

Module 2

Media Narratives & Cross-Border Dialogue

Developed by Outside Media & Knowledge



This resource is licensed
under CC BY 4.0



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Finnish National Agency for Education. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

www.includemedia.eu



01

Cross-Border Journalism and Storytelling – Uniting Diverse Perspectives

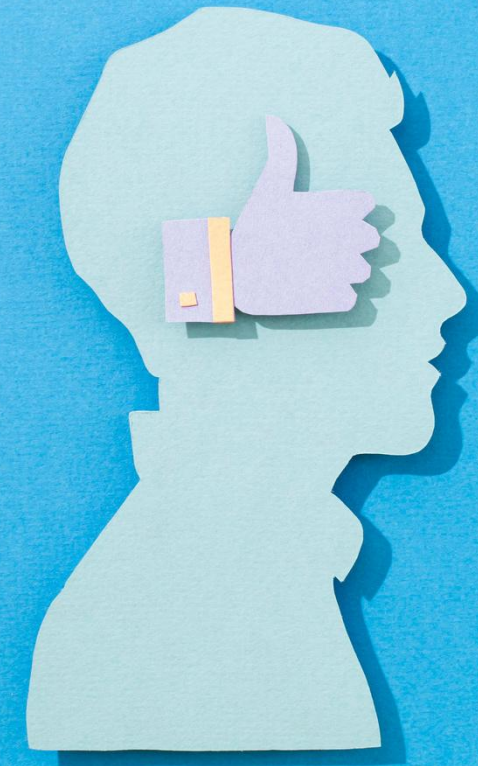
02

Digital Media's Role in Addressing Misinformation in European Political Discourse



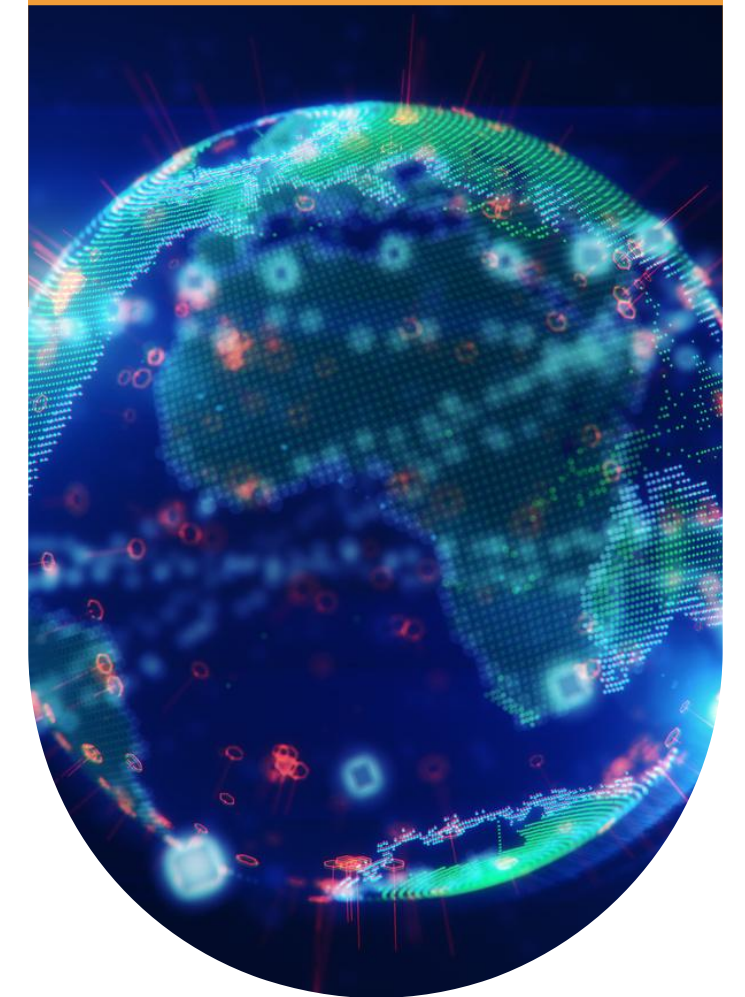
03

Media Representation of Migration and Multiculturalism in Europe



04

The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration



Overview

Media Narratives & Cross-Border Dialogue



This module explores how digital media influences regional narratives and intercultural understanding in a connected Europe. It investigates how journalists, educators, and civil society actors use media to:

- Bridge national and regional divides,
- Counter misinformation and exclusionary narratives,
- Reflect multicultural realities,
- Contribute to a democratic and inclusive digital space.

Learning Outcomes

Topic 1: Cross-Border Journalism and Storytelling: Uniting Diverse Perspectives

- Identify how collaborative storytelling practices across countries enhance media pluralism and civic understanding.
- Analyse case studies where cross-border journalism has exposed truth, challenged stereotypes, or humanised complex issues.

Topic 2: Digital Media's Role in Addressing Misinformation in European Political Discourse

- Examine how misinformation circulates transnationally and affects democratic discourse and public trust.
- Explore digital tools, partnerships, and strategies that counter misinformation and foster resilience in online communities.

Learning Outcomes

Topic 3: Media Representation of Migration and Multiculturalism in Europe

- Critically assess how migration and multiculturalism are portrayed in digital and social media across different European contexts.
- Develop inclusive media practices and guidelines that promote human-centred, nuanced storytelling.

Topic 4: The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration

- Evaluate how digital spaces both reinforce and reshape regional, national, and European identities.
- Reflect on ways digital storytelling can build bridges between cultures and contribute to a more integrated Europe.

01

**Cross-Border Journalism
and Storytelling – Uniting
Diverse Perspectives**





What is Cross-Border Journalism?

Cross-border journalism refers to media collaborations that transcend national boundaries. Journalists from different countries team up to investigate and tell stories that no single newsroom could cover alone.

By pooling expertise, data, and perspectives, they illuminate issues that spill across borders – from international corruption to environmental crises – providing audiences with a richer, more nuanced understanding (sobrief.com).

In a continent as interconnected yet diverse as Europe, such collaborations are essential to reflect multiple viewpoints and **unite diverse perspectives** in reporting.

Topic 1

Cross-Border Journalism
and Storytelling – Uniting
Diverse Perspectives

Why Does Cross-Border Storytelling Matter in Europe?

Many challenges faced today are transnational – **crime networks**, **public health emergencies**, and **climate change** do not stop at borders. Traditional media, however, often focuses on national narratives. Cross-border storytelling bridges this gap by:

- **Connecting Audiences:** It exposes readers to viewpoints from other countries, breaking out of national echo chambers.
- **Fostering Empathy:** Hearing stories jointly told by, say, a Polish and a Spanish journalist can humanise people across borders, reducing stereotypes.
- **Holding Power Accountable:** Collaborative journalism can “connect the dots” of complex scandals. For example, investigating a corruption trail that runs through multiple EU states requires coordinated reporting.

