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ROLE OF EUROPEAN MOBILITY AND ITS IMPACTS
IN NARRATIVES, DEBATES AND EU REFORMS

Comparative report on cross-country media practices, migration, and mobility

REPORT

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Comparative report on cross-country media practices,

migration, and mobility (D11.3)

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Executive summary

This is the last in a series of three papers looking at the practices of media in the reporting of migration and intra-EU mobility in a set of EU member states – Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Our analysis compares national traditions in the practice of journalism across our sample countries, looking at journalists' (and their sources') self-described practices in generating stories about the various forms of migration, the newsroom and professional cultures in which they are immersed, and the broader environments in which journalism happens.

In **Section 1** we identify that migration policy is highly politicised in all of the sampled countries. We show differing levels of political intervention in the reporting of migration, and three broad types of political interaction between government and news journalists in the sampled countries, which create a spectrum of government-media relationships ranging from the strongly and obviously controlling; to influence that may be strongly felt, but that is subtler and which occurs behind-the-scenes; to the largely hands-off.

In **Section 2** we then corroborate this categorisation by synthesising the evidence collected for the previous two deliverables (D11.1 and 11.2) from interviews with journalists and key media sources from two distinct groups of countries – those from media based in the EU15 (which was reported in D11.1) and those from EU member states that joined the union in or after 2004 (D11.2).

These data suggest that direct government interventions on migration reporting mean that the relationship between government and media in Hungary and Poland is relatively direct. In Italy, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, and among certain newspapers in the UK, migration-related media content is more likely to be affected by behind-the-scenes and sometimes two-way relationships between senior media figures and influential individuals (often from, or connected to, government). In Germany and Sweden, and among UK elite publications and non-newspaper outlets, there was little evidence of efforts by government to exert direct influence.

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In **Section 3** we compare the approaches to journalism and the issue of migration among the journalists in the different sampled countries. This shows that journalists across the sampled countries broadly feel proud of their positions, feel that they play an important role in the political lives of their countries, and feel respected by those whose opinions matter to them – though Spain, where the media industry is facing significant economic problems, is a notable outlier here. Importantly, there is some evidence here that 'legacy' media such as newspapers and TV (as opposed to 'new media' which is primarily online) still has a slight reputational advantage – at least in the minds of the journalists themselves.

This section also shows that migration narratives differ by country depending on recent migration experiences and the political salience of key aspects of migration. In most of the countries surveyed, the actual migrant stock was not a major factor shaping migration coverage (though in the UK this was raised as an issue by journalists). The issue of refugees and asylum seekers was the dominant issue in almost all countries with the exception of the UK, and non-EU migration that was not related to asylum or irregular migration was notably irrelevant for most of the journalists surveyed in all countries. Intra-EU mobility was an area of only marginal interest in most countries with the exception of the UK, Poland and Romania.

In **Section 4** we consider how the relationships between government approaches to media, commercial contexts, the national norms and traditions within journalism in the member states and migration as an issue combine to affect journalism practice, and wider public debates about migration.

Our analysis in **Section 5** suggests that entrenched political and cultural media practices, coupled with rapid change and concerns about institutional failure (at an EU or national level) may be stronger determinants of news coverage than "hard facts" related to migration incidence, impacts or policy in a given country.

We close the paper with reflections on how to mitigate such effects and to support level-headed and evidence-based reporting.

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Introduction

This report draws together and discusses the findings of the REMINDER project's Media Practices research (REMINDER work package 11). In particular, it considers the implications of these findings for wider public debates about migration while raising broader questions about the role and responsibilities of a free press and the relationship between media and democracy.

Work package 11 of the REMINDER project is an analysis of media practices, and the factors that shape them, in the reporting of migration and intra-EU mobility in 9 EU member states. It is part of the 'perceptions' pillar of the REMINDER project, looking into public discourses related to migration and intra-EU mobility.

Specifically, the work package was designed to develop a clearer understanding of the political, commercial, institutional, practical, and technical factors that affect news production and shape media narratives and frames around EU mobility and Third-Country Nationals in different EU countries.

The findings of work package 11 should, eventually, be considered alongside the findings of work packages 8-10 which look at media content and public attitudes, thus helping to develop a picture of the relationships between the practice of journalism, the content of media, public attitudes and policy outcomes. This overall approach of the REMINDER project (interviews with journalists compared to media content generated by their outlets) builds on methodological ideas suggested by Bruggemann (2014) to measure journalistic frame-building practices – the mechanisms and processes which contribute to the framing of issues in public debate.

The work package is built around a series of semi-structured interviews with 221 media practitioners and sources in the project's core eight Member States, designed to analyse if, and how, differences in the cultures, objectives, and pressures in different news-generating and news-producing environments in EU countries affect the choices of news items reported, and narratives generated, about the subject of migration and intra-EU mobility.

The countries chosen represent an economic, geographical and cultural cross-section of the EU: Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Work package 11 also added one further new EU Member State – Slovenia – to the analysis after undertaking a pilot project there, which provided suitable and interesting data. Interviews were supplemented by a written questionnaire. Initial findings from these interviews were compiled and published as (deliverables 11.1 and 11.2).

This report (deliverable 11.3) uses the content and analysis from those two initial deliverables and considers what they tell us about:

- The practice of journalism in the European Union;
- The nature of migration as a media issue within different EU contexts;
- The relationships between media practices and the political contexts in which they occur;
- The potential implications of different media practices for democratic decision-making in the countries where they occur.

These issues are all highly salient in an era when the weaponization of information and narrative for political and geopolitical ends has become a significant international concern (Allenby 2016). There is, of course, nothing new in geopolitical issues being played-out through both explicit propaganda campaigns and more subtle efforts to influence media. However, the current role of international migration as a major media story and a potentially destabilising area of policy concern in multiple EU member states – including, but by no means limited to, the UK, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Hungary – merits a deeper look at the factors that shape the stories about the issue.

This report

An idealised – if contested – conception of news media in contemporary democratic societies is that they play a key role in informing the public of local, national and global developments, holding those in power to account and raising and investigating issues that affect and concern citizens.

However, in reality, media and their relationship with democracy are more complex. First, there is deep scepticism about the idealised conception of media outlined above and the extent to which we can realistically expect a world of perfect 'informed citizens' who consume media carefully to make clear political decisions (Ytre-Arne and Moe 2018). Second, as

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clearly illustrated in REMINDER 11.1 and 11.2, media products are not created in a vacuum, and those who produce them are human beings, and liable to influence in numerous different ways.

These may include overt pressures to operate or report in a particular way from senior staff, political figures, or those concerned with the commercial performance of the product (Olien et al 2018). But they may also be influenced in more subtle ways: an institutional sense of 'how things are done' as well as workplace norms and expectations may affect choices of stories or approaches to an issue (Schudson 1989), while technical factors such as story length, the availability of images and deadline pressures may affect the content and detail reported, the choice of interviewees, and other elements that shape the eventual product. Differing perceptions of what the audience expects and levels of expectation that a story should entertain as well as inform may also play a role in the way that stories are put together, while different ideas about news values – such as whether a story should provide tension or conflict as well as information – may lead to very different outcomes (see, for example, Rosenstiel et al 1999).

All of these factors mean that journalists can be liable to exhibit bias even without realising it – and even if, and when, they make efforts to avoid doing so. Notwithstanding this, many journalists do not consider their role to be impartial custodians of information anyway, and are happy to be considered as participants in policy debates, as one of the journalists interviewed for this project noted:

> *"Because there is a professional myth requesting journalists to be independent from the political powers of the day and to watch them on behalf of society, those on the left-wing find it elegant to deny [their sympathies with the political left] so that they can claim they observe professional standards. [...] This undermines the prestige of the profession, yet I must say who the f*ck is interested in what a left/liberal person thinks of me?"*

(Hungarian Journalist)[1]

Equally, journalists do not produce stories from thin air. The stories and broader narratives they generate are shaped by an array of both participants – such as interviewees and contacts, commercial public relations professionals, researchers, friends, acquaintances and colleagues, and the media they themselves consume –, and 'ambient' factors including, but by no means limited to, their daily experiences, the political context in which they are oper-

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[1] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

ating, their social environment and their own social and economic background (White, 1950).

These factors suggest a critical issue in the functioning of democracy that this paper hopes to examine in more detail: A free press is widely accepted as a fundamental requirement for a functioning democracy (Zielonka 2015), making journalists and journalism key features of a nation's political landscape. Most modern democracies accept that freedom includes the right of an individual or group to persuade another individual of their position (Strauss 1991) on an issue. The concept was crystallised by Bernays (1947) who claimed that: *"Freedom of speech and its democratic corollary, a free press, have tacitly expanded our Bill of Rights to include the right of persuasion."*

This places journalists – and by extension the media products they generate – as both subject to persuasion of various types, and potential actors in the persuasion of others. As such they play a complex role in European democratic processes. The REMINDER team has attempted to explore these processes of persuasion by also interviewing a range of key sources on the subject of migration in each of the sampled countries, including Government spokespeople, NGOs, think tanks and representatives from political parties.

Our analysis uses the responses of 221 interviewees – both journalists (71% of the total) and 'sources' (29%) – to a series of questions about their everyday working practices to consider the dynamics of these multiple processes of persuasion within different media contexts, and with particular reference to the issue of migration.

Migration is among the most contentious, divisive and politically sensitive subjects of political and media debate in many countries (Allen et al 2017), including most of the countries sampled. It is also an issue which provides opportunities to sow the seeds of division within a society (Finney and Simpson 2009). As such, migration provides an ideal lens through which to examine the roles of external, internal and personal motivations in the development of media narratives relating to a highly sensitive, salient and contentious issue.

In short, it is clear that a complex and dynamic relationship exists in democratic societies between media, policy-making and public opinion – this dynamic set of multi-directional pressures is shown in figure 1. This analysis attempts to unpick, in some detail, the processes by which media content about one specific area – migration and EU mobility – is generat-

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ed in 9 EU member states. In doing so it aims to shed some light on the wider implications of media practices on that triangle of competing influences.

