



A HOME FOR **EUROPE'S** AGENCIES

Feasibility study on the establishment
of a Joint Newsroom of
European News Agencies in Brussels

Preface

The European Newsroom of News Agencies in Brussels – a centre for news from Brussels for all of Europe

News agencies are the arteries of international newsflow. All independent private and state-owned news agencies have one thing in common: They steadily and reliably supply the media of their respective countries with an offer of news they have gathered. Thus the agencies are highly efficient as central disseminators of relevant news.

It is a crucial prerequisite for the functioning of the European Union that reliable news on the work of its central institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg is distributed in the member states and the candidate countries for accession. Only if there are fact-based and verified news that explain the often complex interrelations in a comprehensible way, the acceptance for European policy making will steadily increase and enable joint European action.

These are the considerations that induced two of Europe's major news agencies – dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur and AFP Agence France Press – to take on the project of a feasibility study on the realisation of a “European Newsroom of News Agencies” in Brussels.

This study now at hand describes a joint newsroom, from which the participating news agencies produce their news wires on EU-related topics for their countries of origin. The physical proximity of numerous news agencies in a joint location will foster new levels of quality and integrity of reporting:

For interlocutors from the EU, the European Newsroom will be a central point of contact with the highest power of dissemination. And for the journalists from the different EU member states and candidate countries who work together at the European Newsroom, joint training programs on subjects such as fact-checking methods will set a strong counterpoint against the omnipresent flood of disinformation, particularly on the social media platforms.

When journalists work together and enjoy close personal and professional contacts on a daily basis, the quality of journalism is likely to improve automatically. Large and small news agencies will meet as equals and thus reproduce the idea of European cooperation within this newsroom. Smaller agencies will gain access to the contact networks in Brussels, which were inaccessible to them when they had to fend for themselves. And, last but not least, the joint usage of a newsroom that is fully equipped technically will create cost synergies. Eventually, these synergies will make it possible to dispatch more journalists to Brussels.

The project is a joint initiative of dpa and AFP. On the market, these two agencies are competitors. However, both are also strongly committed to the European idea and work side by side in this important project.

This study was made possible through financial support from the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In an increasingly digitized world with a virtually infinite number of communication channels, verified information as a basis for democratic decisions falls by the wayside far too often. In addition, we see a steadily growing number of attempts throughout the world – notably on the part of autocratic governments – to globally entrench their narratives via strategic media communication through their respective national news agencies.

Independent reporting by news agencies from European democracies counters these state-controlled narratives. It provides the people in these agencies' countries of origin with unbiased, independent coverage and verified facts, thus constituting a credible alternative to propaganda and fake news. A "European Newsroom of News Agencies" can be a home to quality and integrity in journalism, right within the heart of the EU.

The present study was created between September and December of 2020 and consists of three parts:

In personal talks with the directors of more than 20 European news agencies, we examined whether there was any practical interest in the concept of a European Newsroom. And we can definitely answer this question in the affirmative. In the course of numerous talks, the benefit dimensions clearly took shape.

These benefits are exactly aligned with the requirements of the European Union regarding an improvement of communicative performance in addressing the public in its member states, candidate countries and key third-party states such as Switzerland or Norway.

Together with international consultants and news agency experts, we developed a three-pillar model of a newsroom: a physical newsroom, a digital newsroom with services for the operation of a modern news agency and a joint training centre of dpa and AFP, dedicated to the further development of verification standards to counteract lies, disinformation and propaganda, as well as skills in video journalism and other crucial future technologies.

The third part of the study contains the basics of communication aimed at making public funding for the realisation of the European Newsroom accessible. An end-to-end financing will enable small agencies – notably those from the Western Balkan countries – to ensure the permanent on-site presence of journalists at the EU's centres of decision-making.

The management and editors in chief of dpa and AFP are pleased to present this study to an interested public and thereby take the next step towards realising a project with so much potential for news communication in Europe.



Peter Kropsch

CEO

dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

Table of contents

Preface	2
Table of contents	5
List of figures	7
List of tables	8
1 Introduction	9
2 European news agencies	12
2.1 The role of news agencies in a contemporary European media system.....	13
2.1.2 The contribution of national news agencies to reporting on European affairs	21
2.1.3 Discussion and conclusions	39
2.2 Brief descriptions of the questioned agencies.....	48
2.3 Methodology.....	54
2.3.1 Methodical approach	54
2.3.2 Research criticism	56
2.3.3 Thematic cluster I: Status quo of the news agencies	58
2.3.4 Thematic cluster II: Demand.....	59
2.3.5 Thematic cluster III: Requests	60
2.4 Outcomes.....	61
2.4.1 Quantitative evaluation.....	61
2.4.2 Qualitative evaluation	72
3 Role models for the newsroom	99
3.1 The <i>EuroBuro</i> in Sydney	100
3.2 The <i>Pecoffice</i> in Brussels	103
4 The newsroom in Brussels	108
4.1 Statutes.....	109
4.1.1 Purpose and function	109
4.1.2 Participating news agencies	110
4.1.3 Use of the newsroom’s infrastructure by the participating news agencies.....	110
4.1.4 Access to materials and trainings of dpa and AFP.....	111
4.1.5 Financing and operation	111
4.1.6 Transparency and communication.....	112
4.1.7 Liabilities	112

4.2	Joint European Newsroom for news agencies in Brussels.....	114
4.2.1	Basic principles	116
4.2.2	Daily workflow and priorities	121
4.3	AFP and dpa news services for the EU-Newsroom	131
4.4	Concept for a training programme for journalists of European news agencies in Brussels	133
4.5	Framework conditions for foreign journalists in Brussels	135
4.5.1	Required documents	135
4.5.2	Points of contact in the regions.....	137
4.5.3	Press card and accreditation	138
4.5.4	Social security contributions and taxes.....	141
5	Business plan European Newsroom.....	149
6	Conclusion and outlook.....	153
7	References.....	158
8	Appendix.....	165
8.1	Questionnaire.....	166
8.2	Guidelines and thematic clusters.....	168
8.3	Handout for the interviewers.....	170
8.4	Category system and encoding instructions	172
9	Imprint.....	183

List of figures

Figure 1: European Union members in different enlargement groups.....	14
Figure 2: Competitive forces disrupting traditional news agencies’ ability to monetise general news services in the marketplace of news.....	20
Figure 3: Typical services and business models of a modern national news agency group	21
Figure 4: Ownership of 17 news agencies that responded to the LSE questionnaire and have their seat in the group of countries this report covers....	23
Figure 5: Development of operating revenue in the selected national news agencies.....	25
Figure 6: Development of profit/loss before tax in in the selected national news agencies.....	26
Figure 7: Development of personnel in the selected national news agencies	27
Figure 8: Revenue sources in the two EU-blocs of selected agencies.....	29
Figure 9: Trend of number of journalists accredited with the EU Commission	30
Figure 10: Share of news agency journalists in accredited journalists with the EU Commission.	32
Figure 12: Division of accredited journalists in EU-West and EU-East blocs.	38
Figure 13: How well citizens are informed about European matters	43
Figure 14: Correlation of press freedom and perceived corruption by country.	46
.....	64
Figure 15: The forms of financing of the European news agencies.....	64
Figure 16: Number of employees of the questioned European news agencies..	65
.....	66
Figure 17: Annual revenue of the questioned European news agencies in million euros.....	66
Figure 18: Target audiences of the questioned European news agencies.....	67
Figure 19: Agency services offered by the questioned European news agencies	68
.....	68
Figure 20: Question on the use of a European Newsroom.	69
Figure 21: Question about the reservations of the European news agencies with regard to a joint European Newsroom.	70
Figure 22: Which requirements must a joint newsroom meet for the questioned news agencies to use it? Most frequently chosen answers	71
Figure 23: Number of agency correspondents that work for the news agencies on site in Brussels.....	75
Figure 24: How do the questioned European news agencies rate the relevancy of reporting on EU affairs?	78

List of tables

Table 1: Accredited journalists with the EU Commission by country.....	34
Table 2: List of agencies questioned in the dpa interviews in the period from September to Mid November 2020.....	61
Table 3: Preconditions under which the European news agencies would use a joint EU Newsroom	92
Source: Survey dpa, September to November 2020	92
Table 4: Required documents for journalists from EU and non-EU countries, who want to live and work in Brussels.....	135
Table 5: Points of contact for the important public offices in the regions.....	137
Table 6: Notes on applying for a press card and accreditation with EU institutions.	138
Table 7: Contact data of the registered Guichets d’Entreprises.	144
Table 8: Percentage tax rates in Belgium in relation to annual income.....	147
Table 9: EU Newsroom business plan for years 2021 through 2023.	149

1 Introduction

The idea of the European Newsroom is based on a joint initiative of AFP and dpa to strengthen the cooperation of news agencies in Europe. In preparation, European news agencies were questioned whether they were interested in this cooperation. Some of the agencies questioned are members of the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA). This network consists of 32 agencies that meet on a regular basis (cf. EANA a¹). Peter Kropsch, Head of the Board of Directors of dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur and president of this network of European news agencies, is in charge of this preparatory study.

For the news media in their respective countries, national news agencies continue to play a crucial role in reporting about significant events. They cover central events that occur in the institutions of the EU, as a rule from a general, international perspective.

The aim of the initiative taken by AFP and dpa is the cooperative project of a joint European Newsroom². This would generate synergies in many areas: If the European news agencies share an editorial office with a joint technical and digital infrastructure, they work more efficiently. Furthermore, there are many ways in which their daily journalistic work could profit from the network. There are practical advantages with regard to research, since sources, interlocutors and the EU network are more easily accessible, as well as with the news supply itself.

One example are additional media channels, such as photo or video content, which the portfolio of smaller European news agencies may not include yet. On top of this, the network will also offer training and professional development opportunities. The agencies will not only benefit from one another through access to journalistic standards and competencies, but also through the trainings that dpa and AFB plan to offer in an associated academy. The newsroom's location is intended to be Brussels.

¹ Cf. EANA, quoted from <https://www.newsalliance.org/members/> (2020/11/10)

² Note: *The joint project of a European Newsroom* may hereafter also be referred to as *EU Newsroom* or *European Newsroom* for short. These terms may be regarded as synonyms, all referring to this central project of a joint office in Brussels, focused on reporting *from* and *about* Europe.

The aim of this study led by dpa and AFP is to analyse whether a joint EU Newsroom may be realised and substantiated. This collaborative project could contribute to triggering important developments within the European media landscape:

- The distribution of a fact-based narrative with original sources from the heart of Europe.
- The European idea of joint action for the common good is lived *en miniature* in the EU Newsroom.
- Resilience against disinformation and respect for diversity of opinion are strengthened and supported by quality journalism.
- A media counterweight to the propaganda of autocratic systems created.
- Joint training will steadily improve the work of the news agencies. Journalistic competencies with regard to verification and fact checking in particular may be mutually taught and refined within the framework of a joint academy.

The stated targets do not only improve the classic journalistic agency business on the European media market, they also have a signal effect beyond the continent of Europe. dpa and AFP plan to take care of the joint project's infrastructure. This will mainly benefit news agencies from those EU member states and candidate countries that could so far not afford their own offices in Brussels. The role model for this concept is the *EuroBuro*, a newsroom that was established several years ago in Australia by *Weltnachrichtendienst dpa international*, where several news agencies share the infrastructure of a common Sydney office (cf. dpa 2016³) and thus profit from one another.

Within the framework of the European Newsroom, the participating agencies would have access to the international news wires of dpa and AFP, which comprehensively cover all relevant EU topics – including the right to publish news from these sources in their countries of origin. This would generate a strong and sustainable impulse for the European perspective.

³ dpa press release of 2016/01/27, quoted from <https://www.presseportal.de/pm/8218/3235774> (2020/11/11)

However, providing infrastructure and bridging the physical distance to Brussels as an EU centre are just two aspects. This study also wants to show how agencies can profit from this cooperation in their editorial and journalistic operations. It is looking for joint solutions to strengthen the fight against disinformation and ensure a crisis-resistant technical supply of the media within the EU.

The European Newsroom in Brussels is the next step towards a future-proof generation of joint work spaces for journalists. For the first time, colleagues that are not operating under the same ownership structure are meant to profit from one another's work. The sole link between them will be their common pursuit of objective, bias-free information about European affairs for their customers in their respective countries of origin. The guidelines of this newsroom shall be the pursuit of truth, credibility and objectivity in reporting about the EU and its institutions.

By now, dpa as well as AFP have established their own verification and fact-checking teams. In the spirit of a mutual transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience, journalists from other EU member states who wish to expand their professional skills regarding these topics could attend workshops in an academy associated to the joint newsroom. And last but not least a joint EU Newsroom in Brussels could serve as a central meeting point for the European agencies, enhancing their abilities to network and exchange ideas on sector developments.

2 European news agencies

European news agencies covering European affairs and EU institutions have to focus on what decisions, proposals and debates mean for their countries of origin (Nielsen et al., 2019). As a result, correspondents report from a national point of view.

This means that so far, European news agencies largely work independent of one another. Reporters in Brussels are mediators between a European and a national public. A joint European Newsroom should give journalists from news agencies the opportunity to collaborate transnationally.

The present chapter gives a detailed overview on European news agencies. In his external contribution to this study, Atte Jääskeläinen, full professor at LUT University, analysed the role of news agencies within the European media system. This analysis is the foundation from which to explore further details about the European news agencies. Subsequently, relevant key data on the news agencies questioned within the framework of quantitative and qualitative research will be introduced.

The study as a whole aims to explore the requests that the European news agencies have with regard to a joint newsroom. This does not only refer to the prerequisites a newsroom in itself needs to meet, but it also addresses the question of how reporting about EU affairs from and in Europe may be improved to reach higher levels of journalistic quality.

The survey method chosen were guided qualitative interviews, which were then evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively with regard to the central research questions. The quantitative outcomes allow conclusions to be drawn about the general interest the news agencies have in a future collaboration within the framework of a joint EU Newsroom.

On the basis of the qualitative outcomes, requests regarding a EU Newsroom can be explained in detail. Thus the outcomes of the survey form the basis for the establishment of a European Newsroom that meets the expectations of the news agencies in Europe.

2.1.1 The role of news agencies in a contemporary European media system

The author of the following section, Atte Jääskeläinen, currently is a full professor and Chairman of the Advisory Group of LUT University, Finland, and Visiting Senior Fellow at London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK. Prior to that, from 2004 to 2006, he was Managing Director of Finnish News Agency *STT* and, from 2007 to 2017, Director of News and Current Affairs of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). He started as Director General of Higher Education and Research Policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of Finland, on 1. October 2020. In the following section he gives a detailed analysis of the contemporary role of European news agencies.

Introduction to national news agencies

In the 20th century, Europe was considered to be the most vital continent in the global news ecosystem, with internationally operating news agencies like Reuters, AFP, dpa, EFE and ANSA, together with an extensive network of other national news agencies also serving strong public-service companies (e.g. BBC, ARD, France TV, RAI) and a multitude of high-class newspapers with a broad international audience and high reputation. Tunstall (1992, 2009) has argued, with a list of worldwide known news brands but also with data about topics of world news, that Europe was the world's news leader in the first half of the century and again after 1980.

This description is, in many ways, outdated. First, technology has enabled new ways to both produce and disseminate news, and for news consumers to find and access the news they are interested in. As a result, news selection in online media is mostly in the hands of US-based technology companies and their algorithms. Second, influential new players in news agency activities and in broadcast news have entered the field, especially from the US, the Middle East, Russia and China. Third, from the viewpoint of the European Union, Brexit means that many of the strongest news actors reporting on Union affairs, including politically influential and typically well-informed newspapers like the Financial Times, are no longer established inside the Union's territory.

The purpose of this analysis is to provide an overview of the present state of European news agencies, in particular of those serving national media and national audiences in countries that have joined the European Union since the enlargement in 2004 or are candidate countries (C), or potential candidates (PC), as classified by the EU Commission. The aim is to analyse these news agencies' ability to report on European issues as well as the possible implications they have for their national media systems' ability to serve their audiences with credible and high-quality news on European affairs, and in particular on the European institutions.



Figure 1: European Union members in different enlargement groups

Source: Wikimedia/ Atte Jääskeläinen

UNESCO published the latest worldwide comprehensive study of national news agencies in 1953 (UNESCO, 1953). In Europe, a broad review of the industry was undertaken at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in 2018-2019, where the author acted as a co-director of a research project on *The Future of National News Agencies in Europe*. Fifteen researchers from five European universities participated in the latter project, working in collaboration with the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA) to collect data from their membership (32 agencies). This study provides empirical materials on and analysis of all stakeholders in the news, from its producers to its users, and on the decisive question of whether national news agencies in Europe have a future and if so what kind.

The present report is based partly on confidential, and therefore anonymised, data gathered for that project, but also on public data collected from Eurobarometer surveys, from Digital News Reports of the Reuters Institute at the University of Oxford, as well as from data gathered exclusively for this report from the European Commission and the financial database Amadeus. These data are analysed and interpreted with the help of a literature review. Conclusions are partly based on the author's own professional experience as a researcher on the strategic management of news agencies, as Managing Director of the Finnish News Agency (STT) from 2004 to 2006, as Director of News for the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) from 2007 to 2017 and as a strategic advisor and co-author of EBU News Reports for the European Broadcasting Union from 2018 to 2020.

The author regards the most significant EU enlargement in 2004 as a milestone and classifies countries into two main groups: EU members from before 2004 (EU West), and EU members from the 2004 enlargement and after plus candidate and potential candidate states (EU East). The researchers' discussions show that this grouping makes sense in terms of understanding the characteristics and capabilities of news agencies in reporting on Brussels, and occasionally on Strasbourg.

2.1.1.1 The role and definition of news agencies

News agencies have since the 19th century been at the core of most national media systems in Europe (Rantanen, 2020). Media organisations have traditionally outsourced part of their news coverage to news agencies, sharing the labour costs of producing stories that all news media have to be aware of and in most cases to report (Örnebring & Conill, 2016). This outsourcing has been organised since the mid-19th century through a system of both international news agencies, exchanging internationally relevant news, and national news agencies serving media customers in their own countries and responsible for producing content relevant to their countries of origin. These roles have over time increasingly overlapped: the largest European national news agencies now operate internationally and provide for multiple views of the world.

By serving typically most of the media in their home markets, national news agencies have set the national news agenda (Rantanen et al., 2019) and also acted as critical enablers of the plurality of media in the context of national media policies. Traditionally, news agencies have not been highly visible to the public (Tworek, 2013). Most news agencies still do not reach their audiences directly. This sharing of costs between news media has allowed more exclusive content to be produced in client newsrooms.

Audience trust is of significant importance for any news agency. The news media only benefit from news-agency services if they can publish the agencies' news without checking its reliability. Objective and reliable fact-based information has long been the defining quality of news agency services. It is not only based on the journalistic values that news agencies share, but also – if the agency operates under commercial principles – a quality requirement for success in the marketplace.

2.1.1.2 Categories of national news agencies

Traditionally, news agencies were divided into the categories of private, media-owned cooperative, and state. Within the diverse group of around 140 national news agencies, there are only 20 privately or media-owned agencies in the world.

Seventy-five per cent of all the news agencies in the world are state-owned (Pig et al., 2019; Vyslozil, 2014).

State or public-service news agencies

Many of the oldest and most prominent agencies in the world have a strong connection with the state. The French AFP, the Spanish EFE and the Portuguese LUSA are state-owned and supported. The cooperatively owned Italian ANSA receives significant public funding. In most cases, state-owned agencies operate in the market and need private revenues to cover the costs of their operations (Rantanen et al., 2019). Private financing from the marketplace may, in practice, affect operations more than state ownership.

There are significant differences among state news agencies. Some provide their services to their customers completely free and are funded by the state. They are therefore less dependent on customer feedback, since their customers cannot walk away if they are not satisfied with the service.

Let us suppose that state news agencies can build firewalls against governments' attempts to interfere in their news production. In this case they can be seen as respectable public-service institutions, both nationally and internationally. The concept of a public news agency is in many ways related to public-service (PSM) broadcasting, with the significant difference that PSM companies provide services directly to the audience, while news agencies, even as public-service institutions, mostly provide their services to the media. There are, however, exceptions.

The concept of the public-service news agency is a typical one in former communist countries, where old state agencies were turned into a new type of agency, supporting a more democratic media system but retaining a strategic media policy interest of the state (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2000). Public news agencies' funding is typically arranged through a combination of revenue from clients and public support from the state budget (Rantanen et al., 2019).

Privately owned news agencies

More than half of all privately owned national news agencies in the world are in Europe. Ten of those that consider themselves politically independent have organised their co-operation as the “Group 39”, which now consists of agencies from the Nordic countries, the German-speaking countries, together with Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK (Pig et al., 2019; Vyslozil, 2014).

In Estonia, after the closing down of the Estonian Telegraph Agency (ETA) in 2003, a privately owned Baltic News Service was established and this now operates also in Lithuania. In Latvia, the private LETA is the leading agency (Lauk & Einmann, 2019).

Often, even in the case of privately owned news agencies, their largest customer is a public broadcaster. Over recent years, indirect state subsidies to private agencies have been removed. Typically, state institutions are clients of these agencies and their payment cannot be regarded as a subsidy, but rather as a regular compensation based on the value of the service to a customer.

2.1.1.3 Challenges to monetising general news services

In times before digital distribution, national news agencies typically enjoyed a stable market position due to several factors that gave them a natural monopoly of real-time news in their respective markets.

Now, news agencies face significant risks as a result of the internet, and of the disruption of the market caused by dramatically lower barriers to competition and by substitute services that have eroded the value of news to their clients. The news media and other players in the industry used to be obliged to buy content from the news agencies in order to stay informed about events. Now, anybody – including those organisations to which the agencies previously sold their services directly – can access real-time information and content. Even news media that are themselves clients of news agencies are considered to be serious competitors for their services (Jääskeläinen & Yanatma, 2019; Rantanen et al., 2018). Reasons given by media clients for cancelling news-agency services include the free availability of content elsewhere and the fact that they are producing content

themselves, as well as their own falling income resulting in a need to make savings (Rantanen et al., 2018).

Social media began a new wave of disruption in the news ecosystem, in which both news agencies and their clients have been suffering for the last decade. Social media have had impacts on property rights and on the way that information and content from news agencies are distributed. The second significant impact of social media has been the disintegration of news and advertising in digital channels. This disintegration has disrupted the business models of the news media profoundly, resulting in their losing more than half of the digital advertising market to Google and Facebook, and affecting the media client's ability to pay suppliers.

These changes have given the management of agencies reasons to start making changes to their business model, and to diversify by innovating new services. A general news service is often nowadays only one of many services that news agencies offer, and other, more profitable, operations are often used to subsidise a general news service.

According to research conducted for the project at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the total value of general news services is declining, and their share of the revenues of agencies has fallen. In the times before the internet news services, news agencies typically did not provide a wide variety of services. Of the 25 agencies that responded to the survey conducted for the LSE project, only eight reported that more than half of their income was generated by their general news service, the traditional "newswire".

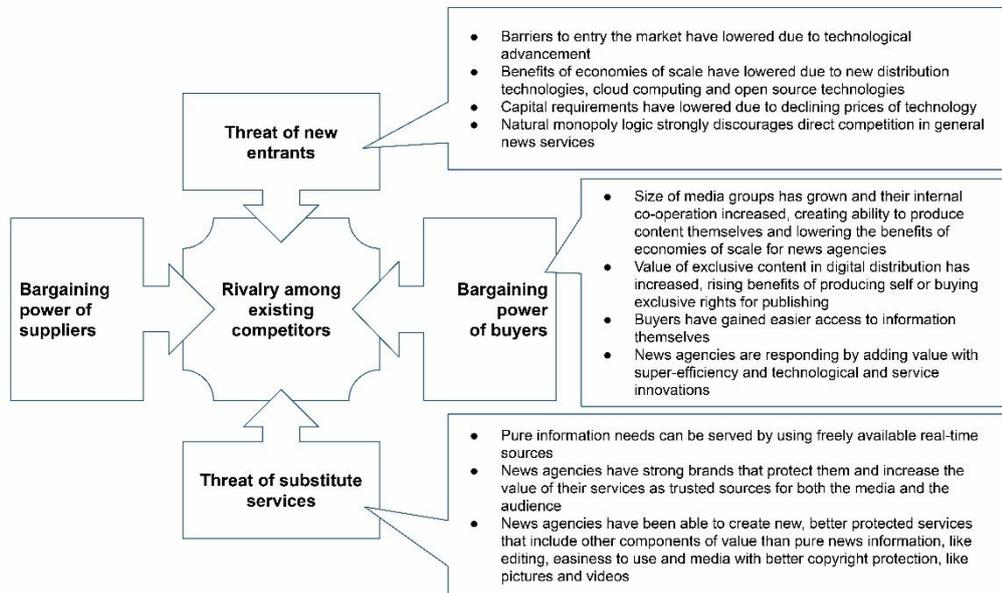


Figure 2: Competitive forces disrupting traditional news agencies' ability to monetise general news services in the marketplace of news

Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

2.1.1.4 Typical services of a modern national news agency

The following graph illustrates the variety of services that news agencies offer, both to the media and to institutional and corporate customers. A notable change has been that most national news agencies in Europe are no longer just newswires. They also provide photo and video services and distribute press releases in their original form to the editorial systems of newsrooms and to the general public. (Rantanen et al., 2018)

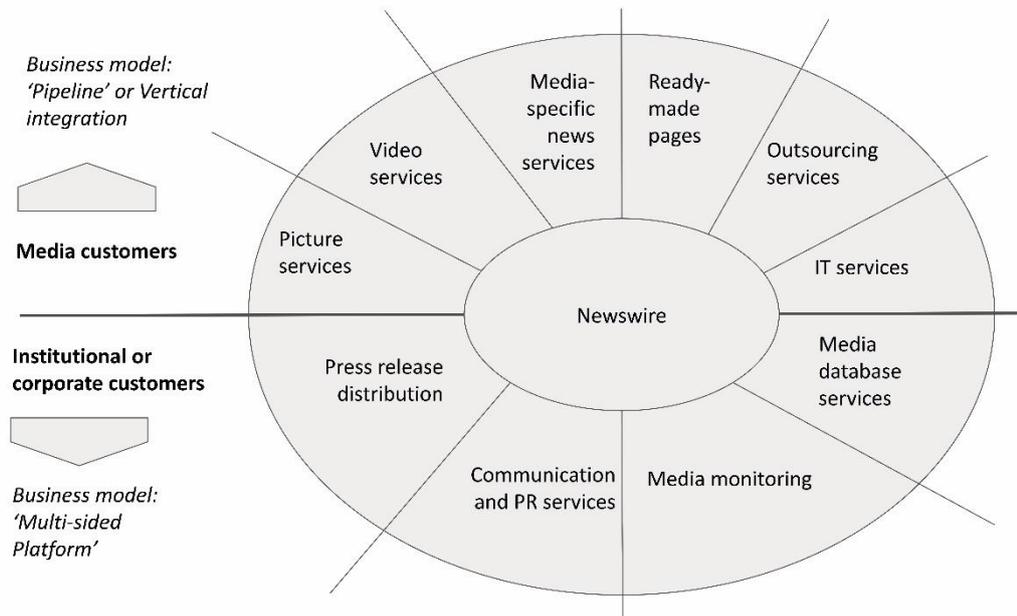


Figure 3: Typical services and business models of a modern national news agency group

Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

2.1.2 The contribution of national news agencies to reporting on European affairs

The recent LSE study investigated European national news agencies' current operations, as well as their plans for the future. The present work provides a more comprehensive analysis based on data both from the LSE survey and from other sources.

2.1.2.1 Special features of the agencies in new member states and candidate countries

The main differences in the characteristics of European national news agencies between the EU-West and EU-East countries relate to size, scope, ownership and revenue sources.

For the LSE study, the researchers had survey results from 17 agencies belonging to these groups and this analysis is based on these agencies. The most remarkable difference is in ownership.

Of the EU-East agencies, seven are directly state-owned and two are established by law as public-service news institutions. The ownership share of private media and private institutions is zero in all these nine news agencies.

As opposed to this, the news agencies in the EU-West member states are mostly private media-owned enterprises. Five of the eight agencies in the EU-West group are clearly private, and only two are state-owned or public-service agencies. In one case, the agency is 49 per cent private and 51 per cent state-owned.

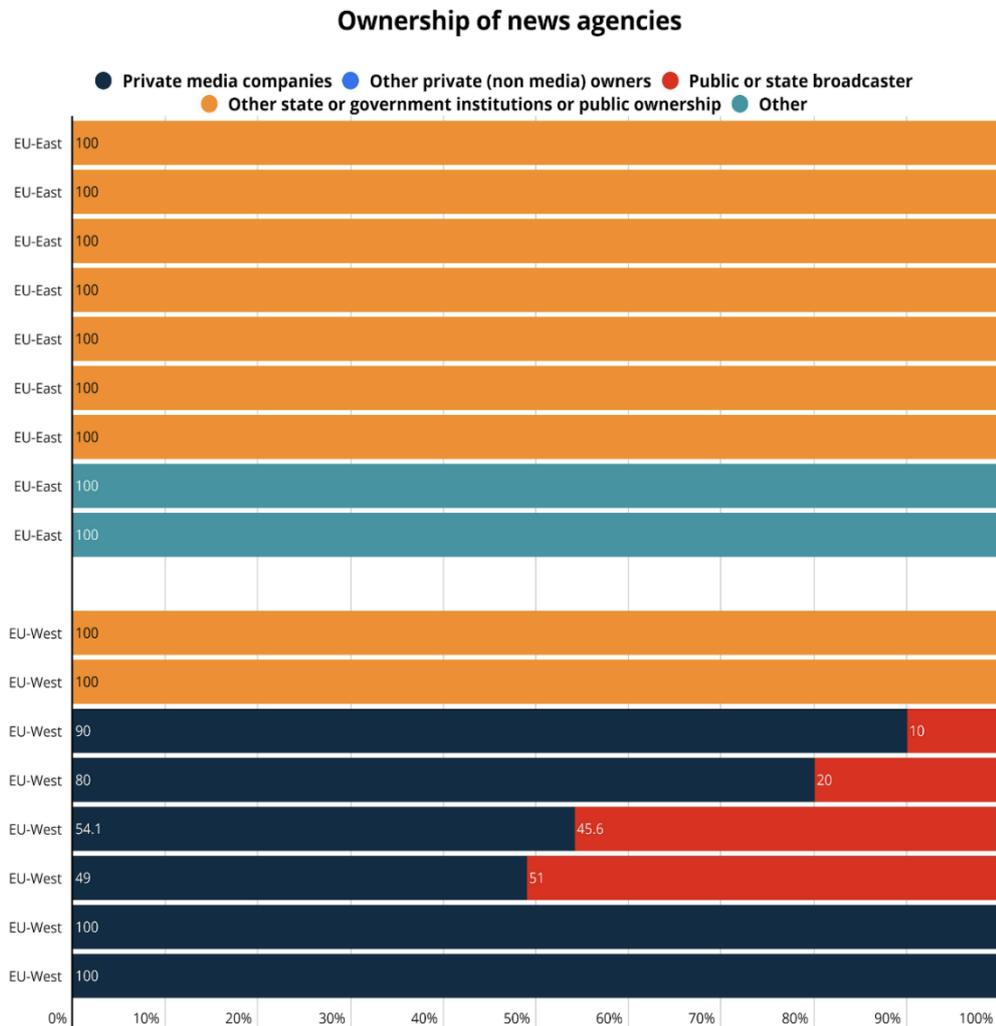


Figure 4: Ownership of 17 news agencies that responded to the LSE questionnaire and have their seat in the group of countries this report covers.

Source: LSE/ Atte Jääskeläinen

The agencies in the EU-East are either state-owned, or in public ownership or established by law as public institutions. The majority of agencies belonging to the group EU West are owned by private media companies and public broadcasters. The two western state- or publicly-owned agencies are EFE of Spain and AFP of France.

