

The Charter of Editorial Ethics

Introduction

In the context of growing disinformation, declining public trust in the media, and political pressure on editorial independence — particularly in CEE countries — the Eastern Flank EU Reporting project is committed to upholding the highest journalistic and ethical standards while maintaining full editorial independence.

This commitment is made tangible through the project's foundational values and structure. It is put into action through transparent decision-making, shared editorial principles, internal governance mechanisms, and by ensuring the professional integrity of all content created under this project.

Each independent consortium member is a media organisation with a proven history of non-partisan, ethical, and fact-based journalism. These partners strictly adhere to their own editorial codes of conduct, which include guidelines for source verification, correcting errors, and maintaining a clear distinction between editorial content and commercial interests.

All consortium members commit to adhere to the following shared ethical and conduct values and rock-solid journalistic standards - as well as to their respective national media regulations:

- **Impartiality:** Content does not favour any political party, government, institution, or lobbying group.
- **Reliability:** Establishing facts through consulting primary materials, verification across multiple independent sources, juxtaposing differing approaches, and systematically providing sources.
- **Quality:** Aiming for clear, well-structured, error-free writing and sound substantive verification
- **Transparency:** Sponsored content or externally sourced material is clearly identified.
- **Editorial Integrity:** Journalists and editors reject gifts, financial incentives, or any influence that could compromise their objectivity.
- **Reader Accountability:** Readers may question Consortium's coverage and request corrections or a right of reply.
- **Conflict of Interest Prevention:** Contributors disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- **Independence from Advertisers and Donors:** Editorial decisions remain fully independent from funding sources.

Furthermore, the consortium operates in full alignment with the European Union's ethical and legal frameworks, particularly those concerning fundamental rights, equality, and non-discrimination.

- Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (freedom of expression and information);
- Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (promotion of EU values);
- The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 and LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (COM/2020/698);
- The Code of Conduct of the International and European Federations of Journalists (IFJ/EFJ);
- The Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation (2021) (diversity in the media sector).

These frameworks guide all editorial activities and inform the consortium's editorial ethics and inclusion policy. To ensure alignment among all partners and preserve content integrity, the consortium adopts this document, hereinafter referred to as the Charter of Editorial Ethics (or the Editorial Charter).

I. Editorial Ethics

This Charter serves as the guiding document for all project-related editorial activities. It is designed to ensure consistency and shared accountability across all national borders, in full accordance with the foundational principles detailed below. Furthermore, it is aligned with both the European Union's Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists.

1. Fact-based, transparent, and non-partisan journalism

Editorial decisions are guided solely by verified facts and the public interest. Journalism remains independent from political, commercial, or external pressures. Transparency in editorial processes safeguards non-partisan and credible reporting, in line with EMFA principles on media independence.

2. Standards for source verification, corrections, and fair representation

Journalists verify all information using reliable, identifiable sources. Unconfirmed claims are not presented as facts. Editorial teams ensure rigorous accuracy and apply verification procedures consistent with EMFA standards for trustworthy journalism.

Journalists must ensure that all content accurately and fairly reflects events and individuals, prohibiting any distortion. Practices such as selective omission, misleading presentation, or context manipulation are forbidden. A commitment to

balance is essential, and all efforts must be made to avoid actions that could deceive the public.

Corrections must be issued promptly in the same format and channel as the original publication. Substantial errors require accurate information and an explanation of the mistake, while new information should be noted in an update

3. Ethical coverage of vulnerable groups and minority communities

Coverage involving vulnerable persons or minority communities respects their dignity, rights, and safety. Journalists avoid discriminatory language, stereotyping, or approaches that may cause harm or reinforce prejudice, in line with EU values of equality and non-discrimination.

4. Distinguishing facts from opinions and avoiding sensationalism

Journalists clearly differentiate factual reporting from commentary, analysis, or opinion. Opinion content is distinctly labelled and is not presented as factual information or investigative findings.

5. Compliance with anti-plagiarism and anti-manipulation norms

Plagiarism, concealed copying, and the improper use of third-party materials are strictly forbidden. All journalistic content must be original or appropriately attributed. Upholding proper citation standards is essential for maintaining editorial transparency and ensuring legal compliance.

All partner organisations endorse and implement the Editorial Charter. Compliance is regularly monitored through peer review and editorial coordination meetings. All articles adhere to the standards of the Editorial Charter, ensuring consistency, journalistic integrity, and neutrality.

