





# Covering Cohesion Policy in Europe



## Covering Cohesion Policy in Europe – the MOOC

Official launch: October 2024



Training MOOC for European Journalism Students

Pilot Master MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), a project co-funded by the EU (January 2023 - June 2024).



Interactive E-Learning platform for journalism students in all EU member countries.



Focus on EU institutions, impact and challenges of Cohesion Policy, EU coverage and collaborative reporting, digital and innovative methods.



Creating sustainable materials for EU journalism educators and students: 14 modules, 108 working hours (1 semester) + a full-text available E-Handbook.



### **COPE - Production Team**

#### **COPE Consortium Partners:**

> Six journalism institutes and departments from EU universities and Arena for Journalism in Europe (ARENA) are members of the COPE Consortium















**The European Journalism Training Association (EJTA)** supports the project, provided important criteria and produced content for the development of the MOOC.

### **COPE** advisory board

- ► **George Ubachs** Managing Director of EADTU, coordinator of the European MOOC Consortium (EMC), representing the Common Microcredential Framework (CMF);
- ► Harald Schumann Journalist at Tagesspiegel, co-founder of Investigate Europe;
- ► Radka Betcheva Head of Member Relations for Central & Eastern Europe in the Directorate of Member Relations and Communications at the EBU;
- ▶ Johannes Pause Research scientist specializing in film and media studies and the deputy programme director of the Bachelor in Animation at the University of Luxembourg.

### 21 EU countries as regional partners

**Spain:** Pompeu Fabra University

**Latvia:** University of Latvia

**Slovenia:** Fakulteta za uporabne družbene študije | School of Advanced Social Studies

Croatia: University of Zagreb

Czech Republic: Masaryk University in

Brno

Estonia: University of Tartu

Slovakia: School of Communication and

Media

**Luxembourg:** University of Luxembourg

Hungary FLTE Faculty of Humanities

**Sweden:** Uppsala University

**Finland:** Tampere University

Austria: Universität Joanneum in Graz

France: Université de Lorraine

**Cyprus:** Cyprus University of Technology

Bulgaria: St. Kliment Ohridski University

Ireland & Malta: University of Limerick

**Lithuania:** Vytautas Magnus University

**Denmark:** DANICOM

**Netherlands:** Fontys University of Applied

Sciences

Italy: Sanjenza Università di Roma

### Project goals and objectives

1. Provide basic knowledge on the EU and EU Cohesion Policy.





3. Facilitate the understanding of policymaking in the EU and provide relevant data and sources.

2. Raise awareness of best practices in EU coverage and highlight media missed opportunities.





4. Facilitate
collaboration with
journalists from other EU
countries to present the
full European dimension
of the stories.

### The structure of the MOOC



**Introduction**. An overview of the contents related to journalistic coverage on EU Cohesion Policy, and the structure and didactics of this MOOC.



**Institutions, structures, and procedures of the EU.** Information about the institutions, structure and procedures of the EU.



**EU Cohesion Policy.** Key knowledge about EU Cohesion Policy; journalism students get a basic understanding of how the EU and how it invests in regions and cities across Europe.



**Cohesion: concept in political science and its relevance for societies within the EU.** Cohesion as a concept in political science. Why the cohesion is now even more relevant for societies within the EU. Concrete case studies for cohesion policy from across the EU, and from key policy fields for the EU.



**EU & The Role of Media.** The role of media for the coverage of EU matters. The responsibility of journalists and the (potential) impact of media on societies and decision-making processes.



**Local angles in stories.** How can topics be broken down, and how can local sources be identified and exploited, to anchor stories in the everyday realities of EU citizens?

### The structure of the MOOC



**EU & reporting on economic issues**. Journalism students need to be trained to understand and assess Cohesion Policy both from a political and an economic coverage perspective.



**Research and Investigate EU Cohesion Policy issues.** Students learn to identify topics and key sources and to use relevant EU and national data bases for their coverage (data journalism).



**Getting the facts right in Cohesion Policy coverage.** Students acquire fact-checking skills, using the EUfactcheck framework (a methodology that consists of step-by-step flowcharts), developed by EJTA.



**Up-to-date developments in journalistic research methods.** Information on data gathering and data presentation, data sharing via data libraries, crowd sourcing in local communities and by-topic cross-border collaboration.