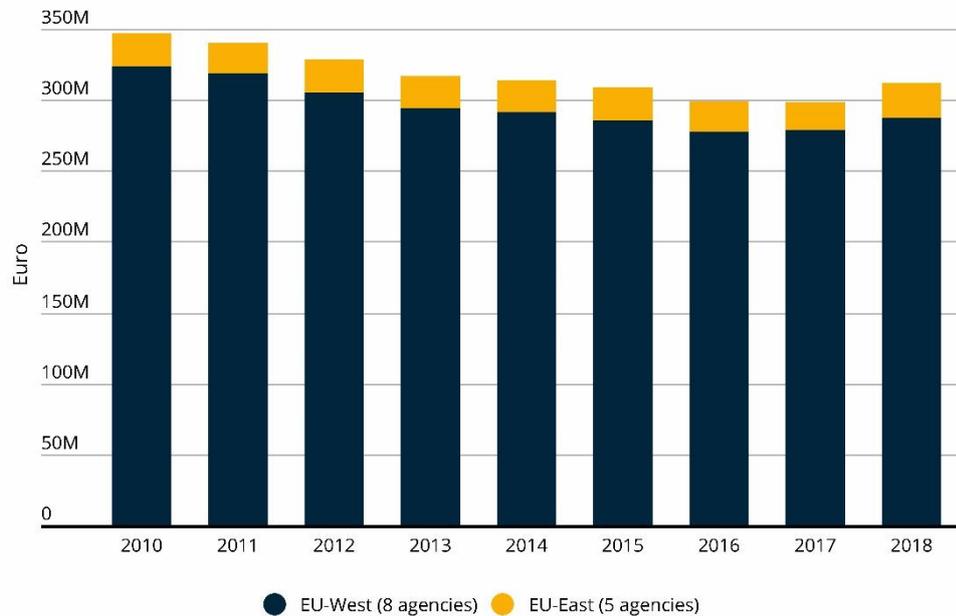
2.1.2.2 Abilities: Financial situation and number of staff

As the LSE data was from just one year, in order to further analyse the trends affecting news agencies' financial and personnel resources, the author gathered long-term data on news agencies from the financial database Amadeus. As many Eastern agencies are established as government or state institutions, their data was not available from this source.

Therefore, Atte Jääskeläinen had to rely on the selection of agencies available, so the data is of an indicative nature at this point. The dataset that could be used covered a ten-year period and 14 news agencies, of which eight belong to the EU-West and six to the EU-East blocs. In comparing personnel, only five of the EU-East agencies had data in the database over the entire 9-year period.

As the following graph showing combined revenues from the two blocs illustrates, agencies in this selection of EU-East member states are mostly medium or small-scale institutions by comparison with those in the EU-West bloc.

Development of Operating Revenue (2010-2018, 13 agencies)



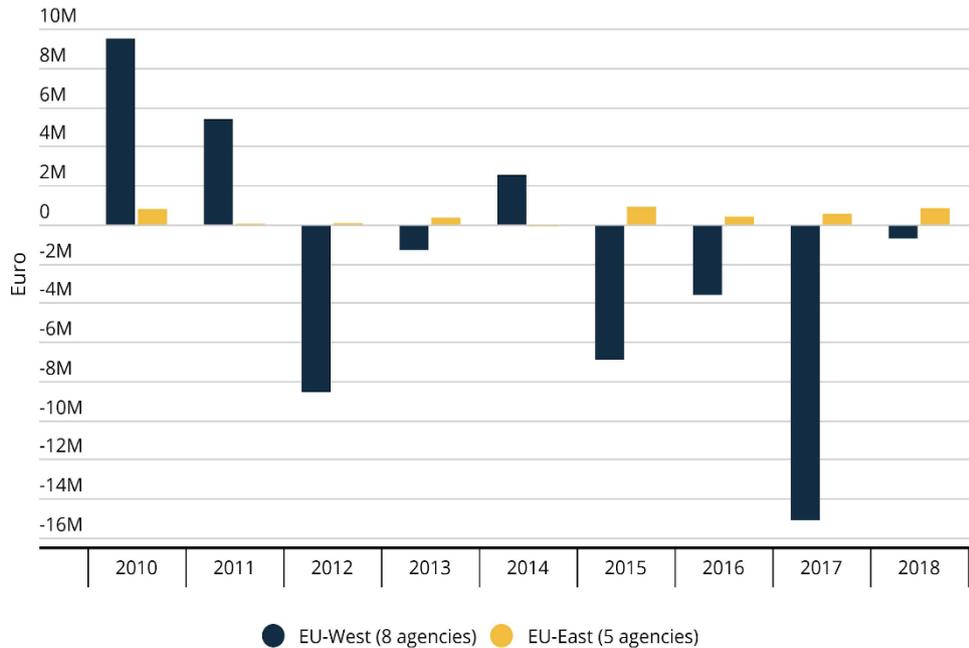
EU-West: ANA-MPA (Greece), ANSA (Italy), Belga (Belgium), DPA (Germany), EFE (Spain), Lusa (Portugal) STT (Finland), TT (Sweden).
EU-East: CTK (Czech Republic), Hina (Croatia), Leta (Latvia), STA (Slovenia), Tanjug (Serbia).

Figure 5: Development of operating revenue in the selected national news agencies.

Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

Profit/Loss before tax

(2010-2018, 13 agencies)



EU-West: ANA-MPA (Greece), ANSA (Italy), Belga (Belgium), DPA (Germany), EFE (Spain), Lusa (Portugal) STT (Finland), TT (Sweden).
EU-East: CTK (Czech Republic), Hina (Croatia), Leta (Latvia), STA (Slovenia), Tanjug (Serbia).

Figure 6: Development of profit/loss before tax in in the selected national news agencies

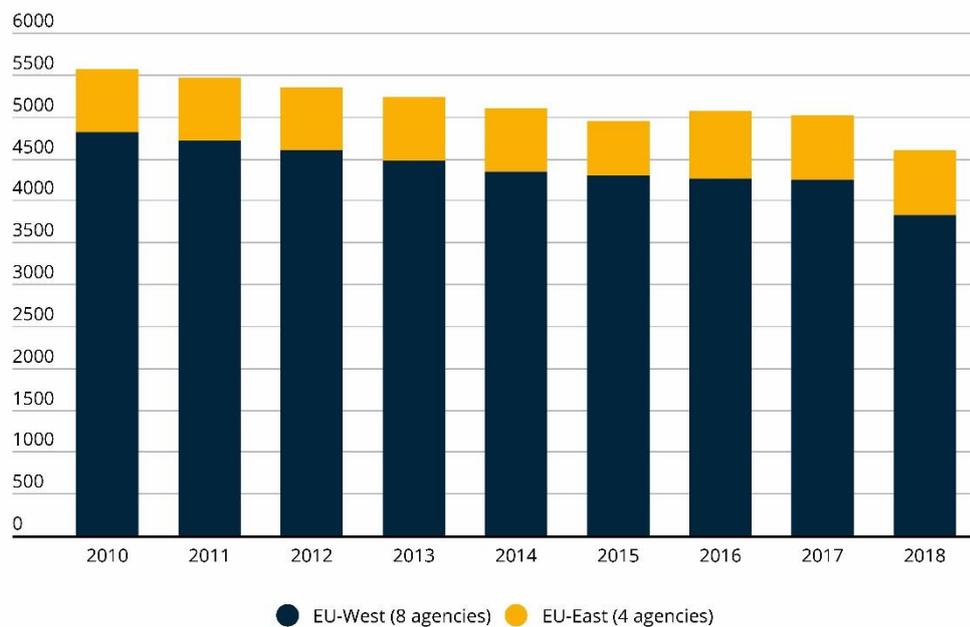
Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

The profit/loss data shows that news agencies are not, on average, a good business. The numbers vary greatly, however, and high losses in some state-owned West-bloc agencies, especially those of Spanish EFE, dominate the aggregated numbers.

If we count only privately owned western agencies, they have been able to show decent profits, mostly based on their diversified new businesses. In the East bloc, profitability is low but stable.

This is perhaps due to the income structure being targeted more towards public-service and state institutions. Also, the agencies of the West bloc operate more diversified businesses whose profitability fluctuates, and this may result in high profits from divestments with occasional capital gains. The personnel trend in the East bloc is more stable, while in the West bloc the personnel trend is clearly downwards.

**Personnel of selected 12 agencies
(2010-2018)**



EU-West: ANA-MPA (Greece), ANSA (Italy), Belga (Belgium), DPA (Germany), EFE (Spain), Lusa (Portugal) STT (Finland), TT (Sweden).
EU-East: CTK (Czech Republic), Hina (Croatia), Leta (Latvia), STA (Slovenia).

Figure 7: Development of personnel in the selected national news agencies

Source: LSE/ Atte Jääskeläinen

2.1.2.3 Revenue sources

In analysing the revenue sources of news agencies, the author again turns to data from the LSE project. Revenue sources vary across these two groups of European news agencies. The share of revenue derived from media customers is lower in the EU-East bloc, whereas agencies in the EU-West member countries have a higher percentage of revenue from media customers.

The average share of news agencies' income from media customers is about 32-41 per cent in the EU-East group, while this figure is 46-55 per cent in EU-West member countries. The reverse is true for the share of revenue generated from public or political institutions (e.g. ministries, parliaments, other state institutions), which is higher in the EU-East states and in candidate countries than in the EU-West group.

As to income from media markets, it is remarkable that news agencies in the EU-East group generate more revenue from public and private television and radio than from print newspapers. In contrast, the print media provide more income than TV to agencies in the EU-West member countries.

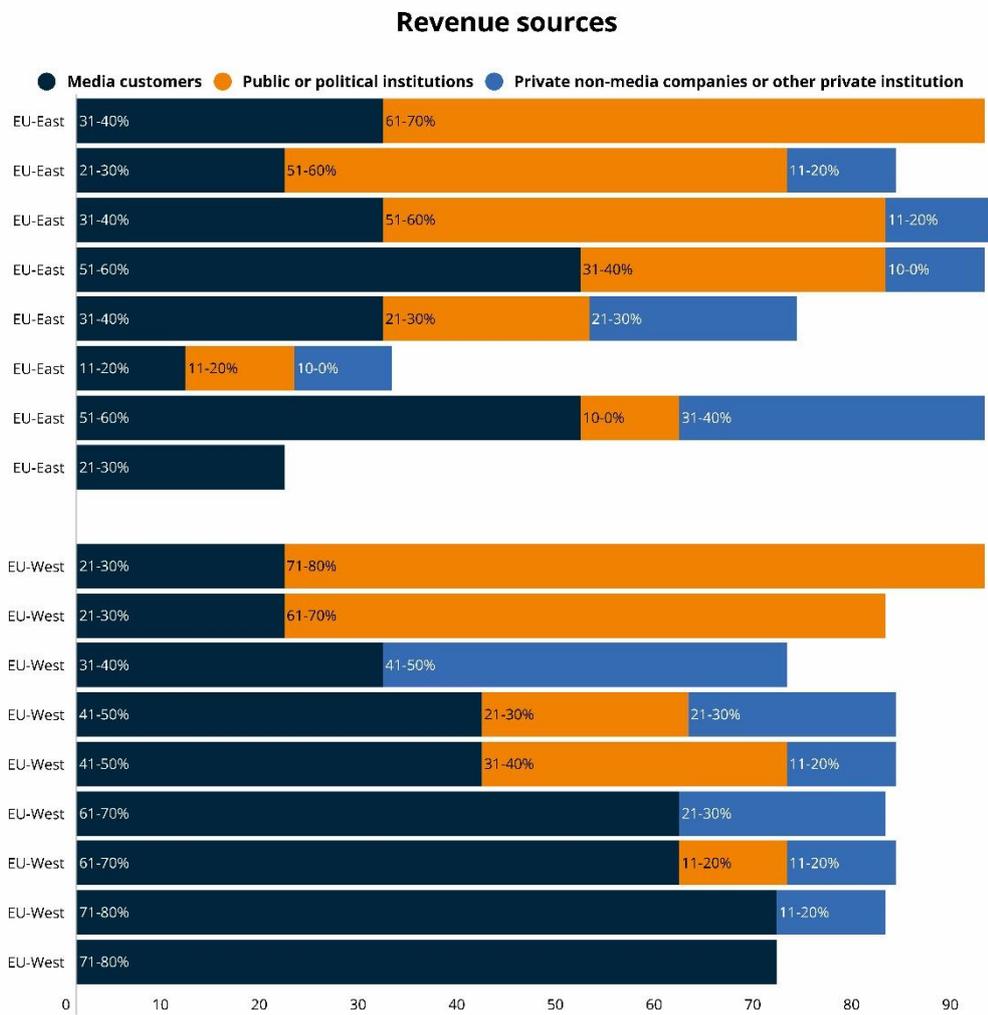


Figure 8: Revenue sources in the two EU-blocs of selected agencies.

Source: LSE/ Atte Jääskeläinen

2.1.2.4 News agencies in the European Union institutions

Examination of the number of journalists from each country’s media outlets accredited with the European Commission, and of the types of media they represent, provides very useful insights into how the national news agencies cover the European Union, in particular in Brussels.

As the membership and the power of the European Union have grown, so has the size of the so-called “Brussels press corps”. In 1976, when the then European Economic Community had nine members, only 259 journalists were accredited

with the European institutions. The number of accredited journalists with the European Commission saw its peak in 2018 with 1,031 journalists.

By September 2020, 899 journalists were accredited with the European Commission. All these figures represent annual accreditations, but do not include temporary or event-based accreditations.

Journalists accredited with the EU Commission

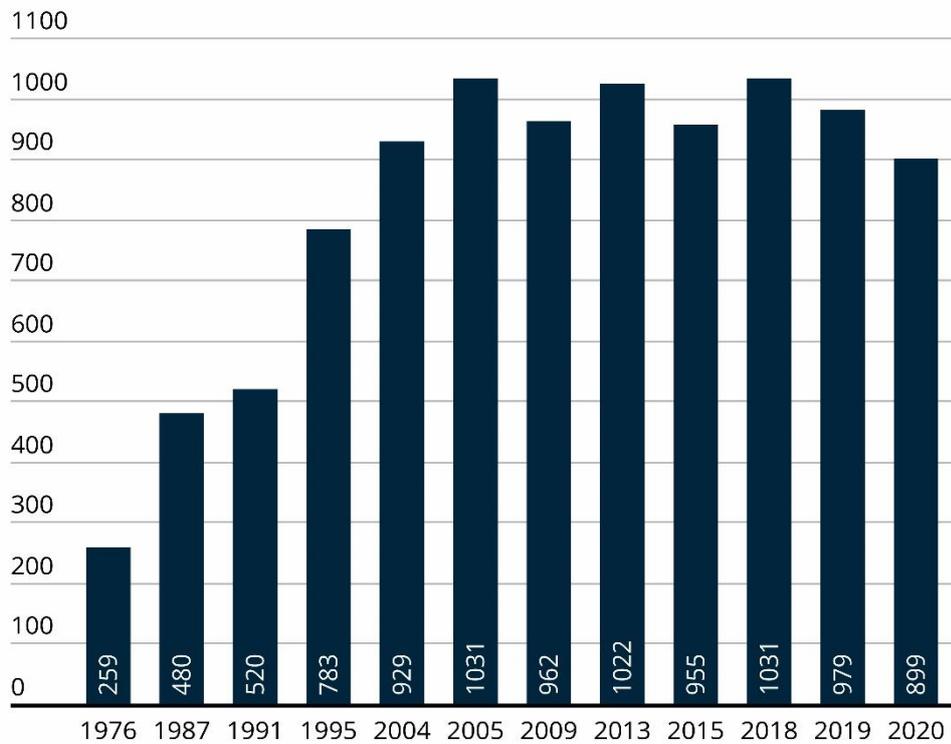


Figure 9: Trend of number of journalists accredited with the EU Commission

Source: EU Commission/ Atte Jääskeläinen

There are several reasons for the levelling off in numbers of correspondents. Firstly, newsrooms across Europe — where most of the Brussels-based correspondents come from — have been shedding staff since the mid-1990s due to the economic crisis, falling revenue streams, and the costs of maintaining

expensive bureaus abroad that stretch cash-strapped media organisations. Secondly, the number of foreign correspondents is declining because the time devoted by traditional media to international news has dropped. Thirdly, many of the journalists from Central and Eastern Europe who came to Brussels to cover their countries' accession to the EU went home after their states joined (Terzis & Harding, 2015).

In September 2020, 189 of these 899 journalists, which corresponds to 21 per cent of all media representatives, work for news agencies. Journalists from news agencies are mostly on staff (160 journalists), while only 29 (15 per cent) are freelancers. Since 2004 there has been a modest shift away from print journalists and towards online media, news agencies, and audio-visual media (radio and TV). In 2005, almost half the accredited journalists in Brussels worked in print. In May 2012, just over 40 per cent did, and this fell to 26 per cent by October 2015. The share of news-agency journalists has slightly decreased in the last decade. In 2012, 26 per cent of accredited journalists worked for news agencies. This figure dropped to 21 per cent by late in 2015 and remains at that level in 2020.

Media outlets accredited with the European Commission are predominantly from European countries. Of all the accredited journalists, 609, corresponding to 68 per cent, work for media outlets from 34 European Union member, candidate or potential candidate countries. Of 189 news agency journalists (64 per cent), 121 contribute to a news agency service in one of these 34 European countries.

News agencies in six European countries (the UK, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and Spain) overtly dominate the sector, as each of these has more than ten journalists and together they represent 76 per cent of the news agency workforce in Brussels, with 116 permanently accredited journalists. Ten countries on the list of member, candidate or potential candidate countries have no news-agency journalists covering the European Union in Brussels, and 13 have only one news-agency journalist accredited with the EU Commission.

Accredited journalists with the EU Commission (2020)

■ Other media (print, TV, online) ■ News agency

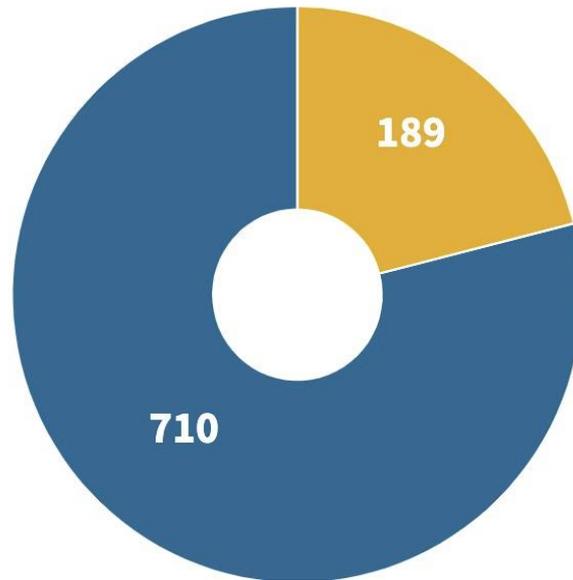


Figure 10: Share of news agency journalists in accredited journalists with the EU Commission.

Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

Accredited journalists with the EU Commission (2020)

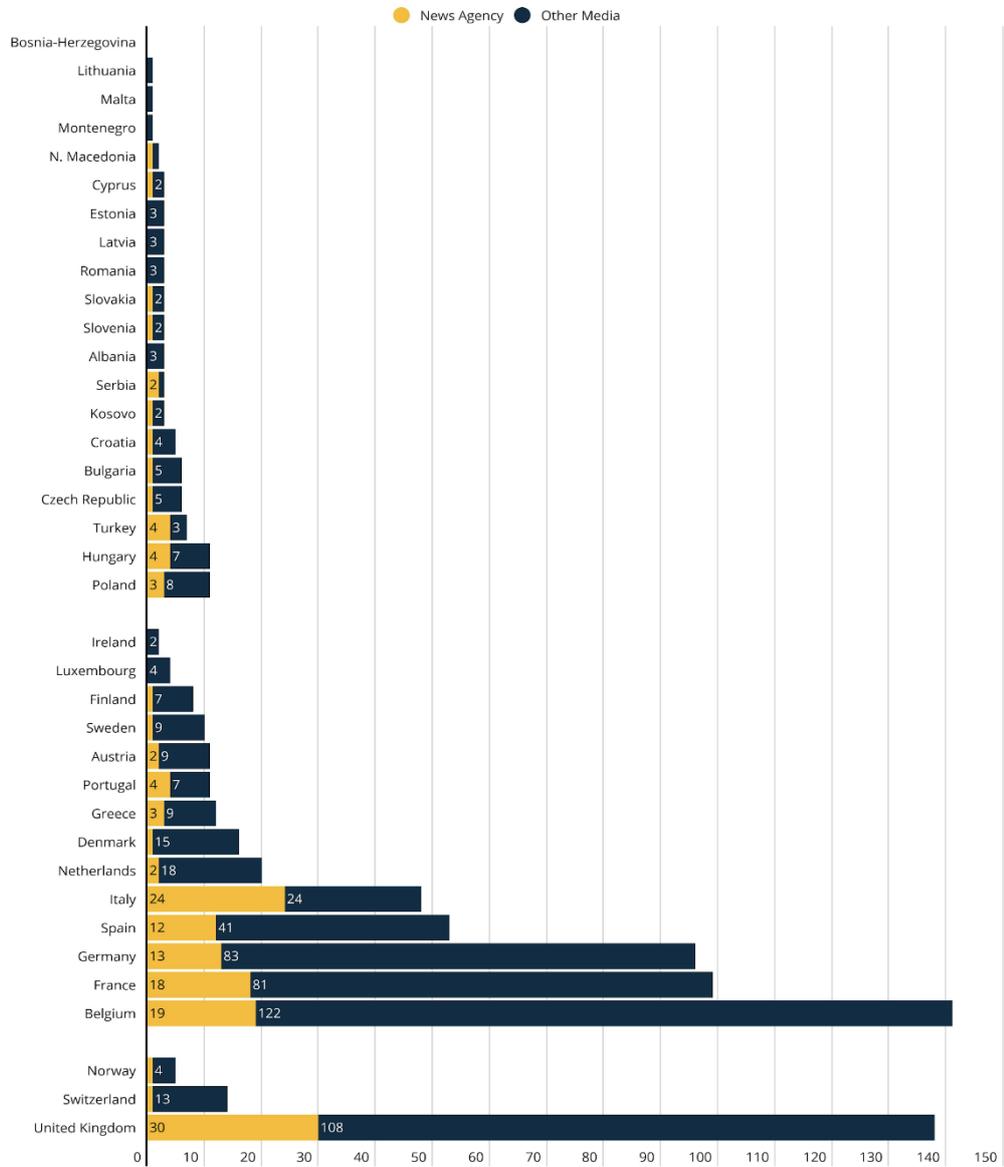


Figure 11: Accredited journalists with the EU Commission by country

Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

Table 1: Accredited journalists with the EU Commission by country
Source: Atte Jääskeläinen

Category		Country	Journalists working for news agencies	All journalists (incl. news agencies)
EU-East / Candidate	C	Albania	0	3
EU-West	1957	Austria	2	11
EU-West	1957	Belgium	19	141
EU-East / Potential candidate	PC	Bosnia-Herzegovina	0	0
EU-East	2007	Bulgaria	1	6
EU-East	2013	Croatia	1	5
EU-East	2004	Cyprus	1	3
EU-East	2004	Czech Republic	1	6
EU-West	1973	Denmark	1	16
EU-East	2004	Estonia	0	3
EU-West	1995	Finland	1	8

EU-West	1957	France	18	99
EU-East / Candidate	C	North Macedonia	1	2
EU-West	1957	Germany	13	96
EU-West	1981	Greece	3	12
EU-East	2004	Hungary	4	11
EU-West	1973	Ireland	0	2
EU-West	1957	Italy	24	48
EU-East / Potential candidate	PC	Kosovo	1	3
EU-East	2004	Latvia	0	3
EU-East	2004	Lithuania	0	1
EU-West	1957	Luxembourg	0	4
EU-East	2004	Malta	0	1
EU-East / Candidate	C	Montenegro	0	1
EU-West	1957	Netherlands	2	20
Non-EU	NON	Norway	1	5

EU-East	2004	Poland	3	11
EU-West	1986	Portugal	4	11
EU-East	2007	Romania	0	3
EU-East / Candidate	C	Serbia	2	3
EU-East	2004	Slovakia	1	3
EU-East	2004	Slovenia	1	3
EU-West	1986	Spain	12	53
EU-West	1995	Sweden	1	10
Non-EU	NON	Switzerland	1	14
EU-East / Candidate	C	Turkey	4	7
Non-EU	(1973)	United Kingdom	30	138
Total			153	766

2.1.2.5 Eastern European news agencies in EU institutions

To further analyse these figures, the author categorised the European news agencies into two main groups in order to reveal their characteristics. The first group consists of states that joined the EU before or in the course of the enlargement of 1995. This group (EU West) includes agencies from 14 countries.

The second group is comprised of agencies from countries that joined the EU in the years 2004 through 2013 as well as candidate countries and potential candidate countries. This group (EU East) contains agencies from 20 countries. States that are not members of the EU – such as Norway, Switzerland and also the UK – are excluded from the comprehensive comparisons between the “old” and “new” member states or candidate countries.

The UK leaving EU membership is a significant event for coverage of EU affairs. There are currently 138 journalists from UK media outlets accredited with the European Commission. This is more than any other country, even than Germany (96) and France (99), despite both countries having a larger population than the UK (Gehrke, 2020). There are several significant outlets serving their audiences on EU affairs that are registered in the UK, like the Financial Times, Euractiv and MLex. On the other hand, Euronews is registered in Lyon, France, boosting French numbers, while Politico boosts those of Belgium (Harding, 2016; Kanter, 2019).

As Figure 12 shows, news agencies from EU-West member countries dominate the resources for covering the European Union when the number of accredited journalists with the EU Commission is taken into consideration. Five hundred and thirty-one journalists covering the EU are from these 14 countries. In contrast, only 75 journalists are working for the other 20 European countries, consisting of 13 members that joined the EU with enlargement, and seven candidate countries.

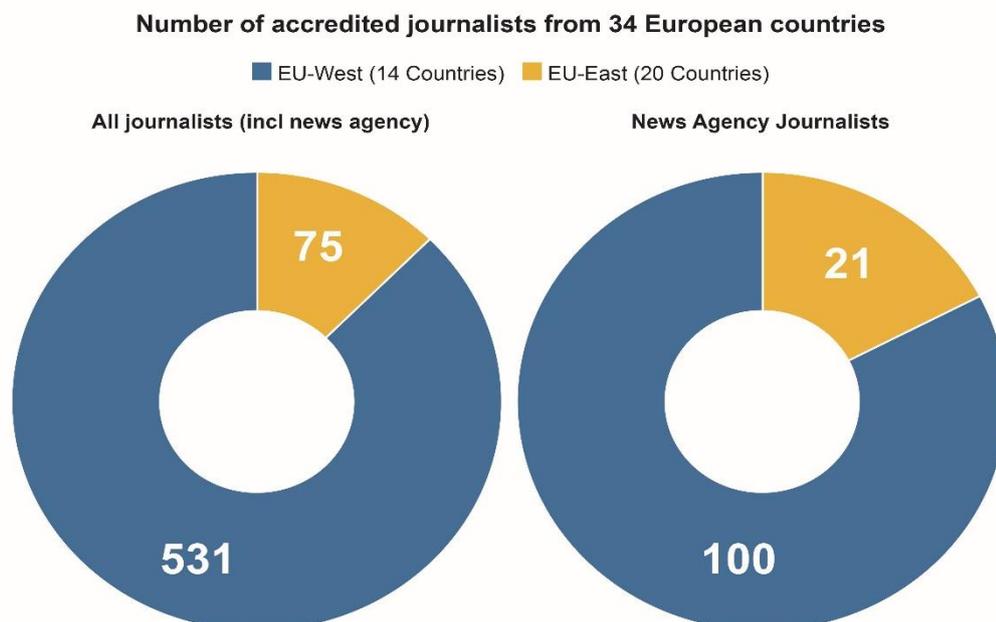


Figure 12: Division of accredited journalists in EU-West and EU-East blocs.

Source: EU Commission/ Atte Jääskeläinen

In addition to all the journalists, media members working for news agencies in the EU-West countries (100) are four times the number of those from EU-East countries (21). Two countries in the EU-West group have no accredited journalist working for a news agency in Brussels, whereas 8 of the 20 countries in the EU-East group do not operate a news agency in Brussels.

Another 8 of the 20 countries have only one accredited journalist contributing for a news agency. All these figures suggest that the EU-West countries have a remarkable investment in their news agencies coverage of the European Union. At the same time, the new bloc, the EU-East group, does not prioritise employing reporters to follow Brussels.

There may be different reasons behind this fact, such as the small media landscape in the countries concerned, their dependency on the international news agencies, which decreases the role of national agencies' general news services, and the revenue loss of their news media due to digital disruption. To gain a deeper

understanding of these reasons, the case of each country needs to be examined comprehensively.

Besides the fact that the national news agencies in the new group have limited ability and resources in covering Brussels, the number of accredited journalists with the EU working for all types of media outlets (74 journalists including those from news agencies) is very low in these countries compared with the EU-West group (531).

This means that people in these countries have minimal sources of news and perspectives on EU affairs, since their national media outlets hardly employ any journalists to cover Brussels. One of the 20 countries has not even a single reporter in Brussels.

Two more of these countries have only one accredited journalist covering the EU. Fourteen of these 20 countries have no more than three journalists accredited with the EU Commission.

2.1.3 Discussion and conclusions

In their report titled *What Can Be Done? Digital Media Policy Options for Europe (and Beyond)* Nielsen, Gorwa and De Cock Buning write, in relation to Brussels correspondents, that “All politics is local”. News organisations, except for global organisations, covering European affairs and EU institutions have to focus on what decisions, proposals and debates mean for their own home countries, (Nielsen et al., 2019). This means that European politics is covered mainly for the European elite, and that practical implications of EU developments are reported from a national angle (Raeymaeckers et al., 2007).

On the other hand, a European public sphere is held to be one possible solution for increasing the legitimacy of the Union. However, that sphere, in reality, does not yet exist. Journalists in Brussels are brokers between European and national public spheres. Journalists from the EU-East enlargement, candidate and potential candidate countries are working for a different kind of media system than those typical of longer-standing West-bloc EU members with well-established democratic traditions and high journalistic standards (Lecheler, 2008).

It has also been noted that journalists from small new member states rely heavily on the official information they receive from their own diplomatic representatives. They have limited access to sources in the European institutions, and lack the prominence enjoyed by large, well-known news brands of the West-bloc (Lecheler, 2008). These countries also suffer from a lack of sufficient financial resources to live and work in the expensive cities of Brussels or Strasbourg. They are forced to rely on their journalists at home or on freelancers in Brussels. As a Polish correspondent explained, "For five stories I cover here, you could finance a good journalist in Poland." (Lecheler, 2008, p. 257).

European democracies and democracy in Europe are based on fundamental values of freedom of speech, diversity of voice, the enabling of informed and educated citizens, tolerance, dignity, and fighting against discrimination and hatred. A strong pluralistic and sustainable media ecosystem is instrumental for democracy in every European country.

As documented in multiple political, official and academic reviews, European principles and values have rapidly been called into question by the global digital media platforms that also set rules under which European media have to operate. European politics and societies have witnessed a rapid polarisation in the past decade.

Scholarly research has found correlations between media usage and extreme political partisanship of both Left and Right (Newman et al., 2019, p. 43). A recent report prepared for the European Commission claims that global social-media platforms constitute a significant challenge to European sovereignty (Klossa, 2019, pp. 11, 16–17).

2.1.3.1 Trust in media, trust in institutions and news avoidance

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, trust in news media had reached a historic low, as measured by the Edelman Trust Barometer 2018 (Edelman, 2018). Scholars have noted, however, that declining trust is not a universal trend. A recent Reuters Institute Digital News Report, Eurobarometer and the Edelman Trust Indicator all confirm that trust in the media varies dramatically between European countries. In countries like the Netherlands and the Nordic nations trust is high, while in the

countries of the south and also in the UK figures are alarmingly low. This corresponds with low trust in politics, elites and institutions in general. According to Eurobarometer, Portugal stands in contrast to other southern countries, showing strong trust in the media (Edelman, 2018; Kantar Public, 2019; Newman et al., 2019).

The link between trust in the press and political trust is stronger in politically polarised societies, and this connection is becoming stronger over time. In general, trust has declined in the Anglo-American sphere, which is typically defined by the two-party political system and has been at the centre of the political polarisation trend.

Studies seeking to discover the reasons for fluctuations in trust specifically in the media are rare. People tend to have more trust in the press when they are interested in politics, when they are regularly exposed to press content, and when they trust other people (Hanitzsch et al., 2018).

When Americans are asked to explain their lack of general trust in news organisations, their top categories of answer mostly focus on perceived inaccuracy and bias. More than 60 per cent of respondents see “too much bias in the reporting of news stories that are supposed to be objective” as a significant problem, with only 44 per cent able to identify any news source that they believe reports the news objectively (Gallup / Knight Foundation, 2018).

In German-speaking countries and in Nordic countries, trust is traditionally high, but trust in the media even in these countries has started to show a decline (Hanitzsch et al., 2018). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the situation dramatically. As measured by Edelman, trust in governments suddenly reached all-time highs, and trust in the media increased significantly. People suddenly saw the value of institutions when they began to experience a common fear of an invisible virus and connected in order to fight this threat (2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update: Trust and the Coronavirus, 2020).

Another often mentioned foundation of trust is the independence of journalism. In the general narrative, vulnerability to governmental or commercial pressures has frequently been cited as a factor eroding trust. However, the relationship is not straightforward. Hanretty (Hanretty, 2010, 2011) has tried to find the contributors

to de facto independence of journalistic decisions. By "de facto independence" he means the degree to which employees take day-to-day decisions about output without receiving or acting on the basis of instructions, threats or other inducements from politicians, or considering whether particular choices concerning output would harm the interests of those politicians. He argues that the size of the market, legal protections and professionalism in journalism are safeguards against unhealthy influence by politicians.