II. Types of articles

News Articles - Ensuring Sustained Coverage of EU Affairs

Contributors:

EURACTIV Poland, EURACTIV Slovakia, EURACTIV Czechia, EURACTIV Romania and Delfi Latvia

Key requirements:

- **Length:** between 290 and 400 words (approximately 300 words)
- **Language:** Written in the language of the respective partner.
- **Publication:** Published on the partners' national platforms.

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

- **Social Media Promotion:** Links shared across both partner and eastflank.eu social media channels.
- **Tagging:** All social media posts must be tagged with #eastflankeureporting.
- **Reporting:** Links to the published articles and social media posts must be entered into the Partners' Charts for project reporting.

Description and topics:

News articles are central to the project, offering regular, timely, and accessible updates on current EU developments, especially those impacting the Eastern Flank. Coverage includes major institutional events, EU and national political decisions, and legislative milestones. Relevant national politics, like elections or debates, are also covered. These brief updates can later form the basis for in-depth articles.

In-depth Articles - Providing Context, Insight, and Democratic Value

Contributors: All partners

Key requirements:

- **Length:** between 700 and 1000 words (approximately 800 words)
- **Language:** Must be written in partner languages and then translated into English.
- **Approval:** The English version requires approval from the Editorial Coordination Board.
- **Publication:** Published on national partner websites and eastflank.eu.
- **Promotion:** Links shared across all partners' and the project's social media channels.
- **Reporting:** Links to the published articles and social media posts must be recorded in the Partners' Charts for reporting purposes.

Description and topics:

This format delivers analytical and explanatory journalism, aiming to offer a profound understanding of political, legislative, and societal developments within the EU and its Eastern Flank. It encompasses two primary editorial types.

- mixed-format articles that combine news reporting with contextual background;
- in-depth analytical articles that explore phenomena in detail.

Articles feature expert insights, political commentary, or stakeholder statements.

Collaborative Article Series – Cross-border Analysis of Shared Challenges

Contributors: All partners

Key requirements:

- **Length:** Between 1500 and 2000 words or longer if needed (Partners contributions approximately 500 words).
- **Coordination:** A lead editor is assigned monthly to oversee the final article.
- **Language:**
 - All contributions must be submitted in English.
 - The final report is written in English and subsequently translated into national languages.
 - The English version requires approval from the Editorial Coordination Board.
- **Visuals:** Must include an infographic or interactive map produced by EURACTIV.pl.
- **Dissemination:**
 - Publication on partners' websites and eastflank.eu.
 - Promotion via social media.
- **Reporting:** Links to the published report and corresponding social media posts must be pasted into the Partners' Charts for reporting purposes.

Description and topics:

The series combines national viewpoints into comparative, cross-border editorial products fostering a shared European public sphere. Initial topics include: energy mix, disinformation, defence spending, Ukraine support, EU funds, armed forces, migration, cohesion policy, media, agriculture, higher education, youth employment, digitalisation, trade balance, industrial capacity, GDP comparisons, and healthcare workforce.

Every article features an infographic or interactive map and forms the basis for a monthly podcast with editors-in-chief.

The Editorial Coordination Board chooses monthly themes. The lead partner develops guiding questions, gathers national inputs, and compiles a structured comparative report. The English version is published on eastflank.eu, followed by translated national versions by partners.

Fake of the Month Series – Systematic Debunking of EU-related Disinformation

Contributors: EURACTIV Poland, EURACTIV Slovakia, EURACTIV Czechia and EURACTIV Romania, Delfi Latvia

Key requirements

- **Length:** Between 500 -700 words (approximately 600 words)
- **Language:** Must be written in the partner language and then translated into English.
- **Approval:** The English version requires approval from the Editorial Coordination Board.
- **Publication:** Articles are to be published on both national websites and eastflank.eu.
- **Promotion:** Links to the articles must be shared on social media.
- **Reporting:** Links to the published articles and corresponding social media posts must be pasted into the Partners' Charts.

Description and topics:

This recurring format exposes and dismantles disinformation, malinformation, and misinformation targeting the EU in participating countries. Each article contains:

- a description of the false claim and its context;
- a fact-based rebuttal, supported by verified data or expert testimony;
- a contextual explanation of why and how the narrative spreads.

Verification procedures include desk research, expert consultations, and fact-checking.

Infographics – Visualising Complexity

Contributors: All partners

Key requirements:

- Must be based directly on the Collaborative Article.
- Required elements: a map or three key data points.
- Designed in English and Polish by EURACTIV.pl.
- Published simultaneously with Collaborative Articles and on eastflank.eu.
- Each partner is responsible for adaptation and localization.
- Promotion will be conducted via social media and newsletters.
- Freely accessible without any registration requirement.

