



The European Union on Twitter, one year after Brexit

When it comes to the European Union, negative emotions, predominantly “fear,” prevail in tweets about Europe.

A Europe that seems united despite Brexit but citizens unafraid to hold back intense, mostly negative emotions, especially *fear*. This is the picture that emerges from Expert System’s latest social media analysis one year since the historical referendum vote that sanctioned Britain’s exit from the European Union (Brexit, June 23, 2016). The **analysis was conducted on Twitter using the cognitive Cogito technology** to analyze a sample of approximately **160,000 tweets** in **English, Italian, French, German** and **Spanish** related to **Europe** (more than 65,000 tweets for #EU, #Europe, etc.) and **Brexit** (more than 95,000 tweets for #brexit, #No2EU, #Remain, etc.) posted between May 21 - June 21, 2017.

The personal dimension in Europe

After the European Union and Brexit, when referencing Europe, we have the *world* and *people*, which are most often associated with personal references and interests (*our, your, my, life, travel*). *Work* and *money* were more frequently discussed over topics related to *politics, leadership* and *government* (business, work, job, money; politics, government, lead, leader).

The *economy* was discussed with the same frequency as *science* and *technology*. Topics such as *culture* and *food* were not ignored, and a lot of attention was focused on current events where *today* and *attack*, etc. were among the words most often used on Twitter; the *Manchester terror attack* and *Ariana Grande* were also frequently mentioned, as well as the recent episode in *Paris* on the *Champs Elysées*).



FIGURE 1 Words most frequently used on Twitter in reference to European Union

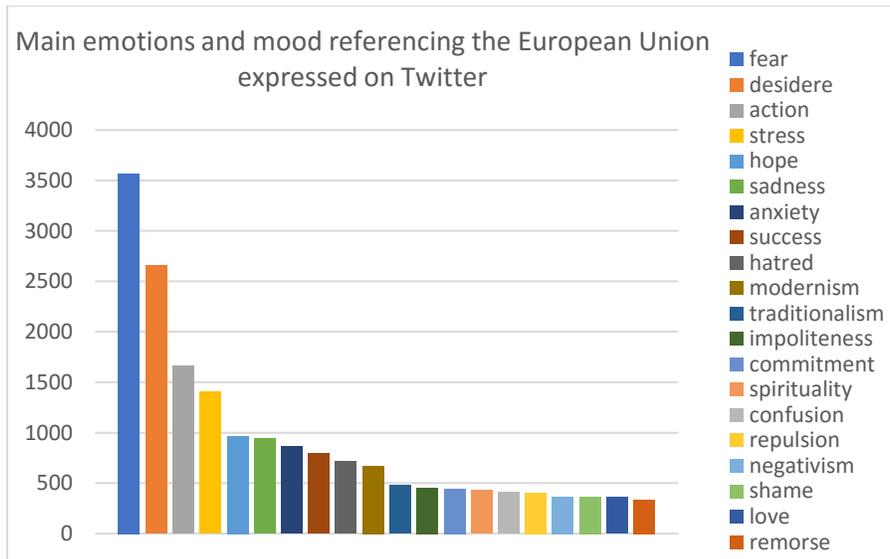
European rights, according to Twitter

Dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights and justice: These are the themes enshrined in the European Union’s Charter of Fundamental Rights. *Are citizens talking about these themes online? And are citizens from Italy, France, Germany and Spain talking about the same topics?*

