



Eastern Europe Studies Centre



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**FIXING EU (IN)
VISIBILITIES IN THE SIX
EAP COUNTRIES:** MORE
PROACTIVE EU EMBASSIES,
BETTER-DECIPHERED
ASSISTANCE

POLICY PAPER

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Abstract

The visibility of the EU lies in its ability to carry out effective public diplomacy. The data discussed in this policy paper make it clear that the EU has achieved some degree of success in building its image, which varies from country to country in the EaP region. However, a reversal in public perception of the EU cannot be ruled out either, as it may occur due to local political dynamics in the eastern neighborhood. The recommendations presented in this policy paper address the current *modus operandi* in the field of EU public diplomacy by analyzing, in particular, the work of EU embassies and the local popularization of EU-funded projects. To diminish the effects of the existing shortcomings, the policy paper suggests, the EU should become more involved and connected to the realities of the EaP countries and their public. Right now, the EU may be the most trusted international actor in the region, but to maintain sustainable visibility, it should be more proactive and inventive, the paper suggests.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) has always longed for its efforts to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the surrounding regions to be duly appreciated. However, the positive self-image of the EU does not always coincide with the opinions others form about it. Therefore, the way the EU is viewed beyond its borders, even in nearby regions such as the eastern neighborhood, can be full of surprises. Its perception and assessment tend to fluctuate. The changing image of the EU mainly depends on its foreign policy actions and how they are subsequently communicated to the outside world. In this sense, the EU relies heavily on the European External Action Service (EEAS)¹ and the EU delegations², seen by scholars as “quasi-embassies”³, which, since 2011⁴, have been the main *arm of EU public diplomacy*.

To a large extent, the EU’s geographic proximity to regions where it operates indicates greater potential for achieving a higher degree of visibility, which is correspondingly diminishing in more remote regions (unless those are ruled by liberal democracies such as the UK, the US, Canada, Japan, etc.). This means that the EU should find it less difficult to persuade the Eastern European region next door. Yet, despite the enlargement of the EU (2004–2007) and the establishment of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009 reducing the physical and political distance between the EU and the region, Russia’s confrontational stance and the democratic inconsistencies of local political regimes turned the region into a hot spot on the EU’s foreign policy agenda. As a result, the visibility of the EU in the eastern neighborhood has since been rather volatile. To address these structural shortcomings, this policy paper aims to provide evidence-based findings that advocate for concrete practical solutions to improve the EU’s image beyond its eastern borders. The existing public communication style that is based mainly on reporting on the activities carried out is clearly insufficient to remain relevant, visible and attractive. This policy paper evaluates the “diplomatic capital”⁵ of the EU by assessing its authority and reputation (*reflected in the surveys*), which derives from the competences exercised by the EU delegations (*reflected on the webpages*) that ultimately build the visibility of the EU. In addition, a wealth of data is presented to highlight the policy areas in which the EU spends its money in the region. To this

end, the policy paper considers specialized webpages on EU-funded projects in the EaP countries, which shed light on the motivation for EU assistance at country level.

The proposed angle of studying the visibility of the EU in the Eastern neighborhood involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative tools. From a quantitative point of view, the policy paper carries out a careful analysis of the surveys conducted in the six EaP countries in 2016–2020 in order to see the evolution of local EaP perceptions of the EU. Furthermore, it is analyzed whether the projects carried out by the EU in the EaP countries are reflected in the public perception of the bloc. The qualitative method employed here is the content analysis of the official websites of the six EU delegations in the EaP countries in order to investigate their communication capacities and ambitiousness. Similarly, the webpages of EU-funded projects in the six EaP countries were also subjected to a qualitative analysis to describe the trends and particularities of EU assistance.

The policy paper is divided into three parts. It begins by describing the attitudes of the Eastern European public towards EU values, geopolitical orientation and domestic reforms⁶. Then, as a second step, the policy paper looks at the ways in which the EU interacts with the public spheres in the six EaP countries through its delegations. It then outlines the particularities of EU-funded projects and the reasons behind them, evaluating the aggregated data from the existing EU-related webpages. In the third and final part, the policy paper presents the main conclusions and articulates a series of recommendations aimed at improving the public communication of the EU and boosting the visibility of the bloc and its projects.

1. Perceptions of the EU in the EaP countries

Since the founding of the EaP initiative in 2009, the EU has developed increasingly differentiated relations with its six eastern neighbors, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The intensity and content of EU public diplomacy deployed in these countries varies according to several underlying rationales: (a) *the scale of ambition of the bilateral agreements*; (b) *the Europeanism of local elites as evidenced by the progress of reforms*; (c) *the strategic calculation of the EU to engage with each of the EaP countries*. These considerations can be inferred from the actions that the EU adopted towards its eastern neighbors. The simultaneous deepening of the diversification and specialization of the EU's approaches in the EaP region determines the degree of achievable visibility and the depth of the imprint it can leave on public opinion in these Eastern European societies. This section of the policy paper assesses the regional public perception of the EU in terms of the following aspects: *shared values, trust, geopolitical preferences and perceived effectiveness of aid and communication channels*.

The EaP surveys examined below were conducted in the period from 2016 to 2020 and ensure a certain degree of uniformity between and, therefore, comparability of the six EaP countries.⁷ To understand how far the EU can go with promoting its values and image, it is crucial to identify the closeness between the values assigned to the EU and those perceived as common to the local audiences in the EaP countries. Using the data provided by the analyzed surveys, the policy paper develops the indicator of “value convergence” (described in the next sub-section) between the EU and the EaP region (see Tables 1 and 2). Value convergence is a brand new indicator that allows to determine the degree of ideational compatibility (at the level of aspiration, values, ideology, etc.) between the public in the EaP country and its perception of the EU.

Value convergence

The highest compatibility with EU values in 2017 was observed in Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan (in nine areas), followed by Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus (in seven to eight areas; see Table 1). The greatest convergence of values of these countries with the EU was detected in the fields of peace and security, economic prosperity (except Belarus), the absence of corruption (except Georgia) and individual freedoms and social justice (except Georgia). The indicator of value convergence is calculated by comparing the proportion of support for the values (ideas, aspirations) attributed to the EU with the individual alignment of the public with the same values. Such

juxtaposition allows to determine whether or not the public is close to the axis of EU values. The assumption behind this is that the closer the public feels to EU values, the stronger their desire to achieve that specific aspiration or “golden standard”. At the same time, there are areas where the EaP public views itself closer to certain values/aspirations than the EU, such as peace and security (Belarus and Ukraine) and absence of corruption (Moldova). On the other hand, there are political areas in which convergence with the EU is very weak, namely respect for other cultures (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), freedom of religion (Ukraine), freedom of the media (Belarus, Georgia).

Table 1. Ratio of value convergence between the EU and the EaP, 2017

Values	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Peace, security, stability	1	1	0,7	1	1	0,9
Economic prosperity	2	2	6,1	2	1	2
Human rights	3	2	2	2	2	2
Rule of law	3	2	2	2	3	3
Honesty, transparency	3	3	1	2	4	2
Absence of corruption	2	3	3	10	0,8	2
Individual freedom	4	4	2	8	6	4
Equality and social justice	4	4	2	13	4	4
Freedom of speech	5	4	4	3	3	9
Democracy	7	6	4	5	5	8
Respect for other cultures, minorities	8	7	13	67	11	34
Freedom of religion	10	16	16	5	7	25
Freedom of the media	13	13	27	38	11	70

Source: Author's compilations and estimations of the indicator of value convergence between the EU and the EaP, based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project (<https://www.euneighbours.eu/>).

The indicator of value convergence (Tables 1 and 2) is calculated by dividing the personal values of the EaP audience in each of the six countries by the values assigned to the EU. The higher the number, the less the convergence between the personal values of an EaP country's public and those associated with the EU. Furthermore, numbers below 1 show that certain values are perceived as more characteristic of the EaP countries than the EU. Therefore, the interval from 0 to 1 suggests that values are perceived as closer to an EaP country than the EU; the interval from 1 to 5 means a stronger convergence; from 6 to 20 a moderate one; and 20 and higher, a weak convergence. (The survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence is provided in the Annex).

