From the European Institutions to the European Citizens: the information channels through the European Documentation Centres (EDCs)

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Abstract:

The European Documentation Centers are establishments of the European Commission in the premises of the Universities and Research Institutions of the European Union Countries. Their mission is the dissemination of the Information about the European Integration and especially:

- *information and documentation on every question about the European Union (EU) rights, funding, exchanges, travelling, working, etc.,*
- *invitations to local EU information/networking events,*
- *access to official EU publications and documents (online and print)*
- *references to other information sources,*
- *contact details for relevant organizations,*
- *help finding detailed information on European law, integration, policies and institutions,*
- *training for students on EU-related fact-finding and research.*

Before all the EDCs are a European network, the members of which produce value added services. The EDCs personnel in most cases are staff of the host organizations or of their libraries who do their best in this Information channel in parallel with their main duties.

However, a wide range of initiatives has taken under and many services have developed, such as:

- *Communication with users through Social Media tools,*
- *Cooperation between EDCs in the creation of repositories with European Documentation,*
- *Use of the new technologies in the Information process,*
- *Cooperation among them and between them and the EU Institutions to the organization of events,*
- *Support of an email list of the whole EDCs members, and dissemination of information and documentation, asked by a member,*
- *Publish Information leaflets and guides,*
- *Organize training courses to their users and librarians.*

The role of EDCs is clearly expanding beyond their "official" duties, based on their personnel interest to the European Documentation and aiming to their users' support. As things have changed passing the years, the European Documentation also changes ways of sharing and methods of collecting and preserving it.

European Commission publishes every year an "[Internal] Annual activity report" about the activities of the EDCs collectively. European Commission has also published some reports on the recent actions and initiatives and communication channels of the EDCs.

The presentation will additionally exploit the results of a questionnaire be issued to the emailing list about their current activities and their consideration on the EDCs transformation in future.

Keywords: European Information, European Documentation Centres (EDCs), Value added services, European Collections

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1. Historical Background[1]

Since 1963 the European Commission has given universities and other institutions of higher education and research the possibility of obtaining Community documentation produced by all the Institutions of the European Communities, which was founded during the 1950s.

The conferment of European Documentation Centre status (EDC) at that time was a response of the European Commission (EC) to requests for aid towards the creation of a documentary and information infrastructure covering Europe as a new discipline. This infrastructure was seen as essential to the promotion of education and teaching in this field, as European integration and the construction of the European Community touched the world of academia directly. In this framework, the European Documentation Centres constituted the oldest official information relay created by the European Commission. They were established mainly in universities and research institutions under a special agreement between the host structure and the EC, and have operated mostly inside institutions' libraries, aiming primarily at the support and promotion of teaching and research in the field of European integration.

The various institutional and other changes in the European Union's structure over the past half century have directly influenced the structure and operation of the European Documentation Centers. In 2001, they were transferred from the supervision of the Directorate-General for Education to the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) in order to respond to the request of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties to disseminate European information to citizens.

In view of the 2004 enlargement with 10 new Member States, a new communication and information strategy of the European Commission was set up and a wider, streamlined information network called Europe Direct (ED)[2] was created as a common denominator covering the broad range of centers and networks created to support the European idea. Since then, EDCs have been placed under the aegis of EUROPE DIRECT, together with Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs) and Team Europe Speakers[3]. One year later, in 2005, both parties, the European Commission and host institutions, signed a new EDC Agreement.

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[1] See also European Documentation Centres (2016).
[2] More information available at http://europa.eu/europedirect
[3] Independent experts who can lead presentations, workshops or debates on various EU issues. They are selected by the Representations of the European Commission.

It is worth noting that in 2007 EDCs outside the EU moved to what was then known as Directorate-General for External Relations (DG RELEX) with the name EUi (EU info corners). They are currently managed by the Foreign Policy Instrument.