Tsfati and Ariely have demonstrated that state ownership of the media alone is not a factor eroding trust if other factors are excluded. However the political system of a country is an important factor: if the country is not democratic, then state ownership is associated with less trust, and in democratic societies, in turn, it is a positive element correlating with trust (Tsfati & Ariely, 2014).

A new and growing problem for media policy is news avoidance: Conscious news avoidance varies in European countries between 15 and 56 percent of the population (Newman et al., 2019). News avoidance, especially of political news, often originates in a cynical attitude towards politicians, coupled with a modest level of civic literacy and a lack of knowledge about politics (Schröder, 2019).

A majority of Europeans feel that they are not well-informed about European issues. Of respondents to the Eurobarometer survey, a majority in only seven EU Member States believed that they were well-informed (Kantar Public, 2019).

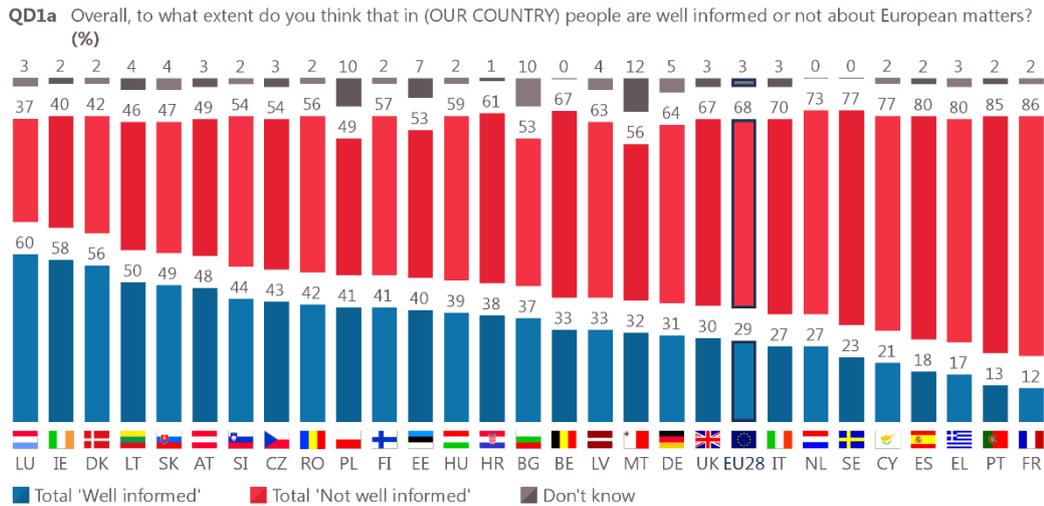


Figure 13: How well citizens are informed about European matters

Source: Eurobarometer 92 Survey

The traditional media still have a significant role, in Europe, in shaping the opinions of the public and affecting their decision-making as citizens. In many countries, local and regional news is the most popular. However, around half of the audience express a high level of interest in hard news topics like international news and politics (Newman et al., 2017). While the role of the written press and of television have been on the decline, and that of the internet and social media on the increase, it is essential to note that all these media are served in their news reporting by national news agencies. Therefore, the indirect impact of news agencies' ability to report on European issues is of fundamental importance to all media systems in Europe.

The resources of news organisations are reduced because of financial strains. Several reports have called for policy action to secure the ability of the quality media to report on issues of high importance for societies and also to tackle the problem of misinformation (The HLEG, 2018; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

2.1.3.2 Interrelations between media systems and European democratic values

Hanitzsch et al. have studied journalistic cultures across nations. Western journalistic culture is characterised by non-involvement, detachment and monitoring of government, as well as by the provision of interesting political information motivating people to participate in civic activity. They observe advanced adaptation to Western standards in countries like Bulgaria and Romania, perhaps furthered by Western ownership of media companies in those countries. They classify Bulgaria and Romania in a group they label as “peripherally western” (Hanitzsch et al., 2011).

The classification of media systems in Europe is typically based on the methodology and model first introduced by Hallin and Mancini (2004) for Western Europe and expanded, by several scholars, to Central and Eastern Europe (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Castro Herrero et al., 2017; Hallin & Mancini, 2011).

This classification is based on the relevant differences between countries. It takes into account factors like how well the media reach their audience, political parallelism (how much political advocacy is conceived of as being part of the journalistic mission), the professional autonomy of journalists, the role of ethical principles, and how much journalistic culture is oriented towards serving the public interest. An important factor in these classifications is the role of the state. In Western countries, public broadcasting is the most important kind of state intervention, while others are press subsidies and regulation.

In the original classification of Hallin and Mancini (2004), Western countries were grouped into Democratic Corporatist (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands), Liberal (UK, Ireland) and Polarised pluralist (Portugal, Spain, France, Greece and Italy) models. The labels of Northern, Central, Western and Southern have also been used, and the countries studied have been variously grouped using four key factors: political parallelism, the role of public broadcasting, press freedom and foreign ownership.

The geographical area of Central and Eastern Europe has been classified into three groups: Eastern (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary), Central (Czech Republic,

Poland, Croatia, Slovenia) and Northern (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia). The Eastern cluster has the highest levels of political parallelism combined with the lowest investments in and the lowest audience for public service broadcasting (PSB). These countries also have the lowest rates of press freedom. The Eastern cluster has the lowest levels of professionalization among journalists. The Central cluster comes between the Eastern and Northern clusters, except with regard to lower levels of foreign ownership and a higher share of PSB in media markets. The Northern cluster has low political parallelism, high press freedom, and high foreign ownership, combined with the highest levels of journalistic professionalism.

Dobek-Ostrowska classified 21 post-communist countries into: Hybrid Liberal (West Slavonic countries, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and South Slavonic state of Slovenia, all members of the EU); Politicised Media (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia); Media in Transition (Moldova, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine), and Authoritarian models (Belorussia and Russia). Especially in Poland, the media have quickly become politicised since the data for this classification was gathered.

The author concludes that the media systems of CEE countries operate “between a rock and a hard place, or rather between political pressure, leading to politicisation, and economic pressure, leading to commercialisation. These are the two negative tendencies that result in the low quality of the media in CEE countries.” (Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015; Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019). It is remarkable that none of the studies mentioned here takes into account the role of the national news agency, its role, relation to the state or journalistic professionalism, as a factor in defining the type of media system in a country (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Castro Herrero et al., 2017; Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2011).

Press freedom and perceived corruption across EU member states

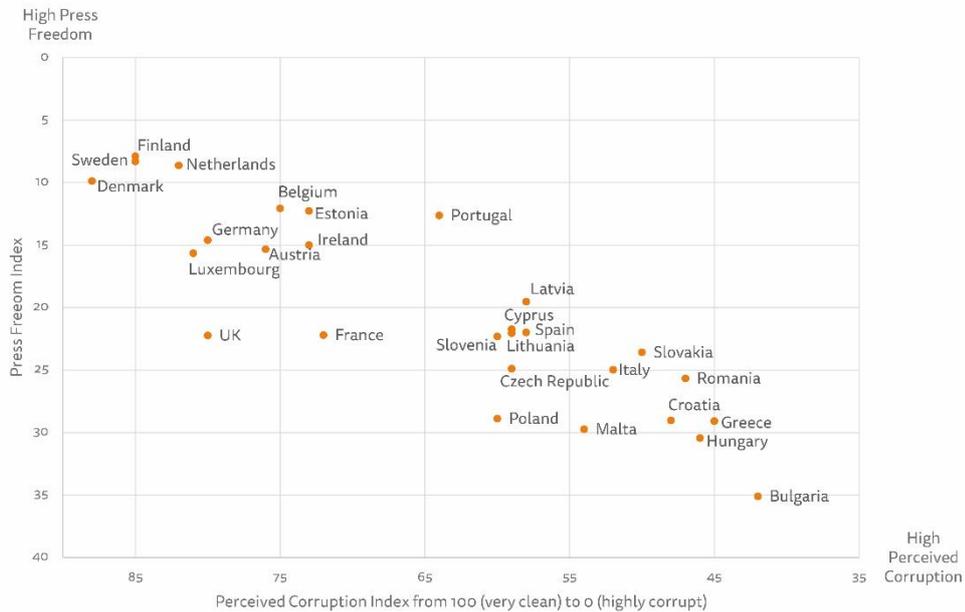


Figure 14: Correlation of press freedom and perceived corruption by country.

Source: Reuters Institute Report

2.1.3.3 Conclusions

Based on the analysis above, the author concludes that:

- Despite that the commercial value of information has dramatically fallen as a result of digital disruption, the national news agencies still play a crucial role in covering the significant events for their news media in their respective countries. The international news agencies cover the main events of EU institutions, but their services mainly have a general, international angle.
- In the EU-West bloc the competitive forces in the marketplace have made it impossible to run a news agency based on a traditional newswire only. As a response to that, the privately owned agencies have diversified their businesses and have been able to maintain their profitability.

-
- The national news agencies of the EU-East bloc have been less hit by the decreasing income trend of traditional newswires, as they rely more on income from public authorities and public television than on newspapers.
 - The news agencies of the EU-East bloc have significantly lower income levels than those from the West. However, due to lower wage levels, some of the latter are able to maintain in their home countries a number of staff comparable to agencies from the West. This lower cost level does not help them in maintaining an ability to report from European institutions, because of the high level of costs in Brussels and Strasbourg.
 - The figures on the journalists accredited with the EU Commission clearly show that most of the news media from the Eastern European countries have limited representation in the capital of the EU, Brussels. It is very remarkable that there are not any Brussels-based from some of the candidate or potential candidate countries.
 - The presence of permanently accredited journalists from Eastern agencies in Brussels is substantially thinner than from those in the West. This results in a situation in which their reporting is based on fewer contacts to original sources, less research and less analysis than would be desirable. Covering the EU needs reporting by specialized journalists.
 - National news agencies in Eastern European countries can play an important role in filling the information gap of citizens on European affairs by covering the events and issues in the EU Commission. They can focus on the priorities of their respective countries in producing news articles, photos and videos. All national news agencies have included in their service portfolio photos and videos, and providing them in high quality requires a presence where the news happens.
 - Fact-based reporting from Brussels is a fundamental requirement for providing citizens with a balanced view of European decisions and politics. Therefore, the ability of EU-East-bloc agencies to maintain – or even scale up – their resources in European institutions is strategically important for these agencies, their countries of origin and democracy in itself.

2.2 Brief descriptions of the questioned agencies

In the following section, the European news agencies questioned will be introduced through the basic data gathered from the questionnaire. Their most important requests for the project of a joint Newsroom will also be mentioned exemplarily, prior to being presented in greater detail in the outcome section.

AGERPRES, Romania: As a public institution of national interest, the Romanian news agency AGERPRES is controlled by parliament. AGERPRES' day-to-day operations are financed from the state budget. The agency's headquarter is in Bucharest, several correspondents are distributed throughout the country. The news agency generates annual revenue of less than EUR 5 million by distributing text, photos and videos in Romanian, English and Hungarian. Its 241 journalists in Romania work for clients in the media and the corporate segments. So far, AGERPRES does not employ any foreign correspondents. Participation in the EU Newsroom would support the news agency in its mission to inform the public and regularly provide the Romanian press with high quality journalistic content from Brussels.

ANSA, Italy: ANSA produces texts, photos and videos from its headquarters in Rome as well as 21 further offices in Italy. It also offers the distribution of press releases. The agency is a cooperative which receives government subsidies. Annual revenue amounts to over EUR 10 million and is generated by more than 500 employees. ANSA publishes in Italian, English, Spanish and Portuguese and has correspondents in 73 locations outside Italy. Five of these correspondents cover EU affairs on site in Brussels. ANSA's target group includes the media, corporate and other segments. ANSA is not disinclined to participate in the EU Newsroom and sees opportunities in the network.

APA, Austria: The editorial teams of the news agency APA supply the Austrian media landscape with content in the shape of text, graphic, image, audio and video formats. The agency is owned by Austrian daily newspapers and the broadcasting company ORF (*Österreichischer Rundfunk*) and is independent of the state and government. The agency works for the media, corporate and other segments and generates annual sales of over EUR 10 million. APA is headquartered in Vienna and employs 145 journalists. The Austrian news agency regards reporting on the

EU as very important and already has an office in Brussels. With regard to a joint EU Newsroom, APA sees definite advantages in the exchange with representatives from other agencies.

ATA, Albania: Albanian news agency ATA has its seat exclusively in Tirana and employs 86 journalists. It is state-financed and publishes content in Albanian, English and French. The news agency offers a word, photo and video service. By its own account, annual revenue amounts to less than EUR 5 million. So far, ATA has no correspondents abroad and aims to increase its presence in Brussels in order to ensure transparency for the Albanian people.

BNS, Estonia: Estonia's private news agency has its headquarters in Tallinn and also operates in Latvia and Lithuania. It employs fewer than 300 journalists and produces texts and photos for its customers. BNS publishes in five languages: Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian and English. At present, there is no Estonian correspondent on site in Brussels. The agency only dispatches a journalist to Belgium if an important event takes place. As a result, BNS currently has little interest in an EU Newsroom.

BTA, Bulgaria: BTA is Bulgaria's national news agency with headquarters in Sofia. Founded in 1898, it now is an important source of information for print and digital media, government institutions and NGOs in Bulgaria. Text and photos are produced in Bulgarian and English. By its own account, BTA is an "autonomous national news organisation" whose director general is elected by parliament. The statutes of the agency guarantee its independent editorial policy and safeguard it against commercial and political influence. BTA's operations are financed by selling information services and products, by advertising and allocations for measures from the national budget. Thus far, the agency has one correspondent on site in Brussels.

CNA, Cyprus: The Cypriot news agency has its headquarters in Nicosia. Founded in 1976, CNA produces in three languages: Greek, English and Turkish. Offering text and photo services, the public information service CNA aims to cover a width of Cyprus-related topics for the domestic as well as foreign markets. The agency is an independent and autonomous organisation. By law, CNA is led by a seven-headed board of directors, composed of professional media representatives. Apart

from its headquarters in Nicosia, the Cypriot news agency runs a network of correspondents in the cities of the Southern, government-controlled part of Cyprus as well as in the Northern part of the republic, which is occupied by Turkey. On top of this, CNA has correspondents in the important foreign decision-making centres (Athens, Brussels, London, New York, Istanbul). At present, participation in the EU Newsroom would be difficult for the news agency, since it faces substantial financial problems due to the Corona pandemic.

CTK, Czech Republic: On a daily basis, the Czech news agency produces texts, photos and videos in two languages (Czech, English). It has its headquarters in Prague and is a corporation established by law. It is politically and financially independent, hence not subsidised by the state. The news agency's supervisory board is elected every five years by the Czech parliament. The board supervises CTK's operations and checks whether the agency fulfils the mission of providing objective and comprehensive information as a basis for free opinion making. The board also monitors all allocations from the state budget, if any are provided. The news agency is generally interested in the EU Newsroom, especially with regard to the support that the Czech correspondent in Brussels might receive from other agencies.

FENA, Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Bosnian news agency with headquarters in the country's capital Sarajevo is state-financed. It employs 80 journalists who produce text, photo, video and audio formats in Bosnian and English. By its own statement, the news agency generates annual sales of EUR 250,000 and is supported by EUR 1.4 million from the state budget. FENA defines the media and corporations as its target audience. Participation in the EU Newsroom is very important for FENA, since it would enable the agency to be on site in Brussels for all significant events. So far, the agency has no journalists of its own abroad.

HINA, Croatia: The 100 journalists of the Croatian news agency produce texts, photos, videos, graphics and audio formats. Apart from its headquarters in Zagreb, HINA also operates another 25 offices in Croatia and abroad, one of them in Brussels. The agency is state-owned and 60 per cent funded by the government. Annual revenue amounts to less than EUR 5 million. The agency's content for the media, corporations and the government is published exclusively in Croatian. An

EU Newsroom would make work and communication easier for all correspondents in Brussels and might induce them to work together as one in the future.

Keystone-SDA, Switzerland: The Swiss news agency Keystone-SDA is a public limited company headquartered in Bern. It runs eleven other regional offices in Switzerland, as well as two foreign offices in Brussels and in Sydney. The agency employs five journalists abroad and 100 in Switzerland. They publish texts, photos and videos in the three national languages German, French and Italian. With its customers in the media and corporate segments, the agency generates annual sales of over EUR 10 million. Keystone-SDA regards it as very important to have a network in Brussels through the EU Newsroom, since so far the agency has been fending for itself. Keystone-SDA sees the Newsroom as an opportunity to jointly profit from the synergies of the European news agencies.

LETA, Latvia: Latvian LETA has 60 employees working for the news agency on the domestic market. This means that the agency with headquarters in Riga does not have any journalists abroad so far – including any representatives in Brussels. LETA is a private agency belonging to the Eesti Meedia Group. Apart from texts, photos and videos, the agency also offers other services, such as big data or monitoring. Content is exclusively produced for media customers, generating annual sales of less than EUR 5 million. LETA publishes in Latvian, Russian and English. Thus far, the agency only dispatches journalists to Brussels for special events. In a joint EU Newsroom, LETA hopes to be able to use dpa's and AFP's news streams and to benefit from a close collaboration with other European agencies.

MIA, North Macedonia: The news agency MIA with headquarters in the capital Skopje produces texts, photos and videos in Macedonian, Albanian and English with 70 journalists. MIA is a stock corporation owned by the state. The news agency's target audience includes media outlets and corporations, but also international organisations, embassies and civil society. One journalist is already present on site in Brussels for the North Macedonian agency. Covering EU affairs is very important for MIA, since North Macedonia is a candidate country. The agency regards the EU Newsroom as an opportunity to work in an international network of journalists. At the same time, MIA thinks that establishing the newsroom will be costly.

PAP, Poland: PAP is Poland's government news agency. About 250 journalists work at its headquarters in Warsaw, another 50 are on site in the major Polish cities. In addition, the news agency has a dozen international correspondents, for instance in Kiev, Berlin, Brussels and New York. PAP is subordinate to the National Media Council and legally bound to report about the activities of the Polish government bodies. The news agency produces text services, exclusively for media customers. It is very important for PAP to cover European affairs. The agency already has two journalists on site in Brussels, but it welcomes collaboration within the framework of a European Newsroom.

NTB, Norway: Norway's private news agency has fewer than 300 employees. Its headquarters are in Oslo and it produces exclusively in Norwegian. With its content for the media, corporations and others, NTB generates annual sales of over EUR 10 million. The news agency offers text, photo and video services. At present, NTB has three correspondents on site in Brussels. The news agency regards the cost sharing as the greatest advantage of a joint newsroom. Since offices in Brussels are very expensive, NTB considers reducing the number of journalists on site. An EU Newsroom would allow the agency to keep all its correspondents in Brussels.

Ritzau, Denmark: Danish news agency Ritzau is jointly owned by the Danish media, the daily newspapers and public broadcasters. The agency is headquartered in Copenhagen, where 100 journalists produce texts, photos and videos in Danish. Ritzau is a market-oriented news agency that sells targeted news products and media services to media outlets, corporations and organisations, thus generating annual sales of over EUR 10 million. The agency regards participation in the EU Newsroom as a great means of support. Since the journalists would not have to compete, they could help one another.

STA, Slovenia: Slovenian news agency STA has its headquarters in Ljubljana. A total of 85 journalists work for STA in Slovenia and another three work abroad, one of them in Brussels. The news agency is state-owned and thus funded from the state budget. STA achieves annual revenue of less than EUR 5 million with text, photo and video products for the media, corporations and the government. The agency produces and publishes in Slovenian and English. STA thinks that the EU Newsroom would bring financial advantages and the opportunity to acquire new (journalistic) skills.

STT, Finland: Finnish news agency STT generates more than EUR 10 million in annual sales with its text and photo services. Headquartered in Helsinki, the agency employs fewer than 300 staff. It produces and publishes content in Finnish, Swedish and English. STT's target audience are the media and corporations. The agency already has a correspondent in Brussels. Participation in the EU Newsroom would make work easier for this correspondent, since she could work from an office and benefit from the exchange within the network.

Tanjug, Serbia: Serbian news agency Tanjug is headquartered in Belgrade and offers text, photo and video services for the media. With these products, the state-owned news agency achieves annual revenue of less than EUR 5 million. The agency publishes exclusively in Serbian and employs fewer than 100 staff. Tanjug already has one correspondent on site in Brussels, who is also working for German broadcaster *Deutsche Welle*. Tanjug is presently undergoing a transformation from a state-owned to a private news agency. Owing to this complex and ongoing situation, the news agency faces financial problems. As a result, Tanjug is presently unable to commit to participation in the EU Newsroom, even though it regards reporting on EU affairs as important.

TASR, Slovakia: Slovakian news agency TASR is a public, national and independent information organisation. TASR has its headquarters in Bratislava and is not subsidised by the government. Instead, it lives on the sales of its products and agency services. For this reason, the agency signed an agreement with the state about assignments of public interest, which are clearly defined by law. A total of 130 journalists produce texts, photos and videos for the media, corporations and the government in Slovakian and English. Annual revenue amounts to EUR 5.5 million. TASR already has a journalist on site in Brussels. A special feature of the country: Coverage of EU affairs is prescribed by law in Slovakia. TASR's interest in a joint newsroom is great, since it regards news agencies as trustworthy sources – and this idea could be promoted throughout Europe through collaboration.

2.3 Methodology

This study focuses on the requests that European news agencies have with regard to a joint newsroom. The central research question is: Which requirements have to be met for news agencies to use the joint EU Newsroom? At a more general level, this also touches the issue on how such a newsroom should be organised to improve reporting on EU affairs in Europe and enhance the quality of journalism.

Using the survey method, potential reservations and concerns of the agencies as well as their concrete requests – for example with regard to the infrastructure of the EU Newsroom – are recorded.

2.3.1 Methodical approach

In order to obtain the opinions and expertise of the decision makers on the framework conditions of a future EU Newsroom, 20 structured interviews with the CEOs of the European news agencies are conducted under the leadership of dpa between September and Mid November 2020. The interviews are conducted in English and take between 20 and 45 minutes. This survey cannot claim to be exhaustive. However, there are recognisable trends at CEO level across 20 of the news agencies on the European continent⁴ and it is quite possible to get a picture of the sentiment towards the project of a joint newsroom.

The chosen survey method is *guideline-based qualitative interviews*, which are evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively with regard to the central research questions. Overall, the interviews can be divided into four thematic clusters (cf. guidelines and thematic clusters in the appendix). The qualitative parts are coded and evaluated with the content analysis software *MaxQDA*⁵. The main categories for the four thematic clusters can be deductively derived from the state of research and the central question of this study. Based on the grounded theory, the category system is coded in vivo and additions are gradually made inductively. This

⁴ Out of the 22 agencies addressed, 20 participated in the survey. Many of those are members of EANA, but some non-members replied as well. Taking into consideration that EANA has a total of 30 agency members, the number of participants in the survey definitely seems solid enough to make statements on trends in opinion.

⁵ The software used was *MaxQDA (Qualitative Data Analysis)* – Standard Version 2020, Release 20.2.2.

methodical approach ensures that all necessary aspects are queried and, at the same time, gives room to voices and opinions that might incidentally arise during the survey and that are not covered by the original category system.

The first part of the survey is a questionnaire collecting important basic data about the news agencies. These include parameters such as *size by employees, media formats and language(s) of reporting, revenue and ownership*. This dataset is recorded during the interview and evaluated quantitatively. For most of the questions in this cluster, it is only possible to tick one answer option. The basic information collected here mostly serves to describe the current status quo of the questioned news agencies.

The second part of the guidelines contains the other thematic clusters, where some of the answers can also be given by ticking options, while other questions allow for free-form open answers. This ensures that new aspects and opinions that have not yet been taken into consideration may be collected exploratory. The subsequent section introduces the thematic clusters in more detail and also reflects on peculiarities the researchers encountered during the phases of coding and evaluation.

Owing to the research economics of this study, the quantitative and qualitative parts of the basic data are evaluated separately in a first step and compiled again at a later stage for analysis. The evaluation of the first interviews already starts during the data collection period.

Due to the professional proximity of the researchers to the subject under investigation, the category system has been comprehensively forethought and structured. And on top of the editorial expertise of dpa-Custom Content's research team, the interviewers themselves, Cristiane Düsterfeld and Peter Kropsch, are consummate media professionals with expert knowledge in the fields of newsroom and media management. Naturally, this has advantageous as well as disadvantageous effects on the interview situation itself, as will be discussed in detail in the following section.

2.3.2 Research criticism

In choosing the news agencies for this study, the researchers were careful to take different regions of the European continent into consideration. However, the list of agencies questioned makes no claim to completeness. First and foremost, the study aims to exploratorily collect sentiments on and concrete requests for the realisation of the project.

The survey is one of the core methods of empirical social research. Like all methods of investigation, it has advantages and disadvantages that naturally lead to a certain need for compromise. Some pitfalls can be avoided through the interview setting. In this case, the survey is conducted face-to-face, the interviews are structured by guidelines and take place via video conference. There are two reasons for the latter: Firstly, the interview partners are located in different regions of the European continent and digital means make travel expendable for face-to-face meetings. Secondly, the circumstances are not least due to the current pandemic situation caused by the Corona virus.

Guideline-based interviews have the major advantage of allowing for freedom with regard to the sequence of questioning. However, this also means that precise minutes have to be taken regarding the order in which the questions were actually asked within a concrete interview situation.⁶ Both conditions are met. Christiane Düsterfeld, Bid Manager at dpa, supports the interviewer Peter Kropsch, CEO of dpa, during the interview situation. While Peter Kropsch is able to focus on conducting the interview, Christine Düsterfeld minutes the core statements in real time and fills in the questionnaire. Thus the first important analytical step is already taken: In this survey, the core statements are summarised during the transcription of the English interview. This means that the source material is summarised and translated into German at the same time. From a researcher's point of view, this is a necessary and justifiable reduction of raw material. However, it requires elevated

⁶ Note: The interviews were recorded and transcribed. As a rule, the interviews take between 20 and 45 minutes.

levels of concentration on the spoken word to correctly note the sequence of the questions in each individual interview, translate the content and take minutes.⁷

The guidelines are structured by thematic clusters and suggest a course. However, the interviewer does not necessarily have to stick to this dramaturgy (the thematic clusters are described in more detail below). Guideline-based interviews are a recognised method of research: A tight corset of questions limits the scope of potential answers and free speech on the part of the interlocutor is not structured enough to adequately pursue research questions. Thus the guidelines can be regarded as the middle ground between these two extremes; they are structured by aspects and thematic clusters, which do not necessarily have to be addressed chronologically – the sequence of questions within one cluster might vary between interviews. The important thing here is to take precise minutes to avoid that single questions or entire thematic clusters are not addressed at all.⁸ All interviews for this study were conducted guideline-based, but for the benefit of a lively conversation, the interviewers still took care not to over-formalise.

A guideline-based structured interview has the following advantages: It allows for a great deal of variance, both formally and with regard to content. An intensive conversation is possible, in which open and complex questions may be asked and difficult questions can generally not be skipped. While there is a sequence of questions prepared in advance – or, as in this study, thematic clusters that result in a logical sequence – the interviewer does not have to stick to this sequence meticulously (cf. Klammer 2005, p. 229). Based on formulated questions, it is quite legitimate for the interviewer to follow up on individual answers, or to develop new questions during conversation in order to discuss thematic aspects in more depth (ibid., p. 230). This means that the interviewer does not just have to listen actively – he or she must also be able to decide on the spot whether it would follow logically to ask the next of the pre-formulated questions from the guidelines or whether a

⁷ Note: Since all interviews are recorded, the questionnaires can also be completed at rest after the interviews. The recordings have the distinct advantage that you may listen to the verbal statements again to make sure that you understood them correctly.

⁸ Note: The guidelines on which all interviews are based can be found in the appendix.

new one should be formulated.⁹ In the interviews with the news agencies, these specifications were also taken into consideration.

The interview partners from the news agencies often possess the last mentioned properties themselves. As a rule, the CEO's do indeed sit on the other side and conduct interviews with a variety of interlocutors themselves. After all, they are professional survey experts. The method's greatest risk of bias is probably incumbent in the great potential influence of the interviewer.¹⁰

2.3.3 Thematic cluster I: Status quo of the news agencies

The first thematic cluster serves to give an overview on the status quo of the news agencies questioned. This thematic cluster deliberately includes answer options to tick (e.g. permanent or freelance staff) as well as individual free-form answers. The central research question for this cluster is: How do the agencies organise their information flow with regard to EU news? To answer this research question, categories are developed on the most important aspects. These include *sources* for reporting on the EU and statements on *research*. Other aspects concern personnel resources. For instance, one question is whether the agency has *on staff or freelance journalists in Brussels*, because if an agency has on staff employees directly on site, they also serve as primary sources for EU-related topics. When it comes to the question regarding the relevancy of covering EU affairs, the guidelines deliberately make no restrictions regarding the type of

⁹ Klammer summarises the high cognitive, verbal and journalistic requirements as follows: "This way of conducting a conversation places particularly high demands on the interviewer, since permanent high levels of concentration are required to evaluate the answers and develop new questions from them at the same time. The active role of the interviewer means that potential interview influences are much greater in an open survey than in a standardised interview. However, not only the interviewer has to meet higher requirements, but the interviewee needs to have verbal capabilities as well and must be prepared to participate in a longer conversation." (Klammer 2005: 230)

¹⁰ Note: With regard to the methodology of a survey, Michael Haller recommends that the questions should „*unconditionally* be understood by all, preferably in the same way, and they should not raise response expectations ("social desirability")". So much about Haller's ideal (Haller 2013: 101). In this study, just as in others, social desirability certainly plays a greater role with regard to some of the questions than it does for others. As the case arises, the authors will point out peculiarities in the evaluation section.

coverage – whether this is general reporting about *Europe* or limited to the *institution and the stakeholders of the EU*.¹¹

This openness of the almost global terms "Europe", "European" and "EU" must in this case always be understood as a holistic complex of topics. The present study does not want to make any limitations in advance regarding the spectrum of contents that a joint EU Newsroom in Brussels should work on. Positively stated, all interlocutors who were interviewed have a basic understanding with regard to the title "joint EU Newsroom". Furthermore, the interviewees' own ideas are complemented by a brief impulse lecture preceding the interview, in which Peter Kropsch presents the news agencies' approach.

The basic tone of the interviews and the interviewees with regard to the project is largely favourable. Consequently, this study rather aims at putting the realisation of the project into more concrete terms and to record the agencies' requests. Thus the qualitative research questions underlying this survey tend to focus on the How and Why.

2.3.4 Thematic cluster II: Demand

The second thematic cluster aims to figure out the agencies' demand for a joint EU Newsroom. The main question of how such an EU Newsroom could be useful was divided into aspects via categories. These include such potential effects of a joint newsroom as *economic synergies*, *an impact on journalistic quality (fact checking, verification)* and *an impact on journalistic diversity*. Further categories contain questions on whether new target audiences could be reached and whether the *attractiveness as an employer* and the overall *reputation* of the agency would benefit.

¹¹ Note: In addition, it cannot be assumed that all news agencies questioned have the same understanding of Europe and the EU. This is a related research question for a follow-up study that the authors cannot seek to answer within the scope of the present one. An analysis of feature coverage of the European financial crisis identified five central models of frames for a common *narrative* about Europe: *Europe as a model of civilisation*, *Europe as a political and economic unit*, *Europe as an economically strong northern alliance*, *a Europe of regions* and *a Europe of cultures* (cf. Theobalt 2019, chapter 3).

The same thematic cluster also includes the questions if the respective agency would actually use this newsroom and whether there are any *reservations* on the part of the agencies regarding the project of an EU Newsroom. Among others, the answer options specified include *financial reservations*, *reservations about journalistic independence vis-à-vis other agencies* as well as with regard to *independence from the EU*. Further aspects concerning this topic can be recorded via free-form answer options.

2.3.5 Thematic cluster III: Requests

The third and last thematic cluster centres on the concrete ideas that the agencies have with regard to an EU Newsroom. Since a guideline-based interview allows for a lively conversation, it is naturally possible that aspects only addressed in this last thematic cluster have already been the subject of previous answers.

In this thematic cluster, potential *explicit requests* can be recorded by ticking answer options and evaluated quantitatively. In addition, there is an “other” option to record all further concrete requests mentioned. Up to five answers were possible, but some of the agencies did not exhaust this number, while others gave more than five requests. All answers were considered in the evaluation.

Additions and country-specific features

Finally, a free-form answer field makes it possible to record general topics concerning the project of a joint EU Newsroom that have not been mentioned yet. Several interviewees made use of this opportunity. As a result, the new category “Country-specific features” developed in the course of evaluation.