Topic 1

Cross-Border Journalism
and Storytelling – Uniting
Diverse Perspectives

Challenges of Isolated Narratives

Without cross-border collaboration, media narratives risk remaining fragmented. Each country's media might report a story in isolation, potentially leading to misunderstandings or biased views. For instance, a migrant's journey might be portrayed negatively in one nation's press but sympathetically in another's.

If these perspectives never intersect, audiences miss the full story. **Misinformation** can also thrive when there's a lack of international dialogue – rumors in one language can go unchecked elsewhere.

Cross-border journalism counters this by providing context and fact-checking beyond one locale (sobrief.com).



Topic 1

Cross-Border Journalism
and Storytelling – Uniting
Diverse Perspectives

Digital Media as a Collaboration Enabler

Digital tools have revolutionised cross-border reporting. Encrypted communication platforms and cloud data-sharing allow journalists in Paris, Rome, and Budapest to work **simultaneously and securely** on the same investigation (sobrief.com).

Virtual meeting tools enable weekly editorial calls across time zones. Collaborative software (from encrypted chat apps to shared document platforms) lets teams coordinate research, compare findings, and plan publication strategies in real time – something much harder in the pre-digital era.

Social media also helps reporters find sources and stories across borders, by connecting with communities and other journalists globally.



Topic 1

Cross-Border Journalism
and Storytelling – Uniting
Diverse Perspectives

Expert Insight

Collaboration Strengthens Truth Expert Comment

Media scholars observe that cross-border journalism not only widens coverage but also improves accuracy.

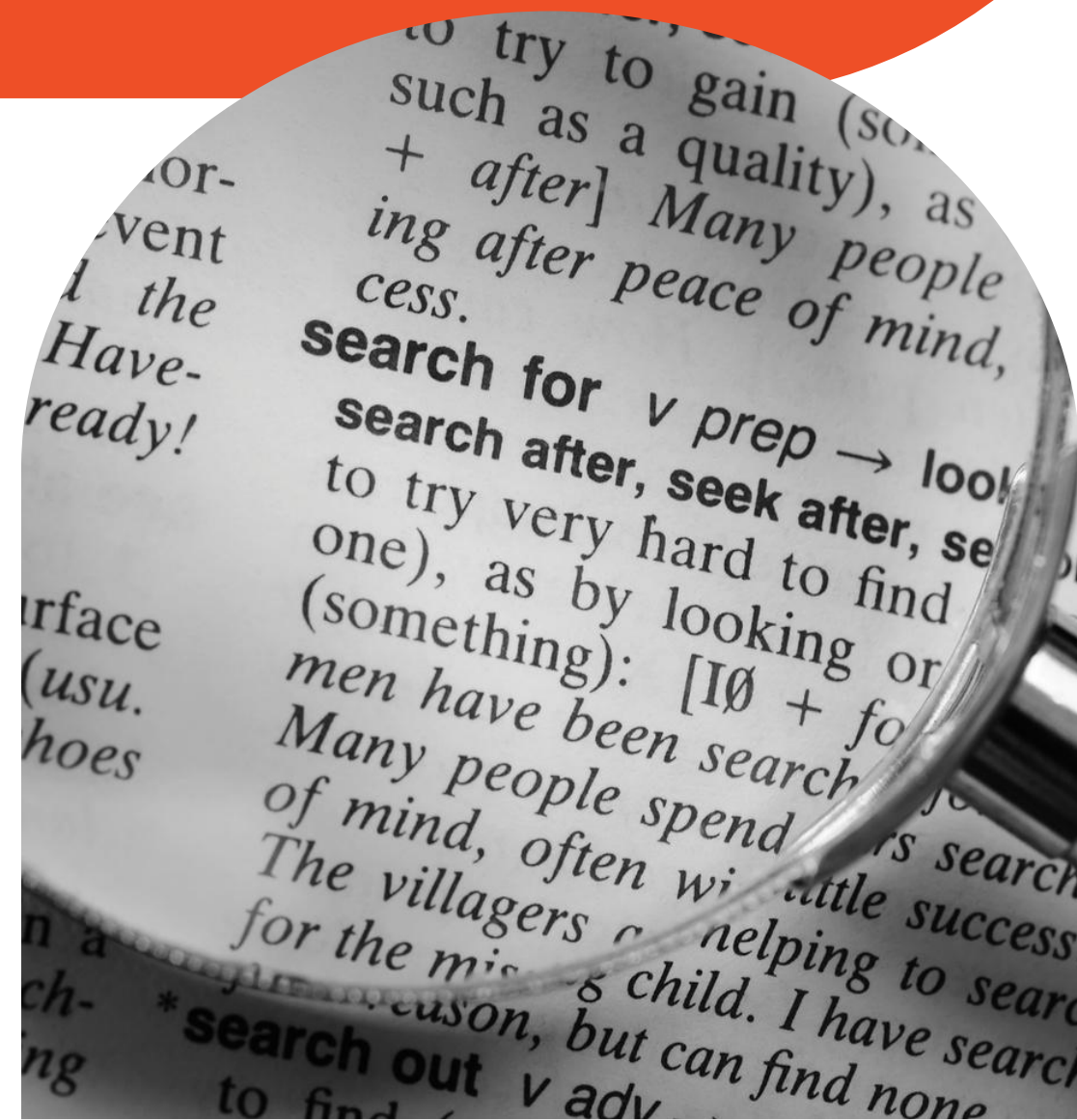
When journalists from different backgrounds fact-check each other and contribute local knowledge, errors are caught and biases balanced.

European media expert Brigitte Alfter argues that journalists must *“learn to systematically cooperate across borders if they want to adequately cover European realities.”*

By uniting reporters from East and West, North and South, cross-border teams can challenge one-sided narratives.

This approach builds **trust** too: audiences are more likely to trust a story reported by a coalition of international media than a single outlet, as it signals thorough verification and broad scrutiny.

(SOURCE: sobrief.com).



Real Initiatives – Networks and Collaboratives

There are now formal networks fostering cross-border storytelling in Europe:

- [Journalismfund.eu](https://journalismfund.eu) – provides grants for investigative teams that include members from at least two different countries, enabling projects that individual outlets couldn't afford.
- [European Investigative Collaborations \(EIC\)](https://www.europeaninvestigativecollaborations.com) – a network of European media outlets that co-publish investigations on issues like arms trafficking or corporate tax avoidance.
- [Hostwriter](https://www.hostwriter.com) – an online platform connecting over 5,000 journalists worldwide, helping reporters find colleagues in other countries to collaborate with or seek on-the-ground help. Such networks illustrate a solution-oriented approach: rather than complain about siloed media, they actively build bridges among storytellers.