In the space of three years, the convergence of values remains as high as in 2017 only in the case of Armenia (in nine areas), followed by Azerbaijan and Belarus (in eight areas). Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine have the fewest areas where the values adopted by their societies overlap with the values attributed to the EU. The developments in Armenia could be correlated with the liberalization of public space after the democratic changes generated by the so-called Velvet Revolution, led by Nikol Pashinyan⁸. The differences between Azerbaijan and Belarus on the one hand, and the Association Trio (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) on the other may be partly due to the fact that the former have a longer distance to travel to catch up with the EU. Therefore, public diplomacy carried out by the EU in Belarus

Table 2. Ratio of value convergence between the EU and the EaP, 2020

Values	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Peace, security, stability	1	2	0,7	1	1	0,9
Economic prosperity	2	3	6	1	2	2
Human rights	3	2	1	2	2	2
Rule of law	4	3	2	2	4	3
Honesty, transparency	4	1	2	2	4	2
Absence of corruption	3	3	1	6	1	2
Individual freedom	5	6	2	13	7	4
Equality and social justice	3	3	3	8	5	3
Freedom of speech	4	3	4	3	4	13
Democracy	8	6	4	6	4	11
Respect for other cultures, minorities	6	16	16	25	9	11
Freedom of religion	11	6	10	6	8	16
Freedom of the media	43	10	67	40	15	24

Source: Author's compilations and estimations of the indicator of value convergence between the EU and the EaP, based on the surveys conducted within EU NEIGHBOURS east project (<https://www.euneighbours.eu/>).

and Azerbaijan could have a greater impact on public perception than in the more Europeanized countries of the EaP, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In other words, it is much easier for the EU to achieve better results in terms of promoting values in the first group than in the second, more democratized group, where the EU could be faced with more challenges to make further gains. The current level of convergence with EU values in the latter is among the highest in Eastern Europe. Compared to others, Georgia seems a clear outlier in terms of convergence with EU values, which has slightly decreased. This could be due to repeated political crises⁹ that provide a fertile ground for further polarization, as well as the further radicalization of Eurosceptic and illiberal fringe groups. A lower convergence with respect to freedom of the media is detected in the same countries as in 2017, with the new addition of Armenia. This could be partly explained by the low confidence in the media on the ground compared with the EU levels (see Table 2).

Trust in the EU and others

In recent years, the sense of trust in the EU has generally improved in the EaP region. Success in building trust abroad has a huge effect on the EU's ability to shape its own image, which can build reputation and increase visibility. This subsection aims to assess trust in the EU in isolation and in comparison with other international actors present in the region due to proximity, geopolitical reflexes or both.

As shown by Figure 1, Ukraine and Moldova have experienced the most qualitative changes in their trust towards the EU. The former saw trust in the EU grow from 36% in 2017 to 46% in 2020, while in the latter, trust in the EU has reached 63% in 2020 from 54% three years earlier. On the other hand, a decrease in trust is observed in Belarus and Azerbaijan, which became more Eurosceptic in 2020 (see Figure 1).

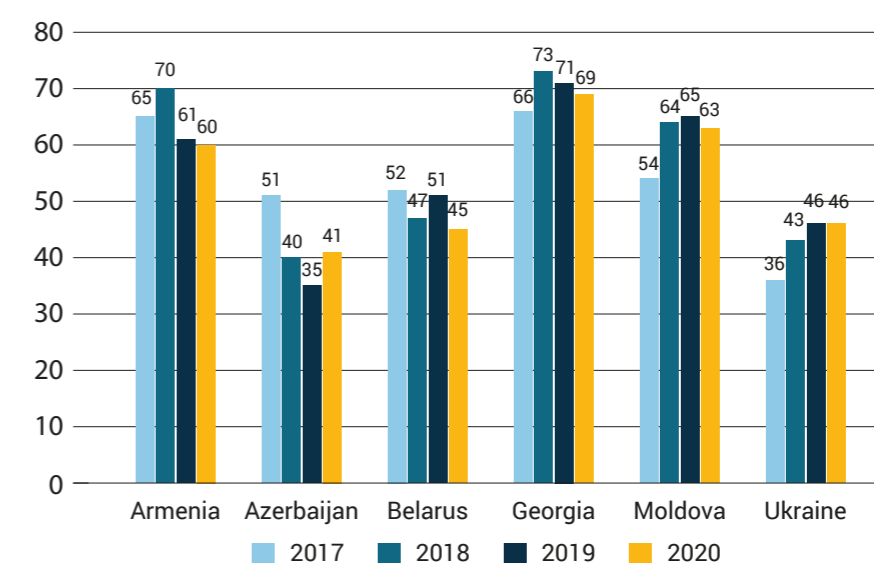


Figure 1. Trust in the EU, 2017-2020, %

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Comparatively speaking, the EU has a more favorable image than other international actors that are active in Eastern Europe. This is due to its geopolitical mandate or agenda, making the EU the most trusted international actor in the six EaP countries. Growth in this positive trend has occurred only in countries with Association Agreements with the EU, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Although the EU remains the most trusted international actor in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus, the level of trust decreased in 2020 compared with 2017. Paradoxically, despite the fact that Belarus and Armenia are members of the Eurasian Economic Union, these two countries trust the Russian-leaning organization less than the EU, with which they are currently the most incompatible in the EaP region (along with Azerbaijan). The poorer perception of the Eurasian Economic Union shows that the EU

is capable of capturing sympathy even in the ranks of rival geopolitical organizations (see Figures 2 and 3).

EU assistance: Awareness versus effectiveness

Another important driver in achieving greater visibility is familiarity with EU aid, which represents the measurable dimension of the EU's soft power in the vicinity. Consequently, visibility limitations in the EaP region can be inferred from the perception of EU support seen through the prism of awareness and effectiveness. From the figures included in this subsection it appears that the greatest familiarity with EU aid best corresponds with the perception of its effectiveness is in Armenia and Georgia. EU support is less visible in Azerbaijan and Belarus (less than 50%). In

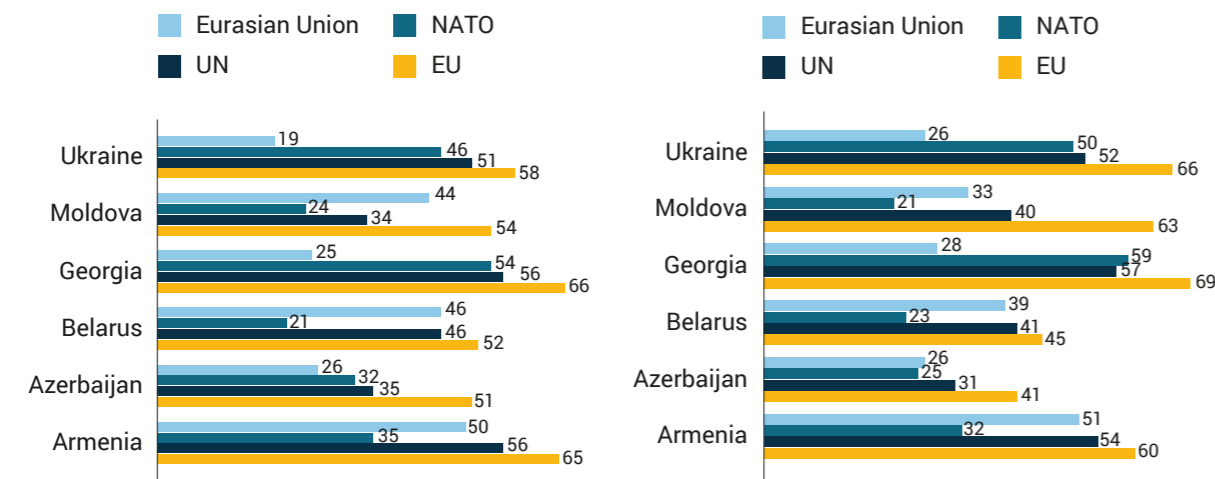


Figure 2. Trust in international organizations in 2017 (left);
Figure 3. Trust in international organizations in 2020 (right), %