Description and topics:

Infographics are used to visually summarize key findings and cross-country comparisons, turning complex policy content into clear visual narratives. These base versions are adapted by partners to suit national audiences, guaranteeing linguistic and cultural relevance. Additionally, EURACTIV Poland develops interactive maps covering all nine countries when applicable.

EU News from the Frontline — Podcast Series

Contributors:

EURACTIV Poland, EURACTIV Romania, EURACTIV Slovakia, EURACTIV Czechia, Delfi Latvia

Key requirements:

- **Content:** Discussions in English among three senior editors, centered on the Collaborative Article topic.
- **Frequency:** Minimum of one 30-minute episode released per month.
- **Distribution:** Available on eastflank.eu, partner websites, and major podcast platforms.

Description:

This podcast promotes cross-border editorial dialogue. Senior editors discuss monthly topics, contrasting national perspectives, and providing expert insights. Each of the five partners contributes to approximately 14 professionally edited episodes, each featuring a dedicated jingle.

Multilingual Translations — Enhancing Accessibility

Contributors: All partners

Key requirements:

- in-depth Articles and Fake of the Month pieces published in national languages and translated into English
- contributions to Collaborative Articles submitted in English
- final English versions of Collaborative articles translated into national languages by each partner
- infographics translated and adapted by partners
- English texts approved by the Editorial Coordination Board
- all English articles include a link to the original
- all English articles must include freely licensed photo
- all English articles are promoted on Eastern Flank social media.
- EURACTIV Poland publishes translated content on the central platform

- All links to articles and social media posts pasted into Partners' Charts.

Newsletter Integration

- EURACTIV Poland, EURACTIV Slovakia, and EURACTIV Czechia integrate all project content — in-depth articles, news, and debunking — into their existing newsletters.
- These newsletters reach policymakers, journalists, and sector stakeholders and ensure targeted dissemination.

III. Promotion of the project

- Partners promote published content on their national platforms via social media (X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), with at least one post per article on each channel. Content is also shared through national websites and newsletters (EURACTIV.pl, EURACTIV.sk, EURACTIV.cz) for localisation and targeted audience reach.
- Social media activity is platform-specific, leveraging audience insights. Paid promotion may occur during major publication cycles and milestones. Partners will cross-post and collaborate with opinion leaders. Regular contact with EU institutions and NGOs will support outreach within policy circles. Engagement data will be monitored and analyzed to continuously improve the communication strategy. All posts will use the official hashtag **#eastflank**.
- English content on **eastflank.eu** will be promoted via dedicated project social media (FB, IG, X) and a YouTube channel, all adhering to a unified visual identity (logo, orange/navy-blue palette, templates) for consistent tone and messaging. Posts will feature key messages, strong visuals, and audience engagement.
- EURACTIV Poland will develop the Communication & Brand Strategy with partners, defining audiences, mission, and key messages. Common branding rules will apply across all platforms, **however online content outputs are not required to include the EU or project logo**. This applies only to materials that refer directly to the project as such, for example the project website, but not to the content itself (such as articles or podcasts). **In the case of journalistic content, we do not disclose EU support.**
- Each partner must have a transparency page detailing funding, editorial structures, and complaint procedures. An "About the project" section will explain the funding source and link to EU programmes.
- The shared platform and partner sites offer a contact point for reporting errors, requesting corrections, or submitting feedback.

Promotion of specific content types:

- News: single graphic / simple post with link to the article
- Collaborative: single graphic and/ or reel (video)
- In-depth articles: single graphic / simple post with link to the article
- Fake of the month: simple post with link to the article/Instagram carousel (several graphic segments)
- Infographics: interactive graphics

Partners' Communication Tasks

- adding a link to eastflank.eu on your national websites (e.g., in the “about the project” section), with a note that the portal has launched and a brief description of its focus
- creating posts on your national social media, following the guidelines above
- liking and commenting on posts with articles from other partners/EastFlank channels to boost each other’s reach
- creating collaborative posts by tagging partners
- sharing posts from other partners and East Flank

It's especially important to like, comment on, and share posts from official project-related channels —Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X— under the East Flank brand.

East Flank social media :

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586677447895>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/eastflank/>
- X: https://x.com/East_Flank
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/east-flank>
- Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/east-flank>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@EastFlank>