

# Communication, Facts and Democracy in the European Union: Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence FREuDe

(Knowledge Transfer)

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## Project leads

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## Abstract

FREuDe, a play with the German word “Joy” and connected to the EU Ode to Joy Anthem, aims to address the question from the perspective of future autonomous citizens, today’s children, and explore closely the ways in which information and Europe feature in their lives.

- Stimulate new forward thinking with regards the role of facts and place of regulation for securing a future democratic Europe.
- Generate new research and policy-oriented thinking about integration on the basis of informational rights and enabling informational environments across disciplines not traditionally involved in studying Europe.
- Develop new agendas for research, policy and teaching across disciplines and across stakeholder communities.

## Keywords

European Integration, children, disinformation, informational rights

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## Aims of the Third Mission activity

The aim of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence FREuDe is to explore the ways in which citizens in Europe negotiate and exercise their informational rights in a context of informational and political tribalism, disinformation and journalism under pressure. It aims further to analyse the possible ramifications for European democracy. In particular, the project focuses largely on children's informational rights as citizens of the EU as the future adult as well as decision-making and productive population in the continent. The Centre aims to run conversations with children between 6 and 16 years old and their close environments in family and school in Austria.

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## Cooperation partners outside the university sector

alumni, teaching communities and practitioners, ORF

**Cooperation partners from the scientific/research field**

Université de Sorbonne, Complutense Universidad Madrid, Stockholm University, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, University of Thessaloniki

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**Faculty**

Media Governance Research and Industries Lab at the Department of Communication

**Timeframe**

01/10/2019 - 01/07/2022

**Funding**

Jean Monnet Activities European Commission

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**Research basis**

The project is based on my extensive and long term research in European integration and communication which was supported by the distinction of the Jean Monnet Chair 2016-2019.

**Social/economic relevance**

- Provide an impetus for future oriented thinking, by researching the needs and perceptions of Europe's future autonomous citizens, young people and in particular children for factual information in and about Europe.
- Mobilise knowledges and competencies of a range of experts and especially aiming to "hear from" stakeholders which have historically been permitted least input to questions of right to accurate and comprehensive information as a civil and human right.

**Integration into academic teaching/the curriculum**

Forschungsseminar WS 2020 BACH Seminar WS2020

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**Impact**

The project is currently collecting information with regards the ways in which children in Austria are negotiating the news. It is also providing impetus among students to think and reflect on these issues as a matter of democracy. The project is at the first stages (the PI was on sick leave for several months, something recognised by the European Commission which approved an extension of the project). The international board of collaborators was working on perspectives on this question in respective countries, which would provide useful context and food for thought in reflecting on the current reality of Europe's children.

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**Transfer aspect of the activity**

The project besides its research focus aims to have an impact on Austrian and European societies and supporting them in understanding deeply the informational needs of children especially in crisis situations, such as the current pandemic, as well as provide practical pathways of regulation and policy within the context of disinformation for the strengthening of children's informational rights.

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**Future orientation & sustainability**

Not yet

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**Achievement of objectives**

These are early stages, but all activities are geared towards research and then dialogue with stakeholders, such as media communities, teachers and parents as well as organisations advocating for children, as well as will seek to engage with children as soon as covid policies allow.

**Measures to sustain this activity over the long term/expand it**

I aim to create sustainable networks of stakeholders on the matter through the creation of a policy-oriented platform.

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**Visibility**

There is a website which is currently being further developed as material is produced. The media will be approached and hopefully the university will support its visibility.

**Links/Publications**

- <https://mediagovernance.univie.ac.at/jean-monnet-centre-of-excellence-freude/>
  - Sarikakis, K., Koukou, A., & Winter, L. (2018). 'Banal' Europeanized national public spheres? Framing the Eurozone crisis in the European elite press. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 3454-3472.
  - Sarikakis, K. (2017). El public service media en la Europa de la crisis económica y política. In J. Marzal Fellici, P. López Rabadán, & J. Izquierdo Castillo (Eds.), *Los medios de comunicación públicos de proximidad en Europa. RTVV y la crisis de las televisiones públicas* (pp. 43-55). Valencia: Tirant humanidades
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