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

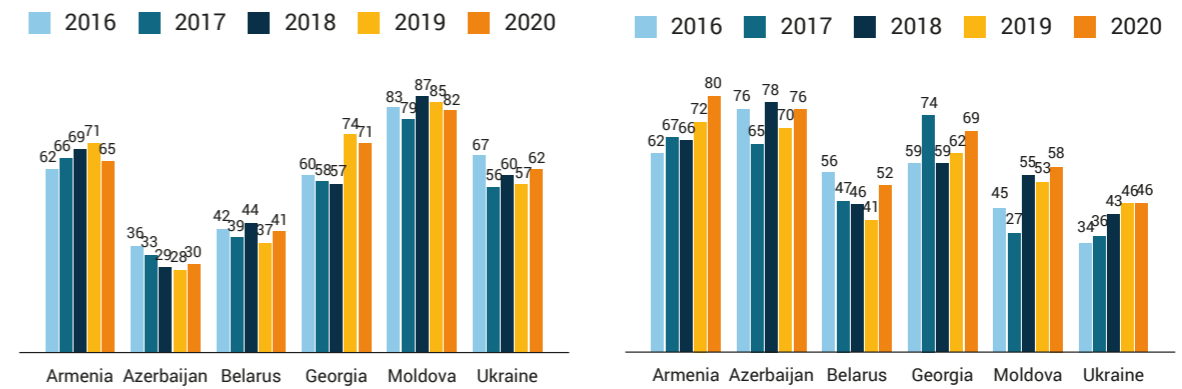


Figure 4. Awareness of EU assistance in the six EaP (left);
Figure 5. Effectiveness of EU assistance perceived in the six EaP (right), 2016-2020, %

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Moldova and Ukraine, the population is familiar with the support provided by the EU, but evaluates its effectiveness less favorably than others in the region, except Belarus (see Figures 4 and 5).

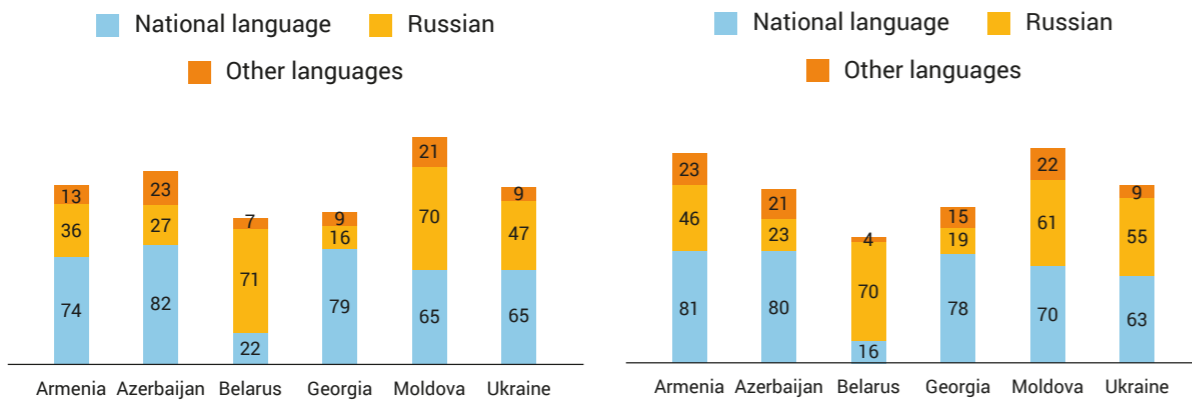
The language of EU communication

Whether public diplomacy leads to greater visibility or, on the contrary, hinders it depends on the discourse and how widespread it is. Accordingly, this subsection looks at the languages preferred by EaP audiences for information about the EU and the sources from which they seek it. Both of these aspects indicate why the EU may or may not have difficulties in promoting its image in the region and, in turn, suggest the areas where some changes in EU communication would bring better results.

EU communication, mainly in national languages, is favored in Armenia, Azerbaijan and

Georgia. The country with the greatest predilection for information in Russian in the EaP region is Belarus, followed by Moldova. At the same time, there is a somewhat similar preference for national and Russian languages in Moldova and Ukraine. These trends have not changed dramatically between 2017 and 2020, except in Armenia and Ukraine, where the Russian language increased its share of favorability.

The main source of information about the EU in the six EaP countries has been television, with the internet as the second. This is true even of Azerbaijan, where online communication – and social media especially – is closely controlled by the state.¹⁰ Moldova is the only country in the region where the internet is as important a source of news about the EU as television. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate that in just three years from 2017, the internet and social media have become the main channels of communication about the EU. Equally important seems to be the exchange between



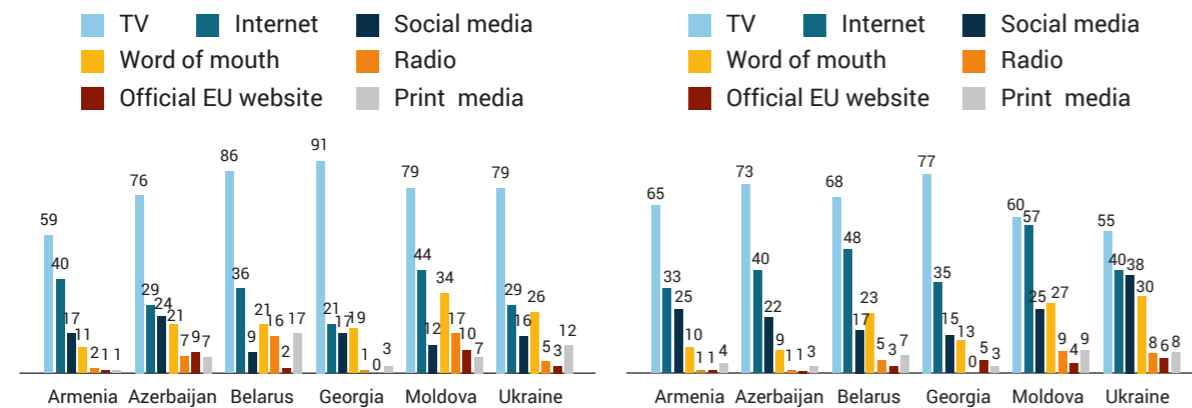
Figures 6-7. Language of the favorite media in 2017 (left) and 2020 (right), %

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

people (“word of mouth”) on the actions of the EU, which is at the same time one of the most subjective and uncontrollable forms of information. Alongside communication through printed material or radio, the least used way of obtaining information about the EU is the official EU websites. The latter also refers to the websites of the EU delegations

in the six EaP countries, raising the question of how well the EU is able to use its own on-line communication tools.

The main conclusions of this section are that the EU has both advantages and limitations in the field of public communication in the eastern neighborhood. *First*, the EU can suc-



Figures 8-9. Sources of information on the EU in 2017 (left) and 2020 (right), %

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

cessfully promote its values due to the high convergence with the value set of the EaP region public. However, it can make more progress in the less Europeanized of EaP countries, which have more to do to “catch up” with the EU in terms of democratization. *Second*, the EU is perceived as more trustworthy than other international organizations. The degree of trust in the EU is higher than in the Eurasian Economic Union even among the member states of the latter, such as Belarus and Armenia. *Third*, even when EU aid is familiar to the public, its effectiveness is perceived as lower in the associated countries (Moldova and Ukraine) than in others (Armenia or Azerbaijan). *Fourth*, although national languages are important throughout the region (except Belarus), Russian-language information sources are also favored in Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine. *Finally*, information about the EU is mainly received via the internet, social media and “word of mouth”, and the official EU websites (including those belonging to delegations of the EU in the region) appear to be extremely unpopular.

2. The vehicles of EU visibility in the EaP region

EU visibility derives, first and foremost, from its own communication and actions. Thus, the EU's storytelling to foreign audiences is largely based on the quality of public diplomacy. The EEAS Handbook, which guides the communication of EU delegations, defines public diplomacy as the effort of promotion and public persuasion through communication tools aimed at different audiences, with the view to improving public perception or awareness.¹¹ Due to their diplomatic status, EU delegations represent the eyes, ears and voice of the EU in third countries. Alongside other activities carried out by the delegations (such as political dialogue, project implementation, reporting to headquarters in Brussels, etc.), "they play a crucial role in communicating values, policies and results of EU projects"¹². They have a very specific task of "explaining the EU and promoting a positive image"¹³ of it as a democratizing force, donor, trading partner, promoter of human rights and provider of security. In particular, the EEAS has suggested to the EU delegations that they establish local communication strategies adapted to local audiences (their linguistic particularities) and contexts (their political situation).