Case Study:

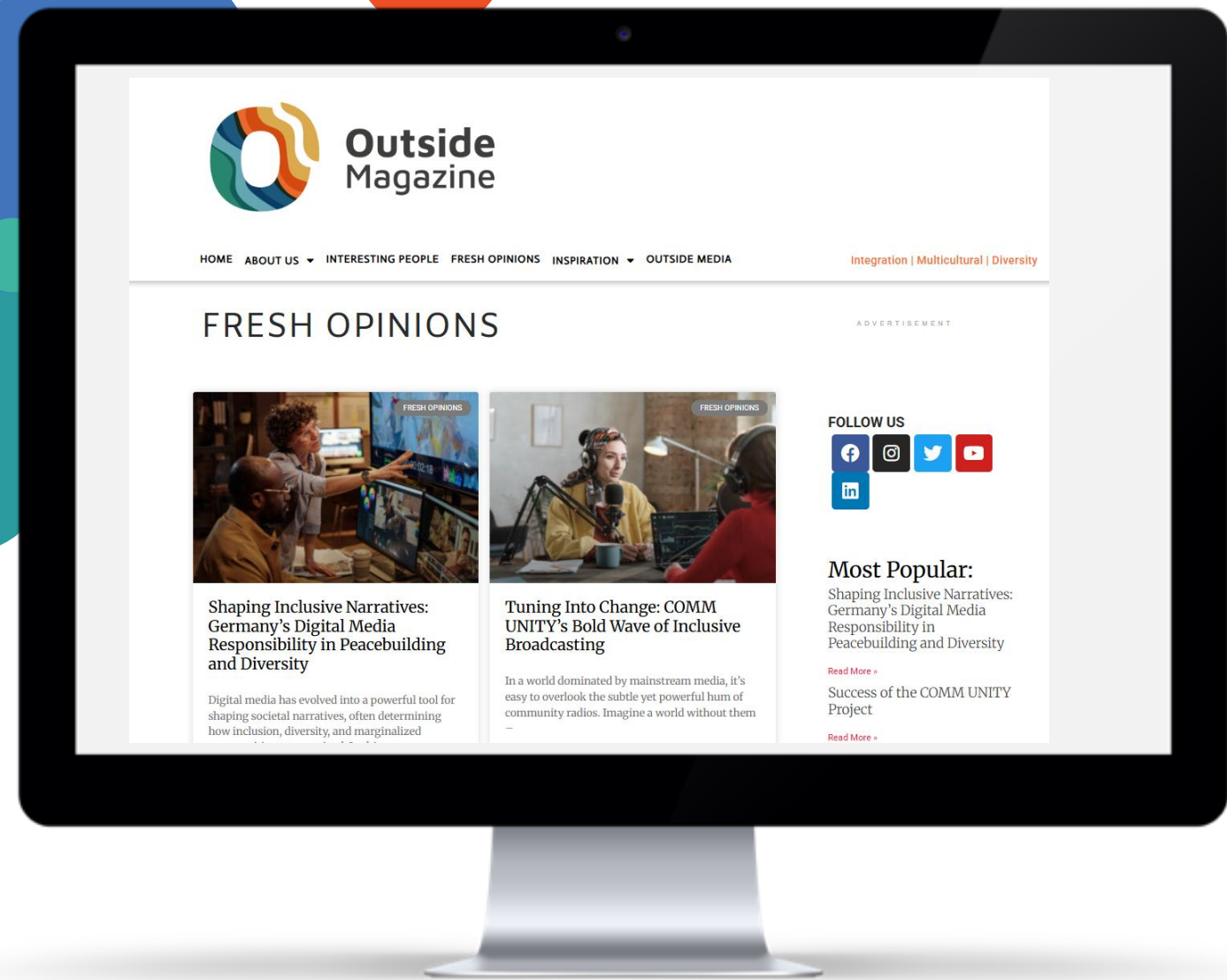
“Forbidden Stories aims to ensure access to information of public interest, while at the same time deterring crimes and violence against journalists.” (SOURCE: <https://forbiddenstories.org/about-us/mission/our-mission/>)

The Daphne Project

Cross-border journalism has also been a force for solidarity and justice. After Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia was assassinated in 2017, **45 journalists from 18 international media outlets** formed *The Daphne Project* to continue her work.

Coordinated by the NGO Forbidden Stories, they shared Daphne’s unfinished investigations and published reports on corruption that might have otherwise been silenced.

This collaborative effort sent a strong message: silencing one journalist would not kill the story. By uniting across borders, reporters ensured accountability and kept the public informed. *The Daphne Project* exemplifies how cross-border storytelling can uphold press freedom and **amplify voices** that dangerous actors try to suppress.



Media Collaboration Example

Outside Multicultural Magazine

“Stories should travel, just like people do.” That’s the philosophy behind [Outside Multicultural Magazine](#), an EU-based media project amplifying the voices of migrants, minorities, and multilingual storytellers across Europe.

The editorial team includes contributors from Ireland, Bosnia, Nigeria, Italy, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond – working remotely to craft bilingual content that reflects lived experiences often left out of mainstream media.

“When we co-write stories, we don’t just translate language. We translate context, nuance, and emotion,” says a contributing editor.

“An article on refugee housing isn’t just one country’s issue – we shape it with shared learning from different regions.”



Activity

Try It Yourself Practical Exercise:

Comparing Cross-Border Coverage – Pick a major news story that affects more than one European country (for example, a new EU policy, a climate protest movement, or a business merger).

Find articles about it from two different countries' news sources.

Compare:

- How do the narratives or emphasis differ? (Are there nation-specific angles?)
- What do you learn from one source that the other left out? Reflect on how reading multiple perspectives changed your understanding. Then, imagine you are a journalist tasked with writing a single story that would make sense to both audiences. What elements would you include to unite those perspectives? Discuss how this exercise highlights the value of cross-border journalism in providing a fuller picture.

02

**Digital Media's Role in
Addressing Misinformation
in European Political
Discourse**



The Challenge of Misinformation in Europe

In the digital context, misinformation (false or misleading information) spreads rapidly across Europe's online spaces, often outpacing the truth.

Social media, messaging apps, and even search algorithms can amplify rumours and fake news, influencing public opinion and political discourse. European societies can feel a negative impact that spans across areas of life: from politics, citizens' participation, to conspiracy theories about health and science.

According to EU surveys, an overwhelming majority of Europeans are concerned that online disinformation is a **threat to democracy** and social cohesion. The ease of sharing content online means a fake story posted in one country can quickly circulate in many languages.

(SOURCES: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2966> ; datajournalism.com).



