09/2023

#02

A “Battle for Hearts and Minds”?

EU Digital Diplomacy towards the Global South

Cecilia E. Sottilotta

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND STATECRAFT
WORKING PAPER

GIGA
German Institute for Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien

Author

Cecilia E. Sottilotta is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Department of International Human and Social Sciences of the University for Foreigners of Perugia (Unistrapg). Before joining Unistrapg, Sottilotta was an Assistant Professor of International Relations and Global Politics and Director of the MA Program in Peace Studies at the American University of Rome. Previously, she was a post-doctoral research fellow at the Department of Political Science of LUISS Guido Carli, working on the research project "The choice for Europe since Maastricht: Member States' preferences for economic and fiscal integration – EMU Choices" funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. She has been Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Salzburg, Austria (2016), Visiting Professor at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia (2017), DAAD Visiting Research Fellow at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies – GIGA Hamburg (2019), Visiting Researcher at the Jacques Delors Centre of the Hertie School, Berlin (2021). Since 2021, she is a Visiting Professor at the College of Europe, Bruges, where she teaches Political Risk Analysis in a European perspective.

"Digital Diplomacy and Statecraft" is a research project funded by the Federal Foreign Office. It explores how digitalisation offers new opportunities, challenges, and instruments for foreign policy. By bringing together international experts, it identifies prospects and threats of digitalisation. Digital technologies are fundamentally transforming societies worldwide. The Global South is an important shaper of this change. The project analyses drivers and consequences of digitalisation across the world regions and delivers useful impulses for German foreign policy and for timely responses of (digital) diplomacy.

GIGA
German Institute for Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien

A “Battle for Hearts and Minds”? EU Digital Diplomacy towards the Global South

Abstract

Against the backdrop of the polarization created by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and growing competition between the US and China, a “battle for the hearts and minds” of the Global South is taking place, with the digital realm serving as a major theater for such a battle. Based on a review of the literature, an analysis of official documents as well as data collected via expert interviews with EU officials, this study delves into the state of the art of EU digital diplomacy towards the Global South, problematizing key concepts and categories, exploring the role of actors, audiences and messages, and providing some policy recommendations.

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Key Concepts and Definitions
3. Actors: the EEAS as the hub of EU digital diplomacy
4. Audiences: targeting the Global South
5. Messages and Problems: from values to interests?
6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations
References

1. Introduction

In the context of what many consider the "end of an era", ushered in by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and marked by rising tensions between the US and China, there is much discussion about what the new world order will look like, whether there will be a shift towards a multipolar or rather a bipolar one,[1] and, from a European standpoint, what the European Union (EU) should do to pursue its strategic and geopolitical interests while remaining committed to multilateralism, rule-based international order, and open and fair trade – the so-called "open strategic autonomy" (Belka and Marques 2023).

According to an interpretation of current international affairs embraced, among others, by EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (hereinafter HR) Josep Borrell, a "battle of narratives" is taking place. The main battlefield for which is indeed the "Global South", as many countries belonging to this macro-region have hesitated to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine with the same vehemence displayed by the US and its allies, including the EU (Apps 2022), more or less explicitly refusing to accept that Western interests are those of the rest of the world (Ishmael 2022, p. 18). In this sense, disputes pertaining to recent changes in world affairs inevitably intertwine with long-standing issues in North-South relations, including the need to manage or reduce the impact of climate change, to close the extant economic development gaps between countries belonging to different regions of the world, and to deal with colonial legacies, among others.

In this environment, the digital sphere has turned into a major theater for discussions, clashes and indeed full-fledged infowars, an inescapable consequence of the way in which digital technologies are reshaping virtually every single aspect of daily life. Spillovers of geopolitical competition to the social media arenas force the EU to constantly reflect on its ability to engage with foreign audiences to promote its soft power – one of the traditional objectives of public diplomacy tout-court.

Against this backdrop, and based on fourteen expert interviews with EU officials (five stationed in Brussels, nine from EU delegations on the ground), this paper aims to provide some reflections and policy recommendations on the current state of the art of EU digital diplomacy towards the Global South. Accordingly, its contents are organized as follows. Section 2 frames the ensuing analysis, engaging with theoretically and practically relevant definitional issues surrounding the concepts of "EU digital diplomacy” and “Global South”. Section 3 explores the making of EU digital diplomacy from the standpoint of the actors shaping it. Section 4 deals with the audiences of EU digital diplomacy. Section 5 explores the most problematic aspects of EU digital diplomacy as emerged from an analysis of primary and secondary sources. Section 6 concludes providing some policy recommendations based on the findings of the study.

---

[1] See for instance https://carnegieeurope.eu/2023/02/28/after-russia-s-war-against-ukraine-what-kind-of-world-order-pub-89130

2. Key Concepts and Definitions

Digital Diplomacy: what is it?

An analysis of the literature on digital diplomacy reveals that there is no consensus regarding its definition, significance and essential components. Nonetheless, looking at how this term has been used over the past few decades, it is possible to maintain that it generally refers to an innovative, practical extension of the concepts of *soft power* and *public diplomacy* (Sotiriu 2015, p. 35). Soft power, as Nye famously put it, “rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others” (2005, p. 5), while public diplomacy can be considered as a set of practices meant to boost a country’s soft power by facilitating engagement between publics addressing foreign public opinion (Cull 2010). In line with these notions, the stated purposes of EU public diplomacy are enhancing “the mutual understanding between EU citizens and citizens around the world and reinforcing the ties and cooperation between the European Union and the rest of the world”.[2] *Nation branding*, that is the strategic process of branding nations like commercial products, targeting specific audiences and conveying predetermined messages about a country’s image, values, identity, enhancing its “attractiveness” for foreign publics (see Gudjonsson 2005) is another adjacent concept.

