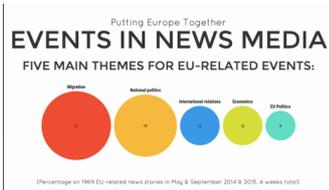




Based on the WP5 "The role of media representations of the EU and youth active citizenship", team leaders Pina Lalli (University of Bologna) and Jakub Macek (Masaryk University) The authors would like to thank the team leaders in the consortium who provided the datasets for the data which were collected by their team to be used in this presentation.

The analysis of the news media landscape looked for similarities and differences in the coverage of European affairs across 7 different countries and 14 different national media outlets in 4 periods in 2014 and 2015. **Three questions have been crucial:**

1. Do national media show interest in European Affairs?
2. How and on which issues do they talk about European Union?
3. How and on which issues do they talk about European Union?



**The rise and fall of European issues**  
Media coverage of European issues tends to be cyclical and to peak during events that national journalism sees as characterized by a specific European dimension.

**The lack of a shared European news agenda**  
The national news media generally tend to report EU issues through a national point of view; more domestic politicians than EU political representatives: a wider problem of EU visibility.

The **EU does not appear as a public space** where specific actors debate on specific issues on the interests of European citizens, but it tends to take the form of a taken-for-granted background against which debates take place.

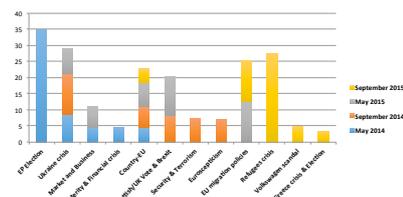
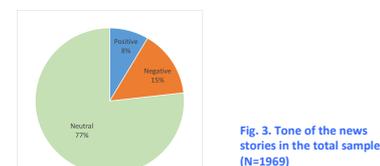
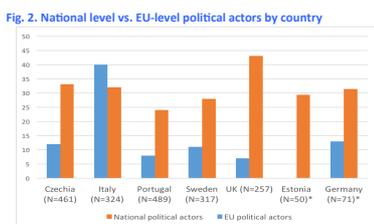


Fig. 1. Five main issues for each period (in 7 countries: Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, UK, Sweden) (% N= 1969)



### What youth in mainstream news media?

**TWO POLES.** Youth are only rarely mentioned in connection with European affairs, and their presence is associated only to a limited variety of issues, like education and unemployment. Young people are mostly depicted as:

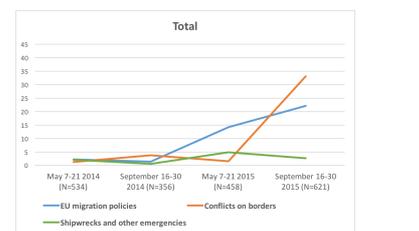
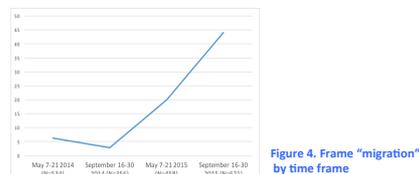
- (a) **A vulnerable collective actor:** the main victim of the economic crisis, prone to having problems with unemployment, housing, lifestyle, crime.
- (b) **Non-active and politically apathetic, except for isolated cases.** Thus even when rarely evoked as voters, they are considered "bad voters", under the influence of extreme populism.

In contrast, youth can be evoked in the European perspective as:

- (c) **The main beneficiaries of the most successful EU programmes.** The EU basis of education is valued positively especially in the Italian and Czech media. However, this positive view may develop into an image of **students-as-tourists**, beneficial to national economies.
- (d) **The only collective actor who opens a social window on the EU:** active when they participate to some solidarity volunteering activities (i.e. in the migration crisis), passive as the beneficiaries of youth policies in employment or education.

### The rise of the MIGRATION CRISIS

The debate on refugee and, more in general, the so-called "migration crisis" or "refugee crisis" is the most prevalent and spatially universal theme dominating the samples collected from 2015. Between May and September 2015 the "migration crisis" becomes more and more relevant for the EU member states and EU integration.

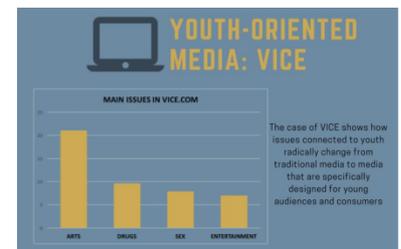


### DIFFERENT YOUTH IMAGES IN NEW FORMS OF JOURNALISM

Youth-oriented media such as the hybrid journalism of **VICE** (examined in six of its national-language websites – Czech, English (UK), German, Italian, Portuguese and Swedish), together with the television and radio programmes selected by each national team, provide a very different picture of young people:

#### REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH'S INTERESTS IN HYBRID JOURNALISM

- (a) An often unrecognized **collective force that drives the West forward:** especially in relation to new technologies and innovation, entrepreneurship and start-ups.
- (b) Growing **disenfranchised from and disillusioned with mainstream politics but interested in other forms of participation** (i.e. protest and dissent actions; volunteering).
- (c) Generally **interested in environmental and cultural issues and active** within these realms, especially oriented towards music, cinema and arts.
- (d) A **global (or rather glocal) community** of workers, consumers and travelers that goes beyond the Europe an borders



#### WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE?

While traditional media devote an almost irrelevant space to youth and youth culture, new but consumerist hybrid sources present young people as active, resourceful and relevant actors.

#### TACKLE THE DUALISM BETWEEN POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The mutual love-hate relationship between traditional news media and youth could be a symptom of an unsolved issue regarding the way we conceive political engagement. Marketers working for new media companies have understood that young consumers are a propulsive force with strong interests in technological innovation, mobility and cultural consumption. Thus, they provide models of shifting communities to whom they can belong. Simply, they provide representations of possible ephemeral commitment, since they are not required to construct a public debate. If we are interested in enhancing a sphere for critical thinking, shaping and acting, we have to give room to youth participation in all its forms and effervescence.