Topic 2

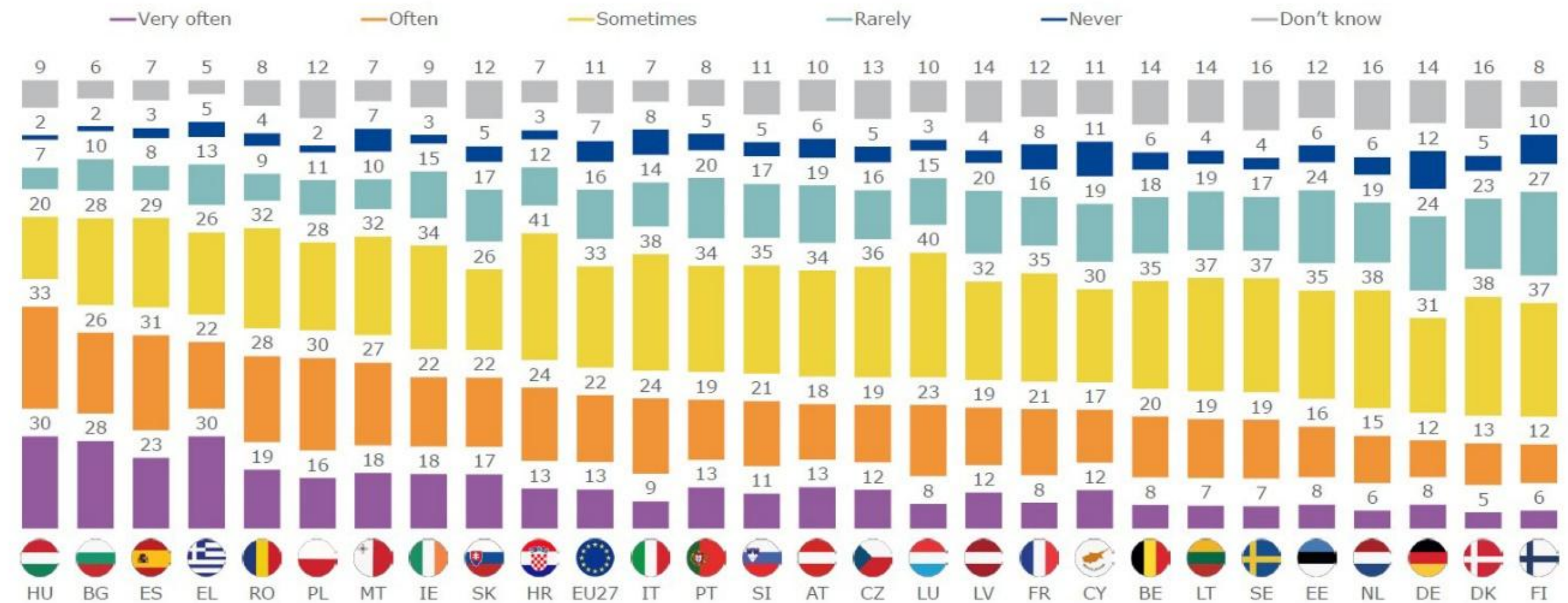
Digital Media's Role in
Addressing
Misinformation in
European Political
Discourse

The Challenge of Misinformation in Europe



Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in Addressing Misinformation in European Political Discourse



How often do you think that you have been personally exposed to disinformation and fake news over the past 7 days?

SOURCE: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2966>

How Misinformation Crosses Borders

Digital media platforms are global by nature.

A sensational fake story or doctored image doesn't stay confined to where it originated:

- **Language translation:** Misleading content often gets translated (or carries minimal text) so it spreads across linguistic communities. For instance, a false narrative about EU policy might appear in one diaspora Facebook group and soon after in other ones.
- **Bots and Coordinated Networks:** Malicious actors use automated social media accounts (bots) to disseminate the same false messages in multiple countries simultaneously.
- **Algorithmic amplification:** Platforms like YouTube or X can algorithmically promote engaging (often provocative) content beyond its country of origin. This means a lie created in Country A can trend in Country B even if it's utterly false.

Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in
Addressing
Misinformation in
European Political
Discourse

How Misinformation Crosses Borders

- **Diaspora and transnational communities:** Migrant or diaspora communities share news back home and vice versa via digital channels. Unfortunately, this can include unverified stories, spreading misinformation between nations. Example: During the COVID-19 pandemic, conspiracy theories (like false “cures” or vaccine myths) that started on fringe websites in one European country were soon popping up on WhatsApp and Facebook groups across the continent, requiring a concerted cross-border effort to debunk them.



Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in
Addressing
Misinformation in
European Political
Discourse

The Impact on Political Discourse

Misinformation doesn't just distort facts; it **polarises societies**. In European politics, false or misleading narratives have been used to:

- **Sway Elections and Referenda:** e.g., In the lead-up to elections, fabricated stories about candidates or parties can influence voters.
- **Erode Trust:** Repeated fake claims (can erode citizens' trust in institutions and mainstream media if unaddressed).
- **Fuel Populism and Extremism:** Othering narratives (e.g., false stories blaming migrants for crimes or EU plots against nations) contribute to extremist talking points. They simplify complex issues into sensational falsehoods, which can spread faster than nuanced truth.
- **Distract and Divide:** Misinformation often targets emotions. A shocking lie can dominate online conversations, distracting from real issues. For instance, a hoax story about a crime by an immigrant might overshadow factual discussion on immigration policy. Such distortions hinder rational, evidence-based discourse at the European level.

Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in
Addressing
Misinformation in
European Political
Discourse

Digital Media – Part of the Problem and Solution

Digital media platforms (Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, TikTok, etc.) have been **vectors** for misinformation, but they are also key to combating it:

- **Rapid Spread:** A false news article can go viral on Facebook within hours. YouTube’s algorithm might auto-play misleading videos, and Twitter trends can elevate dubious claims. This has forced tech companies and policymakers to acknowledge their role in the problem.
- **Detection & Response:** On the positive side, the same speed can be harnessed for correction. Social media enables real-time fact-checking responses; e.g., when a misleading tweet gains traction, experts and fact-checkers can quickly reply or **flag** it with correct information.

(Source: datajournalism.com).



Topic 2

Digital Media’s Role in Addressing Misinformation in European Political Discourse

Digital Media – Part of the Problem and Solution



Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in Addressing Misinformation in European Political Discourse

- **Platform Policies:** Digital platforms are introducing measures like content warnings, fact-check labels, and algorithm tweaks to **reduce misinformation spread**. For example, Twitter (pre-2023) experimented with prompts (“Read the article before you retweet”) to curb blind sharing of headlines. Facebook and YouTube increased removal of verifiably false harmful content (like COVID disinfo), often in cooperation with fact-checking organisations.
- **Public Awareness via Digital Campaigns:** Social media is also used to run awareness campaigns (by NGOs or the EU) teaching users how to spot fake news. For instance, the European Commission’s social media campaigns have encouraged critical thinking and advertised resources like fact-check portals. Thus, while digital media has enabled the misinformation flood, it also offers tools to dam the tide when used responsibly.



Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in
Addressing
Misinformation in
European Political
Discourse

European Initiatives – Fighting Fake News Together

European institutions and collaborations have been actively addressing online misinformation:

- **[EU Code of Practice on Disinformation](#)**: In 2018 the EU facilitated a voluntary code where major tech platforms (Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc.) agreed to take steps against disinformation – for example, by demonetising fake news (cutting off ad revenue) and boosting authoritative content. This Code was [strengthened in 2022](#) with more binding measures and transparency requirements linking with the new Digital Services Act.
- **[European Digital Media Observatory \(EDMO\)](#)**: Established in 2020, EDMO is an EU-supported hub bringing together fact-checkers, academic researchers, and media organisations across Europe. It supports a network of national/regional hubs that monitor and analyse misinformation trends in their languages, and then share findings. This cross-border network means a fake narrative detected in one country can be rapidly flagged to others.



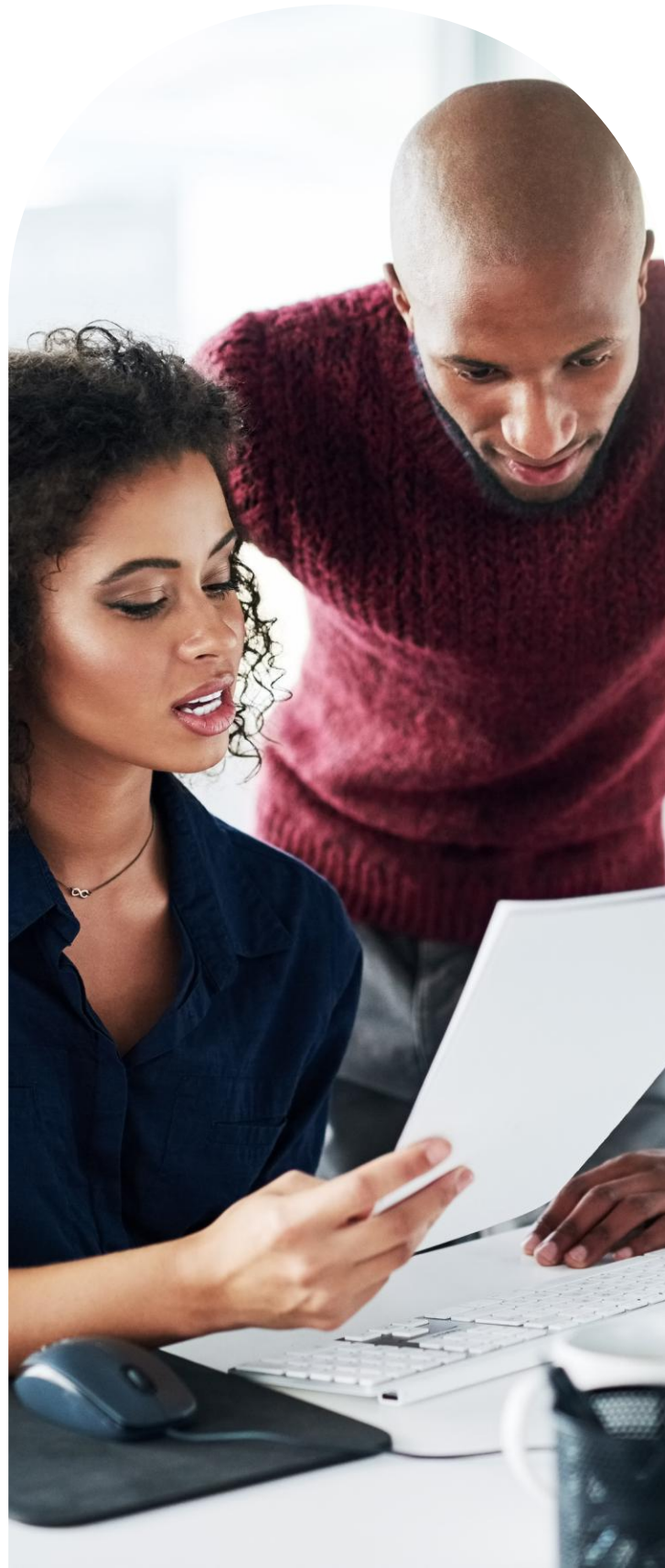
Topic 2

Digital Media's Role in Addressing Misinformation in European Political Discourse

European Initiatives – Fighting Fake News Together

- [EU vs Disinfo](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/euvsdisinfo-how-debunk-over-6500-disinformation-cases-four-years_en): An initiative of the European External Action Service, originally focused on countering pro-Kremlin disinformation, it maintains an online database of debunked false stories. As of 2021, it had collected thousands of disinformation cases targeting European audiences, exposing common tactics (e.g., conspiracy narratives). It regularly publishes trend reports and myth-busting articles, effectively acting as a cross-border fact-check resource. (SOURCE: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/euvsdisinfo-how-debunk-over-6500-disinformation-cases-four-years_en)
- Rapid Alert System https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/59644_en: The EU created a Rapid Alert System among member states' authorities to share real-time information about disinformation campaigns, especially around elections. If one country's election experiences a wave of false news (say, via Facebook), others are alerted to watch for similar patterns.