Fig. 1: The dynamic relationship between media, public opinion and policy making
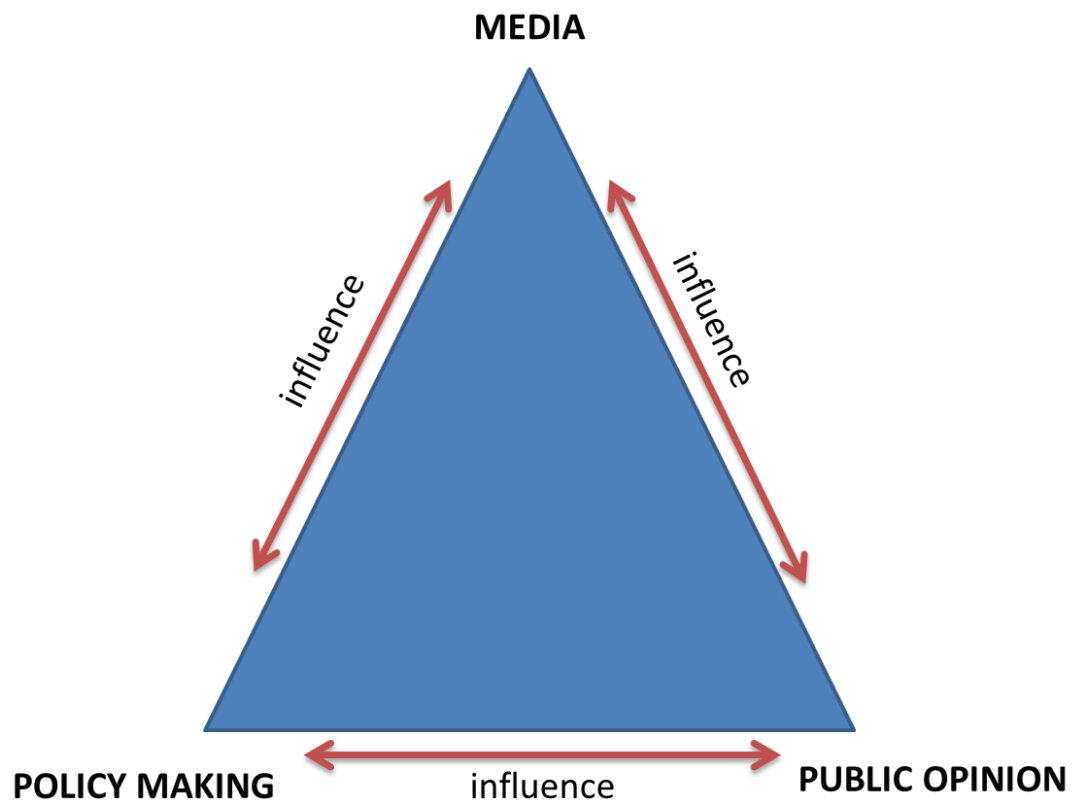
1. Journalistic working practices: reporting migration and relationships between government and media

In the previous two reports from this work package (REMINDER WP11.1 and WP11.2), notable differences the practices of journalists in different countries became apparent. The reports considered EU15 states (Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, UK – WP11.1) and new member states (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia – WP11.2).

Migration themes

In all countries, the issue of migration was considered contentious, politicised, and relevant to journalists, though to differing degrees.

In most countries, reporters seemed broadly focussed on the issue of asylum and refugees – largely as a result of the relatively recent and high-profile issues resulting from the asylum flows through Europe since 2014. Immigration narratives, for most reporters sampled, even when not associated with asylum issues, still broadly focussed on the mobility of the poor and the resulting consequences for the receiving countries and their local populations.

In the UK – predictably, in the light of the Brexit vote – the mobility of EU nationals was more present as a significant policy issue than in other countries sampled (see also Allen 2016). Mobile EU citizens were rarely cited as a theme in immigration reporting in other sampled countries, though in Sweden some narratives about beggars from poorer EU member states were highlighted. In many of the sampled member states, intra-EU migrants were not considered as "migrants" per se.

The least clearly defined group of migrants for most journalists was non-EU migrants who were not refugees or asylum seekers. A sizable proportion of journalists in all countries struggled to think of themes in their national discourse on migration which dealt with migration that was not related to humanitarian issues or EU mobility.

In new EU member states the issue of emigration was more prevalent as a key topic among reporters – particularly in Romania – than in the rest of the sampled countries. However, as a whole, themes related to immigration, refugees and asylum tended to dominate conceptions of what 'migration' stories were really about in both new member states and most EU15 countries.

For an additional breakdown of the themes and key frames related to migration that were raised by reporters in different countries, see Section 3.

Autonomy and the role of government, commercial pressures and other external influences

The analysis we have undertaken differs from previous efforts to differentiate between media systems – such as that put forward by Hallin and Mancini (2004) – by starting from the current practices of journalists and journalism in different countries rather than from the political and commercial situations from which these practices have emerged.

By taking this approach, REMINDER deliverables 11.1 and 11.2 established a suite of practices in the sampled countries that this paper combines to propose a spectrum of political influence on journalistic practices. This spectrum runs from:

1) what one might consider highly '***directive***' – in which government influence, or even interference, appears to be commonplace, a normalised (if often unwanted) reality of journalistic life, and could potentially significantly affect a journalist's ability to work effectively (common in Hungary and Poland, visible in Romania);

> *"They did all they could to silence us. [...] Our advertisers were practically threatened or are afraid of being threatened. [...] State advertisers cancelled their contracts the day after the legislative elections."*

(Hungarian Journalist)[2]

> *"Up until now, I thought that my job was stable and I'll get old and die here. As one of the lucky ones, I work on the basis of an employment contract. But since the government announced the media deconcentration bill, we've started to worry about losing our job and our independence."*

(Polish Journalist)[3]

2) to the '***collusive***', where government influence is felt more-or-less indirectly rather than directly from government, for example, through reporters expectations of what sort of politicised interpretations their editors, proprietors or other senior staff may want to see (common in UK newspapers, Italy, Spain, Romania, Slovenia);

> *"There is an awareness of the owner's circle of friends – he knows lots of influential people – and [awareness of] his enemies."*

(UK, popular newspaper)

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[2] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

[3] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

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> *"Political parties are the obvious one … I do think we get fed lines by the Conservatives, and we would take a certain line because we've been briefed that way by a cabinet minister, or something like that. I also suspect, though I don't know, that senior people have connections in certain places that mean things have to be portrayed in a certain way."*

(UK, newspaper)[4]

> *"The international section is not pressured, because it isn't of big interest, but the political section is – very coarse pressures from the national government."*

(Spain, quality newspaper)

3) to the '***responsive***' – in which there is little or no sense that political entities are trying to direct journalists' choices or behaviours other than through basic PR strategies, such as the issuing of press releases and quotes (UK non-newspaper media, Germany, and Sweden).

> *"Many want to influence, do they have an influence? Hard to say. NGOs want money, they like to make reports and analyses that they present, that is part of their mission. They need to get attention and funding. EU institutions rely on tax money, I see relatively little analysis from the EU. It appears they have internal reports that one as journalist would like to read. UN organs are more interesting, they communicate more."*

(Sweden, radio)

> *"Maybe PR people are trying to influence, but I don't know how far this has an effect "*

(Germany, quality newspaper)

These processes were experienced in different ways in different member states – the analysis from Hungary and Poland suggests that of out the nine countries sampled, these two had the most 'directive' media, followed by Romania, though the Romanian example was less explicit in terms of sanctions or threats. One example from a Romanian journalist is:

> *"TV news stations are generally pushed from behind by political interests. My newsroom is no different. To be more exact, I am talking about a political party. Usually, from the governing side."*

(Romania, TV)

While this explicitly states government interference, unlike the cases of Poland and Hungary, it does not imply direct interventions undertaken to generate political outcomes.

In Slovenia, Spain, Italy and the UK, politicised media content relating to migration emerged from a more complicated mix of commercial considerations and partisan positions of senior

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[4] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

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staff or owners. In Italy and the UK, these situations were notably dependent on the type of media the journalist worked for, with newspapers in the UK more open to politicised narratives, but broadcast and other media types less so. In Italy this was largely reversed, with TV producing populist and polarising materials and newspapers producing more considered outputs.

In Germany and Sweden, there is a recognition of the influence of suggestions from external sources including government and commercial organisations, but little evidence that external organisations wield any serious power, while an orthodoxy of moderation often appears to shape journalistic practices and the content generated from them – perhaps stifling more radical voices.

Other factors

A notable factor in all countries was the lack of diversity in newsrooms – in most this was visible in the lack of ethnic or cultural diversity, though in the UK, migration reporting also appeared to be a somewhat 'male' area. A lack of cultural or ethnic diversity may have some impact on the way that migration issues are covered (Gemi et al 2013, Markova and McKay 2013) though it is not clear whether there are gendered differences in reporting practices on the subject, and we found some evidence to reject conceptions that men and women approach subjects differently anyway (Hanzitsch and Hanusch 2012).

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2. Country by country interview findings – summary

This section briefly summarises the country-specific findings from deliverables 11.1 and 11.2, painting a picture of the national norms within journalism and, in particular, in relation to the reporting of migration. To read more detailed descriptions of migration reporting in each country, please refer to these deliverables.

EU15 states:

Germany

Our survey participants paint a picture of a German media environment characterised by moderation in its approach to subjects; a broad sense of job security; a sense of respect from both audiences and colleagues; and high levels of job satisfaction.

The practical, day-to-day working environments of German media professionals surveyed support the concept that this is a country in which the 'responsive' relationship between media and government dominates. German media professionals are characterised by a strong sense of autonomy and freedom from outside influences – both from management, making attempts to affect or shape stories, and from outside bodies either political or commercial. This is not to say that these journalists are not influenced by frames constructed by political, commercial or other organisations (see Hänggli 2012), but they do not perceive that they are being manipulated. However, our findings suggest that the wider public agenda has a stronger impact on journalists' decision-making process on what to cover than they care to admit.

> *"Of course, all the lobbyists are trying to influence us, starting with environmental groups which send us daily emails, also big companies, car manufactures, politicians, readers – all trying to influence us – but one mustn't see that only negative – lobbyism also has an informative side – and we need information, so I look at all of that."*

(Germany, popular newspaper)

From a technical perspective, German media is broadly focussed on using measured and moderate language which protects them from accusations of sensationalising serious news. This is visible in terminology used in reporting migration by our German sample – such as the very anodyne "Person mit Migrationshintergrund" – (in English a 'person with a migra-

tion background' – a term which does not specify that the person has ever migrated), and in the broadly technical focus on the status of refugees. These approaches to reporting may also shape the migration frames they produce.