Rather than to “digital diplomacy”, other authors prefer to refer to the broader concept of *digitalization* of public diplomacy defined as “a long-term process in which digital technologies influence the norms, values, working routines and structures of diplomatic institutions, as well as the self-narratives or metaphors diplomats employ to conceptualize their craft” (Manor 2019, p. 15). This definition has, among others, an important merit: it emphasizes that digital diplomacy as such is not, nor can it be considered as separated from public diplomacy tout-court. This point is especially relevant, as further explained in the following sections, since there still is a tendency, also among EU officials, to consider “digital diplomacy” as a separate realm, rather than an ever more relevant aspect of today’s diplomatic practice, inextricable from people’s and institutions’ everyday experience.

---

[2] See EEAS website https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/public-diplomacy_en

It is important to clarify that the definition of digital diplomacy adopted for the purposes of this paper is the somewhat narrower one provided by Bjola, who considers it as "the use of social media for diplomatic purposes" (2015, p. 4). Such use can be examined through at least two different lenses (Ibid, p. 5), that is a) its policy dimension (thinking of the impact of digital practices on public diplomacy's "core business", for instance via the implementation of social media campaigns addressed to foreign publics); and b) its institutional adaptation (an example being the creation of the East StratCom Task Force, a special unit embedded in the European External Action Service – EEAS, created in 2015 to address Russia's disinformation campaigns).[3]

In spite of differences in defining the exact empirical scope of the term, virtually all scholarly analyses of the subject acknowledge that, compared to "traditional" public diplomacy, which was based on "broadcasting" models of communication, the possibility for foreign affairs ministries, but also other governmental as well as non-governmental actors, to interact with foreign audiences, that is two-way communication, is the defining feature of 21st century "new" diplomacy (Pamment 2013). In other words, digital diplomacy is, by default, much more "relational" in nature than traditional public diplomacy.

Finally, it should be remembered that, at the time, the field of diplomacy is undergoing further transformations thanks to the latest developments in artificial intelligence (AI), for instance the possibility for internet users to interact with AI directly thanks to the interface provided by ChatGPT. Only time will tell what the full extent of the impact of AI on diplomacy will be. There are many potential advantages to the AI revolution, including for example the possibility to automatize consular services. However, experts fear that the ability of AI to create "alternate realities" may indeed feed into a growing sense of distrust of people vis-à-vis diplomats (Manor 2023).

The EU and Digital Diplomacy: clarifying the ambiguity

Over the past few years, the term "digital diplomacy" has become an important buzzword in Brussels policy circles. This development is not surprising, considering that, in a trend which has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the "twin green and digital transitions" have become the centerpiece of the EU long-term strategic vision.[4] Consistent with this vision, on 18 July 2022, the EU Council (henceforth

---

[3] See Hedling (2021).

[4] See European Commission's 2022 Strategic Foresight Report "Twinning the green and digital transitions in the new geopolitical context", https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0289&qid=1658824364827

“the Council”) met in its Foreign Affairs configuration to discuss the principles, objectives and tools of EU digital diplomacy. In its Conclusions, the Council expressed the intention of ensuring “that Digital Diplomacy become a core component and an integral part of the EU external action”.[5] The Council met again in summer 2023, this time to outline a “set of priority actions” meant to implement the principles and objectives charted the previous year, in “close collaboration with like-minded partners” and on the basis of “universal human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic principles”.[6]

Even a cursory analysis of the aforementioned documents reveals that what EU officials mean when they talk about “digital diplomacy” largely differs from the concept as defined in the previous subsection. In the meaning embraced by the EU official documents, “digital diplomacy” refers to a set of new topics in the diplomatic agenda. It is not considered as a tool or a means to reach a given objective (e.g. enhancing the Union’s soft power), but rather as an end in itself, indicating diplomatic efforts having at their core a set of strategically important policy issues, such as cybersecurity, data protection, e-commerce, internet governance, AI governance, touching virtually every policy area of relevance to the EU, from geopolitics to development, from human rights to security (Kurbalija 2023).

In this sense, in the context of the EU, “digital diplomacy” may indeed designate “traditional” diplomatic practices (e.g. in-person high-level summits) focusing on digital matters. A recent example of this is the EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) summit culminating, among other things, with the establishment of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, that is an “informal, values-based framework for cooperation” aiming to foster cooperation between Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries and EU Member States on a broad range of digital issues, such as infrastructure, connectivity, AI, data protection, space-related activities.[7] These issues, once marginal with respect to other items, have now become a top priority in the policy agenda of the EU and its partners (Interview 5, Interview 9).

If we stick to the definition given above though, that is digital diplomacy as an extension of public diplomacy, things are naturally different, also in terms of “ownership”. Indeed, multiple actors within the EU, with varying levels of awareness, play a role in this sense, although, as further illustrated below, the

---

[5] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11406-2022-INIT/en/pdf

[6] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11088-2023-INIT/en/pdf

[7] See European Commission 2023 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_3892 . The Digital Alliance is one of the pillars of the European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean Global Gateway Investment Agenda (GGIA). See https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/eu-lac-global-gateway-investment-agenda_en

EEAS (its headquarters in Brussels as well as delegations operating on the ground) remains the natural institutional "house" of EU (public) digital diplomacy.

"Global South": a contested category

After defining the scope of EU digital diplomacy for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to briefly discuss another contested category used here, that is "Global South". As mentioned above, one of the key features of digital diplomacy is its *relational* nature. In this sense, a good starting point to unpack the concept of "Global South" is to observe that it too has been defined as a "relational" category, describing a "...subdued position in a structural relationship of domination between interconnected entities within a global system" (Berger 2021, p. 2002).

Coined in 1969 by leftist academic and activist Carl Ogelsby and popularized by a 1980 report prepared by the Independent Commission on Development Issues also known as the "Brandt Commission",[8] the term "Global South" came to replace in common usage more loaded terms like "Third World", "Developing World", or "Non-western world", becoming a shorthand for a remarkably heterogeneous group of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The term seemingly conjures a distinction grounded in geography between countries belonging to the northern and those situated to the southern hemisphere, but neither geographical criteria nor economic ones are per se relevant to the "membership" in this group.