The Role of Fact-Checkers and Newsrooms

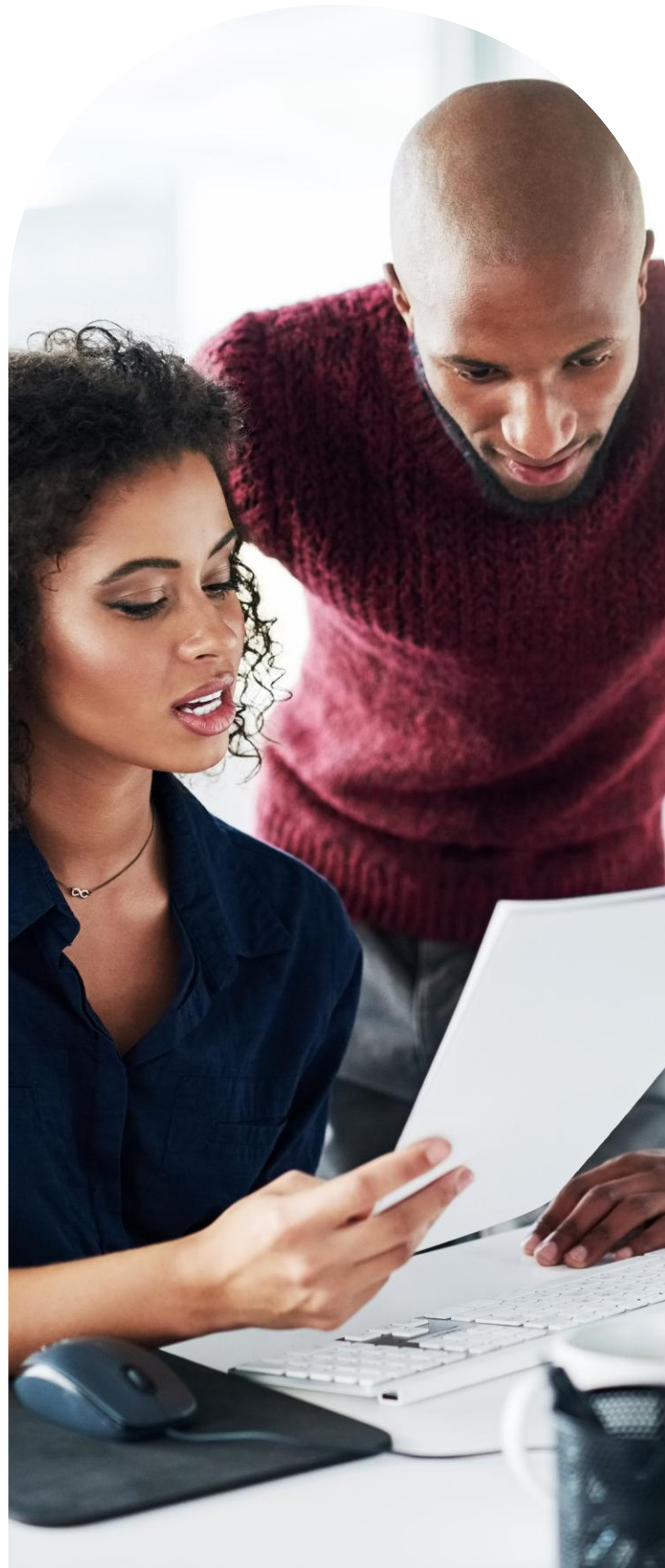


Fact-checking organisations have become frontline warriors against digital misinformation in Europe. Groups like Full Fact (UK), Correctiv (Germany), Pagella Politica (Italy), and many others now work together across borders.

They use digital media to:

- **Debunk in Real Time:** They publish articles, tweets, and videos that investigate viral claims. Importantly, they optimise this content for online sharing – e.g., infographics or short explainer videos that quickly convey why a circulating claim is false.
- **Collaborate via Networks:** Many are part of cross-European coalitions (e.g., the International Fact-Checking Network, or the EU-funded fact-checking hub). If one group debunks a story that has relevance elsewhere, they share their research so others can translate or adapt it. An example is the COVID-19 #CoronaVirusFacts Alliance, which united over 100 fact-checkers globally (including many EU teams) to pool their debunks and avoid duplication.

The Role of Fact-Checkers and Newsrooms



- **Push for Accountability:** Fact-checkers often liaise with social media companies – flagging repeat disinformers or asking for certain virulent false posts to be taken down under platform policies. In Europe, some newsrooms have begun “embedded” fact-checkers who directly input on newsroom decisions to avoid inadvertently spreading misinformation.
- **Media Literacy Outreach:** They don’t just debunk; they also educate. Organisations run workshops or create online quizzes teaching citizens how to identify fake accounts or manipulated images. For instance, the French outlet Le Monde’s “Les Décodeurs” offers tutorials on source verification.

Solution-Oriented Approaches in Digital Media

Despite the daunting challenge, numerous solution-oriented methods are being deployed via digital media to counter misinformation:

- **Prebunking Campaigns:** Rather than only reacting, prebunking involves exposing people to a mild dose of misinformation tactics beforehand, like a “vaccine” for the mind. In 2022, researchers and Google’s Jigsaw unit ran [YouTube ad campaigns](#) in Eastern Europe showing short videos on how propaganda and manipulation work. These prebunking videos led viewers to be more skeptical of subsequent fake news. This innovative use of digital media helps inoculate the public.
- **Crowdsourced Verification:** Initiatives like [Truly Media](#) (a collaborative verification platform) or [Twitter’s Community Notes \(formerly Birdwatch\)](#) allow users themselves to help fact-check and add context to dubious posts. In the EU, an example was the Facts Against Fake campaign. For example, read this article: <https://www.dw.com/en/fact-check-how-to-spot-fake-news-ahead-of-eu-elections/a-69046888> .

Solution-Oriented Approaches in Digital Media

- **Legislative Frameworks:** While not “digital media” per se, new laws like the Digital Services Act (DSA) compel platforms to be more transparent and accountable for content risks, including disinformation. Under the DSA, very large platforms must assess and mitigate systemic risks – which has led to more robust systems to flag and reduce harmful false content in EU user feeds. These regulatory measures work hand-in-hand with digital media efforts to create a safer information space.
- **Media Literacy Games and Challenges:** NGOs and educators use digital tools to engage people in learning to spot fakes. For instance, [the online game “Bad News”](#) (available in multiple European languages) lets players step into the shoes of a fake news creator to learn how misinformation works – a fun, interactive way to build savvy media consumers.

“Scientists who worked with us on the development of this game found that playing Bad News improves people’s ability to spot manipulation techniques in social media posts, increases their confidence in spotting such techniques, and reduces their willingness to share manipulative content with people in their network. You can read more about the science behind the game [HERE](#).”

SOURCE: <https://www.getbadnews.com/en>





Activity

“Think Like a Fact-Checker” Challenge.

The aim is to practice verification skills using digital tools:

- 1. Find a Claim:** Go to a social media platform or news site and find a viral claim or headline that sounds dubious or extreme. (For example, “EU to outlaw personal vehicles by 2025!” or a dramatic statistic someone shared on Twitter.)
- 2. Verify with Digital Tools:** Use at least two verification methods:
 - Do a reverse image search if an image is involved (e.g., using Google Images or TinEye) to see if the image is old or doctored.
 - Check fact-checking sites (such as EUvsDisinfo, Snopes, or a local fact-checker) to see if the claim has been investigated.
 - Look for the original source of the news (is a known credible outlet reporting it, or just a random blog?).
 - Use WHOIS or other domain lookup if it’s a suspicious website to see who’s behind it.



Activity

- 1. Document Your Findings:** Write down what you found. Was the claim true, false, or mixed? How could you tell? If false, what harm could it have caused if people believed it?
- 2. Share and Reflect:** Discuss how easy or hard it was to debunk the claim. How did the digital platform's design help or hinder your checking (for example, did it provide any fact-check labels or context)? What does this say about the role of digital media companies in either spreading or curbing misinformation?
3. Through this exercise, learners experience firsthand the detective work of addressing misinformation online.



Multimedia Resource

Verification Handbook

Resource: “Verification Handbook: For Disinformation and Media Manipulation” – European Journalism Centre. This is a free, downloadable e-book (with versions in multiple languages) that offers step-by-step guidance on verifying online content and investigating disinformation. It covers techniques like geolocation of images, checking deepfake videos, and analysing social media accounts. The latest edition was published at a critical time and “equips journalists with the knowledge to investigate social media accounts, bots, ... deep fakes, as well as other forms of disinformation”. Educators can use excerpts from this handbook in class to show how professionals tackle fake news. Learners are encouraged to read a chapter and practice one of its methods (like using a reverse image search or metadata tool) on a piece of content they find online.