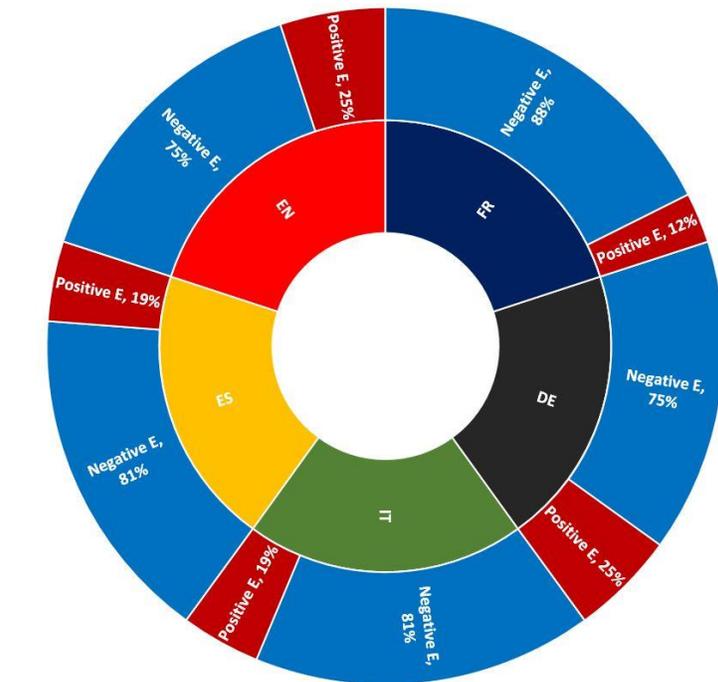
The Expert System analysis highlighted the prevailing themes in the tweets in each language. Tweets in Italian talked about “rights” for European Union citizens, with a focus on **citizenship**, which was also prevalent in Spanish tweets, where **justice** was also frequently cited. **Justice** was more frequently cited in tweets in French, while tweets in German centered on **dignity** and **solidarity**. Finally, tweets in English referencing the European Union talked about all of the rights of EU citizens with the notable presence of **freedom**.



The analysis revealed a need for more **energy (action)**, and, in an atmosphere that seems to be dominated by a general sense of stress, the tweets also showed many contrasts: **modernism** and **traditionalism**, **hope** and **remorse**, **hatred** and **love**.

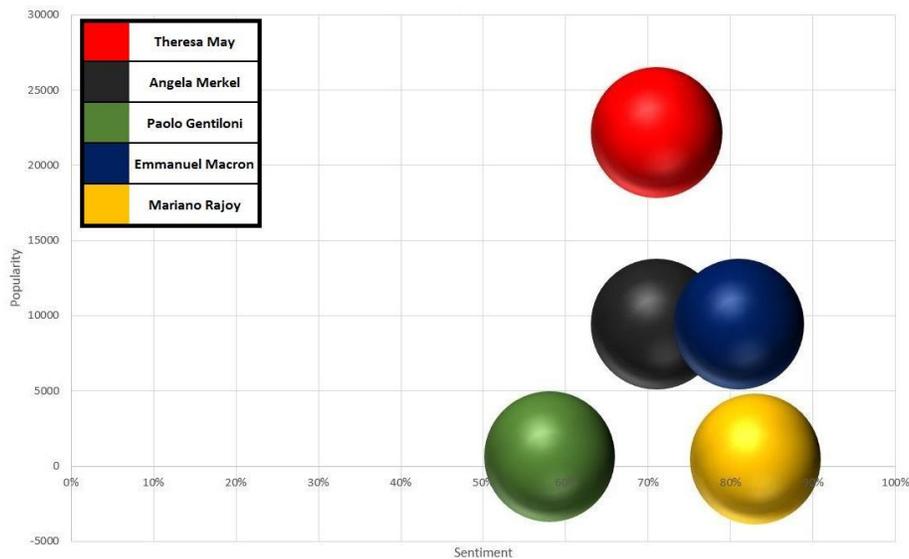


Comparing the **negative** and **positive emotions** expressed in tweets in each language, sentiment was mostly negative in each language. In **Italian, French** and **English** tweets, **fear** and **desire** prevailed, compared to **desire** in **German** tweets and **fear** and **sadness** in **Spanish** tweets.



What is the sentiment about politicians in EU and Brexit tweets?

Considering the global nature of the tweets analyzed (more than 1600.000 tweets referencing the European Union and Brexit), the central position of United Kingdom politicians is noteworthy, primarily Theresa May, who garnered positive sentiment. Italy’s Paolo Gentiloni was less popular in the tweets, with neutral sentiment and Spain’s Mariano Rajoy, who also was infrequently mentioned, was associated with positive sentiment. Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron were equals in both popularity and positive sentiment.



Expert System created Cogito, a text analytics technology that transforms the way organizations find, comprehend and use information. Cogito leverages proprietary artificial intelligence algorithms to deliver business value and ROI by extracting actionable knowledge from internal and external information and automating business processes. Cogito has been deployed to serve enterprises and government organizations in some of the world’s largest industries (Banking and Insurance, Pharmaceuticals, Oil and Gas, Publishing and Government).

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