The sample's technocratic and labour-market focused descriptions of high-income EU migrants and skilled non-EU migrants contrast, however, with a recognition that descriptions of groups perceived as poorer – including ethnic minorities and EU migrants from lower-income EU member states – may be considerably more negatively loaded.

The refugee crisis of 2015 and subsequent years appears to have very substantially raised the critical awareness of German journalists for migration and mobility issues. The sample exhibited a clear understanding of the various nuances of migration itself, and of the intricacies of migration-related vocabulary. This is indicative of intensive discussions and self-reflection in the country's newsrooms.

Finally, the commercial considerations of the media professionals sampled suggest that they broadly focus on generating materials for middle-aged, educated professionals. This ties in to their general focus on education, rather than sensation, but also to the lack of more radical voices – which may be a facet of our sample, but does appear to be characteristic of the German media as a whole. However, the sample also suggested that a move toward more negative depictions – with a focus on cultural differences and negative impacts of the "welcome culture" – may now be starting to take root.

Italy

The Italian journalists surveyed were characterised by something of a contradiction – both a passionate belief in their work and its fundamental value, and a pessimism and cynicism about their industry. Both sides potentially affect the commercial, institutional, practical, and technical factors that then shape their coverage of migration. Two examples of this include:

> *"I don't do it for the money. I have a great passion and like to give voice to the voiceless."*

(Italy, TV)

> *"I feel respected and appreciated, but no longer supported."*

(Italy, press agency)

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Institutionally, and despite anecdotal evidence suggesting that journalism is highly precarious and under-funded in Italy (especially where freelancers are concerned), the journalists taking part in this study felt relatively secure in their jobs. Most are in journalism out of passion rather than as a means to make a living, and though they feel personally respected, they highlight a decline in public trust in journalism more generally.

While the respondents are generally content with their working environment, few describe it as very good, friendly, or particularly constructive, and several raise significant concerns about the actions and professionalism of their management.

From a day-to-day practical perspective, a number of Italian journalists surveyed highlighted a high degree of managerial direction – sometimes to the point of interference – as well as significant influence from both internal (such as proprietors) and external (such as political parties, the Catholic church, commercial bodies and trade unions) sources. This may affect their autonomy in both the choices of and shaping of stories.

Technical factors highlighted by the Italian journalists sampled, which may affect the framing of migrants, include an emphasis on generating emotional impact in audiences, and the dynamics, role and importance of the issue of Mediterranean migration in Italy more broadly. The nature of Italy's position as a high-profile receiving country of refugees and other migrants using the Mediterranean route to enter Europe has also meant that many of our interviewees worked as specialists dealing with the issue of migration and asylum, which, in itself, may affect the nature of their relationship with the subject. These factors also meant that, as a whole, journalists' focus was on poverty or refugee related migration issues rather than other types of migration, including intra-EU mobility.

Journalists displayed very low levels of trust in government sources. In fact, the Italian survey suggests that Italian journalists tend to be sympathetic to migrants and in particular refugees, no matter the political leaning of the outlets they produce coverage for, and to exhibit a tendency to side with, disadvantaged groups.

The group also identified a broadly pro-EU agenda, was largely supportive of intra-EU mobility, and focused on delivering societal impact and protecting the interests of disadvantaged groups.

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As noted above, the journalists sampled described a situation where their autonomy was somewhat constrained by a wide range of interest groups and managerial direction. On top of the practical implication for the reporters, this might also be seen through a commercial lens – these choices are often related to the audience being targeted by profit-seeking outlets, keen to maximise audiences, but also wary of alienating their advertising clients or corporate owners. However, the dynamics of the relationship between the demand for particular content by the audience, and its supply by Italy's significantly politicised media organisations is less clear.

This analysis was undertaken before the 2018 elections, which may affect the dynamics of media in the country.

Spain

Traditional, established journalism in Spain was described by our sample as an industry in crisis – with many outlets facing a combination of economic distress, issues of political partisanship and suspicions of manipulation by the government and big business.

> *"We have a bad reputation and we deserve it. The media has abused superficiality and we are now too politicized. People have the feeling that we lie."*

(Spain, online)

Institutionally, this is characterised by a perception of a loss of credibility of, and confidence in, journalists, which has rendered working conditions in many newsrooms difficult and negative. However, a new wave of independent outlets seems to have managed to steer clear of those issues – though many of these organisations lack the reach of the more established 'legacy' (such as newspaper and traditional broadcast) media. Many journalism jobs are precarious.

Practical factors that may affect approaches to reporting include significant concern from several participants about external pressure from advertisers, government and political parties. However, with the exception of an accusation that the Spanish government proactively tried to minimise coverage of the refugee crisis, it is unclear how the political and business pressure applied on mainstream outlets overshadows the good-faith efforts of the report-

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ers. Despite this, and the institutional challenges outlined above, the journalists expressed pride in their profession and aspired to high ethical standards.

From a technical perspective, Spanish journalists interviewed were particularly likely to focus on using emotive and emotional approaches to stimulate a response from their audiences – with a recognition that this needs to be balanced with factual reporting. There is also a strong focus among many of the participants on educating the audience, supporting public debates with dependable information, and at times a desire to be agents of change.

Terminology is considered important, with a recognition from some that the term 'migrant' has become synonymous with both cultural difference – notably that it can be seen to denote 'Muslim' – and problems. There is low trust in government, and strong support for the EU among the sample.

Again, respondents suggested that commercial considerations played little role in their work. Many of the journalists surveyed were somewhat unclear about who they perceived their audiences to be.

Sweden

The picture painted by Swedish journalists is of a stable environment reminiscent of the German situation outlined above, but with a greater sense of campaigning objectives among those sampled. The sample comprised rather more senior staff than the other groups, which may have some bearing on the findings.

Institutionally, journalists in Sweden appear to be very secure in their jobs and to feel, broadly speaking, but by no means universally, respected. Newsrooms are considered pleasant working environments.

Practical issues affecting the sampled journalists in Sweden include the indirect influence of media owners – which can include trade unions and other organisations – as well as the personal connections between senior staff and political parties. Senior staff are also highlighted as key figures in the choices of which stories are pursued and run. Despite these observations, the sampled journalists claim a high degree of autonomy and a strong sense of the importance and value of objective news.

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Technical factors that may affect the way that stories are constructed include a focus on the aesthetic dimension of journalism and a common educational – if not activist – motivation. This can be seen in the context of a desire among a number of the sampled respondents to reduce negative attitudes toward migrants.

Nevertheless, problem themes appear to be common in reporting on migration of both EU citizens – which is often characterised as driven by the relative poverty of some new member states – and refugees. Some seemingly Sweden-specific terminology – such as the phrase "bearded children" to describe certain asylum seekers – may also impact on national understanding of certain issues.

Swedish journalists displayed generally high levels of trust in government, but commercial considerations were not high on their agendas. Many described work based on journalistic research and the transmission of knowledge, and in particular truthful information, to their audiences – but these audiences were mostly conceptualised as the country's élites; only public and trade union-owned outlets intentionally and expressly target a broader social spectrum.

United Kingdom

Working practices in the UK are highly professionalised, but sometimes aggressive.

The most striking finding in this area is the difference between the often highly autocratic and even aggressive environments depicted in some newspapers, and the more laid-back and respectful attitudes in all other media. The degree of positivity felt by journalists toward their working environment was noticeably lower in newspapers than other media types.

> *"Newspapers are like the military. When you send the troops out to capture the flag, you can't have a discussion about whether you want to capture the flag... The whole thing would just break down."*

(UK, quality newspaper)

> *"Everyone, from the editor down, is very approachable. Ultimately mangers make the final decisions about what stories are covered, but as a journalist you definitely feel that you have a real input, and they will listen to you. It's collaborative and collegiate.*

(UK, broadcast)

UK journalists sampled were generally highly motivated and enjoy their jobs, despite a broad recognition that others may feel the profession is problematic. Many identified that they themselves felt respected, but that the wider picture of journalism was more negative.

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Several also expressed a concern that their jobs are misunderstood and that those who are critical are unaware of the pressures and difficulties that they face. The pressures identified include the speed with which they are expected to turn stories around, and the level of detail and nuance that they are able to introduce to short pieces – which also have to hold the attention of the audience and be adequately 'newsworthy'.

UK journalists' objectives are often driven by a sense of moral purpose and/or an instrumental drive for various forms of success. The 'moral purpose' element can be seen when journalists expressed objectives such as exposing wrongdoing, standing up for underdogs, increasing freedom, helping people to make better democratic decisions, or 'making the world a better place' in some other way. Instrumental desires to achieve forms of success are evident in objectives such breaking news/exclusives, getting stories published (as far forward in the publication as possible), having the biggest possible impact or pleasing a news editor. Some journalists described balance between these objectives, while some were more focused on one or the other.

In explicit answers, most (but not all) UK journalists expressed a sense that they had autonomy and were not pushed to do things in particular ways. However, in their more detailed responses, a number of factors that may shape both the types of stories covered, and the content of them, became evident – more in newspapers than in other media types:

Some identified that the imagined figure of the proprietor wielded power in a way that the actual proprietor did not. Others identified an almost instinctive knowledge of an outlet's position or objectives, and a recognition that producing stories that were in opposition to that position would not be received well. The direct influence of the perspectives – and sometimes biases – of other senior figures, such as the editor or other senior production staff was also noted by some journalists.

The broad concept of a "migrant" was generally agreed to include mobile EU citizens, third country nationals and refugees and asylum seekers. Journalists from tabloid newspapers were more likely than other media types to characterise migrants, as a broad category, negatively. The prevailing view among journalists in the survey was that there is no objective difference between EU and non-EU migrants, other than the rights afforded to EU migrants.

One comment also highlighted the role of 'media convention' – where regular use of a term or theme normalised it, making it more likely to be used again.

Key themes that journalists identified in their reporting on EU migrants in the UK were work; numbers (generally the question of whether there were too many); Brexit; impacts on public services, and impacts on public finances. These themes may be interpreted as containing a subtext relating to perceived low-incomes of EU migrants. Some journalists from tabloid newspapers identified EU migrants' access to welfare benefits as an issue their newspapers were particularly concerned about.