In fact, extreme heterogeneity within it in terms of economic paths, institutional set-up and political culture has led many to question its utility,[9] while others maintain that, compared to the alternatives, the term is useful as it constitutes a lens through which this group of countries keep seeing and narrating their problems in a distinctive way vis-à-vis "developed" countries in Europe, North America and Asia (see e.g. Braveboy-Wagner 2003; Duck 2015), positioning themselves politically in international fora to highlight the unjust nature of the international order like the Group of Seventy Seven (G77) has been doing in the context of the United Nations (Freeman 2017). Considering that, after all, widely accepted labels like the "West" or "Europe" cover realities which are very different in economic, military, cultural terms, "Global

---

[8] See https://www.southasiamonitor.org/perspective/third-world-or-global-south-its-time-redefine. See also North-South: a programme for survival; report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000039496

[9] For a recent critique see https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/08/15/term-global-south-is-surging.-it-should-be-retired-pub-90376

South” indeed can be considered as a useful shibboleth to interact with countries which otherwise are frequently and readily dismissed as “the rest” (Kürzdörfer and Narlikar 2023).

The relations with the Global South are a key dimension of the EU’s external action. Indeed, they cover most of the world: suffice it to think that 111 out of the EU’s 144 diplomatic missions are currently located in G77 countries.[10] Unsurprisingly, therefore, the label “relations with the Global South” hides a great deal of different situations and arrangements depending on multiple factors, including colonial legacies, cultural/linguistic ties, geographical proximity as well as geopolitical positioning, in particular with respect to the fault lines that emerged in global politics after recent crises, namely the COVID19 pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Somewhat surprisingly though (considering that demographically speaking the Global South represents the vast majority of world population) research into the perceptions of the EU from a Global South perspective is scant. Extant studies, usually investigating external perceptions of the EU in general (thus also typically including other countries such as the US or Japan), tend to focus on larger countries, such as Brazil, India, and South Africa[11] or rely on closed-ended survey questions formulated on the basis of the EU’s self-representation as a “normative power” (Manners 2002).[12]

An important contribution partly filling this gap is a 2022 study by Carnegie Europe entitled “The Southern Mirror: Reflections on Europe from the Global South”. The study focuses on 11 countries from the Global South (Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Niger, the Philippines, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe) and finds that perceptions of the EU vary considerably, based on a myriad factors, including the most pressing issues on the ground, domestic political trends, colonial legacies of individual EU member states, and the level of knowledge about the powers and functioning of the EU itself by non-specialized publics (see Balfour et al 2022).

In the current turbulent political juncture, debate is raging in Europe about the “revenge of the Global South”, which as an emerging “geopolitical continent” has not aligned itself with the EU and NATO’s stance vis-à-vis the Russian invasion of Ukraine launched on 24 February 2022 (Ricard and Paris 2023). As mentioned in the introduction, in the words of HR Josep Borrell, there is an ongoing “battle of narratives” about the Ukrainian war and its dire consequences for the world order,[13] with the US, the EU and their allies (a "democratic front") on the one side, and Russia and China (an "authoritarian front"), on the other, trying to win over "hearts and minds" in the Global South.[14]

---

[10] See https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-world-0_en. This count includes the EU delegation to the African Union but excludes the EU delegation in China. Indeed, China’s self-positioning as a “developing country” belonging to the Global South is increasingly questioned. For a discussion see Rudyak 2023.

[11] See for instance Lucarelli and Fioramonti (eds) (2011), European Commission (2015), Chaban and Holland (eds.) (2019).

[12] See https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2141_450_eng?locale=en

In the context of this meta-narrative (that is the narrative about a "battle of narratives"), the impact of digital diplomacy is becoming increasingly crucial. Key international actors including the EU are leveraging virtual platforms and digital technologies to shape narratives, disseminate information, and engage with "glocal" audiences. As will be shown in the following sections, which explore the role of actors, audiences and messages, this dynamic interaction between rival actors underscores the significance of digital diplomacy as a strategic tool for the EU.

3. Actors: the EEAS as the hub of EU digital diplomacy

Any analysis of the EU digital diplomacy cannot but start by acknowledging the influence exerted on it by the peculiar nature of the EU as an ever-evolving institutional entity and political project. Since its inception on 1 December 2009 (when the Lisbon Treaty entered into force), the main center of gravity of EU digital diplomacy has been the EEAS. Prior to that, as a consequence of its three-pillar structure, EU public diplomacy in general was more fragmented. In the decade preceding the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, a key role was played by the Council Secretariat, in particular the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and by the Commission, especially the Directorate-General External Relations (Relex) which focused primarily on disseminating information to "internal" and "external" audiences (Duke 2013, p. 116-117).

The inception of the EEAS, saluted as an important step towards solving one of the key problems plaguing EU public diplomacy, that is its inconsistency and lack of strategic focus, coincided with an exponential growth in the relevance of digital diplomacy and with an acceleration of the digitalization of EU policies in general. Indeed, the EEAS is truly a "digital native", considering for instance that its Twitter/X account (@eu_eeas) was created as early as October 2009. Like clearly expressed in the October 2016 Council Conclusions, the EU Foreign ministers decided that public diplomacy "including strategic communication, inside and outside the EU, to speak with one voice and ultimately promote its core values” should be a strategic priority.[15]

---

[13] See https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1538064154094882817

[14] See for instance Apps 2022; Detsch and Gramer 2023.