EU delegations as performers of public diplomacy

As in other parts of the world, EU delegations also operate in the six EaP countries. The heads of the six EU delegations in this region are predominantly male diplomats, with the exception of the EU ambassador to Armenia¹⁴. So far, they have been showing a varying appetite for local visibility, which also reflects the degree of openness of local governments towards the EU and the geopolitical ambition of bilateral agreements. Therefore, with or without a pro-EU government in office, the EU delegations keep to the limitations set by bilateral agreements. As a result, they are involved in almost all areas of public diplomacy in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, compared to a more selective approach in Armenia, Belarus

and Azerbaijan. Heads of EU delegations deployed to partner countries (the Association Trio, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) have more confidently engaged in forthright public communication on the progress of the reforms. Taking these aspects into account, this subsection of the policy paper analyzes the activity of the EU delegations in terms of their interaction with local political dynamics and the public sphere.

The legal effects of the Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine serve as a confidence booster for the EU delegations to adopt a more resolute public communication approach, which may even include criticism towards the quality of reform implementation by the local governments (Georgia¹⁵, Moldova¹⁶ and Ukraine¹⁷). In fact, the EU Delegation in Armenia can also carry out active public diplomacy due to its favorable political environment stemming from Nikol Pashinyan's continued rule since 2018¹⁸ and the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), in force since March 2021. In Azerbaijan, the EU Delegation prefers to engage with the public in non-political sectors, handing over the responsibility for communication on sensitive issues – such as the tensions in the aftermath of the Second Karabakh War in relations with Armenia – to Brussels (the European Commission, EEAS etc.).¹⁹ Against the structural constraints caused by the low profile of the bilateral relations, the EU Delegation in Belarus has stepped beyond the bounds of its actual influence and endangered its diplomatic status after issuing a diplomatic note that condemned²⁰ the prosecution of the opposition and large-scale violations of the human rights since the summer of 2020. The withdrawal of Belarus from the EaP initiative (June 2021), followed by the deci-

sion to suspend the Readmission Agreement (September 2021) in reaction to the EU sanctions on the regime of Alexander Lukashenko, affects the activity the EU Delegation in Minsk and its public diplomacy efforts.²¹

The table below shows the intensity of the work carried out by the EU delegations, using simple benchmarks ("yes", "partial" and "no") to assess performance, as well as three colors (green, yellow and orange) to identify where EU delegations are showing more or less ambition (see Table 3). Nine aspects of the public communication of EU delegations are divided into two blocks and examined separately. The first block addresses the EU delegations' structure and content: (i) contacts of the press officer/departments; (ii) the inclusion of the press attaché in their communication efforts; (iii) the use of the national language together with English in public communication; (iv) the availability of information in Russian in communication by the national press departments. The second focuses on the EU delegations' ambitiousness: (v) the personal involvement of the heads of the EU delegations in the public communication; (vi) the activity of their national press departments; (vii) attention to the situation in Russia in their communication. The content of the webpages scrutinized here includes the information published in the period between 1 January and 12 September 2021 (see Table 3).

The findings compiled in the table above help to define and analyze two characteristics of the public diplomacy carried out by the EU delegations in the eastern neighborhood: (i) the presence of the communication departments (*structure*) and (ii) the extension of the public communication of the delegations of the EU as a whole (*ambitiousness*).

Table 3. Public diplomacy at EU delegations in the six EaP countries

	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Structure						
1. Explicit contacts of the Press Officer (name, phone number, email)	Yes	Partial	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes
2. Press Attaché	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
3. Press-releases combining English and national language	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Availability of the Russian language in communication	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ambitiousness						
5. Statements by the Heads and members of EU Delegation (Jan-Sept 2021)	0	0	1	16	1	2
6. Information Published only by the Press Departments of the EU delegations (Jan-Sept 2021)	25 out of total 55 (45 %)	22 out of total 61 (36 %)	6 out of total 64 (9 %)	44 out of total 84 (52 %)	18 out of total 49 (36 %)	10 out of total 64 (15 %)
7. Statements on the situation in Russia	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

Source: Author's compilation based on the information available on the webpages of EU delegations in the six EaP countries, for the period from 1 January to 12 September 2021. The colors used in this table describe the intensity or extension of the EU delegations' activity, where green means large, yellow means medium and orange means limited.

Structure and content: Profiles of the EU delegations' communication departments

In this part, the aim is to observe and identify the structure that the EU delegations have developed to communicate so far. Of the six EaP countries, the EU delegations in Armenia and Georgia provide partial information on the press departments, listing only the emails and phone numbers. In contrast, Azerbaijan,

Moldova and Ukraine present the names of the people in charge and their contact details, exhibiting a more personalized approach and, ultimately, greater openness and outreach. Moldova, on the other hand, is the only country where the EU delegation has a Head of the Policy, Press and Information Section and a Press Attaché. Meanwhile, the organigram of the EU Delegation to Ukraine shows that the Press and Information Department functions separately from the Political Department. To achieve greater visibility, it makes more

sense to have a specialized person/section dealing with press communication, such as in Moldova (Press Attaché) or Ukraine (Press and Information Officer). The ideal candidate for this position could be a citizen of the EaP country who is familiar with the local languages and regional particularities, well trained in EU affairs and recruited by competition. This would make it possible to attract College of Europe graduates from among the EaP countries' nationals, thus contributing to the "brain retaining and/or returning".

The interaction of the EU delegations with the local public in the EaP region is also taking place in Russian, alongside English and the national languages. However, communication in Russian is openly welcomed only in Belarus and Moldova. The annexation of Crimea, the militarization of separatism in Donbas and Lugansk, the occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and disinformation campaigns justify Ukraine and Georgia's reluctance towards the Russian language. Unlike other EaP countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan use the Russian language extensively, but not as a *lingua franca* among minorities due to their ethnic homogeneity.

A combination of information in the national language and English can also contribute to increasing the visibility of the EU delegations' websites. All EU delegations practice communication in the local languages, but, for example, in Ukraine, the press release might include its Ukrainian and English versions in the same document. Some EU delegations resort to the services of specialized communication companies, like the EU Delegation in Moldova²², which appends the same text in Romanian and Russian to the original version in English.²³

These findings can be synthesized in the following conclusions. To begin with, EU delegations in the six EaP countries have structures/sections for public communication. A combination of national and English languages is used in communication, helping it to connect with local audiences. Wherever and whenever possible, some public diplomacy in Russian could be organized such as to reach out to the public that might otherwise be left in the shadows, especially for combating misinformation. Where the Russian language is acceptable, it should be used to reach a wider audience and counter the pejorative narratives spread in the region by state-controlled Russian media.

Ambitiousness: Assessing the EU delegations' pro-activeness

The centrality of this part of the policy paper constitutes the mapping of the EU delegations' ambitions. One way to see the intensity of public diplomacy is to weigh the statements made by their heads. The investigation of the six webpages shows that the EU delegations in Azerbaijan and Armenia were the least ambitious. Only once did each of the heads of the EU delegations in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine issued statements together with the diplomatic missions of the EU Member States. The political crisis in Georgia (2020–2021) saw the involvement of the President of the European Council Charles Michel, whose statements were circulated by the EU Delegation in Tbilisi.²⁴ EU delegations in the rest of the EaP countries published statements made by Charles Michel during his official visits to the region in the summer of 2021, which had more of a diplomatic than

political connotation. The most active and therefore confident and ambitious head of the EU delegations in the region is the EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell, who made 16 statements in the analyzed period alone (from 1 January to 12 September 2021). His performance shows that at least for Association Agreement countries like Georgia (and also Moldova and Ukraine), the heads of EU delegations can promote EU public diplomacy in a more dynamic and tangible way.

An added value for public communication of the EU delegations is when the press departments are providing a significant amount of information, instead of relying on the communication from the headquarters in Brussels. This gives a more local identity to public communication. From this point of view, the local press departments of EU delegations in Georgia and Azerbaijan themselves published a higher proportion of information than the total press releases published on the delegations' webpages, 52% and 45% respectively. After them come Armenia and Moldova. The least amount of information from the national press team has been published on the websites of the delegations in Ukraine and Belarus. The EU's involvement in the resolution of the political crisis is one of the easily described reasons why the EU Delegation in Tbilisi has outperformed other delegations, issuing 84 press releases. This number is

higher than in the case of Belarus (mired in local and transnational political turmoil) or Ukraine (affected by the Russian occupation of Crimea and the eastern regions of Luhansk and Donbas).