Themes relating to non-EU migration were less immediately clear, but included work – with a focus on skilled migration; study and family migration routes; and then enforcement and security issues –, which were often linked to irregular migration and integration issues. National tabloid/mid-market newspaper journalists surveyed often gave answers depicting refugees and asylum seekers in negative terms – frequently questioning the legitimacy of their claims, though they were not the only group to do this. Those writing about refugees and asylum seekers from a geopolitical context appeared to move away from a human focus.

Almost no UK journalists explicitly identified commercial factors as direct or major influences over their work. However, commercial factors were often identified, at least indirectly, as elements that journalists were keenly aware of in the background of their work. These indirect commercial factors sometimes took the form of a recognition that what they were producing had to be approved by other – often senior – staff, whose focus on sales/audience figures was more direct. A small number of respondents also raised the possibility that advertisers attempted to directly influence stories.

New EU member states:

Hungary

Journalism in Hungary was fundamentally divided along political lines. Journalists' sense of their freedom to work unencumbered by pressures from government was significantly affected by their political and social positions. Conservative and pro-government media described relatively straightforward working environments, while those working for more lib-

eral or anti-government media outlets described working in more difficult and precarious situations.

> *"Some companies would place ads here, but were told [from above, from the political sphere] not to."*

(Hungarian Journalist)[5]

Frames used by journalists critical of the government to report migration suggest that the Hungarian government has imbued the term 'migrant' ('migráns' in Hungarian) with highly negative connotations. These journalists describe a state-supported anti-migrant campaign – using outdoor billboards, newspapers, radio stations and television channels and a staged "national consultation" – that has been in operation since early 2015 (before the actual arrival of refugees) and is continuing up to the present day. This is described by some interlocutors as creating an atmosphere of fear before refugees physically crossed the border. These interviewees generate a general picture of government propaganda that has labelled refugees as potential terrorists, and has transformed public opinion and behaviour.

Pro-government media and sources consider that they put forward a "realist" perspective on mass migration that has been suppressed by Brussels – which does not realise that this is a major threat to traditional European and Christian values:

> *"The political elites of the EU are amazingly naïve, and their self-destroying attitude is responsible for the whole crisis. What I would like to achieve in this fight is realism to become the dominant view in Europe."*

(Hungary, think-tank).

> *"Efforts by the German, French and all the 'core Europe' countries to solve their work force and demographic problems while disguising it as a humanitarian action are outrages. Merkel and the others will one day be held responsible at the magistrate of history."*

(Hungary, journalist)[6]

This perspective suggests that Prime Minister Orbán and his cabinet are trying to change European politics so that the European Union realises it is under a threat of unforeseeable outcomes. The propaganda campaign that the government has launched is aimed at alarming public opinion about migration to this end. An alternative perspective, suggesting that immigration is very low and of no significant threat to Hungary, and that rapid emigration is

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[5] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

[6] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

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a greater concern, was highlighted by some journalists critical of the government position, but with a recognition that the government's framing of a 'migrant crisis' engulfing Hungary was dominant.

Poland

Poland is a source, a transit, as well as a host country for migration. Consequently, migration has been high on the public and media agenda, especially since 2015, with key issues including integration, humanitarian problems affecting asylum seekers, and the European Union's relocation programme.

Christian- and conservative-leaning journalists tend to agree with the government, taking a broadly negative and restrictive stance on migration issues, while liberal journalists come from a more humanitarian perspective.

> *"I have no illusions about how the media work (…). Media outlets are companies that supply some product. They are also 'para-political' entities."*

(Poland, journalist)[7]

Migration as an issue is broadly discussed in terms of immigration into Poland – though a number of journalists also deal with the issue of Polish migration to other countries, notably within the EU, and the implications of this, with considerable focus on Brexit. Narratives about migration tend to focus on refugees and the movement of the poor, with security frames relating to this intensified by reports about terrorist attacks in Western Europe in recent years. Religious and ethnic differences are highlighted as a key difference between EU and non-EU migrants, suggesting that reporters in Poland – in common with those in Hungary – operate with a more racialised underlying narrative than the other nations surveyed.

> *"I am appalled by the language of hatred aimed at refugees in some media and the skewed portrayal of certain events when refugees are blamed for attacks on locals. Some media persuade people that the refugee is a potential terrorist, a wog [brudas], a Paki [ciapaty] who spreads disease etc."*

(Poland, journalist)[8]

Reporters' different political perspectives on the issue of migration generated radically different responses from audiences and had impacts on their self-image. Those taking a more

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[7] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

[8] Media type not further specified to protect the respondent's anonymity.

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negative stance on migration issues – in common with the Hungarian sample – sometimes spoke in terms of the greater freedom that they had to be 'honest' with their audiences about issues than those in more 'liberal' media climates, such as Germany. However, at least one reporter who produced sympathetic materials dealing with a Muslim refugee noted significant hostility in the public response to the article.

The sources interviewed stressed the level of public discussion about migration – which they describe as ill-informed and biased – may partly have been caused by the heated atmosphere generated by the incumbent government's efforts to control public media and to "re-polonise" much of the private media, by way of limiting the ratio of foreign ownership.

In a comparative perspective, however, migration appears to be less of an issue in Poland than in Hungary, and the debates about it appear to be less heated.

Romania

As Romania to date is mainly a migrant source country, with over one million Romanian citizens working in Western Europe, journalists and media tend to focus on emigration – including the issues of Brexit, discrimination towards Romanian (and in general Eastern European) workers in host countries, and the domestic demographic problems caused by massive emigration.

> *"We are a country that produces many migrants. Thus, the perspective will always be internal, focused on Romania."*

(Romania, online)

However, these issues are not high on the political agenda, as all major political parties and actors support the idea of free movement within the European Union. There was less evidence of political pressure for migration or other issues to be reported in particular ways than in Hungary or Poland.

In a similar vein, immigration is not much of a political issue with no major nationalist or extremist political parties or movements pushing this issue (even though the ratio of xenophobia has increased in recent years among citizens). That said, policy discussion and media do cover the issues of the refugee quota, human trafficking on the Black Sea, illegal border crossings, the potential cultural and economic effects of immigration, as well as terrorism.

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There is clear evidence that the issue of migration is strongly differentiated between EU mobility and non-EU migration, with the former being seen, generally, as high-skilled migration and the latter as more related to economic necessity or humanitarian issues.

Overall, news reporting dominated over in-depth analysis – a situation that was common to all of the new EU member states surveyed. The influencers (sources) interviewed suggest that some of the Romanian press and media report about migration negatively, with the result that some people in Romania

> *"comment on how migrants come as a hoard of conquerors that threaten our lives, health, liberty, jobs, and so on."*

(Romania, international organisation)

Overall, the perspective of journalists may be summarised as having a "national" focus, while that of the influencers has a "humanitarian" one.

Slovenia

Unlike the other new member states surveyed, respondents in Slovenia said migration discourse in the country focused on human rights issues, and especially the protection of the right of workers of foreign origin. Reporting in Slovenia, of all the new EU member states surveyed, bore the closest resemblance to the EU15 sample – with similarities to Spain and Italy in particular. Little evidence of explicit state interference was present, though some concerns were raised about external influence, but from more shadowy characters whom the journalists could not pinpoint. However, significant concern about the financial viability of journalism was clear – a facet of the comparatively small size of the Slovenian media market.

> *"Critics have actually a good point, let's face it, the quality of media is worse than it was. It is frustrating that we can't influence on the society anymore, because they [readers] don't really take us serious anymore. They don't trust us. Sometimes I have the feeling that the mission of journalism has been lost, sometimes I have the feeling that it has disappeared already."*

(Slovenia, quality newspaper)

The issue of EU mobility was considered positively by all the journalists sampled, with some considering EU mobility not to be migration per se.

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Despite the fact that the 2015 migration wave crossed Slovenia as a part of the "Western Balkans corridor", debates about migration appeared to be much less heated and much less politicised than in the other countries of the region. The journalists' humanitarian perspectives toward refugees and asylum seekers was significantly more apparent than in the other new member states – which may relate, as one of the Slovenian journalists implies, to the more recent history of conflict in the former Yugoslavia than other countries sampled.

That said, the discourse reflects the political cleavages dividing the political and the media landscapes, with the left-wing media taking a humanitarian approach to migration, and some right-wing outlets focusing on the negative aspects of it. This analysis was undertaken before the 2018 elections, which may affect the dynamics of media in the country.

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3. Comparative cross-country analysis

Introduction

The following chapter takes a comparative look at the responses received from the 221 participants in focus groups and interviews, limited to cases where there were significant profile differences either between the nine countries surveyed, or between the EU15 and new member states, or genders.

The job of journalism

Reputation

In the new EU Member States, the majority of respondents reported that they felt journalists had a good reputation, compared with less than half in the Western part. Conversely, many Western journalists perceived public ambiguity to their profession, which depended on circumstances at any given time. The most positive reputation was felt by Romanian, Slovenian, and Polish journalists, followed by Sweden and Italy. A major outlier was Spain, where most respondents said they were severely disliked.

These findings appear to be in line with recent controversies, which saw journalism in Germany and the UK attacked by forces questioning the truthfulness and morality of the industry, while the new EU Member States have not experienced a similar crisis in the perception of the news business. The economic crisis facing Spanish journalism, as outlined in deliverable 11.1, is also likely to have affected attitudes toward the profession.

Quality newspaper reporters testified to the highest social esteem, followed by broadcasters, which suggests that legacy media categories (newspapers and traditional broadcast) may still be perceived as trusted institutions by their societies, while newer outlets still need to gain their audiences' confidence. In most countries, quality newspaper offices came across as the friendliest working environments, followed by hybrid and broadcasting newsrooms. Tabloid newsrooms, in the countries where they exist - notably the UK (but tabloids are also present in other countries, including Poland and Germany, albeit in differing forms) – were described as high on adrenaline, competitive, and male dominated – some reporters liked this type of dynamic environment, but others found it unpleasant and stressful.

Motivation and job security

About twice as many male than female respondents claimed to do their job for its potential to provide a creative outlet and personally fulfilling outcomes. The male-female differential was also visible (if at a lower level) when looking at those who were motivated by investigative journalism and its role as society's 'watchdog'. Political and ideological motivations were often exhibited by men, yet hardly present in female journalists' answers. These responses suggest that aspects of journalism still retain a certain image of machismo and bravado, which corresponds with a traditional glorification of investigative scoops – a fundamentally competitive approach to journalism. Roughly half as many female than male respondents described their newsroom working environment as friendly, and fewer women journalists than males reported that they were trusted by the hierarchy to do their jobs.

