



DFA Communicating Europe Initiative Report by DCU Brexit Institute


December 8, 2020

In September 2020 the DCU Brexit Institute was awarded €6000 by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFA) under the Communicating Europe Initiative (CEI).

The funding was given in support of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) called “The European Union: Crisis and Recovery.” The MOOC was produced by the DCU Brexit Institute in cooperation with its partners in the EU-funded Jean Monnet Network BRIDGE. While the actual production of the course was paid for out of the EU funding, the entire grant from the DFA-CEI was put towards a marketing campaign to publicize the MOOC.

With the funds from the DFA-CEI, the DCU Brexit Institute, under the guidance of the National Institute for Digital Learning at DCU, relied on an external marketing agency, Havas Media, to carry out a social media marketing campaign (see attached documents Brexit Institute Invoice Havas Media and Brexit Institute PO receipt). The marketing campaign advertised the MOOC on Facebook and LinkedIn for four weeks, from 29 September to 25 October 2020 and was a success (see attached document Brexit Institute MOOC presentation from Havas Media). Together the two marketing initiatives led to over 298,000 views of the MOOC with a click-through rate of 0.74. This is a good performance, well above the social media benchmark of 0.5.





The funding from the DFA / CEI proved instrumental for the success of the MOOC. The course was launched on 5 October 2020 on the FutureLearn platform, and has as of 8 December 2020 reached a number of enrollees of over 1750 and counting. FutureLearn has now extended the run of the MOOC until the end of January 2021, and so the number of enrollees will continue to grow.

Most important, the course has proven to be very popular with learners, as revealed in the detailed course statistics, which analyse data as of 30 November 2020 (see attached document, Brexit Institute MOOC Statistics) The MOOC experienced a 86% positive learner sentiment, and 30% of learners are engaged learners (i.e. those leaving comments), which is comparatively high. The course has a rating of 4.6 stars out of 5 on FutureLearn, based on verified learner reviews.

The statistics of the MOOC, which the DCU Brexit Institute collected with the support of the National Institute for Digital Learning and FutureLearn, also reveal information about the people enrolled in the course. The demographic profile of the learners (those who filled in the pre-course survey) indicates a diverse cross-section of society with respect to age, gender and employment status. The course has reached learners in dozens of countries in Europe and around the world. The top five countries by learners' location are the UK, Ireland, India, Turkey and Italy. Ireland has the second-highest number of learners, with 15% (compared to 1% of Irish enrollees in the average FutureLearn course), which does not include a number of enrollees who indicated in the course comments they they are Irish currently living abroad.

All in all, therefore, the support of the DFA / CEI – which also very helpfully publicized the course through its own network, spreading the word via its embassies throughout Europe – was essential to secure the success of the MOOC, and we trust this innovative digital instrument provided a particularly valuable way to communicate Europe to a large audience at a time when, due to the pandemic, face-to-face interactions have been drastically reduced.