becomes profoundly clear how significant this transition is. Despite grappling with issues of unregulated systems and rule of law challenges, many of its citizens, whether they put their trust into EU integration or not, invariably find themselves integrating into EU countries. They pursue better education,

work opportunities, and an overall greater quality of life. It is a telling tale of how millennial diplomacy rise above traditional borders and ideologies. It is imperative to underline these insights to the European Union's diplomatic activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a candidate for EU membership. The EU must recognize that engaging young Bosnians and Herzegovinians, who represent the future of their country, requires a millennial diplomacy approach. This means adapting public diplomacy efforts to resonate with the values and aspirations of the local youth, employing innovative communication strategies, and facilitating genuine dialogue to build a bridge of understanding and support towards EU integration. The transition from “like” to millennial diplomacy signifies not only a change in diplomacy's form but also in its essence. Accepting these changes and lengthening them to the EU's public diplomatic activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina will not only motivate support for EU membership but it can also improve the Union's role as a pulsating, progressive global actor that recognizes and involves with the motivations of the next generation. This approach embraces the promise of a more inclusive, participatory, and democratic future for both the European Union and its aspiring member states.

However, the most enlightening realization in this journey is the recognition that today's millennial diplomats are those who once were at the receiving end of various EU campaigns and strategies. Their shift from consumers to advocates underscores the power and potential of millennial diplomacy. It is as if they have come full circle, first as the subjects of outreach and now as the torchbearers of change.

In the end, as we navigate through the terrains of euphoria and Euroscepticism, there is undeniable evidence that millennial diplomacy not only exists but thrives. It is an undeniable change agent, shaping both EU and global narratives. In this age, the lines between professional diplomat and informed citizen are blur, but the mission remains the same: to foster understanding, forge relationships, and further mutual interests. However, we must remain alert to ensure that the essence and values of traditional diplomacy are not overshadowed by the allure of the new.

But no matter what the present or future digital advancements will be, or generation Z and Alpha generation interventions can bring, the heart of diplomacy should always beat in rhythm with its age-old mission: to bridge divides and promote peace.



## **Interviews - Millennial talks**

This master thesis has incorporate a series of interviews with millennials from diverse backgrounds and profiles to provide a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives and experiences. By doing so, it aims to provide an insight into the multifaceted world of millennials, shedding light on their values, aspirations, challenges, and social contributions.

**Bukva Alibašić, Berina. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Sarajevo, September 1, 2023.**

Holds a degree in Law and an MA in International Law. She is a long-time activist and trainer in the field of human rights and peacebuilding, as well as working with youth on similar or related topics. She advocates for equal opportunities for all, believes in informal education, actively supports youth activism and gender equality, as well as the #OrangeDay campaign. Currently, she works as a program manager in the IT company and believes that innovation and agility are principles that are applicable beyond the IT sector. She emphasizes that the focus is always on people, and in her work, she applies the "people and communication first" matrix.

**How does youth CSOs mission align with the broader goals of the EU's youth engagement and diplomacy strategies? In what ways does it specifically target millennial sentiments?**

*Answer to this one could go both ways: it is a question for individual youth CSO actively working and contributing to the EU strategies and directions (intentionally or unintentionally), as the individual efforts and results of the respective CSO in different youth categories could be and are sometimes perceived as divided from general youth groups (such as: youth entrepreneurs, youth with disabilities, women youth groups, Roma youth, NEET youth groups - not in Entrepreneurship, Education or Training). But also, it is a question for collective feedback as in general scale we can observe the impact and progress of status of youth in the previous period. But to answer specifically, how they succeed (as they do) in reaching out to the millennials and their core environment is that the CSO working with youth is adequately approaching the matter of youth issues and doing a good job at researching (planning and preparing the project baselines, activities, budget...) of what kind of support, work or mentorship they need at the certain moment.*

*They need to go with the trend and they follow it in their Modus Operandi. The baseline for this one is a target group. They know where to find them and how to approach them. In order to do that, they explore their environments, necessities, trends, tools, how to get with them and*

*what are the latest pros and cons in working for them, with them. Alignment of the mission with EU's mentioned goals happens by nature of operating in CSOs working environments, sometimes because of the project or budget driven culture, but also because of the greater good or mission which implies a progress in the sector or state. Some of the CSO stakeholders are even pre-aligning their project mappings according to the EU's strategies which is desired and sometimes even needed, if we are talking of BiH's path to EU.*

*But in a nutshell, the youth CSOs are aligning with EU's youth engagement and diplomacy strategies naturally and logically, because the necessity of progress in our lives is out there and very visible to be worked upon, even without written strategies and setting goals. Youth CSOs, often, manage to achieve even more than what is written, settled or demanded in project scale or expected from the targeted groups. Prominent, consistent in their work with youth CSOs make great results, create valuable partnerships not only with those in need, targeted groups, but they create these networks with decision makers and are impacting directly in changing the legal framework in BiH regarding youth. While doing that, they detect new challenges (which is also one of the ways to reach the new generation's issues and needs) - so they listen, hear and react upon the information they have.*

*So that is how, no matter what year it is, who the new generations will be and how they will "operate": millennials, gen Zs, trends or TikTok exposures, diplomacy challenges - competent experts and CSOs will detect their environments and challenges and address them, work with them accordingly.*

### **What unique challenges and opportunities arise when using digital platforms to promote reconciliation and cooperation among youth in a region with a complex history?**

*Challenges which arise are legal (ir) regulations of freedom of speech and hate speech, especially in the online world and SM platforms. It is still a deep sea without knowing what kind of species we can find in the depths. More concretely, when it comes to reconciliation and cooperation it comes more about HOW TO promote essential values of the process of reconciliation, if you are viewing reconciliation as a value and cooperation as a model. So, challenges are still how to control the "two-way street" communication with misfits and how to prevent greater damage of reaction and "what I think is a fact and true" opinions, because when working on reconciliation and promoting it - dealing with the past in my opinion, should be the central stage of it. I believe even DwP should be (not promoted-to not get the wrong idea around it) but make it visible and transparent among youth targeted with it. Especially, as we are talking about complex histories almost always, when we are unwrapping dialogues, DwP and reconciliation.*

*Opportunities are much wider and more "digital". All the topics being digitalized are being "easier" to comprehend as in the core of the word is the positive chance that this social norm could offer us. It connects faster, it erases borders among youth in dealing and coping with these thematics, it gives them also space (hence: unsafe - reference to the first part of answer in relation to the challenges) ... but it makes them visible and their voice are now out there and heard by bigger audience and even those in power who never get to listen to their/youth statements and points of view. It goes viral, so everyone can see it. Support it. Be part of it and it makes the world look more interested in whatever it is that we are working on and with whom we are doing it.*