As a whole, in the motivation to become a journalist across the old and new EU Member States, the "creativity/fulfilment" aspect generally played a greater role for interviewees from the EU15 than the new member states. Similarly, more EU15 journalists favoured the investigative aspects than in the new member states. Nevertheless, these divisions are not consistent and depend on the individual country contexts – for example, the "creative" angle received the highest number of mentions in Poland, Germany, and the UK (around one third of respondents each). A similar number of the Spanish and Hungarians claimed that delivering real-world impact was their main motivation, followed by Slovenia and Poland.

German respondents mentioned a broad scope of additional reasons, such as curiosity or a desire to support groups that were otherwise under-represented in the public sphere. Romanians and Swedish journalists were the most likely to say that journalism was a childhood passion.

About 30% of respondents in Germany, Poland, and Sweden reported that their newsroom leadership invested high amounts of trust and confidence into their staff. Almost half of Hungarians, way more than in any other sample country, reported that their newsrooms were encouraging them to try new things and gave them praise.

In terms of job security, there was a clear EU15-new member states divide, with considerably fewer journalists in the new member states feeling very or fairly secure in their positions than reporters in the EU15 countries, an observation that is likely due to the more economi-

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cally and politically precarious situation of news media in Central and Eastern Europe. Again, male journalists were more likely to report good job security levels than their female colleagues, which appears to correlate with the responses related to newsroom climate.

In several countries, journalists' self-declared professional objectives were to inform public debate and to deliver accurate information (this was the case in Germany, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Italy). In Sweden and the UK, journalists also acknowledged a willingness to inject a degree of opinion into the public debate. The notion that journalism was supposed to affect policy-making and/or speak truth to power was most popular among respondents in Hungary (more than one third), followed by Sweden and Italy.

Audience relationship

Half of UK respondents interviewed perceived that they had a "transactional" relationship with their audience, i.e., that they responded to the public's demands for information, rather than developing a "community" relationship (where they saw themselves as representing a shared perspective, and speaking for, and guiding, audiences), followed by Germany. Conversely, around one third of Slovenian, Spanish, Hungarian, and Polish journalists said that they catered to a community audience with which their media organisation shared values and convictions. Interestingly, not a single German respondent mentioned the community-type relationship, which may attest to a greater distance between journalists and their audiences than many other countries.

Around one third of journalists in Hungary, Spain, and Italy emphasised that in order to appeal to audiences, stories should have a human-interest component.

Influence

German respondents overwhelmingly denied that anyone was able to exert external influence on their work, with the remaining few admitting that lobbyists might be successful in spinning topics. After that came the UK, where half the respondents said that there was no outside influence on their work, while the other half attested to the impact of their senior editors, the government, and other powers-that-be, including their audiences, on their coverage. Swedish journalists were most reflective, citing factors such as the soft power of established networks, sanctioned opinions, lobby groups, and hiring practices – suggesting

that the Swedish interviewees were highly aware that journalism does not take place in a vacuum, but as part of a culture and political interdependencies.

About one third of Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian journalists felt entirely free of external influence in their work. Several Hungarians interviewed pointed out that advertisers exerted a strong influence – with the implied subtext that many advertisers were highly partisan and/or close to the government. Almost 20% of Hungary's journalists said they felt directly influenced by the government. They were surpassed by Spain, though, where – despite less evidence of direct interference than from the Hungarian or Polish respondents answers – one third of the surveyed journalists perceived direct government influence on their work and also claimed, after Hungary, the greatest degree of influence from advertisers.

Angles on migration

Journalists in many countries emphasised that they were trying to use the technically correct terminology to describe migrants, or that they avoided terms that had negative connotations in order to be politically correct and unbiased. In particular the Swedish respondents expressed a high level of awareness of what kind of language would come across which way in any given context. A notable outlier was Spain, where almost 30% said that their employers dictated the choice of language. About one in four UK journalists surveyed stated that they intended to use "clear" terms, which seemed to imply that they would go with negatively loaded terms in cases where they felt the need to bring a point across immediately and unambiguously.

In most countries, economic motivations to migrate were considered the most important ones – mentioned by around 50% of respondents in Spain, Italy, and Hungary, followed by Poland as well as the UK. Asylum was chiefly mentioned in Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK, which is, perhaps, surprising to the extent that in comparison to Germany, Italy, Hungary, Sweden or Slovenia, these countries have seen relatively limited impacts in terms of flows of asylum seekers in transit, or actual applications for asylum.

The section on reporting angles separates migrants into three main categories:

- Intra-EU migrants;
- Third Country Nationals (TCNs) who are not refugees and asylum seekers;

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- Refugees and asylum seekers.

Intra-EU mobility

Angles on intra-EU mobility were strongly related to current domestic preoccupations in the country sample. For instance, in Romania, the core angle relating to intra-EU mobility was the fate of Romanian emigrants in other countries rather than immigration to Romania, whereas in Poland, issues relating to Brexit and the conflict over the allocation of refugees to EU Member States prevailed, and in Germany, there was a strong accent on so-called 'poverty migration' from the new member states. In the UK, EU migration as a whole was a more prevalent issue, with Brexit, housing conditions, and social aspects of intra-EU migration mentioned very frequently. The UK's focus on immigration from EU countries was unusual – in Slovenia, none of the journalists interviewed even considered mobile EU citizens to be "migrants" per se – a position that was echoed by a smaller, but notable number of journalists in other countries.

Third-country nationals (except refugees and asylum seekers)

TCNs (or at least those with legal status) were rarely considered a relevant or important topic. German reporters did highlight public concerns associated with Turkish and Arab populations. In the UK, family migration and foreign students were mentioned as topics of interest, but with little sense that they were pressing.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Refugees and asylum seekers, who were high on most countries' agendas while our survey was in the field, evoked stronger and more differentiated reactions. In Germany, Sweden, and the UK, many respondents (around 30%) felt that reporting angles on refugees and asylum-seekers were multiple and varied, making it essentially impossible to focus on one or two specific aspects of what journalists perceive as a tangled thematic cluster. Issues included: numbers of refugees, integration and domestic policy issues, humanitarian rights, crime, and a number of further aspects – all of which played fairly equal roles. In Hungary and Poland, the issue of refugees was commonly tied up with EU resettlement policies, cultural and religious differences, and security and terrorism narratives – with indications from a number of conservative and pro-government journalists in both countries that they felt

that "Western" media was euphemistic and did not share the "realistic" conception of the existential threat posed by Islam (via the refugees crisis) to European culture.

4. Media practices and the promotion of political agendas

The concept of the deliberate harnessing of narratives within national debates – in both social and traditional media – by external bodies (commercial entities, hostile-governments, political interest groups) as a means of creating disruption, has become a much debated subject in recent years. Claims have suggested, among other things, that efforts were made by the Russian government to influence media and social media in the run-up to the UK's Brexit referendum in the UK (Guardian 2018[9], Bloomberg 2017[10]) and the 2016 US presidential election (New York Times 2018[11]), while the wider rise of nationalist parties in Germany, Poland, Austria, Italy, France, Sweden, the UK and numerous other states has been ascribed in part to the spread of propaganda and politicised media content about migration (Wodak and Krzyżanowski 2017).

Migration debates – which can be harnessed to stimulate public concerns about "foreign invasions" (Mail on Sunday, 2013[12]), terrorism (Budapest Times, 2016[13]), criminality (Spiegel online, 2018[14]), and other impacts on the religious, cultural or economic lives of citizens – are obvious targets for this sort of 'weaponisation' of media.

As such, considering the nature of journalistic practice in a range of European countries allows us to explore how different practices may create different barriers or opportunities for those hoping to exploit media for political ends.

The broad picture painted in the introduction to this report and in Section 1, above, is of media environments that are complex and fundamentally human. The individuals who create media content across all of the countries surveyed bring with them a construction of the reality in which they operate that is both nationally situated and, itself, mediated by the narratives to which they themselves are exposed.

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[9] Patrick Wintour, The Guardian January 10, 2018. "Russian bid to influence Brexit vote detailed in new US Senate report"

[10] Jeremy Kahn, Bloomberg News, November 2, 2017. "U.K. Probes Russian Social Media Influence in Brexit Vote"

[11] Scott Shane, The New York Times, May 12, 2018. "When Spies Hack Journalism"

[12] Mail on Sunday (2013). Peter Hitchens, Mail on Sunday, March 31, 2013. "How the invasion of immigrants into every corner of England has made a mockery of PM's promise to close the door"

[13] Budapest Times, March 19, 2016. "Door slammed in EU's face"

[14] Spiegel Online January 17, 2018. "Is There Truth to Refugee Rape Reports?"

Our analysis also highlights the self-evident point that each individual journalist operates within a distinct and complex situation of competing pressures and influences. Factors that shape their journalistic outputs include: their preconceptions about their roles as journalists; the nature of the media they work for and its place in the particular political context of their society; and the nature of migration and EU mobility as a factor within this understanding of the world around them.

Like anyone else, journalists are also influenced by a multitude of different experiences and narratives that they have, themselves, read, heard and seen throughout their lives both privately and professionally. This will also include multiple key 'sources' – such as those interviewed in this project – vying for their attention to promote their own objectives, but also the media content (both news and entertainment) the journalists continue to consume, their own political leanings, their expectations of what the editors may want and the nature of the policy debate in their country of residence.

This highlights that journalists operate within:

1) a national context,
2) a commercial context and
3) a political context

Each of these dimensions can fundamentally affect a reporter's approach to the subject of migration. Therefore, the following section considers our findings through these national, commercial and political lenses, to explore their dimensions and implications.

National norms

Considering these findings first from a national perspective, it is clear that significantly different national norms exist in the practice of journalism in different countries. In Germany and Sweden, the industry is highly professionalised and governed by an unwritten code of ethics which encourages 'moderation' at the expense of 'sensation', and leans broadly toward a liberal conception of the world.

The UK is equally professionalised, but a relatively aggressive newsroom culture has developed within the country's highly influential newspapers, which fosters a 'hard and fast' approach to reporting in the country's media as a whole that is often more extreme than in than Germany or Sweden.

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In Spain, emotive reporting is given a high priority and commercial and political pressures create more insecure environments for many journalists. Italy's position as the key receiving state for migration across the Mediterranean into the EU from Libya has generated a particular type of specialist migration reporter.