In spite of this “call for unity”, EU digital diplomacy remains far from monolithic, a natural consequence of the fact that the Council, the European Parliament, the European Central Bank and other EU bodies also systematically engage in relations and communication with external partners (Fanoulis and Revelas 2023). Additionally, the digital diplomacy of individual member states adds another layer of complexity to the activity of EU diplomats. As emerged from several of the interviews conducted for this study, sometimes digital audiences in the Global South confuse the EU and its member states, which puts EU communicators in a delicate position (Interview 1, Interview 6, Interview 8). For instance, during the exodus of civilians leaving Ukraine in consequence of Russia’s invasion, negative sentiment was engendered by the discriminatory treatment reported by many non-white third country nationals at the Polish-Ukrainian border at the hands of Polish police.[16] On that occasion, the line chosen by the EEAS to try and counter such negative sentiment about the EU on social media was showing statistics about the actual numbers of asylum seekers from Asian and African countries welcomed by other EU countries sharing a border with Ukraine, such as Hungary, Romania and Slovakia (Interview 6). As noticed by an interviewee, it is quite frequent to witness member states’ taking credit for public diplomacy “successes”, while often the EU takes the blame when fiascoes take place (Interview 8).

In any case, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty the EU architecture for digital diplomacy was remarkably reinforced: as one interviewee put it, although a constellation of institutional actors contributes to the making of the EU digital diplomacy, the EEAS acts as a “hub”, housing two communications divisions, the ‘Communication Policy and Public Diplomacy’ and ‘the Strategic Communication, Task Forces and Information Analysis’ one. The Task Forces are specifically devoted to counter disinformation in the regions they cover. The “East StratCom Task Force”, in particular, was set up in 2015 upon request of the European Council to address Russia’s disinformation campaigns.[17] Its flagship project “EUvsDisinfo” systematically “identifies, compiles, and exposes disinformation cases originating in pro-Kremlin media that are spread across the EU and Eastern Partnership countries.”[18] Meetings with other Directorates-General and institutions, including the Council and the European

---

[15] See https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13202-2016-INIT/en/pdf

[16] See https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/02/people-of-colour-fleeing-ukraine-attacked-by-polish-nationalists

[17] See European Council Conclusions 19-20 March 2015 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21888/european-council-conclusions-19-20-march-2015-en.pdf

[18] See https://euvsdisinfo.eu/about/

Parliament, are regularly held every 4-6 weeks to ensure coordination. Recently coordination meetings with member-state diplomats in charge of strategic communication were introduced too (Interview 3). Indeed, synergy with colleagues from member states, especially for EU Delegations on the ground, is important (Interview 4, Interview 6, Interview 7).

While the most relevant social media platform for EEAS activities remains Twitter/X (Interview 3), the Service is also present on Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, as well as on other social media sites such as Weibo and Vimeo via the EU Delegations and EU missions in third countries, which, with a few exceptions all have a social media presence.[19]

The role of EU Delegations and Missions (144 in total as of November 2023) is crucial insofar as they are best equipped to intercept local audiences and to mediate the key messages the Union aims to spread (Interview 1, Interview 4, Interview 6). Delegations mostly communicate in the local language, as also reflected in the very social media handles used by EU delegations abroad (e.g. "@UEnoBrazil" or "@UEauBenin"). The need to engage in dialogue rather than in simple one-way communication has become even more urgent for Brussels in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine which, as further explained below, has sparked a debate on the attitude and preferences of governments and public opinion in the Global South vis-à-vis those of the EU and NATO.

It should be added that in the current institutional setting, and in line with a global trend in digital diplomacy, individual personalities, from digitally savvy diplomats to political leaders[20] such as the President of the EU Commission, the President of the European Council and, most importantly, the High Representative for International Affairs and Security Policy, play an increasingly important role in the external projection and communication of the EU's values and priorities, via their personalized social media accounts (e.g. @vonderleyen, @CharlesMichel or @JosepBorrellF on Twitter/X). When it comes to individual diplomats, the propensity for example of EU ambassadors to engage in digital activities is variable, with a few cases of diplomats who excel in the use of social media, adding a personal touch to their official opinions which greatly benefits the overall public diplomacy efforts of the EEAS (Interview 6, Interview 10).

---

[19] For an update list of EEAS social media accounts, see https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/social-media-accounts_en

[20] Manor (2019, p. 312-313) for instance analyzes the case of former French ambassador to the US, "social media star" Gérard Arnaud, with over 130,000 followers on Twitter as of November 2023.

4. Audiences: targeting the Global South

Unsurprisingly, considering the complexities surrounding the very notion of Global South as discussed above, this label may refer to number of different, physically and culturally distant audiences. A first aspect that needs to be considered in this respect is that, as recent research into how public opinion in the Global South perceives the EU shows, target audiences do not necessarily possess a clear understanding of the EU’s true nature or of who is authorized to speak on its behalf (Balfour et al 2022). As already mentioned, in the interaction between the EU and digital publics from the Global South the former is often confused with its member states (Interview 6, Interview 8). This poses challenges as, depending on the history of each country, there may be colonial legacies which are inevitably projected onto the EU as a whole, in spite of the fact that within the EU itself, former colonial powers indeed coexist with formerly colonized countries.

Another key peculiarity of EU digital diplomacy in terms of audiences is that, compared to that of individual countries, it has to handle a much more complex environment. On the one hand, digitalized public diplomacy – including the EU’s – is inevitably characterized by “networks of selective exposure” (Hayden, 2012). On the other hand, while in the era of “traditional” media it was possible for diplomats to control, at least to some extent, the segmentation of audiences (including a separation of domestic from foreign ones), in the digital era this is not possible anymore. As Duke (2013) rightly pointed out, EU public diplomacy in general has historically been directed predominantly inwards. The importance of “domestic” narratives in shaping the construction of the identity that the UE projects outwards, coupled with the fact that in today’s globalized and digitalized media landscape domestic and foreign audiences have equal access to official information, contributes to a blurring of the distinction between the internal and the external aspects of EU public (digital) diplomacy (Duke 2013, p. 114).