2.   Institutional Framework

2.1.   EDC Agreement

According to the internal Commission's guidelines regarding EDCs, the EC Representations are responsible for keeping a well-functioning EDC network with a good geographical spread in each member state. University/research centre authorities wishing to host an EDC should approach the EC Representation in their country. The DG COMM headquarters coordinates the selection process in general. The EDC agreement stipulates the rights and obligations of both parties as regards the setting-up and operation of a Centre:

2.1.1. European Commission

- provides free documentation published by different European institutions, agencies and bodies distributed to Centres by the Publications Office, which is based in Luxembourg. EDCs are not awarded any direct operating grant by the Commission;

- offers support services such as regular training seminars, visits and exchange programs, as well as information services and internal online communication platforms;

- organizes annual networking meetings at member-state for the national Europe Direct Network, which includes EDCs;

- carries out a yearly evaluation of the EDC network based on the annual activity report of each EDC. A centre which does not meet the rules and requirements of the agreement could be possibly closed.

2.1.2. Host institution

- Offers accommodation, preferably inside the institution's library, for the collection and for readers. It provides facilities for accessing information electronically;

- Provides a professionally qualified librarian or documentalist as the person responsible, in cooperation with a member from academic staff who is appointed as the academic responsible for the EDC.

As mentioned in the Agreement, the main tasks of the EDCs are to:

(i)   promote and consolidate teaching and research in the field of European integration (educational task);

(ii) make in-depth information and sources on the European Union and its policies available to the public, especially in the academic and university environment (operational task);

(iii) participate in the debate on the European Union, when appropriate, with other European information and networks (communicative task).

In fact, the EDC's are special libraries inside the library of the host institution. They perform a series of other tasks such as cataloguing and indexing of all Community publications within a single collection, providing access to and enabling consultation of publications (print & electronic form) at least 20 hours per week, and informing the Commission about the events

which they organize or participate in. Nevertheless, there is a discussion if the EDCs offer a good return for the time, infrastructure, human resources, and money invested in them by the host institutions. Bell and Watson (2009) argue that:

"EDCs have never been free of charge to their host institutions: the publications are free, but the commitment in terms of space allocated and staff time is not. Some of these costs have diminished, not only because fewer publications supplied, but also thanks to the efficiencies of modern cataloguing and serials registration systems. However, it is still necessary to invest in professional staff, and this raises questions about the role of the EDC within the host institution, and the purpose of an international network of increasingly 'virtual' EDC."

The discussion is long. EDCs undertake responsibilities and develop new initiatives responding to their new roles.

2.2. Types of EDCs

There are two types of European Documentation Centres:

- **General EDCs** which in theory receive a free copy of each official publication in the language of their choice

- **Specialized EDCs** which receive documentation selected according to a thematic profile established as a preliminary.

It is possible, according to the interest of the Universities, or of the Commission, to modify the types of European Documentation Centres (EDC). Publications are distributed in the language chosen by the European Documentation Centre (EDC), which is usually the national language. If a publication is not available in this language, French or English will be sent by default.

2.3. National EDC Coordinators

EDCs are encouraged to organize their cooperation at national level by selecting a national EDC coordinator. The coordinator should be one of the EDC managers in that country. Their main role is to assist with cooperation; and to strengthen the complementarity and synergy between European Documentation Centres at the national and European levels, and between EDCs and other networks of the European Commission. This representative also acts as an information hub between EDCs and the Commission Representations.

3. Information Sources of EDCs

3.1. Official Publications and Documents

Most academic and research libraries house the EDC in a discrete collection. During their lengthy histories, the EDCs have developed rich collections of EU official documents and publications in 24 official EU languages. Typically EDCs used to receive the following types of material:

(i) <u>Official Journal of the European Union</u>: consists of two series, L-Legislation & C-Information and Notices, which contain primary legislation (treaties) and secondary legislation (regulations, directives, decisions, etc.). From 1 July 2013 the electronic version of the Official Journal (e-OJ) has been the authentic version, while the paper will no longer have official legal status;

(ii) <u>COM(mission) and SEC(retariat) Documents</u>: Draft legislation, communications, green papers[4], white papers[5];

(iii) <u>Documents generated during the legislative process, e.</u>g. European Parliament debates and reports;[6]

(iv) <u>Opinions and Reports</u> of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions;

(v) <u>Case-Law of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance;</u>

(vi) <u>Eurostat - statistical- publications;</u>

(vii) <u>Monographs, annual reports, pamphlets, periodicals, and newsletters</u> covering all EU policies and issues:

- Agriculture and fisheries
- Budget
- Competition
- Consumers
- Culture
- Customs union
- Digital economy and society
- Economic and monetary affairs
- Education, training and youth
- Employment and social affairs
- Energy
- Environment
- Foreign and security policy
- Health
- Human rights
- Institutional affairs
- Justice and home affairs
- Regional policy
- Research and innovation
- Single market
- Trade
- Transport

Material is offered in various formats: paper, microfiche, CD-ROM and online. Over time the print material has decreased, while the digital has increased.