Slovenian and Romanian media operate within these new democracies with the recent memory of autocratic government, but in these countries – both of which are ethnically and nationally heterogeneous – populist anti-immigration narratives had generally not taken root at the time of our interviews (though were present in both countries), and journalists interviewed tended to have a broadly pro-EU and somewhat liberal leaning. These similarities come despite the vastly different experiences of autocracy the two countries faced – the totalitarian Ceaușescu regime in Romania versus the comparatively liberal Tito regime in Yugoslavia. Like Spain, these two countries' media environments face significant commercial and political pressures and insecure environments.

Journalists in Poland and in Hungary – in particular – face more complex issues, navigating increasingly autocratic efforts by the government to control media and nationalist narratives focussed on security and a Christian/Muslim clash of civilisations. These journalists tend to operate in a 'pro-' or 'anti-' government context which fundamentally defines approaches to the issue of migration.

The 'directive-collusive-responsive' spectrum outlined in section 2 also becomes an important critical lens through which to view national norms:

Our analysis highlights that 'directive' approaches were considerably more visible in the reporting practices seen in new member states – where democratic institutions and a free press have been in place for shorter periods – than in the EU15 sample. However, 'collusive' approaches were present in a majority of the countries sampled – five out of nine. These 'collusive' relationships with politics create more ambiguous environments, and may be expected to create greater opportunities for the exploitation of narratives for political ends than 'responsive' relationships.

Clearly, 'directive' relationships between media and politics create more immediate opportunities for exploitation of narratives, such as migration, for political ends. The recent actions of the Hungarian state, in particular, in actively encouraging anti-migration media con-

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tent, can be reasonably seen as an effort to consolidate public support for right-wing political approaches to the management of the issue and, fundamentally, as a means of encouraging support for the Fidesz party of Viktor Orban. There is little dispute that overt government interference in a free press is problematic (Zielonka 2015), but where national models of media regulation/self-regulation are failing to protect press freedom – especially when audiences have grown to expect certain interactions with the media (Bajomi-Lázár 2017) – identifying mechanisms that exist at a supra-national level to prevent this sort of action is more challenging (Bard and Bayer 2016).

However, the visible actions of a state in interfering with a free press may also undermine trust in government-supporting media. According to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017, general trust in the media is much lower in Central and Eastern Europe than in Western and Northern Europe (Newman et al 2017). That study also offers evidence of how polarized media in central and Eastern Europe can be, which is often reflected in the difference between lower levels of general trust in the media and higher levels of trust in one's own choice of media outlet (the difference being the biggest in Hungary in the sample).

This introduces the possibility that nominally 'independent' media organisations who have a 'collusive' relationship with political bodies may be more trusted and therefore exercise a subtler form of political influence, as their outputs will be less likely to be seen as propaganda, and more likely to be considered objective reports.

'Collusive' relationships between media and national political bodies introduce complex regulatory questions and face policymakers wishing to encourage a measured and reasonable debate around migration with something of a quandary: stepping in to stop, or even discourage a media organisation from pursuing a particular theme or narrative related to a given topic – such as migration – is highly likely to be seen as a 'directive,' and therefore problematic, intervention by government. Equally, working on the assumption that the Bernaysian concept of a 'right to persuade' (Bernays 1947) is, indeed, a fundamental aspect of a free society, it is hard to argue that a media proprietor should be prevented from expressing his or her political perspective through a commercial media outlet – providing that the points made do not amount to hate-speech. This also makes it hard to argue that a journalist, employed by a certain media organisation, should not be able to produce materi-

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als in the manner that he or she expects to be well received by that organisation and the audience at whom it is being aimed.

'Responsive' relationships between government and media may be seen as a more ideal situation in a democratic process, insofar as they support a greater degree of media freedom and do less than the 'directive' or 'collusive' relationships to drive political points championed by powerful individuals. Nevertheless, 'responsive' relationships may also create environments in which there is a perception among sections of society that the prevailing social and political attitudes within a country's community of journalists may be shaping national discourse. As discussed later, this concept of out-of-touch elites shaping media discourse around migration was prevalent during the UK's Brexit debate and has been visible in the 'Lügenpresse' (lying press) narrative that emerged recently in Germany.

Commercial

Commercial media organisations might be expected to have a greater degree of freedom from 'directive' relationships with government than state-funded media. However, there are still mechanisms by which governments can exert coercive influence over these organisations – withholding advertising spending, providing or limiting access to key figures or stories, exerting business, financial, legal or other pressure on media owners. All of these types of effort to influence are present to differing degrees in the responses from our sampled journalists. Equally, state funding does not imply government interference. Many publicly funded media organisations, such as the BBC or the public media systems in Sweden and Germany, operate with extremely strict controls that limit opportunities for governmental interference (see, for instance, the BBC Charter for more details), reducing their likelihood of 'directive' or 'collusive' relationships with government.

Our analysis suggests that very few journalists are willing to explicitly acknowledge that the materials they produce are driven by commercial objectives. In the case of publicly funded or other non-commercial media this may be a realistic picture of journalism, however, in the case of journalists working for commercial media outlets, it is not unreasonable to expect some sort of awareness of the commercial objectives of their outlet. The implicit answers provided by many journalists at commercial media organisations suggest that, while individual stories may not be generated with a commercial agenda in mind, the issue of sales, ad-

vertising or audience reaction is never far away. Many of those interviewed highlighted the expectations of their editors or management that materials would be produced in a particular way, often with a recognition that these people were indeed concerned about the commercial component of the job.

This commercial component creates a number of spaces for migration narratives – and by extension the migrants themselves – to become part of the arsenal of commercial content used by media organisations to build or consolidate audiences. Repeated studies have shown that migration-related content often depicts migrants as an "other" to the native population, and often as a threat (Allen et al 2017). This, again, raises complex questions about whether demand for migration content is generated as a result of existing public concerns, political rhetoric, media coverage itself or, most likely, a combination of all of these (see Figure 1). The REMINDER project as a whole should make a significant contribution to our understanding of this question.

Again, the importance of a free press makes regulatory responses to commercially motivated exploitation of migration narratives problematic – how does one decide the point at which a legitimate story highlighting a problem moves into cynical exploitation of the issue for commercial gain? What does a media regulator do about production choices within media organisations about the use or placement of accurate reporting that, through regularity and prominence, creates increased public concern about an issue?

While the deliberate use of migration-related stories as a means of generating concern or outrage in a population – a strategy that appears to have been undertaken by some news organisations in our survey, though no journalists explicitly acknowledged that they did so – may make commercial sense for some outlets, it also creates risks to individuals, groups and to cohesive societies as a whole.

Political

The political contexts in which journalists cover migration and EU mobility topics relate to both their national and commercial contexts – such as the terms of the national debate they are covering and the position espoused by media outlet they work for – as well as to the individual journalist's general worldview and the skills of the of the interest groups (sources) attempting to influence them.

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This context is broadly in line with that spelled out in Robert Entman's model shown below (Entman 2007) describing the processes generating framing bias in the US. He describes the slant of a political news story emerging from a suite of interactions resulting from the competing of 'skills' of the administration and opposition public relations teams coupled with the reporter's 'evaluation of the political game,' 'market competition,' 'personal ideology' and 'other sources of variation':

$$NS = F + [S_{WH} \; X \; (B_E + B_M + B_I)] - [S_O \; X \; (B_E + B_M + B_I)] + E$$

- NS = slant of a specific news item
- F = perceived facts;
- S_{WH} = skill of administration news managers;
- S_O = skill of opposition party news managers;
- B_E = decision biases arising from evaluation of the political game;
- B_M = decision biases arising from market competition;
- B_I = decision biases arising from personal ideology;
- E = event context and other sources of variation.

(Adapted from Entman (2007), Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power)

Most interest groups (sources) we interviewed were either generally broadly supportive of, or in opposition to, a governmental position on migration issues (and therefore a part of Entman's S_{WH} and S_O groups in the equation). On that basis, our analysis suggests that Entman's model holds true across the 9 countries sampled. However, our analysis substantially develops our understanding of the complex factors that shape the biases arising from 'evaluation of the political game,' 'market competition,' and 'personal ideology' (the B_E, B_M and B_I groups).

In Hungary and Poland in particular, 'evaluation of the political game' involved a recognition of the governing party's position (in this case on migration) and a willingness to either support it and expect to be treated positively, or to oppose it and to potentially face negative consequences.

In other countries sampled, this seemed to be less of a direct concern for journalists. In the UK, the 'evaluation of the political game' was broadly built around Brexit and public support for reduced immigration, while in most other countries it was built around the broad national response to the 2015 asylum and refugee flows into the EU. In each country, the natural journalistic focus on problems generated an openness among media to negative narra-

tives around migration – creating opportunities for exploitation by far-right parties (Wodak and Krzyżanowski 2017), and possibly even enabled hostile governments to use public relations strategies to deliberately increase concerns and attempt to encourage increased hostility toward migration for political ends – including, potentially, broad aims of political destabilisation (New York Times, 2018[15]).

There is certainly evidence that negative immigration narratives were specifically used effectively by both by the Trump campaign in the 2016 general election (BBC 2016[16]) and by the Leave campaign in the UK's referendum on EU membership as a means of achieving political objectives (Spectator 2017[17]).

The 'market competition' element of Entman's model has already been explored in some detail in the 'commercial' section above.

The 'ideology' element refers to how the individual ideological positions of journalists can be expected to have some bearing on the content that they produce. However, our analysis suggests that the national context – in terms of the country specific norms of media practice – as explored above, also plays a critical role in shaping the overall slant a journalist is likely to take to the issue of migration (or, indeed, any other subject).

From this perspective, efforts to understand the consequences of migration narratives in different EU member states should consider that different national journalistic norms appear to be highly influential. National contexts, and the norms of journalistic practice they foster, appear to create different levels of openness and different types of opportunity for migration narratives to be exploited for political ends.