2.4 Outcomes

2.4.1 Quantitative evaluation

As already discussed in section 2.2 “Brief descriptions of the questioned agencies”, the European news agencies in the respective countries are positioned differently. Supported by graphics that were developed on the basis of the quantitative survey conducted between September and November 2020, the following section will describe the differences and common features in more detail. In a first step, a closer look will be taken at the general basic information of the news agencies. The second part of the section focuses on the interest the European news agencies have in a future collaboration within the framework of a joint EU Newsroom.

Table 2: List of agencies questioned in the dpa interviews in the period from September to Mid November 2020.

*The greyed out agencies did not fill in the questionnaire.
Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020.*

Agency code	Agency name (usu. English name)	Country	Interviewee	IA Further interviewees
AGER-PRES	Agenția Națională de Presă – Romanian National News Agency	Romania	Claudia Nicolae	
ANSA	Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata	Italy	Stefano De Alessandri	Luigi Silvestri
APA	Austria Presse Agentur	Austria	Dr. Clemens Pig	
ATA	Albanian Telegraphic Agency	Albania	Armela Imeraj	
BTA	Bulgarian Telegraphic Agency	Bulgaria	Maxim Minchev	

BNS	Baltic News Service	Baltic States	Evelyn Kaldoja	
CNA	Cyprus News Agency	Cyprus	George Penintaex	
CTK	Česká tisková kancelář (read: „Četka“)	Czech Republic	Jiri Majstr	
FENA	Federalna novinska agencija, originated from the merger of state-owned agency <i>BiH Press</i> (Sarajevo) and the agency of the Bosnian Croats <i>HABENA</i> (Mostar)	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Elmir Huremovic	Aida Birno
HINA	Hrvatska izvještajna novinska agencija (HINA)	Croatia	Branka Valentic	Damir Hainski
Key-stone-SDA	Keystone-SDA, merger of news and picture agency	Switzerland	Jann Jenatsch	Andreas Gran
LETA	Latvijas telegrafa agentūra, originated from the affiliate of the Soviet <i>Telegrafnoje agentstvo Sowjetskogo Sojusa</i> (TASS)	Latvia	Juris Mendzins	
MIA	Macedonian Information Agency	North Macedonia	Dragan Antonovski	Ivan Kolekevski
NTB	Norsk Telegrambyrå AS	Norway	Mads Yngve Storvik	
PAP	Polish Press Agency	Poland	Wojtek Surmacz	
Ritzau	Nordisk Centralbureau for Telegramme, founded by Erik Nikolai Ritzau in 1866	Denmark	Lars Vesterlørkke	Søren Funch
STA	Slovenska tiskovna agencija	Slovenia	Barbara Strukelj	
STT	Suomen Tietotoimisto	Finland	Minna Holopainen	

TASR	Tlačová agentúra Slovenskej republiky	Slovakia	Vladimir Puchala	
Tanjug	Tanjug, Telegrafaska agencija nove Jugoslavije (English: "News agency of the new Yugoslavia")	Serbia	Branka Djukic	Mitko Arnaudov

2.4.1.1 General information on the news agencies

Eleven agencies, the larger part of the news agencies questioned, are financed privately. Nine of the news agencies questioned are state-subsidised.

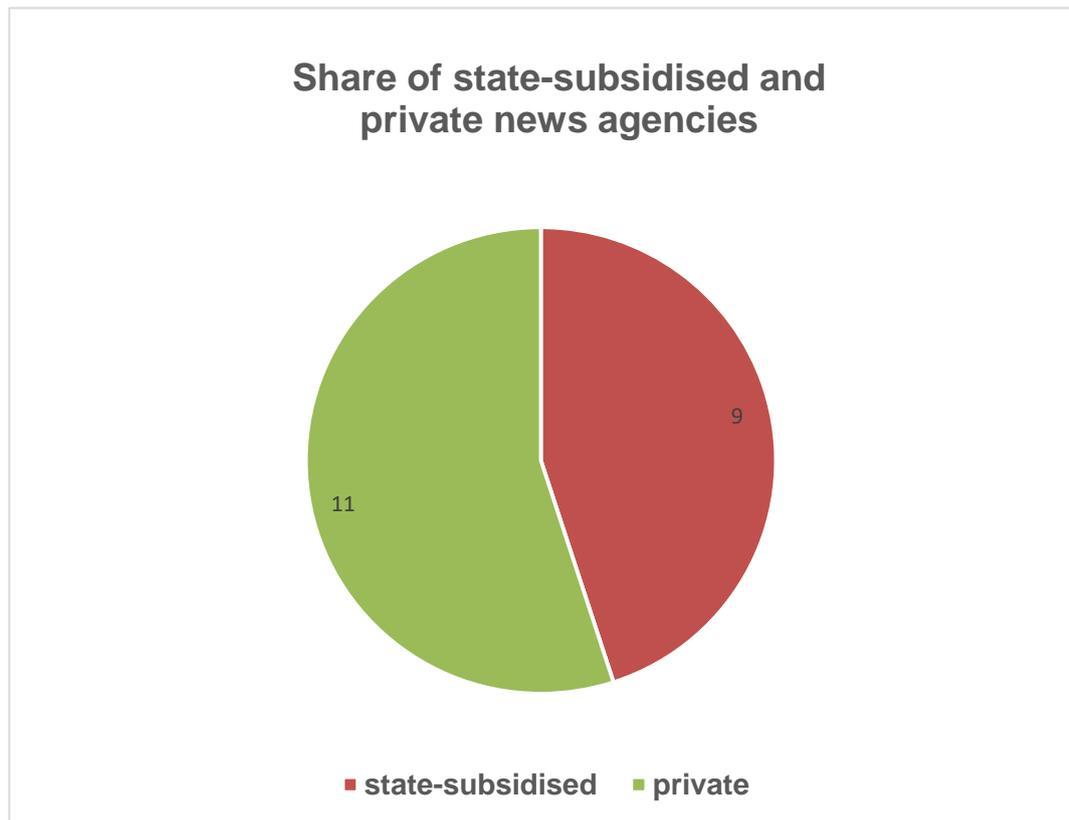


Figure 15: The forms of financing of the European news agencies

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

The majority of the agencies questioned have between 100 and 300 employees. Only a few of the agencies have more than 500 employees. In addition, there are five small agencies with fewer than 100 employees. A total of four out of the 20 agencies in the survey did not answer the question.

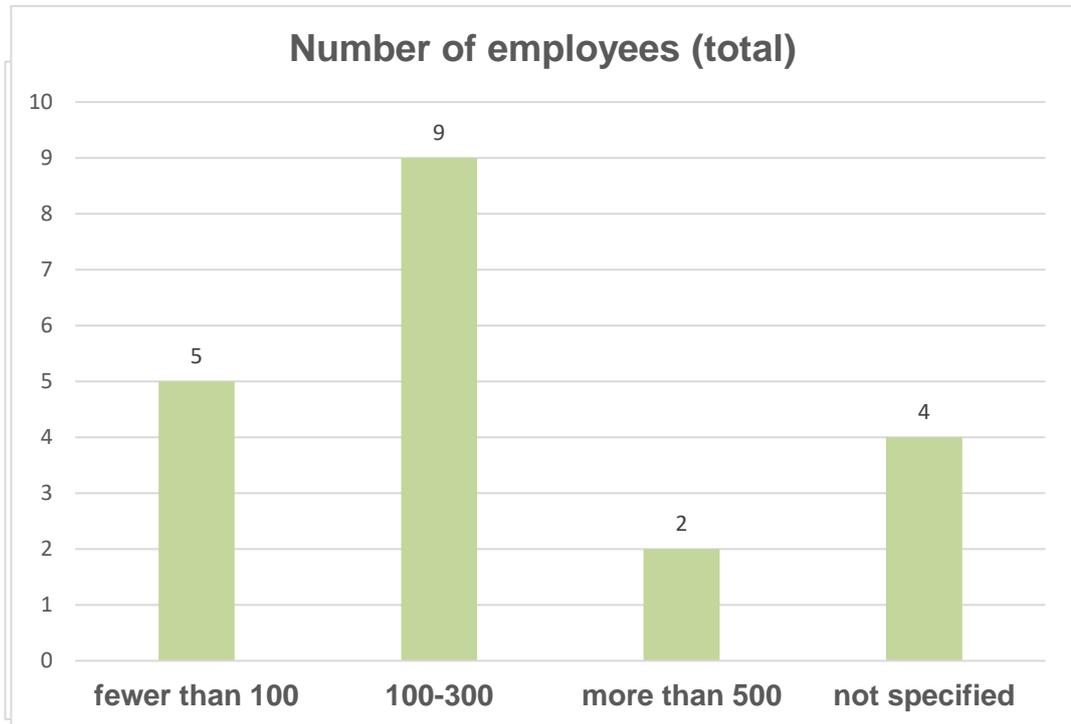


Figure 16: Number of employees of the questioned European news agencies

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

When it comes to annual revenue, the news agencies are divided into two camps: those with sales of over EUR 10 million and those with sales of less than EUR 6 million. Nine of the agencies questioned generate sales of over EUR 10 million, while eight news agencies report annual sales of less than EUR 5 million.

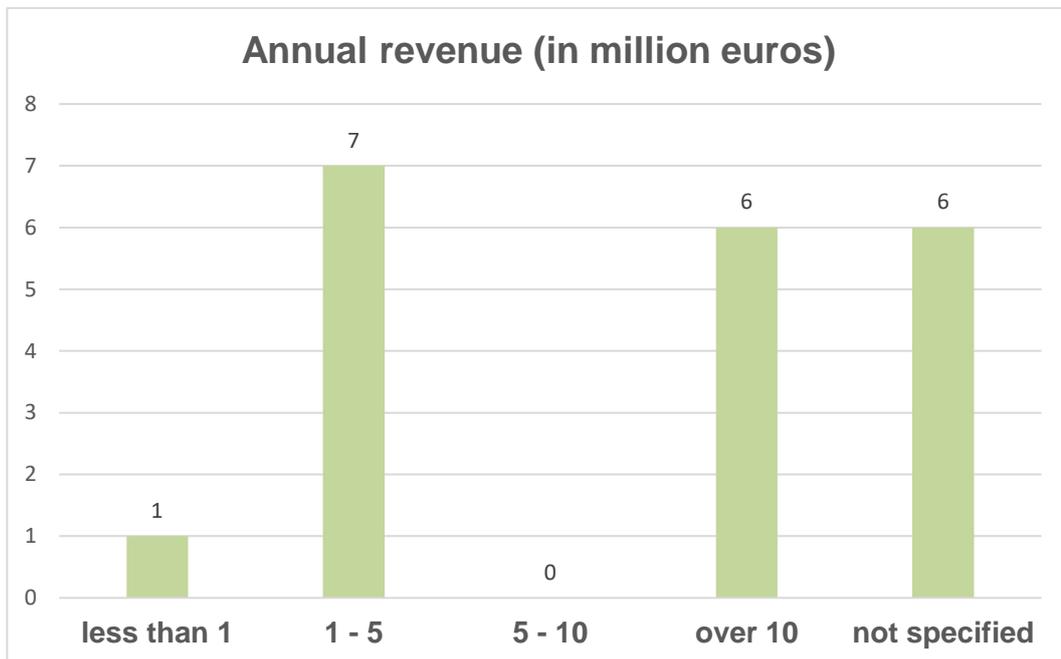


Figure 17: Annual revenue of the questioned European news agencies in million euros

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

Multiple answers were possible for the question about the news agencies' target audiences. Several news agencies made use of this option. However, with 16 mentions, the media are the most frequent target audience.

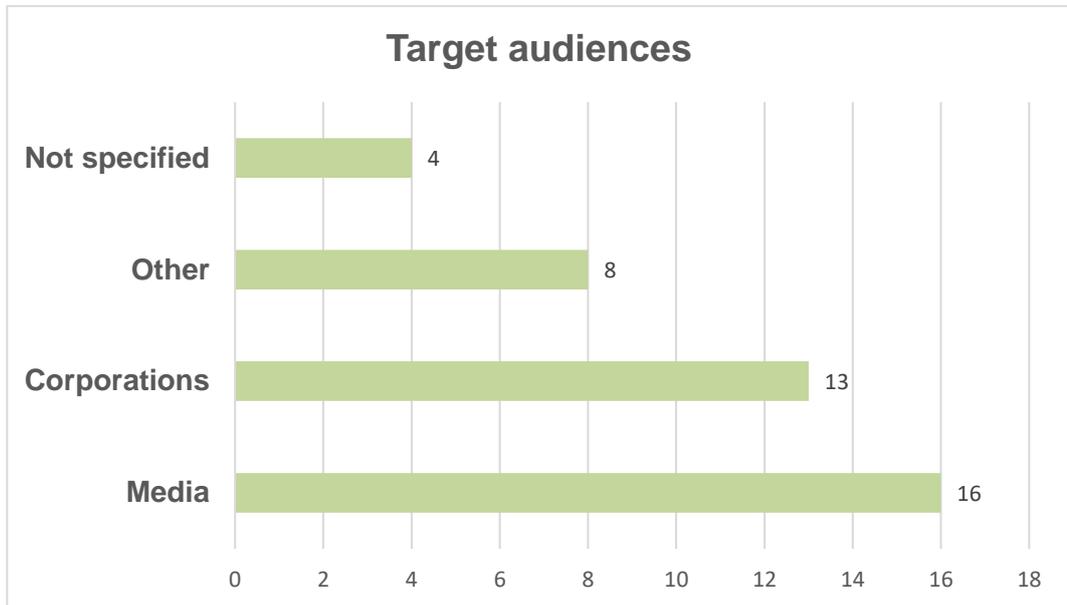


Figure 18: Target audiences of the questioned European news agencies.

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020.

Each of the questioned agencies offers a text service. In addition, 19 of the agencies also offer photo services. On top of this, a majority of 15 news agencies also publishes video content for their target audiences.

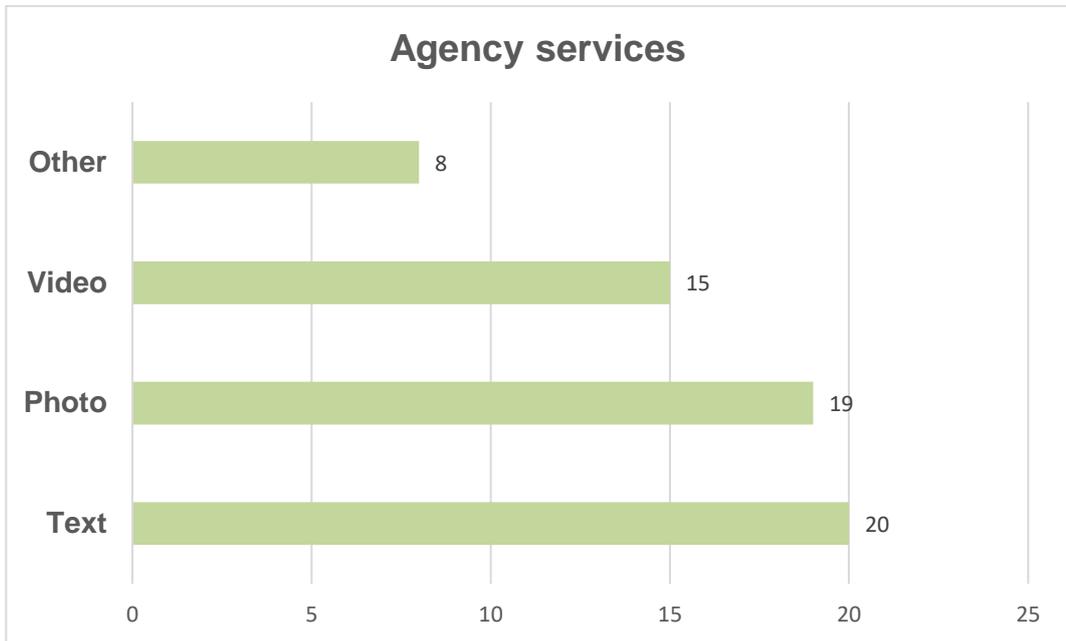


Figure 19: Agency services offered by the questioned European news agencies

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

2.4.1.2 Interest in an EU Newsroom

The second part of the questionnaire aimed to determine the general interest in an EU Newsroom. In a first step, outcomes are evaluated quantitatively. Apart from the general sentiment towards the projected newsroom, the questions also tried to get a clearer picture of the concrete requirements for participation in such a newsroom.

70 per cent of the questioned agencies would use an infrastructure like that of the projected newsroom. Only two of the agencies ticked the “no” box on the questionnaire. In the qualitative evaluation in section 2.4.2.3 the reasons behind this will be discussed in more detail. However, general interest in the EU Newsroom on the part of the questioned agencies is great.

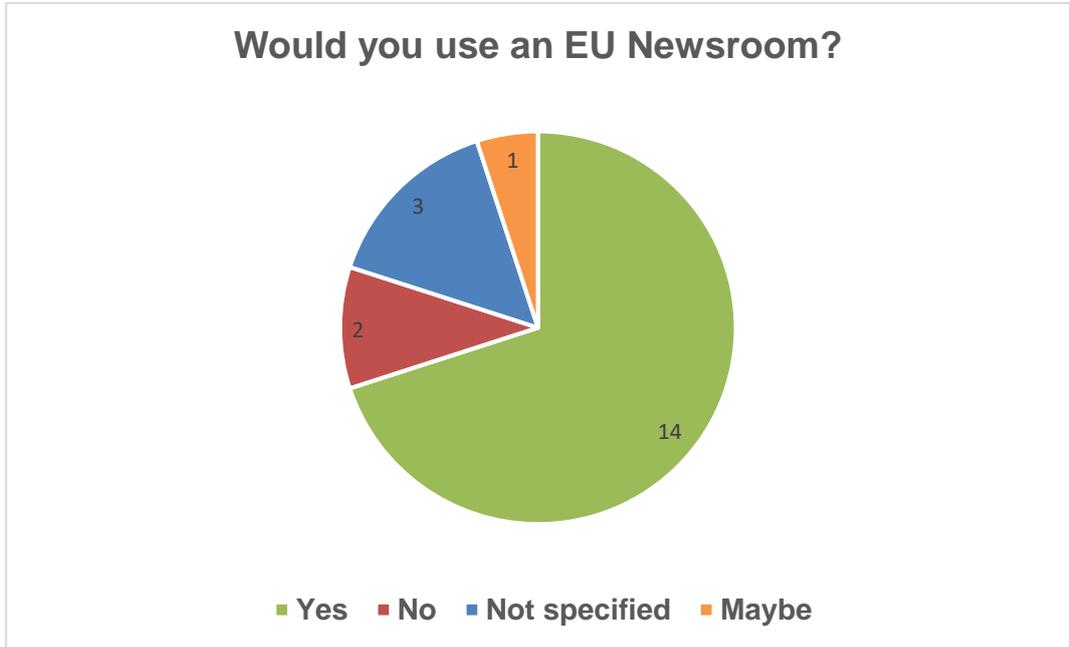


Figure 20: Question on the use of a European Newsroom.

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020.

Following on from this was the question about potential reservations the agencies had with regard to a joint EU Newsroom. In their answers, 13 of the questioned agencies stated that they had no reservations at all with regard to the project. Three agencies indicated financial problems or other reasons. This question also allowed for multiple answers.

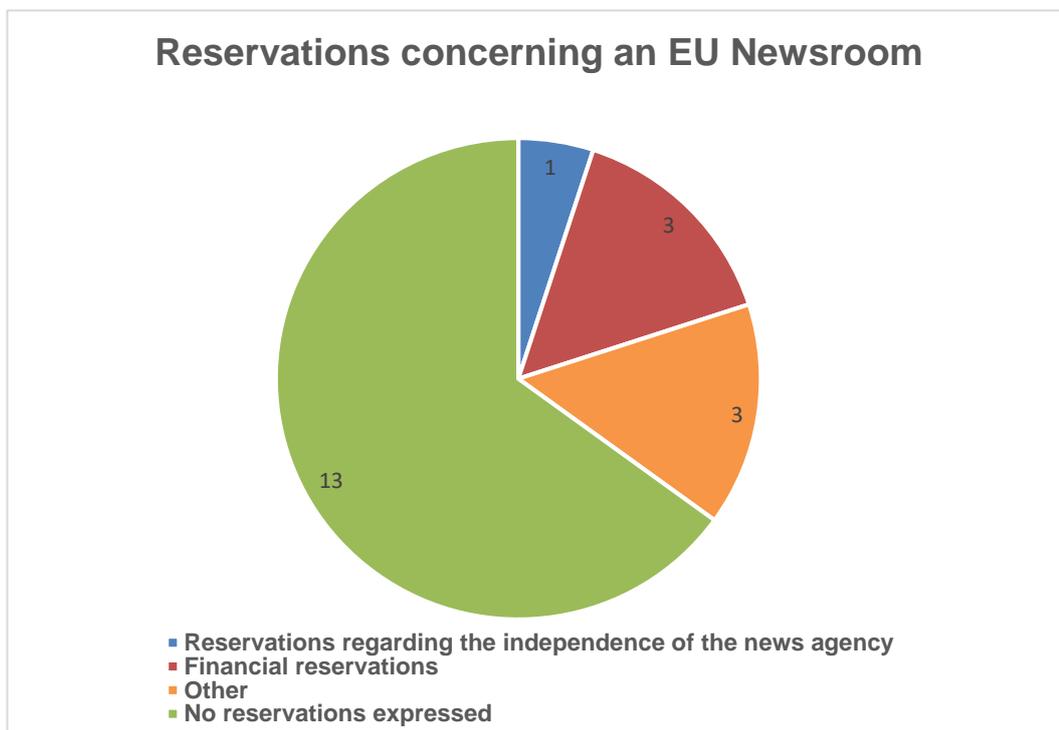


Figure 21: Question about the reservations of the European news agencies with regard to a joint European Newsroom.

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

This leads to the question under which conditions the agencies would participate in the cooperative project of an EU Newsroom. At this point in the questionnaire, the agencies could choose between 15 potential answers and multiple choices were possible. Three quarters of the questioned news agencies – 15 out of 20 – regard the *joint network of correspondents* as the most important requirement for the EU Newsroom. Accordingly, the network is also their most important reason for participation in the newsroom.

The exchange with other news agencies (twelve mentions) also is of significant importance for the questioned agencies. These ratings suggest that the European news agencies regard networking with the other agencies as the newsroom’s greatest advantage. The aspects *collaboration at eye level*, *access to the EU network* and *access to other agency services* all got nine mentions.

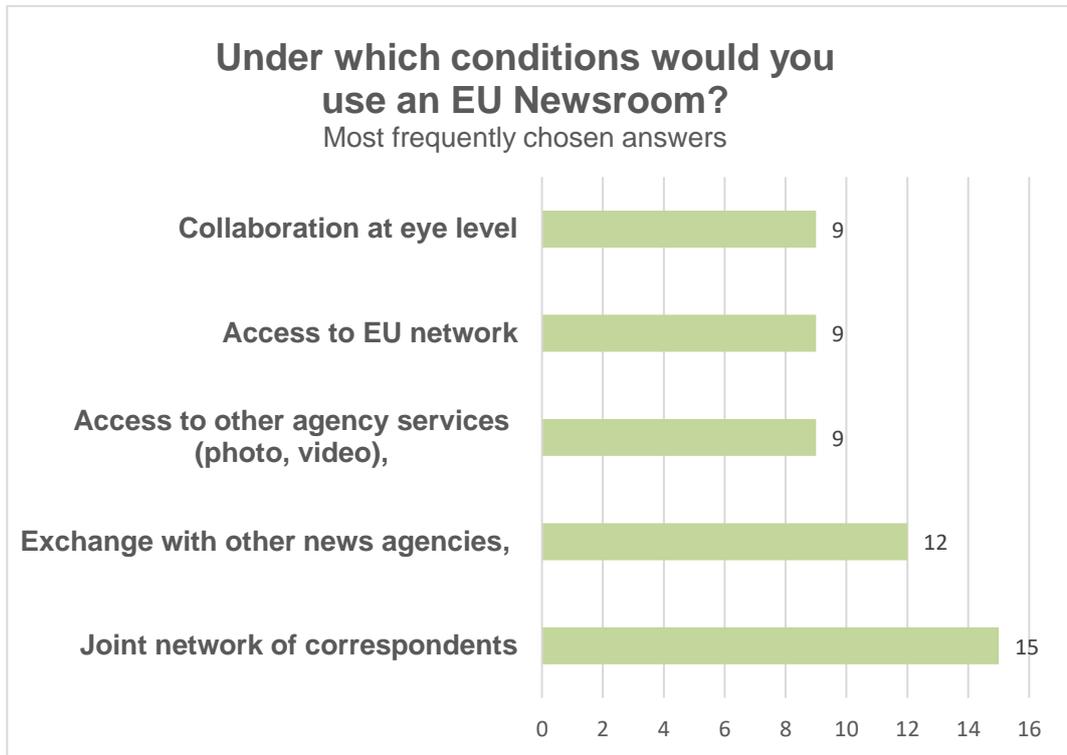


Figure 22: Which requirements must a joint newsroom meet for the questioned news agencies to use it? Most frequently chosen answers

Source: Quantitative survey dpa, September to November 2020.

To summarise, it is already possible at this point – based on the quantitative evaluation – to get an atmospheric picture of the news agencies in Europe. When it comes to parameters like *annual revenue* and *number of employees*, there are substantial differences between the agencies.

However, as far as the question regarding a joint newsroom is concerned, the trend is clear: 70 per cent of the agencies questioned would like to participate in a joint newsroom. Their most important requirement is the network that may result from such a newsroom. The news agencies show an obvious desire for more mutual exchange from which all could benefit. In the following section on qualitative evaluation, the concrete requests with regard to an EU Newsroom are discussed in greater detail.

2.4.2 Qualitative evaluation

In the qualitative part of the evaluation, the outcomes are presented by research questions and categories. The quotes are taken from the interviews conducted on the basis of the questionnaires. To simplify matters, only the agency is mentioned as a source in a citation: For instance (cf. MIA), if the quote is rendered indirectly, and (STA) for direct quotes. For the agency codes, please refer to Table 2 in section 2.4.1 “Quantitative evaluation”.

2.4.2.1 Organisation of information and research

Sources

Only a minority of the questioned agencies is privileged to have their own staff on site in Brussels. APA already has permanent offices in Brussels, conveniently located close to the EU quarter, but the agency still takes a favourable stance on the project of a joint EU Newsroom. Their requirement for the cooperation is that they would continue to work from offices close to the EU quarter. In addition, they made a concrete request for two working places of their own (cf. APA). While STT has an employee on site in Brussels, she has to work from home. This might change with a joint EU Newsroom, which would be a major improvement of that correspondent's working conditions: “Correspondent works from home, so it would be a great advantage for them to have a facility and also a community and network where she could work from and with.” (STT)

Some of the agencies questioned, including Ritzau and AGERPRES, indicate that their main sources of reporting on the EU and EU affairs are agency materials. Often, dpa and APA as well as AFP and Reuters are cited as sources, for instance by Ritzau, ATA and Tanjug.¹² Another significant sources mentioned by the interviewees are the communication channels of the EU itself, such as press releases (cf. exemplarily AGERPRES).

The interviewees of the agency HINA cite a whole list of concrete sources, including *EU agency DANTE*, *EU, Observer*, *EURACTIV*, *EU Parliament*, *Center for European politics*, *EnterEurope* and *AFP*. Their English language sources are

¹² Note: With regard to this issue, social desirability effects possibly play a certain role in the interview situation.

EU Business, EURLEX, Eurointelligence as well as European World and VOX Research for the Eurozone (cf. HINA). ATA also mostly relies on EU websites and some other proprietary channels. In exceptional cases, the agency can dispatch someone from Albania to Brussels for reporting. Naturally, this is a budget issue and only possible about once a month (cf. ATA). CTK's only correspondent in Brussels mainly covers "the Czech perspective". For general reporting on EU affairs, CTK produces from its headquarters in Prague and relies on materials from agencies Reuters, AP, AFP or dpa (cf. CTK). In his interview, the interlocutor gives practical examples to explain which sources the agency uses for which topics – and how a collaboration of the news agencies could improve the quality of research:

"So if there is something important at the same time when a "Czech" event is covered by our guy, we have to rely on you guys – but you provide what I call "general European perspective" or your national one. So if for instance our guy could ask one of your or AFP guys – "Could you ask the commissioner these questions for me (because I have to cover our minister) and give me the audio of the replies", that could prove useful and hopefully will not increase workload of your journalists too much. And of course if your or AFP guys could say: "We checked this with our people and it is not ..." (and our guy would say: "Well, the Czech and Slovak sources are saying the same to me"), that could also be useful." (CTK)

To point out the advantages, the interviewee uses the example of two press dates taking place at the same time: CTK's employee, who cannot attend the second appointment because attending the "Czech date" is mandatory, could benefit from a colleague in the network of the joint EU Newsroom. He could ask this colleague to take along questions for a certain EU commissioner and ask them in his place, while he attends a parallel appointment with a Czech representative/minister. Thus he would get his answers even though he has to attend another appointment at the same time. And when checking their sources, the agency journalists could also collaborate: For example, if AFP or dpa have already verified a source, this also

helps the CTK journalist.¹³ Conversely, he would probably be more proficient at assessing Czech sources. Thus all cooperating agencies profit from one another.

According to their own statement, FENA also use different sources for their EU coverage. Like most agencies that don't have an employee on site in Brussels, they depend on the statements the EU disseminates via its own communication channels. In the interview, the interlocutor gives an overview of their sources:

„We mostly use open sources, such as global news media sites and websites of the EU institutions and accounts of the EU officials on social media. We significantly rely on the EU Delegation to BiH and local experts for the EU issues. In certain situations we contact interlocutors from Brussels and other EU centers by phone, email, skype, etc.“ (FENA)

Thus research and contact with primary sources is organised from Bosnia-Herzegovina (cf. *ibid.*). And the Latvian news agency relies on two correspondents from a Latvian radio station and Latvian TV for research on sources about EU affairs (cf. LETA).

TSAR explains that they are obliged to distribute news about the EU (“It is TASR’s duty to provide news from the EU (obliged by law).”). On top of video reporting from Brussels, they also intend to offer streaming content for their online users in the future.

Permanent journalists in Brussels

As already discussed in section 2.1, the figures for journalists accredited with the EU commission clearly show that most news agencies from Eastern European countries only have a limited presence in Brussels, the capital of the EU. Some of the agencies – such as APA, ATA, ANSA, HINA, STA, Ritzau, MIA, NTB, PAP, Keystone-SDA¹⁴, TASR, Tanjug, CTK, STT – have the good fortune to have

¹³ Note: This aspect probably relates to the projected offer of joint use of dpa and AFP content, which would be made possible within the scope of the cooperation.

¹⁴ Note: However, the two interlocutors of Keystone-SDA point out that for visa-related reasons, the permanent correspondent for the Swiss agency can only work in Brussels temporarily, for the duration of six months.

permanent on staff employees or correspondents directly on site in Brussels, who serve as a solid source.¹⁵

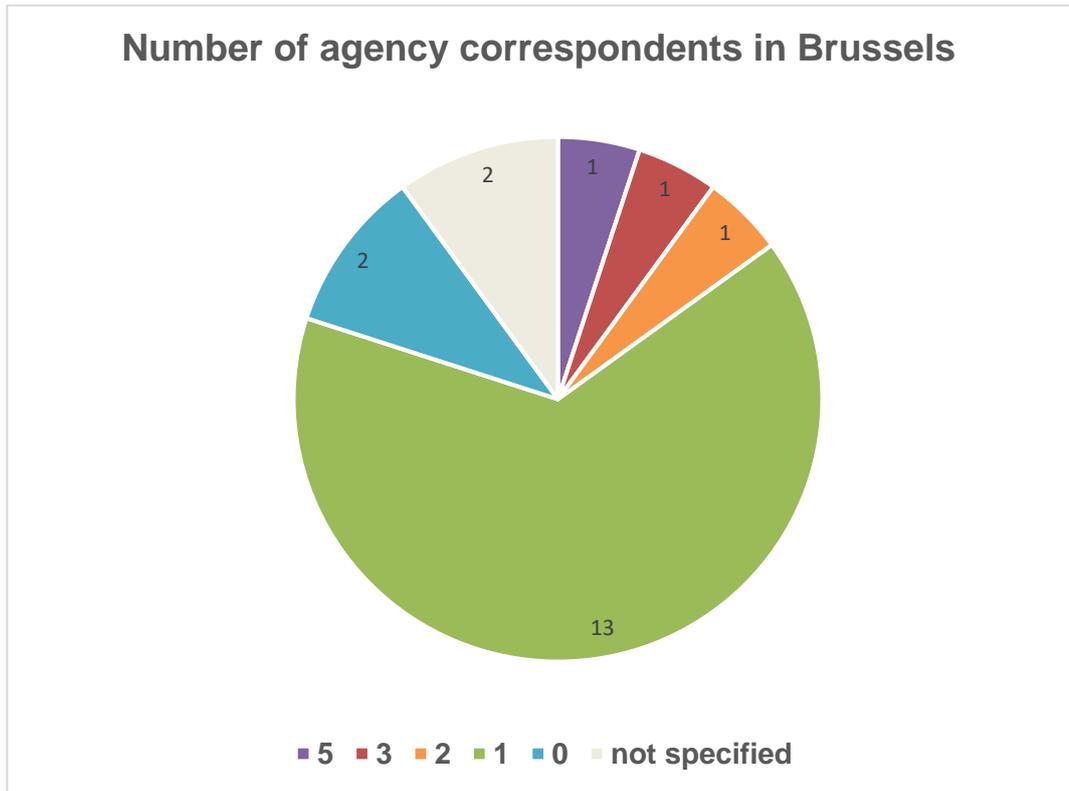


Figure 23: Number of agency correspondents that work for the news agencies on site in Brussels

Source: Qualitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

Further sources mentioned are “websites” and “social media”, without making any concrete specifications (e. g. STA). In addition, STA send their own freelancers to Brussels. The same applies to the Latvian news agency, which only dispatches its employees to Brussels to cover certain events (cf. LETA). During the current Corona pandemic, travelling is obviously not possible. The interview does not specify in which cases the agency uses this option. The interlocutors of CTK do not specify whether their correspondent in Brussels works for the agency as a

¹⁵ Note: FENA and AGERPRES have no permanent employees on site in Brussels. BNS and BTA did not specify/did not or not fully complete the questionnaire.

permanent employee or as a freelancer. However, it's his explicit duty to focus on "the Czech perspective" while reporting from Brussels (cf. CTK).