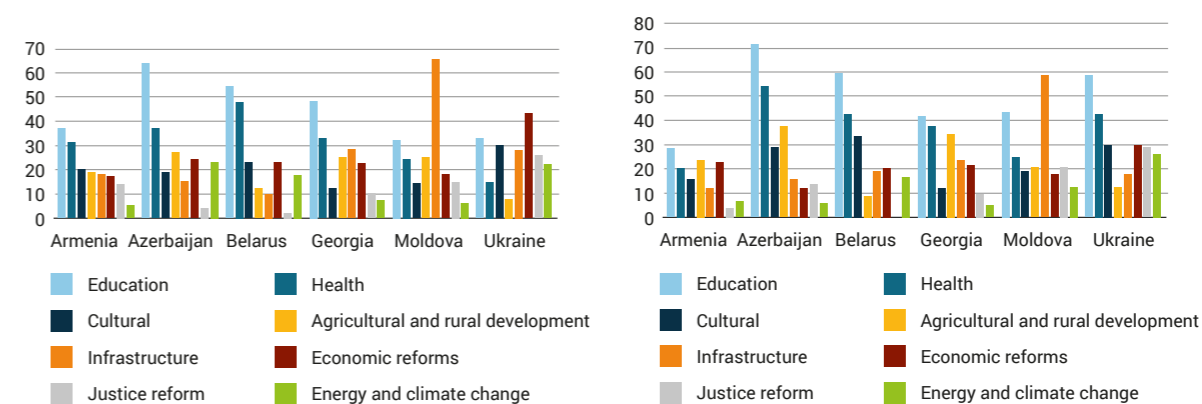
It should be noted that the EU Delegation in Ukraine stands out for publishing information that refers to the situation in Russia, along with positions on Crimea, sanctions and other sensitive Russia-related issues. To some extent, this is also a manifestation of ambition on the part of the EU Delegation in Kyiv that may find utility in Moldova or Belarus, where domestic decision-making processes are strongly connected with the dynamics within Russian politics.

After tracing the broad lines of the ambition observed by the six EU delegations, it can be concluded that only some of them have the confidence and motivation to step out of their comfort zone. The type of a bilateral agreement that the country has with the EU is not a limiting factor. The EU Delegation in Georgia, for example, opted for vibrant public communication, unlike those of the delegations in Moldova or Ukraine, which, like Georgia, are linked to the EU with Association Agreements. The communication of the EU delegations is essential not only for the visibility of the EU in general, but also for the promotion of EU-funded projects. discussed in the next section.

3. EU-funded projects and their visibility

The visibility of EU projects is not uniform across the region and within the countries, showing that local public perceives them its own way. These variations may be due to the way the EU communicates its activities or the financial resources that are allocated to certain projects.²⁵

Data from 2017 shows that the best-known EU-funded projects were in the fields of education and health in four of the six EaP countries; the exceptions here are Moldova and Ukraine, where the public was most familiar with infrastructure projects and economic reforms, respectively (see Figure 10). In the period of three years (see Figure 11), the most significant changes were observed in Armenia and Ukraine. More precisely, the public's familiarity with some types of EU projects in Armenia decreased in 2020, compared with 2017 (in particular, in the fields of education and health). At the same time, the EU projects with the highest visibility in Ukraine became those related to education and health, replacing economic reforms. The fields of EU-funded projects visible in Moldova in 2017 were unchanged in 2021, with infrastructure continuing to outperform others. In Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia, a



Figures 10-11. Visibility of the EU-funded projects in 2017 (left) and 2020 (right), %

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

fairly similar degree of awareness of EU projects was maintained (except for the field of education). Agriculture-oriented projects best reached the public in Georgia and Azerbaijan, while economic reforms scored higher in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine.

The EU4EaP projects

EU assistance to individual countries is primarily guided by the objectives enshrined in bilateral legal frameworks. It can take different forms, such as financial support, technical assistance, grants for civil society, access to EU programs, etc. Furthermore, the logic of financial support in the six EaP countries is integrated into five areas of intervention: (i) economic development and better market opportunities; (ii) institutional strengthening and good governance; (iii) connectivity, energy, efficiency, environment and climate change; (iv) mobility and person-to-person contacts; (v) cross-cutting priority areas. These areas revolved around the 2020 Deliverables that the EU endorsed at the Eastern Partnership Summit in 2017.²⁶ In the coming

years, however, the entire focus towards the region will shift towards building resilience²⁷ in the EaP region, which will revise the direction of EU assistance.

To understand the status quo in the five areas of EU intervention, this subsection examines the number and types of EU-funded projects in the eastern neighborhood. There are special webpages that serve as a convenient database for viewing EU-funded projects in the EaP countries. The “EU4” combined with the name of the EaP country in question helps to easily identify EU assistance tailored to it. These webpages have been set up for at least four of the six EaP countries (the exceptions are Ukraine and Belarus) and contain virtual maps showing both completed and ongoing projects (see Table 4).

In general, the information on the webpages dedicated to EU-funded projects is classified according to the five areas of intervention mentioned above. In most cases, projects are presented by region within the EaP countries where they are implemented, in both English and national languages and in Russian (in Mol-

Table 4. Total number of EU-funded projects implemented in the six EaP countries in the period from 2009 to 2021, both completed and outgoing

	Total projects	Ongoing (September 2021)	Completed (before September 2021)
Armenia	77 ²⁸	–	–
Azerbaijan	138	63	75
Belarus	25 ²⁹	–	–
Georgia	261	130	131
Moldova ³⁰	120	–	–
Ukraine	250 ³¹	–	–

Source: Author's compilation based on the webpages of EU-financed projects: EU4Armenia, EU4Azerbaijan, EU4Georgia, EU4Moldova, sources available on Belarus and Ukraine.

dova). The Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova websites offer the clearest way to display EU funded projects. Some adjustments to these websites, such as the possibility of matching ongoing and completed projects with the five areas of intervention, could increase their usefulness for the purposes of communication (see Table 5). The EU support website for Armenia is less elaborate and does not draw a clear distinction between the ongoing and completed projects or sort the projects according to the five intervention areas.

A prominent exception is the assistance to Belarus, for which there is no dedicated and fully functional website. Information on the projects implemented in Belarus is available on the website of the EU delegation, but it is difficult to find, and data on projects implemented prior to 2015 are missing altogether.³² Due to persecution of civil society activists and other domestic stakeholders, the EU is using the EU4Belarus website to provide assistance to young people to enroll in universities in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic.³³ In addition, the EU has redirected country-relat-

ed aid from bilateral cooperation with current authorities to the people of Belarus themselves, offering support to civil society and independent media, youth and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and health resilience in the face of the pandemic. Information on EU projects implemented in Ukraine is also available in Ukraine. The EU Delegation underlines that it currently implements more than 250 projects.³⁴ However, a webpage with well-structured information about EU projects, similar to EU4Azerbaijan, EU4Georgia or EU4Moldova, is not yet available.

The data in Table 5 show that the information on the projects implemented in Azerbaijan is the most complete and detailed, allowing it to be aggregated and used for explaining the trends in the EU's sectoral aid. The EU4Georgia and EU4Azerbaijan webpages could be used as a reference to review similar webpages dedicated to the EaP countries. These two webpages allow one to find completed and ongoing projects much more easily. They also contain the largest number of projects based in EU countries. Due to the discrepan-

Table 5. Number of projects per area of intervention (priority) of the EU in the six EaP countries

	Economy	Good governance	Connectivity and environment	Mobility	Cross-cutting issues
Armenia	25	20	18	1	13
Azerbaijan	53	41	29	24	22
Belarus ³⁵	–	–	–	–	–
Georgia	89	104	49	38	42
Moldova	62	36	10	7	13
Ukraine	–	–	–	–	–

Source: Author's compilation based on the webpages of EU-financed projects, namely EU4Armenia, EU4Azerbaijan, EU4Georgia, EU4Moldova, and sources available on Belarus and Ukraine. Due to the fact that some projects have overlapping scopes, the number of total projects in this table might not coincide with the data in the Table 4.

cies in the way the EU presents data on the projects it supports in the region, Table 5 is more useful for in-country comparisons between the five EU-funded intervention areas than it is for comparing the six EaP countries side by side. The proportion of projects per intervention area is distinctive in each of the EaP countries. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, projects related to the economy and good governance prevail, regardless of the fact that only Georgia and Moldova have implemented the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). Projects on connectivity and environment have a minor share in Moldova, while mobility seems to attract the least assistance from the EU. Information on Ukraine is difficult to aggregate and analyze due to the lack of a specialized website on EU-funded projects that reflects the five intervention areas (priorities).