Green papers: documents published by the Commission aiming to launch consultation at Community level on a particular issue.

[5] White papers: proposals for a Community action in a specific field.

[6] Bell and Watson (2009).

The EDC Network offers high quality documentation services by cataloguing and indexing EU material according to international bibliographic rules, standards and classifications, e.g. AACR2, DDC, LC, and the ECLAS and Eurovoc thesauri. Usually EDC librarians adopt the classification system of their host library so users are not confused. However, there are EDCs which organize the material based on the institution or the directorate which has produced the publications. Sometimes EDCs follow their own arrangement and classification schemes.

3.2. Official EU Websites

- Almost all current European documentation and information is now available electronically. Electronic production has been growing rapidly as part of a "paperless" strategy of the European Commission since '90s. The main official European websites used by EDCs are the following:

- Europa – Official Website of the EU http://europa.eu: basic information on how the EU works, the latest EU news and events, links to EU information on the websites of EU institutions and agencies[7].

- Eur-Lex – Access to EU Law http://eur-lex.europa.eu.

- CORDIS – Community Research and Development Information Service http://cordis.europa.eu/.

- EU Bookshop[8] - Contains all EU publications at http://bookshop.europa.eu. There is privileged access for EDCs to order multiple copies of general publications.

- European Union Open Data Portal. http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data - The single point of access to a growing range of data from the institutions and other bodies of the European Union (EU). Data are free to use and reuse for commercial or non-commercial purposes. The site aims to promote innovative data use and unleash economic potential. It also aims to help foster the transparency and the accountability of institutions and other bodies within the EU.

- Eurostat – "Your key to European Statistics" http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu.

- Find-eR - Library and e-Resources Centre http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/.

- N-Lex - National law: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/index_en. N-Lex offers a single entry point to national law databases in individual EU countries.

- .,RAPID - Press Releases http://europa.eu/press.

- TED - Tenders Electronic Daily http://ted.europa.eu.

- Your Europe - Help and advice for EU national and their families, and & practical guide to doing business to Europe http://europa.eu/youreurope/.

However, users frequently use other web sources than EUROPA and find information on the following types of websites:[9]

- External search engines (Google) to access the required information directly,
- Online encyclopedias and Wikipedia,

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[7] After the report of Ernst and Young (2008) Europa has improved its functionality.
[8] The EU Bookshop website has moved to "EU Law and Publications" website managed by the Publications Office (in short OP Portal) as of Wednesday 14 June 2017: http://publications.europa.eu/bookshop
[9] Ernst and Young (2008).

- Government offices, institutional and administrative national websites, e.g. national/local authorities, foreign ministries, embassies,
- Opinion makers' websites (including NGOs, lobbies, political parties, think tanks, trade union websites),
- Academic and university websites,
- Online press / news (web, TV, newspapers, radio websites),
- National portals in association with the EU dealing exclusively with EU issues (e.g. touteleurope.fr),
- Independent portals dealing exclusively with EU issues (ex. europeanvoice.com, euractiv.com, euobserver.com),
- EU dedicated blogs, chats and forums,
- Professional websites dedicated to a specific economic sector (ex. law society, professional associations),
- Company web sites,
- Statistical Institute, Documentation Centre and databases web sites,
- Web pages of national Commission representations are considered to be outside the "europa.eu" domain, as well as other institutional EU websites such as that of the European
- Central Bank, Council of Europe, European Court of Justice, or European Court of Human Rights.

4. Numbers, Staff and Users of EDCs

4.1. Number of EDCs.

The considerable changes which have taken place in the development of European integration, and the increased interest in EU Affairs, has been such that most university courses in EU member countries now have a European dimension. In this framework, the number of EDCs has gradually increased to cover most universities/research institutions in different EU member-states and regions. The EU member states[10] are very well served with over 402 EDCs. There also 14 EDCs in Turkey, the only candidate country that hosts them.