*It is necessary to underline that no matter if we are talking about challenges or opportunities, using, and promoting digital platforms for any kind of work is a standard now. But also, it is a risk at its core. You should know how to do it and it is not advisable to start with it if you do not have a strategy for these challenges and opportunities, as well. But platforms itself are an asset and a standard so - If you want millennials/gen Z to hear it, grasp it, participate in it, support it, act on it... it should be there where they are - and that is social media. So, both concepts are tricky and they might be a negative peeve of the work, but the ones managing different topics or groups should be capable of handling it so that escalation of any kind is minimized or avoided.*

**In your experience how have EU strategies and insights influenced the framing and implementation of youth policies in the region?**

*They gave better orientation, support, financial support to start or continue the processes which are crucial that they are there. They are trying to consolidate the policies among various regional parties or countries. Intending to have a basic start equal or as much as possible to have the same tools and frameworks in place for everyone. Which is positive, much needed and even an obligation which system in the region are failing to do. Framing, constructing policies yes, but implementation is something that even the EU thoroughly cannot make states implement as it is obligated.*

**What distinct characteristics or preferences of millennials make them a unique audience for digital diplomacy? How are these characteristics addressed in campaign strategies?**

*No doubt, they are the digital generation. Their attention is in accordance with the lifestyle and trends of our reality. So, it is short, they want to be involved, asked, addressed even if they are not interested in it - because it is a trend to know everything nowadays or to be informed about everything. And if they cannot click it, it is under their radar and you do not want to not have*

*them in the process. So it goes also for diplomacy. A lot of ambassadors, states, public personas, sports, events, policies, stories, court decisions, ideas, brands are today followed, wanted, talked about, liked, and shared because it is out there, wherever millennials are, you have reached the point.*

*I believe, the experts for campaigns make their matrix for creating adequate campaigns in line with the characteristics/messaging need/addressing posture of target groups. A campaign of any kind is successful only when it addresses the issue and the ones inflicted directly and accordingly.*

**While digital campaigns offer broad reach, how do they compare in impact to physical youth exchange programs? How do the two complement each other? And as the digital landscape and youth sentiments evolve, how do you anticipate the strategies for engaging young Europeans will change in the next decade?**

*Yes, they are complementary and whatever is "missed" with let's say digital campaign it can be more in depth covered with a physical exchange program. It happens that more in-depth effective results are achieved with physical exchange, but it goes without saying that media or digital campaigns introduce and start the narrative/mode which may encourage participants to take part and be more interested in the respective topics.*

**Are there specific EU youth engagement strategies or campaigns that have served as models or inspirations for youth CSOs initiatives in BiH?**

*This is a two-way street: some of them were inspired by EU Youth engagement strategies or campaigns but also, I believe EU offers tailor made programs on behalf of clear information and examples of practice in BiH society.*

**Having been deeply involved in shaping youth policies and programs, what are your personal reflections on the journey so far? You are a millennial; how do you envision the future of millennial diplomacy in the region?**

*It is a process. The end goal is not to achieve the perfect youth policies but to educate, raise awareness of all society stakeholders to actively participate and custom make the programs which will answer the needs of its society. And yes, the result might be good and compactible policy, but policy is a living thing. It needs to be refreshed and upgraded with constant change within societies, trends which appear, f.e. if the new generation is present at the new platforms the policies should be adequately improved in that direction for the new youth generations. When Tik Tok was a new thing the EU parliamentarians advocated and*

*promoted their work on this platform in order to gain votes for themselves from first time voter - which explicitly supports the statement that millennials are the great audience for any topic as long as you are representing the issues and solutions "on the stage at which they are looking at".*

*The future of millennial diplomacy will be progressed in a direction in which we all as a target group will move. Diplomacy, as mentioned before, will do what diplomacy should be and do no matter what, but how we advocate, present, negotiate, solve, and escalate the conversation, actions will deeply depend on how we will do that. In the future, the leaders, domestic and international ones, decision makers, and relevant parties – will themselves be the millennials if they already are not. So, it will be a complementary diplomacy rather than just being a digital or millennial one.*

**Čelik, Renad. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Sarajevo, August 17, 2023.**

Renad Čelik is an individual driven by his aspirations, symbolizing the essence of a dreamer committed to making his visions a reality. His entrepreneurial spirit is obvious in his co-founding of the Garden of Dreams Festival, an initiative that highlights his dedication to cultural and artistic improvement. Further showcasing his commitment to youth and community development, Renad plays a significant role in advocating for Sarajevo's bid to become the European Youth Capital in 2026. His activities reflect a deep-rooted wish to create a successful environment that resonates with the dreams and ambitions of the youth, highlighting creativity, growth, and transformative skills.

**How do you see the role of online platforms in promoting cultural diplomacy between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially targeting the millennial audience? How do online platforms facilitate a two-way cultural exchange, allowing young Europeans to not only consume but also contribute to the cultural narrative of Bosnia and Herzegovina and what unique challenges do you face when trying to engage millennials in cultural diplomacy?**

*In this digital age, I see online platforms as links that connect distant shores. They are indispensable in promoting cultural diplomacy between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly for millennials like myself who bloom on digital connectivity. These platforms are not just channels but backgrounds where cultural stories can be lived, discussed, and reshaped. They allow two-way exchange; for instance, while young Europeans explore the rich Bosnian*

*heritage through digital storytelling, and online concerts, they simultaneously give part of themselves through their responses, art, or music into this shared cultural world.*

*The challenge, however, is overcoming digital tiredness, doubt, and the craving for novelty that characterizes our generation. We need to create engaging, sincere, and dynamic stories that speaks to the heart, not just the intellect.*

**In what ways has the European Union's expertise influenced or reshaped the creative industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in engaging millennial audiences?**

*The creative pulse in Bosnia and Herzegovina has gained rhythm from the EU's influence. The EU's emphasis on quality, diversity, and innovation has becoming a part of our local scene, pushing us towards better professionalism, broader perspectives, and braver expressions. This influence is particularly seen in how we engage our millennial audiences - we have learned to speak their language, the visual grammar of their digital world, and the melodies of their diverse, hybrid cultural tastes. Whether it is updating our creative setups or adopting the EU's holistic approach to cultural promotion, we are creating experiences that resonate with this generation while breaking boundaries while looking for belonging.*

**How do you imagine the role of digital campaigns in strengthening Sarajevo's bid as the European Youth Capital? What strategies are being deployed to resonate with young Europeans?**

*Envisioning Sarajevo as the European Youth Capital is dreaming of a city that reflects the joie de vivre, involvedness, and hopes of youth. Our digital campaigns aim to capture this vision, turning platforms into stages where Sarajevo's cultural, historical, and social backgrounds can be explored. We are creating strategies that boom with young Europeans - from influencer collaborations that bring fresh, relatable voices to the narrative, to interactive challenges, virtual events, and user-generated content that allow active participation rather than passive consumption. It is about showing Sarajevo not just as a city on a map, but an experience, a feeling, a conversation.*

**As the head of the Garden of Dreams music festival, how have you integrated EU-centric messages or influences to appeal to a broader European youth audience?**

*The Garden of Dreams is more than a music festival; it is a microcosm of the world we, the youth, strive to co-create. In curating this space, I have deliberately merged in EU-centric narratives that underline our shared ideals — unity in diversity, sustainable living, and transformative power of art. We have invited artists from across the EU and worldwide to show*