SOURCE: datajournalism.com.



Multimedia Resource

EU Mythbusting Portal

Resource: [EUvsDisinfo Online Portal](#) – This is an interactive website maintained by the EU’s anti-disinformation task force. It contains a searchable database of thousands of debunked false stories that have circulated in Europe. Users can search by keyword (e.g., “NATO”, “vaccines”, “immigration”) to see real examples of disinformation and read the fact-check analysis behind them. The portal also showcases weekly disinformation trend reports, explaining how false narratives spread across countries. For instance, one can find how a particular piece of fake news about “5G causing COVID” popped up in different languages. By exploring this portal, learners get a hands-on understanding of common disinfo themes and the work that goes into countering them. (If accessible, show an infographic from the site illustrating a disinformation network, or have students lookup a myth of their choice.)

Building Resilience – Media Literacy and Critical Thinking

Ultimately, the most sustainable solution to misinformation is an informed, critical public. Digital media initiatives in Europe emphasise empowering users:

- **Media Literacy in Education:** Many European countries have introduced digital literacy in school curricula, teaching students how to recognise biased or false information online. For example, Finland is often cited for its comprehensive approach to educate schoolchildren on spotting fake news as part of civic education.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Organisations run social media challenges like #ThinkBeforeSharing, encouraging people to pause and verify before forwarding content. The European Commission's sites provide quizzes like "Could YOU spot fake news?" to engage citizens interactively.
- **Fact-Checking as a Habit:** Some news outlets now regularly include fact-check segments in their programming or newsletters (e.g., the BBC Reality Check, France24's Les Observateurs). By making fact-checks visible in daily media consumption, the public gets used to seeing claims scrutinised.



- **Community Initiatives:** Local libraries and community centers host workshops (in-person or via webinars) on digital skills for seniors or other groups, recognising that misinformation often preys on the less digitally savvy. These workshops often teach how to double-check sources and not to trust everything that appears on Facebook or WhatsApp.
- **Encouraging Quality Journalism:** Support for independent, quality journalism (through subscriptions, donations, or public funding) is a broader but crucial component – if people have access to reliable news sources they trust, they are less likely to fall for disinformation on random websites. The EU has acknowledged this by funding projects that enhance local media and investigative reporting (tying back to Topic 1's cross-border efforts). By combining these efforts, Europe is gradually building a resilient digital citizenry that can navigate the online information flood with a critical eye.



03

Media Representation of
Migration and
Multiculturalism in Europe





Topic 3

Media Representation of Migration and Multiculturalism in Europe

Why Media Representation Matters

How the media portrays migration and multiculturalism has a profound impact on public perception and social cohesion. In Europe, a continent shaped by migration flows and cultural diversity, media narratives can either foster understanding and inclusion or fuel prejudice and division. This topic explores how digital media covers migrants, refugees, and minority cultures, and why it matters.

Consider: Do news stories give voice to migrants themselves or just talk about them? Are multicultural societies depicted as thriving mosaics or sources of conflict? Representation matters because it shapes the stories a society tells about who “we” are. It influences policies and how welcoming (or hostile) communities feel.

This section will highlight current patterns, challenges in media representation, and positive initiatives promoting a more inclusive narrative.

Common Media Narratives on Migration

European media coverage of migration has often fallen into a few broad storylines:

- **Crisis/Threat Narrative:** Often peaks during events like the 2015 refugee influx. Migrants are described with terms like “waves” or “floods” – metaphors that suggest a threatening, uncontrolled mass. Headlines might focus on border security, fears of cultural change, or isolated incidents of crime, framing migration as a security crisis. This narrative was common in tabloids and some political discourse, portraying refugees and migrants as the other and a potential danger.
- **Humanitarian/Victim Narrative:** At other times, especially in more liberal media, migrants (particularly refugees) are shown as victims deserving compassion – fleeing war, persecution, or poverty. Stories centre on humanitarian crises, tragic journeys (like deaths at sea), and calls for aid. The iconic 2015 image of Alan Kurdi (the Syrian boy who drowned) shifted many outlets to this empathetic framing, at least temporarily.



Topic 3

Media Representation
of Migration and
Multiculturalism in
Europe

Common Media Narratives on Migration

- **Economic/Functional Narrative:** Migrants are sometimes discussed in terms of numbers and economic impact – as workers filling labour shortages, or conversely as perceived competition for jobs and welfare. This can reduce people to statistics (e.g., “X thousand asylum applications” or “migrants cost/generate Y euros”), missing individual stories.
- **Success/Enrichment Narrative:** Less common but important, some media highlight positive integration stories – migrants succeeding in business, arts, sports, or enriching the host society culturally (food, music, festivals). Multiculturalism in this narrative is an asset: e.g., articles about a thriving immigrant neighbourhood bringing new life to a city. Each narrative comes with its own tone. The challenge is that negative or sensational frames (threat, crisis) often dominate, because they produce strong reactions and clicks, whereas nuanced or positive stories may receive less attention.



Topic 3

Media Representation
of Migration and
Multiculturalism in
Europe

Stereotypes and Bias in Representation

Media representations can inadvertently (or deliberately) reinforce stereotypes:

- **Generalisation:** One migrant or minority individual's actions might be taken to stand for the whole group (e.g., if a migrant commits a crime, some outlets splash their origin in the headline, implying a broader trend).
- **Lack of Voices:** Migrants and minorities are frequently spoken about, rather than heard. Studies in several European countries have found that in news stories about immigration, migrants were quoted in only a small fraction of stories, whereas politicians and officials dominated the narrative. This can render migrants voiceless and objectified.
- **Imagery:** The choice of images often sets a tone – for example, looping footage of crowds of young male refugees crossing a border can instil fear of an “invasion”, whereas showing a diverse family being welcomed depicts integration. Unfortunately, media often reuse stock images of overcrowded boats or fences, perpetuating an image of migrants as faceless masses at Europe's gates.



Topic 3

Media Representation
of Migration and
Multiculturalism in
Europe

Stereotypes and Bias in Representation

- **Terminology:** Words matter. Labels like “illegal immigrant” vs “undocumented migrant”, “refugee” vs “economic migrant”, “Islamic terrorist” vs “terrorist” can bias audiences. Some media have adopted more neutral language, but others continue terms that carry stigma. For instance, calling someone an “illegal” criminalises their existence rather than describing their status.
- **Multiculturalism Portrayals:** In coverage of multicultural societies (e.g., second-generation immigrant communities in Europe), bias can creep in by only highlighting problems (ghettoisation, radicalisation) and rarely success stories. If news from a suburb with a large immigrant population is only reported when there is violence, it skews public perception of that community.