With regard to personnel resources, the Italian agency comes out on top, employing five correspondents in Brussels (cf. ANSA). Norwegian agency NTB currently has three employees in Brussels, but they are considering to reduce the number to two (cf. NTB). However, at a later stage during the interview, in the context of economic synergies, they indicate that they will probably be able to keep all three journalists in Brussels due to shared facility expenses.

As discussed in section 2.1, significantly fewer permanently accredited journalists from the Eastern agencies are in Brussels, as opposed to those from Western Europe. Consequently, when reporting they have fewer contacts with original sources and fewer capacities to research and analyse than would be desirable. Covering EU affairs requires specialised journalists.¹⁶

Polish agency PAP has two permanent journalists on site in Brussels who cover EU affairs ("Responsibility for stuff", PAP). MIA also has a permanent journalist on site in Brussels who takes care of reporting on EU affairs. This correspondent is supported by three further journalists in MIA's newsroom who are responsible for EU-related content. Serbian agency Tanjug has one correspondent on site who they share with *Deutsche Welle* (cf. Tanjug).

The interlocutors of Swiss agency Keystone-SDA report that they have a permanent full time on staff journalist who works from Brussels temporarily, for the duration of six months. Another correspondent works from the offices in Geneva, though he reports "exclusively for the UN" in French. Croatian agency HINA also has on staff and freelance journalists on site: Since 2006, they have been having a correspondent directly in Brussels. In addition, they cover the EU from their foreign desk in Zagreb – journalists travel to Strasbourg from there and report on the plenary sessions of the European Parliament. In the context of "media partnership projects" of the European Parliament, this group also includes junior journalists as well as students (cf. HINA). The politics department of FENA from

¹⁶ Note: It would certainly be interesting, in the context of a follow-up study, to investigate the regional differences in working methods and reporting between the groups EU West and EU East (cf. section 2.1).

Bosnia-Herzegovina occasionally commissions freelance reporters to Brussels from Sarajevo to cover certain press and other events. However, this is mostly classic appointment journalism rather than investigative on-site research for exclusive stories about EU topics initiated by the editorial team itself.

Romanian agency AGERPRES does not have any journalists of their own in Brussels at all. Sometimes they may accompany visiting Romanian delegations, but this seems to be the exception rather than the rule (cf. AGERPRES).

Regular EU category

Most of the agencies questioned do not run an explicit EU category. Reporting is mostly done by the specialized departments: The questioned agencies mostly mention the economic and business departments (for instance STA, Ritzau, FENA, AGERPRES ...). Other responsible departments alluded to are the “business desk” (at STA) and “the international newsroom” (at AGERPRES).

As opposed to this, the interlocutors from HINA, for example, emphasise the great relevance of reporting on the EU and its affairs. The EU is regularly featured in a category of its own: “It is extremely important, news about EU are part of regular agency broadcast, in the section EU, in the subscriber service EUinfo, and the special web page HINA#EU” (HINA). The *relevancy of reporting on the EU and EU affairs* is the subject of a dedicated question in the guidelines. The answers to this question are presented in the following section.

Relevancy of reporting on the EU and EU affairs

The majority of the interviewed agencies regard reporting on EU affairs and the EU as “very important” or “very relevant”, including ATA, APA, ANSA, MIA, FENA¹⁷, STA, TASR, PAP, HINA, AGERPRES, NTB, Ritzau and Keystone-SDA. Serbian agency Tanjug rates reporting on these topics as “important”. That being said, the graduation between “very important” and “important” seems to be the result of a

¹⁷ Note: BNS, BTK, CNA, STT and CTK did not specify or not fully complete the questionnaire.

rather spontaneous reaction – often no explanations or guidance is given to substantiate the respective ratings.

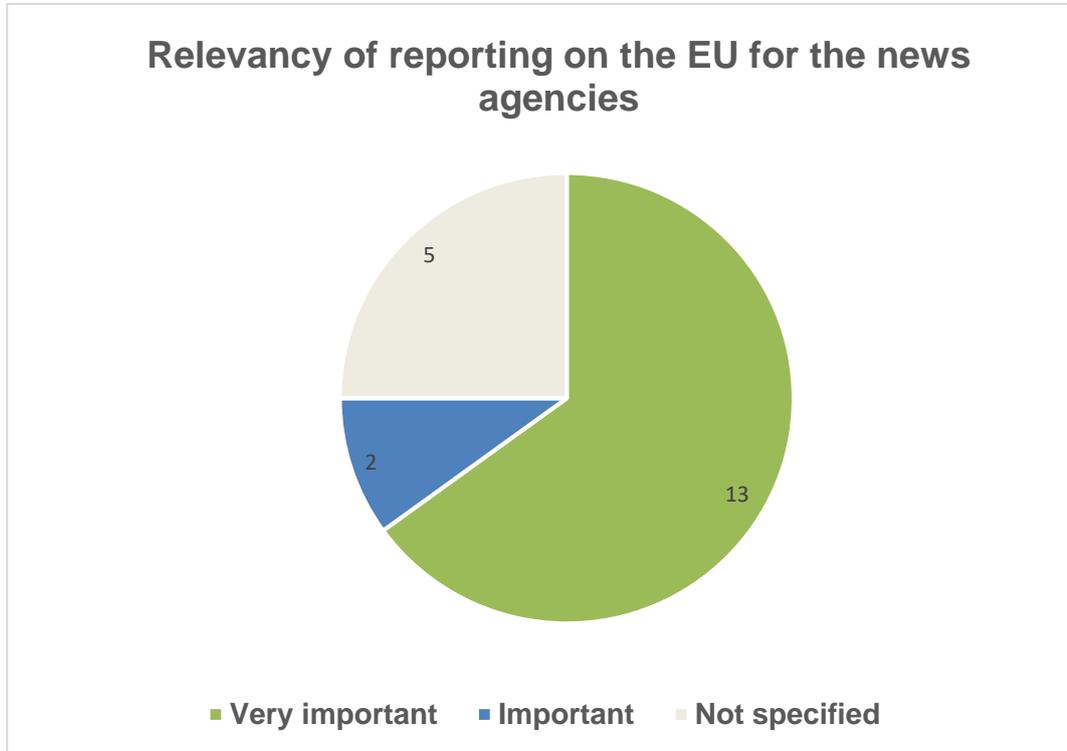


Figure 24: How do the questioned European news agencies rate the relevancy of reporting on EU affairs?

Source: Qualitative survey dpa, September to November 2020

As opposed to this, EU content was only rated as “occasionally important” in the interview with Latvian agency LETA: “Important occasionally – mainly whenever a Latvian politician is travelling to Brussels on an important EU matter or if there is an important event in Brussels with some kind of impact on Latvian politics or the economy” (LETA). In other words: The reasons to put the EU, its stakeholders or Europe on this agency’s agenda are rather pragmatic and predefined by appointment journalism.

Slovenian agency STA also indicates that they are registering declined public interest in EU affairs. However, the interlocutors do not explain to which observations they tie this declined interest. It is also unclear whether these

observations only apply to Slovenian media customers and/or the Slovenian audience. In the interview with agency Ritzau, the interlocutor admits that demand for EU coverage obviously seems to have decreased on the part of their customers, stating: “Even that we prioritize EU it is often quite difficult to have our customers print it” (Ritzau).

Right at the beginning of their interview, Polish agency PAP emphasises that: “A joint EU Newsroom would make the situation better for the Polish market” (PAP). The agency does not concretise, though, whether the Polish market situation would merely improve with regard to financial factors or if they are rather referring to positive effects on journalistic quality and/or thematic diversity.

Several of the questioned agencies underline a correlation between the relevancy of EU coverage and EU topics for their journalistic work and the aspirations of their country to become a member of the EU, including agencies MIA, ATA and FENA. The process of joining the EU not least means – as in the case of North Macedonia – that countries face years of preparatory negotiations. As a result, MIA’s reporting on the EU and related topics gains in significance as well: “The EU coverage is of great importance for MIA, since the country is currently awaiting the start of EU accession negotiations and will undergo a years-long process of talks to join the Union” (MIA). ATA argues in a similar way: With regard to the accession negotiations between Albania and the EU, starting in December 2020, the Albanian news agency states that it will have to show increased presence in Brussels as well (cf. ATA). And the interlocutor from FENA also emphasises the correlation between the great relevancy of EU-related topics – and the agency’s coverage of these issues – and the aspirations of Bosnia-Herzegovina to accede to the EU. Even before the state becomes a member, the EU already is the country’s most important trading partner. This also gives great thematic relevancy to EU content and strengthens the position of the agency, which seems to have an important gatekeeping function¹⁸ with regard to these topics:

¹⁸ Note: The authors deduce that the agency has a journalistic gatekeeping function, because the term „key public media service“ is mentioned in the interview. This term was coined, among others, by the journalist Walter Lippmann, who uses the term in his research on journalism to metaphorically describe the criteria and selective processes journalists employ to choose which news items or positions they let past the gate or not as „lockkeepers“, thus deciding on their dissemination. (cf. Lippmann 1922: *Public Opinion*)

“Considering that BiH is a country striving for the EU-membership, which has a border with the EU and EU as its main trade partner, events in the EU hold priority importance. Therefore, FENA as the key public media service considers covering EU topics as one of its priorities. We find it important due to the European path of BiH, but also to raise public awareness on what this integration process means and what advantages and changes it brings for BiH.” (FENA)

Within the framework of these conditions, the agency in Bosnia-Herzegovina makes an effort to provide its users with as much information as possible about the EU and Europe. FENA also offers multimedia formats to achieve this aim. The agency is very keen to provide a professional and regular coverage of these topics – preferably with information from primary sources. This also harmonises with FENA’s strategic plan to become a leading (regional) news agency:

“It is very important for FENA to be able to secure as much information as possible to its users and the entire public in BiH in a quick and professional way, including multimedia content from Brussels. We find it important to continuously present advantages that membership in the EU Newsroom have for the citizens of BiH. Covering activities of the EU institutions firsthand is important due to commenced path of BiH to the EU. We believe that FENA, as the agency on a geographic border of East and the West, is significant media to transfer EU news towards the East. All of this is fully compatible with FENA’s strategic plans of being a regional leader in agency reporting.”(FENA)

By reporting on events and issues of the European Commission, national news agencies in the Eastern European countries can play a significant role in closing the existing information gap of the citizens with regard to European affairs (cf. section 2.1). According to Atte Jääskeläinen, fact-based reporting from Brussels is a basic requirement for providing the public with a balanced perspective on the decisions and politics of the EU. It is of strategic importance to facilitate – or even make possible in the first place – access to the network inside the European Institutions for the agencies in the EU East group. Not only the agencies would profit from this, but in the end so would democracy in itself.

To a certain degree, the relevancy of reporting on the EU, which the agencies rather tended to rate as high, already is one of the core aspects of the thematic cluster on the benefits of an EU Newsroom. The outcomes on this cluster will be presented in the next section.

2.4.2.2 Benefits of an EU Newsroom

Economic synergies

Most of the agencies questioned name economic synergies as the main benefit. STA, for instance, cuts to the chase with the formula “more output for less input”. Several agencies hope for shared expenses, even though they mostly do not specify what these costs are. This group includes NTB, LETA, ANSA and STA. HINA also counts on financial benefits: Since the agency cannot afford to rent their own offices in Brussels – let alone a newsroom – they currently only dispatch journalists or photographers to report from there on request (cf. HINA, but also FENA and AGERPRES).

In 2013, a group of European news agencies and media outlets already established a joint newsroom in Sydney, the so called EuroBuro. This alternative model of a joint office space Down Under aimed to reduce the number of night shifts in the newsrooms of European media outlets, share resources and – in the end – save money. Depending on the season, Sydney is eight to ten hours ahead of Europe and thus presented the ideal location for such a project. This concept is one of the role models for the European Newsroom and shows how a joint newsroom can save resources (cf. section 3.1).

However, financial synergies are just one side of the coin. Several interlocutors also cited positive effects regarding a division of labour as potential benefits of the European Newsroom. These would result from exchange and the joint networking with the other agencies. The agency Ritzau, for instance, emphasises collaboration and mutual support, from which all agencies could profit within the scope of the cooperation project. It seems that the agencies do not see each other as competitors so much, but more as a team providing support to one another in the event of problems or in their everyday journalistic work:

“It would be of great help for us to work together with our news agencies. We are not competitors, therefore we could help each other. Would not be a problem if the rent compared today would be cheaper ☺ [It] should be possible to work together on some projects, interviews etc.” (Ritzau)

The arguments of the interlocutors from HINA take a similar direction during the interview. They hope to profit from the infrastructure of the EU Newsroom,

concerning the (technical) equipment as well as the networking function with the other participating agencies. In this, they particularly single out the services of dpa and AFP (cf. HINA and LETA).¹⁹

When it comes to networking, dpa and AFP are global leaders with a network of correspondents operating all over the world. As will be discussed in section 4.3, dpa and AFP also aim to strengthen networking within the scope of the joint European Newsroom initiative by granting access to their news services to all agencies participating in the newsroom.

Italian agency ANSA also shows enthusiasm at the idea of not just sharing expenses, but to benefit from a network and teamwork as well. This would not only be advantageous for journalistic research, but the agencies could also exchange contacts and support one another in applying for EU tenders.

“EU Newsroom project makes sense because co working is very good and no competition as we work for different markets. It is very important to share contacts (network). If they can reduce the costs to zero in Brussels it would make sense. ANSA is also in Brussels to develop the business with EU tenders – which is very important to them” (ANSA).

APA and LETA also reckon that mutual exchange with the other agencies would definitely be advantageous for journalistic skills and teamwork. They are also interested in strategies for a joint usage of technology, digital solutions and editorial management systems. APA asks whether there are plans for an “axis between AFP/dpa beyond the newsroom issue”. In the context of “beyond”, the buzzwords “investment and technology” are mentioned. In the same breath, the Austrian agency offers to “invest as well and contribute something – e.g. technological framework” (cf. APA). The Latvian news agency is mostly interested in an exchange of knowledge and journalistic skills such as verification and fact checking, and hopes to gain access to corresponding journalistic guidelines through the cooperation:

“Might be interesting for finding academic partners via this way in order to answer more calls by the EU (tenders and grants), finding contacts through our fact-checking

¹⁹ Note: They refer to the offer already mentioned above – they will gain access to dpa and AFP content within the scope of the cooperation.

workshops and other network Newsroom as an option for guidelines in this topic” (LETA).

The agency does not specify their need for academic and scientific partners in any more detail. Consequently, it remains unclear whether they have this need in their search for suitable sources and interlocutors on EU topics, or whether they are mainly on the lookout for academic journalistic expertise to improve their chances when applying for EU tenders.

At any rate, Czech news agency CTK is hoping for an “EU pool”, to profit from “increased manpower”: „What would probably be of most interest to us is the increased manpower or what we could call “an EU pool” (CTK). “Pool” here probably refers primarily to personnel resources, and this aspect is of course indirectly linked to economic benefits.

In the interview in section 3.2, former correspondent Karel Bartak, who founded the *Pecoffice* for Czech news agency CTK in the 1990s, explains how a merger of agencies can benefit the exchange of information. He states:

“If there is a place for correspondents of the European news agencies where colleagues from other agencies know certain things and can help them out, the correspondents will naturally use this opportunity to get the information.”

Effects on journalistic quality (fact checking, verification)?

The second most frequently mentioned benefit of an EU Newsroom is positive *effects on journalistic quality and the diversity of reporting*. The aspects fact checking and verification are listed as examples in the question, but the terms do not necessarily turn up in the answers. However, it seems likely that these aspects are considered in the answers, even if they are not explicitly mentioned. Circumscriptions as those used in the interview with STA make the authors suppose so: The Slovenian agency is hoping for a positive impact and the opportunity to acquire “new skills” in the context of a joint EU Newsroom. In their answer, TASR emphasise that skills such as fact checking are becoming more and more relevant, especially for junior journalists and research in social networks: “EU coverage/a joint newsroom would also be very important especially for young

journalists and to provide fact checking to be in the opposite of the social networks” (TASR).

The interview partners of Croatian agency HINA and Slovakian agency TASR explicitly name access to special journalistic competencies such as verification and fact checking as advantages of a joint EU Newsroom. In addition, the flow of information would accelerate, rendering journalistic work more efficient. The agencies state that the exchange with the other agencies would also have many positive effects on work (cf. HINA and AGERPRES): “The end-product will contain varied information, relevant and certain and it will be broadcast much faster” (AGERPRES). In other words: EU coverage would become more reliable, more relevant and faster through the joint newsroom.

ATA also cites a whole number of concrete advantages that would arise for the Albanian agency: Their work and the journalistic quality of their reporting as a whole would profit from a joint EU Newsroom. For instance, they would regard it as very useful to receive video training within the scope of this cooperation. Other aspects they stress in the course of conversation are an increase in journalistic diversity and the quality of information:

“EU-topics are getting more and more important. Getting transparent information, being in touch with other journalists, other perspectives, we would get standards in news reporting that would impact our complete product. ATA would get much more trustworthy” (ATA).

Thus the news agency would profit in several ways from an inclusion into the network – journalistic standards are one aspect. Through cooperation, the agencies also expect to improve the transparency of their own work, which would in turn increase trust on the part of their consumers or customers (cf. *ibid.* and also AGERPRES). Other advantages with immediate effect on the journalistic quality of reporting cited are mutual support in research and easier access to information, but also further cooperation projects (cf. exemplarily Ritzau, Keystone-SDA and AGERPRES). MIA points out that the European perspective would be strengthened through a joint newsroom. And the Latvian news agency would also welcome an exchange of opinions across agencies. Their own reporting would profit from access to other views and perspectives (cf. LETA).

In the course of their interview, Polish agency PAP emphasises that they are currently looking for a new editorial management system. Consequently, they are suggesting that the agencies participating in the EU Newsroom should also share a joint editorial management system. However STT and LETA are not interested in that at all – they are content to use their own editorial systems (cf. STT; LETA).

The aspect of *journalistic diversity* is closely linked to *journalistic quality* in itself. The answers do not fit into just one of those categories. In the interviews, the interlocutors repeatedly mention the positive effects on journalistic work by virtue of the improved networking within a joint newsroom alone, such as an accelerated newsflow (cf. HINA) and easier access to new sources and interview partners. The following quote from HINA is exemplary: “Better working conditions and better communication with colleagues from other news agencies will certainly result in better journalistic products” (HINA).

In the interview in section 3.2, former CTR-correspondent Karel Bartak also discusses the issue of journalistic quality in the context of the European Newsroom. He says:

“It is obvious that the correspondents have to treat European affairs from a national perspective. But if a report would also include a comparison with other countries of the same size or neighbouring countries that would make it much more valuable. It would even improve journalistic objectivity to know what journalists from other countries are thinking or which general perspective their countries of origin have on a certain matter. Every correspondent working in Brussels is pressed for time. So as a rule they do not have the time to illuminate all perspectives. In a European Newsroom, the information would already be there and the correspondents would not have to conduct any extra research to get it.”

To bundle the collective strength of the agency journalists in a joint newsroom and profit directly from using it seem to be the two greatest advantages that the agencies in the survey expect from the cooperation project. Knowledge and needs among journalists vary greatly. As a result, there are plans for the European Newsroom to offer a comprehensive modularised training programme to meet the needs of all agency journalists.

Section 4.4 introduces a concept for such a training programme for the European journalists. Each module presents one theory and embeds it in the daily work routine of the participants by means of diverse practical exercises.

Effects on journalistic diversity

According to the interviews, several agencies are convinced that their research and journalistic work on EU affairs would profit from an EU Newsroom on site in Brussels. The EU Newsroom would bring them closer to European events and facilitate access to primary sources. These positive effects do not just improve journalistic diversity, but also the quality of their EU coverage. An exemplary quote from AGERPRES: In the interview, the interlocutor explains how the agency could also cover “more specific topics” through the cooperation: “We could vary very much the topics that are truly interesting for the population, we would cover more specific topics, not only at EU general level, but at the level of each member state, even allowing a comparative approach” (AGERPRES). The “comparative approach” she mentions could refer to journalistic content which evaluates the political, economic and societal developments on the European continent. The agencies could also analyse themselves self-critically and conduct studies in media science.²⁰ Further synergies arise with regard to personnel resources (cf. *ibid.*).

Journalistic diversity is one aspect of *journalistic quality*. Thus the answers given in the interviews often fit into both categories (see previous section). Verified sources and fact-based journalism are important issues that are repeatedly put on the agenda during the interviews (a. o. by MIA, TASR and FENA). In this context, the interviewees of the North Macedonian news agency also emphasise the cooperation's European perspective. The “European stamp” of their coverage would bring the EU closer to the people of North Macedonia:

“Such a newsroom would be of enormous benefit to MIA because of the European perspective of the country and the region in general, it would provide more EU-

²⁰ Note: Within the framework of an accompanying study, it would certainly be interesting to analyse the workflows as well as the reporting of the EU Newsroom and take stock at intervals of how the journalistic workflows of the news agencies and the contents have changed in the course of cooperation – e.g. has the agency coverage become “more European”.

related information and bring the Union closer to the people of North Macedonia. In addition, the products coming out of MIA would have a European stamp, coming from credible sources and fact-checked" (MIA).

Majority in favour of an EU Newsroom

MIA, NTB, Keystone-SDA, HINA, FENA, AGERPRES, APA, ATA, LETA, CTK, STA, Ritzau and PAP answer the general question on whether they would use a European Newsroom in the affirmative, ANSA has not decided yet. Polish agency PAP states that they are "very interested" in becoming a member of the joint EU Newsroom. In addition, the agency offers to support the cooperation – for instance by contacting Polish members of the European Parliament and other official politicians to promote the project (cf. PAP).

Agencies CNA and BNS have explicitly answered the question in the negative. Tanjug, STT, TASR as well as BTA did not specify (or not fully complete the questionnaire), because they were still uncertain when they were interviewed for the survey and intended to wait and see how the idea for the project would develop.

2.4.2.3 Reservations towards an EU Newsroom

On top of the predefined optional answers, all other reservations expressed are recorded in this category. Multiple answers are possible. The majority of interlocutors problematized the cost factor in the interviews. This obviously seems to be the greatest reservation on the part of the European news agencies.

Financial reservations

Financial reservations are the most frequently cited category in the interviews.²¹ However, many agencies did neither answer the question, nor express any reservations, because they obviously do not have any. This group includes ANSA, Ritzau, FENA, APA, LETA, CTK and Keystone-SDA.²² However, some of the agencies that take a positive overall stance on the project of an EU Newsroom

²¹ BNS did not specify/not (fully) complete the questionnaire.

²² Note: This conclusion is permissible when consulting the statements made by the agencies named, which mostly underline a very positive basic sentiment towards the EU Newsroom.

express generalised – or concrete – financial reservations. TSAR or AGERPRES are exemplary for this group.

Several of the questioned agencies, among them ATA, STA, TASR, MIA, HINA, NTB and Tanjug, state that a joint EU Newsroom would basically be a very expensive project. It is not just the sceptics among the interview partners who frequently point out the high rents for office spaces in Brussels. CNA rejects the project as a whole, since – not least due to the present Corona pandemic – they are severely stressed financially. Serbian news agency Tanjug has major reservations with regard to financing. The interlocutors explain that they are currently in a transition phase themselves, because the agency is undergoing structural reforms. They say that they are dealing with a “complicated situation of Tanjug as it is transforming into a private owned agency from state-owned. But the transition is complex and still ongoing” (Tanjug). Finnish news agency STT also argues that they cannot pay anything for the joint project, except – at the most – a membership fee (cf. STT).

Reservations towards the institution of the EU and worries concerning independence as a news agency

None of the agencies questioned expressed *reservations towards the institution of the EU*. It is possible that they would not publicly admit to such reservations for reasons of social desirability. After all, a certain pro-European stance is to be expected when one decides to establish an EU Newsroom, not least to increase coverage on EU developments and affairs. In the end, the subject of this coverage itself is rather complex and not free from contradictions:

In the course of the history of the European Union, the design of the union and the establishment of supranational institutions such as the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament have repeatedly given cause for criticism. An exemplary voice of criticism is author Robert Menasse, who makes the structural problems of the EU the subject of discussion in his book „Der europäische Landbote“. These problems do not just pose a threat for democracy, but bring to light time and again the inner contradictions of Europe's daily political and social life. In this context, Menasse talks about a construction error of the EU:

“It is the Union’s basic construction error that it had to give institutional power to just those nation states whose power it should have broken – because it is precisely the representatives of nations who have to unite to overcome nation states [...] Towards this end, an authority had to be created in which the democratically legitimised representatives of the nation states can meet and take their joint decisions according to rules that have to be approved by national parliaments. This institution is the Council of the European Union” (Menasse 2012: 49).

These historically evolved prejudices, so to speak, are expressed time and again by critics. They regard them as the source of the EU’s structural problems, which in turn have an impact on its politics. This leads to the question about the agencies’ understanding of Europe, which underlies their reporting on developments in Europe and politics of the EU. However, the present study can only touch upon these thematic complexes briefly.²³

With regard to the project of a joint newsroom, STT for one does clearly express reservation concerning the political spectrum of opinions of other news agencies and their correspondents, especially when these agencies originate from societies not based on democratic values: “Concern for any political views of the participating other agencies and correspondents, especially when it comes to societies which are not based on democratic values” (STT).

The interlocutors from HINA interpret the question differently than the majority of agencies in the survey. In their answer, they describe the greatest potential (journalistic) competitors that the editorial teams of the EU Newsroom would have. According to HINA, these would be *European World*, *VOX Research*, *Eurostat* and the *EU-Foreign-Policy-blog* (cf. HINA). FENA, in the context of this question, emphasises their own present distress at not having any on-staff employees on site in Brussels, and having to rely on freelance reporters which they can only dispatch in individual cases at the most. And whether they can make use of this possibility at all is yet again a question of money. If they had greater financial

²³ Note: Within the framework of another study, it would certainly be intriguing to investigate the attitude of the agencies towards the institution of the EU. Are there, for instance, any differences between those that have their headquarters in a country that already is an EU member state and those whose country of origin aims to accede but is not a member yet. A survey on the EU’s understanding of the EU would be another intriguing topic for research – and, with regard to content analytics, it would also be interesting to investigate if the EU’s understanding of itself is mirrored by agency reporting.

resources, they could certainly send their reporters to Brussels for research “more frequently” (cf. FENA). The same is true for Romanian agency AGERPRES, who also have no employees in Brussels. Positively stated, “first-hand sources” would improve the journalistic quality of reporting (cf. AGERPRES).

In the preliminary talk for the interview, Baltic agency BNS expresses scepticism with regard to project of a joint EU Newsroom:

“At the moment I'm quite sceptical since we don't have anyone who's permanently based in Brussels, we only fly over there for bigger EU and NATO events which offer their own pressrooms. [...] We could talk tomorrow [...] but I'm afraid there's a high likelihood we won't be interested in the project” (BNS).

Indirectly, the need for increased and more diverse EU coverage rings through, since – by their own statement – the Baltic agency “only” manages to cover “the bigger EU and NATO events”, and even this only seems to be possible if they can use their pressrooms. The self-criticism that the agency expresses with regard to the appointment journalism it is forced to conduct, probably due to a scarcity of resources, is remarkable at this point.

The survey also asks the question under which *requirements* the agencies would use an EU Newsroom. The following section will discuss their *requests* for the project in more detail. In this context, some aspects from the other thematic clusters turn up again. For reasons of research economics, this also safeguards the outcomes, even if there are duplicates, or rather if logic remains in place across congruent answers in several places. For instance, “financial benefits” (STA) are again explicitly mentioned in answering the question on the requirements for usage of the newsroom/participation in the joint project.

2.4.2.4 Requests to an EU Newsroom

Currently existing newsrooms are organised in different ways, adapted to the respective journalistic requirements. All of them are united in their desire to produce news with the highest possible levels of quality, despite limited budgets and diminishing resources, through a sharing of knowledge, resources and infrastructure. Thus these newrooms facilitate customised services for audiences that communicate in increasingly diverse ways and ensure journalistic production

for diverse target groups. In section 4.2, Stefan Ströbitzer discusses the governing principles and daily workflow of a European Newsroom in more depth.

In the final thematic cluster, the news agencies are asked under which *preconditions* they would use a joint EU Newsroom. Concrete requests are predefined and the number of possible answers is actually limited to five. As previously mentioned, some interviewees did not fully exhaust these options, whereas others ticked too many. Unfortunately, nearly half of the agencies – nine out of 20 – did not answer the questions in this thematic cluster of the questionnaire at all (see Table 3). Answers given in other thematic clusters are at least taken into account, though (cf. also section 2.4.1.2).

Table 3: Preconditions under which the European news agencies would use a joint EU Newsroom

Source: Survey dpa, September to November 2020

Ranking/ Top 5	Requirement/Request	Yes (number of mentions in brackets)	Not specified (number of mentions in brackets)	No answers given in thematic cluster
1	Mutual exchange with other agencies	ANSA, APA, AGERPRES, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, Ritzau, STA, TASR (10)	PAP (1)	ATA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
1	Joint network of correspondents	AGERPRES, APA, ATA, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, PAP, Ritzau, TASR (10)	STA (1)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, Tanjug, STT (9)
2	Opportunities for training and further education of our employees	AGERPRES, ATA, FENA, HINA, MIA, TASR, STA (7)	APA, Keystone-SDA, PAP, Ritzau (4)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
2	International working environment	AGERPRES, APA, ATA, HINA, MIA, Ritzau, STA (7)	FENA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, PAP (4)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA,

				NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
3	Joint editorial management system	AGERPRES, ATA, Keystone-SDA, HINA, LETA, PAP (6)	APA, FENA, MIA, Ritzau, STA, TASR (6)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, NTB, STT, Tanjug (8)
3	Access to EU network	AGERPRES, ATA, APA, FENA, Keystone-SDA, Ritzau (6)	HINA, MIA, PAP, STA, TASR (5)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
3	Access to further media services (photo, video)	AGERPRES, ATA, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, TASR (6)	APA, MIA, PAP, Ritzau, STA, (5)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
3	Collaboration at eye level	ANSA, AGERPRES, ATA, Keystone-SDA, Ritzau, STA (6)	APA, FENA, HINA, MIA, PAP, TASR (6)	BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (8)
4	Stable internet connection and modern technological equipment	APA, FENA (2)	AGERPRES, ATA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, PAP, Ritzau, STA, TASR (9)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
4	Access to offers in further languages	AGERPRES, TASR (2)	APA, ATA, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA,	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA,

			MIA, PAP, Ritzau, STA (9)	NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
4	Journalistic independence vis-à-vis the other agencies	AGERPRES, ATA (2)	APA, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, PAP, Ritzau, STA, TASR (9)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
4	Journalistic independence vis-à-vis the EU	AGERPRES, ATA (2)	APA, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, PAP, Ritzau, STA, TASR (9)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
5	Security and emergency concept for EU Newsroom	AGERPRES (1)	APA, ATA, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, MIA, PAP, Ritzau, TASR, STA (10)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)
5	Accommodation and catering offers	MIA (1)	APA, ATA, AGERPRES, FENA, HINA, Keystone-SDA, PAP, Ritzau, STA, TASR (10)	ANSA, BNS, BTA, CNA, CTK, LETA, NTB, STT, Tanjug (9)

Categories featuring the networking idea of the cooperation take first place in the ranking of the top five requirements: *Mutual exchange with the other agencies* and the *joint network of correspondents* (both getting ten/eleven mentions). In the eyes of the agencies in the survey, the networking function seems to be the core requirement or the greatest advantage. While this basic tendency certainly did not come as a surprise, the fact that the outcome of the interviews was so

unambiguous at this point also shows that the idea of a joint EU Newsroom really meets demand and expectations.