> *"We are trying to analyse as journalist what we have done wrong [why AFD and Pegida had such an impact] … I feel a high deficit of democratic attitude in the eastern part [of Germany], which goes along with the reputation of the media, especially the public media. Why [the media], especially the public broadcasters have such a bad image I find very difficult to follow. Asking people in the street, we get explanations which are totally absurd, they estimate that we receive every morning direct orders from the government what we have to report about, and it is impossible to convince these people otherwise."*

(Germany, TV)

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[15] Scott Shane, The New York Times, May 12, 2018. "When Spies Hack Journalism"
[16] BBC Online, September 1 2016. "Donald Trump: Mexico will pay for wall, '100%'"
[17] The Spectator, January 9 2017. Dominic Cummings: "How the Brexit referendum was won"

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This should not be taken lightly – among our sample of nine countries there are already several examples of deliberate efforts to use migration narratives for political ends. Migration narratives in the UK media are considered to have played an important – possibly decisive (Spectator 2017) – role in the UK's decision to leave the European Union; migration media narratives in Hungary appear to have been used to generate increased support for Fidesz and Prime Minister Orban's increasingly xenophobic and autocratic approach; in Germany, PEGIDA (Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung Des Abendlandes) is making efforts to characterise the German media's moderate approach to migration reporting as 'lying' (Deutsche Welle 2016[18]), with a view to generating a more negative response to Muslim immigration. Anti-migration narratives also appear to have played important roles in the recent successes of right-wing, populist parties in both Italy and Slovenia.

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[18] Wolfgang Dick, Deutsche Welle 30 October 2015. "Lying press: Germany's misleading media?"

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5. Relationship between media approaches and migration experiences

There was little evidence from our interviews that the actual level or type of migration a country was encountering was closely related to the level or type of coverage it received – this was evident from, for example, the focus on the issue of asylum in Romania, or the lack of interest in non-EU migration in the UK.

However, in all national contexts, rapid change was invariably considered a 'good story' – and therefore worthy of reporting – as were perceived failures of government. Unsurprisingly, then, inflows of migrants coupled with concepts of a 'lack of control' were generally themes that journalists felt merited reporting across the sampled countries (see also Allen and Blinder 2018). Whether approaches taken to the stories by journalists were more humanitarian, technocratic, or security focused depended on the wider national context, broader approaches to reporting in general and the media the reporter happened to work for.

However, this perspective also sheds light on a fundamental issue that must not be overlooked – actual events that take place and the management of them by national and supranational authorities are the one essential component of media reporting, irrespective of the national context, media type or any other factors.

So, the failure of the EU and of national governments to find sustainable and agreed solutions to the mass movement of asylum seekers through the continent in and after 2015 can be seen as a primary catalyst for the negative reporting about migration that then followed, in the context of rapid change with a lack of effective solutions.

Equally, the rapid growth of the UK's population of EU citizens following the expansion of the bloc in 2004 and 2007 was a real and visible change to the UK. A lack of effective responses by the UK government or the EU to either show that this was a managed process or that it could be controlled, generated concerns, again, about rapid change and a lack of effective solutions.

German media's initial welcoming response to migrants, which appeared to be related to a desire for a 'moral renewal' of the national identity post World War II (Wood 2017), and a wider sense of national obligation, was described by many of our interviewees as having

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now moved to profound concerns about overstretching the integration processes (see also Vollmer and Karakayali 2017). Again, this highlights that rapid change and a lack of effective solutions remain fundamental concerns: Even though the initial rapid change – the arrival of the migrants – was broadly accepted as a positive moment for Germany, the subsequent perceived failure of institutions to deliver integration solutions may have undermined this.

Beyond these broad conclusions, it seems likely that the factors described above – the national, commercial and political norms that shape journalists approaches, and the directive, collusive or responsive relationships between media and government, coupled with the speed and management of events that take place, are more likely to shape content than the actual number of migrants in the country.

This is not to say that numbers do not matter. Trends and changes – in particular notable increases in flows or migrant populations – clearly generate concern and media coverage. However, the degree to which those are painted as national crises (such as asylum seekers travelling through Hungary or EU labour migrants in the UK), in more positive terms (the initial arrival of asylum seekers in Germany, EU labour migrants in Sweden) or disinterestedly (EU immigrants in most countries and non-EU migrants who are not refugees/asylum seekers in all countries sampled), critically depends on three factors: norms, relationships between government and media, and perceptions of the effective/ineffective management of rapid change.

To put this more simply: migrant numbers may decide what is covered, but norms, government/media relationships and conceptions of the management of a situation will shape how it is covered.

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6. Conclusions

Craig Newmark – the founder of the online classified advertising service Craigslist – has described a trustworthy media as "the immune system of democracy" (Newmark 2017) which, in essence, places journalists as the antibodies of this system.

When working as they should, they support the successful functioning of the democratic process and ensure that the other primary components of it – policy makers and the public – are able to function properly too. However, like antibodies in an immune system, journalists can function in unanticipated ways, do not always target genuine problems, and sometimes target benign or even necessary elements in the system as problems.

The analysis undertaken throughout work package 11 of the REMINDER project is, in effect, designed to understand how and why these 'antibodies' operate the way that they do in different situations.

Encouragingly, it is clear that across all media environments, the primary motivation of journalists tends to be a desire to deliver factual accuracy, hold power to account and to pursue truth, even as one needs to be aware that self-declared values not necessarily translate into related practice. In most cases (though by no means always) they see themselves as politically independent and important players in upholding democratic values.

The actual professional choices they make and the realities of their work are often more complex than this idealistic self-image. Journalists are frequently steeped in the traditions and narratives of their country of residence; they bring individual biases and presumptions; they work at high speed and with little time to digest nuance; they are required to produce materials with word limits and in language that is accessible for audiences who may have no knowledge of the subject; they work for organisations which may be politically affiliated, and for individuals with commercial objectives or personal biases, and they are employees who need to keep their jobs in an ever more competitive and challenging media climate.

What we see, then, is that media – and more specifically the journalists that are the human reality of "mass media" – are part of complex, dynamic and interconnected systems. Their work is responsive to the national environment in which it is constructed, the audience it serves and the political context it is a part of at any given time.

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These human realities serve to illustrate that idealised versions of what journalism "should" be are often naive and over-optimistic. Like politics, business, academia or any other field of human endeavour, the process of creating news is messy, imprecise, often beset by poor decision making, and subject to the vagaries of personality. This seems a natural and ordinary state of things and, while somewhat obvious, is, a vital finding of the work package.

There are, nevertheless, some factors that present cause for concern:

- The increasingly directive approach of some governments within the EU toward media suggests an erosion of freedom.
- Many serious media organisations face pressure to reduce costs and to focus on commercial success and easy wins rather than serious reporting – this raises the possibility of a populist race to the bottom which is unlikely to deliver a robust "immune system" for the Europe's democratic processes.
- Equally, without efforts to encourage greater media plurality in some EU member states, we are unlikely to foster new sets of ideas and political solutions, and to drive better decision-making.

Complicated questions about media regulation and censorship arise when looking at specific subject matter – particularly highly politically salient subject matter such as migration and intra-EU mobility –, but nevertheless, accepting that the price of a free press may be that the free press is imperfect should not be an excuse not to examine the root causes of the imperfections and attempt, where possible, to make it better.

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Annex: Findings from the open online survey

The intention of the online survey was to collect information from a much broader selection of countries – namely all 28 rather than the only nine EU Member States we researched in detail – in order to cross-check the insights presented above and in deliverables 11.1 and 11.2. However, the survey was not representative. Participants self-selected based on a public promotion campaign via email and the European Journalism Centre's social media channels, and were not screened in any way, nor compared to the profile of the journalism ecosystem in their countries. This led to an equitable rather than proportional mix of nationalities, which covered the entire European Union plus some additional countries.

Of the 238 participants who successfully completed the questionnaire, 83% were journalists, while the rest were representatives from NGOs and academia. Their professional self-identification is generally credible for two reasons: On the one hand, they arrived at the survey from communications that address professional journalists and typically do not spread much into the general online audience. On the other hand, the responses were highly consistent with journalistic competence and practice.

The survey achieved a good gender balance, with participants aged primarily between 25-54. Broadcast media accounted for 31%, quality newspapers for 42%, online for 36%, and tabloids for 3% of the participants.

The main limitation imposed by the recruitment and self-selection process of participants in the online survey appears to be that it lacks the same breadth of political spectrum that was deliberately sought in the nine-country face-to-face focus groups and interviews. The results, as discussed below, indicate that respondents overwhelmingly held favourable or at least constructive attitudes towards the entire cluster of migration issues. While the findings in the nine-country sample suggest that, indeed, a majority of European journalists perceive themselves in a similar way, the online survey appears to be notably biased in this direction.

The job of journalism

The vast majority of respondents said that their workplaces were not aggressive; however, that still leaves 24% who claim to have encountered aggressive behaviour at least occasionally. Half of the respondents thought of their colleagues as friends. At the same time, 77% experienced a strong sense of hierarchy, and 62% felt the pressure of competition in their