*diverse musical styles and way of thinking. Through panels, art installations, and thematic workshops, we have sparked dialogue on issues ranging from EU integration to social justice, making the festival a part of the Europe we believe in and hope to become a part of.*

**Can you highlight any specific EU creative campaigns or initiatives that have inspired your strategies or tactics in reaching out to young Europeans?**

*The “Europeana Collections” campaign inspired me. It demonstrated the power of digital platforms in making culture available, shared, and relevant. The way it allowed young individuals across Europe to explore, remix, and contribute to their cultural heritage motivated me to adopt similar strategies. I realized the importance of storytelling through user’s lenses, the authenticity it brings, and the bridges it builds. Such initiatives have guided my approach in designing campaigns that are less about monologues and more about dialogues.*

**As digital trends evolve, how do you anticipate the strategies for cultural diplomacy through online platforms will change in the next decade?**

*Looking towards the future, I anticipate a seismic shift in how we perceive and practice cultural diplomacy on online platforms. As we tread into the era of virtual reality, AI-driven experiences, and digital ecosystems, our strategies will evolve to create more immersive, personalized cultural exchanges. I foresee diplomacy not just through curated content but through shared digital experiences and realities, where empathy and understanding can be lived and felt, and transcending physical and geopolitical barriers. It will be about creating shared digital spaces where culture is not just seen or heard but experienced and co-created.*

**As a millennial yourself, how does your personal experience shape the way you approach digital campaigns and strategies, especially in the cultural domain?**

*My journey as a millennial shapes every digital campaign or strategy I develop. I approach them with the understanding of our generation’s quest for authenticity, meaningful connections, and the urge to be part of narratives larger than ourselves. My strategies are rooted in empathy, built on the premise of listening before speaking, and engaging rather than preaching. I believe in harnessing the potential of digital platforms to compress the distances between hearts and minds, crafting experiences that are not just consumed but felt, remembered, and cherished. Every campaign is a page in the digital diary of a generation trying to find its voice amidst the chaos, hoping to pen a story of hope, diversity, and unity. But I already know that I will need to change the way I think and learn new things to be able to speak to the generations that will come – of my sons.*

**Čizmić, Lamija. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Prague, August 19, 2023.**

Lamija is a personification of the spirit of the millennial generation. An Erasmus alumni, Lamija's academic journey took her across the borders, giving her various cultural insights and open minded educational experience. Passionate about the potential of her generation, she actively engages in youth-oriented initiatives in Prague, where she currently works and lives, along with ever-evolving geopolitical situation.

**As a millennial, do you believe that your Erasmus+ experience has made you a better advocate for the ideals and goals of the European Union?**

*Yes, my Erasmus+ experience has meaningfully improved my understanding and support for the ideals and goals of the European Union, encouraging a sense of unity and cultural exchange that rise above the borders. It did not only showed me to various perspectives and cultures within the EU but it also strengthened my belief in the importance of international collaboration and mutual understanding, making me a more avid promoter for the EU's ideals and goals.*

**Did you notice any significant changes in your pro-European views before, during, or after your Erasmus experience?**

*Absolutely. In fact, my pro-European ideas grew stronger during and after my Erasmus experience, as the first-hand experience to different European cultures and the friendships created across borders made me appreciate the value of European unity and cooperation even more.*

**How would you compare your attitudes towards Europe with those of your peers in BiH who did not participate in the Erasmus+ programme? During your time abroad, did you observe any distinctions in voting preferences or general perspectives on Europe between Erasmus millennials and BiH millennials?**

*My Erasmus+ experience had a deep impact on my attitudes towards Europe when compared to those of my peers in Bosnia and Herzegovina who did not become Erasmus alumni. During my time in a Czech republic, I had an opportunity to become a part of the world of different European cultures, creating friendships with people from many EU countries, and experiencing the concrete benefits of Erasmus. Because of this experience I have even stronger appreciation for the European project, and I have a feeling that I belong to a larger EU community.*



*On the other hand, some of my peers in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not have the opportunity to participate in Erasmus+, and therefore their experience to the benefits that EU integration brings are somehow limited. In terms of voting preferences and general perspectives on Europe, there were discernible differences. Erasmus millennials often leaned towards supporting political parties and policies that advocated for closer European integration, seeing the EU as a source of opportunities and stability. On the other hand, some of my peers who did not have the Erasmus experience may have been more inclined to support political movements or policies with a more nationalist or Eurosceptic orientation.*

**In your opinion, how does Erasmus+ contribute to breaking stereotypes or prejudices between different European countries or even globally?**

*Erasmus+ breaks stereotypes and prejudices by encouraging cultural exchange and fostering friendships among participants from different European countries, leading to more open-minded perspectives.*

**How do you respond to criticism that the Erasmus programme might attract a predominantly pro-European cohort, rather than actively nurturing pro-European sentiments?**

*While the Erasmus program may naturally attract individuals with a pro-European outlook due to its international and inclusive nature, its real impact lies in deepening and broadening their understanding of Europe. It fosters an environment where participants can critically engage with European ideals, ultimately nurturing and strengthening pro-European sentiments through first-hand experiences and interactions.*

**Do you believe that the Erasmus programme's potential goes beyond the scope of cultivating Europhile "Erasmus generations"? If so, how?**

*Yes, the Erasmus program's impact extends beyond nurturing Europhile sentiments among its participants. It encourages broader international cooperation, raises intercultural understanding, and creates a network of globally-minded individuals who can contribute to different fields, including diplomacy, business, and academia, in that way benefiting society. The Erasmus program did not only foster a generation of Europhiles but also prepares its participants with the skills, perspectives, and networks needed to address multifaceted global challenges, from climate change to international conflicts, therefore contributing to a more interconnected and supportive world.*

**Reflecting on your Erasmus journey, how do you think such mobility programmes can influence broader socio-political attitudes, beyond just the European context?**

*Participating in mobility programs like Erasmus can significantly influence broader socio-political attitudes by fostering a sense of global citizenship and interconnectedness. Through cultural exchange and various interactions, participants grow a more open-minded and sympathetic view, promoting tolerance and inclusivity in cultures worldwide. Furthermore, the international networking opportunities provided by such programs can lead to cross-border collaborations that exceed geographical boundaries, contributing to a more supportive and harmonious global political world.*

**Dacešin, Robert. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Banjaluka, September 2, 2023.**

Banjalučanin Robert Dacešin, by profession a graduate economist, has been living his dream as a "travel blogger" for the past few years. After three years of working for others in various companies, he realized that it did not fulfil him because he did not see an opportunity for advancement. He decided to embark on an adventure that, fortunately for him, turned out to be the right choice. As a world traveller, he has visited more than 80 countries, been to five continents, learned five foreign languages, and worked as a tennis referee at some of the biggest world tournaments. He has authored four books, including the first interactive tourist guide in the former Yugoslavia, "Travel Mapping," a travelogue about his journey through South America, and two more books about traveling in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And now he is also a someone who holds a diplomatic passport.

