

**To the Head of the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies  
of the University of Tartu**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Application**

I hereby apply for authorization for my MA thesis, titled *Media Representations of European Union's International 'Actorness' by EU 'Outsiders': Case Study of RT (English), BBC World, CNN International, and Al Jazeera*, to be defended in order to obtain an MA Degree in EU-Russian Studies.

**Thesis Title:** *Media Representations of European Union's International 'Actorness' by EU 'Outsiders': Case Study of RT (English), BBC World, CNN International, and Al Jazeera*

**Appendices:**

1. 1 hard copy of the MA thesis, bound
2. Annotation of MA thesis in English
3. Supervisor's agreement regarding entitlement to defense to be sent electronically to Academic Affair Specialist

**Name:** Heidi Ann Erbsen

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** *Media Representations of European Union's International 'Actorness' by EU 'Outsiders': Case Study of RT (English), BBC World, CNN International, and Al Jazeera*

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**Reviewer:** Thomas Linsenmaier

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## **SUMMARY OF THE MA THESIS**

In a globalized world, the European Union is among an increasing number of organizations struggling to define themselves as international actors capable of solving various trans-national problems. Considering cross-border flows of information, the actorness of any organization is no longer determined solely from within, but is shaped by 'outsider' perceptions. These external perceptions differ based on national perspectives of 'closeness to' or 'distance from' an organization in geographical, economic, political, military, and cultural terms.

As a main source of information representing how an actor is perceived by various outsiders, international news media can be used to better understand how an organization is perceived in comparison with other actors and in connection to which issues. Therefore, this study investigates the online content of four regionally diverse international news media outlets (CNN International, BBC World, RT English, and Al Jazeera English) to understand how the EU as an institution is represented in comparison with 'EU Member States' or 'Europe'. The two-step content analysis of the headlines related to the EU helps to show how or whether the EU is present as an international actor in these outlets, which issues are linked in reporting to the EU, and how positively or negatively the EU is depicted. Considering the increasing amount of research concerning the 'discursive construction' of the EU, the content analysis of this study aims to better clarify and identify *what these different discourses are* as a first level to understanding how these discourses each work to construct the organization.

The multi-level content analysis revealed that there are similar models of the EU's representation in international news. In the reporting of all four outlets in this study, the EU was, to a greater or lesser extent: 'a non-existent or secondary actor' to specific regions, countries, or individuals, a '(un)reliable partner or actor' in international agreements or problem solving, and a 'bureaucratic/complicated/misunderstood organization' in terms of function. While the EU is not represented any more or less negatively in the news than 'Europe' or specific 'Member States', it is linked to different issues in each outlet.

The representations of the EU in each of these outlets reveals that the relative 'outsiderness' of a country *does in fact* influence how the EU is represented in international news reporting of a domestically based news outlet. An analysis of reporting on the issues of 'Syria', 'Calais (Migration)', and 'CETA' shows how the closer a country is to the EU in terms of 'economics', 'politics', 'military', and 'culture' in addition to 'geography', the more present the organization will be in the international news reporting of a domestic outlet. Furthermore, the EU and related actors are also reported on more specifically the 'closer' an issue is to the host country of an international news outlet and more generally the 'further' an issue is from its shared common interest.

While this study has taken the first step in identifying the external discourses defining the EU's 'actorness', further research is needed to understand how these distinct discourses have developed over time and are likely to develop in the future. A greater understanding of how the EU and other international actors are perceived as capable of solving or handling specific international problems depending on the relative 'outsiderness' will help these organizations choose the best course of action to maintain stability in a globalized world.

**University of Tartu**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies**

**MA Thesis:**  
**Heidi Erbsen**

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**Supervisor: Külliki Seppel, PhD**  
**Co-supervisor: Stefano Braghioli, MA**

**Tartu 2016**

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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/ signature of author /

**The defense will take place on:** June 9, 2017

**At:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In auditorium number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Opponent:** Thomas Linsenmaier, M.A. PhD Candidate at Tartu University

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**Supervised by:** Külliki Seppel, PhD,

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# **Media Projections of European Union International ‘Actorness’ by EU ‘Outsiders’: Case Study of RT (English), BBC World, CNN International, and Al Jazeera**

**Heidi Erbsen**

## **Abstract**

In a globalized world, the European Union is among an increasing number of organizations struggling to define themselves as international actors capable of solving various trans-national problems. Considering cross-border flows of information, the actorness of any organization is no longer determined solely from within, but is shaped by ‘outsider’ perceptions. These external perceptions differ based on national perspectives of ‘closeness to’ or ‘distance from’ an organization in geographical, economic, political, military, and cultural terms.

As a main source of information representing how an actor is perceived by various outsiders, international news media can be used to better understand how an organization is perceived in comparison with other actors and in connection to which issues. Therefore, this study investigates the online content of four regionally diverse international news media outlets (CNN International, BBC World, RT English, and Al Jazeera English) to understand how the EU as an institution is represented in comparison with ‘EU Member States’ or ‘Europe’. The two-step content analysis of the headlines related to the EU helps to show how or whether the EU is present as an international actor in these outlets, which issues are linked in reporting to the EU, and how positively or negatively the EU is depicted. Considering the increasing amount of research concerning the ‘discursive construction’ of the EU, the content analysis of this study aims to better clarify and identify *what these different discourses are* as a first level to understanding how these discourses each work to construct the organization.

Drawing on prior research of ‘outside’ perceptions of the EU and considering the relation between the international news media’s framing of issues and relative ‘outsiderness’ of a media outlet, this research sheds light on how the EU as an organization is viewed in its actor capabilities in various regions. A clearer picture of how the EU is portrayed in

international news helps the organization understand how its actions are recognized externally and bridge the gap between internal definition and external recognition.

The multi-level content analysis revealed that there are similar models of the EU's representation in international news. In the reporting of all four outlets in this study, the EU was, to a greater or lesser extent: 'a non-existent or secondary actor' to specific regions, countries, or individuals, a '(un)reliable partner or actor' in international agreements or problem solving, and a 'bureaucratic/complicated/misunderstood organization' in terms of function. While the EU is not represented any more or less negatively in the news than 'Europe' or specific 'Member States', it is linked to different issues in each outlet.

