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POLICY BRIEF

Migrant Integration in Europe: What role for the media?

This policy brief presents the results of the pilot study applying the MEDIVA Diversity indicators on 31 media outlets (including Press, TV and web news sites) in six EU countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom) assessing thus their capacity to represent cultural diversity and promote migrant integration in Europe. The results presented here indicate general issues and trends and offer key messages to media organisations and civil society.

INTRODUCTION

Migrant integration in Europe and the role of the media

Migrants from non EU countries account for approx. 4% of the total EU population

The context of economic crisis and rising xenophobia

What role for the media?

The population of the EU was 501.1 million on 1 January 2010. The total number of non-nationals (people who are not citizens of their country of residence) living on the territory of an EU Member State on 1 January 2010 was 32.5 million persons, representing 6.5 % of the EU-27 population. Two thirds of this population, i.e. 20.2 million people were citizens of a non EU country.

The social and economic integration of third country nationals into the societies they live in is an important challenge that the European Union is faced with in the 21st century. Migrants' social integration and insertion in the labour market is a prerequisite for social cohesion and economic prosperity for Europe as a whole. This is particularly so at times of economic crisis as those we are living in since 2008. Unfortunately, rising unemployment and feelings of increasing insecurity make immigrants from third countries 'easy' targets of xenophobic and racist attitudes. Far right parties like the *Front National* in France, the *Golden Dawn* and *LAOS* parties in Greece or *Lega Nord* in Italy find convenient answers to the citizens' worries by putting the blame for all sorts of social or economic problems on to immigrants.

In this context, the role of the media is crucial in promoting migrant integration and enhancing societal cohesion. The media's contribution to migrant integration is here understood in four concrete ways

- promoting migrants' fair and polyphonic representation in the media;
- presenting a balanced view of migration-related issues ;
- engaging immigrants as media professionals (journalists, audience, spokespersons) ;
- raising the awareness of both media professionals and audiences on inequality and discrimination suffered by immigrants.

We argue that **promoting more inclusive societies is part of the ethical and business mission of the media sector.**

The MEDIVA Diversity Indicators

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Media Capacity to Promote Migrant Integration

Responding to the challenge of migrant integration and to the need for the media to contribute to such integration, we have built a set of **Media Assessment Indicators** aimed at *monitoring and evaluating a media outlet's capacity to reflect migration related diversity and promote migrant integration*.

Such monitoring and assessment can take the form of self-evaluation and self-monitoring (by the management of a media outlet) or it can take the form of an institutional monitoring and assessment mechanism, performed by the state, by a media ombudsman or by a media professional association.

Our Indicators are qualitative and quantitative in nature and are organised along four main dimensions:

1. Media **content** (what and how is presented in the news)
2. Media **newsmaking and news gathering** practices
3. Media **recruitment and employment** policies and practices
4. Media **training** schemes and practices

Special features of the MEDIVA Media Assessment Indicators

What kind of indicators?

Our indicators are mostly qualitative in nature (capturing the different aspects of the question of integration and of media routines and practices) but are expressed in quantitative form (as assessments of scoring Low/Medium/High in a particular issue/field and sub-field which is then translated in a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high)).

They are designed to be used for media outlets based in different countries with different editorial cultures and different media ownership structures as well as journalism traditions. The indicators are written in simple language so that they can easily be translated in another country's national language. They include clear methodological instructions on (a) media content evaluation, that has to be done by the researcher her/himself, (b) on the personal or phone interview method used to compile answers and scores for indicators 2-4 (newsmaking, employment/recruitment, training, (for more see [The MEDIVA Diversity Indicators: A Toolkit](#))).

Our indicators are appropriate for different types of mainstream media (print: newspapers or electronic: TV but also internet news sites). They are not designed to evaluate ethnic media.

The Pilot Study

Below we present the results of a pilot study using the MEDIVA Diversity Indicators to assess 31 media outlets from six countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the UK). These included 19 newspapers, 9 television channels and 3 news web site (Details on the selected media outlets and the methodology used are given in the Pilot Study Parameter section at the end of this Policy Brief)

KEY COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

What portion of all news relate to migration or migrants?

The content of news on migration and migrants

Media in new migration countries (such as Ireland, Italy and Greece) cover migration related news rarely (between 0.5% and 1.5% of total news items). In the MEDIVA Diversity Indicators we have adopted a rule of thumb: migration-related news should be roughly equal to the percentage of migrants in a country's population. It is clear that this is not the case in countries that have experienced incoming flows in the last 20 years.