Alternative ways to communicate

Another way the EU conducts public diplomacy is through public campaigns. The public campaigns organized by the EU that are reflected on the EU aid webpages cover several blocks: (i) environment and energy; (ii) business, agricultural and rural development; (iii) human rights / EU values; (iv) gender issues; (v) COVID-19; (vi) others (youth, solidarity). Therefore, some key issues that correspond to EU values or priorities can be further promoted through campaigns involving politicians and national volunteers. In addition, the EU should make effort to integrate the topic of good governance – and anti-corruption in particular, – in the public campaigning in the region to promote more visibility for the good governance projects (see Table 6).

To some extent, the support offered for public campaigns does contribute to the popularization of the EU. The most active use of public campaigns is observed in Georgia, which provides such information as of 2019. Moldova follows Georgia in terms of the total number of campaigns and topics covered. To a lesser extent this is also true of Azerbaijan, while information on Armenia and Belarus is not available on the project website. Although the EU tries to intertwine public campaigns with the projects it implements, these attempts do not have a systemic focus. Furthermore, the campaigns organized by the EU are not reflected in the awareness of the local public. The latter revolves around EU-funded projects related to education and health (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine), infrastructure (Moldova), agriculture (Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the economy (Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine), as shown in Figures 10 and 11. There is untapped potential to promote EU-funded projects through public campaigns for those sectors where public awareness is volatile or declining. Furthermore, the EU must not refrain from promoting human rights, anti-corruption etc. even in countries such as Azerbaijan and Belarus (when the situation allows).

In addition to public campaigns, the EU finances the activity of Europe Café and the EU Info Centers in Moldova. These platforms represent a more sustainable way of conducting public diplomacy. Through Europe Café³⁶, EU diplomats working in Moldova can communicate about the EU by organizing EU-related public events and interacting with audiences of different ages, particularly with young people. However, its activity has been mainly concentrated in the country's capital. Another public communication platform is the EU

Table 6. Themes of public campaigns supported by the EU in the six EaP countries

	Total	Environment, energy	Business, agriculture, rural development	Human rights/ EU values	Gender	COVID-19	Other
Armenia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Azerbaijan	5	1	2	–	2	–	–
Belarus	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Georgia	18	6	3	6	1	1	1
Moldova	11	1	3	4	–	1	22
Ukraine	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source: Author's compilation based on the webpages of EU-financed projects: EU4Armenia, EU4Azerbaijan, EU4Georgia, EU4Moldova, sources available on Belarus and Ukraine.

Info Centers, consisting of “a network of information multipliers on the contribution of the European Union to the development of the Republic of Moldova”.³⁷ This network has been attracting the College of Europe alumni as well as other young activists, who spread information about the EU in cities, libraries, etc. across the country. Unlike with other EaP countries, the EU Delegation in Moldova has been making extensive use of Europe Café and EU Info Centers in their communication actions, involving the media and civil society organizations.

Although the EU publishes project types and opportunities (competitions, calls, etc.), the designated webpages do not show project results in terms of objectives achieved, number of beneficiaries and continuity/sustainability. This deficiency is evident with respect to both ongoing and completed projects, for which the data on outcome should be easier to collect and distribute. In some cases (Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova), the webpages redirect to “Fact Sheets” on EU assistance,

which, however, present general information about assistance and not individual projects. These kinds of constraints are clearly disadvantageous for the EU, making it difficult to understand the real impact of projects it funds. Consequently, it is very difficult to judge their lasting effect on public memory in the EaP countries, which obviously undermines the visibility of the EU in the longer term. Another interesting way to diversify communication is used in Azerbaijan, where, in addition to YouTube videos, the EU supports podcasts on EU topics (which require some boosting to extend the coverage from the current 15 followers³⁸).

There are several key takeaways that can be drawn from this third and final section. *First*, the public in the EaP countries is unevenly informed about EU projects. In the three years since 2017, familiarity with EU projects changed the most significantly in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova (least intensity) and Ukraine (most visible shifts in project-related knowledge). *Second*, the EU does not have

specialized webpages describing its projects in all the six countries. Despite certain imperfections, it is recommended to replicate the webpages covering Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia in the rest of the region. *Third*, the areas in which the EU implements projects are the economy and good governance, even in countries where the Association Agreements do not apply (Azerbaijan). According to the available data, Georgia implements the largest number of projects related to good governance. In two of the six EaP countries, specific information on projects is not available

due to the political situation (Belarus) or technical aspects (Ukraine). *Finally*, in addition to conventional media (television, online, EU delegations' webpages etc.), the EU supports alternative forms of communication which help conduct public campaigns. Those are most actively used in Georgia. At the same time, the case of Moldova shows that additional platforms can be used to share information about the EU and its assistance to the EaP countries, such as Europe Café and EU Info Centers (Moldova).

Conclusions and recommendations

The visibility of the EU lies in its ability to carry out effective public diplomacy. The data discussed in this policy paper make it clear that the EU has achieved some degree of success in building its image, primarily through the provision of assistance, which varies from country to country in the eastern neighborhood. However, a reversal in public perception of the EU cannot be ruled out either, as it may occur due to local political dynamics in the EaP countries.

Based on quantitative and qualitative analysis, the policy paper arrived at three main conclusions:

First, the EU ranks highly in terms of public trust in the six EaP countries, including those least democratic. The convergence of values with the EU is counterintuitive, mainly due to the potential of the less democratic EaP countries to catch up with the EU. Compared with other international players, trust in the EU is more stable, but also prone to reversal. The tools available to the EU are not used at their full potential to communicate the assistance, which is not always deemed effective. Local Russian language preferences place the EU in the dilemma of whether or not to conduct communication through Russian channels, given local sensitivities about Russia's destructive role in the region (especially in Ukraine and Georgia).

Second, the main diplomatic arm of the EU, represented by its delegations in the EaP region, acts quite differently in the most Europeanized EaP countries (the Association Trio), where it can actually have an identical (exigent) approach towards the regress in reforms. Although the EU itself has issued the most reactions through diplomatic channels on Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus, at the local level, the EU delegation in Georgia proved the most ambitious and confident in stepping out of its comfort zone.

Third, the EU is visible in the EaP region and communicates about its projects. However, the quality of public diplomacy, in terms of a sustainable impact, is something the EU should work on more. There is

a clear discrepancy in the forms of communication used in the region. In some cases, the structured details of EU-funded projects are displayed on specialized webpages, but not always – or not in a systemic and comprehensive way. Online information is combined with actions on the ground through public campaigns and, more in isolation, via other public communication platforms such as those used in Moldova (Europe Café and EU Info Networks) or Azerbaijan (a podcast). Based on these findings, it is fair to conclude that the EU relies on a fairly safe and less ambitious modus operandi. It overlooks the possibility of replicating the newer and more efficient communication models applied in some EaP countries to the rest of the region.

In order to explore new avenues to energize the EU's public diplomacy efforts in the region and build more sustainable visibility in the EaP region, this policy paper outlines a series of recommendations presented below.

EEAS:

- **Update and fine-tune the communication toolbox.** Although the EEAS has adapted its previous handbooks for EU delegations, adding suggestions for the purposes of communication, an update is due for them in accordance with current challenges. As part of the same effort, the EEAS could develop a separate communication strategy for the EaP region, with a clear roadmap and actions. For the moment, strategic communication is included as a transversal objective in the framework documents related to the EaP, without being operationalized through a more limited public communication for the eastern neighborhood.
- **Delegate more communication powers to the EU delegations and increase trans-**

parency. Novel ways to incentivize local communication from EU delegations are needed, as their communication is largely dominated by centrally-shaped discourse rather than coming from EU diplomats deployed in the region. Local communication could mean much faster, more updated and better calibrated messages. This could lead to more visibility and connection with the local realities by the EU delegations. One way to encourage the delegations to leave their comfort zone is by introducing the annual reporting system for the delegations themselves to participate in, which would break down reporting into a more nuanced and country-based exercise, beyond the current more general report delivered by the EEAS.

- **The more detailed the description of the results of the projects carried out in the EaP countries, the more durable the visibility of EU assistance can become.** Each project, whether ongoing or completed, should include clear information on the number of beneficiaries (or other achieved results) and follow-up actions to ensure at least a minimum degree of sustainability of EU assistance. Insufficiently nuanced outcomes and a lack of details on project continuity can affect the public's long-term memory of EU-funded projects in the region.