The representations of the EU in each of these outlets reveals that the relative 'outsiderness' of a country *does in fact* influence how the EU is represented in international news reporting of a domestically based news outlet. An analysis of reporting on the issues of 'Syria', 'Calais (Migration)', and 'CETA' shows how the closer a country is to the EU in terms of 'economics', 'politics', 'military', and 'culture' in addition to 'geography', the more present the organization will be in the international news reporting of a domestic outlet. Furthermore, the EU and related actors are also reported on more specifically the 'closer' an issue is to the host country of an international news outlet and more generally the 'further' an issue is from its shared common interest. When the country is relatively distant to the EU in terms of common interest in a particular issue, the organization and subsequent actors tend to be more generalized and simplified or even interchangeable with 'Europe' as a whole. Meanwhile, when an issue is of particular importance to a host country, the international news reporting represents specific actors and their roles in the issue more clearly.

While this study has taken the first step in identifying the external discourses defining the EU's 'actorness', further research is needed to understand how these distinct discourses have developed over time and are likely to develop in the future. A greater understanding of how the EU and other international actors are perceived as capable of solving or handling specific international problems depending on the relative 'outsiderness' will help these organizations choose the best course of action to maintain stability in a globalized world.

**Key Words:** Actorness, External Perceptions, International News, European Union



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## TERMS:

EU- European Union

UNSC- United Nations Security Council

ICC- International Criminal Court

CETA- Comprehensive Economic and  
Trade Agreement (between the EU and  
Canada)

TTIP- Transatlantic Trade and Investment  
Partnership

BBC- BBC World

CNN- CNN International

RT- RT English

AL Jazeera- Al Jazeera English

## Chapter One: Introduction

In “The End of Power”, Moises Naim suggests that we are headed towards a world in which “players have enough power to block everyone else’s initiatives but no one has the power to impose its preferred course of action”<sup>1</sup>. The increasingly transnational nature of global issues such as migration, terrorism, climate change and economic stability, has spurred the creation of various international governmental and nongovernmental actors. While these organizations aim to raise global awareness and cooperation to solve such “problems without passports”<sup>2</sup>, Naim’s statement supports that the increase in stakeholders to these problems appears to have complicated rather than facilitated comprehensive solutions. On the one hand, a more diverse range of international organizations can create wider variety of tools and global networks for solving global problems. Paradoxically, the emergence of new actors without a clear sense of legitimacy creates what James Rosenau referred to as “a ‘crazy quilt’ of authority that is constantly shifting” and limiting the problem-solving capabilities of these actors in the current system of global governance<sup>3</sup>.

The European Union (EU) is one such organization which, since its conception, has constantly changed and evolved to address global challenges of the day. As a ‘different’, ‘hybrid’, or ‘new’ kind of power, the EU’s methods of ‘normative power’<sup>4</sup> appear to be an alternative form of problem solving in a world where traditional power and authority are harder to wield. Its promotion of norms<sup>5</sup> as the fundamental basis for its economic and political partnerships has raised the question of whether the EU could have a unique role as a ‘global actor’ or leader in addressing modern transnational crises. In an increasingly globalized world however, the authority of any international organization depends not only on members and actions, but also on the perceived legitimacy of the organization by ‘outsiders’. Therefore the success of a new form of power in resolving global crises relies on

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<sup>1</sup> Naim, 2014; 18

<sup>2</sup> Qtd. in Weiss Et al. in reference to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s address: “What is the International Community” in 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Weiss Et al, 2013; 20. James N. Rosenau quoted from “Toward on Ontology for Global Governance”, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> See Manners “Normative power Europe” 2002

<sup>5</sup> According to Manners the EU’s normative power basis consists of five ‘core’ norms (peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights) and four minor norms (social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance).

the precondition that the outside world recognizes the legitimacy of the organization in the first place.

Increased transnational relations and intercommunication mean that ‘outsiders’ to an organization can no longer be defined in solely geographical terms; rather, ‘outsider’ perceptions must be analyzed with the understanding that there are various levels of ‘outsiderness’ which shape perceptions. While there are countless variables for measuring the relative closeness to or distance from an organization, this study focuses on common interests associated with the geographical proximity, economics, political relations, military cooperation, and cultural similarities of the host country for international news outlets to the EU. Globalization and a subsequent change in the system of global governance have altered and arguably increased the role of the media, particularly international news media, as a facilitator, shaper, or enforcer of perceptions of an organization. Solutions to global problems can no longer be debated in isolation by national governments but must be ‘mediated’ and ‘communicated’ by a growing number of institutions including international media<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, this study views international news media as having a distinct, yet largely unexplored role in understanding the perceived legitimacy of the EU as a global actor. An assessment of the role in global problem solving that four regionally diverse, online, international news outlets: BBC World, CNN International, RT (English) and Al Jazeera (English), attribute to the EU as an organization sheds light on the organization’s current and future potential to overcome Naim’s ‘end of power’ and help resolve increasingly transnational crises.

### **Main Questions and Hypothesis**

By drawing on prior research of ‘external’ perceptions of the EU and considering the relation between the international media’s framing of issues and the relative ‘outsiderness’ of the media outlet, this research aims to better understand the role of modern international news media in depicting intergovernmental organizations. The theoretical investigations into actorness, ‘external perceptions’, and media framing in section two aims to answer the more general question: **How does the relative ‘outsiderness’ of news outlets’ host countries to**

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<sup>6</sup> Hajarvard (2008) and others have researched the role that media plays in shaping modern institutions and societal structures in general and argue that the media is a leading factor shaping modern society.