**Being awarded a diplomatic passport is not only a recognition but also carries significant responsibilities, especially in the realm of representation. As a millennial, how do you perceive your role and responsibility as a "diplomat" in promoting BiH to the EU? How do you believe your generational perspective influences or shapes this diplomatic endeavour?**

*As a millennial "diplomat," I see my role as a connection that brings together nations, cultures, and generations. My generational perspective shapes this diplomatic effort in several ways. Millennials are known for their global mind-set, digital fluency, and commitment to open borders. I believe these qualities allow me to connect with EU audiences more authentically and effectively. My role is not just about passing on information but also promoting genuine connections and understanding.*

**What first inspired you to use online platforms as a tool for promoting BiH's cultural, natural, and historical beauties to the EU audience? Which online platforms have you found to be the most effective in reaching the EU audience, and why? Can you share a specific campaign or content that you are particularly proud of?**

*What initially inspired me to use online platforms for promoting BiH was the realization of their immense reach and influence. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram allow me to show BiH's cultural, natural, and historical treasures in a visually engaging way. They offer a direct and personal connection with the audience, making it easier to send the message of beauty and diversity of BiH. One campaign I am particularly proud of is "BiH Uncovered," where I explored hidden gems and shared personal stories of local people and places.*

**As a millennial, how do you think your generational perspective uniquely equips or positions you to communicate BiH's attractions to the EU? And what can BiH learn from EU when we are talking about campaigns?**

*My generational perspective has thought me to communicate BiH's attractions to the EU because I can relate to the interests and values of fellow millennials. We value authenticity, sustainability, and cultural experiences. BiH offers all of these in richness. Moreover, my familiarity with digital tools and social media trends allows me to present BiH in a contemporary and significant way. From the EU, BiH can learn about effective branding and marketing strategies used in successful EU campaigns, especially when we speak about cultural heritage and environment.*

**Have there been any specific challenges in promoting BiH's attractions to the EU audience, especially given the country's historical and political complexities? How have you navigated them?**

*Promoting BiH to the EU audience does come with challenges, taking into consideration historical and political background. Some may have defined ideas about the region. To direct these challenges, I focus on storytelling that highlights the resilience, diversity, and warmth of the people in BiH. I also address misconceptions directly by sharing historical context and showcasing the positive transformations happening in the country. And there are happening. You just need to look at the right places.*

**How do you see the relationship between tourism and diplomacy? In what ways do you believe promoting tourism can influence diplomatic relations between BiH and EU countries?**

*Tourism and diplomacy are linked. Tourism serves as a powerful tool for building connections and promoting mutual understanding between BiH and EU countries. When people from the EU visit BiH, they experience its culture first-hand, leading to more informed and empathetic perceptions. Positive tourism experiences can translate into improved diplomatic relations, as people-to-people connections often are the groundwork for diplomatic efforts.*

**Given the rapid evolution of digital platforms and changing travel patterns, how do you envision the future of promoting BiH's attractions to the EU in the next 5-10 years?**

*The future of promoting BiH's attractions to the EU in the next 5-10 years will likely involve even more immersive and interactive digital experiences. Virtual reality, improved reality, and AI-driven personalized travel recommendations will play a significant role. Sustainability and responsible tourism will also be emphasized, aligning with global trends. It's crucial to stay adaptable and responsive to emerging technologies and travel preferences. And we must not forget the people. They are the secret component.*

**How do you integrate or collaborate with local communities and stakeholders in BiH in your promotion efforts? Can you share an example where this collaboration enriched your campaign towards the millennial audiences or content?**

*Collaborating with local communities and stakeholders in BiH is vital to my promotion efforts. These collaborations improve the campaign by infusing it with authentic voices and stories. For instance, partnering with local artisans to showcase traditional crafts or working with community leaders to organize cultural events helps create content that resonates with millennial audiences. It also ensures that the benefits of tourism are shared with and empower local communities, fostering a sustainable and inclusive approach to promotion. Just like they do in the EU.*

**Koenig, Ferdinand, Interview by Lejla Čamo. Sarajevo, September 7, 2023.**

Ferdinand is a communications strategist currently leading the Communications department for the EU Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina as Head of Communications/Spokesperson at EU Special Representation/Delegation, Bosnia and Herzegovina. With a sharp awareness of the multifaceted nature of institutional strategies, he plays an important role in creating the EU's communication strategies, balancing inputs from different stakeholders in Brussels and beyond.

His career is marked by rigidity and a deep understanding of shifting communication paradigms. His journey from traditional media world to the digital front makes him uniquely both a digital immigrant and native, equipping him with a comprehensive perspective on communication strategies.

Ferdinand holds an MSc in European Political Economy, increasing his expertise in the EU's institutional framework. However, his educational journey began with a combination of Modern History and Modern Languages and Literature.

**Given your unique position as a millennial and as Head of Communications/Spokesperson at the EU Special Representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, how does your personal experience as a millennial influence or reflect the broader EU strategy for engaging young Europeans?**

*There are two caveats before I address this question.*

*First, I'm always slightly hesitant to attribute professional decisions to personal experience. Of course, the recent trend towards acknowledging individual perspectives in decision-making – for example, gender perspectives, racial perspectives etc. is a welcome correction to the past when the range of 'valid' perspectives was rather narrow. On the other hand, overemphasising someone's personal experience can be unhelpful.*

*For example, when talking about digital communication, there is a tendency to separate people into 'digital natives' i.e. those people born into digital communication and social media as opposed to 'digital immigrants' i.e. those who had to learn how to use digital media. This can be useful in conceptualising communications strategies, but it can also be discriminatory – there is no reason why a 60 year old can't be an excellent social media manager, or a 25 year old a terrible one.*

*My second caveat is that while I do have a great deal of influence on the communications strategy for the EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the Head of the Communications, any institutional strategy is shaped by a great number of stakeholders – for example stakeholders in Brussels as well as other stakeholders within the EU Office.*

*Nonetheless, despite these important caveats, my personal experience as a millennial is likely to influence my approach to communication. I started my career working in print media – a very traditional channel with centuries of history - but after the collapse of the print advertising market following the global financial crisis in 2008 I moved to work in a PR agency managing social media tools. I am therefore part "digital native", part "digital immigrant". I believe this contributes to a well-rounded approach to communications that recognises a holistic strategy needs to take account of all possible tools and approaches on the basis of their strengths or*

*weaknesses, without rushing to embrace or reject one or other tool because it is trendy or untrendy.*

*Anyone developing a communications strategy needs to bring a healthy scepticism to their work, and look only at evidence in an objective and dispassionate manner. Having experience of communications before the social media revolution helps to cultivate this scepticism.*

**How has your background in political science informed or evolved your approach to communication and millennial diplomacy?**

*I'm cautious about taking a deterministic approach between studies and work. Particularly when we are talking about communications. Arguably, there are too many political scientists working in EU communications – a broader range of educational backgrounds would probably be beneficial!*