An example of the challenges entailed by addressing “intermestic” audiences (Ibid., p. 115) are the vehement reactions generated across the Global South by the remarks made by HR Josep Borrell on 13 October 2022 on the occasion of the inauguration of the European Diplomatic Academy, a training program for junior diplomats for EU member states and institutions on EU foreign and security policies. In his speech, the HR said that while “Europe is a garden [...] Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden. The gardeners should take care of it, but they will not protect the garden by building walls.”[21] Initially, the attention of the media was attracted by Borrell’s strong words in response to Russia's threat to launch a nuclear attack against Ukraine. Such an attack, Borrell said, would generate "... an answer, not a nuclear answer but such a powerful answer from the military side that the Russian Army will be annihilated".[22] However, over the following days, a social media storm built up over the "garden vs. jungle" metaphor, which many around the world saw as a reflection of a "Western sphere's superiority complex over the Global South" steeped in racism and eurocentrism (Liboreiro 2022). The UAE summoned the head of the EU delegation to ask for explanations regarding Borrell's remarks, which also attracted harsh criticism by foreign media outlets such as the New York Times and Al Jazeera,[23] as well as "domestic" ones.[24]

---

[21] The full text of the speech is available at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-diplomatic-academy-opening-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-inauguration_en

Evidently, a metaphor which did not engender a vehement reaction in an audience made of young European diplomats, and that indeed had already been used by the HR on Twitter without giving rise to special criticism,[25] took a completely different spin when it started to garner the attention of "Southern" audiences, a poignant reminder of the "glocalized" nature of today's public diplomacy, in the context of which foreign policy practitioners need to keep in mind and target both local and global publics as appropriate (Manor 2019, p. 8). In fact, negative reactions from governmental elites may be compounded if not elicited by social media storms, and although there is a significant difference between addressing a country's elites vs. the general public when it comes to crafting a certain message or narrative (Interview 8), in the digital age this distinction has become increasingly blurred. This clearly constitutes a break with the past, when the targets of public diplomacy were the elites (Pamment 2013) which, as already stressed, could be addressed via dedicated channels that allowed for a much more controllable "segmentation" of audiences. On the other hand, it should be noticed that being active on different social media platforms allows for a segmentation at least in terms of demographics: for instance, Instagram is used to reach younger audiences, Facebook for slightly "older" ones (Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8). In many countries in the Global South, the population is on average much "younger" than in the EU, which has important implications in terms of information consumption, as social media outlets are much more popular than traditional media (Interview 12).

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] See e.g. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/10/17/josep-borrell-eu-racist-gardener , https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/17/world/europe/eu-ukraine-josep-borrell-fontelles.html

[24] See e.g. https://www.brusselstimes.com/308833/europe-still-driven-by-neocolonialism-says-belgian-mep-on-borrells-speech , https://www.liberation.fr/international/josep-borrell-le-maitre-jardinier-de-leurope-se-perd-dans-la-jungle-20221019_2KOTPBOMSBC3RJLJRUJV7VMY2E/

[25] https://twitter.com/josepborrellf/status/1563925309111635968?lang=bn

Another essential dimension to be considered when thinking about audiences for EU digital diplomacy in the Global South is that its effectiveness very much depends on local media landscapes. A quick glance at the Freedom in the World 2023 report shows that the majority of EU partners in Africa and Asia are classified as “partially free” or “not free” (Freedom House 2023). In the case of authoritarian or “hybrid” settings where the EU is contributing to development projects, for instance, local audiences may be more prone to turn to official social media accounts for reliable information than in countries where the media landscape is more open (Interview 6). In other contexts (South Africa being a prominent example of this), Chinese firms own large shares of big media companies, which makes it easier for them to spread messages locally and more difficult for the EU to intercept and “hijack” the narrative. Also in this respect, the empowerment of EU delegations is crucial, to build trust with local communities and connect with them online and offline (Interview 1), but also to provide the EEAS headquarters in Brussels with constant feedback about the media environment on the ground (Interview 10).

5. Messages and Problems: from values to interests?

In terms of content, the core messages conveyed in the context of EU digital diplomacy towards the Global South can be grouped in four broad categories (Abratis 2021): 1) Informing about the EU: as multiple interviewees stressed, outside of academic and diplomatic circles there often is confusion about the EU and its functioning, hence the importance of using social media to explain to the wider public how the EU and its institutions work;[26] 2) Promoting a friendly image, especially by stressing the importance of intercultural dialogue and people-to-people dialogue, and – an increasingly relevant task – by fighting disinformation deliberately spread by rivals;[27] 3) Disseminating information about partnerships on development and beyond;[28] and 4) Communicating EU values, such as gender equality, human rights, sustainability, peace, democracy, and a global rules-based order in general.[29] Unsurprisingly, the way in which all of these messages are conveyed by EU social media accounts and interpreted by audiences has been heavily impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent war. The virtually unconditional political and military support given to Ukraine by the EU, its members and other NATO allies was arguably one of the triggers of the above-mentioned "battle for the hearts and minds" in the Global South.

---

[26] Infographics and short clips are used to illustrate the functioning of the EU single market, as showed in this tweet posted by the EU Delegation to Brazil https://twitter.com/UEnoBrasil/status/951062169080254464

[27] See for instance this tweet posted by the EU Delegation to India on European street art in Delhi https://twitter.com/EU_in_India/status/1395628673990991873 or this tweet posted by the EU Delegation to Pakistan on an initiative involving Pakistani students https://twitter.com/EUPakistan/status/1634923799547195394. EU Delegations also circulate content created as part of the EUvsDisinfo project, such as this infographic on Russia’s disinformation campaigns in Africa posted on the Facebook webpage of the EU Delegation to Nigeria https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=658930099592787&set=pcb.658930879592709

[28] See for instance this tweet by the EU delegation to Brazil about the EULAC Digital Alliance https://twitter.com/UEnoBrasil/status/1688604897770409989 or this one by the EU delegation to South Africa celebrating the success of a EU-funded program on fighting youth unemployment https://twitter.com/EUinSA/status/1661024308033118220. As several interviews confirmed, the move away from

Indeed, the fact that values lay at the core of the EU's "brand" as communicated externally clearly presents some advantages, but it also gives rise to several challenges (Interview 3, Interview 8). For a complex polity like the EU, modeling its communication around values remains easier than talking about interests. While the former are usually described in very general terms, the latter are even more difficult to define and implement for the 27 EU member states, in spite of the "geopolitical awakening" experienced by the EU as a consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.[30]

Notwithstanding the fact that much of the EU communication on Ukraine in the Global South hinges on asserting the full responsibility of Russia's government for the negative consequences of the war in terms of food and fuel prices (Interview 6, Interview 10), observers from the Global South tend to see the conflict in Ukraine through the all-engulfing prism of colonialism, which means that to many of them, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is as much a violation of international law as Western arbitrary interventions and exits in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Libya (Malhotra and Saran 2023). Accusations of double standards abound in EU's conversations with digital audiences in the Global South, sometimes dismissed as "whataboutism", are nonetheless important indicators of the evident mismatch between EU's self-perception as the sole carrier of "universal" values and what the Global South believes (Interview 3, Interview 8, Interview 12).