**the EU affect international news representations of the organization in terms of its projected ability to resolve or alleviate conflict?** This section will combine and build upon the previous investigations of ‘EU actorness’ outlined in the literature review and link these findings to understand how the relative ‘outsiderness’ in terms of geography, economics, political relations, military cooperation, and culture influence the four news outlets in this study. A juxtaposition of these three fields of research will be used to support the hypothesis of this paper that *there is an existing link between domestic framing of international news and external perceptions of the actorness of an international organization.*

Sections three and four will then investigate more specifically **how the representation of the EU as an actor in international news reporting differs based on a media outlet’s relative distance from or closeness to the EU.** First, a breakdown of the ‘outsiderness’ of the four international news outlets in this study (CNN International, BBC World, RT (English) and Al Jazeera (English)) will help show these outlets’ relative ‘closeness to’ or ‘distance from’ the EU. Then, a two-step content analysis of these outlets will be used to draw conclusions about how the EU is represented as a global actor in international news. The main focuses here will be to assess whether the EU is represented as a present and positive or influential actor, a negative yet influential actor, or a largely non-present and secondary actor.

In the first level of analysis the headlines of these four outlets will be collected for a 60-day period and coded according to location, actor, issue, and positive or negative connotations towards the EU. The initial headline coding aims to assess the amount of coverage the organization receives, compared with other actors, and in relation to which issues. This initial data collection will be utilized to compare the amount of coverage and issues associated with the EU in each outlet to determine the main hypothesis of this paper that: *the relative closeness of a media outlet does influence how it represents the EU in international news.*

This hypothesis follows the logic of Larsen<sup>7</sup> that *a correlation exists between how the EU is perceived externally and the relative ‘closeness’ of the international media outlet not*

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<sup>7</sup> Larsen, 2014; 206 states: “there are significant geographical differences in the extent to which the EU is seen as a normative power”.

*only geographically but also in terms of common interests with the EU.* Furthermore it aims to support Lucarelli's<sup>8</sup> hypothesis *that there is a distinct difference in how the EU is perceived in conjunction with 'Europe' and individual member states.* Based on the initial findings of chapters two and three, the second level of content analysis in chapter four will aim to confirm how these news outlets report on specific EU-related issues in the text of news articles. For the coding period of October 10, 2016 to December 16, 2016, three topics will be selected based on common headline reporting among all outlets. The articles related to the topics selected will be analyzed using a qualitative content analysis to assess how the EU is represented as an actor in these issues. This deeper level of analysis will also help to confirm the findings from the previous sections or expose contradictions in the coverage of these events.

Finally, chapter five will combine the theoretical framework with the two-staged content analysis to draw more general conclusions about how relative 'outsiderness' influences the online content of international news outlets. This comparison will aim to clearly identify how these 'external' perceptions differ and lay a foundation for a future, deeper investigations into specific 'discourses' defining the EU and other international actors. A more specific assessment of how the EU is represented, and in relation to which issues, will aid to a better understanding of how the organization is interpreted as a new kind of global actor in solving international crisis. Furthermore, it will help to more clearly understand how the EU is presented as an actor in diverse regional discourses and propose models for further investigations of external perceptions of the EU's 'actorness'. As Anne-Marie Slaughter reminds us, international organizations are "the glue binding the contemporary system of global governance and government networks, both horizontal and vertical".<sup>9</sup> International organizations, especially the EU, cannot facilitate the resolution of current and future crises unless the glue holding them together is trusted by all parties interacting in a globalized world.

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<sup>8</sup> Lucarelli, 2014; 12 emphasizes the importance of further understanding "relation between images of the EU and images of Europe...without simply conflating them"

<sup>9</sup> Qtd. in Weiss Et al, 2014; 18

## Literature Review:

In addition to a content analysis of real-time online reporting by international news agencies, this study will draw on literature regarding actorness of international organizations, external perceptions of the EU, and media theory, in order to bridge the existing gaps between these three areas. Each of these fields has been researched individually and even juxtaposed through various content and discursive analytical processes; however, previous studies have yet to achieve the linear link between the three which this study aims to construct.

Considering the increasingly transnational nature of crises in Europe and its neighborhood, several studies have been dedicated to analyzing the EU as an economic, military, humanitarian, environmental, or diplomatic ‘actor’. An overview of these studies by Niemann and Bretherton shows how EU actorness has been defined and analyzed in terms of effectiveness, capabilities, and cohesiveness, in the organization’s “goal attainment” or “problem solving”<sup>10</sup>. These previous studies and the current study agree with da Conceição-Heldt and Meunier’s findings that actor capacity in global governance is achieved in the sequential order of authority, autonomy, external recognition and internal cohesion<sup>11</sup>. While attempting to numerically assess or define the actorness of the EU is beyond the scope of this study, a look into ‘external recognition’ or perception of the EU by four diverse international news outlets can provide a solid foundation for better understanding where the EU is in this sequence.

Recent studies investigating the actorness of the EU have taken two broader approaches. The first approach stems from Manner’s notion of ‘Normative Power Europe’ (NPE) which argues that the EU is a new kind of power with ‘normative’ aims to construct an ideal coexistence through closer forms of economic and humanitarian cooperation. This approach defines the EU as a specific *type* of actor with goals to overcome the obstacles to ‘harmonious coexistence’ which render traditional forms of hard power unnecessary. Critics of Manner’s particular definition of NPE have highlighted the lack of a comprehensive

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<sup>10</sup> Niemann and Bretherton, 2013; 267 apply Oran Young’s *Protecting the Environment in a Stateless Society* to better conceptualize the actorness and effectiveness of the EU as an organization.

<sup>11</sup> da Conceição-Heldt and Meunier, 2014 build their definition on findings from Jupille and Caporaso’s (1998) “States, agency, and rules: the European Union in global environmental politics”.

international<sup>12</sup> or even European understanding<sup>13</sup> of the term ‘normative’. Others, such as Diez (2013) and Orbie and Khorana (2015), contend that normative power, along with other forms of soft power, “should not be understood in juxtaposition to hard power, but as a continuation of it by different means”<sup>14</sup>.

Rather than defining the EU’s *type* of power, the second approach investigates how the organization is perceived by outside actors to better understand:

- 1) the organization’s own self representation
- 2) the impact on EU/European identity formation
- 3) the EU’s role in the world
- 4) conditions for EU’s policies to be effective
- 5) how to overcome Eurocentrism in literature regarding the EU.<sup>15</sup>

This study focuses primarily on the second and third of these and aims to address the “interactive nature of perceptions”, which Lucarelli suggests is underdeveloped in current external perception literature.