**Collaborative reporting: an introduction.** Emphasis on how interdisciplinary and cross-country teams can research and cover cohesion policy matters more effectively, and with a larger impact on local and EU public.



**Training journalists to 'sell' their stories.** Students learn how to 'sell' stories tackling cohesion policy matters in their newsrooms, and make them acquainted with best practice cases of multimedia reporting of EU issues

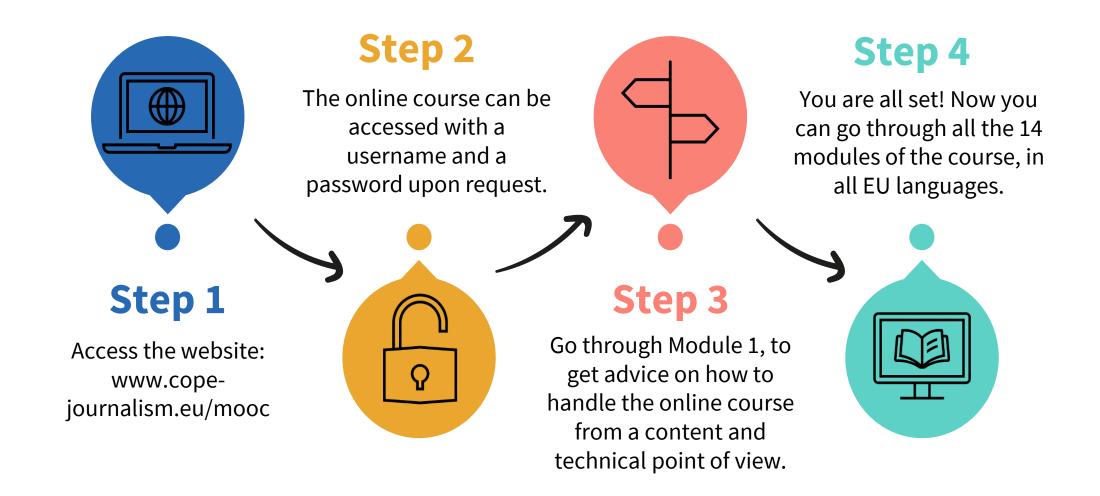
### The structure of the MOOC



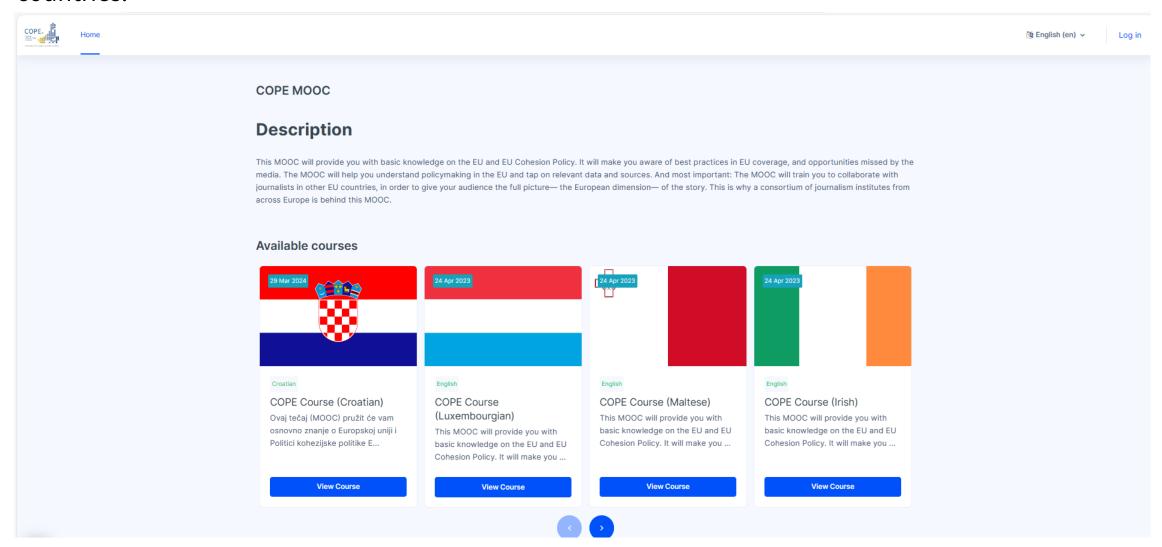
**The Pitch**. The final module comprises a pitch of a journalistic story/project. Journalism students will practically apply their skills earned in this MOOC and prepare their own pitch of a journalistic story/project on EU cohesion matters. Module 14 is based on individual work, but also offers the option to complete the covered exercises together with other students in a group (e.g., to do the pitch jointly). Ultimately, the module provides sample solutions for the pitch, so that students will be able to assess their performance and results.