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newsrooms or peer groups. 70% thought that journalism offered a lower degree of job security compared with other jobs in their country.
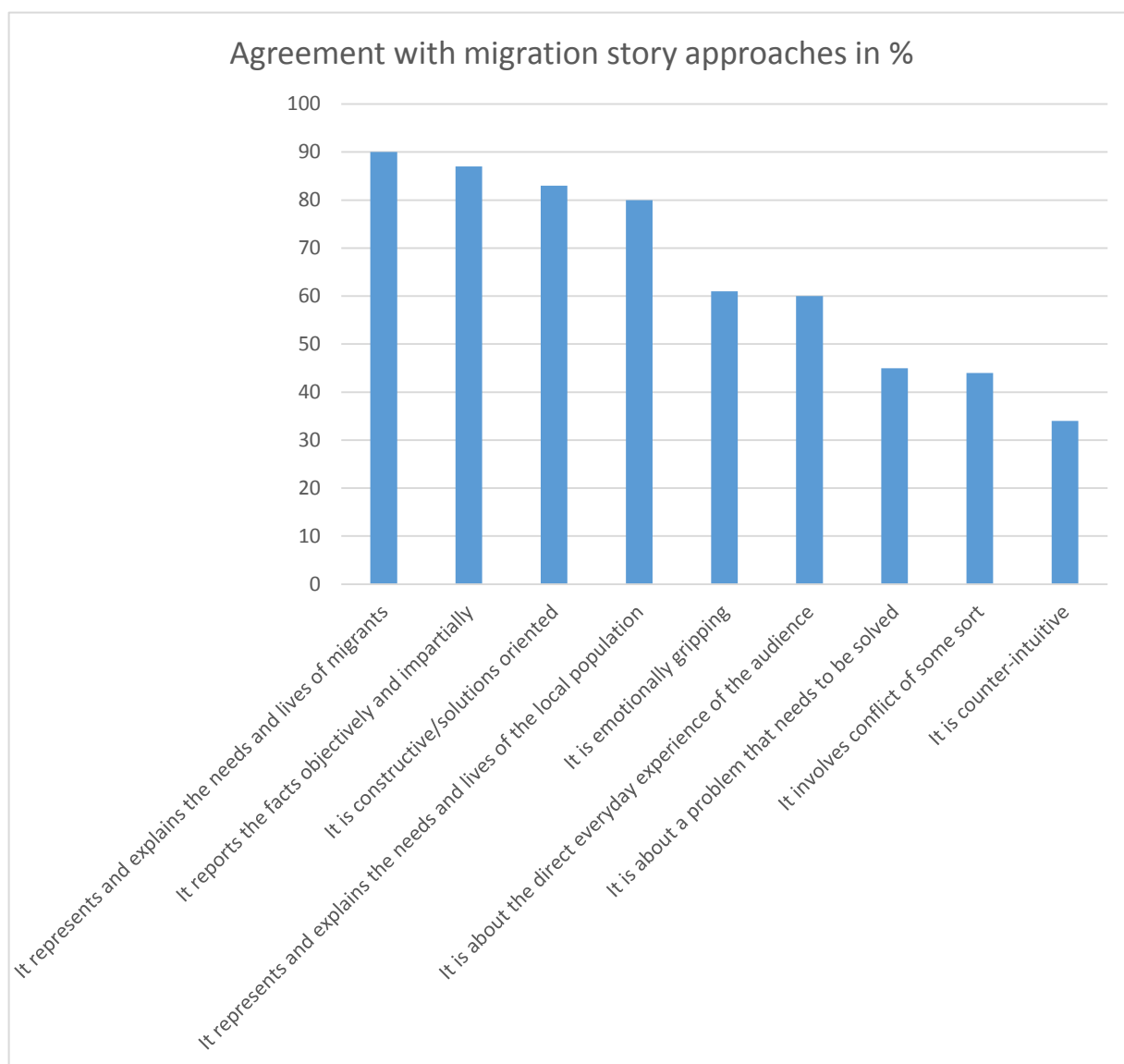
The respondents exhibited a strong "responsibility ethic", including an impetus for educating even a disinclined audience. 65% felt morally compelled to tell stories they deemed relevant, never mind whether the public demanded them or not; 64% shared the belief that at times, readers and viewers had to be encouraged to understand the importance of an issue; and 63% would decide on their own that the audience needed to be aware of a given story. Hardly anyone admitted to just following orders or giving priority to perceived audience demands.

The journalists placed relatively high trust in primary sources (27%) and academics (26%), while many expressed concerns about government press releases (48%) and government spokespeople (49%).

Angles on migration

In terms of news values attributed to migration stories, fact-orientation and a clear grasp of the issues were ranked very highly (80-90%). Surprisingly, 83% of respondents favoured Constructive Journalism approaches – a value that does not nearly appear to match the actual adoption rate of the method across European outlets. Constructive Journalism is a journalistic method that emphasises reporting about good practice and potential solutions to problems and on a careful, measured use of language. With this corresponds that the "conflict" and "problem" frames are rated relatively low (44-45%). 61% admitted that stories needed to be emotionally gripping.

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## Agreement with migration story approaches in %

The respondents exhibited a much more varied vocabulary to describe EU mobility (EU citizens 14%, workers 12%, immigrants 12%, EU migrants 11%, Europeans 10%) than migrants from third countries (migrants and refugees 52%, immigrants 17%).

Respondents saw respect and mutual understanding as well as discrimination issues of all categories of migrants in their host countries as the most important aspect of their reporting (above 80%), while they considered cultural impacts as well as national security and crime the least important, relatively speaking – these frames still received about 50% agreement.

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However, the highest-rated aspect related to refugees and asylum-seekers was the situation in their countries of origin, which, conversely, reduced the perceived relevance of their skills, the labour market needs of the host countries, and their economic impacts. This indicates that respondents appeared to view the refugee situation as primarily humanitarian, whereas the other types of migrants were more closely associated with the economy and labour market.
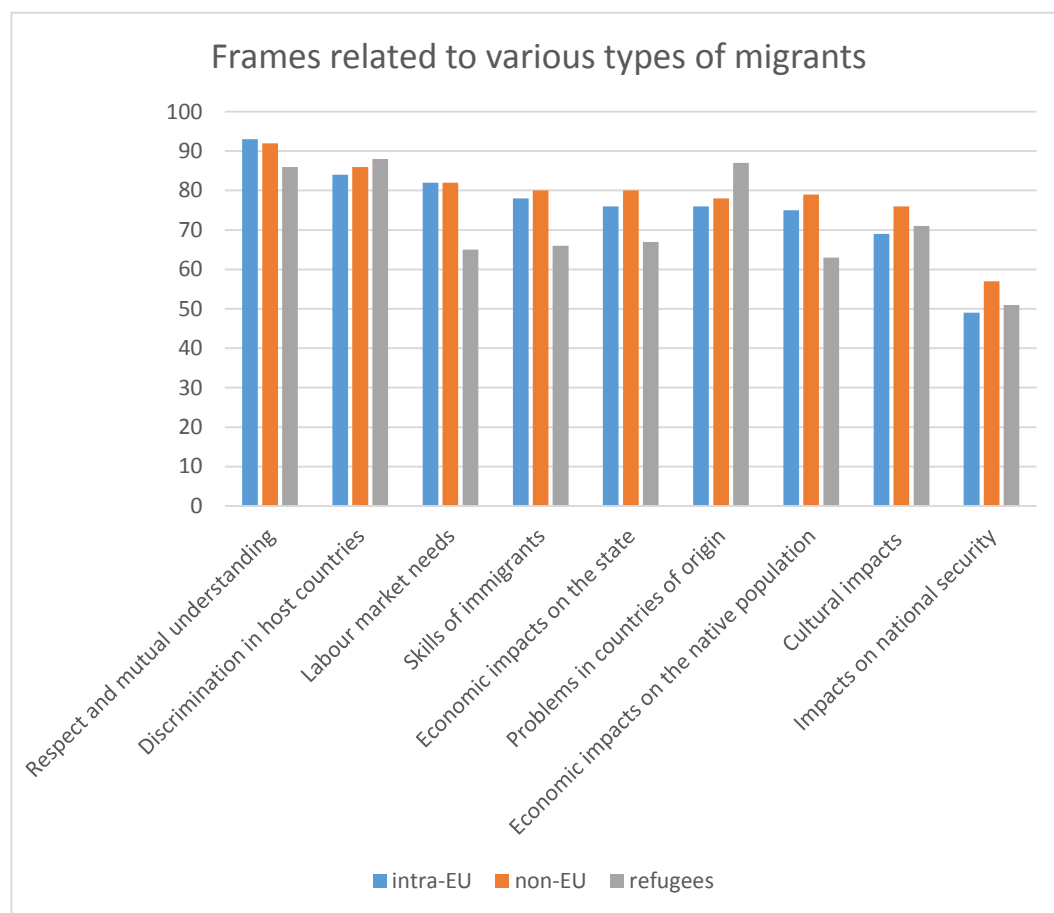
Respondents were very positive about European mobility, and had no strong issues with it from an economic or other perspective. Mid-level answers indicate that journalists had, however, awareness for the difficulties that mobile Europeans experience in practice. Very few subscribed to the "migration as a problem" narrative.

European mobility is... in %
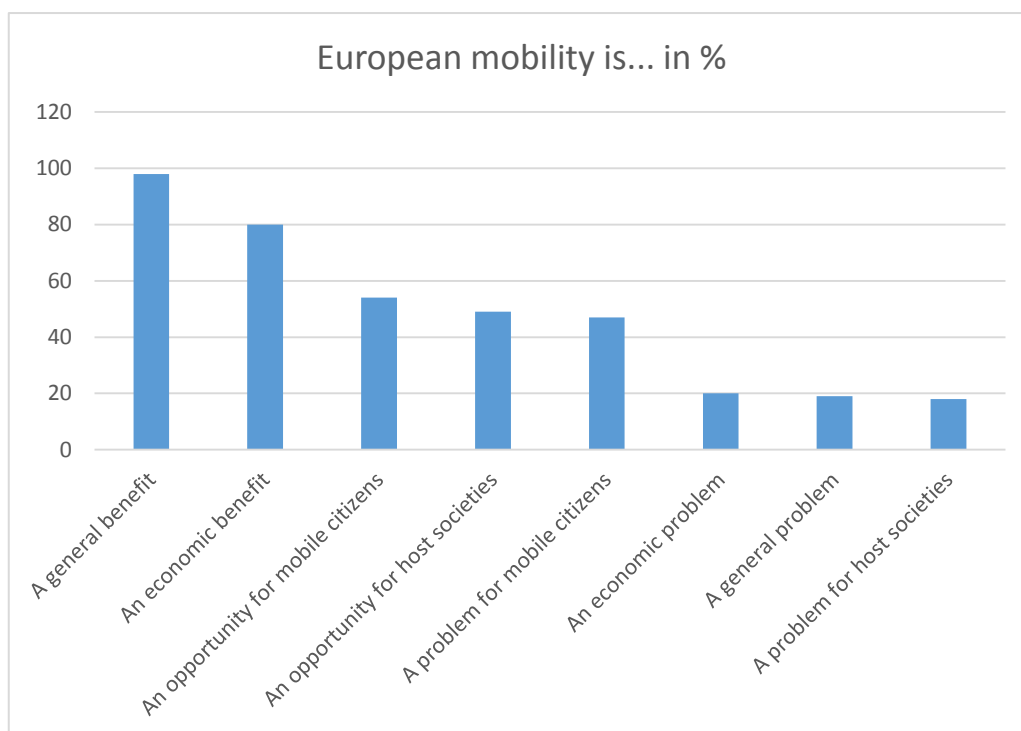
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ROLE OF EUROPEAN MOBILITY AND ITS IMPACTS IN NARRATIVES, DEBATES AND EU REFORMS

The REMINDER project is exploring the economic, social, institutional and policy factors that have shaped the impacts of free movement in the EU and public debates about it.

The project is coordinated from COMPAS and includes participation from 14 consortium partners in 9 countries across Europe

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