



Campaign for EP election in Lithuania “Don't be a couch potato”

Client: European Parliament Liaison Office in Lithuania

Agency: “Fabula Hill+Knowlton Strategies”

Timeframe: April-May, 2019.

- **Project's background**

According to Eurobarometer data, Lithuanians are among leaders in EU to regards of knowledge about EP and European Union (EU). Majority of them are in favor of EU membership. However, the benefits of opportunities are perceived narrowly – financial aid, borderless travel, work abroad. This lack of broader perception of what Parliament does create a psychological distance between the people and institution (EP). Thus, voters are less likely to engage in elections and vote. The main problem is low participation rate among youth, opinion leaders, professionals. Despite general interest in EU, EP and Lithuania's wealth this target group is quite passive voters. Causes vary from “being too busy” to “other technical issues”. It is also important to mention that during the campaign period (first half year of 2019) 3 elections in Lithuania were happening (municipality councils and mayors, Presidential elections and EP elections). So, one of the issues was how not to get lost in other elections communication and grab target audience attention with EU topics.

- **Impact of the project**

Chosen strategy and bold message let us grab target audience attention in social networks (main campaign channels), media attention and even spread the message abroad (we even got request from House of European History to exhibit main our campaign symbol in the museum in Belgium). Overall voter turnout in EP election was 47.35% in 2015 and 53.39% in 2019. All campaign's target audiences voted more actively than in 2015 EP election.

- **Communication objectives**

The objectives of the campaign were: 1) attractive and engaging communication of EP activities, reasons to vote, benefits of EU membership using social media platforms; 2) increase perception EU *is not a given* and our involvement determines our and EU future; 3) Draw audience's attention to the importance of participation in elections and encourage to vote in the upcoming EP elections.

- **Target audience**

Main target audience – 25-39 y. o., undergraduates, opinion leaders, young professionals (IT specialists, medical workers, lawyers, architectures, managers, entrepreneurs), executives (mid-high positions) other socially active professionals – teachers, lecturers, interested in politics, satisfied with quality of life in

Lithuania and its membership in EU but still passive in participation in EP elections. Secondary target audience – 18-24 y. o., active youth, students, living in major cities of Lithuania.

- **Strategy**

Tight communication context (because of three elections going on), interests of the target audience (TA), and experience of previous EP elections encouraged us to concentrate on the main campaign goal – to increase TA participation in EP elections in Lithuania. It was chosen not to create separate campaign platform but use the channels where our audience already is. Thus, influencers, Facebook event, Instagram account, popular video/TV shows were chosen to deliver the message in different ways. The term couch potato is well known by TA and not much liked. So, we took this term as central creative idea as it raises the charms from the mode of life environment to the political field. The term is sharp but it does not offend a specific person, but a system of values, or, rather, it's absence. The main message was - "stop being couch potato" (LT: "Pakelk savo bulvę nuo sofos"). Campaign symbol: real sofa with a huge potato on it.

- **Communication actions plan**

Campaign was structured into two main stages:

1. Awareness of EP/EU:
 - a. Facebook event "[Šį kartą balsuosiu – Rinkimai į Europos Parlamentą](#)" launch and communication using well-known internet character "Hold the pain Harold" and potato reminding main EP functions and decisions that changes our everyday life).
 - b. Long-reads by influencers about their experience of EU membership, benefits/actions by EP (12 different influencers);
 - c. Integrations in popular video/TV show "Laikykitės Ten su Andriumi Tapinu": special overview of recent EP actions and other related EP content, questions for interview participants (9 shows)
 - d. Topic integration in a popular among target audience internet talk show "Kitokie Pasikalbėjimai": questions for interview participants, ads on the stage (4 shows; views of one show – 160k-350k)
2. Call to action – go to vote:
 - a. Facebook event "[Šį kartą balsuosiu – Rinkimai į Europos Parlamentą](#)" launch and communication using well-known internet character "Hold the pain Harold" and potato (reminding why it is important to vote in an easy and a bit ironic tone).
 - b. Installation of the main campaign symbol – potato on the couch – in Vilnius city center (Kudirkos square) two days before election day reminding that EP elections are coming and inviting passersby to try to lift the potato from the couch and make a photo to their social networks with campaign hashtag (#sikartabalsuosiu / #thistimelamvoting)
 - c. Digital banners campaign on GDN using different messages by the types of browsing: shopping – shoes and clothes will wait – Europe will not - got to vote; searching for film: it is easier to choose EP than a film etc (planned audience reach – 1 574 000)
 - d. Influencers communication on May 25-26th – invitation not to be couch potatoes and go to vote in EP elections.

Additional activities: radio clip inviting not to be a couch potato and go to vote; participation in TV morning show "Labas rytas, Lietuva" presenting the campaign; integration in public event "mES - 15 metų šeima" (European Day celebration in Vilnius) with real couch and potato, inviting people to raise the potato, take a picture and they in their own social media channels that this time they are voting.

- **Results**

Audience reached through digital advertising: 2521877. Total audience reached through influencer communication: 290 324. Number of views in partner's communication channels: 2 070 230. Taking into consideration the potential overlap between channels, the total audience reach across channels is estimated to be over 2.5 million. Overall voter turnout in EP election was 47.35% in 2015 and 53.39% in 2019. All campaign's target audiences voted more actively than in 2015 EP election.

Campaign message was grabbed not only by target audience, but also by national media (main campaign symbol – potato – was invited to morning show “Labas rytas, Lietuva” and several additional events).

Moreover, we even got request from House of European History to exhibit main symbol of our campaign (potato on the couch) in the museum in Belgium) and were invited to present the campaign in International digital communication conference.