4.2. Human Resources

To better serve their users, EDCs have developed a suite of skills thanks to the specialized training offered regularly by the European Commission. As a result, EDCs staff is knowledgeable about:

(i)   the EU institutions and policies,

(ii)   the EU information sources,

(iii)   the search methods and

(iv)   the means to enable students, researchers, citizens to contact and communicate with the EU institutions.

However, the staff of EDCs are professionals hired by the host organizations and an important investment in it. The strength of EDCs is derived by their independence.[11] Bell and Watson (2009) emphasize this:

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[10] Except Luxembourg
[11] Bell and Watson (2009).

"By applying their professional skills and understanding of the structure of the EU and its documentation, EDC librarians enable researchers to identify, discover and evaluate both highly visible and hidden material… and to direct them to… other independent documentary sources. Likewise, an EDC librarian can help students to track the progress of cases and legislation through the databases, and draw their attention to commentary in the press and academic publications that presents alternative views to those found in, for instance the Commission's press releases."[12]

Furthermore, the EDC network, based on the commitment of individuals who are involved in them, recognizes the added value potential of cooperating with other EDCs at national and European level or with other similar organizations such as the Library and e-Resources Centre of the European Commission or the Historical Archives of the European Union. Examples of such networking are Spain-European Union Digital Archive (SEDAS), European Sources Online (ESO), Archiving Electronic EU Documents (ArchiDok), etc. Cooperation with other Europe Direct networks complements EDCs activities joint meetings, events and seminars.

Means of Cooperating with other ED networks:[13]

- Organizing joint events, meetings, seminars;

- Sharing, exchanging publications;

- Exchange of information;

- Forwarding of requests;

- Informal exchanges;

- Joint projects;

- Operating as part of a (broad) network;

- Producing joint publication;

- Participation in local working group;

- Partnerships;

- Promoting events of the EDCs.

The cooperation is achieved by:

- Intranet http://ednetwork.ec.europa.eu,
- Annual network meetings at national and European level,
- Training seminars and visits to EU institutions,
- Mailing lists and discussion groups,
- Eurodoc discussion list http://eurodoc.jiscmail.ac.uk,
- Pan-European Working Groups.

Cooperation among EDCS. The Goals of the Pan -European Working Groups

- The gathering of expertise and the cumulative tacit knowledge and practice of the EDC members and exploitation of know-how.

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Source: European Commission (2017).

- Knowledge exchange during annual meetings, subject focused workshops and seminars.
- The transformation of this knowledge into tangible results, in information products and communication.
- The Dissemination of the results to the other members of the Network and to Europe Direct Network.
- Subject Experts who act as contact point for the other member of the Network.
- Exchange of Best practices.

The majority of EDCs staff have attended a training seminar for EDCs organised by the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) Headquarters in Brussels at least once in the past 3 years. The overwhelming majority of them are satisfied or very satisfied with the seminar(s). The vast majority of EDCs staff have attended a training seminar or meeting for EDCs organised by the Representation in their country in the past 3 years. All of them were positive about the experience.[14]

4.3. Users.

Students, professors and researchers - mainly from the host structures, but also from the wider academic and research community - are the main target group of the EDCs.

Postgraduate students on European studies from other Universities use EDC resources.

Social science researchers search for statistical data.

Employees, a large number of them working in public administration and education, also use EDC services.

In addition, the general public can address its questions to the EDC Network and take advantage of its services, both on site or remotely.[15] This is a duty of public libraries and of the Europe Direct Information Centers –EDICs, but EDCs staff guide the people to find the information about the way of living in the European Countries in EUROPA or other Web pages.[16]

Terra (2009) deduces that the significant majority of users deliberately visit EDCs looking for European information. This demonstrates that EDCs offer a reliable service to those who know their existence and have been trained about their operation.

88% speak English. The other most frequent languages are French, German, Spanish and Italian. These five languages cover nearly 100% of users' linguistic needs, and 90% of the respondents use the Internet as a means to receive information on the EU[17].

5. EDCs Services and Activities of added value

Traditionally, the primary activity of EDCs has been to maintain a paper collection of EU documentation and to facilitate access using these resources: premises, publications, shelves, catalogues and computers accessible to academic and general public.