### How to access the platform

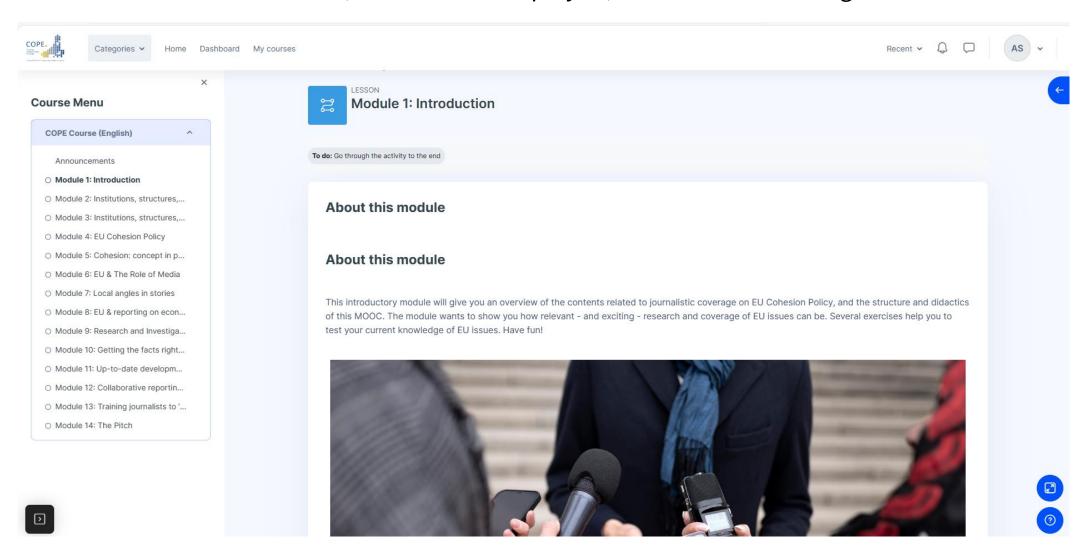
**COPE** is a stand-alone MOOC. Students can work individually, without the need of further assistance of a lecturer. However, it can easily be integrated in teaching activities.



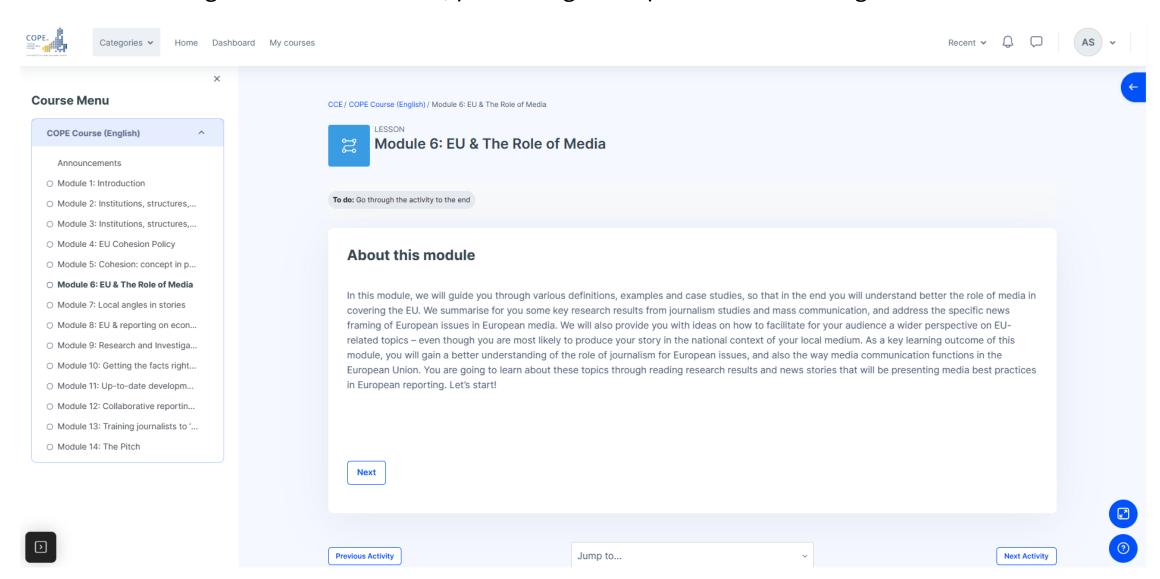
The landing page of the interactive E-Learning platform, for journalism students in all 27 EU-member countries:



Once the student starts the course, an outline is displayed, to facilitate the navigation:



Each module begins with an overview, presenting the topic and the learning outcomes:



The content is enriched with relevant research and various useful external resources:

#### **Newsrooms providing European coverage**

EURONEWS, launched in Lyon, 1993, covers world news from a pan-European point-of-view. The newsroom is multicultural and multilingual, and correspondents across the continent bring their perspectives to the media project.

Smart Regions is a special section of the Euronews website that shows how Cohesion Policy projects are helping people live better lives across the EU.

You can access the webpage here.

EURACTIV is an independent pan-European and multilingual media network covering EU affairs, also adding national as well as local angles. It was launched in 1999.

EURANET PLUS is a network that gathers 15 public and private broadcasters within the European Union. It broadcasts professional reporting on EU affairs in 15 languages to more than 13.8 million daily listeners.

POLITICO EUROPE, launched in 2015, is the European subsidiary of the news organisation Politico and reports on political affairs of the European Union. Based in Brussels, with additional offices in London, Berlin and Paris, Politico Europe delivers news reports covering the EU institutions via the online platform politico.eu, a weekly magazine and newsletters such as Brussels Playbook, Playbook Paris or London Playbook.

EUobserver is an online independent newspaper established in Brussels in 2000, producing European reporting that the newsroom considers essential for European democracy.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is an umbrella concept used by UNESCOto encompass a range of skills necessary for identifying problematic information. These skills include human rights literacy, news literacy, advertising literacy, and computer literacy. By developing these skills, individuals can better navigate the information society and critically evaluate the information they encounter, including identifying and avoiding false news (Abu-Fadil, 2018, p. 74). Ultimately, MIL is about empowering individuals to be informed and engaged citizens who can make sense of the world around them and participate in a democratic society (Jones-Jang et al., 2021, p. 373).

Interactive elements, to test the acquired knowledge: quizzes, drag-and-drop exercises, interactive

scenarios

A post on social media, which went viral and was even picked up by some international media institutions, claims that companies that use carbon-based fuels can access European funds with easy conditions.

O Considering that prestigious media institutions have shared the information, there is no need to hesitate in taking it over as well, considering that those journalists are more experienced than you, so they have certainly verified the information.

O Your first instinct is to check the information, because you know that the transition to a green and carbon-free economy is one of the basic principles of the EU Cohesion Policy.

O What private companies do does not concern the general public. This topic is not of interest, therefore it will not become news.

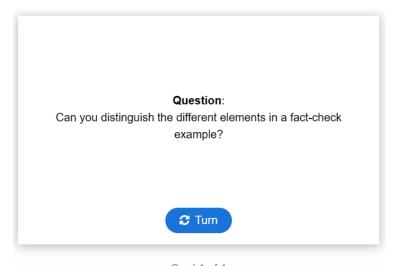
A post on social media, which went viral and was even picked up by some international media institutions, claims that companies that use carbon-based fuels can access European funds with easy conditions.

Considering that prestigious media institutions have shared the information, there is no need to hesitate in taking it over as well, considering that those journalists are more experienced than you, so they have certainly verified the information.

Your first instinct is to check the information, because you know that the transition to a green and carbon-free economy is one of the basic principles of the EU Cohesion Policy.

The instinct to verify the information is the correct one. The suggestion that an institution like the European Commission would easily fund businesses that affect the environment is a red flag.

What private companies do does not concern the general public. This topic is not of interest, therefore it will not become news.