Further problems created by the emphasis on values in political communication emerge from the fact that it is difficult for partners and rivals alike to clearly understand what they really are, and that across the Global South there is a widespread suspicion that values actually hide interests, as it happens for EU

---

language conjuring power imbalances and towards language evoking a balanced relationship between equals within the EU – as reflected for instance in the renaming of the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) as the Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) from January 2021 was a particularly welcome change (Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9).

[29] See for instance the tweet posted on 9 May 2022 (Europe Day) by the EEAS official account citing the promotion of these values as the "core business" of the EU diplomatic service, widely reshared by EU delegations located in the Global South and beyond:
https://twitter.com/eu_eeas/status/1523558390873706497

[30] The creation of a "Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defense in the next decade" was decided by the Council in March 2022. See https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/

“green” standards which are often considered as protectionist tools in countries which may lose market access to the EU because of difficulties in meeting them (Interview 7). The choice of *which* values to stress in the communication of delegations is also a delicate matter. When it comes to lgbtq+ rights, for instance, there is much difference between operating in an open environment and a more conservative one (Interview 7, Interview 10).

Another problem which emerged from interviews is the contradiction between the occasional inability to empathize with those at the receiving end of public diplomacy (such as in the case of the controversial “garden vs. jungle” metaphor mentioned above) and the sense of guilt surrounding some of the EU member states’ colonial past, which is often transferred to the EU as a whole. The latter, in the interpretation of some of the interviewees, prevents EU public diplomacy from being more assertive in countering rival narratives – even surrounding values – by stressing how, for instance, the EU indeed provides funding for events at which the EU itself is criticized, while China or Russia would never do anything of the kind (Interview 3, Interview 8, Interview 12). This lack of assertiveness as opposed to the aggressiveness of rivals is also in line with the assessment by some of the interviewees that EU digital diplomacy is “reactive” rather than “proactive”, allowing the rivals to control the narrative (Interview 3, Interview 13).[31] This is also due to the fact that, apart from a few exceptions, the personnel of delegations on the ground are not empowered enough nor do they have a strong political mandate allowing them to engage more and more meaningfully on social media. The result is that, also due to the bureaucratization in the management of communication, the risks of engaging with the public and ending up caught in social media storms are often much higher than the perceived advantages (Interview 8, Interview 13). Reflecting the official nature of the messages coming from the EEAS headquarters, as well as this risk-averse approach to communication, the register adopted is also very bureaucratic (Interview 8, Interview 13). This may engender a sort of “identity crisis” for diplomats, caught between the caution required by their traditional role and the demands of today’s digital diplomacy, which entails taking some risks (Interview 13). Another obstacle hindering effective engagement derives from the fact that member states not only have different social media “cultures”, but also different rules and guidelines about who is allowed to publicly express opinions and mechanisms of pre-approval/screening of posts (Interview 10, Interview 12). To some extent, these differences persist when member states diplomats move to the EEAS.

How to deal with criticism and take control of the narrative without shutting down communication is a huge challenge, requiring attention and resources. Suffice it to think that an analysis of about six million

---

[31] Countering disinformation is key, but it is still a “reactive” practice.

Arabic-language tweets posted between 22 February and 15 March 2022 and discussing Russia and Ukraine revealed that approximately 12 percent of them also mentioned Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine alleging double standards by the West.[32] This resonates with the fact that, for instance, in some cases the social media accounts of EU ambassadors show disabled "comments" sections, suggesting a difficulty in the moderation of negative comments, which is comprehensible and yet creates a dissonance vis-à-vis the primary objectives of modern day digital diplomacy, that is entertaining a dialogue with local audiences.[33] Moreover, interviews revealed that although heads of mission and officials from Political, Press and Information Sections indeed are always in touch with the EEAS headquarters in Brussels, for the time being a mechanism for delegations to provide systematic feedback about what works and what does not work in communicating with audiences in the Global South is absent (Interview 8, Interview 10).

Another aspect to consider with respect to the work of the EU delegations is that while all of the interviewees stressed that the cooperation in terms of political communication with the delegations of member states is typically excellent, the role of EU public diplomacy practitioners on the ground is sometimes complicated by the fact (mentioned above) that governments of member states are ready to claim their (past) positive role, but sometimes tend to shift the blame to the EU when something negative, for instance, about their colonial legacy comes up in the public/digital sphere (Interview 8).

Finally, a problem that requires attention is the disparity in resources devoted by rivals to spread disinformation compared to those available to the EU to fight it and to build a more proactive communication strategy (Interview 7). Ideally, more resources should be committed to further empower EU strategic communicators. However, as one interviewee noted, the EU is already making an effort in this sense, that is often more substantial than those made by individual member states (Interview 11). In this respect, it should not be forgotten that important budget constraints derive from the sheer fact that the EU is accountable to its citizens for the cost of its activities, while rivals – namely Russia, but also China – are not (Interview 11, Interview 12).