Despite the fact that these two fields have evolved rather independently, several studies have highlighted their interconnectedness. In his comparative literature review, Larsen suggested that these two fields are inherently inseparable in that “the precondition for the EU to be a special normative power is that the outside world attributes a distinct role to the Union”<sup>16</sup>. Most recently, Chaban and Holland also noted that the gap between these two fields “is somewhat surprising given that NPE deals with the flow of information and ideas towards the EU as a particular kind of international actor”.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the type of actor the EU is willing and able to present itself as depends a great deal on how its various international actions are perceived. Moreover, Niemann and Bretherton note that “approaches such as those on civilian and NPE are built on the assumption that the EU possesses sufficient actorhood” in other areas such as “trade, development, climate diplomacy and

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<sup>12</sup> Forsberg, 2011

<sup>13</sup> Headley, 2015 and Hansen and Marsh, 2015

<sup>14</sup> Qtd. in Rostoks, 2015; 16

<sup>15</sup> Lucarelli, 2014

<sup>16</sup> Larsen, 2014; 897

<sup>17</sup> Chaban and Holland, 2015; 286



CFSP/Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)".<sup>18</sup> Keeping in mind that "to be a normative power is often times less important than to *appear* to be a normative power",<sup>19</sup> the content analysis of the representation of transnational issues in this study aims to understand how EU actorness is represented in international news.

Two basic approaches, issue based and region based, have been taken to assess how the EU's actorness is perceived by external actors. Öner's (2014) analyzation of German political elite and civil society perceptions towards Turkey's EU membership and Torney's (2014) examination of Chinese and Indian perceptions on the EU's role in climate change both fall into the issue specific approach. While these studies draw very concrete conclusions about specific issues, they are limited in that they do not consider how these issues rank in terms of importance in their country of study or in broader international terms. The regional approach has been taken up by Fioramonti and Poletti (2008) in South America, Secrieru (2010) in Russia, Chaban and Holland (2013) in the Asia-Pacific region, and Elgström and Chaban (2014) in China, India, and Russia. While many of these studies have also incorporated issue specific analysis within these regions, they do not fully consider how the EU ranks as an actor in comparison with individual member states nor do they assess which national perceptions become more salient on a broader scale.

According to Elgström and Chaban's overview of the methodological approaches to studying external perceptions of the EU, "external perceptions can refer to elites or public opinion, as well as to media imagery"<sup>20</sup>. Several studies, such as Secrieru's (2010), Chaban Et al's. (2013) and Öner's (2014), have aimed to understand external perceptions through interviews with elites or analysis of official statements and documents. Others, such as the European Commission (2014) and Didelon-Loiseau and Grasland (2014) have used public surveys or polls to understand how the public views the organization. Further studies conducted by Chaban and Holland (2014), Chaban and Elgström (2014) and Lucarelli and Fioramonti (2009) have incorporated domestic media projections of the EU as an actor in their investigations. While mass media has long been seen as a mediator between elite and

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<sup>18</sup> Niemann and Bretherton, 2013; 266

<sup>19</sup> Qtd. in Chaban and Holland, 2015; 287 from Kavalski, 2013; 250. "The struggle for recognition of normative powers: normative power Europe and normative power China in Context"

<sup>20</sup> Elgström and Chaban, 2015; 18

public opinions<sup>21</sup>, it is still, “the least researched dimension found in the studies of EU external perceptions”<sup>22</sup>. Many of these studies, such as Wanta Et al. (2004) and Golan (2006), have investigated the relation between media coverage and public perceptions. Others, such as Vliegthart et al. (2016) have further analyzed media issue salience and political actions; however, most of these previous studies have considered only the first level of media agenda (what issues are most present) and the second level (how these issues are reflected). Only recently have media scholars such as Guo and McCombs (2011) and Vu, et al. (2014) begun to investigate a third level of agenda theory in which the media agenda is “a bundle of networked elements”<sup>23</sup> which better reflects that no issues exist in complete isolation. Even fewer scholars have applied all three levels of agenda setting to studies on EU external perceptions as this study aims to do.

Finally, and most significantly, previous studies on external perceptions of the EU have analyzed the EU primarily as an organization. The content analysis framework of this study compares perceptions of the EU with Europe as a region and individual member states to better understand how the EU measures in comparison. According to Lucarelli, “the greatest methodological difficulty is to design research that will capture the relationship between images of Europe and of the EU”.<sup>24</sup> In addition to capturing this relationship, this study aims to analyze the type of actor the EU is seen to be on a broader, international scale by using the most issue salient, and wide reaching online news outlets.

A recent trend to analyze the EU through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has also spurred several studies into “demonstrating the means through which it is being discursively constructed”<sup>25</sup>. A plethora of investigations, particularly into the EU’s foreign policy (Aydın-Düzgit (2016), Teló (2014)), common security and defense policy (Poopuu (2015)), and international intervention capabilities (Teti (2012)) have aimed to construct and deconstruct the EU as a particular type of actor. Following the logic that “discourses produce precondition

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<sup>21</sup> Cohen (1963), McCombs and Shaw (1972), Dearing and Rogers (1996), Bennett and Entman (2001), Perloff (2013), Neuman Et al. (2014)

<sup>22</sup> Elgström and Chaban, 2015; 27

<sup>23</sup> Vu, Et al, 2014; 672

<sup>24</sup> Lucarelli, 2014; 12

<sup>25</sup> Aydın-Düzgit, 2016; 134

for action”<sup>26</sup> these studies have taken similar strives to understand how the EU is viewed and represented as an actor. Whereas these studies have focused primarily on understanding how the EU is constructed from within by EU member states and EU institutions, the current study aims to identify the discourses outside of the EU. According to Kevin C. Dunn and Iver B. Neumann in *Undertaking discourse analysis for social research*, ‘identifying the discourse’ is the first step in understanding how an actor is discursively understood in diverse settings and under unique circumstances.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, by identifying the link between international news outlets, ‘external perceptions’, and ‘actorness’, this study hopes not only to understand how the EU is viewed as an actor, but also to contribute to the further identifications of ‘external’ discourses regarding the EU.