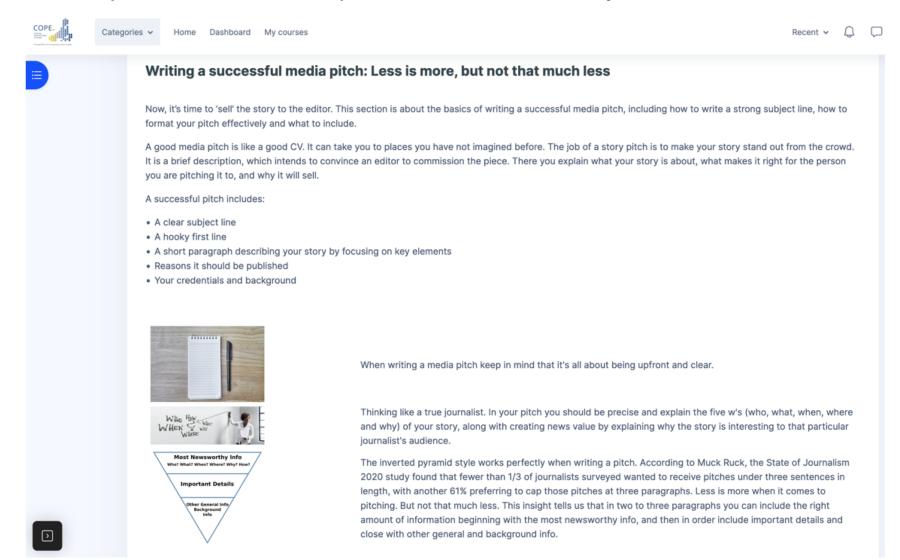
#### Card 1 of 1

#### Answer:

- Head/Title with the rating
- Lead: Introduction of the claim with reference to the sources
- · Middle part: Explaining the sources used to investigate the various elements of the claim. Assessing the evidence from the sources
- Conclusion and rating.



The assignments require the students to put into action what they have learned.



The modules of the MOOC also include some short videos.



To create a more European-oriented public sphere, it's suggested that media in EU member states should increase their coverage of EU-related issues. This, in turn, could contribute to the development of a shared European public sphere. Journalistic networks are also considered to have enormous potential for a more comprehensive and sound EU reporting. Heft et al. in 2019 observe that rather than focusing on domestic or national actors, a media network can contribute to a more international, truly European coverage, including European Union institutions relevant for the topic. European topics get more salience and exposure through such networks and modes of organisation.

ARENA FOR JOURNALISM IN EUROPE – one of the institutions behind this MOOC – is an excellent example of the power of such cross-border collaborative projects!

Watch this short video clip explaining the idea of the project:

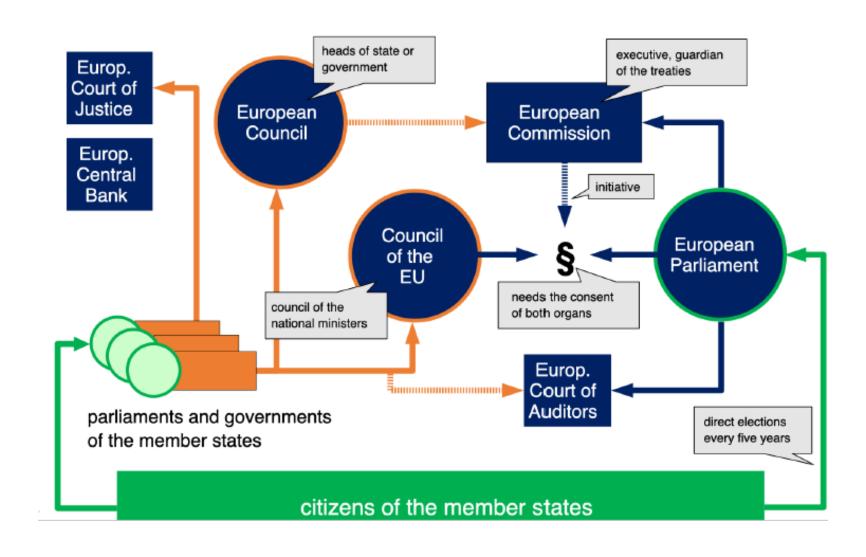
Let's meet the Arena for Journalism in Europe