The items *international environment* and *access to mutual and joint further professional education* came in second with seven votes each. Both these requests directly reference the targets of EANA, but only one also references the planned cooperation project. Many of the questioned agencies hope that, all things considered, they will profit from the other agencies participating in the EU Newsroom, because they will be able to acquire new knowledge and skills through the cooperation.²⁴ STA for instance desires “opportunities to acquire new knowledge”. The interlocutors of North Macedonian agency MIA also welcome the project and reckon that they will profit above all from the exchange with other international journalists in the network. They hope that their reporters will also be able to work from the editorial offices of the newsroom in Brussels and express particular interest in photo and video reporters in the EU Newsroom. The interviewees of Keystone-SDA argue along similar lines when they point out the synergies among the news agencies. They state that the network would be “incredibly useful” for their correspondent because she “presently works alone”.

Section 3.1 describes the aspect of collaboration, taking the *EuroBuro* in Sydney as an example. The joint newsroom in Australia, where several European news agencies work together in the same location, has already proven itself in practice. The colleagues from dpa who work on site mention the intercultural exchange as a great advantage. They say that the intercultural exchange of opinions and experience is particularly helpful to ensure coverage from different perspectives in situations of crisis and when it comes to breaking news. The editors benefit from the exchange with colleagues from other editorial teams. Direct exchange has already proven to be effective when there were breaking news on terrorist attacks, disasters and elections.

Six agencies each ticked the answer options *access to the EU network*, *access to further media services* such as photo and video, *collaboration at eye level* and a *joint editorial management system* one of their top five as requests. Hence

²⁴ Note: In the qualitative part of the study, all the concrete requests are recorded, which – in the context of the other questions – were hidden in the answers. In the spirit of a lively coding in vivo, these outcomes are also taken into account.

concrete requests are not limited to practical tools and advantages for journalistic work (editorial management system, photo and video content, research synergies through access to the EU network). The agencies questioned regard an appreciative – maybe even a democratic – working environment with collaboration at eye level as (at least) just as important.²⁵

TASR already asks questions about the infrastructure of the newsroom in the first thematic clusters. For instance, they enquire about a “multimedia cooperation with the European Parliament” for online coverage. TASR envisages a TV and radio studio for interviews with members of the European Parliament from which direct broadcasting is possible as well (“Do we consider a multimedia cooperation with the EU Parliament, e.g. web? It would be good to have a TV-studio in Brussels to broadcast interviews with members of the parliament in this studio”, TASR). Keystone-SDA emphasise their great demand for joint usage of technology and a joint editorial management system.

Italian agency ANSA has great general interest in the project of a joint EU Newsroom. However, with regard to their own editorial offices in Brussels, they want to wait and see the outcome of the current contract negotiations first.

Last but not least, it is remarkable that there seems to be so little fear of endangering *journalistic independence* through the cooperation project. The explicitly listed request options *journalistic independence vis-à-vis the other participating agencies* and *independence vis-à-vis the institution of the EU* were rarely mentioned as one of the agencies' top five requirements. The authors assume that this is probably due to the great extent of trust among EANA members – trust in their own network and their own journalistic professionalism, but also trust and faith in the EU and its basic democratic values (freedom of the press).²⁶ The Albanian and the Romanian agency both mention these requirements (cf. ATA and

²⁵ Note: As mentioned in the beginning, the questionnaire is not accompanied by a long glossary of terms, so as not to narrow down the scope of potential answers. But the agencies who participated in this thematic cluster naturally have certain basic assumptions about “collaboration at eye level” or “access to the EU network”. With regard to the latter, they might not just think of EU members and interlocutors from the institution of the EU, but also about external experts on Europe/the EU.

²⁶ Note: If journalistic independence within the European press landscape was not in such a good shape, the interviewees might have been more sensitive to these issues and would have named these criteria among their top five requirements.

AGERPRES). In the case of ATA, this ranking is quite intriguing, because when they answer the final open-ended question, the interview partners yet again stress their crucial role as mediators with regard to the EU and its developments. The following paragraph describes this in greater detail.

Closing part/open-ended question on potential additions

The closing part of the questionnaire gives the interviewees the opportunity to add aspects that have not been mentioned so far, or to explicitly highlight ideas that they have already expressed. It stands out that many *country-specific features* are mentioned, such as why a joint EU Newsroom would be particularly useful for a certain agency's country of origin. In this context, regional particularities of the countries are stated, and the special *relevancy of a joint EU is emphasised* as well.

Accordingly, such a newsroom becomes even more relevant when the country in question applies for EU membership, as in the case of North Macedonia and the Macedonian agency MIA. In preparing for the accession negotiations, they have great journalistic interest in information on how the country can join the EU. They state that overall public interest in EU affairs is great, due to Macedonia's candidacy: "Some topics might overlap some might be individual" (MIA). Above all, MIA is interested in having the agency's own correspondents work in the EU Newsroom and in gaining access to video and photo reporters through this cooperation (cf. *ibid*).

At the end of the interview, Albanian agency ATA also once again emphasises the correlation of Albania's candidacy for EU membership and this project. Overall, the Albanian public is pro-European and thus the news agency has an important mediating role.

"It will be very helpful not to have high costs. 95% of Albanians are pro EU but the rate is declining, this year it was 75%. Media is one of the industry branches who could take care of the better connections of people in Europe. This is why they need to be more present in Brussels to create more transparency" (ATA).

Their ranking of *requirements* for participation in the cooperation project shows that the Albanian news agency – and also AGERPRES – attaches great importance to *journalistic independence*. At the same time they want to ensure high levels of transparency via direct reporting from the EU Newsroom (cf. *ibid*).

Other interviewees use their conclusion to once again explicitly underline their approval of the idea of the cooperation. FENA, for example, state that they hope the project will be a success and once again express their enthusiasm for the joint project. TASR desires the “EANA headquarters” to be in Brussels. Ritzau seconds this request and says that the offices should be placed “close to the EU institutions”.

And Italian agency ANSA even desires further locations with joint newsrooms “in more cities in Europe, not only in Brussels but also in our respective home-countries, Italy and Germany, also internationally, e.g. in London or Paris. Or South America. Very positive towards collaboration in general” (ANSA).

Other categories of additional aspects include special requests for certain formats. In the context of country-specific features, TASR for instance highlights that video formats are not very popular in Slovakia. The answer does not specify, though, whether this refers to the users (consumers) or to the producers (journalists). Live streaming, on the other hand, is in great demand in Slovakia (cf. TASR). At the end of the interview, the Latvian agency once again highlights their interest in establishing good contacts through the cooperation of the EU Newsroom. With regard to this, they are thinking of “academic partners” for EU tenders and grants as well as contacts they might gain through joint fact checking workshops and the network itself (cf. LETA, but also ANSA). The Italian agency also reckons that joint research and the network will help in finding contacts for tenders as well as points of contact within EU institutions (cf. ANSA).

In sum, the predefined requirements as well as the advantages and disadvantages of an EU Newsroom mentioned in the questionnaire seem to have met the agency's spectrum of opinions rather well, since only a few additional aspects were mentioned under “Other”.

3 Role models for the newsroom

The collaboration of the European news agencies in a joint location is the foundation for a European Newsroom in Brussels. The present chapter will take a closer look at two newsrooms in which news agencies from Europe are or were already working together on a daily basis.

As Stefan Ströbitzer will discuss in greater detail in section 4.2, the concept of a multimedia newsroom is not so much that of an actual physical space, but rather refers to a form of organisation for news research and production. By adopting this form of organisation, media outlets throughout the world try to meet the rapidly changing requirements brought on by digitization.

One example for this is the *EuroBuro* in Sydney, where nine European news agencies, including dpa, work in a joint newsroom together with Australian Associated Press. For the present study, Thomas Cronenberg, Deputy Head of dpa International, writes on the basic principles of collaboration within the scope of the Sydney newsroom.

Karel Bartak, former correspondent of Czech news agency CTK in Brussels, founded a similar initiative with other EU candidate countries in the 1990s. In an interview for the present study, he reports on his experience with the collaboration of news agencies in the *Pecoffice*.

Thus the present chapter is intended to provide insights into the experience of similar newsrooms, which may serve as reference points for the realisation of a joint European Newsroom in Brussels.

3.1 The *EuroBuro* in Sydney

Back in 2013, several European news agencies and media outlets already opened a joint newsroom in Sydney, the so called *EuroBuro*.

The *EuroBuro* was founded by Australian Associated Press (AAP) and Danish agency Ritzau under the auspices of Tony Gillies, former CEO of APP, and opened in 2013 in the APP Building on 3 Rider Boulevard.

Apart from dpa, the following media from Europe joined the project:

Ritzaus Bureau – news agency (Denmark)

NTB Norsk Telegrambyrå – news agency (Norway)

TT Nyhetsbyrå – news agency (Sweden)

STT – news agency (Finland)

Belga – news agency (Belgium)

PA Media – news agency (England)

The Telegraph – daily newspaper (England)

Keystone-SDA – news agency; German and French (Switzerland)

This alternative model of a joint office space Down Under aimed to reduce the number of night shifts in the newsrooms of European media outlets and thus share resources and – in the end – save money. Depending on the season, Sydney is eight to ten hours ahead of Europe and thus presented the ideal location for such a project.

The fact that Australia is a politically stable and technologically advanced society was another significant point in favour of this newsroom. Robust technical systems and a reliable internet connection also played a role in dpa's decision to relocate one of their editorial workplaces from Bangkok to Sydney in 2016. Over the course of collaboration, other important synergies transpired beyond mere economic benefits.

Additional benefits

Working in joint editorial offices with many colleagues from different European countries improves and strengthens communication with one another and contributes greatly to collaboration, the flow of information and mutual support in the everyday work of individual news agencies.

The intercultural exchange of opinions and experience as well as coverage from different perspectives is particularly helpful in situations of crisis and in the event of breaking news. For the editors, exchange with colleagues from other editorial teams is immensely valuable, for instance when learning about their thematic priorities. In the event of breaking news, the journalists directly exchange views. This has proven to be very effective with regard to terrorist attacks, disasters and elections.

David Cronenberg and Steffen Trumpf, dpa's correspondents in the *EuroBuro* in Sydney, relate the following examples from daily work:

The employees of Ritzau were reporting live about the candidacy of a Danish politician in a German municipal election. The correspondents of dpa were able to contribute materials from dpa's regional services, valuable additions to the coverage of their Danish colleagues. And during the many parliamentary disputes and debates surrounding Brexit, it was very helpful to be able to directly ask the colleagues from PA Media in the same room for their assessment and analysis. After all, this kind of daily editorial collaboration creates added value for the customers of the participating agencies and media outlets.

Some practical considerations from the colleagues at dpa

Based on their experience in Sydney, Steffen Trumpf, who worked for AP World News in Sydney from 2014 to 2016, and David Cronenberg agree that the size and location of a joint EU Newsroom in Brussels should be the subject of careful consideration:

1. Cultural differences in work style

Some teams in the *EuroBuro* tend to have a more expressive, more communicative and nosier style of working, whereas other colleagues – especially those who spend a lot of time translating – would welcome a quiet, concentrated working atmosphere.

Consequently, a newsroom needs to be large enough to have quiet zones or separate rooms in which colleagues can work in an undisturbed and concentrated manner. Two smaller meeting rooms are needed for individual talks and confidential phone calls. In addition, the newsroom should definitely contain at least one larger meeting room, a studio for radio recordings as well as a kitchen/common space. The latter should, if possible, be located at some distance from the work spaces.

2. Central location

The location should be close to the most important political institutions, to prevent that the journalists lose a lot of time getting to interviews and other appointments.

3. Office organisation

The office manager of the *EuroBuro* in Sydney plays an important role, since she is able to help with visa and other essential legal matters. In addition, she is the first point of contact for colleagues that are new to Sydney and need support in finding their way around the city.

3.2 The *Pecoffice* in Brussels

From 1995 to 2006, **Karel Bartak** worked as a correspondent for Czech news agency CTK in Brussels. From 2006 to 2019, he was the head of the coordination centre for the European Commission's programme *Creative Europe* in the Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. Karel Bartak retired in 2019.

dpa: In the 1990s you founded the Pecoffice, a project similar to the European Newsroom. What was your experience?

Karel Bartak: I indeed founded a small joint space for agency reporters from what were at that time – back in the 1990s – the candidate countries for accession to the EU. In Brussels lingo, it was called „Pecoffice“, PECO being the French acronym for Pays de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale. This so called *Pecoffice* was intended to facilitate the exchange of information and a pooling of resources in the pre-accession period. This was a time when, as a rule, there was only one correspondent per agency in Brussels. The office also helped us to be able to compete with major agencies such as dpa. As opposed to the major players such as dpa, we focused particularly on those details of the accession negotiations that nobody paid any close attention to. In the heydays of the *Pecoffice*, we had reporters from MTI, PAP, CTK and TASR, as well as colleagues from Latvia and Slovenia, who worked for different media outlets. In those days, the situation was quite different from now. After all, we were all sitting in the same boat. The great advantage was that we were not competing with one another. Thus the exchange of information was open and efficient.

Neither the Czech Republic nor the other candidate countries could rely solely on information provided by the major European agencies. We needed additional information that was significant for our regions. Founding the *Pecoffice* was the logical consequence. We were not competing and we all felt the need to collaborate more intensively. All members of the *Pecoffice* only had one correspondent per agency on site in Brussels, so we decided to divide the work between us. Until the respective countries eventually became EU members, this system worked very well. However, after accession to the European Union, common interests suddenly

ceased to exist. There were few reasons left to continue to collaborate in this way, because there no longer was an urgent common goal such as the accession to the European Union. And when Wi-Fi was introduced and well-equipped, free work spaces became available at all institutions, logistics changed as well. When we started the Pecoffice, these opportunities did not exist.

Did the project receive any funding, and if so, by whom?

Bartak: The project did not get any funding. The participating agencies just shared the rent to reduce expenses for each member.

Where exactly were the offices in Brussels located? In your eyes, what are the most important criteria with regard to location? How important is it to have offices close to the EU institutions?

Bartak: Naturally, speed is of the essence. Even the colleagues from Reuters or AFP already send their first breaking news when they are still in the Commission's building – and only after having done this, they return to their offices in Brussels. But even apart from that there is the possibility to use the facilities in the institutions for your entire coverage. When looking for a suitable location, the financial framework naturally determines what choices you have. But basically, it is definitely important for a news agency in Brussels to have a fixed location where they can work around the clock, if required.

If you would conduct this project again, where would you look for office space in Brussels?

Bartak: The situation today is completely different from the times in which the Pecoffice was founded. Nowadays, there are fully equipped, free to use office spaces available for all correspondents on site in the buildings of the institutions in Brussels. Speed is crucial in journalism – and if the correspondents have to work fast, they can use the facilities in the EU institutions. But apart from that it is good to have another workspace available, preferably one in which other correspondents from further news agencies also work on a daily basis. Especially

those news agencies that only have one correspondent on site in Brussels, who might even work freelance or part-time, can profit from a joint newsroom.

What do you reckon: How many workspaces for journalists should we offer when we establish a joint EU Newsroom for news agencies?

Bartak: Most Eastern European countries only have one correspondent in Brussels. And some agencies have no correspondent of their own at all in Brussels, because they cannot afford that. As far as the number of journalists in the newsroom is concerned, there will very likely be one or two per agency.

What are the advantages of an EU Newsroom?

Bartak: When it comes to coverage of European affairs, context and background knowledge are very important. If somebody works on his or her own as a correspondent for a country, he or she will never have all the information. As a rule, the major agencies have a great wealth of knowledge and the colleagues from smaller agencies could profit from this. For the European Newsroom, it would be important that the participants commit themselves to be on site, so that joint work on topics is possible at any given time. If there is a place for correspondents of the European news agencies where colleagues from other agencies know certain things and can help them out, the correspondents will naturally use this opportunity to get the information. At the moment, we have the situation that the major agencies return to their offices after a press conference or another EU event, and the smaller agencies work in the facilities of the institutions. But maybe the colleagues of dpa or AFP would like to know the Slovenian perspective on a certain topic. Exchange is very important – especially at agency level, since the journalists of the news agencies generally have the greatest wealth of knowledge that they can share with one another.

How can dpa as the founder of the European Newsroom prevent that participants solely focus on national issues?

Bartak: All this depends on the strategy of the agencies. It is obvious that the correspondents have to treat European affairs from a national perspective. But if a report would also include a comparison with other countries of the same size or neighbouring countries that would make it much more valuable. It would even improve journalistic objectivity to know what journalists from other countries are thinking or which general perspective their countries of origin have on a certain matter. Every correspondent working in Brussels is pressed for time. So as a rule they do not have the time to illuminate all perspectives. In a European Newsroom, the information would already be there and the correspondents would not have to conduct any extra research to get it.

In the face of fake news and the big US news platforms, how do you assess the need for a collaboration of news agencies in Europe?

Bartak: If European news agencies would join forces to combat fake news in Europe, this would send a good message to the European Commission. The challenge of fake news and how to uncover them is a very important issue at the moment, which is why the European Commission should fund the project. Workshops on uncovering and checking fake news led by dpa and AFP would be very useful. Even in Europe, many countries are still under systematic influence, and this means that they are confronted with a lot of counterfeit news. It would help them a lot if they could learn how to deal with that properly.

If you could turn back time, what would you do differently?

Bartak: It was due to the situation back then, but I have to admit that we could have collaborated more intensively with the agencies from Western Europe. We as participants of the *Pecoffice* were a rather closed society that did not even look at what the others were doing.

On a scale from 1 to 10 – how would you rate the significance of our project Joint European Newsroom?

Bartak: I would rate it a 7 or 8. It would be rather important to have such a newsroom and it would be a wonderful example for the solidarity of the major agencies with the small ones in Europe.

Mister Bartak, thank you very much for this interview.

This interview was conducted by Wiebke Wetschera and Christiane Düsterfeld, both with dpa, on October 27, 2020.

4 The newsroom in Brussels

As discussed in the previous chapter, working in joint editorial offices with many colleagues from different European countries improves communication among each other and contributes greatly to collaboration, the flow of information and mutual support in the everyday work of the individual news agencies.

While the preceding chapters dealt with the European news agencies and similar newsroom projects, the present chapter focuses on the practical implementation of a European Newsroom in Brussels. The statutes, jointly developed by AFP and dpa, are the foundation for this implementation and define the basic principles of the newsroom.

In addition, Stefan Ströbitzer, CEO of Ströbitzer Consulting, presents concrete workflow scenarios within the framework of the newsroom. In the section on collaboration, he contributes his expertise on the establishment of newsroom models and defines important criteria for the joint newsroom in Brussels.

The agency services of dpa and AFP, which they intend to make available to the participating agencies, are another building block of the EU Newsroom. On top of that, the chapter presents a detailed training concept for journalists from European news agencies in Brussels.

The closing section of the chapter names important framework conditions for foreign journalists in Brussels. This section serves as a kind of instruction manual for those correspondents who will freshly come to Brussels.

4.1 Statutes

4.1.1 Purpose and function

News agencies are the main sources of information for the media. They provide news that have been processed according to transparent quality standards and thus act as joint editorial offices for their customers. The European Newsroom of News Agencies (subsequently called “European Newsroom”) is a facility for news agencies in Brussels. It is the purpose of this facility to improve the fact checked, professional newsflow according to the principles of quality journalism between the central EU institutions and the member states as well as the accession candidates to the EU.

News agencies committed to the principles of quality journalism perform their journalistic tasks based on facts, impartially and independent of actions and influences from political parties, ideological groups, economic and financial players. The European Newsroom is completely free from third-party influences that could have an impact on the journalistic work of the participating agencies. The same applies to the participating agencies themselves.

The European Newsroom supplies the participating news agencies with premises, workspaces and technical infrastructure (subsequently called “infrastructure”) which enable them to carry out their journalistic work.

The European Newsroom also provides journalists with access selected news from Germany and France in the languages English, German and French, in order to support their work in a media environment that can be difficult financially.

Workshops on new techniques in journalism (fact checking, podcasting, etc.) will be offered in the European Newsroom.

Apart from providing offices, access to news and further learning, the European Newsroom also aims to improve communication between the participating agencies, in order to continuously enhance the quality of journalism and adherence to common values such as verification, accuracy and transparency. The European Newsroom is run by dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur and AFP Agence France

Presse (subsequently called “operators”). The legal entity in this cooperation is dpa.

4.1.2 Participating news agencies

News agencies that want to participate in the European Newsroom have to meet the following criteria:

1. The news agencies have to operate a general news service. This must include at least the following departments: politics, business and panorama/miscellaneous.
2. The statutes of the news agencies have to guarantee independence from third-party influences, and this independence must actually be lived and discernible in the agencies' journalistic output. dpa and AFP – or experts commissioned by dpa and AFP – shall determine this independence, depending on the individual audit case.
3. The news agencies must have their registered offices in a EU member state or
4. in a country that is an official or potential accession candidate to the EU (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey) or
5. Switzerland or Norway.

4.1.3 Use of the newsroom's infrastructure by the participating news agencies

The infrastructure of the European Newsroom includes workspaces and a powerful internet connection. Depending on the expansion stage, there might also be meeting rooms, production facilities such as sound or video studios or even separate rooms for interviews.

All participating news agencies are entitled to use all facilities of the European Newsroom.

Facilities will be allocated via a booking system to which all news agencies have equal access.

Work spaces may be booked on a permanent basis, whereas jointly used facilities (such as conference rooms or recording studios) may be booked as required.

If permanently booked work spaces are not used over a longer period of time, the booking expires.

4.1.4 Access to materials and trainings of dpa and AFP

One of the advantages of the European Newsroom for the participating agencies will be access to selected EU-related news in English, French and German as well as access to the EU Monitoring Desk established by dpa and AFP.

We also intend to provide fact checks in several languages, among them English, German, French, Portuguese, Polish, Czech, Slovakian, Serbian, Romanian, Hungarian and Bulgarian.

All this will contribute to ensuring the production of verified, high quality and fact-based news in the regional languages

The European Newsroom also intends to offer workshops on topics such as EU affairs and the production of videos as well as new techniques of journalism including fact checking, podcasting and data journalism. The latter is an increasingly important technique in reporting on the EU.

4.1.5 Financing and operation

To operate the European Newsroom, dpa will set up a special account. dpa will also act as contracting party for any possible agreements. Funds shall be merged in and operating expenses paid through the special account. dpa will compile monthly reports for the operators.

The aim is to fully finance the European Newsroom via subsidies. For the European Newsroom to be realised, investments and operations must be fully financed for a period of at least 4 years (initial period).

Financing institutions shall have no influence on the operation of the European Newsroom or the participating agencies. The financing agreements will explicitly preclude this.

If, after the initial period of funding, future subsidies should not suffice to fully cover financial requirements, the participating agencies shall finance the difference in proportion to the respective workspaces used. It is of crucial importance that the project is designed for long-term sustainability, but:

None of the participating news agencies are obliged to participate. In addition, dpa and AFP are not obliged to continue operating the European Newsroom if the financing is not fully secured.

Contracts shall be concluded in such a way that they do not contain any obligations extending beyond the periods of secured financing. If no full financing is achieved, the European Newsroom will cease to operate.

4.1.6 Transparency and communication

The working language of the European Newsroom is English.

The operators shall regularly inform the participating agencies about the availability of existing as well as newly projected infrastructure.

The operators shall ensure a well-balanced availability to the participating agencies.

4.1.7 Liabilities

The following liabilities are an integral part of the contracts defining the participation of a news agency in the European Newsroom:

1. The participating news agency and its representatives use the European Newsroom at their own risk. To the extent a limitation of liability is permitted by law, the participating news agency and its representatives shall indemnify and hold harmless the operators from any and all claims, actions, damages, losses, liabilities, costs or expenses incurred by or for which operators are liable in connection with the European Newsroom.

These are:

- (a) any damage, loss, injury or death, loss of earnings or medical expenses;

(b) the condition or repair or state of the European Newsroom or anything in or on the premises; or

(c) all utilities provided for the European Newsroom,

unless they have been caused by a negligent act or omission or default of the operators. This clause does not end when the participation of the news agency has expired or ended.

2. The participating agency shall compensate the operators for:

(a) all damages, costs, actions, claims and demands which may be made or brought against the operators as a result of the negligence or default of the participating news agency and its representatives in connection with the European Newsroom.

(b) all damages, losses, costs, actions, fines, claims and demands which may be incurred by the operators ("any claim"), which may be recovered or asserted against the operators, or any loss or damage which may be incurred by the operators as a result of any damage to or destruction of the European Newsroom or the premises in which it is located, arising out of or in any way connected with participation in the European Newsroom, to the extent that they have culpably (negligently or intentionally) caused such damage or loss.

This clause does not end when the participation of the agency in question has expired or ended.

4.2 Joint European Newsroom for news agencies in Brussels

We all know the big newsrooms of US newspaper publishing houses from films and TV series. Endless rows of desks with hardly any space between them, shouting reporters and rattling typewriters. For a long time, images such as these informed the debate in Europe about the necessity to establish multimedia news centres such as cross medial newsrooms. However, nowadays a completely different understanding prevails: the concept of a multimedia newsroom is not so much that of an actual physical space, but rather refers to a form of organisation for news research and production. Media outlets throughout the world adopt this concept to meet the rapidly changing requirements brought on by digitization. One legendary and international role model is the multimedia newsroom of Danish public broadcaster DR. Under the leadership of Director of Information Ulrik Haagerup, the editorial teams of the news agencies for Danish Radio, TV and Online – which had hitherto been operated silo-like – were reorganised. Nowadays, work on the journalistic topic is the centre of attention and a collaboration of Topic Teams and Media Specialists produces the best possible product for any given target audience and publishing channel.

The latest example is the modern, architecturally outstanding newsroom of Axel Springer Group in Berlin. Different service providers move in together, join forces and work jointly to create their products, their common motto being: Mobile first! Video first!

Next generation of newsrooms – the Joint Newsroom

The Joint European Newsroom of News Agencies in Brussels is the next step towards a new future-oriented generation of collaborative work spaces for journalists. For the first time, colleagues that are not operating under the same ownership, for the same parent company, are meant to profit from one another's work. The sole link between them will be their common pursuit of objective, bias-free information about European affairs for their customers in their respective

countries of origin. The guidelines of this newsroom shall be the pursuit of truth, credibility and objectivity in reporting about the EU and its institutions.

7 Steps to joint success

1) Celebrating the community spirit

The newsroom community is a European Union on a small scale. This spirit will radiate and permeate reporting.

2) Standing strong united

Small agencies profit from the bigger ones. Resources are pooled and shared: photographers, camera crews, technicians and office management.

3) Showing full presence on all channels

The future of news agencies is the presentation of topics across a wealth of different media platforms. The newsroom makes it possible.

4) Sharing knowledge to broaden horizons

Having access to more facts, aspects and different perspectives will enhance the quality of any research.

5) Joining forces in the pursuit of truth

Fact checking and source validation: The greater the network of collaborating quality journalists, the faster the process of checking facts and verifying sources.

6) Promoting constructive debate

Listening to one another, gathering arguments and discussing in a solution-orientated matter will turn the Joint Newsroom into a connecting platform for a joint Europe.

7) Learning from each other

Different skills, a variety of specialisations and pooled know-how will turn the Newsroom into a learning platform for outstanding quality journalism in Europe.

4.2.1 Basic principles

Sharing and caring – the common roof

Naturally, currently existing newsrooms have diverse forms of organisation adapted to their respective requirements and structures. However, they are all united in their desire to produce news of the highest possible quality, despite tight budgets and diminishing resources, by sharing knowledge, resources and infrastructure. Thus these newsrooms facilitate the production of customised services for target audiences that communicate and inform themselves in increasingly diverse ways.

In this context, the representatives of the Generation Z can mostly be characterised by the saying: “The news will find me”. This means that they hardly subscribe to journalistic offers, browse news websites rarely or not at all and seldom consume any traditional radio or TV news. They are only reached by what comes towards them in their social streams and manages to attract their attention.

As opposed to this, the older generations often still show “traditional patterns of media usage”. They listen to the radio, consciously turn up the evening news and in some cases still read newspapers – and if they don't, they partake of the online news services of publishing houses.

Supplying a full range of journalistic services

News agencies need to supply information to their customers for all these target audiences, and more often than not the classic agency text does no longer suffice. Increasingly, their customers – be they newspaper publishers, public broadcasters or digital platforms – require a full range of journalistic formats: text, images, graphics, video and audio. And if journalistic quality levels are to be kept up at the same time, these multimedia offers can only be produced through working collaboratively.

If they succeed in this, the news agencies' offers will increasingly continue to form the basis of reporting for many media outlets in an almost unedited manner. Since customers can trust in the exceptional quality of the agency services, this allows them to conserve their own resources and allocate them otherwise. Video footage supplied by agencies such as dpa, AFP, Reuters and AP is often incorporated

into their costumers' reporting 1:1. German news agency dpa supplies dozens of customers with ready-to-use video clips, which they import into their digital news portals via player services and subsequently make them available to their audience, readers and listeners without editing them beforehand.

Promoting quality journalism

Consequently, it should be the goal of the Joint European Newsroom project to enable the participating agencies, through joint usage of services and infrastructure, to produce significantly higher degrees of quality journalism – meaning unbiased, objective information – for all target audiences and platforms (digital, social, print, TV, radio).

This is all the more important, since issues seem to get more and more complex, while the citizens' attention spans deteriorate. Facts that cannot be explained in a clear and simple manner do not get through the digital thicket and are in danger of being drowned out by forces offering populist, simple and emotionalising messages. Journalists who are not present on site in the institutions in Brussels often have to rely on information filtered through and underpinning the respective positions of interest and lobby groups in their countries of origin. And while these shreds of information reflect aspects of reality, they never give the full picture.

Providing orientation

However, quality journalism should aim to give the full picture (big picture journalism), gather all arguments and present a topic from different standpoints and with all its aspects. Quality journalism provides orientation in a complex world, in which media services covertly controlled by populism, bots, fake accounts and interest groups are also trying to inform debates. With regard to EU affairs in particular, outsiders often face difficulties when they are trying to research objective, unbiased information. There are so many different forces trying to assert their interests.

The Joint European Newsroom will counteract this problem. The collaboration of journalists from a great variety of diverse European countries, their mutual exchange and debate and, above all, their ability to draw on a joint base of data and research, will promote mutual understanding and broaden perspectives to include other points of view.

Sharing knowledge

The building blocks of modern newsroom organisation are sharing of knowledge, profiting from the research of others and drawing on joint archives and databases. Promoting this kind of networking is the stated target of the Joint European Newsroom of European News Agencies. The participating agencies will be given access to basic information like schedules and statistics, but also to high quality content such as interviews and video footage.

Using a joint infrastructure

Apart from sharing knowledge, one of the greatest advantages of the joint newsroom will naturally be the operation of a joint infrastructure and pool of resources. This will enable the participating agencies to use all means of journalistic content production in a very cost efficient manner. Whether they want to record an interview with sound and picture or produce a video clip for the digital customers in their country of origin – they will always find the required production infrastructure on the spot. Opportunities arise, which, without these shared services, would not have been available to many of the participating journalists, or only through considerable investment of resources. Consequently, less well funded agencies may also be able realise offering a full range of journalistic services.

The entire newsroom infrastructure will be jointly operated and maintained. Shared resources will also include IT support and the possibility to book skilled specialists required for a given assignment from a pool of photographers, camera operators and TV production service providers. In this manner, resources – often freelance photographers or producers – are better utilized and the participating agencies do not need to keep a “standing army”: a win-win situation.

Creating a forum for discourse

Once the Joint Newsroom has been established and become a fixed part of Brussels' media scene, it could quickly turn into a meeting place and forum for objective discourse. When there is a steady coming and going of interview partners, government and EU Commission representatives as well as members of the European Parliament from different nations and parties, it will be relatively easy to bring them together for talks, evenings of debate and background discussions. This in turn will enable the journalists to hear different points of view, promote

discourse across nations and enhance the quality of their articles by presenting the big picture. Just by listening to one another, they will already win new perspectives for their work.

