

Brusselian as Newspeak. The EU's Public Discourse on Enlargement and the Constitutional Treaty*

Dr. Cosmina Tanasoiu

Abstract:

Problems of European integration and governance are increasingly analysed from a discursive perspective. This article seeks to examine the reasons behind the increasing distance between Europe/European Union and its citizens by taking a discourse and content analysis approach. It argues that the current situation is due to a "communication deficit" as a result of a tendency to rely upon an overly-technical vocabulary. Hence, unlike previous studies, the article does not focus upon the structural difficulties to develop an EU communication strategy but examines the language and the discourse coming from Brussels and used to "communicate" Europe to its citizens. It applies a case study approach by looking at the discourse coming from the European Commission on the Eastern enlargement and the Constitutional Treaty. Seen as one of the main reasons for the current public concern and for the failure of ratifying the Constitutional Treaty, the Eastern enlargement was in fact an event insufficiently explained or justified to the European public. Data collection is archive-based and it relies on primary sources from the European Commission (speeches, press conferences, and press releases).

Keywords: European integration, communication deficit, public discourse, European Commission, enlargement, the Constitutional Treaty