The typology of EU power, or actorness, has been the subject of debate long before Manners coined the term ‘Normative Power Europe’ in 2002. With the ever changing international system and improvements to modern technology, this debate can be expected to continue as long as the EU exists as an international organization. Considering the various transnational crisis facing Europe, the following research aims to fill an important gap in understanding how the EU is viewed internationally in its ability to resolve these conflicts and what power EU institutions are perceived to have in comparison to those of individual member states.

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<sup>26</sup> Dunn and Neumann, 2016

<sup>27</sup> Dunn and Neumann, 2016; 105 state that “because discourse analysis relies heavily on interpretation, one of the first steps must be to identify and locate discourses under investigation”.

Likewise, Aydın-Düzgit, 2016 notes that “The first step involves outlining the main content of the themes and discourses, namely the discourse topics in the narrative on a given subject (Van Dijk 1984: 56)”.

## Chapter 2: Juxtaposing Theories

As seen from a review of previous studies, defining and assessing the ‘global actorness’ of one international organization is not a straightforward task. This study agrees that ‘actor capacity in global governance’ can be conceptualized by the authority, autonomy, external recognition, and internal cohesion of any particular organization. While da Conceição-Heldt and Meunier contend that global actorness depends on the particular sequential order listed, attempts to measure the EU’s actorness have shown that this order is interactive rather than strictly linear and varies depending on policy area. In the case of the EU, global actorness has been measured through assessments of the organization’s ‘effectiveness’ or ‘capabilities’ to act in various areas of international relations. Effectiveness, according to Niemann and Bretherton, is most often categorized as either ‘goal attainment’ or ‘problem solving’. While the analysis of international news in this study aims mainly to understand perceptions of the latter, it considers the main goal of the EU to maintain a ‘harmonious coexistence’.

Capabilities, on the other hand, focus primarily on coherence<sup>28</sup>. In the case of the EU, this refers to the vertical coherence of the EU institutions and member states and the horizontal coherence of policies across all levels. While a greater internal cohesion within the EU *does* increase the organization’s ability to act (or decide not to act), it does not ensure that its actions will be effective. As da Conceição-Heldt and Meunier show in their comparison of ‘Internal Cohesiveness and External Effectiveness of the EU in Global Governance’, “low internal cohesiveness can co-exist with high, medium or low effectiveness depending on the policy areas and the bargaining configuration” and that “high cohesiveness can even be associated with low effectiveness.” In a comparative assessment of the EU as an actor in the Arabellions, Börzel, et al. also equate capabilities with coherence and notes that multi-level government systems such as the EU are no more incoherent in their actions than single state democratic actors or even authoritarian actors.

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<sup>28</sup> Niemann and Bretherton (2015) 267 note that capabilities was originally understood in the three categories of ‘consistency, coherence, and the availability of policy instruments’ but cite Bretherton and Vogler in their revised focus.

The effectiveness of an actor therefore depends not only on capabilities, but increasingly on expectations and external recognition. In “Contenting metaphors of the European Union as a Global Actor”, Esther Barbé et al. propose three different ways the EU, as a multilateral institution, is referred to in its position in global governance based on a discourse analysis of speeches given by EU officials. These include the EU as a MODEL (or ‘rule-setter’ for global norms of democracy and human rights) a PLAYER (‘emerging power’ capable of ‘negotiating’ the terms of globalization), or INSTRUMENT (‘friend’ or collaborator with other institutions of global governance)<sup>29</sup>. While these metaphors imply a logical framework for assessing whether the EU is leading by example in terms of conflict-resolution (model), negotiating solutions with other major powers (player), or acting as an institutional tool of global governance to facilitate cooperation (instrument), they represent how the EU looks at itself rather than how it is viewed by its outside partners. This ‘Eurocentric’ approach to understanding the EU has been criticized as being one of the main weaknesses of the organization’s ability to promote itself as any specific type of actor. In an analysis of perceptions of EU mediation by the Iranian and Lebanese public, elite, and media, Ruth Hanau Santini, et al. note that “the EU fails to be recognized as an effective actor on the world stage both due to its lack of internal unity and its Eurocentric attitude”.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, while the EU’s promotion of ‘norms’ creates expectations from within the EU and abroad to ‘act’ to defend these norms, these actions are not equally recognized across all policy areas or regions.

The current literature on EU external perceptions has gone a long way in better understanding how the EU is recognized as a global actor in various fields and diverse regions. Based on the assumption that “EU perceptions can refer to elites, media or public opinion”<sup>31</sup>, comprehensive studies have compared elite, media, and public perceptions on the EU in virtually every region.<sup>32</sup> These studies and the current work aim to better

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<sup>29</sup> Barbé et al’s (2015) findings are based on a discourse analysis of 35 speeches from various EU officials retrieved in the Commission and Council on-line archives.

<sup>30</sup> Hanau Santini, et al. 2009; 55

<sup>31</sup> Bachmann and Müller, 2015; 8

<sup>32</sup> Three larger studies include: *External Perceptions of the European Union as a Global Actor* as part of the GARNET project funded by the European Commission, Various regional studies by Natalia Chaban et al., and

understand outsiders' perceptions of the EU's legitimacy, credibility, and (in)coherence<sup>33</sup> as a global actor. Regional studies regarding EU perceptions by Natalia Chaban, Et. al. note that public perceptions of EU are issue specific and vary by regional relations<sup>34</sup>. Diverse national perspectives and geographical, economic, and political, "closeness to" or "distance from" Europe can cause different depictions of the EU's actorness as an organization. Building on this research, this study aims to draw a link between previously studied public perceptions and international news. In addition to considering geographical, economic, and political relations with the EU, this study considers cultural and military relations separately to draw conclusions about the implications of the agendas of international news.