*In any case, I only have a Masters in political science (An MSc in European Political Economy), while my Bachelors was in Modern History and Modern Languages and Literature (Russian). I find for example that literary and historical examples are at least as instructive in developing a communications strategy as political science. Particularly in a country such as Bosnia and Herzegovina where history weighs so heavily on the present.*

*But where I have found political science to be helpful is the analytical approach that political science demands to complex sociological questions. Good political science demands analysis of large amounts of quantitative and qualitative data to draw general conclusions that can rarely ever be entirely precise, and are more a snapshot of a particular issue. The same is true of communications.*

**How do the historical perceptions and experiences of older European generations influence or contrast with millennial views on the EU? How can these generational differences be bridged in EU campaigns?**

*It has been a long time since I have studied Eurobarometer polls (data on EU audiences is less relevant for our work in BiH), but as far as I recall older generations are more likely to express Eurosceptic views, while younger generations are more likely to have pro-European attitudes. Also, as far as I can recall there is a difference in attitudes between the generation that was alive during the Second World War, and the generation that was born immediately after. If I recall correctly, those that experienced the war are more likely to have pro-European attitudes than those born in the years after.*

*Thus the perceptions and experiences of older Europeans are not uniform. Also, there is interesting data from the United States, which shows that the youngest cohorts of Americans*

*(i.e. those between 18-25) are increasingly disillusioned with democratic norms, and if this trend is repeated in the EU, then we also have to acknowledge that the views of younger generations are not uniform either.*

*With regard to “bridging the gap”, it is debatable whether this can ever be a serious strategic objective. Firstly, older generations are more difficult to reach – they are for example more likely to consume media such as television (which is expensive to advertise on). Young people on the other hand are easier to reach – activities are easier to organise in schools and universities and they are more likely to use social media (which is cheaper to advertise on).*

*Secondly, no communications strategy should spread itself too thinly. There will always be a segment of the population that is so unresponsive to your message that it’s not even worth trying to reach them.*

*When developing communications strategies therefore, the EU Office both takes practical considerations into account (i.e. how do we reach the maximum number of people with the resources we have) as well as strategic ones (i.e. we can’t please all the people all the time).*

*Nonetheless, the question touches upon an important point, which is that even though older people are harder to reach, and that bridging the opinion gap is not a realistic objective, neither must older generations be forgotten. Particular care is taken therefore in the EU Office’s communication to ensure that using media relations (e.g. interviews with the Ambassador on television) or paid media campaigns that our messages reach older generations. With interviews, the audience will be people who follow the news and are possibly receptive to our message.*

**How has the evolution of digital platforms shaped the European Union's diplomatic engagement strategies with millennials? And as the digital world continuously evolves, how should the EU adapt its diplomatic engagement strategies to remain relevant and engaging to young Europeans in the next decade?**

*The digital landscape is continuously evolving. One only has to look at the enormous changes which have taken place on the platform ‘X’ (formerly Twitter) to see how a communications strategy based on the use of selected tools can be upended very quickly.*

*It is therefore of the utmost importance that the media landscape is continually analysed in order to spot opportunities.*

*One must however be cautious about embracing a tool because it appears trendy. The sparsely attended ‘metaverse gala’ event organised by the European Commission in November 2022 is a cautionary tale in using a new tool to appear relevant to younger audiences, and failing.*

*The approach that I have taken is that it is better for the EU Office in BiH to use tried and tested tools, rather than experiment too much. While 'Twitch' for example is a great tool for reaching younger audiences, the time and effort it would take to develop a Twitch strategy would deflect from the tools we do have.*

*In my view, we need to use the tools we have better, not diversify further.*

**In your opinion which EU campaigns targeted towards young Europeans have been the most effective, and why? What key elements made them resonate with the millennial audience? What are the main challenges the EU faces when trying to engage millennials in meaningful diplomatic dialogue and how can they be overcome?**

*The best campaigns are always the ones that are tangible and/or have a direct call to action. Therefore the most effective campaigns directed at young people are those that young people have a stake in and address their concerns.*

*Thus campaigns on mobile roaming, or rail passes for young people, Erasmus or environmental issues that have an impact on the lives of young people are those that are the most successful.*

**While digital metrics (likes, shares, comments) provide quantitative data, how does the EU gauge the qualitative impact of its digital campaigns on young Europeans? Are there mechanisms to measure genuine engagement beyond superficial interactions?**

*Monitoring and evaluation of communications campaigns is an evolving science and while this is a challenge that many organisations face, it's also an area where we in the EU can clearly do better.*

*For small scale digital campaigns, the only way to measure success is digital metrics. Nonetheless, bigger campaigns (which are rarely digital alone) are measured through tools such as opinion polls, focus groups, media reviews, social media mentions, and deep interviews with stakeholders. This is an area where we can however do more.*

**How does the accession process of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU influence its youth's perception of the European Union? Are there unique challenges or opportunities in engaging Bosnian millennials compared to other European youth? How does the balance between local cultural narratives (specific to Bosnia and Herzegovina) and broader pan-European messages influence the success of EU strategy campaigns aimed at millennials?**

*On the one hand, the best communications is always targeted so that the audience feels like it has a stake in the message. In this sense, communications has to be as local as possible.*



*On the other, it is also important to have clear narratives – in the case of communicating the EU, this means consistent and transparent communication about the EU and its core values and objectives.*

*The challenge of the EU Office is to take the overarching narratives of the EU as a whole (for example, the EU as a peace project, the Green Deal, the Digital Agenda etc) and make them relevant for audiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

*This task is complicated by the fact that the communications environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is fragmented, with the country's two entities and three major ethnicities to a very large extent having their own information environments. Nonetheless, the EU Office tries to ensure that messages are tailored impactfully to reach different audiences.*

**Podojak, Armin. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Sanski Most, August 8, 2023.**

Armin, a 22-year-old from Sanski Most, Bosnia and Herzegovina, holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy. He is currently pursuing a postgraduate degree in European Studies at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. Armin is dedicated to youth activism and peacebuilding. He serves as the Young European Ambassador and a Country Coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina within the YEA network. His volunteering experiences, notably with the Center for Peacebuilding and the High School Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina, started his passion for these causes and inspired his academic journey in International Relations and Diplomacy and later in European Studies. Armin's goal is to contribute to positive change and peace promotion in his region and beyond.