Training and further education

If the spatial configuration permits, the Joint Newsroom could also be a base for mutual learning. Experienced journalists and specialised experts from individual agencies could not only contribute their specific knowledge to journalistic topics but also pass their specialist know-how on to their fellow colleagues. Conceivable ideas are a fact checking academy, video training or courses in data journalism. Thus the newsroom would not only be a good platform for collaborative, creative journalistic work, but also contribute towards the effort of jointly raising the journalistic standards in Europe by bringing forth more and more increasingly well-trained colleagues. As a result, the journalistic quality of EU coverage would benefit in two ways.

Operating model

Which operating model, which form of organisation and what kind of everyday workflow do these targets require?

Generally speaking:

- the basic spatial configuration should be flexible, “breathing”. It should be possible to react to changing challenges without much fuss and without incurring substantial expenses.
- the entire infrastructure should be geared towards easy docking for every participating agency (plug & play).
- collaboration requires space to promote the usage of the joint infrastructure and bring colleagues together.

Considering cultural differences

At the same time, cultural differences in working style should be taken into account. Modern office organisation aims to reduce individual offices and fixed workplaces to create a variety of workspaces adapted to any given work situation: retreats,

silent rooms, alternating workstations to write texts and conduct research from diverse sources (cabins for telephone and video calls) as well as multimedia production spaces.

Accordingly, a newsroom needs to be spacious enough to provide quiet zones as well as individual rooms, in which colleagues can work undisturbed and in a concentrated manner. In addition, it should be possible to book conference spaces as well as silent rooms for one-on-one talks and confidential phone calls. Finally, a tea kitchen or common space is indispensable to promote communication between the colleagues from the participating agencies and for taking breaks.

The optimal location

A central location, only a stone's throw away from the EU institutions, makes editorial activities easier during work sessions and meetings. However, location ceased to be a knock-out criterion quite some time ago, since infrastructure for journalistic work is also available on the premises of the institutions these days.

In addition, it is a general requirement that journalists are equipped to be mobile and perform their duties on the go. Speed is of the essence, especially in the agency business. Therefore, it will be a feature of the Joint European Newsroom that all participating journalists will have access to applications that facilitate mobile working (Reporter APP etc.).

A mobile newsroom is essential

The Newsroom as a home base for concentrated work, exchange and dialogue is ideally complemented by mobile working facilities. Feed points for live connections, rentable studios and audio cabins in and around the institutions supplement the equipment. From a workflow perspective, a central location offering a full range of facilities is just as feasible as a combination of a physical newsroom that is merely nearby with infrastructure facilities close by the EU sites (studios, feed points, alternating workstations).

4.2.2 Daily workflow and priorities

A workflow concept has been developed, suited to any location variant and optimally geared towards collaboration and the basic principles described above. This will be described subsequently, sorted by priorities:

- Priority 1 means, that this requirement is an absolute must have for modern agency work aiming for efficiency.
- Priority 2 implies that meeting this requirement is indispensable if a news agency wants to offer the full range of journalistic services, including their own audio and video production. However, these requirements can also be met in other ways, for instance by renting studio infrastructure in other locations or by using press centres in the EU institutions, even if this is not as optimal as using one's own facilities.
- Priority 3 is given to requirements that would be nice to have, since they would contribute to an optimal implementation of the cooperative idea of a Joint Newsroom of European agencies. This priority is also given to requirements that are not indispensable for everyday journalistic work, but which would promote constructive discourse among the participating countries as well as the dissemination of the EU's principles and plans. Examples are a press centre or a room to hold background talks with members of parliament or the Commission.

Priority 1

Use cases

EU monitoring

The EU Monitoring Desk probably is the most important service of the Joint Newsroom for the participating agencies. At this point, several colleagues view the complete EU-related news volume and make it available to the others via agency newsfeeds. EU monitoring prepares the content along the most important current topics, adds metadata and subsequently shares it with all the participating agency partners. This saves a lot of double track work and takes perspectives and aspects into account that would often escape notice if monitoring was left to a singular

participating partner. In this way, the debates, negotiations and statements of the EU institutions can be made available to the agencies in a comprehensive manner, sorted by topics.

This is a software-based service, but it should also be visualised in the centre or a meeting zone of the newsroom. The ongoing stories, the most important appointments of the day and the currently running streams can be gathered at a glance by looking at one of several big displays. This video wall is the meeting and assembly point for all the participating editorial teams. Here is where communication and exchange develop.

Alerting system

Participants in the Joint Newsroom can configure their individual alerts. This means they don't have to follow all EU-related news actively, but can trust that they will be alerted when news arise in their chosen subject areas. Naturally, those alerts are also available for mobile use, so that the journalists are always up to date with regard to the latest information.

News gathering across platforms

It is possible to follow the news on different platforms at the same time: agency feeds, Twitter, Facebook, websites, YouTube. These sources can also be visualised through the video wall. This makes it possible, for instance, to watch the social media accounts of MPs or Commissioners during a parliamentary debate or meeting of the Council.

Search templates for EU-related topics

The participating journalists have access to pre-configured or individually designed search templates on EU-related topics and stakeholders. The results of the cross media content search can be saved in topic-related inboxes within the editorial management system. These inboxes can be shared and continuously filled with additional sources and information. So it will become superfluous to start the search on a certain topic all over again every time. All participants in the newsroom have access to the topic-related inboxes.

Appointment database

There is a database as a shared service, in which all relevant appointments and meetings are collected. These can be shared via the editorial management systems of the participating agencies or directly transferred to the personal calendar.

Topic planning

Appointment entries and search results can be used to start planning an article or publication. Planned elements can be scheduled on a calendar.

The information gathered in the topic-related inboxes can be retrieved for editing and production.

Additional research

To conduct additional research, journalists need a space where they can make phone calls and work through documents undisturbed. Consequently, the Joint Newsroom does not only offer open-plan alternating workstations, but retreats, meeting rooms for confidential talks and multifunctional call booths as well.

Writing texts, editing photos

No further special arrangements have to be made to facilitate research and the writing of agency texts. Just for the sake of completeness: Every workstation should be equipped with a network connection, a dock-in facility for a monitor, a keyboard and a mouse. In addition, a telephone system is required to directly record interviews on the server (voice over IP).

Photos may be stored, edited and transmitted via corresponding dpa systems or using the agency's own system.

Importing, editing and storing audio and video footage

Since agencies increasingly turn to producing content and news articles for radio stations in their country of origin, digital portals of publishing houses and TV broadcasters, corresponding storage and editing systems are required. The central content management system should have interfaces with all common editing programmes for video and audio files, depict metadata well and be directly connected to archiving systems.

Joint using of archives

This facilitates an uninterrupted workflow for audio and video production and access to footage already stored in the archives, which is indispensable for everyday journalistic work.

Another great advantage of the Joint Newsroom idea becomes apparent here: For an individual smaller agency, it would never be possible to gain access to such a wealth of (moving) images and audio files.

Accreditation service

The Joint Newsroom will take care of accreditation with the institutions as well as for individual appointments, meetings and events for its members. This is a software-based service, but members also have access to personal support through a Central Office Management (OM). This will facilitate a good onboarding for newcomers to Brussels and colleagues who only have to work there occasionally.

A space for exchange and discourse

Naturally, the meeting rooms of the Joint European Newsroom not only serve as a retreat for members who seek to produce in a quiet environment, but also as a space in which they can come together and discourse. The meeting rooms can be booked through the Central Office Management, which will be supported by booking software.

Pool of resources

The Joint European Newsroom offers the participating agencies access to a pool of photographers, camera operators and cutters. This pool will mainly be compiled and managed by the major leading agencies dpa and AFP as well as the local Belgian news agency Belga. Representatives of smaller agencies have access to free resources from this pool or can jointly use it during appointments and events.

Spatial and technological requirements

Most of the use cases in the Priority 1 cluster (=must haves) require an appropriate software infrastructure. dpa's new RUBIX system is suitable for EU monitoring and news gathering. The installation of a multiviewer solution enables the individual

connection of any stream to any workstation. Thus it becomes possible, for instance, that all participating journalists can receive and watch a debate of the European Parliament on their laptop through a dock-in-station.

Four flat screens will be installed for central visualisation.

Investment requirements for screens and multiviewer solution: ca. EUR 15,000-20,000.

For research and the production of journalistic products, the colleagues need multiple alternating workplaces as well as two meeting rooms for up to six people and – in a best case scenario – two multifunctional, acoustically enhanced cabins or rooms for up to three people.

The corresponding investment requirements have to be calculated individually for every potential location. If existing rooms can be adapted, the cost of acoustic enhancements should amount to roughly EUR 10,000. If prefabricated soundproofed cabins can be installed, the cost would amount to around EUR 15,000.

Priority 2

Use cases

Mobile Working

Naturally, modern journalistic work requires that accessing research results and creating news products (at least in a text format) is possible on the go. Therefore, the Joint European Newsroom provides corresponding equipment (Reporter APP) to download for the participating colleagues, if the journalists are not yet connected to mobile working systems via their delegating agency. To ensure an uninterrupted flow of information, attention has to be paid to a good connectivity of the various systems.

Audio and video interviews

Several different workflow and use case scenarios are feasible with regard to audio and video studio production. The first expansion stage will facilitate sound recordings, as already described in the use cases for Priority 1. Not just since the

outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated limitations, it proves its worth to install video communication systems and provide good recording equipment for video calls and interviews. This requires a minimum of equipment with LED spots and a presentable background. In addition, the used room should be acoustically enhanced and isolated from ambient noise.

In the case of the Joint European Newsroom, it would also be commendable to make the background for video interviews adaptable to each agency, for instance with their signature decorative element (logo). This can basically be managed in two different ways: by using a big screen that plays pre-recorded individual backgrounds or with a green box solution. Various backgrounds are feasible: static topic-related images, the logo or CI of the agency in question – or even moving images or live exterior views of various EU buildings.

Podcast production

The use case described above can easily be combined with podcast production, since an adapted room or a prefabricated, permanently installed audio cabin offers ideal conditions for this use case as well. Thus talks and debates on EU-related topics with up to three participants could be produced on site in the Joint European Newsroom and shared with the participating agencies.

TV and video studio production

An increasing number of media outlets operate digital platforms that offer embedded live streams, the retrieval of video clips and podcasts, the playing of entire features with live broadcasts to venues, expert talks in studios and the insertion of pre-recorded content such as videos and graphics. Increasingly, news agencies will also supply these kinds of content, notably in those countries that have no potent media enterprises or where a strong concentration on a few potent players could threaten the diversity of reporting. If agencies provide videos, this strengthens the diversity of supply and facilitates objective, high quality reporting in the format that is already used most frequently by the younger target audiences today.

Consequently, the journalists of the participating agencies should have access to a TV studio unit. And since demand is likely to increase, this offer will successively have to be extended to two units. Potential scenarios are the recording or live

production of news broadcasts, of introductions to news features by reporters, the recording or live production of interviews and small debates (such as the confrontation of two conversation partners with divergent views on a current topic) as well as the recording or live production of videos and recitals for social media and/or YouTube.

Spatial and technological requirements

For the use cases summarised in Priority 2, software solutions are needed, such as access to all common video conferencing systems, a programme for cutting audio and video files as well as a control room unit, ideally one that automatically manages recordings.

In a best case scenario, two soundproof audio cabins or adapted rooms are available to produce podcasts and optimal audio recordings of news broadcasts and features. The estimated cost per audio cabin including technical equipment amounts to EUR 20,000. If audio production occurs in acoustically adapted rooms, the estimates given in Priority 1 apply.

Depending on the quality of the technical equipment, the estimated one-off investment for the two TV studios with green box technology would amount to EUR 90,000-160,000 per studio. This includes the control room unit for processing the broadcasts. However, for a green box studio to be realised, a minimum room height of 350 centimetres is required.

Alternatively – especially if the rooms are not high enough – a studio with real decorative elements (logo wall and screens) could be installed. While this slightly limits flexibility, it is also somewhat less costly.

Priority 3

Use cases

Live stand-up from the newsroom

To position the Joint European Newsroom as a location, it would be nice if live broadcasts and recordings from the newsroom could directly join TV or digital programmes. For this, the Newsroom would have to feature a stand-up position

with the necessary camera, light and sound equipment. Alternatively, it would also be possible to broadcast – a frequently used method – from a terrace with a view on the EU buildings.

Livestreaming

The Joint European Newsroom as a hub for current news related to the EU and its institutions could also be equipped for the hosting and processing of appointments, debates and events that are streamed live. This would enable the participating agencies to supply their customers with livestreams produced on site in Brussels and – if necessary – subtitle those livestreams in their respective native language via text-to-speech language recognition and transcription software. This would make an immense contribution to an unadulterated transmission of perspectives for orientation and opinion-making in the participating countries. Every citizen would be able to get an authentic, unadulterated picture of events in Brussels, or at least they could participate in Brussels' affairs in real time. In a next step, self-produced streams could also be distributed via this streaming interface. Thus the Joint Newsroom turns into a hub for live coverage from Brussels.

Press conferences and briefings

In addition, the instalment of a multifunctional press centre is required to turn the Joint European Newsroom into a location for constructive European discourse. Equipped with livestreaming facilities, this event space could host discussions with interested media representatives as well as press conferences, briefings and background talks. Thus the Joint European Newsroom becomes a hub for encounters and dialogue.

Spatial and technological requirements

The use cases described in Priority 3 require technological livestreaming equipment and a software base. Depending on the kind of equipment and the targeted quality, the basic investment would amount to EUR 10,000-50,000. If events only take place from time to time, the equipment could also be rented. As far as the spatial prerequisites are concerned, the press centre requires a room that is at least 100 m² in size and includes a cloak room as well as a tea kitchen to prepare catering. To install the stand-up position, a newsroom would be desirable

that contains free spaces of an appropriate size indoors – or a terrace with a view on the institutions.

Infrastructural requirements

Four potential locations were examined for the establishment of a Joint Newsroom of European News Agencies in Brussels. Right up front: None of them is optimal on its own.

Belga: To establish the Joint Newsroom in the existing newsroom of the Belgian news agency has distinct operational advantages, since the participating agency employees could avail themselves of an infrastructure that is already in place. This applies to the required EU monitoring desk, the accreditation service, the use of IT support, the booking of meeting rooms and even to the exchange among colleagues in the tea kitchen.

Disadvantages: Belga's newsroom is located three kilometres from the EU institutions and it offers little space for desks (a maximum of 16) or an adaptive, future-proof infrastructure such as cabins for audio recordings or a TV studio. Audio recording facilities could be installed, but this would limit space even further. TV interviews can only be recorded if the participants are sitting down – anything else cannot be realised because the rooms are not high enough.

Avenue D'Auderghem 22–28: The location of AFP and Le Monde is very close to the institutions. It is in open plan office for up to 66 workstations, divided into two larger open spaces. While this certainly has the character of a laying battery, it still seems feasible. However, design options are limited since the rooms are not high enough to install a green box TV studio and there are few retreat spaces that would have to continue to serve as such.

Rue Froissart 95–99: Based on the documents at hand, little can be inferred about the nature and composition of the rooms. The Brussels Press Club – an institution similar to Concordia in Austria – is situated within the same building. Occasionally, press conferences take place there. The office space is divided into individual offices and there is one larger conference room. In sum, this location appears least attractive, since design options seem to be limited.

Résidence Palace: This certainly is the most attractive location, directly opposite the European Council and the EU Commission. The building is a collection point for media outlets. Not only dpa have their offices here, but also ORF, other European TV stations, newspaper editors, etc. There is a TV studio that is utilised little and can be rented quite cheaply. Other on-site features are a terrace for stand-ups, meeting rooms for rent, a restaurant, etc. The great disadvantage is that office units are rather small and this configuration cannot be changed since the building is listed. A newsroom cannot be realised here, just offices that are very close to events.

Conclusion: A combination of Belga and Résidence Palace would enable a quick start of the Joint Newsroom. Belga would be the “home base” providing the shared services EU monitoring, accreditation service, IT support, meeting and conference opportunities as well as quiet spaces for planning and production. Audio recording facilities and a position for TV interviews could also be installed quite easily in Belga's offices. The Résidence Palace would serve as a “field office” close to the institutions, where journalists can find a workstation during conferences, rent a TV studio to interview ministers from their countries of origin or record analytical introductions for back home. All EU monitoring information could also be made available at the Résidence Palace and livestreaming of EU activities could be organised there.

This flexible combination of “home base” and “field office” is the perfect solution for a quick realisation of the Joint Newsroom.

4.3 AFP and dpa news services for the EU-Newsroom

When it comes to networking, German dpa and French AFP are global leaders with a network of correspondents operating all over the world. dpa and AFP also aim to achieve this for the joint EU Newsroom by granting all participating agencies access to their news services. The network idea and the joint fight of EU news agencies against fake news in Europe are the main drivers behind this measure as well as behind the workshops the two agencies plan to hold within the scope of the newsroom (cf. section 4.4).

dpa supplies media outlets, corporations and organisations with editorial offerings. These include texts, photos, videos, graphics, radio contributions and other formats. As an agency that operates internationally, dpa reports in seven languages. Around 1,000 journalists work from more than 150 locations in Germany and abroad.

dpa's editorial teams operate according to the principles laid down in the agency's statutes: independent of world views, business enterprises or governments. Especially in Europe, dpa has a strong network of correspondents. A big team of experienced EU journalists reports directly from the important political hotspots in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxemburg. dpa's reporting is regarded as the European voice of experts, supplying agencies in Europe with reliable, professionally researched and objective news items.

The two most important news services for a comprehensive EU coverage are the English language newswire dpa international and the German language *Europadienst* (European service).

AFP, Agence France Presse, has a network of around 2,400 employees in 151 countries. With their international text photo, video, audio and multimedia services, they report all over the world in six languages. AFP's reporting is independent as well. As guaranteed by the agency's founding statutes, AFP speaks with an independent voice, free from political, corporate and ideological influences.

AFP's most important news services for comprehensive reporting in the Brussels Newsroom are their French language General Newswire and the English language World Newswire.

Both news agencies, AFP and dpa, supply international media outlets with news in all common formats via state of the art news technology in more than ten languages.

The news services of both agencies contain worldwide and up to date daily reporting with a focus on EU affairs, available 24/7, and various analysis formats: explanatory texts, background reports, stories from different perspectives and highlights.

Within the framework of cooperation in the projected EU Newsroom in Brussels, dpa and AFP intend to make high quality coverage of EU affairs from the most important political, corporate and societal sectors available to the participating journalists. To offer truly comprehensive reporting about and from the EU institutions, three official EU languages need to be taken into consideration: French, German and English. For everyday editorial work, the two agencies will give the journalists in the Brussels Newsroom access to a targeted selection of news from their general newsfeeds via dpa's new editorial system RUBIX.

Through the provision of dpa's and AFP's news services, all participating journalists in the projected Brussels Newsroom have equal access to fact-checked, objective information, equipped with the necessary background material to ensure high quality reporting to the media in their countries of origin. Mainly those agencies that usually have no budget for international agency services and often have to rely on information from their governments stand to benefit. In addition, there are many advantages for the political institutions of the EU, because their affairs and decisions will be reported to the EU's citizens through the media in an unaltered, fact-checked and truthful manner.

4.4 Concept for a training programme for journalists of European news agencies in Brussels

Journalism is a skilled trade. It requires learning, training and practice. In the 21st century, journalists face a particular challenge: On the one hand, they have to master the basic principles of their trade, such as unbiased research, factual reporting and user-friendly presentation. On the other hand, they keep on having to acquire new skills in the digital sphere.

The monitoring of social media platforms, verification of online accounts and content as well as the mastering of browsers and tools for digital research and storage are just some of the challenges that journalists throughout the world have to tackle. The skills and requirements of individual journalists differ greatly. Thus it appears reasonable to offer a comprehensive modularized training programme to address these diverse needs.

Each of the modules presented here contains the theories underlying the respective topic and embeds them in the daily work routine of the participants by means of diverse practical exercises. Ideally, the exercises have a European or EU context.

Module “News trade 2.0 – Writing for the digital sphere” (min. 2 days)

The participants learn about message theory (structuring of news, news factors, WH-questions, significance of the subjunctive and the background, source accuracy, etc.) and apply it in practical writing exercises.

Module “Photo journalism” (min. 2 days)

The participants learn about the features of a good news photo and the existing variants. They apply their knowledge in simulated and real training scenarios (press conference, arrival of a politician, unexpected event, single interview, feature, etc.).

Module “Video journalism” (min. 2-3 days)

The participants learn about the theory of filming (setting sizes, five-shot rule, typical mistakes while filming etc.) as well as technology (cameras, sound technology, gimbal, etc.). They apply their knowledge in practical projects: They

film raw footage on a given subject and shoot a news video on a self-researched topic.

If the participants are to learn video cutting as well, the duration of the module should be extended by at least one day.

Module “Audio journalism” (1 day)

The participants learn about different audio formats (news, survey, correspondent talk, original sound report, interview). After each theoretical unit, they directly apply their knowledge. Smartphones are used as recording devices.

If the participants are to learn about podcast journalism as well, the module is extended by one day.

If the participants are to learn how to use professional recording equipment and cutting programmes as well, the module is extended by one day.

Module “Digital research and verification” (min. 2 days)

This module is divided into seven sub-units, in which the participants learn the techniques behind each respective type of work and apply them in small group exercises. They receive research assignments, which they have to complete together as a group, applying their newly acquired knowledge. The topics:

- Photo reverse search in the WWW
- Finding and saving of (deleted) internet content
- Intelligent browser search
- Geolocation based on photos and videos
- Verification of social media accounts
- Platform tools (understanding, monitoring and searching social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram & Co.)
- The laws of verification and an outlook on deep fakes

The respective individual topics can also be taught in mini-modules with an approximate duration of 1.5-2.0 hours each. In addition, further topics such as “Research in the deep web and the dark web”, “Research on Telegram, pr0gram, Reddit, etc.”, “Identifying deep fakes”, etc. can also be offered if required.

4.5 Framework conditions for foreign journalists in Brussels

This section provides the necessary information for journalists who are going to work and live in Brussels as correspondents for the European news agencies. This includes the required documents for registration for journalists from EU countries as well as those from outside the EU. In addition, details will be given on important contacts in the regions, the points of contact for accreditation as well as social security contributions and taxes in Belgium. This section is intended as a kind of manual for the journalists, offering them guidance after their arrival in Brussels.

4.5.1 Required documents

Table 4: Required documents for journalists from EU and non-EU countries, who want to live and work in Brussels.

Source: AFP

<p>Journalists from EU countries</p>	<p>After arrival, find a flat, move in and register with the municipality.</p> <p>You require the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proof of accreditation from your director/editor in chief • ID card or passport • Rental contract • temporary press card Foreign Affairs • three passport photographs <p>The list of required documents may vary between municipalities. Please refer to the website of the municipal</p>
---	--

	<p>administration, the citizen's office or the foreigner's registration office of your municipality of residence.</p> <p>A list of municipal administrations in Brussels is available under the following link:</p> <p>https://be.brussels/about-the-region/the-communes-of-the-region</p>
<p>Journalists from non-EU countries</p>	<p>Within eight days of your arrival in Belgium, register with the municipal administration, stating your (temporary) place of residence and apply for the issue of a combined permit.</p> <p>You have to submit the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your passport • attachment 46 (or attachment 47) • the two documents you received from the immigration office, plus their attachments (confirmation from your employer and visa) • you will be entered into the register for foreigners and receive attachment 49 (attachment 49 is a temporary residence permit valid for a duration of 45 days. This can be extended twice for another 45 days) • after a positive residence check, you will receive an electronic A-card. This card has the same period of validity as the temporary press card Foreign Affairs and permits you to work and reside in Belgium • three months before your A-card expires, your employer has to apply to the responsible regional office for a new combined permit to be issued to you

4.5.2 Points of contact in the regions

Table 5: Points of contact for the important public offices in the regions.

Source: AFP.

Brussels	<p>Desk for work permits:</p> <p>CCN – Station Brussels North</p> <p>Rue du Progrès 80, 1030 Brussels</p> <p>Monday to Friday from 08:45–11:45 a.m.</p> <p>Phone: +32 2 204 13 99</p> <p>Further information on required documents is available on the Website of the Brussels Regional Public Service.</p> <p>Postal address for applications:</p> <p>Brussels Economy and Employment</p> <p>Direction de la Migration économique</p> <p>Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 20,</p> <p>1035 Brussels</p> <p>Travail.eco@sprb.brussels</p>
Wallonia	<p>Wallonia Public Service</p> <p>Directorate of Employment and Work Permits</p> <p>Place de Wallonie 1</p>

	<p>5100 Jambes</p> <p>Phone: +32 81 33 43 92 (09:30–12:00 a.m.)</p> <p>permisdetravail@spw.wallonie.be</p>
Flanders	<p>The application for work permits has to be submitted through the postal service to the central administration in Brussels.</p> <p>Departement Werk en Sociale Economie</p> <p>Afdeling Tewerkstelling en Competenties</p> <p>Dienst Economische Migratie</p> <p>Koning Albert II-laan 35 bus 20</p> <p>1030 Brussels</p>

4.5.3 Press card and accreditation

Table 6: Notes on applying for a press card and accreditation with EU institutions.

Source: AFP

Application for a permanent press card	<p>Register with IPA, as soon as you have received your temporary press card:</p> <p>Office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 13:00 p.m.</p> <p>IPA – Résidence Palace – bloc C</p> <p>bureau 2.257</p>
--	---

	<p>Rue de la Loi 155</p> <p>1040 Brussels</p> <p>Phone: +32 2 235 2224</p> <p>info@api-ipa.org</p> <p>www.api-ipa.org</p> <p>The following documents are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application form (to be completed on site at IPA) • certificate from your director or editor in chief confirming that you have been employed as a paid correspondent for at least two years. Freelancers have to submit proof of income for the last two years. • copy of the temporary press card Foreign Affairs • copy of the confirmation of registration from the responsible municipality • copy of your birth certificate (from your country of origin or the consulate of your country of origin) or a copy of your passport • four passport photographs
<p>Accreditation with the European institutions</p>	<p>Interinstitutional accreditation, valid for the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission (except for European Council summits and high level events)</p> <p>For detailed information on accreditation, please refer to:</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/contact/press-services/media-accreditation_en</p>

	<p>Contact: Spokesperson's Service of the European Commission</p> <p>Accreditation office/phone: +32 2 29 54385</p> <p>For interinstitutional accreditations: COMM-PRESS-ACCREDITATIONS@ec.europa.eu</p>
Accreditation with the European Commission	<p>For Ad-hoc accreditations with the Commission:</p> <p>COMM-PRESSROOM-TEAM@ec.europa.eu</p>
Accreditation with the European Parliament	<p>For detailed information on accreditation, please refer to: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/accreditation</p> <p>Contact: media.accreditation@europarl.europa.eu</p> <p>Brussels: +32 2 28 42555</p> <p>Strasbourg: +33 3 881 72555</p>
Accreditation with the Council of the European Union/the European Council	<p>For detailed information on accreditation, please refer to: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/accreditation/</p> <p>Contact: press.centre@consilium.europa.eu</p> <p>Phone: +32 2 281 90 00</p> <p>Even if you only apply for a one-day accreditation with the Commission, the Parliament or the Council, it is advisable to get in touch with offices of the Parliament and the Council to subscribe to their mailing list and receive press releases.</p>

<p>Newsroom of the FPS Foreign Affairs</p>	<p>M. Michael Vlamijnck</p> <p>Phone: +32 501 44 81</p> <p>michael.vlamijnck@diplobel.fed.be</p> <p>Address: FPS Foreign Affairs (SPF Affaires Etrangères), Newsroom 15 rue des Petites Carmes 1000 Brussels</p> <p>If you want to receive the press releases of the FPS Foreign Affairs, you can subscribe to their mailing list here: https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/Newsroom/newsletters</p>
--	--

4.5.4 Social security contributions and taxes

Employers can send their employees to work temporarily in another EU country. During this period, these employees will acquire the status of so called “posted employees” and will benefit from the same basic working conditions and rights as employees in their host country.

A posting should be limited to the period of time that is necessary to complete a specific task. After completion of the posting, the employee should return to his or her place of work in the EU country where he or she was posted from. If a journalist is replaced by another after his or her contract has terminated, the status of a posted employee is no longer applicable.

If you are posted for more than 12 months – or more than 18 months if your employer submits a substantiated notification to your host country’s national authorities – all relevant terms and conditions of employment of your host country will apply to you as well. Only provisions related to the termination of contracts and company pensions are exempt from this rule. If you are posted to another EU country for a longer period of time, you may want your family to join you there. Your family members can do so by virtue of their own EU citizens’ rights, but not as your dependants.

Other rights

If a journalist is an EU citizen, the following regulations apply while he or she is posted to another EU member state:

- Journalists do not require a work permit, unless they are posted to Austria from Croatia. In the latter case, restrictions apply for some sectors.
- Recognition of professional qualifications is not required. However, a written declaration might be needed for some professions. Get more information about the recognition of professional qualifications.
- It is not necessary to register journalists with the social security providers of the country they have been posted to, because they will continue to be insured as employees in their country of origin. However, this also means that during their posting, they will not acquire any additional entitlements to social security payments, such as pensions or unemployment benefit, in their host country.
- If journalists are posted for more than three months, they need to register their residence with the responsible authorities:
https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/residence/documents-formalities/registering-residence/index_en.htm
- The period of posting does not count towards a journalist's qualifying period for entitlement to permanent residence in the host country:
https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/residence/documents-formalities/eu-nationals-permanent-residence/index_en.htm

Social security coverage during the stay abroad

In order for you to still be covered by the social security system in your country of origin as a posted employee, your employer has to request a PD A1 form from the social security provider in your country of origin and inform the host country's authorities.

If your posting lasts longer than two years, you can either:

- change to the social insurance system of your host country or
- ask your employer to apply for an extension of the posting period determined in your social insurance form to remain covered in your

country of origin. The extension will be granted if the authorities of both countries approve and it is in your interest.

Prior to posting an employee, the employer may also need to notify the host country's authorities and provide information about

- the place of work,
- the duration of the posting,
- the contact details of the employee,
- and any other relevant details.

For further details, please refer to:

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/work-abroad/posted-workers/index_de.htm

Migrant workers in the EU

As a migrant worker in the EU – no matter whether you are employed or self-employed – you should always register with the social security providers of the host country. Journalists and their dependants will then be covered by the social insurance system of this host country. Benefits related to sickness, family, unemployment, pensions, occupational accidents and diseases, early retirement and death will be determined by the local laws. Freelance journalists have to register with the social security providers in Belgium and meet all obligations related to their status.

So called Guichets d'Entreprises offer support for journalists. They are agencies authorised to attend to all registrations and necessary legal formalities for migrant workers. These agencies are obliged to register with the Banque Carrefour des Entreprises before they start to operate. The Guichets facilitate the registration formalities. Below, you will find a list of all registered Guichets d'Entreprises.

Table 7: Contact data of the registered Guichets d'Entreprises.

Source: AFP

Acerta	Buro & Design Center Esplanadedu Heysel, BP 65 1020 Brussels	www.acerta.be
Eunomia	Oudenaardsesteenweg 7, 9000 Gent	www.eunomia.be
Formalis	Rue du Lombard, 34–42 1000 Brussels	www.formalis.be
Partena	Rue des Chartreux 45 1000 Brussels	www.partena-professional.be
Securex	Avenue de Tervueren 43, 1040 Brussels	www.securex.be
Ucm	Chaussée de Marche 637, 5100 Wierde	www.ucm.be
Xerius	Rue Vésale 31 1000 Brussels	www.xerius.be
Zenito	Quai de Willebroeck 37, 1000 Brussels	www.zenito.be

If journalists work under contract for a foreign employer, this employer has to register duly to ensure that they meet all legal obligations related to social insurance, occupational safety, health protection, labour insurance, etc.

In addition, employers have to declare to the tax authorities which tax rates they withhold from the salaries of their employees each month, and pay the corresponding monthly amounts to the tax office.

With regard to social insurance contributions, employers have to declare all salaries they have paid in the preceding quarter. The respective deadlines for the submission of these declarations are April 30, July 31, October 31 and January 31. Advance payments of social security contributions have to be made by the 5th day of each month to the responsible office.

The quarterly statement will show the contributions payable by the employees, which amount to 13.07% of gross salaries. The statement will also indicate the contributions due from the employer. The employer's social insurance contributions amount to +/- 26.91 percent (depending on the employer and the industry segment).

Taxes

There are no EU-wide rules on how EU nationals who stay, live or work outside their countries of origin are to be taxed on their income.

However, the country where you are resident for tax purposes can usually tax your total worldwide earned or other income. This includes wages, pensions, income from property and other sources or capital gains from the sale of property, no matter in which country in the world the income was earned or generated.

The authorities of the EU member states regularly exchange information on taxes to ensure that the taxpayers meet their obligations and to combat tax fraud and evasion. Please contact your local tax office for information on property tax, municipal taxes, gift tax and inheritance tax.

Every country has its own definition of "resident for tax purposes", but as a rule

- you are regarded as resident for tax purposes in a country in which you spend more than six months/year.
- you continue to be resident for tax purposes in your country of origin if you stay in another EU country for less than six months/year.