It is important to note that there are different levels of 'outsiderness' and various variables for understanding the relative 'outsiderness' of any actor. As Hjarvard points out: "As globalization progresses, more and more regions and cultures will be affected by mediatization, but there may be considerable differences in the influence mediatization exerts".<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the variables of geography, economics (trade), politics (political relations), military (military cooperation), and culture are first used as a conceptual basis in this study for understanding the relative 'outsiderness' of each of these outlets with the EU. Figure 2.1 (below) has been constructed to reflect the relative 'closeness' or 'distance' of the regional host of each outlet to the EU in terms of the variables previously mentioned, 0 being the closest and 30 being the furthest.

Based on these variables, it is clear that each of these international news outlet, despite its international, online content, has a unique set of gatekeepers which influence how international content is framed and received by their respective audiences. While this study

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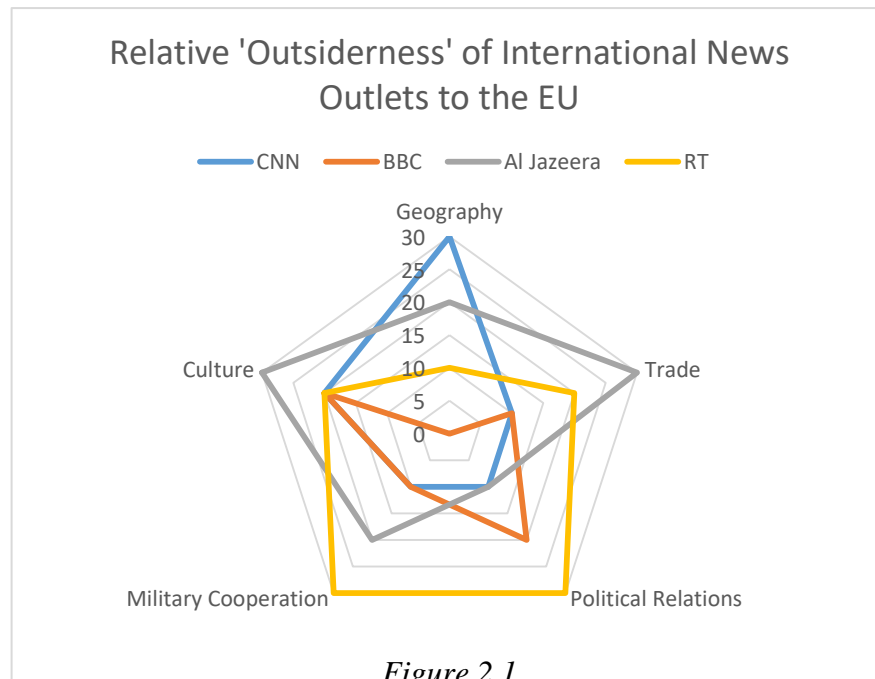
*Perceptions of the EU in Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa* as a part of the larger collection *Europe in a Global Context*.

<sup>33</sup> Elgström and Chaban in "Studying External Perceptions of the EU: Conceptual and Methodological Approaches" as an introductory chapter to Bachmann and Müller, 2016; 21.

<sup>34</sup> These findings are based on several consecutive studies of EU perceptions from in depth interviews with elites in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa (2013), China, India, and Russia (2014), Asia (2015), and Eastern-Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa (2015).

<sup>35</sup> Hjarvard, 113

cannot assess the direct influence these outlets have on the public perceptions of the EU, it can draw conclusions about the role of international news in shaping the EU's 'actorness'.



\*Data determined based on an original analysis of current relations between country or regional host of the news outlets and the EU. Culture here is considered in terms of language, religion, and historical tradition, 'Trade' is considered a reflection of 'Economic relations', 'Military Cooperation' and 'Political Relations' have been determined based on current international developments and geography is a mathematical measurement.

The content analysis of the outlets in this study aims to understand more specifically the external perceptions of the EU's legitimacy, credibility, and coherence in solving global problems and maintaining peace and stability in Europe. Rather than investigating the elite, media, or public perceptions of any particular region individually, this study employs a study of international news media to bridge the gap between a 'Eurocentric' image of the EU and studies of external perception.

On the one hand, online international news media bridges the gaps vertically in understanding elite and public perceptions of an organization. On the other hand, it acts as an interactive, horizontal mode of communication between domestic 'gatekeepers' both within and outside of the EU. Important to note, is that for the purpose of this study, 'elites' refers to various groups of decisions makers and actors in the broader political sphere while

‘public’ refers to those receiving, interpreting, and legitimizing the decision of actors. An increasing amount of attention has been paid to the influence media has on society through the notion of ‘mediatization’. Hjarvard’s theory of mediatization, signifies that the media has, by in large, evolved from a *tool* of political institutions into an independent mediator between various wielders of ‘power’: political, cultural, and social institutions. This mediatization shift “whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a consequence of the growth of the media’s influence”<sup>36</sup> has occurred simultaneously with the changing face of power. Developments in media theory support that the institution of international news media in particular is a multi-directional and interactive one which “increases the awareness and interconnectedness of social and political information and across borders”.<sup>37</sup>

The overall influence of mass media on public opinions and political agendas has long been at the center of media studies. Among these first agenda-setting studies, by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, and James W. Dearing and Everett Rogers, investigated how “mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues.”<sup>38</sup> While traditional media agenda theory attempted to measure political influence on the public via the media,<sup>39</sup> this study considers modern news media as an institutional intermediary *between* the political sphere and the public. The content analysis of international news items from the four outlets of this study considers three levels of agenda setting. The first level of agenda setting refers to the *salience*, or the amount of coverage a country, organization, or issue receives compared to other actors. In the case of this study, the salience of the EU as an organization relative to ‘Europe’, individuals, or EU member states will help in understanding how visible the organization is. As social analyst David Weaver suggests, “Concentration by the media over time on relatively few issues leads to the public perceiving these issues as more salient or more

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<sup>36</sup> Hjarvard, 2008; 114

<sup>37</sup> Clausen, 2004; 27

<sup>38</sup> McCombs and Shaw, 1972; 177

<sup>39</sup> Tewksbury and Rittenberg, 2012; 3 contend that: “The dominant media of the 20th century operated within a system of centralized, largely one-way news dissemination. To consume the news was to ingest a diet of information selected by news professionals.”



important than other issues”<sup>40</sup>. Conversely, lack of representation of an actor or issue can cause it to fall by the wayside and be considered of little importance.