Increasing EU electronic production means this function has in many cases been replaced by the dissemination of electronic information. Moreover, the plethora of information provided

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[14] European Commission (2016).
[15] See also Terra (2009).
[16] Bell and Watson (2009).
[17] Ernst and Young (2008).

and the complexity of the EU policy-making and publishing regulations have resulted in EDCs serving as mediators between users and information sources. In this new landscape, EDCs offer a wide range of services.

5.1.   Specialized enquiry service and a point of reference on EU related topics.

Access to the European Parliament, Council and Commission documents is an essential component of the policy of transparency being implemented by European institutions. Under the Treaty, all EU citizens and all residents of the Union enjoy this right of access, which is governed by Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

EDCs disseminate EU information in and outside the host institution, offer free consultation of the EU official documentation, and provide reference services by mail or phone.

Typology of Information disseminated:

- General information on EU;
- Information related to European law;
- Information related to European policies and institutions;
- Information related to the activities of the EDC;
- Information related to (electronic) resources of EU information;
- Information on EU actions of interest to citizens;
- Information on EU actions of interest to students;
- Information on EU actions of interest to academic staff (professors, lecturers); [18]
- Information on EU actions of interest to fellow librarians.

Needless to say, EDCs are never outlets for propaganda and do not promote the EU. They support research into European integration, without taking a position one way or the other.[19]

It is recorded that the users estimate the libraries and the documentation centers to which they belong as the best EU information providers, amongst the magazines, newspapers, internet, radio, television. Respondents visit EDCs because they are confident about them.

Even experts who use EDCs know how to navigate the official website of the EU, but they often find it difficult to locate where the information is and who provides it. They can't always find documents and reports that are produced during the creation of European legislation. Although users with internet access can be referred to the digital documents through websites, they still need to be informed about the accuracy of the information, the reliability of the resources, and the legal rights for its usage.

For the same reasons EDCs create website that is usually a part of the host organization's wider website and provides factual information on services offered by the Centre. For example: the Library of the University of Piraeus compiled an Index in both print and electronic format, located in the portal of the library: http://www.lib.unipi.gr/node/82, titled: *EDC Links: Where is What*. It contains the basic sources of EU and their URL for quick access. It gives the starting point of the search. The following part of the table gives the idea:

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[18] Terra (2009) notices that the academic work (65%) and the research work (55%) are the main reasons for seeking information in the EDC. See also Ernst and Young (2008).

[19] Bell and Watson (2009).

if you search for…	You start from:
COM documents	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/pre-acts.html?locale=el http://www.uni-mannheim.de/edz/virbib/kom/kome.htm
CORDIS	http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html
EU Whoiswho:the official list of the EU	http://europa.eu/whoiswho/public/index.cfm?lang=el
Eurofound:	http://eurofound.europa.eu/el/about/who-we-are
EUROPE DIRECT	Έχετε απορίες σχετικά με την ΕΕ; http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_el.htm
European Information Association	http://www.eia.org.uk/
JOIN έγγραφα	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/pre-acts.html?locale=el
Labourline	EDC of the European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety-ETUI-REHS http://www.labourline.org/

In summary, academic researchers ask complex questions, ask for deeper insights about topics, search for material not easily identified on online databases, and seek for interim versions of documents.

5.2. Library services

- Circulation;
- Interlibrary loan;
- Cataloguing,
- Classification and Indexing,[20]
- Compiling of specialized bibliographies at university professors' request;
- Collection development and management: EDCs belong to the privileged users of the EU bookshop and can order large quantities of some European publications, which they offer to the users for free.
- E-journal database: a service that is offered by some EDC networks in a national basis to their users. It contains the electronic journals of the European institutions for free.

For some years the European Commission has been asking the EDCs to assume a more dynamic role, rather than just preserving and disseminating EU documentation (whose online availability is increasing). The centers should provide specialized reference services that support the teaching, research and organizing of events and study sessions on European

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[20] Source: European Commission (2017) and European Documentation Centres (2016).

issues, in order to increase awareness about the EU and reduce the gap between institutions and citizens.