**Could you briefly describe your role and responsibilities as a Young European Ambassador (YEA)? How does the millennial diplomat look like and what kind of "superpowers" she or he must have?**

*As a Young European ambassador, my role primarily involves communicating the values promoted by the European Union in the Western Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This includes spreading EU values among young people between the ages of 18 and 30 through social media and on-the-ground work. In this sense, our responsibilities are precisely as follows - working with young people in our local communities, but also beyond, starting with organizing our own activities and extending to representing young people at events throughout the Western Balkans and the European Union.*

*That is why we can say that millennial diplomats differ from the traditional diplomat and require "contemporary" skills essential for their work. This primarily relates to the power of communication, where the ability to navigate social media platforms is particularly crucial as they represent a potent tool for spreading important messages. This factor plays a significant role today in crafting content that must be engaging to young people in order to capture their attention and attract their interest in the messages we want to convey.*

**What motivated you to become a YEA, and how do you believe this role can influence the perception of the EU among young Europeans, but mostly among millennials of Western Balkans countries?**

*The motivation to become a Young European Ambassador was multifaceted. Firstly, my long-standing involvement in youth and peace activism had created in me the desire to elevate my work to a higher level. The network of Young European Ambassadors provided me with the opportunity to expand my work into the realm of communication. On the other hand, as a student of international relations and diplomacy, later specializing in European studies, I possessed the perfect background for this role, as it encompassed everything I had been engaged in up to that point. Furthermore, as an advocate of the European integration process, it motivated me to be one of the young people who would have the opportunity to promote European Union values in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans. I can also say that I firmly believe there is no better way to spread certain messages and make them interesting to young people than by having young people themselves create and convey them, as is the case with Young European Ambassadors.*

**What are the key challenges you have faced in your role as a YEA, especially when engaging with fellow millennials?**

*The primary issue faced by all young people working in specific fields of activism, including communication, in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the passivity of youth in our country. Young people are not interested in these types of activities, and motivating them to join is extremely challenging. For this reason, our primary task is to work on creating activities that are interesting enough to attract young people. Therefore, we have been implementing activities such as music and film events, commemorating international days, TED talks, and other similar activities that young people in the region typically engage with.*

**In your interactions, how well do you think millennials understand and resonate with the EU's objectives and messages? From your perspective, how could the EU improve its strategies to better engage with millennials? Is there millennial diplomacy?**

*First and foremost, I must say that I believe young people still understand the European Union primarily through the lens of politics and economics, which is a standard association with this subject. The problem here is that these associations prevent young people from realizing that the European Union offers them multiple opportunities, even at this moment when our country is in candidate status. We can point to examples like the Erasmus+ exchange program, which is one of the best benefits that young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina have, but due to the aforementioned issue, they utilize it to a minimal extent. For this reason, I believe that the European Union, in its neighbouring regions such as the Western Balkans, should place much greater emphasis on communicating with young people about its goals, ideas, and the opportunities it provides. The network of Young European Ambassadors is certainly a good example of this, but the obstacle is that it is the only example of such a network, and that most other activities are focused on short-term projects that generally cannot yield significant results. In that sense, we can conclude that millennial diplomacy does exist, although it still has a long way to go in fully utilizing its potential.*

**How do you tailor your approach when communicating with diverse youth groups, considering Europe's vast cultural, linguistic, and historical differences?**

*Despite the historical and cultural diversities, our approach to young people depends on several factors. One of the factors we always encounter is the age difference, which makes it essential to screen the group we are engaging with. Although our target audience is young people, it spans a significant age range from 18 to 30 years old. For most topics, applying the same approach to an 18-year-old and a 30-year-old would be a mistake because their perceptions and thoughts on the same subjects can be quite different. That is why we make an effort to develop multiple approaches for the same topic that we can use in our work.*

**What kind of feedback or responses have you received from young people about the EU and its initiatives?**

*Feedback from young people on such activities can indeed be viewed from two perspectives. Firstly, I can say that the feedback for each activity varies, depending on how appealing the topic of the activity is to young people. For this reason, feedback on activities like panel discussions can be very different (depending on the interest in the topic), while youth-friendly activities typically receive very positive feedback. I believe that messages from the EU can be*

*much more easily conveyed in such activities, and young people tend to accept them more readily, as opposed to standard panel discussions where only those interested in the topic usually participate. However, in general, I believe that young people's feedback on most activities is positive, but efforts should be made to increase the number of young participants in such activities.*

**Lastly, what would be your message to other millennials about the significance of the EU and its endeavours in shaping a unified, prosperous Europe?**

*The message that I, as a young person who believes in the values of the European Union, would like to convey is that I appeal to millennials to embrace all the opportunities that the European Union offers. As individuals who will soon lead Bosnia and Herzegovina towards EU membership and, consequently, have the opportunity to be part of the European family, it is essential for us to promote its values and bring its products into our communities. I previously mentioned the Erasmus+ student exchange program, which provides young people with an excellent opportunity to network with peers from the EU and gain knowledge and expertise in various fields. On the other hand, utilizing EU funds, participating in EU projects, and many other opportunities can improve our future and offer a chance to enhance our quality of life even before we achieve EU membership. For these reasons, I hope for increased interest and a greater number of young people participating in such activities. Together, we can work towards bringing our country and our region closer to the European family.*

**Šabanović, Anida. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Zenica, July 23, 2023.**

Anida holds a Master's degree in Economics, with many years of managerial, research and consulting experience. She has professional experience in policy research and analysis with a focus on public administration reform and European integration of BiH and other Western Balkan countries, as well as capacity building of government institutions and promotion of human and women rights. As part of her work, she was dedicated to advance and influence the debate and discussion among academics, activists, and policy and decision makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim to present a critical view of the reform process, covering political, economic, and social issues. She has been doing this through providing expert analyses, raising public awareness as well as through education and training, individually and within project activities. She has worked with the representatives of all levels of government in BiH, as well

as politicians from different political parties. Anida has experience in consultancy and has been author, co-author or contributor of reports, political analyses and texts related to European integration process, public administration reform, and civil society, gender, and youth issues.

**As a millennial who has a place in this” political world” do you think millennials are becoming more and more apolitical? If so, why?**

*I would say that millennials are open to change and can be the leaders of that needed change in the world, as they are passionate for different perspectives, new and better knowledge, jobs, travel, etc. On the other hand, as some research show, millennials are estimated to compromise 75% of the global workforce by 2025 and that should be the answer for them to be more active in the politics.*

**Why it is important that millennials take the lead in today’s national and international diplomacy?**

*Although due to the impossibility of making a change and imposing their views, millennials do not actively enter politics or withdraw, they should still be aware that politics shapes the lives of all citizens, and in this regard, use the advantage they have (better knowledge, technology, workforce of the future, etc.) and actively get involved and change long-established political attitudes.*

**What do you believe are the most pressing challenges BiH faces concerning European integration? How can they be addressed? And are there millennials in a position to do so?**

*Corruption, cronyism, and ethnic divisions continue to challenge an already difficult governance system. Key priorities which need to be addressed in order to accelerate Bosnia and Herzegovina’s EU accession process should include rule of law, fundamental rights, democracy and public administration, among others. Changes are needed to ensure that the institutional framework in place in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in line with European standards. Work on 14 key priorities needs to continue, primarily the rule of law and judicial reform. The judiciary needs to be reformed urgently, considering all the recent affairs regarding its institutions. As stated below, not that millennials are in a position to do so, but the active involvement of millennials is needed in the politics as they are the ones who are the workforce in the society.*