The second level of agenda setting, called framing, involves the "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution".<sup>41</sup> This study's investigations into which 'topics' the EU is related to in international news media and how positively or negatively it is viewed in relation to these topics is aimed at analyzing this level of agenda setting. Finally, more recent investigations into a third level of agenda setting have investigated the 'salience of interrelationships between issues and/or attributes'<sup>42</sup> from the first two levels which better shape understanding of 'networked-bundles' of information. A final cross-analysis of various topics in relation to the EU will help to draw clearer conclusions about how the EU and EU-related topics are represented or 'bundled' together.

The main conclusions from previous agenda setting research are that the media agenda serves as a link between public opinions and political decision making. While the famous quote by classical American author and political analyst Walter Lippmann that: "the press serves as our window on the distant political world" still holds true, the institutionalization of media and globalization in general has made this window an increasingly two-way process. This process can be understood through a combination of gatekeeping and convergence theories in modern media. Traditional gatekeeping theory is "the process by which the billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transformed into the hundreds of messages that reach a given person"<sup>43</sup>. Easier flows of information and an increase in the number of outlets on a local, domestic, or international level mean that there are various levels of 'gatekeepers' which interact with each other as well the informative audiences in a system of 'networked gatekeeping'. While Stephen Reese and Pamela Shoemaker's "Hierarchy on Influences Model" provides a basis for

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<sup>40</sup> Perloff, 2014

<sup>41</sup> Entman, 2004; 5

<sup>42</sup> Vu, et al, 2014; 669.

<sup>43</sup> Shoemaker's Gatekeeping theory from 2001 is quoted in Barzilai-Nohon, 2008; 1494.

understanding the factors influencing gatekeeping at five different levels, they contend that “these factors interact across levels and compare across different contexts”.<sup>44</sup>

Despite a diversification in the number and type of media outlets, several studies confirm that the news and information that reaches the public, particularly international news, tends to be homogenous and ‘redundant’ rather than equally diverse. In “Inter-Media Agenda Setting and Global News Coverage”, Guy Golan supports previous findings that there is a significant correlation between international news coverage and domestic evening news broadcasts. He contends that: “international news coverage may not result only from gatekeepers’ assessment of country-based or event-based variables but rather might be influenced by the international news agendas of other media sources.”<sup>45</sup> Conversely, the translation of various international news outlets into English have made it possible to disseminate local and global news alike and allow for a ‘localization’ of international news as well as an internationalization of local news<sup>46</sup>. The interactivity of media networks, means that international news media is a reflector as well as a driver of diverse national and public opinions. Therefore, the outlets analyzed in this study are investigated to understand how they mediate an understanding of the EU as an institution rather than influence political, cultural, or social messages between and among international, national, and local institutions.

Considering an increase in the amount of online news sources, special attention has also been paid to the networked agenda setting of online networks or platforms in the form of ‘Big data’ research. The main aim of recent investigations into complex online networks has been to understand: “who sets the agenda in the digital age?”<sup>47</sup> These studies, by Neumann et. al, and others support that online news media is particularly reflective of issues represented in other media outlets. A study on the third-level agenda setting in the media by Hong Tein Vu, Lei Guo and Maxwell E. McCombs found that “media network agendas

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<sup>44</sup> Reece and Shoemaker, 2016; 397. The *Hierarchy of Influences Model* includes five levels of influence: The individual level, routines level, organizational level, the institutional level, and the social system level. A more in-depth analysis of each of these levels in juxtaposition with networked gatekeeping theory can be found in Reece, 2016 and Barzilai-Nohon, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Golan, 2006; 325

<sup>46</sup> Bielsa, 2008; 209 refers to Beck’s term ‘cosmopolitan empathy’ from *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006)

<sup>47</sup> Neuman, et al. define ‘Big Data’ as the simultaneous development of traditional media and social media in a complex online network.

constructed by online news media had the strongest correlations with those constructed by other media outlets”.<sup>48</sup> Further comparisons of the agenda setting capability of online news outlets and social media platforms concludes that “attentional spikes of the blogs, tweets, and discussion board posts are as likely to precede the traditional media as to follow it”.<sup>49</sup>

Based on these findings, the current study analyzes the online content of four international news outlets to understand how the EU is framed as an actor in solving global problems. Despite the fact that global convergence theory suggests that the *topics* of international news have become more homogenous with technological advances, international news outlets are still being influenced on all levels, even if this influence comes ‘in different locations and sequences’. Reece and Shoemaker remind us that “hierarchical power—not the least of which the State’s—is still with us and reasserting itself in many areas, even if deployed in a dramatically restructured news environment.”<sup>50</sup> Moreover, international news is often either written or translated by domestic journalists meaning that “the foreign news we receive is filtered through domestic voices, views and frames” or faced with “insurmountable barriers to access foreign events.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the topics of international news reported in various outlets are influenced by how domestic actors view and represent international events; in turn, domestic voices reframe international news stories for local audiences creating and reinforcing the nexus between international news creation and domestic reinforcement and dissemination.

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<sup>48</sup> Vu, et al. 2014; 682. Findings are based on a comparison of second source polls and databases for the media content of the top issues covered in four dozen news outlets in the United States.

<sup>49</sup> Neuman, et al. 2014; 210

<sup>50</sup> Reece and Shoemaker, 2016; 397

<sup>51</sup> Bielsa, 2016; 205 specifies three barriers to international reporting as language, lack of local connections, and circumstances of danger or war where first hand access to the conflict zone is unrealistic.