Media in the old migration countries are much more aware of migration issues although this is clearly more the case in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom. The selected Dutch media reviewed cover a wide range of migration related topics and news items (accounting for between 9% and 15% of total news items). In the UK the percentage of migration or migrant related news ranges between 1% and 7%, much lower than in the Netherlands but close to the overall percentage of migrant and ethnic minority population in the country.

Migration is not yet a 'news' issue in Poland as migrants represent approx. 1% of the total population. There were hardly any stories covered in the media outlets reviewed.

How are migrants represented in the news?

Within this quite limited coverage, migrants are represented in neutral or positive terms in the selected Irish media while the representation of migrants and migration is markedly negative in Italy and Greece (with 50% or more of news items on migration presenting migration as something negative for society or the economy). The few times when migrants are represented as active subjects taking part in social life, they are 'doing bad things' (e.g. provoking conflict, causing harm or indeed committing crimes). Of course there are notable exceptions of positive stories about migrants in the selected media of the three 'new' host countries.

Active or passive?

In the selected Dutch media migrants have a more positive and more active presence: they are quoted in many of the news that concern them. In the Dutch TV news channels (both public broadcasting and private commercial channel), this was the case in 50% of the items. Migrants were represented and quoted also in mainstream news, in particular in the Dutch commercial TV channel investigated.

'goodies' or 'baddies'?

News making and news gathering

Fact-checking from several sources, yes but are migrant actors specifically consulted?

Our pilot study shows that journalists in all the media outlets reviewed check information and seek opinions from several sources. Receiving and checking information from multiple sources is seen as a paramount practice for good journalism. However, there is rarely an awareness that migrant sources should be consulted too, specifically, for issues that concern them. Migrant actors are consulted in the selected media of the 'old' migration countries (Netherlands or UK) rather than in those of the 'new' host countries (Ireland, Italy or Greece).

Are there journalists specialising on migration-related issues?

There are rarely if ever journalists/reporters that specialise on migration in the majority of the media outlets studied across the different countries. Journalists covering migration related issues are

those who cover the relevant general area such as crime, social news, culture, international affairs.

However there is occasionally some sort of informal specialisation: people who have a personal interest in the issue, investigate issues and cover stories that refer to migration. There are thus specialized journalists (this is notable in Greek newspapers for instance) but their specialisation occurs in informal ways, not through some kind of formal training or task division within the newsmaking routine.

By contrast there is formal specialisation in Dutch public television and in Dutch quality dailies too. There used to be such specialisation even in the Dutch popular daily *AD*, but this is not the case anymore. Such specialisation is also notable in established and well known progressive media outlets in the UK such as the BBC and the quality British newspaper *The Guardian*.

Are there programmes in main migrants' languages?

There are generally no programmes in the languages of the migrants' countries of origin, the only exceptions being the BBC in Britain which has some programmes in migrants' languages in the Asian network web site and *Radio Filia* (Radio Friendship) which belongs to the Greek public television NET and has programmes in several languages (e.g. Albanian, Russian). The quality British newspaper *The Guardian* makes some news stories available in other languages (with a 'translate' option on its web site).

Is there special attention for news from important countries of origin?

It is only in the selected Dutch media studied that there is awareness of the interest in news from main countries of origin such as Turkey or Morocco. The logic for such interest is both a political one (for public broadcasters – you need to represent the people who are 'out there', the tax payers) – and a commercial one: there may be a large number of potential readers/audience that would like to know news from these countries. The BBC and to a lesser extent *The Guardian* cover important news from migrants' countries of origin – in the case of BBC through its Asian network of BBC radio and for BBC television through their global news agencies around the world.

Who decides when and what kind of migration-related news are reported?

Migrant related issues are reported when they are of high (general) news value. Editors and editors in chief are those who ultimately make decisions although in some Italian media individual journalists have a strong say and can bring forward their proposals. In newspapers in the Netherlands and in Britain it is a team of editors that decides so the process may be more polyphonic and open to suggestions. Nonetheless, in the large majority of the media outlets evaluated it is the chief editor of the newspaper or of the relevant section of the newspaper that has the final say.

Controls for racist language

Racist language is checked and edited in all the letters to the editor/comments section of all the media outlets surveyed except for the populist Greek newspaper *Proto Thema*. Their director noted that if a letter/comment is relevant they may include it despite racist/discriminatory language, in the sake of freedom of expression and pluralism (sic).

Codes of ethics? Are they necessary?