**We are speaking a lot about the millennial brain gain, but what about the brain drain?  
Europe 1 – BiH 0?**

*Brain drain is one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's biggest challenges as more than 50% of young people are willing to leave the country and are finding the ways to do so. These are mostly high educated, skilled members of the society who are trying to find better life somewhere else. And they are succeeding in it. It is not the path towards a richer life but a safer life that they do not have in their country, because of the politics.*

**With your experience in policy creation, what factors do you consider most crucial when formulating effective policies for BiH in a context of millennials?**

*Young people as well as youth organisations should be more involved in the policy creation, from the very beginning as part of the working groups. It is important to do more detailed analysis - research to the core of the least important issues - as it is not important only for the creation of good policies, it will be important in the process of integration, in the process of creating good projects which will help in getting more fundings. Strengthen the capacity of youth organizations to reach the level where they can advocate but strongly advocate for better position in the society. And it is crucial that different groups of society (CSOs, youth organisations, academia, business community etc.) start advocating together, because this fragmentation today is the answer to why we are where we are. The ball is not only in the governments' court, but in all of us, as well. Harmonization and advocacy at the regional level are equally important.*

**With your diverse experience, what advice would you give to young professionals in BiH aspiring to work in foreign policy, governance, and economic research?**

*If that is your passion – go for it, but remember that the path is not always easy and it has challenges (read a lot, research a lot, build your knowledge and skills), find yourself a mentor, ask for information and seek it always, build your network. Foreign language is a must as well as communication.*

**How do you envision the future of BiH in terms of its relationship with Europe and its internal socio-political landscape?**

*Envisioning the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a complex task, given the diverse opinions and challenges that the country faces. From a millennial's perspective, we believe in the potential of BiH to strengthen its relationship with Europe and improve its internal socio-political landscape. From the positive side we believe in the EU, from the negative side we do not believe in our politicians.*

**Škaljić, Adi. Interview by Lejla Čamo. Sarajevo, August 10, 2023.**

Is a 37-year-old millennial jurist from Sarajevo, is not only a dedicated family man with a loving wife and a lovely 3-year-old daughter but also a prominent public servant. He holds positions as an elected councillor in both the Novi Grad Sarajevo municipality and the City of Sarajevo assembly. Adi's commitment to his profession and community is evident in his contributions to both the legal and civic spheres.

**You are a millennial and a politician. Do millennials care about politics (in EU and BiH)?**

*Since I am a millennial, most of the people I hang out with and talk to belong to the same generation. Although it is not a representative sample, my estimate is that one-third follow political news, another third has a very selective approach, and the last third do not follow at all.*

**Straight to the point, what is your perspective on the low number of millennials among elected officials in many countries in EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular?**

*We have two different causes for the underrepresentation of millennials in political life. The first is simple, today there are fewer millennials than boomers and members of the X generation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A large part of my generation has been living in other countries for a long time, which makes it impossible for them to engage in politics or any other social engagement for that matter. Another reason for the lack of engagement is the traditional distrust of society in the abilities of young people. In our society, experience is valued more than youthful enthusiasm, innovation, and desire for change. Of course, this is just my opinion and feeling, not an empirically verified fact.*

**What are the main challenges or barriers you face in understanding or connecting with the EU's public diplomacy strategic campaigns in a context of BiH?**

*I believe that the citizens of BiH do not have adequate knowledge about the scope of total EU direct investments and financial support to BiH. The EU is, by far, the largest investor in the social and infrastructural development of BiH. The promotion of individual investments is done in a very good way, and the challenge is the promotion of total investments, including comparison with other global powers.*

**Millennials have a strong presence in the communication platforms, like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, which politicians now must use to reach their voters. Does this suggest they might use an indirect influence on politicians?**

*Political campaigns are increasingly taking place in the digital world. Political parties invest an increasing percentage of their funds in presentations on social networks. This does not necessarily mean that the indirect influence of millennials is stronger because social networks are used by all generations today.*

**How can politicians speak to millennials and activate them?**

*Millennials are currently the most productive generation in any society. They are at the peak of their intellectual and work potential; they are big consumers because they are planning or building families. Consequently, the most challenges are encountered. Politicians should focus their engagement on the most potent age generation by considering their problems as primary social problems.*

**BiH belongs to Europe, but is there a place for BiH in European Union?**

*Of course, BiH has a place in the EU. However, the access process is there for a reason. The Union is a complex structure, subject to changes in national policies. If you do not have stability, you do not respect basic democratic achievements and human freedoms and rights, and you do not adapt your legislation to EU legislation, you have nothing to look for in that club. It is a perfectly fair approach.*

**Last questions, what would be the top three things you do to build core support among millennials but also to create a better place for your peer millennials?**

*Through my actions, I try to make the most challenging period of their lives easier in three aspects. The first is the aspect of work, that is, the possibility to finance family and individual needs from work. The second aspect is the upbringing and education of children, which can be improved in every sense possible, and the last is entertainment, that is, the opportunity to have quality free time.*



## Charts - Public Opinion Polls

Image 1.

**Q1. Which media - source of information do you use most often?**

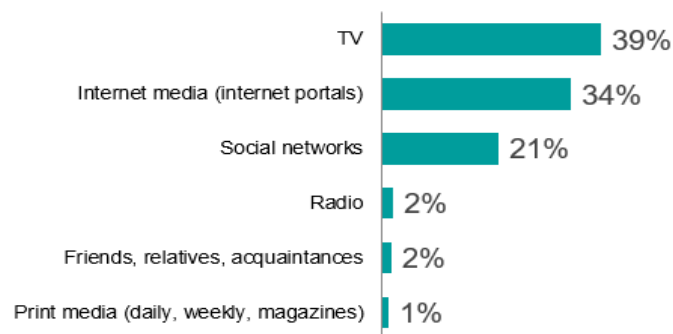
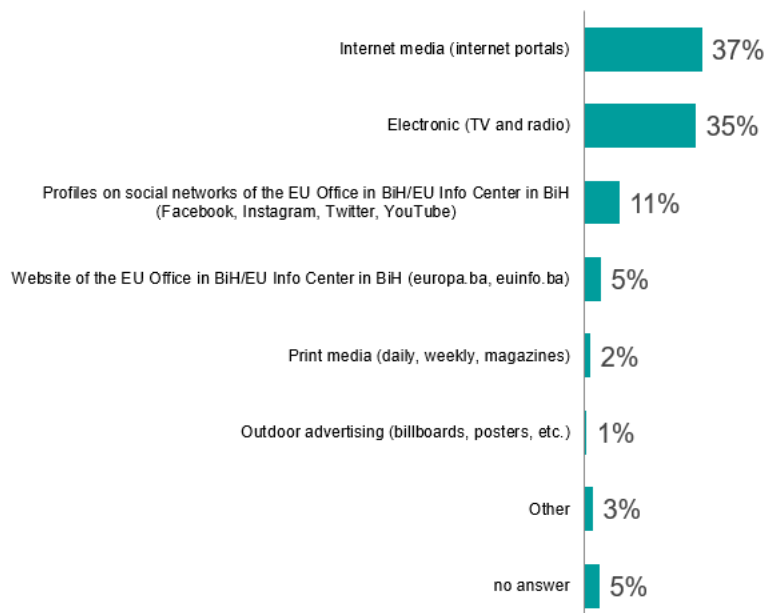


Image 2.