Which income will be taxed in Belgium?

You are residing in Belgium for at least six months of a given tax year? Then your total worldwide income will be taxed in Belgium. You are residing in Belgium for less than six months of a tax year? In this case, you will be regarded as non-

resident for tax purposes in Belgium and will only be taxed for those portions of your income there, which you have earned/generated in Belgium.

You have income from other EU countries? Make sure that you are never taxed twice for one and the same income.

What are the tax rates?

Online tax calculator for Belgium:

<https://www.belgiumtaxcalculator.com/>

Income tax in Belgium is progressive: the higher your income, the higher your tax rate. Please note: All taxpayers in Belgium are granted a tax allowance. The amount of your tax allowance depends on your personal circumstances. In addition, certain expenses are tax-deductible.

Table 8: Percentage tax rates in Belgium in relation to annual income.

Source: Online tax calculator of the Federal Public Service Finance

Income bracket	Annual income 2017 in Euro	Tax rate
1	up to 11,070	25%
2	11,070–12,720	30%
3	12,720–21,190	40%
4	21,190–38,830	45%
5	over 38,830	50%

Income tax (*Impôt des Personnes Physiques* or *Personenbelasting*) is assessed once a year on the basis of an income tax return. However, employers withhold a percentage of their employees' monthly salary. These amounts are offset against the annual tax assessment. This is referred to as *Précompte Professionnel* or *Bedrijfsvoorheffing*.

All the rules mentioned above apply to journalists who are not eligible for the status of a *Cadre Non-Résident*. Belgium has a special tax regulation for "executives from abroad". The circular of August 8, 1983 introduced special tax legislation for foreign executives and specialists, who work in Belgium temporarily. Expats who meet certain conditions benefit from a reduction in income tax and social security contributions.

For this special tax legislation to apply, approval from the tax office for foreigners is required. Journalists who reside in Brussels have to submit their corresponding request within six months of their arrival in Belgium to the following address:

Centre des Matières Spécifiques

Fiscalité Petites et Moyennes Entreprises

Cadres Etrangers – GESTION TEAM 5

Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 50 boîte 3410

18ème étage-P

1000 Brussels

To be eligible for the status, journalists have to meet the following requirements:

- They have to proof that they will not stay in Belgium permanently.
- Their gross annual income must exceed EUR 39,824.
- The request for application of the special tax legislation has to be submitted by the journalist's employer.
- The employer's headquarters must be located outside Belgium.

If the status is granted, the employee receives the following benefits:

- a maximum annual tax allowance of EUR 11,250
- income the journalist earns on days when he or she works outside Belgium is not taxable.

5 Business plan European Newsroom

A brief overview of the expenses incurred by the establishment of a newsroom equipped with modern technology and located in the centre of Brussels is shown below. As discussed in section 4.2, two locations seem advisable to ensure that the correspondents' editorial work runs as smoothly as possible. Chapter 4 also contains a description of the preferred technological equipment. The business plan is exemplary for the first three years of operation.

Table 9: EU Newsroom business plan for years 2021 through 2023.

Source: dpa

EU Newsroom business plan 2021-2023

in T EUR	plan 2021	2022	2023
revenue	0	0	0
material expenses	<u>120</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>120</u>
personnel expenses	<u>370</u>	<u>227</u>	<u>231</u>
depreciations	<u>82</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>82</u>
other operating expenses	<u>230</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>230</u>
- communication expenses	5	5	5
- travel expenses	5	5	5
- advertising expenses	25	25	25
- rent and room expenses	120	120	120
- IT maintenance and development	30	30	30
- external consulting expenses	40	40	40
- commission	0	0	0
- ancillary personnel expenses (essent. further training)	0	0	0
- administrative expenses	5	5	5
operating expenses	802	658	662
operating result	-802	-658	-662

Expenses are based on the following assumptions and information:

1) Rent and room expenses: EUR 119,600 p. a.

a) Rent Belga:

EUR 65,000 p. a.

b) Rent Résidence Palace (200 m²):

EUR 273/m², p. a.: EUR 54,600

2) Expenses for the technological equipment of the EU Newsrooms (Ströbitzer report, section 4.2.):

Expense estimate: EUR 408,000

Depreciations are spread over a period of 5 years.

3) Material requirements: AFP and dpa news services – Software as a Service

All accredited journalists in the Newsroom have access to selected news services of AFP and dpa. The optimal news supply for the EU Newsroom is described in detail in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the present study.

4) Personnel expenses.

For the initial phase of establishing the Newsroom in Brussels, we require 2.5 employees as newsroom managers and one assistant to be available on site in Brussels during the usual office hours for all organisational questions and to provide the necessary support for the correspondents. In addition to the staff on site in Brussels, roughly three further employees of dpa will intensively support the project from Hamburg. We assume that these expenses will decline during the second and third year of operation, as all processes gradually become routine and the coordination duties gradually decrease. We have taken this fact into account in the operating result in table 9.

5) Other operating expenses

- **Communication expenses**

- **Travel expenses**

For travel of dpa and/or AFP staff to Brussels for coordinating meetings and other events in the Newsroom (e.g. workshops, trainings, industry meetings, panel discussions).

- **Advertising expenses**

We need to reach potential users of the EU Newsroom and regularly keep them up to date on the development of the location. It is important to increase the number of user of the Newsroom to achieve an optimal utilisation of facilities.

In addition, we have to keep the users of the EU Newsroom informed about the workshop agenda, discussion forums and other events, such as the opening. These aims will be achieved, for instance, via producing and sending out marketing materials such as flyers or newsletters as well as the targeted approach by means of telephone or email.

- **IT maintenance and development**

For the platform and the editorial system provided to the correspondents, to ensure a reliable technological condition of the systems used.

- **External consulting expenses**

The expenses are incurred, for example, by experts who organise and lead trainings in the EU Newsroom.

- **Administrative expenses**

Per event (additional expenses for catering, technological support, video and photo editors booked to accompany an event, at usual market prices)

Financing forecast:

The expense items listed above add up to an estimated required financing amount of EUR 800,000 for the first year and expenses of approximately EUR 670,000 for each of the subsequent years. To render participation in the EU Newsroom as uncomplicated as possible, particularly for the smaller news agencies, we aim to fundraise in the coming year, for example through EU grants. We are also investigating other forms of government funding and will negotiate with the relevant bodies.

6 Conclusion and outlook

The most important outcomes of the survey of the European news agencies are summarised below:

Central outcomes:

- A majority of the questioned agencies takes a positive stance on the cooperation project of a joint EU Newsroom in Brussels. They see a lot of practical advantages for agency journalism about Europe and EU affairs as well as their own reporting from Brussels. The network idea appears particularly promising to them, with its aspects of teamwork, a mutual exchange of sources and contact partners and support with tenders. Overall, a sense of community prevails over a competitive mindset – probably because the agencies address different regional target audiences on the European continent. Last but not least, the EU itself is based on a sense of community. **The European idea of joint action for the common good is lived *en miniature* in the EU Newsroom.**
- The establishment of a joint newsroom would not only facilitate journalist work for each of the individual agencies, but the pooling of agencies has **positive effects on journalistic quality** as well. It seems justified to expect that the agencies would report *more frequently* and also *more diversely* on the EU and European affairs as a result of having greater personnel resources on site in Brussels.
- Further frequently cited benefits expected from the collaboration are access to journalistic skills such as *verification* and *fact checking* and corresponding *further training* opportunities, access to *dpa and AFP content* as well as *additional media offers* such as photo or video and a *joint network of editors*.. In other words: **Quality journalism strengthens resilience against disinformation and promotes respect for diversity of opinion.** And: **Joint training steadily improves the quality of agency journalism.**

-
- When the questioned agencies express any reservations at all, these are mostly related to scepticism with regard to the cost of the cooperation project. The rent for editorial offices in Brussels is the most frequently cited argument here. That being said, Brussels naturally is a highly attractive location with lots of practical advantages for such a joint newsroom as well.
 - A majority already attaches great importance to the contents of EU coverage today. Overall, the questioned agencies expressed that the cited strategies would enable them to give greater scope to this coverage. This would also enhance **distribution of a fact-based narrative from original sources and the heart of Europe.**
 - Several of the questioned agencies emphasise a **correlation between the relevancy of EU coverage and EU affairs for their journalism and the efforts of their country of origin to become a member of the EU:** If the country where the respective agency is seated is currently undergoing accession negotiations, for instance, this increases the significance not just of covering these developments but general EU affairs as well.
 - **The European perspective is strengthened.** Not only journalism in Europe but the object of reporting itself – the political, societal and cultural developments in Europe – is largely based on a common set of values. **Thus the project would also create a media counterweight to the propaganda of autocratic systems.**

In conclusion: A joint EU Newsroom in Brussels strengthens the network of news agencies on the European continent. There will not only be practical economic synergies due to cost sharing for spatial and personnel resources, but everyone stands to profit from the joint technological infrastructure as well. But first and foremost, it is the network idea that can be realised in the context of a joint newsroom: Skills of the journalist trade such as *research, fact checking* or *verification* can pave the way to joint journalistic standards. The majority of agencies questioned would also welcome advantages such as access to *sources*,

the usage of a *joint editorial system*, *further trading opportunities* and *general exchange between the agencies*.

Coverage of topics in and about Europe, the EU and its stakeholders could improve, particularly with regard to *diversity* of content and formats – and the *quality of agency journalism* in general stands to profit from this. Those who are not present on site in the institutions of Brussels more often than not have to rely on information filtered through the lenses of interest and lobby groups in their countries of origin. And this kind of information is likely to reinforce the point of view of these lobby groups, thus showing a part of reality, but not the big picture. For example, permanently accredited journalists from the Eastern European agencies are significantly underrepresented in Brussels. As a result, these agencies' journalism is more strongly based on secondary sources, and exclusive features about the EU and developments in Europe are seldom possible. After all, the production of such features requires specialised journalists.

In the Eastern European countries, national news agencies can play an important role in closing the existing information gap with regard to European affairs and the EU, if they report – for example – on events and issues in the European Commission. When they produce news articles, photos and videos, they will still be able to focus on the priorities of their respective countries of origin, but they will be present at the very source of the news – in Brussels. Thus news agencies can ensure the supply of their countries with fact-based coverage, enabling the public to form their own opinion about the political developments and decisions taken in Brussels. Therefore, it is of particular strategic significance to give or even expand access to sources from the immediate environment of the European Institutions for the agencies from the EU East cluster of countries. This is crucial for the agencies themselves as well as their countries of origin, since it strengthens the countries' level of democracy.

The most important benefits that the EU Newsroom will have for the agencies, but also for the EU, are summarised below in the form of theses:

-
- 1. A natural centre is being created for a multitude of news agencies with unique powers of dissemination, which will supply all of Europe with verified news from the heart of the EU.**
 - 2. A modern newsroom is being created, equipped with all the required facilities for state-of-the-art news journalism, which will particularly support news agencies from smaller states.**
 - 3. A training centre for modern news journalism is being created.**
 - 4. Quality and integrity are being promoted by pooling the news agencies, by their informal networking as well as by their joint infrastructure and trainings. A place is being created for reliable information from the EU Institutions, as well as a strong authority for all of Europe in the fight against fake news.**
 - 5. For the first ever time in the EU's history, a place is being created where news agencies from Western and Eastern Europe are collaborating at eye level.**

In a time like the present, where media-critical combat terms such as “fake news” and “lying press” sound out loud again and again in public discourse, an international editorial team reporting from a joint Newsroom in Brussels can become a strong voice from Europe, convincing through journalistic quality and strengthening the European perspective in global competition.

This is important, because there are comparable editorial strategies on the media market. Facebook, for example, is also planning to establish a newsroom. However, their criteria for including publishing houses and media outlets in this cooperation are not clear yet.²⁷ A joint EU Newsroom of European News Agencies

²⁷ The Facebook newsroom is mentioned, for instance, by the Social Media Watchblog, edition of August 27, 2020: “Last autumn, Facebook News was launched in the USA. Now, Facebook plans to launch the offer in another five countries, including Germany (a Facebook newsroom in each case).”

fortifies Europe within the global media landscape. More space is given to the European perspective on topics in and about Europe. A Facebook newsroom would be direct competition for the projected EU Newsroom. Based on the announcement of the Facebook newsroom in Germany, the target audiences of the two editorial teams would overlap:

“With the start of Facebook News in the USA, we have further intensified our collaboration with the media sector and, supported by publishing houses and our users, created a dedicated sphere for news content on Facebook. It is one of our most important targets to help publishing houses and editorial teams reach new target audiences. So far, results are promising: We have determined that 95% of hits on Facebook News occur on top of the traffic generated by the News Feed.”(Facebook 2020)²⁸

In the context of a follow-up survey of the news agencies, it would be interesting to analyse on which understanding of Europe and the EU the agencies' reporting is based. Following on from this, the question also arises if the agencies regard themselves as part of a *European public*.²⁹ It is probably safe to assume that news agencies in a joint EU editorial team, who do not just work *alongside* each other but *with* one another in a newsroom, would have a stronger tendency to regard themselves as part of a European public. Conversely, it would be interesting to examine – in the context of audience research – whether agency content from Europe and its intentions actually reach the customers and, finally, the consumers.

It cannot be the intention of this cooperation project across agencies to speak with a single voice. Instead, the main idea behind the Joint EU Newsroom is the collective and the **polyphony of European agencies**, which in turn report on a diverse Europe of many voices, thus making a valuable contribution to **quality journalism made in Europe**.

²⁸ Brown, Campbell (2020): Internationale Ausweitung von Facebook News. VP, Global News Partnerships. Facebook-Website, zit. n. <https://about.fb.com/de/news/2020/08/internationale-ausweitung-von-facebook-news/> (06.11.2020)

²⁹ On the question of the European public cf. exemplary Ruiz-Soler (2017); Eilders & Lichtenstein (2010); Pöttker & Schwarzenegger (2010); Theobalt (2019: 80–88).

7 References

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update: Trust and the Coronavirus.

(2020). Edelman. <https://www.edelman.com/research/trust-2020-spring-update/>

Boyd-Barrett, O., & Rantanen, T. (2000). European national news agencies: The end of an era or a new beginning? *Journalism*, 1(1), 86–105.

Brown, C. (2020): Internationale Ausweitung von Facebook News. VP, Global News Partnerships., zit. n. <https://about.fb.com/de/news/2020/08/internationale-ausweitung-von-facebook-news/> (06.11.2020)

Brüggemann, M., Engesser, S., Büchel, F., Humprrecht, E., & Castro, L. (2014). Hallin and Mancini Revisited: Four Empirical Types of Western Media Systems. *The Journal of Communication*, 64(6), 1037–1065.

Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa) (2016): Pressemitteilung vom 27.1.2016 verbreitet über OTS, zit. n. <https://www.presseportal.de/pm/8218/3235774> (11.11.2020)

EANA, The European Alliance of News Agencies, (o. J. a), zit. n. <https://www.newsalliance.org/members/> (10.11.2020)

EANA, The European Alliance of News Agencies, (o. J. b), zit. n. <https://www.newsalliance.org/about/> (10.11.2020)

Eilders, C. & Lichtenstein, D. (2010): Diskursive Konstruktionen von Europa. Eine Integration von Öffentlichkeits- und Identitätsforschung. In: M&K Medien und Kommunikationswissenschaft 2/2010, S. 190–207.

Castro Herrero, L., Humprrecht, E., Engesser, S., Brüggemann, M., & Büchel, F.

(2017). *Rethinking Hallin and Mancini Beyond the West: An Analysis of Media Systems in Central and Eastern Europe*. 11(27)).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322481724_Rethinking_Hallin_and_Mancini_Beyond_the_West_An_Analysis_of_Media_Systems_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2015). 25 years after communism: four models of media and politics in Central and Eastern Europe. In *Democracy and Media in Central and Eastern Europe 25 Years On* (print). Peter Lang Edition.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2019). How the Media Systems Work in Central and Eastern Europe. In E. Połńska & C. Beckett (Eds.), *Public Service Broadcasting and Media Systems in Troubled European Democracies* (pp. 259–278). Springer International Publishing.

Edelman (2018). *2018 Edelman Trust Barometer*.

<https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer/>

Gallup / Knight Foundation. (2018). *American views: Trust, media and democracy*. Gallup / Knight Foundation.

<https://www.knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-trust-media-and-democracy/>

Gehrke, L. (2020, May 27). *UK media tops the Brussels bubble*. Politico.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-media-brussels-media-bubble-european-council-european-commission/>

Haller, M. (2013 [1991]): *Das Interview*. 5. Auflage. Konstanz: UVK.

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2011). *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the*

Western World. Cambridge University Press.

Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Mellado, C., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., Coman, M., Hamada, B., Elena Hernández, M., Karadjov, C. D., Virginia Moreira, S., Mwesige, P. G., Plaisance, P. L., Reich, Z., Seethaler, J., Skewes, E. A., Vardiansyah Noor, D., & Kee Wang Yuen, E. (2011). Mapping journalism cultures across nations. *Journalism Studies*, 12(3), 273–293.

Hanitzsch, T., Van Dalen, A., & Steindl, N. (2018). Caught in the Nexus: A Comparative and Longitudinal Analysis of Public Trust in the Press. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(1), 3–23.

Hanretty, C. (2010). Explaining the De Facto Independence of Public Broadcasters. *British Journal of Political Science*, 40(1), 75–89.

Hanretty, C. (2011). *Public Broadcasting and Political Interference*. Routledge.

Harding, G. (2016, May 23). *Everything you wanted to know about the Brussels Press Corps but were afraid to ask*. Clear Europe.

<https://cleareurope.eu/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-the-brussels-press-corps-but-were-afraid-to-ask/>

Jääskeläinen, A., & Yanatma, S. (2019). *The future of national news agencies in Europe. Case study 4: Business model innovation in media-owned national news agencies*. London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Media and Communications.

Kantar Public. (2019). *Standard Eurobarometer 92. Media use in the European Union*. European Commission.

Kanter, J. (2019, April 22). The European Press Corps Cannot Cover the EU. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/04/european-press-corps-eu-fails/587083/>

Klammer, B. (2005): Empirische Sozialforschung. Eine Einführung für Kommunikationswissenschaftler und Journalisten. Konstanz: UVK.

Klossa, G. (2019). *Towards Media Sovereignty. An Industrial Media Strategy to leverage Data, Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence*. European Commission.

Kuckartz, U. (2014): Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung. 2. Auflage. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Lecheler, S. (2008). EU membership and the press: An analysis of the Brussels correspondents from the new member states. *Journalism*, 9(4), 443–464.

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company – via Internet Archive, abrufbar unter:

<https://archive.org/stream/publicopinion00lippgoog#page/n6/mode/2up/>

(11.11.2020)

Menasse, Robert (2012): *Der europäische Landbote*. Wien: Paul Zolnay.

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D. A. L., & Nielsen, R. K. (2017). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2019, June 12). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019*. Digital News Report.

<http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2019/overview-key-findings-2019/>

Nielsen, R. K., Gorwa, R., & De Cock Buning, M. (2019). *What can be done? Digital Media Policy Options for Europe (and beyond)*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/what-can-be-done-digital-media-policy-options-europe-and-beyond/>

Örnebring, H., & Conill, R. F. (2016). Outsourcing newswork. In T. Witschge, C. W. Anderson, D. Domingo, & A. Hermida (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism* (pp. 207–221). Sage Publications.

Pig, C., Sonntag, B., Vyslozil, W., Haller, P., & Forster, E. (2019). Alliance of independent news agencies in Europe 1939–2019. Independent news agencies as a motor for a free press and platform of innovation for the media and communication industry. Austria Presse Agentur. <https://gruppe.apa.at/2019/08/29/gruppe-39/>

Pöttker, H. & Schwarzenegger, C. (Hrsg.) (2010): *Europäische Öffentlichkeit und journalistische Verantwortung*. Im Auftrag des Vereins zur Förderung der publizistischen Selbstkontrolle. Köln: Herbert von Halem.

Raeymaeckers, K., Cosijn, L., & Deprez, A. (2007). Reporting the European Union. *Journalism Practice*, 1(1), 102–119.

Rantanen, T. (2020). Introduction to special section on news agencies in Europe. In: *Journalism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919883504>

Rantanen, T., Jääskeläinen, A., Bhat, R., Stupart, R., & Kelly, A. (2019). The future of national news agencies in Europe. Executive summary (p. 21). London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Media and Communications.

Rantanen, T., Jääskeläinen, A., Bhat, R., Stupart, R., Kelly, A., Einmann, M., Juntunen, L., Lauk, E., Nieminen, H., Surm, J., & Others. (2018). The Future of National News Agencies in Europe. The London School of Economics and Political Science. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/projects/news-agencies/news-agencies-exec-summary.pdf>

Ruiz-Soler, J. (2017): Gibt es eine europäische Öffentlichkeit? Forschungsstand, Befunde, Ausblicke. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Hrsg.): Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ): Europa. 67. Jahrgang, 37/2017, 11. September 2017, S. 35–40.

Schröder, K. C. (2019, February 14). What Do News Readers Really Want to Read About? How Relevance Works for News Audiences. Digital News Report. <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2019/news-readers-really-want-read-relevance-works-news-audiences/>

The HLEG (2018). Final report of the High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation. A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation. European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation>

Social Media Watchblog (2020): Online-Ausgabe des Social Media Watchblog vom 27. August 2020. [Liegt den Autoren vor.]

Steinke, I. (2012): Gütekriterien qualitativer Forschung. In: Flick, U.; von Kardoff, E. & Steinke, I. (Hrsg.) (2012): Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch. 9. Auflage. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, S. 319–331.

Theobalt, C. A. (2019): Der geforderte Seismograph. Das Feuilleton als Orientierungsgeber in den stürmischen Zeiten von Krisen und gesellschaftlichem Wandel. In der Reihe: Aktuell. Studien zum Journalismus. Band 16. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Tsfati, Y., & Ariely, G. (2014). Individual and Contextual Correlates of Trust in Media Across 44 Countries. *Communication Research*, 41(6), 760–782.

Tunstall, J. (1992). Europe as World News Leader. *The Journal of Communication*, 42(3), 84–99.

Tunstall, J. (2009). European news and multi-platform journalists in the lead. In *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* (Vol. 10, Issue 3, pp. 387–389).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884909102603>

Tworek, H. (2013). The creation of European news: news agency cooperation in interwar Europe. *Journalism Studies*, 14(5), 730–742.

UNESCO. (1953). *News Agencies, Their Structure and Operation*. Greenwood Press.

Vyslozil, W. (2014). *Group 39: History of an exceptional alliance of news agencies: Character, business and policy of independent news agencies in Europe*. APA – Austria Presse Agentur.

Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking* (DGI (2017) 09). Council of Europe.

8 Appendix

8.1 Questionnaire

1. Framework data news agencies

Name news agency:

Name of interview partner:

Position of interview partner:

Headquarters (country and city):

Revenue: (clusters to tick)

Target audience/customers: choices to tick – private media outlets, state-owned media outlets, other

Government financed: yes/no

Branch offices (domestic/abroad (number and locations))

Number of employees: (small, medium, large – to tick/clusters)

Share of female employees:

Working language(s):

Other:

Reporting language(s):

Text service: yes/no

Photo service: yes/no

Video service: yes/no

Organisation chart of the editorial team, incl. departments:

Interview guidelines

Basic understanding:

- Research question of the study: What should an EU Newsroom for all European news agencies look like?

- Research question of the interviews: What should an EU Newsroom look like from the perspective of the European news agencies' CEOs?

8.2 Guidelines and thematic clusters

Topics & questions: [encoding instructions; guidelines for interviewers]

Thematic cluster I: Status quo of the news agencies

- How do you organise your information flow about the EU today?
 - Sources for EU topics?
 - How is research being conducted?
 - Permanent, dedicated staff for EU topics?
 - Do you have staff or free lancers in Brussels today? (If so, how many?)
 - Do you have a permanent category for EU topics?
 - How much space do you devote to EU reporting?

Recommendation: free field, open answers expected.

Thematic cluster II: Questions to determine demand

- Why is such a European Newsroom useful for you?
 - What economic synergies do you expect for your agency?
 - What would be the impact of the EU Newsroom on journalistic quality? (fact checking, verification)
 - How would EU coverage in your country change? (diversity)
 - Do you expect new/other target audiences?
 - To what extent does this increase the attractiveness of your agency as an employer for junior journalists?
 - To what extent does a EU Newsroom strengthen your renown in global competition?
- Would you use such an infrastructure?
 - Tick: yes/no
 - If no, why?
 - Worries regarding independence of the news agency
 - Financial reservations
 - Reservations regarding the EU
 - Spatial distance to Brussels

Recommendation: answer choices to tick, specify spectrum of opinions.

Thematic cluster III: Outlook: Requests the interviewees have with regard to an EU-Newsroom

- What would be the preconditions for you to use the European newsroom?
 - Top-5-Requests (number priorities from 1– 5)
 - joint network of correspondents
 - stable internet connection and modern technological equipment
 - joint editorial management system
 - access to further media services (photo, video)
 - access to offers in further languages
 - mutual exchange with other agencies
 - access to EU network
 - international working environment
 - opportunities for training and further education of our employees
 - security and emergency concept for EU Newsroom
 - accommodation and catering offers
 - collaboration at eye level
 - journalistic independence vis-à-vis the other agencies and the EU
 - other

- Closing question: What else is important for you? What else is on your mind?

8.3 Handout for the interviewers

CEO-Interviews

Handout and checklist: before and during the interview situation

Completing the questionnaire

1. Clarify: Make cover page and questions available beforehand?
2. Have all the questions on framework data been answered? If not complete, send a reminder
3. Were the different questioning principles understood? Ticking vs. Top-5-Ranking

Guidelines for interviewer (Peter Kropsch)

1. It is mandatory to go through all thematic clusters – if necessary, in writing after the interview.
2. The questions within a thematic cluster can be asked in any sequence, if possible, all aspects should be mentioned.
3. Please note: As the interviewer, take a neutral stance and refrain from answering the questions yourself 😊
4. Keep track of time, but only interrupt interlocutors if absolutely necessary.
5. Video conferencing: While it is face to face, transmission of facial expressions, gestures and sound is delayed. Pause after every question.

Guidelines for the supervisor of the interviews (Christiane Düsterfeld)

1. Check at the beginning of the interview: Do recording and sound work?
2. Recommendation: Note time specifications for the recording of important statements. This will help selecting key statements that are to be quoted verbatim in the study.
3. Also indicate disruptions of the interview with time specifications in the minutes (interruptions of the interview/the recording due to ringing mobile phones, technical disruptions on Zoom, etc.)

4. Have notepaper ready. Definitively make a brief note of any interesting new thematic aspects mentioned, even if the interview does not go into further detail.

8.4 Category system and encoding instructions

Basic understanding:

- **Research question of the interviews: What should an EU Newsroom look like from the perspective of the European news agencies’ CEOs?**

Thematic cluster	Main categories	Subcategories	Instructions for encoders
<p>Thematic cluster I</p> <p><i>Target:</i></p> <p>Determine the news agencies’ status quo</p> <p><i>Central question:</i></p> <p>How do you organize your information flow about the EU today?</p>	<p>Information flow</p>	<p>Sources for EU topics</p>	<p>Encode descriptions related to the question how agencies get their information about the EU (sources). Examples: First-hand information/direct quotes from EU politicians; EU press office: press releases, press conferences; content from other news agencies; other media; online media such as social networks and blogs; other</p>

		Research	Encode descriptions of how agencies research EU topics. Examples: On-site research, appointment journalism, press releases, agency content, telephone research, online research, other
		Permanent staff for EU topics	If yes, encode statements on number and function of permanent staff (e.g. correspondents, reporters, specialists)
		Freelancers contributors in Brussels	If yes, encode statements on number of freelance contributors
		Permanent category for EU topics	If yes, encode number and names of EU-related categories

		Relevancy of EU coverage	Encode answers to the question how much space is devoted to EU coverage: format, frequency and extent of EU reporting
<p>Thematic cluster II</p> <p><i>Target 1:</i></p> <p><i>Identify demand for an EU Newsroom</i></p> <p><i>Question 1:</i></p> <p>Why is such a European newsroom useful for you?</p> <p><i>Target 2:</i></p>	<p>Benefits and advantages of an EU Newsroom</p>	Economic synergies	Encode statements about positive economic effects. Examples: Opportunities for cost and headcount reductions, rent for rooms, infrastructure, administration
		Impact of journalistic quality	Encode statements on positive effects on journalistic workflow. Example: Quality improvements, fact checking, verification, 4-eyes principle

<p><i>Clarify which reservations might (still) exist</i></p> <p><i>Would you use such an infrastructure?</i></p>		Diversity of journalistic reporting	<p>Encode statements related to the question to what extent the diversity of journalistic reporting increases. Examples: Different or more interlocutors, new topics, sources on EU topics</p>
		New target audiences	<p>Encode statements on potential new target audiences</p>
		Attractiveness as an employer	<p>Encode statements regarding the question to what extent the attractiveness of the agency increases – for existing, but also for future employees</p>
		Renown in global competition	<p>Encode statements on the agency's renown – this means all</p>

			positive effects (excluding information on attractiveness as an employer), e.g. increase of the agency's relevancy within the global media landscape
	Reservations with regard to a EU Newsroom	Worries concerning independence as a news agency	If yes, encode statements that show that they see threats for the agency's independence, such as the EU seeking to influence content, e.g. selection, analysis, evaluation
		Financial reservations	If chosen, encode statements expressing fear of financial disadvantages
		Reservations with regard to the EU	If chosen, encode statements expressing reservations with regard to the EU,

			such as the EU's power, criticism related to the EU's structure and EU politics; encode statements that express that they don't want to be seen as taking the EU's side, etc.
		Spatial distance to Brussels	If chosen, encode statements on spatial distance, the agency's location is too far away from Brussels or there is a perception of spatial distance to the EU
Thematic cluster III: <i>Target: Identify requests the interview partners have to the EU Newsroom</i>		Joint network of correspondents	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request a joint European network of correspondents
		Stable internet connection and modern	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request

<p><i>Questions:</i></p> <p>What would be the preconditions for you to use the European newsroom?</p> <p>Top-5-Requests</p>	<p>Preconditions for using an EU Newsroom</p>	<p>technological equipment</p>	<p>a stable internet connection and/or modern technological equipment (hardware and software)</p>
		<p>Joint editorial management system</p>	<p>Encode statements suggesting that agencies request a joint editorial management system</p>
		<p>Access to further media services (photo, video)</p>	<p>Encode statements suggesting that agencies request access to further media services, which they are not able to offer yet (photo, video, etc.)</p>
		<p>Access to offers in further languages</p>	<p>Encode statements suggesting that agencies request access to further language offers, which they are not able to offer yet</p>

		Mutual exchange with other agencies	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request mutual exchange with other agencies
		Access to the EU network	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request access to the EU network, e.g. contact with experts, interlocutors and EU journalists in Brussels
		International working environment	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request an international working environment
		Opportunities for training and further education of our employees	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request opportunities for further learning/training

			which they are not able to offer themselves
		Security and emergency concept for EU Newsroom	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request a security and emergency concept for the EU Newsroom
		Accommodation and catering offers	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request accommodation and/or catering offers
		Collaboration at eye level	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request mutual collaboration at eye level
		Journalistic independence vis-à-vis the EU	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request to keep their journalistic

			independence vis-à-vis the EU
		Journalistic independence vis-à-vis the other agencies	Encode statements suggesting that agencies request to keep their journalistic independence as an individual agency
		Other	All aspects that cannot be assigned to the subcategories mentioned. Encode each new aspect individually in a corresponding new subcategory.

<p>Closing of the interview</p> <p><i>Target:</i></p> <p>Determine further aspects that have not been mentioned yet</p> <p><i>Question:</i></p> <p>To conclude: What else is important for you?</p>			<p>If answered, assign statements to subcategories and encode according to the instructions provided</p>
--	--	--	--

9 Imprint

A home for Europe's agencies

Feasibility study on the establishment of a Joint Newsroom of European News Agencies in Brussels

This study was supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.



Hamburg, December 2020

Editor: **dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH**

CEO and head of the study: Peter Kropsch

In collaboration with

Christiane Düsterfeld

Stefanie Backs

Dr. Cora Theobalt

Wiebke Wetschera

With friendly support from

Thomas Cronenberg

Christine Buhagiar

Susanne Goldstein

Atte Jääskeläinen

Daniela Jung

Thorsten Matthies

Etienne Miessen

Patrick T. Neumann

Vicente Poveda

René Schmidt

Anja Stein

Stefan Ströbitzer

Title design: Annett Schuft

Proofreading: Silvia Peper-Sengstock

Mittelweg 38, 20148 Hamburg, Germany

Phone: +49 40 4113-0, Email: info@dpa.com

Registered in the Hamburg Trade Register

HRB 68431, VAT ID: DE 118543436