Interestingly in Ireland and Britain there is a strong culture of ethics guidelines and standards which may or may not focus on migration specifically (generally they are general ethical guidelines, particularly on anti discrimination and respect for diversity). In the selected media

from the other four countries studied here such guidelines exist but do not seem to play a very important role in daily practice – there is lower awareness of their existence.

Should there be sanctions for journalists who use racist language?

Journalistic ethics lies more in professional training, professional practice and a general, assumed to be diffused, sense of ethical and professional responsibility. Indeed this attitude may be seen as special to the journalistic profession where any rules that limit freedom of expression are treated with suspicion. At the same time, feedback that we have received in our workshops with migrant organisations and journalists of migrant background draws attention to the importance of sanctions against journalists who make racist and discriminatory comments.

Although in some countries effective complaints procedures include Press Council (NL) Commission for Racial Equality (UK), Courts, on the other hand professional bodies, or journalists' trade unions such as Ordine dei Giornalisti or FNSI in Italy could be called upon to mediate such complaints mechanisms.

Recruitment and Employment of Journalists with a Migrant Background

Ensuring that migrants are represented among the journalist staff:

Recruitment and employment practices in the selected media differ both in relation to the country where a given media outlet is based and in relation to its size.

In the 'new host' countries there is hardly any awareness.

In the new migration countries there is little or no awareness that the profession of journalism should include people of immigrant background and hence there is no awareness that there should be such programs. This is particularly the case in Italy and Greece. In Ireland by contrast there was some awareness that this should be an issue of concern for human resource departments but no steps have been taken in this direction in the selected media assessed.

The 'language argument'

Media staff may include migrants in the technical or cleaning staff (e.g. Greece) but not as journalists. Interestingly the senior journalists interviewed in Greece noted that the reason why there are no immigrants is because (a) they have not come forward to ask for jobs in the media sector, and (b) because they do not speak well enough the language. This argument thus inverts the reasoning of discrimination and puts the responsibility on the migrants and their supposed lack of language skills, foregoing the fact that many first and second generation immigrants in Greece have studied at Greek Universities.

Interestingly and quite surprisingly, senior journalists interviewed in selected Polish media outlets note that they are aware of the need for diversifying one's journalistic staff to reflect diversity in society and point to the need for a perfect command of the national language.

The language argument is also still found in countries like the Netherlands where for instance senior journalists interviewed note that for instance refugee journalists who are trained or have experience from their home country sometimes may struggle to master the Dutch language (as they did not grow up here like their second generation migrant counterparts).

Legal obstacles

Journalists of immigrant or refugee background face legal obstacles (Related to their nationality or residence status) in exercising the profession in several countries (this issue has been reported in Italy for instance). These legal obstacles should be removed and through appropriate qualification tests people who are trained and have the requisites should not face nationality or status obstacles. Public diversity policies apply to all sectors of the labour market. The experience of the Netherlands and UK in this has been particularly positive and has changed recruitment and employment practices especially in public television channels. Indeed, in the old migration countries (UK and Netherlands) there are journalists of ethnic background but this may not be always be reflected in the current recruitment and employment practices concerning hiring new journalists.

Government diversity initiatives

Employment or recruitment schemes targeting journalists of immigrant background are 'science fiction' in most of the media outlets assessed

More advanced options foreseen in our indicators like having diversity recruitment or employment policies or outreach schemes and also monitoring them are 'science fiction' for the vast majority of the media assessed. It is only in the Netherlands and in the UK where some large quality newspapers like *De Volkskrant* and *The Guardian* have special outreach schemes for students of migrant background and/or special training for migrant journalists. It should be noted that the line here between people who are actually immigrants (i.e. third country nationals) and the people who are of 'ethnic minority background' (i.e. citizens) is blurred. Outreach and employment schemes refer to both without distinction

Training for Diversity

Only large and well established media outlets can afford it.

In several of our Dutch and British media reviewed diversity training is incorporated in the general human resources and training policy. Large quality newspapers like *De Volkskrant* or the Dutch public television (*NOS Journaal*) provide such training. Smaller newsrooms however in other newspapers do not have resources and in fact they do train interns that can be either migrants or non-migrants, but they do not train regular staff. The general belief is that experience on the job is the best training - this however also means it is harder to break conventions/habits.

In Greek, Irish and Italian media outlets assessed there was no training provided whatsoever, the only exception being the news web site in.gr which sends its staff to do training in new media technologies.