5.3.   Promotional material and activities that have been organized under this context are sometimes beyond the official duties derived by the EDCs. Some of them include:[21]

- Organization of events such as speeches, exhibitions, competitions concerning European Union, e.g. Europe Day, Schuman Declaration, the fifty years of the European Parliament, the European elections etc.;

- Organization of conferences and presentation of articles and papers;

- Information and promotion activities for specific target groups, e.g. public librarians, students of library science, youth networks, school pupils;

- Compilation of guides and other information products such as newsletters, posters and studies;

- Free distribution of documentary material and gadgets maps, leaflets, pocketbooks relevant to the everyday life in Europe;

- Visits to the EC Representation and Institutions in Brussels;

- Meetings with European consuls and ambassadors;

In addition, a wide range of databases which distribute knowledge between colleagues and partners are also created, such as RSS feeds, email discussion lists, email alerts, etc., such as Euractiv[22] and EUfeeds,[23] which the EDC staff distributes to relevant target groups.

5.4.   Social media examples of Best Practices.

EDC staff have also participated in training courses organized by the European Commission and also national representations to enable them to use Social Media in their everyday work.

According to the results of a survey, EDCs use Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn, and Flickr to communicate with target users and to share images and photos. They also blog, podcast, use Del.icio.us for social bookmarks, as well as wikis, and Myspace.[24] The same survey for EDC staff also asked the following questions:

Why is it important for the EDC to embrace social media?[25]

Today, social media has become a significant means of communication, especially among our primary target audience – young people:

- To raise awareness of the existence, objectives and activities of the Centre,

- To enhance engagement and an interactive approach,

- To raise interest in European issues, events, programmes and policy-making,

- To develop a closer connection between the EU and society,

- To raise awareness of new/important information sources and initiatives.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Independent company providing news across the EU States: www.euractiv.com/en.

[23] European journalism Centre: www.eufeeds.eu.

[24] Source: European Documentation Centres (2013).

[25] Ibid.

What are the elements which contribute to the successful use of social media?[26]

- Visual: publish pictures to report on EDC events, tagging the people involved.

- People: identify the people taking part in EDC events by mentioning them in posts.

- Collaboration: encourage collaboration between other EDCs in the region/country, creating common social media platforms.

- Frequency: establish a daily/weekly update of your social media network, making efficient use of the available human resources.

- Interactivity: develop a dynamic and interactive approach in order to attract more followers – encourage and facilitate responses.

- Creativity: be proactive and creative when producing posts: it is important to establish a differentiating identity.

- EDC identity either as part of wider parent library or institution or part of the wider EDC network.

How does the use of social media work for the EDC?[27]

- Think about and decide why your EDC is going to launch social media initiatives – what are your objectives.
- Decide who will be responsible – the message must reflect the central objectives of your EDC or parent institution.
- Decide on the resources/staff to be allocated.
- Decide on the evaluation methods.

Overview of good practices from EDCs[28]

The following good practices illustrate how EDCs are using social media which have proved the most popular within the network for Facebook and Twitter:

i. The University of Cyprus was facing a challenge to find ways to inform people of its existence and about the EU information and documents available; a Facebook account was created.

ii. The European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, launched its own Facebook page focusing on local news about both the library and the EDC.

iii. The EDC of CEU San Pablo University, Spain, created a Facebook account in order to provide a new channel of communication with its regular users.

iv. The EDC of CEU San Pablo University also created a Twitter account to establish a new channel of communication with its regular users.

v. EDC Francisco de Vittoria University, Spain, created an EDC social networking tool called Smart Info. By using Facebook, a Blog and Twitter the Centre provides EU information to young people.

vi. The EDC Fundacion Centro de Documentacion e Informacion Europea de Extremadura, Spain, has a Facebook account to provide information about job vacancies, student grants, EU documents, and news about mobility issues.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] ibid

[28] ibid

vii. The EDC Wroclaw University of Economics, Poland, is using a <u>Facebook</u> account to both promote the EDC and provide information on EU-related topics, by adding posts, links and suggestions about other EU-related Facebook profiles.

viii. The Cardiff EDC, UK, launched its <u>Facebook</u> page as an experiment to further raise the profile of the Centre and its activities among students at Cardiff University and the wider world.