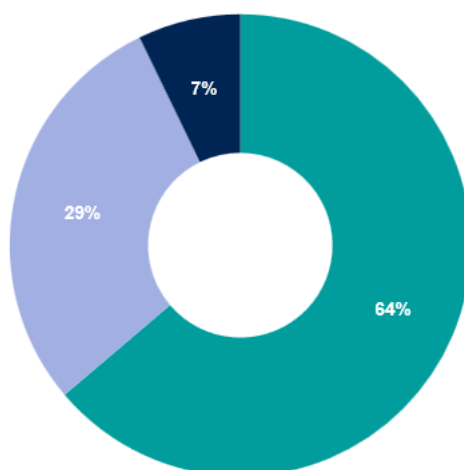
**Q2. Which media - source of information do you most often use to get information about the EU?**



More than half of the respondents believe that the information about the European Union that you read or saw online is useful, informative, and understandable. A more positive assessment is given by younger and more educated respondents, which is certainly connected with a higher rate of consumption via online channels by this part of the population.

*Image 3.*

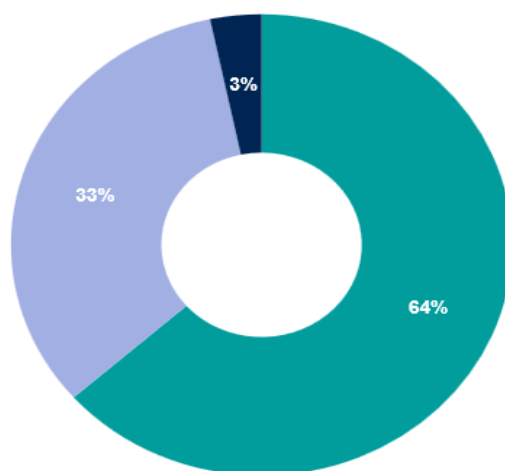
**Q3. Did you find the information about the European Union that you read or saw online useful, informative and understandable? (brochures, flyers, catalogs, infographics, posts on social networks...)**



A little less than two thirds of the respondents think that the way of presenting information about the European Union is attractive and interesting.

*Image 4.*

**Q4. Do you find the way of presenting information about the European Union attractive and interesting?**

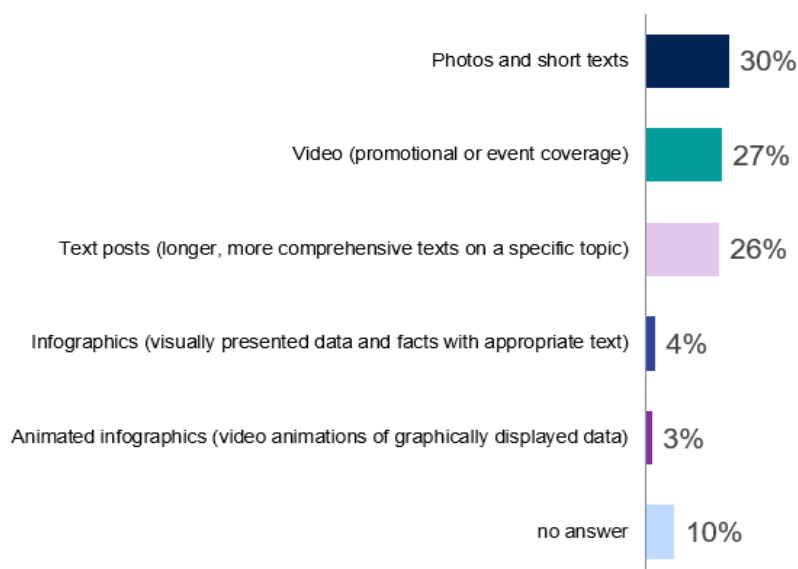


■ Yes ■ No ■ no answer

Photos and short texts, video and text posts are the preferred format of information on social networks.

*Image 5.*

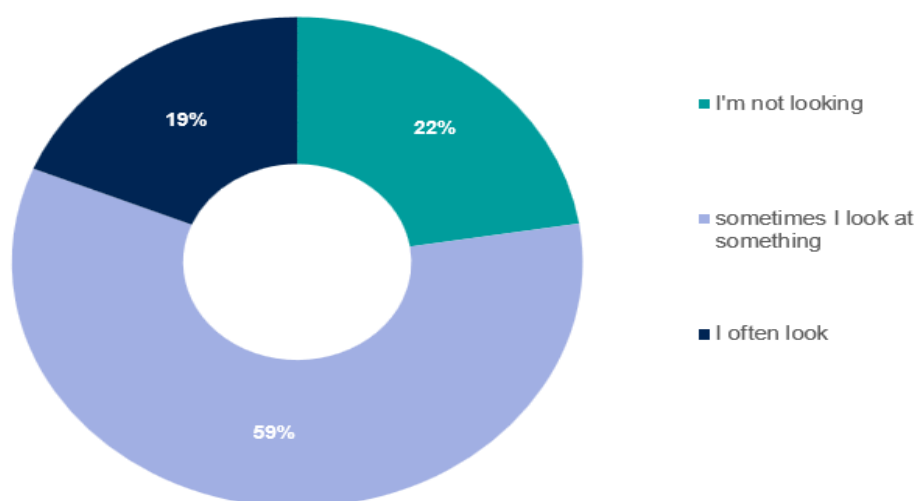
**Q5. In which format do you prefer to see information on social networks?**



The majority of respondents often or occasionally consume information about the European Union in a targeted manner.

*Image 6.*

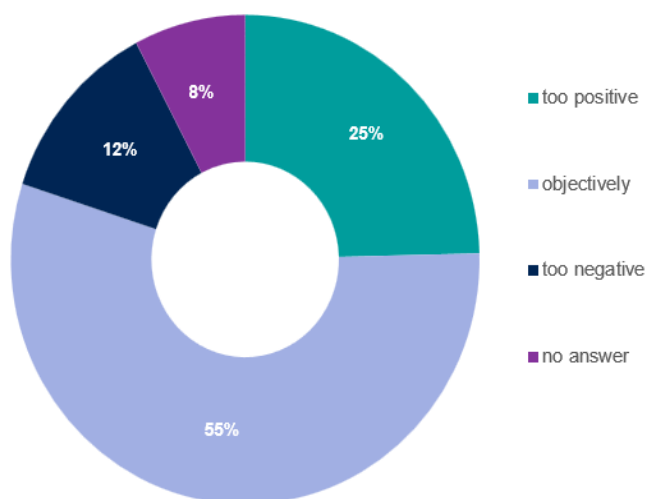
**Q6. Do you look for and watch, read, listen to news and other articles about the European Union in the media?**



More than half of the respondents think that media reporting on the European Union is mostly objective.

*Image 7.*

**Q7. How do the media you follow report on the European Union?**



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