No awareness that such training is necessary in the 'new' host countries

Generally apparently training is only provided in large media with a strong institutional basis and history (e.g. the BBC, the quality newspapers *The Guardian* and *De Volkskrant*) and particularly so in countries with a long immigration history like the UK and the Netherlands. Such training is not provided in small media outlets anywhere because of lack of resources, especially in the current context of economic crisis.

It is not provided by either large or small media outlets in the new host countries like Ireland Italy or Greece because of lack of resources as well as lack of awareness that this is important or necessary.

There is generally however an increasing tendency to use freelance reporters rather than full time journalists which actually makes investment in training seem rather useless.

KEY MESSAGES FOR MEDIA MANAGERS and CIVIL SOCIETY

Content of the news

There is a need for strategic policy choices for balanced reporting

There is a need for more investigative journalism and for an active interest for positive stories about migrants, their families, their work, their countries of origin. This is not to say that migrant representation needs to be always positive. However there should be a more balanced presentation of migrants (as doing both 'good' and 'bad' things). It is necessary that news editors adopt a specific strategy for that as, especially in new host countries, the main news source about migration is the police bulletin.

Sanctions against racist and discriminatory language

There should be clear ethical guidelines at national level. Such guidelines can be enforced if they foresee sanctions to be applied by journalist unions when journalists use racist or discriminatory language.

News making and News gathering practices:

Migrant voices must be heard

When migrant related news are reported, migrant sources need to be consulted – not simply 'several sources' but specifically people or organisations directly concerned.

There should also be, as happens in some of the Dutch media monitored, a clear interest for migrant views in and on mainstream news. This would actively promote the sense that migrants are active and equal members of society.

Recruitment and Training

Cooperation between Universities, journalists' unions and media outlets

Universities and other media schools should collaborate with media associations and journalists' trade unions to ensure that

- a) Diversity training is included in all standard journalism studies curricula
- b) Special schemes target talented individuals who may not have the necessary language skills because they have only recently arrived in the country

Training should be provided by public education institutions as smaller media and even large media in conditions of increased competition, increased freelancing and continuing economic crisis are highly unlikely to be able to make the necessary investment in training and in particular in diversity training

Good practices need to be 'exported'

Good practices from media outlets such as the BBC, Dutch public television and quality newspapers like *The Guardian* and *De Volkskrant* should be highlighted.

Employment

Monitor anti-discrimination practices and policies

There is a concern that journalists of migrant background face indirect and institutional discrimination especially in new host countries. There should be periodical monitoring and assessment of employment policies and practices with a view to ensuring that people of immigrant background are not discriminated in the media sector.

THE PILOT STUDY PARAMETERS

Selection of Media Outlets

This pilot study aims not at assessing the national media scene in the six countries studied (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland and the UK) but rather to provide for an assessment of how different media of different types and ideological orientations deal with the question of migration and promote (or not) migrant integration. The selection aims at covering a range of media without however claiming any sort of overall assessment of the media of the given country. In addition our selection aims at providing sufficient material for cross country comparisons in terms of scores as well as of qualitative assessment.

The media outlets selected included usually two large newspapers with different political orientation (left-right wing) and different in terms of their media profile (quality vs. populist). They also included one or two television channels – of different ownership (public broadcasting vs. commercial television). In some countries we included a regional newspaper (e.g. in Italy where regional press is strong) while in other countries a free newspaper (like Metro) that has a large audience even if its genre is different from mainstream dailies. In the countries where an important news web site (with a large readership) existed we also included such a media outlet to show how media outlets using new technologies deal with migration issues. In each country we selected at least five media outlets including always both press and television and occasionally news web sites.

For a detailed presentation of the MEDIVA Diversity Indicators and a detailed set of instructions on how to use them see <http://www.eui.eu/Projects/MEDIVA/Documents/MEDIVAindicatorsToolkit23March2012.pdf>

For the full results of the pilot study in each country and in each media outlet see:

<http://www.eui.eu/Projects/MEDIVA/MEDIVADiversityIndicators.aspx>

The media outlets included in the pilot study are:

Greece: Eleftheros Typos, Proto Thema, Kathimerini, Mega TV, NET, and in.gr

Ireland: Irish Times, Irish Independent, Metro Herald, RTE News, TV3 News

Italy: La Nazione, La Repubblica, Il Sole24Ore, Il Corriere della Sera and Rai TG3

The Netherlands: NOS JOURNAAL, RTL Nieuws, de Volkskrant, AD and Metro

Poland: Rzeczpospolita, Gazeta Wyborcza, Tok Fm , Wtk, Polsat

UK: BBC, the Guardian, London Evening Standard, the Morning Star and SchNEWS