MP OPEN CALL
RESEARCH PACKAGE

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Mercator European Dialogue

Package 1: Protests and counter-movements

As Virus Surges, Resistance also Grows in Europe | The New York Times

As infection numbers rise, stricter counter measures begin to resemble those of the spring period. Entire countries are still partially recovering from the economic, emotional, and physical toll of nationwide lockdowns, and governments are finding that the public might not be so compliant with restrictions this time around. The New York Times gives here an overview of the different crisis reactions in European countries. This smart insight, matched with a source such as the COSMO Covid-19 Snapshot Monitor, where German institutions observe the emerging psychological environment and populations' perception of the corona pandemic, makes for a good overview of national policies and public support for them.

The Global Rise of Anti-Lockdown Protests—and what to do about it | World Politics Review

As second rounds of restrictions are announced (here an overview of the current measures in Europe), lockdowns have become the latest symbol of broader conversations about the alignment of citizens' needs with government action. As it is generally recognized that popular protests are on the rise, as the Carnegie's protest tracker confirms, the World Politics Review addresses the diversity of the movements, the various strains and the way in which governments can spend more energy reassuring their citizens.

Lockdown Protests: not just "Pandemic Fatigue" | The Guardian

The tendency to use pandemic fatigue as an umbrella term covering a diverse set of trends and rationales creates the risk of overlooking particularities and addressing discontent with inadequate policies. It may be worth considering that resistance against public health policies may be just one symptom of people trying to deal with paradigmatic shifts in our societal priorities, an epochal struggle of transition.

Package 2: Communicating crisis

Pandemic Fatigue. Reinvigorating the Public | WHO

As member states report growing signs of pandemic fatigue in their populations, the WHO provides a tool for behavioral insights on COVID-19 and a framework for the planning and implementation of national strategies to sustain public support in the prevention of Covid-19. The document, besides providing a definition and explanation of the expression "pandemic fatigue", offers key strategies, communication principles, and lists concrete actions for managing the crisis while keeping the populations' commitment to the shared effort intact. It seems that **Europe must go beyond science to survive the Covid crisis**, as this additional Guardian article suggests.

5 Ways to Manage a Crisis According to McKinsey | McKinsey

The GMF already reported on Europe's differing leadership styles in the Coronavirus crisis, highlighting how the crisis has put leaders to the test. Personal style and political culture seem produce crucially different strategies: While Angela Merkel stated that the virus punishes half-heartedness, Nicola Sturgeon took decisive action in Scotland and Boris Johnson changed course several times in the course of the crisis. It is important in these comparisons to see how each approach employs meaning-making, a fundamental element for effective communication. As this is not an easy art to master, especially in times of crisis, McKinsey experts provide a framework and consideration on how to refine leadership in a crisis context.

Psychology of a Crisis | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Understanding the psychology of a crisis is key when shaping a communication strategy. Many are the elements that play a role, the ways in which people process information and the resulting behaviors. The US Department of Health and Human Service produced a comprehensive overview of these processes in order to help policymakers better understand them. It offers a theoretical framework of how a crisis develops in people's perception: as no crisis is totally identic to another, ISENTIA's contribution on **the 3 pillars of effective communication during Codiv-19** can help complete the picture.

Package 3: Engaging citizens with inclusive practices

Civil Participation in Decision-Making: a CoE Toolkit | Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance created a toolkit aimed at providing an integrated framework to guide authorities and practitioners in the design and implementation of context-based strategies to boost civil participation, especially in times of uncertainty and crises. This goes hand in hand with the Council of Europe's permanent efforts to safeguard and give new life to democratic participation, reflected in its 12 principles and tools of good governance. The toolkit is a rich source of inspiration and strategies for engaging citizens in decision-making processes.

Citizen Science in a Pandemic: A Fleeting Moment or New Normal? | Cambridge University

As media coverage of the pandemic entered private houses and science talk people's everyday lives, analyses of citizen science have emerged to better understand how populations can be involved in educational and scientific projects: a hybrid citizen-science engagement approach has proven to be very fruitful and successful in promoting citizens engagement in new and surprising fields which are crucial for future societies. The University of Cambridge's Center for Humanities and Social Change has prepared an interesting article to reflect on the question of whether this is just a pandemic trend or can be made a new normal in citizen engagement. The article also offers a compilation of ongoing citizen science initiatives

Bringing People Together with Europe Talks| Europe Talks

Renovating political engagement is fundamental to maintain cohesion in our societies and it is especially crucial to blueprint solutions to **support civil society during the Covid-19 pandemic**, both in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Europe Talks is a European initiative that aims at offering an open space for citizens to discuss pressing issues and share ideas for the future of

the 'old continent'. The 2020 edition of the program takes place online and aims to activate synergies with similar initiatives, such as Pulse of Europe, to overcome divisions and promote dialogue

Package 4: Best practices in pandemic management

The Need for Preparedness at All Levels: Observations of the Pandemic Response | National Academy of Public Administration

The NAPA reflects on the concepts of preparedness and responsibility and touches upon the question of planning and practice development. How is it possible to draft frameworks both for current and future emergencies? Here, the Academy offers its initial observations of pandemic responses.

Innovative Covid-19 Response Tracker | OECD

The OECD created the Innovative Covid-19 Response Tracker within the scope of the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) to explore and compare new thought lines on impact absorption and innovative policy initiatives worldwide to help society cope with disruption and the unexpected.

Package 5: MED resources

Truth or Tale? Fact-Checking, Disinformation, and Fake News in European and National Election Campaigns | Mercator European Dialogue

The Mercator European Dialogue has long-standing experience in treating issue of fake news, which is crucial for the activity of our members and for democratic political life at large. Last year, the MED team held a workshop on the matter. Some of the takeaways are still valid to this day, while others have acquired different nuances in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While at the time, fake news was perceived to be less urgent compared to other threats, this is not the case anymore. The question becomes more pressing as misinformation is mixed with disinformation and retroactive fact-checking strategies falter. The MED publication *Truth or Tale* explores MPs' shared perceptions of the challenge at hand, and offers a comprehensive overview of initiatives, frameworks, and studies on the matter of fake news, as well as counterstrategies.

Is European Politics Polarizing - and if so, what does that Mean for the Democratic Process? | APROPOS

The issue of fake news is strongly related to that of polarization and its effects on democratic processes. APROPOS' article explains how polarization is making policymaking increasingly difficult as it prohibits compromise and undermines the role evidence in the political debate. It also provides an overview of the state of polarization in European parliaments.