

# **Innovation and Diplomacy in Modern Europe**

---

**Edited by**  
**Andreas Fickers and Pascal Griset**

**Volume 1**

# **History of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

---

Transnational techno-diplomacy from the  
telegraph to the Internet

Edited by  
Gabriele Balbi and Andreas Fickers

**DE GRUYTER**  
**OLDENBOURG**

**ISBN 978-3-11-066960-2**  
**e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11066970-1**  
**e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-066977-0**  
**ISSN 2629-5059**

**Library of Congress Control Number: 2020932544**

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**  
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;  
detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2020 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston  
Cover image: Drawing of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary  
Conference held in Geneva in 1959; Reproduced with the kind permission of ITU  
Druck und Bindung: CPI books GmbH, Leck

[www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com)



# **Table of Contents**

Gabriele Balbi and Andreas Fickers

**Introduction: The ITU as Actor, Arena, and Antenna of Techno-Diplomacy — 1**

## **Part I ITU as a Global Actor in the History of Telecommunications**

Marsha Siefert

**1 The Russian Empire and the International Telegraph Union, 1856 – 1875 — 15**

Andrea Giuntini

**2 ITU, Submarine Cables and African Colonies, 1850s – 1900s — 37**

Richard R. John

**3 When Techno-Diplomacy Failed: Walter S. Rogers, the Universal Electrical Communications Union, and the Limitations of the International Telegraph Union as a Global Actor in the 1920s — 55**

Christiane Berth

**4 ITU, the Development Debate, and Technical Cooperation in the Global South, 1950 – 1992 — 77**

Gianluigi Negro

**5 The Rising Role of China in the Promotion of Multilateral Internet Governance, 1994 – 2014 — 107**

Dwayne Winseck

**6 Is the International Telecommunication Union Still Relevant in “the Internet Age?” Lessons From the 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) — 135**

## Part II ITU as an Arena of Techno-Diplomatic Negotiations for Emerging Technologies

Simone Fari

- 7      **Telegraphic Diplomacy From the Origins to the Formative Years of the ITU, 1849–1875** — 169

Maria Rikitianskaia

- 8      **The International Radiotelegraph Union Over the Course of World War I, 1912–1927** — 191

Christian Henrich-Franke and Léonard Laborie

- 9      **Technology Taking Over Diplomacy? The ‘Comité Consultatif International (for) Fernschreiben’ (CCIF) and Its Relationship to the ITU in the Early History of Telephone Standardization, 1923–1947** — 215

Heidi Tworek

- 10     **A Union of Nations or Administrations? Voting Rights, Representation, and Sovereignty at the International Telecommunication Union in the 1930s** — 243

Anne-Katrin Weber, Roxane Gray, Marie Sandoz, with the collaboration of Adrian Stecher

- 11     **ITU Exhibitions in Switzerland: Displaying the “Big Family of Telecommunications,” 1960s–1970s** — 265

Nina Wormbs and Lisa Ruth Rand

- 12     **Techno-Diplomacy of the Planetary Periphery, 1960s–1970s** — 297

Valérie Schafer

- 13     **The ITU Facing the Emergence of the Internet, 1960s–Early 2000s** — 321

**Index — 345**