



22nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN ELECTION OFFICIALS (ACEEEO)

PLENARY SESSION II

A new phenomenon in election matters: the social media

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**“Information and communication technology and
social media in elections”**

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Debate and quality of contemporary democracies are focused on

- Financing of the electoral competition
- Behaviour of political parties
- Role of the media - use of social networks

Characteristics of the media in politics

- Develop diagnoses about the political reality
- Reflect political plurality
- Broadcast capability no candidate can reject.
- Without the media there is no politics.
- There is no direct cause between the use of the media and the electoral results.

Characteristics of the media in politics (2)

- Challenge: equity of parties and candidates in the use of the media.
- Campaigning: the media and its financing.
- Subject to political reforms, transparency and accountability to strengthen equity.
- A decade ago we were not dealing with social media and the challenges they pose for electoral processes.

Social media

- Web-based technological platforms and applications
- Means to create virtual interest communities

Characteristics

- Immediacy and real-time communication
- Users can easily produce and disseminate contents
- Accessibility
- Global projection
- Veracity (issue)

Social media - Variations

- Social networks → Facebook
- Media sharing → YouTube
- Microblogs → Twitter

Social media

Expansion

REGIONS	POPULATION (2012 EST.)	INTERNET USERS JUNE 30, 2012	% POPULATION	% WORLD USERS	FACEBOOK SEPT 30, 2012
<u>Africa</u>	1,073,380,925	167,335,676	15.6 %	7.0 %	48,262,820
<u>Asia</u>	3,922,066,987	1,076,681,059	27.5 %	44.8 %	235,989,160
<u>Europe</u>	820,918,446	518,512,109	63.2 %	21.5 %	243,230,440
<u>Arab World</u>	223,608,203	90,000,455	40.2 %	3.7 %	22,793,140
<u>North America</u>	348,280,154	273,785,413	78.6 %	11.4 %	184,177,220
<u>Latin America / Caribbean</u>	593,688,638	254,915,745	42.9 %	10.6 %	188,339,620
<u>Oceania / Australia</u>	35,903,569	24,287,919	67.6 %	1.0 %	14,614,780
WORLD TOTAL	7,017,846,922	2,405,518,376	34.3 %	100.0 %	937,407,180

DIGITAL ERA

**INFORMATION
REVOLUTION**

**INFORMATION
SOCIETY**



INTERNET

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DEBATES

STANCES

Social media

Debates

- Cyber-optimists → democratising
- Cyber-pessimists → exclusion/polarisation
- Cyber-skeptics → adjustment to status quo



Social media in the political electoral world

- They have altered the communication strategies
- The way in which politics and political campaigns are made or understood
- How electoral processes are managed

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The implementation of social media in the political-electoral field seems unlimited

FROM THE EMB'S PERSPECTIVE

- For information and guidance of electors
 - A growing practice (all EMBs in LA have internet websites)
 - Resources and capacities generated, and resistances overcome towards the use of social media.
 - Ease access to updated information
- For campaigning
 - They represent a complementary and increasingly important tool.
 - They tune with the signals of our time,
 - They approach to and can even get to “connect” with sectors (youth, mainly)
 - They can revitalise the interest and participation in politics and elections

FROM THE EMB'S PERSPECTIVE

But.....

- They can transgress legal regulations that were conceived or adopted to control campaigns

Two questions to address.....

- are restrictions conceived for other media or campaigning applicable to them?
- should they be the object of specific regulations?

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FROM THE EMB'S PERSPECTIVE

- We can argue that there are no generally valid or overarching answers
- The most effective solution is always the one that turns out to be suitable with each context's conditions, requirements and demands.
- Identify the problem and assess the available resources.

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Regulation?..... If yes

- To build the appropriate agreements and consensuses.

Anyway, for any answer or design

- Some key points to consider:
 - Access to information is not the product of explicit consent or deliberate search
 - Restrictions in terms of periodicity and content of the advertising materials be applied
 - Powers, capabilities and resources to assure their enforcement