Topic 3

Media Representation
of Migration and
Multiculturalism in
Europe



Tools and Guidelines for Inclusive Reporting

There are practical resources and frameworks to help journalists improve representation of migrants and multicultural issues:

- **Glossaries and Style Guides:** Organisations like the UNHCR and Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) have published guidelines on migration terminology. For instance, UNHCR recommends using “refugee” only for those meeting the definition, “asylum-seeker” for those applying, and avoiding criminalising terms. The EJN’s “Migration Reporting Guidelines” urge context (report numbers in proportion, avoid shock adjectives like “massive influx” without data).
- **Diversity in Sourcing Checklist:** Some newsrooms implement a checklist for reporters/editors: Did we include a migrant voice or representative of the community in this story? Have we balanced official statements with personal perspectives? This kind of self-audit can become part of the editorial process.



- **Story Angle Shifts:** Journalism training encourages moving beyond the predictable angles. For example, instead of yet another report on migrant numbers (which can be abstract), focus on process stories (what is the asylum process like for an individual?), or community impact stories (how a new immigrant community revitalised a town, or how locals and newcomers interact in a school).
- **Visual Guidelines:** Photo editors are advised to choose images that humanise. Rather than always showing crowds from a distance, include portraits of individuals or families, images of interaction between locals and migrants, etc., with consent and respectful portrayal. There are Initiatives that share photo sets that depict refugees in everyday life (working, learning, laughing) to break the visual monotony of crisis imagery.
- **Inclusive Storytelling Techniques:** This might involve co-creating content with communities. For example, a journalist might run a workshop where refugees outline what stories they want told about them. The resulting articles have those insights built-in, leading to richer narratives. Another method is using first-person formats: letting migrants write op-eds or do video diaries on major news sites, integrating those voices directly into mainstream coverage.



Activity

Practical Exercise – Analysing Media Content

Media Representation Audit.

Divide learners into small groups and have each group select:

- One news article about migration (from any European country's media, ideally translate if needed).
- One piece of social media content (could be a tweet, a Facebook post, or a short video) related to multiculturalism or migration that has significant reach (many shares/likes). Each group will:
 1. Analyse the Content: Identify the framing and language. Is the coverage negative, positive, or neutral? Does it use emotive language or imagery? Who is quoted or featured (migrants, officials, locals, experts)? What narrative category does it fit (from Slide 2: crisis, humanitarian, etc.)?
 2. Discuss Impact: How might this content make audiences feel about migrants or multicultural communities? Does it reinforce any stereotype or challenge them?

04

**The Impact of Digital
Media on Regional
Identities and European
Integration**



Identities in a Digital Europe

In Europe, people often carry layered identities: local/regional (eg: Catalan, Bavarian, Sicilian), national (eg: Spanish, German, Italian), and a broader European identity.

Digital media – from social networks to online news – influences how these identities are expressed and evolve. This topic explores how being online affects one's sense of belonging to a region or nation and to Europe as a whole.

Does the internet bring Europeans together into a shared public sphere, or does it amplify regional loyalties and separatisms? How do regional cultures find voice online? Crucially, can digital media help reconcile regional pride with European unity? The goal is to understand the interplay between the digital landscape and identity narratives across Europe's regions, and how that impacts the ongoing project of European integration.



Topic 4

The Impact of Digital
Media on Regional
Identities and
European Integration

Regional Identities Go Online

Topic 4

The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration

Europe's many regions – defined by culture, language, or history – have embraced digital media to promote their identity:

- **Language Revival and Preservation:** Speakers of regional or minority languages (like Basque, Welsh, or Sami) use social media, YouTube, and blogs to create content in their mother tongue. This has been a boon for languages once confined to private spheres. For example, there are popular YouTubers producing comedy in Scots dialect or influencers tweeting in Corsican. This online presence both preserves and normalises these identities for younger generations.
- **Cultural Showcasing:** Regions use digital platforms to share local heritage with the world. Virtual tours of regional museums, Facebook pages for folk festivals, and Instagram accounts dedicated to local cuisine or landscapes connect people far and wide to a region's pride. A person in Brazil interested in Celtic music can follow a Breton festival live-stream, fostering a niche global community around a regional culture.

Regional Identities Go Online

- **Diaspora Connections:** For people who have moved away from their home region, digital media keeps them connected. A Sardinian living in Berlin can join Facebook groups of Sardinians abroad, follow local news from Sardinia online, and even participate in hometown decisions via e-consultations if available. This maintains a sense of regional identity regardless of physical location.
 - Within certain countries, people of a common, minority cultures – a diaspora, very often form Facebook or even professional LinkedIn groups, to exchange information, socialize and nurture their cultural connections.

Topic 4

The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration

European Integration – A Shared Online Space?

On the flip side is the idea of a common European identity – a sense of unity across countries. Digital media has opened new possibilities for forging this:

- **Pan-European Media and Discourse:** Unlike the fragmented national TV and print landscapes, online media has given rise to pan-European outlets (e.g., Euronews on YouTube, Politico Europe online) and forums where Europeans from different countries discuss issues (Reddit forums on EU policy, pan-European Facebook groups). People from Lisbon to Riga can comment under the same Euronews article on Facebook, interacting directly.
- **Transnational Communities:** Interest-based communities often transcend borders online. Think of a forum for European history buffs or an EU-funded Erasmus alumni Facebook group. Members share a European outlook that complements their national identity. Campaigns like #EUandMe or #ThisTimeImVoting (ahead of EU elections) tried to rally especially young Europeans on social media around a shared cause of participating in European democracy.

Topic 4

The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration



European Integration – A Shared Online Space?



Topic 4

The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration

- **European Public Sphere Emergence:** Scholars have long called for a European “public sphere” – a space where Europeans debate as Europeans, not just as nationals. Social networks and online events (like Twitter chats with EU Commissioners, or the Conference on the Future of Europe’s digital platform where any citizen could propose ideas) are steps toward that. The [Conference on the Future of Europe platform in 2021-22](#), for instance, saw tens of thousands of Europeans contribute ideas and vote on proposals online, with automatic translation bridging language gaps. It was a novel experiment in digital deliberative democracy across the Union.

European Integration – A Shared Online Space?



Topic 4

The Impact of Digital Media on Regional Identities and European Integration

- **Solidarity in the Digital Era:** When crises strike, digital media can unite Europeans in solidarity. During the pandemic, hashtags like #StrongerTogether circulated as people in different countries shared support. After terrorist attacks or natural disasters, Europeans often change profile pictures or spread slogans of unity beyond borders (e.g., after Notre-Dame fire in Paris, messages poured in from all over Europe). Such spontaneous digital solidarity reinforces a feeling of European togetherness.



Thank you and
congratulations for finishing
MODULE 2!



www.includemedia.eu

This resource is licensed
under CC BY 4.0



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Finnish National Agency for Education. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

* Note to manage waste please print this document in greyscale or black and white rather than in colour. Please print on both sides of the paper (duplex) and if you can print multiple slides or pages on one page.