



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA:
BE THERE WHERE THE CITIZENS ARE

Firmly stamping its presence on social media presents an enormous challenge for the European Parliament. It is not as if there is one single Twitter account or Facebook page, as with many brands or organizations. In reality, there are **more than one hundred social media accounts related to the European Parliament**. In this case study we will have a look at precisely how the EP has overcome a myriad of obstacles.

First, let us give you an introduction to what the European Parliament is and how it works.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament (EP) is the only democratically elected EU institution. It consists of [766 members](#) (the MEPs: Members of Parliament) that are elected in the 28 member states of the European Union. The EP exercises the **legislative function of the EU**, acting alongside the Council and the European Commission arms. The Parliament has [20 Standing Committees](#) that each consist of 28 to 86 MEPs. In addition to the MEPs, there are about **6,000 people working for the EP and these are the ones directly involved in the EP's social media management**. The EP is based in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, but has information offices in all 28 member states.



ON WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IS THE EP ACTIVE?

The EP is fully aware of the possibilities that social media offers and they are not afraid to extend their [presence on many different platforms](#). Its strategic aim is to **“be where the citizens are”**. Here is an overview of its primary social media accounts:

CASE GOVERNMENTS



[Newshub](#) is a tool the EP developed themselves to combine **all (social) news streams** related to the EP.



The EP considers [Facebook](#) the flagship of their social media presence. They mainly use it to animate a community of more than 1.2 million fans and share information about decisions, debates and other events in a visually appealing way that caters to their younger followers. **Info-tainment** is essential on Facebook.



On [Twitter](#), the EP brings **real-time news**, with for example continuous updates during the plenary and committee meetings.



The EP uses [LinkedIn](#) for **in-depth discussions** about the EU policymaking.



An in-house photographer reports on all of the important EP events via their [Flickr](#) account. The same photographer enjoys playing around with filters on the EP [Instagram](#) account.



The EP is even present on [Foursquare](#). Individuals can access all EU locations and follow their top lists, such as [EU capitals of culture](#), [Discover Europe](#) or [Building the EU: the main treaties](#).



The EP shares news videos on its [YouTube](#) channel.



The EP is present on [Pinterest](#) with a wide variety of visual content such as infographics, pictures from events or #wish4eu pictures.

The EP also runs accounts on Spotify for policy related playlists and a Google+ account.

FUN FACT



Fun fact—In a way, it was US President Obama’s first election campaign in 2008 that [inspired](#) the European Parliament to start with social media. They kicked off their MySpace and Facebook account in 2009.

HOW DOES THE EP HANDLE THIS IMMENSE VOLUME OF MESSAGES?

The social media accounts we just listed are only the general EP accounts. There are many accounts that are more specific as well as accounts by individual EU member states. The EP’s social media officers keep a close eye on all of them, following up on their performance, growth and top conversations. Which immediately raises the question, “How do they bring this about?”

Since 2012, the EP has relied on Engagor to handle the huge volume of social media messages related to the EP, the MEPs, standing committees, the EP President, the European elections and an ever-changing selection of legislative topics.

A huge strong point in favor of Engagor is its ability to handle such massive amounts of data. All messages still roll into Engagor in real-time and generate all analytics instantly, without any delays. This is a critical requirement for the EP.

EP COMMUNITY MANAGERS IN ALL MEMBER STATES

In the context of the Share Europe Online Project led by the European Commission, **community managers** joined EP information offices in the different EU member states. They train local staff and help manage social accounts, using Engagor to build strong national communities on the social web.

TIP

Bring your reports back to basics. Choose only a few metrics that really matter to your audience.

CUSTOM REPORTS THAT PERFECTLY FIT THEIR NEEDS

One of the most important functions for which the EP relies upon Engagor is the follow-up of online conversations and the creation of reports to share with the social media officers and higher management in the different member states.

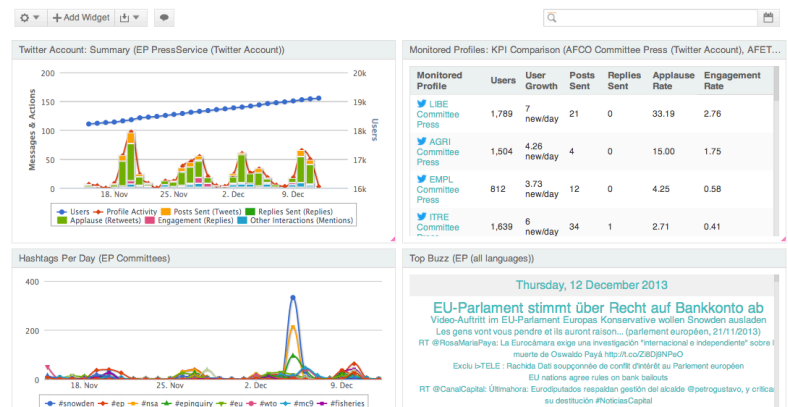
Reports for member states

Social media officers in all of the different member states are keenly interested in **how they are performing on their different social channels**. The speed at which they are growing, which content works best and similar metrics are especially useful.

Reports for higher management

Managers on the other hand tend to be under great stress and do not have time for detailed analytics. They need a **snapshot** of what is going on with the EP on social media; that is, the figures and elements of the public debate taking place on the social web.

Apart from the social media officers in the different member states, there are several other parties intensely interested in the EP's social media activities. They use the **Engagor custom dashboards** that are filled with the metrics and social media conversations that specifically matter to them.



The European Parliament has established a secure and important social media presence, being there where their audience is. Unlike many brands that focus solely on Twitter and Facebook, the EP is also digging into Instagram, Foursquare, Pinterest and any other platform that can help it do its job better for all of us! Social media management at the EP is a challenging task but they are clearly pulling it off!

It is refreshing to see how such a huge institution as the EP contributes to the democratic process as it keeps up with the times. It is easy to understand why it is recognized as one of the leading actors on social media worldwide.