EU delegations:

- **Encourage the discourse and proactive measures of the EU delegations.** Heads of EU delegations who want to get out of their comfort zone and dedicate themselves to upholding EU values in a bolder and more direct way on the ground should have the support of EEAS / Brussels. Investing in

proactive approaches could be useful not only to maintain the visibility of the EU, but also to adjust, review and launch new projects that correspond to the urgent issues on the public agenda of a specific EaP country. The same forging of support is advisable for the EU delegations as preventive or reactive measures in the face of ongoing or highly probable crisis situations.

- **Ensure a detailed display of ongoing and completed projects on specialized webpages dedicated to EU-funded projects.** The websites such as EU4Azerbaijan, EU4Georgia and EU4Moldova should be replicated for Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine to not only increase the transparency of EU-funded projects, but also to facilitate the exchange of best practices in the implementation and communication of project results in the six EaP countries. In addition, EU delegations could use these webpages to hold communication events that attract the media and civil society (Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum) from the region explaining the particularities of EU assistance across the different EaP countries.
- **Find alternative ways to popularize EU aid.** The EU should strive to create hybrid forms of public diplomacy that combine alternative public communication platforms, such as Europe Café and EU Info Centers (Moldova), with those that currently provide effective visibility to the EU (television, social media and the internet). The alternative platforms used in Moldova should be promoted in the rest of the region. They involve debates and networks of multipliers that help provide more objective information and an individualized approach to the more remote regions of the country. In

no case can the hybridization of communication tools serve as a substitute for the physical presence and contact with local audiences beyond the capitals of the EaP countries, which are informationally oversaturated as it is.

- **Promote EU values where the convergence of values with the EaP region is weaker.** The visibility of the EU depends on promoting values where there is the gap with the values of the EaP public is small. However, it does not follow that topics lacking high convergence should be avoided. Quite the contrary. Since one of the functions of the EU's public diplomacy is to promote its values, EU delegations should endeavor to integrate issues of press freedom, minority rights, good governance, anti-corruption, etc. in the public campaigns the EU conducts in the region and in other types of communication. There should be no taboo topics in EU communication to EaP countries, whether they are among the most Europeanized (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), intermediate (Armenia) or the most Eurosceptic (Belarus, Azerbaijan).
- **Gain more visibility by positioning itself with EU Member States.** In addition to the joint reaction of EU delegations with Member State ambassadors to negative developments in the EaP countries (observed in Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova in January–September 2021), delegations can supplement the EU's public diplomacy efforts. To this end, they can design activities with the embassies of the EU states that assume the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU (and are operational in the EaP countries). As the content of EU delegations' webpages shows, the coverage of the progress in achieving the objectives

pursued by the rotating presidencies of the Council of the EU is omitted. Furthermore, a greater focus on a common agenda of the activities related to public communication established by the EU delegations with the embassies of EU states holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU can also have an added value.

- **Encourage the exchange of good practices at the level of the EaP delegations.** A way to spread the positive examples of public communication and diplomacy could be

through organizing online workshops for peer-to-peer exchange of ideas between the staff of the delegations, including by organizing field trips to learn the best practices and eventually import and apply them locally in terms of recruiting policy. That should involve more local staff, especially from among the alumni of the College of Europe to contribute to the “brain retaining/returning”, as well as the use of local languages and Russia (if it is proven acceptable and useful), etc.

Annexes

Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence, 2017-2020

Table 7. Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence for Armenia

2017				
	Values associated with the EU	Personal values	Value Convergence	
Peace, security, stability	71	63	1,126984	1
Economic prosperity	85	40	2,125	2
Human rights	90	31	2,903226	3
Rule of law	85	24	3,541667	3
Honesty, transparency	79	24	3,291667	3
Absence of corruption	53	23	2,304348	2
Individual freedom	89	21	4,238095	4
Equality and social justice	74	19	3,894737	4
Freedom of speech	90	18	5	5
Democracy	79	12	6,583333	7
Respect for other cultures, minorities	77	9	8,555556	8
Freedom of religion	78	8	9,75	10
Freedom of the media	78	6	13	13
2020				
Peace, security, stability	82	61	1,344262	1
Economic prosperity	88	39	2,25641	2
Human rights	90	32	2,8125	3
Rule of law	89	23	3,869565	4
Honesty, transparency	80	21	3,809524	4
Absence of corruption	66	20	3,3	3
Individual freedom	88	18	4,888889	5
Equality and social justice	79	23	3,434783	3
Freedom of speech	91	21	4,333333	4
Democracy	84	11	7,636364	8
Respect for other cultures, minorities	84	13	6,461538	6
Freedom of religion	87	8	10,875	11
Freedom of the media	86	2	43	43

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Table 8. Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence for Azerbaijan

2017				
	Values associated with the EU	Personal values	Value Convergence	
Peace, security, stability	65	35	1,85714286	1
Economic prosperity	79	19	4,15789474	2
Human rights	81	34	2,38235294	2
Rule of law	80	23	3,47826087	2
Honesty, transparency	74	52	1,42307692	3
Absence of corruption	60	23	2,60869565	3
Individual freedom	74	10	7,4	7
Equality and social justice	74	13	5,69230769	4
Freedom of speech	80	39	2,05128205	4
Democracy	80	21	3,80952381	6
Respect for other cultures, minorities	54	4	13,5	7
Freedom of religion	50	14	3,57142857	16
Freedom of the media	79	5	15,8	13
2020				
Peace, security, stability	72	45	1,6	2
Economic prosperity	74	22	3,36363636	3
Human rights	75	29	2,5862069	2
Rule of law	74	22	3,36363636	3
Honesty, transparency	72	46	1,56521739	1
Absence of corruption	52	17	3,05882353	3
Individual freedom	71	11	6,45454545	6
Equality and social justice	66	22	3	3
Freedom of speech	72	24	3	3
Democracy	69	12	5,75	6
Respect for other cultures, minorities	65	4	16,25	16
Freedom of religion	63	11	5,72727273	6
Freedom of the media	71	7	10,1428571	10

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project,
<https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Table 9. Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence for Belarus

2017				
	Values associated with the EU	Personal values	Value Convergence	
Peace, security, stability	58	73	0,79452055	0,7
Economic prosperity	74	12	6,16666667	6,1
Human rights	75	36	2,08333333	2
Rule of law	70	29	2,4137931	2
Honesty, transparency	49	31	1,58064516	1
Absence of corruption	37	14	2,64285714	3
Individual freedom	74	31	2,38709677	2
Equality and social justice	62	25	2,48	2
Freedom of speech	77	19	4,05263158	4
Democracy	67	18	3,72222222	4
Respect for other cultures, minorities	65	5	13	13
Freedom of religion	82	5	16,4	16
Freedom of the media	81	3	27	27
2020				
Peace, security, stability	46	58	0,79310345	0,7
Economic prosperity	69	12	5,75	6
Human rights	65	49	1,32653061	1
Rule of law	60	28	2,14285714	2
Honesty, transparency	52	33	1,57575758	2
Absence of corruption	32	21	1,52380952	1
Individual freedom	63	39	1,61538462	2
Equality and social justice	51	17	3	3
Freedom of speech	65	17	3,82352941	4
Democracy	63	14	4,5	4
Respect for other cultures, minorities	65	4	16,25	16
Freedom of religion	68	7	9,71428571	10
Freedom of the media	67	1	67	67

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project,
<https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Table 10. Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence for Georgia

2017				
	Values associated with the EU	Personal values	Value Convergence	
Peace, security, stability	72	59	1,22033898	1
Economic prosperity	79	50	1,58	2
Human rights	79	40	1,975	2
Rule of law	79	32	2,46875	2
Honesty, transparency	60	32	1,875	2
Absence of corruption	52	5	10,4	10
Individual freedom	73	9	8,11111111	8
Equality and social justice	76	6	12,6666667	13
Freedom of speech	81	25	3,24	3
Democracy	79	17	4,64705882	5
Respect for other cultures, minorities	67	1	67	67
Freedom of religion	72	15	4,8	5
Freedom of the media	77	2	38,5	38
2020				
Peace, security, stability	76	61	1,24590164	1
Economic prosperity	78	55	1,41818182	1
Human rights	78	39	2	2
Rule of law	72	34	2,11764706	2
Honesty, transparency	65	26	2,5	2
Absence of corruption	50	8	6,25	6
Individual freedom	77	6	12,8333333	13
Equality and social justice	77	10	7,7	8
Freedom of speech	80	23	3,47826087	3
Democracy	77	13	5,92307692	6
Respect for other cultures, minorities	75	3	25	25
Freedom of religion	78	14	5,57142857	6
Freedom of the media	79	2	39,5	40