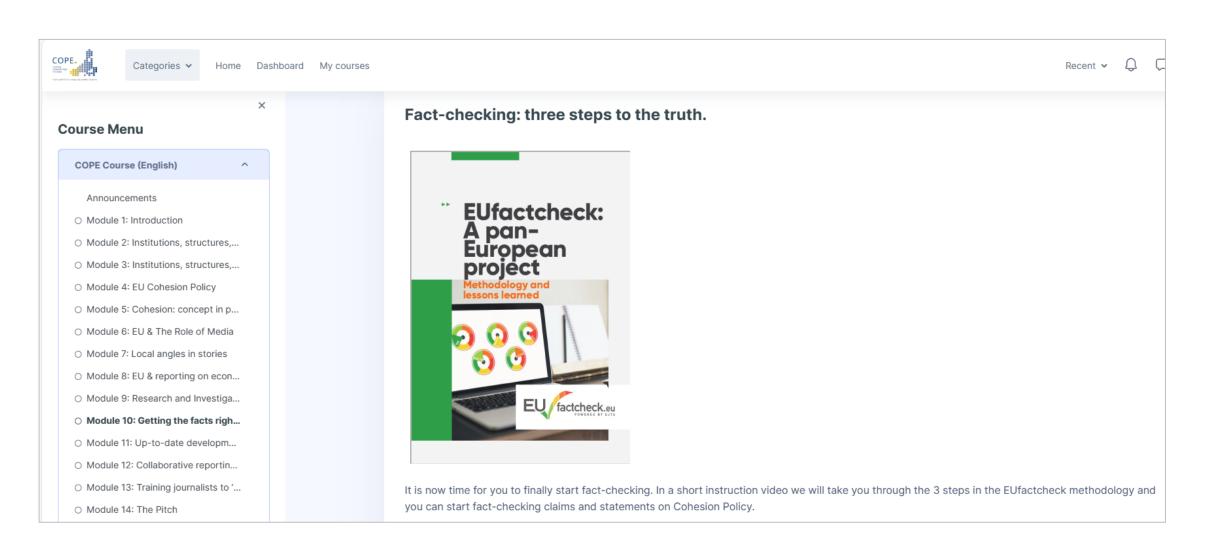
The MOOC has a user-friendly design and includes innovative layouts.



The theoretical information is summarized for stressing the important concepts.



Module 10 is connecting journalism students to EJTA's project, EUfactcheck:



- ➤ 5 modules from the MOOC also have a "local window" that provides insights on the national and local dimensions.
- Journalism students get a basic understanding of how the EU invests in regions and cities across Europe.
- ▶ They reflect on matters of the national media ecosystems.
- ➤ The local windows provide examples of EU media coverage with specific local angles or focus on economic aspects related to EU Cohesion Policy, specific for each EU country.

Here is an example of a local window, about the impact of the EU Cohesion Policy in France (Module 4):

#### Fenêtre locale: L'impact de la politique de cohésion en France

Bien que contributrice de la politique de cohésion, la France en est aussi grande bénéficiaire. La politique de cohésion fonctionne bien en France, car de nombreuses actions y sont menées. Elles concernent surtout, mais pas exclusivement, les agriculteurs et les pêcheurs, grands bénéficiaires, mais aussi les DOM ainsi que les territoires enclavés.

Pour ce qui concerne la gestion quotidienne des Fonds en France, cette tâche est assurée soit par les **conseils régionaux**, soit par les **collectivités territoriales uniques**, soit par **l'Etat**.

Entre 2014-2020, les conseils régionaux ont géré 77% de financement d'une enveloppe globale de 27,5 milliards d'euros. Tandis que pour la période 2021-2027, ces mêmes conseils géreront 68% des fonds alloués à la France, soit 16,8 milliards d'euros au titre de FEDER, FSE+ et FTJ. L'Etat est co-responsable de la mise en œuvre des quatre fonds sur le territoire (FEDER, FSE+, FAMI et FTJ). Cette gouvernance se fait par un comité Etat-régions, chargé de suivre la bonne conduite de l'ensemble des programmes et des fonds.

Plus concrètement, les programmes FEDER sont régionaux, c'est-à-dire qu'ils concernent une région en particulier. On a autant de programmes FEDER que de Régions en France. Des actions de formation, de développement rural et de coopération territoriale européenne peuvent ainsi être menées par les Conseils régionaux. Mais le **FEDER** finance également les programmes interreg de coopération territoriale européenne, qui concernent plusieurs Etats membres, soit 22 programmes.