ix. The following good practices illustrate how EDCs are using some other social media tools:[29]

x. The University of Nicosia EDC, Cyprus, sought ways of disseminating information and news of its existence to as many people – both academics and the general public – as possible. The fastest way to do this was to implement a combination of Web 2.0 tools: <u>Twitter, Facebook and Scoop.It.</u>

xi. The EDC University de la Rioja, Spain, is making a specific selection of sources accessible to its customers. The information sources are carefully selected, subject tagged using <u>Delicious.</u> The tagged resources are organized or displayed using <u>Netvibes.</u>

xii. The EDC of the University of Piraeus library, Greece, uses the Europa <u>Portal RSS</u> service and receives announcements from the European Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Council every day.

xiii. The <u>wiki guide</u> of the network of Italian EDCs explains in simple terms EU themes and policies to young people, students and academic staff.

xiv. The EDC of the Universita Bocconi, Italy, has been successful with its <u>video</u> 'Exchange your mind', which was produced to celebrate Europe Day on 9 May 2012.

5.5. Repositories and e-journals

EDCs develop open access (OA) electronic information platforms such as e-books, e-journals and repositories of research papers on the European Union[30]. The initiatives on OA are important and highlight the libraries as central stakeholders. The new roles are described as:[31]

i. Disseminator of the work of the researchers at home institutions;

ii. Filter of information to readers within the home institution;

iii. Broadcaster of the work produced by the institutions to the stakeholders outside of it;

iv. Publisher of research through peer-review journals;

v. Creator of alerting services and search tools;

vi. Creator of virtual research environments;

vii. Developer of new business models in publication chains;

viii. Organizer of the archiving and preserving strategies for every version of a publication, e.g. pre-prints, working papers, blogs, wikis, etc;

ix. Creator and host of repositories;

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Source: European Documentation Centres (2013) and Europe Direct Network, 2011.
[31] Prosser (2008)

Generally speaking, the library can be the central establishment for the integration of research outputs into e-science and e-research.

The main advantage of a repository is that it integrates authors, various kinds of documents, subjects, organizations, and Databases: e.g. theses, Council decisions, results from consultation, scientific articles etc., into the same subjective learning space.[32] As it is obvious the benefits are multiple. Some of these initiatives are listed below:[33]

- **European Integration Online,** http://eiop.or.at/eiop/index.php/eiop. EIoP is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary e-journal in the field of European integration research.

- **European Research Papers Archive (ERPA),** http://eiop.or.at/erpa. ERPA is a common access point for the following online series in the field of European integration research.

- **EDZ ArchiDok,** http://www.archidok.eu. ArchiDok began in 2003 as a long-term European Documentation Centre (EDC) project with the following aims: archiving electronic full texts (studies, working papers, etc.) of relevant European Union bodies and institutions covering all policy areas; recording, indexing and classifying collected data; and maintaining a full text database and a search interface.

- **Archive of European Integration,** http://aei.pitt.edu/. The Archive of European Integration (AEI) is an electronic repository and archive for research materials on the topic of European integration and unification. The AEI collects two types of materials: certain independently produced research materials, and official European Union documents.

- **Italian network of European Documentation Centres (EDC): Guides of Italian European Documentation Centre network,** http://www.cdeita.it/node/53. European documentation and periodicals in various fields; a collection of e-books was created in 2011 by the Italian European Documentation Centres.

- **Spain-European Union Digital Archive,** http://repositori.uji.es/xmlui/handle/10234/25884?locale-attribute=en. Includes important documents in all formats – text, image, audio, and video – about Spain and the European Union. These are currently dispersed across the bibliographical and documentary collections in institutions that have worked and continue to work in the sphere of the European Union. It also includes scientific and academic production generated by universities – mainly from Spain – relating to the EU.

- **KETlib,** http://ketlib.lib.unipi.gr. The repository of the Greek EDCs contains material of European interest by the Greek scientific and political organizations and the EU institutions. It is freely accessible.

5.6. Information Literacy (IL)

Given that users have difficulty dealing with the copious amounts of online information, and identifying obstacles that prevent them from discovering it, many EDCs offer Information Literacy courses.