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Table 11. Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence for Moldova

2017				
	Values associated with the EU	Personal values	Value Convergence	
Peace, security, stability	52	40	1,3	1
Economic prosperity	72	47	1,53191489	1
Human rights	71	45	1,57777778	2
Rule of law	65	24	2,70833333	3
Honesty, transparency	54	15	3,6	4
Absence of corruption	40	46	0,86956522	0,8
Individual freedom	69	12	5,75	6
Equality and social justice	56	13	4,30769231	4
Freedom of speech	67	20	3,35	3
Democracy	62	12	5,16666667	5
Respect for other cultures, minorities	66	6	11	11
Freedom of religion	68	9	7,55555556	7
Freedom of the media	64	6	10,6666667	11
2020				
Peace, security, stability	67	44	1,52272727	1
Economic prosperity	82	52	1,57692308	2
Human rights	79	41	1,92682927	2
Rule of law	73	16	4,5625	4
Honesty, transparency	68	18	3,77777778	4
Absence of corruption	57	44	1,29545455	1
Individual freedom	73	11	6,63636364	7
Equality and social justice	73	15	4,86666667	5
Freedom of speech	75	17	4,41176471	4
Democracy	74	17	4,35294118	4
Respect for other cultures, minorities	75	8	9,375	9
Freedom of religion	77	10	7,7	8
Freedom of the media	73	5	14,6	15

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Table 12. Survey data used for calculating the indicator of value convergence for Ukraine

2017				
	Values associated with the EU	Personal values	Value Convergence	
Peace, security, stability	65	70	0,92857143	0,9
Economic prosperity	74	45	1,64444444	2
Human rights	76	37	2,05405405	2
Rule of law	74	27	2,74074074	3
Honesty, transparency	66	26	2,53846154	2
Absence of corruption	64	32	2	2
Individual freedom	72	19	3,78947368	4
Equality and social justice	67	18	3,72222222	4
Freedom of speech	72	8	9	9
Democracy	67	8	8,375	8
Respect for other cultures, minorities	69	2	34,5	34
Freedom of religion	74	3	24,6666667	25
Freedom of the media	70	1	70	70
2020				
Peace, security, stability	72	73	0,98630137	0,9
Economic prosperity	81	37	2,18918919	2
Human rights	81	36	2,25	2
Rule of law	76	22	3,45454545	3
Honesty, transparency	71	33	2,15151515	2
Absence of corruption	63	29	2,17241379	2
Individual freedom	79	18	4,38888889	4
Equality and social justice	74	23	3,2173913	3
Freedom of speech	78	6	13	13
Democracy	77	7	11	11
Respect for other cultures, minorities	69	6	11,5	11
Freedom of religion	66	4	16,5	16
Freedom of the media	73	3	24,3333333	24

Source: Author's compilation based on the surveys conducted within the EU NEIGHBOURS east project, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>

Endnotes

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- ² As of 2020, there were 143 EU delegations worldwide.
- ³ Dorina Baltag, EU External Representation Post-Lisbon: The Performance of EU Diplomacy in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, https://brill.com/view/journals/hjd/13/1/article-p75_75.xml
- ⁴ EEAS, Information and Communication Handbook for EU Delegations in Third Countries and to International Organisations, 2012
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- ⁷ This policy paper analyzed two sets of surveys conducted in the six Eastern Partnership countries (12 surveys), covering the period from 2016 to 2020. The surveys are part of the EU-funded "OPEN Neighbourhood – Communicating For A Stronger Partnership: Connecting With Citizens Across The Eastern Neighbourhood" ("EU NEIGHBOURS east") project. They are carried out annually, in collaboration with ACT LLC. The surveys can be consulted via this link: <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/>
- ⁸ BBC, Why Armenia 'Velvet Revolution' won without a bullet fired, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43948181>
- ⁹ Denis Cenusă, The new 'exits' and 'turning points' in Georgia and Moldova's political crises, <https://neweasteurope.eu/2021/04/29/the-new-exits-and-turning-points-in-georgia-and-moldovas-political-crises/>
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- ¹¹ EEAS, Information and Communication Handbook for EU Delegations in Third Countries and to International Organisations, 2012
- ¹² EEAS, Information and Communication Handbook for EU Delegations in Third Countries and to International Organisations, 2012
- ¹³ Idem.
- ¹⁴ As of September 2021, the heads of EU delegations in the six EaP countries are as follows: Azerbaijan – Peter Michalko; Armenia – Andrea Wiktorin; Belarus – Dirk Schuebel; Georgia – Carl Hartzell; Moldova – Janis Mazeiks; Ukraine – Matti Maasikas.
- ¹⁵ EU Delegation: Georgia Failed to Sufficiently Address Condition for Macro-Financial Assistance, <https://georgiatoday.ge/eu-delegation-georgia-failed-to-sufficiently-address-condition-for-macro-financial-assistance/>

- ¹⁶ Peter Michalko about intention to take money from reserves: This is attack on NBM's independence, https://www.ipn.md/en/peter-michalko-about-intention-to-take-money-from-reserves-this-7965_1080966.html
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- ²⁰ Head of EU Delegation to Belarus reacts to recent developments in the country, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/news/head-eu-delegation-belarus-reacts-recent-developments-country>
- ²¹ European Union ambassador informed about Belarus' steps in response to EU sanctions, <https://eng.bel-ta.by/politics/view/european-union-ambassador-informed-about-belarus-steps-in-response-to-eu-sanctions-141235-2021/>
- ²² The EU Delegation to Moldova is contracting the BDR Associates, Strategic Communication Group Romania & Republic of Moldova, to carry out the public communication in Moldova.
- ²³ The EU Delegation to Moldova, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/104066/eu-republic-moldova-relations-and-future-developments-discussed-during-high-level-visit-eu_en
- ²⁴ EEAS, Statement by president Charles Michel on the political situation in Georgia, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/102568/statement-president-charles-michel-political-situation-georgia_en
- ²⁵ The EU webpages related to the projects implemented in the EaP countries provide a rather inconsistent and/or incomplete description: The aid for Armenia is estimated at around €160 million in the period from 2017 to 2020; no clear information is available for Azerbaijan; assistance to Belarus has a separate track from the political situation in the country; in the case of Georgia, the assistance data refer to annual allocations of €120 million; the information in Moldova is provided in the form of a number of projects (more than 1,000 projects executed to date); the webpages of the projects in Ukraine do not allow to deduce any specific numbers, apart from the information about 250 projects that are currently being implemented.
- ²⁶ EU, 20 Deliverables for 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/20-deliverables-for-2020/>
- ²⁷ EU, Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/swd_2021_186_f1_joint_staff_working_paper_en_v2_p1_1356457_0.pdf
- ²⁸ The information about the EU projects in Armenia is presented on the EU4Armenia webpage, <https://www.eu4armenia.am/projects>
- ²⁹ The information about the EU-implemented projects in Belarus is partly available on the webpage of the EU Delegation to Belarus, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/area/projects_en?page=4
- ³⁰ The information on ongoing and completed projects is not provided by the EU4Moldova webpage.
- ³¹ This is number of the ongoing projects reported by the EU Delegation to Ukraine. https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/1938/eu-projects-ukraine_en
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- ³³ EU4Belarus: Solidarity with the People of Belarus, <http://eu4belarus.info/>
- ³⁴ The EU is developing a dedicated website on EU4Ukraine. Information on 250 projects is currently available on the website of the EU Delegation in Ukraine. This lack of information prevents the type of analysis of EU-funded projects in Ukraine that this policy paper provides for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/1938/eu-projects-ukraine_en
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- ³⁶ Europe Café in Moldova, <https://eu4moldova.eu/europe-cafe/>
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- ³⁸ As of 26 September, the podcast on EU projects in Azerbaijan (AvropadASAN / EuropeAsan) only had 15 followers, while the first podcasts date from May 2017, <https://www.mixcloud.com/AvropadASAN/followers/>