---

[32] See the Twitter thread used by the author Mahmoud Pargoo to disseminate the results of his analysis of social media data https://twitter.com/mpargoo/status/1504303136105713667?s=20

[33] See for instance the Twitter/X accounts of the EU ambassador in Iraq https://twitter.com/EUAmbIraq and the Twitter/X account of the EU ambassador in Israel https://twitter.com/DTzantchev as of 31 August 2023, which do not allow for comments from other users unless they are mentioned in their tweets. This contrasts with the choice of diplomats from other like-minded partners, such as the US, to keep their comments section open (see e.g. https://twitter.com/USAmbIraq).

6. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

A great deal of effort is required for the EU to successfully adapt to shifting global political equilibria. Whether the bloc will manage to achieve the ambitious objective outlined by HR Josep Borrell in presenting the Strategic Compass, that is to face its “security responsibilities, in front of [its] citizens and the rest of the world”,[34] will largely depend on its ability to project its priorities externally in a strong and consistent way. Needless to say, digital diplomacy will play a key role in this effort.

Based on the research conducted for this study, it is possible to draw some conclusions and put forward some policy recommendations. Some refer to the *policy dimension* of EU digital diplomacy vis-à-vis the Global South, others speak to the dimension of *institutional adaptation* (as defined by Bjola 2015 cited above).

As far as the *policy dimension* is concerned, it should be stressed that the most problematic aspects of EU’s digital diplomacy emerge from patent inconsistencies between political choices and the narratives promoted to explain and defend them, which are exacerbated by the specific nature of digital diplomacy as a two-way, interactive realm. Although overall the very inception of the EEAS has made the management of the EU strategic communication more consistent and coordinated compared to the past, contradictions in EU discourses – which had already surfaced before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine[35] – seem to persist. On the one hand, in EU digital diplomacy efforts directed to the Global South there is still much emphasis on values and on the EU essentially being a “force for good” in the world. On the other hand, as discourse meeting “normative power standards” (Diez and Manners 2014) begins to fall flat in the context of Southern public arenas, EU policy makers have started to acknowledge that – while maintaining a firm commitment to fight disinformation – if the overall objective is to engage with Global South audiences in a non-antagonistic and non-condescending way it is necessary to make room for different interpretations of situations, interests and values. Abandoning the assumption – still prevalent in much of the EU’s strategic communication as also suggested by extant research (see e.g. Narlikar 2022; Nitoiua and Pasatoiu 2023) – that the EU is the sole bearer of universal values, may allow for more effective public diplomacy, one that embraces a truly “globalised” approach by “recognising diversity” (Narlikar 2016). The need for the EU to become more assertive in this respect is also in line with the assessment made by some of the interviewees that EU digital diplomacy so far has been “reactive” rather than “proactive”, allowing the rivals to control the narrative. Evidently, such a shift is not easy to realize, considering the importance to EU identity and domestic audiences of normative discourse centered on universal values. At the same time, there is a clear indication that a shift in this sense is indeed necessary, as shown by the reluctance, even by like-minded allies in the Global South, to unconditionally embrace what used to be “normal” EU narratives about the state of world affairs.[36] In summary, EU public diplomacy practitioners should keep emphasizing EU values but strike a balance by clearly articulating how those values align with the bloc’s interests. This can help address accusations of double standards.

---

[34] See https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/

[35] See for instance Wagnsson and Hellman 2018, who find that in its communication, the newly established East Stratcom Task Force substantially diverged from the approach embraced by the then HR in terms of discursive standards.

Turning to *institutional adaptation*, some policy recommendations are in order too. First, it would be useful to harmonize social media practices across member states, especially as far as rules and guidelines on who can “speak” on behalf of the organization are concerned. In this sense, prioritizing the development of a shared social media culture, for instance in the context of the European Diplomatic Academy would be important, as diplomats coming from different member states may have very different perceptions and convictions about if and how to interact with the public on social media (Interview 10). In general, an empowerment of EU public diplomacy practitioners with the provision of stronger political mandates to engage more meaningfully and proactively on social media is desirable, together with more investment in resources and training for effectively handling criticism, including improved comment moderation and thoughtful responses to negative comments.

Second, it would be useful to have a set-up whereby feedback from delegations in the Global South is systematically solicited and incorporated in strategic communication choices, including those made by top officials. This would offer input and signal possible dissonances with local public opinion. Providing delegations on the ground with more leeway to take bolder initiatives in the context where they operate may be in order. In general, activities such as regularly assessing the impact of digital diplomacy efforts, monitoring audience response, and adapting strategies accordingly need to be potentiated to ensure the messages are resonating effectively with audiences across the Global South.

---

[36] A recent example of this reluctance were the difficulties experienced in finding language acceptable to all parties involved in the drafting of the final Declaration of the EU-CELAC Summit 2023 (Interview 3).

References

Abratis, J. 2021. *Communicating Europe Abroad: EU Delegations and Public Diplomacy.* Los Angeles: Figueroa Press.

Apps, P. 2022. “Ukraine war unleashes battle for Global South hearts and minds” Reuters, April 11, 2022. https://www.reuters.com/article/apps-south-column-idINL3N2W91UE

Balfour, R., L. Bomassi, and M. Martinelli. 2022. *The Southern Mirror: Reflections on Europe From the Global South.* Carnegie Europe. https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/06/29/southern-mirror-reflections-on-europe-from-global-south-pub-87306

Belka, M. and P. Marques. 2023. “Towards EU open strategic autonomy in a multipolar world” Euractiv, March 3, 2023. https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/opinion/towards-eu-open-strategic-autonomy-in-a-multipolar-world/

Berger, T. 2021. “The ‘Global South’ as a relational category – global hierarchies in the production of law and legal pluralism.” *Third World Quarterly* 42(9): pp. 2001–2017.

Bjola 2015. “Introduction.” In C. Bjola and M. Holmes (Eds.) *Digital diplomacy theory and practice,*(pp. 71–88). Oxon: Routledge.

Braveboy-Wagner, J.A. 2003. "The Foreign Policies of the Global South: An Introduction". In J.A. Braveboy-Wagner (ed) *The Foreign Policies of the Global South: Rethinking Conceptual Frameworks*, Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 1–12.