According to the survey of Terra (2009), users have difficulty using and understanding EU Information Terminology sources. Information literacy courses offer a good introduction to

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[32] Katsirikou (2015).
[33] A most complete list is on the "European Documentation Centres (2013) and Europe Direct Network (2011).

EU information access tools, including catalogues, internal and external databases, alternative reliable sources, raw data, and other sources of information.

Similar to other library's IL courses, EDCs target classes for specialized user groups, students, researchers, librarians, employees, etc. They focus is on the EDC, its services, EU information sources and databases, EU institutions, and integration. The training addresses specific topics such as the European Digital Single Market, the European law for legal practitioners, European and international security, European languages, European projects and programs, health issues, opportunities for retired people, the safe use of the Internet by students, international human rights, and job opportunities in the EU.

The courses are complemented with learning materials, teaching aids and internship programs. The EDC staff members are designated with responsibility for maintaining the skills and expertise of the users.

6.   Looking to the Future[34]

The majority of the EDCs believe that the relations between EDCs and the European Commission are weakening. A survey reveals that the existing EU information sources have declined in significance and number over recent years withal.

For these reasons, EDCs pursue further networking and cooperation, not only within their network, but also with other European Commission DGs, the agencies, the various EU entities and institutions. Emphasis is given to the other EDCs, the ECLAS- European Library and the Historical Archives.

Changes come in the role and the way of working for EDCs because of the whole changes in libraries. Some host libraries pay attention to the management of the EDCs. Staff stay up to catch the changes and remain aware and high skilled. They apply best practices, adapt services and standards to meet the needs.

EDCs continue to access to EU publications and provide assistance to search on EU information sources as the main activities. However, in future the focus will be additionally on the publishing and social media, as well as on disabled students and citizens.

Educational tasks are important for librarians: teaching electronic information, databases and publications. They combine it with the information literacy of the institutional EU. A prerequisite is the training of the trainers in collaboration with national and European hosts even using the virtual learning environments (VLEs).

The EDC network is open to wider partnerships to offer their high level of expertise on the EU and related topics and this knowledge would enable them consultants in establishing EU information sources.

EDCs are interested in creating more synergies and participating in international exchanges.

EDCs focus intently on the related policies at EU funded research and innovation projects. This access derives the potential cooperation with DG RTD in this field and the support from EDCs about the information about calls, cooperation with the National Contact Points (NCPs) and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)), including the dissemination of results of EU-funded research projects.

EDCs also are interested in strengthening their relations with the Library and e-Resources Centre and Jean Monnet Chairs. The vast majority of EDCs are interested in working together

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[34] Source: European Commission (2016) and Alleweldt (2007).

with ECLAS to create a common entry point for searching several free collections. They are also strongly interested in cooperating with the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) to create the European Commission Library catalogue. The new discovery tool e-Finder provides more options for users, and facilitates the cooperation between the library and the EDCs.

EDCs staff would be very interested in receiving more advanced and specialized training on specific databases and in depth analysis of the Commission policies. Examples: the CURIA (the Court of Justice of the European Union website) and the European Parliament Observatory, as well as the policies followed by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA).

7.   Epilogue

EDCs are a multilingual and multicultural pan-European information network providing a professional and neutral information service concerning the EU, European countries and European issues of interest to students, researchers, citizens and other stakeholders.

Primarily, EDCs serve the higher education community, but they are also available to support the wider community. In the digital era, this network is a centre of detailed knowledge on EU sources and information literacy. They can play a crucial role between the European institutions and the European citizens as an education and well-researched information resource.

The EDC staff are experts in locating information on EU sources, managing metadata, information literacy, and knowledge management. They have the necessary experience to judge reliability and accuracy of information. Investment in the professional skills of EDC managers through more training and building on human resources are both essential, especially as people in this profession tend to have a long tenure.

EDCs collaborate with the Commission in identifying and prioritizing the necessities and the management of all the issues and difficulties to optimize the services and the costs.

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Links: Last access for these and all above, July 2017

Europa: http://europa.eu/europedirect

Europe Direct: http://europa.eu/europedirect

European Commission DGs Education & culture: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/

EU Bookshop: http://publications.europa.eu/bookshop.

European Union Open Data Portal: http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data

Data Protection Officer: https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/data-protection-officer_en

Library and e-resources centre: http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/

N-Lex -National law: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/index_en