Le FSE+ finance des programmes nationaux, qui concernent toute la France, mais aussi des programmes régionaux.

Le fonds européen pour une transition juste finance les territoires les plus touchés par la transition vers la neutralité climatique. Seules six régions sont concernées.

Le **FEAMPA** (affaire maritime pêche et aquaculture) est un programme national.

Le Fonds européens affaires intérieures : le FSI, **FAMI et IGVF** financent des programmes nationaux. Des exemples de financement sont à retrouver sur le lien qui mène vers les programmes régionaux et nationaux pour 2021-2027.

Here is an example of a local window, about the media landscape in Italy (Module 6):

#### Local Window: Il panorama dei media in Italia



Ovviamente, prima ancora di avventurarvi nella composizione di pezzi, è bene capire in quale panorama siete immersi, in modo tale da muovervi agevolmente tra i vari pubblici che compongono il mercato dei media in Italia.

L'ultimo Rapporto Agcomsull'Informazione (2018) ci dice che oltre l'80% della popolazione italiana consuma contenuti informativi ogni giorno, con un ruolo predominante esercitato dal mezzo televisivo (più del 90% dei fruitori), subendo però un declino durante il periodo pandemico. Il lockdown ha visto, infatti, un boom dei consumi di prodotti giornalistici tramite Web e Social media, mostrato dal dossier italiano del Digital News Report 2023. In declino costante è, invece, il mercato della stampa cartacea, che più di tutte subisce il colpo del boom dell'informazione online, con perdite da oltre 2 miliardi di euro in termini di ricavi.

Nel vastissimo panorama mediatico italiano, si annoverano:

- TV: l'emittente pubblica Rai (con i suoi tre canali principali: Rai 1, 2, 3); Mediaset, l'azienda di proprietà della famiglia Berlusconi (Italia 1, Rete 4, Canale 5); LA7, di proprietà di Cairo Communication, considerata popolarmente "il terzo polo" della televisione italiana.
- Stampa: tra i 1151 giornali presenti sul territorio nazionale, quelli più venduti (mese di riferimento Giugno 2023, dati Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa) sono stati:
- Il Corriere della Sera (136.860 copie)
- La Repubblica (78.816 copie)
- La Stampa (60.270 copie)
- II Resto del Carlino (55.860 copie)
- II Messaggero (43.480 copie)
- La Nazione (36.320 copie)

Here is an example of a local window, about Dutch reporting on EU Cohesion Policy (Module 9):

#### Lokale venster: Nederlandse berichtgeving over EU-cohesiebeleid

In dit onderdeel nemen we de berichtgeving over EU-cohesiebeleid in drie Nederlandse media onder de loep. Kijk naar de insteek, de belanghebbenden en hun belangen en naar de bronnen die aan het woord komen. Kijk ook naar de verschillen in berichtgeving. Wat valt je op? Neem aantekeningen.

De Correspondent, 16 maart 2018: "De EU is er niet voor herverdeling van de welvaart – en zal dat ook na 2020 niet zijn."

Follow The Money, 9 februari 2022: "Brussel weigert documenten over coronamiljarden openbaar te maken."

RTV Noord, 19 december 2023:

Lelylijn krijgt groen licht van EU: Groningen moet ook met Noord-Europa verbonden worden

#### **Analyse: De Correspondent**

Insteek: De EU en haar cohesiebeleid hadden nooit als doel om de economische ongelijkheid in het continent recht te trekken, schrijft de auteur. Zelfs voorstanders van het EU-cohesiebeleid durven niet voor meer geld te pleiten, wat een teken is dat de EU de status-quo wil behouden.

Tegelijkertijd onderstreept de auteur dat de EU enorme bedragen blijft pompen in landbouwsubsidies via het Gemeenschappelijke Landbouwbeleid, terwijl het bewezen is dat het niet de beoogde resultaten oplevert. De auteur is daarom ook zeer kritisch op dit beleid, evenals de stijgende Defensieuitgaven die ook bij de wapenindustrie terecht zullen komen.

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## Covering Cohesion Policy in Europe

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Thank you!

**Download the COPE E-Handbook**