Chaban, N. and M. Holland (eds.) 2019. *Shaping the EU Global Strategy: Partners and Perceptions*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cull, N.J. 2010. “Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past”. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 6, pp. 11–17.

Detsch, J. and R.Gramer. 2023. Ukraine’s Next Big Diplomatic Offensive Is in the Global South. *Foreign Policy*, May 17, 2023. https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/05/17/ukraine-diplomatic-offensive-global-south-war-russia/

Diez, T. and I. Manners. 2014.”Reflecting on Normative Power Europe”. In Diez, T. (ed.) *A Different Kind of Power? The EU’s Role in International Politics*.New York: Idebate Press, pp. 55–73.

Duck, L.A. 2015. “The Global South via the US South”. In A. Hollington, Andrea, T. Salverda, T. Schwarz, and O.Tappe (Eds), *Voices from around the world : Concepts of the Global South*. Global South Studies Center Cologne, Cologne, Germany. https://web.archive.org/web/20160505210457/http://gssc.uni-koeln.de/node/456

Duke, S.2013. “The European External Action Service and Public Diplomacy”. In: Cross, M.K.D. and J. Melissen(eds) *European Public Diplomacy*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

European Commission.2015. Analysis of the Perception of the EU And EU’s Policies Abroad https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-11/eu_perceptions_study_executive_summary_0.pdf

Fanoulis, E. and K. Refelas. 2023. “The conceptual dimensions of EU public diplomacy”. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31(1), pp. 50–62.

Freedom House .2023. Freedom in the World 2023. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/FIW_World_2023_DigtalPDF.pdf

Freeman, D. 2017. The Global South at the UN: Using International Politics to Re-Vision the Global. *The Global South*, 11(2), pp. 71–91.

Hedling, E. 2021. Transforming practices of diplomacy: the European External Action Service and digital disinformation.*International Affairs*, 97(3): pp. 841–859.

Interview 1	Interview with EU Presidency official	7 July 2023
Interview 2	Interview with EEAS official	17 July 2023
Interview 3	Interview with EEAS official	18 July 2023
Interview 4	Interview with EEAS official	26 July 2023
Interview 5	Interview with INTPA official	31 July 2023
Interview 6	Interview with EEAS official	24 August 2023
Interview 7	Interview with EEAS official	4 September 2023
Interview 8	Interview with EEAS official	5 September 2023
Interview 9	Interview with INTPA official	5 September 2023
Interview 10	Interview with EEAS official	8 September 2023
Interview 11	Interview with EEAS official	12 September 2023
Interview 12	Interview with EEAS official	18 September 2023
Interview 13	Interview with EEAS official	21 September 2023

Ishmael, L. 2022. “A world Divided: A multilayered, multipolar World”. In Ishmael, L. (ed) *Aftermath of War in Europe: The West vs. the Global South?* Rabat: Policy Center for the New South.

Kurbalija, J. 2023 “Digital diplomacy”.https://www.diplomacy.edu/topics/digital-diplomacy/#a-new-topic-on-the-diplomatic-agenda--digital-foreign-policy

Kürzdörfer, N. and Narlikar, A. 2023. “A Rose By Any Other Name? In Defence of the ‘Global South’”. *Global Policy*, August 29, 2023. https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/29/08/2023/rose-any-other-name-defence-global-south

Liboreiro, J.2023. “Josep Borrell apologises for controversial 'garden vs jungle' metaphor but defends speech”. *Euronews*, 19 october 2022. https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/10/19/josep-borrell-apologises-for-controversial-garden-vs-jungle-metaphor-but-stands-his-ground

Lucarelli, S. and Lorenzo Fioramonti, eds. 2011. *External Perceptions of the European Union as a Global Actor*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Malhotra, S. and S. Saran.2023. How to Reset Relations Between Europe and the Global South ORF Commentaries, June 30, 2023. https://www.orfonline.org/research/how-to-reset-relations-between-europe-and-the-global-south/

Manor, I.2017. “The Digitalization of Diplomacy: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Terminology.” Working Paper. *Exploring Digital Diplomacy*. 10.13140/RG.2.2.31199.36004

Manor, I. 2023. “The AI moves in: ChatGPT’s impact on digital diplomacy”. *CPD Blog*, March 10, 2023. https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/ai-moves-chatgpt%E2%80%99s-impact-digital-diplomacy

Manners, I. 2002. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40: pp. 235–258.

Narlikar, A. 2016."’Because They Matter’": Recognise Diversity—Globalise Research.*GIGA Focus | Global* | Number 1. https://www.giga-hamburg.de/assets/tracked/pure/24348529/gf_global_1601_en.pdf

Narlikar, A. 2022. “Scripting a Third Way: The Importance of EU-India Partnership,” *ORF Issue Brief* No. 540, Observer Research Foundation.

Nitoiu, C. and F. Pasatoiu.2023. Public diplomacy and the persistence of the conflict and cooperation dichotomy in EU-Russia relations, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31:1, pp. 21–34.

Nye, Joseph S., Jr. 2005. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: PublicAffairs Books.

Pamment, J. 2013. *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Comparative Study of Policy and Practice*. London: Routledge.

Ricard, P. and G. Paris .2023. “War in Ukraine: The revenge of the Global South”. *Le Monde,* July 14, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/07/14/war-in-ukraine-the-revenge-of-the-global-south_6053397_4.html

Rudyak, M. 2023. “China and the Global South: Many Initiatives, One Narrative.” *IAI Working Papers* 23, 20, August. https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip2320.pdf

Sotiriu, S. 2015. “Digital diplomacy: Between promises and reality”. In C. Bjola & M. Holmes (Eds.), Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice, pp. 33-51. New York: Routledge.

Wagnsson, C and M. Hellman.2018. “Normative Power Europe Caving In? EU under Pressure of Russian Information Warfare”. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, 5. pp. 1161–77.

DIGITAL
DIPLOMACY
AND STATECRAFT
WORKING
PAPER