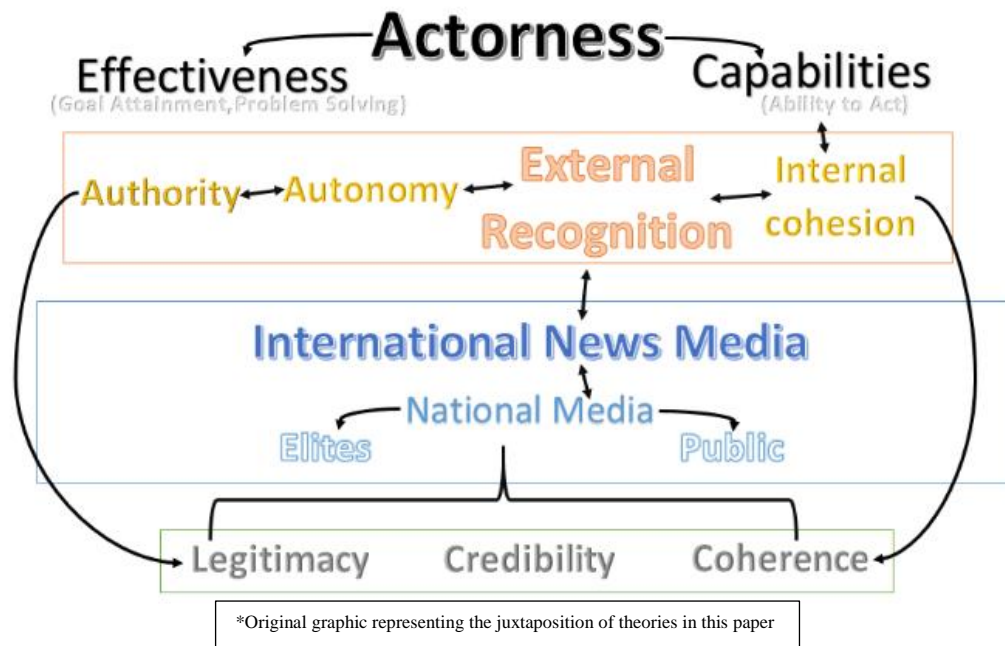


Figure 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Previous investigations into perceptions of the EU in media outlets have thus far considered only the most prestigious, *domestic*, newspaper outlets in their media analysis with the hypothesis that these are most likely to “influence images of and attitudes to the EU among the general public, as well as impact other media”.<sup>52</sup> This study combines these investigations into ‘external perceptions’ with studies of ‘networked media agendas’ to understand how internal and external perceptions of an institutions ‘actorness’ interact. A clearer analysis of which issues are bundled together in these perceptions as they become more salient on a broader, international scale can strengthen institutions’ such as the EU’s, ability to act to effectively resolve global problems. While in a modern and increasingly globalized world, the *topics* of news media may be relatively similar in line with media *convergence theory*, the *framing* of topics can influence how actors and issues are perceived by respective audiences.

Considering that the media works by “casting far-away events in frameworks that render these events comprehensible”<sup>53</sup>, this study aims to compare the different frames that

<sup>52</sup> Elgström and Chaban, 2015; 28

<sup>53</sup> Clausen, 2004; 28

shape or make international news ‘comprehensible’ to respective audiences. The different framing of international news events will shed light on **how the relative ‘outsiderness’ of news outlets’ host countries to the EU affects the international news representations of the organization.** The analysis of the domestic factors influencing ‘closeness to’ or ‘distance from’ in comparison with framing of the EU by each of the four outlets in this study will show more precisely **how the representation of the EU as an actor in international news reporting differs based on a media outlet’s relative distance from or closeness to the EU.** Finally, a deeper comparison of the projected relevance of the EU as an actor in relation to specific topics of international news by each of the outlets will aim to draw further conclusions about how these representations differ and define what different discourses are presented in international news. Understanding how the EU is framed by international news media as an actor in solving global problems can help bridge the gaps between previous “eurocentric” and “external perceptions” approaches.

### **Methodology:**

#### ***Description of Outlets***

Drawing on external perceptions (Chaban) and agenda setting literature (Wanta) this study involves a content analysis with emergent coding<sup>54</sup> of headlines from four online international news sources: CNN International (henceforth referred to as simply ‘CNN’), BBC World (henceforth ‘BBC’), RT (English), and Al Jazeera (English). These four outlets were chosen due to their common online format, wide reaching audience, and common use of English language. The regional diversity of these outlets and distinct domestic factors of influence (as outlined in Figure 2.1, pg. 14) further make these four outlets unique in understanding how the ‘EU’ as an actor is shaped in the discourse of online reporting in each. Despite the reporting by these outlets of purely ‘international’ events which transcend national borders, this study agrees that Shoemaker’s hierarchy of influence model is still relevant and that the social system in which international news is produced has some influence on the framing of international events.

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<sup>54</sup> Stemler, 2001; 140 defines ‘emergent coding’ whereas “categories are established following some preliminary examination of the data” as is the case for both levels of analysis in this study.

CNN and BBC are both global news outlets with multiple international and domestic offices which cater to diverse regions and report in multiple languages. Regardless of the fact that CNN is a private company while BBC is publically owned, the structure of these outlets which targets diverse audiences through various forms of media, grants regional offices and branches a certain level of autonomy<sup>55</sup>. Historically, CNN was the first news outlets to use satellite technology to broadcast ‘live coverage’ and ‘breaking news’ in various international conflicts in the 1990’s. This resulted in the agency’s increased influence on various national outlets which has continued structurally today. BBC, as “one of the most trusted news organizations worldwide”<sup>56</sup>, has also established several regional and domestic offices which compete with local outlets.

Furthermore, the use of English as a native language in the reporting of both outlets has two important stylistic effects on the way in which headlines are conveyed. First being that the headlines listed on the main page differ from the actual title of the article. For example, on CNN’s online news page the headline reading “EU Canada deal is back on” is linked to a full story with the title “Europe rescues its huge free trade deal with Canada”<sup>57</sup>. While this is a common trend in both CNN and BBC, the headlines by RT and Al Jazeera are shown as they appear in the title of the subsequent articles. Secondly, the headlines in CNN and BBC tend to be vaguer in their reporting of ‘where’ an action takes place and ‘who’ is the specific actor. One additional distinction between BBC World reporting and CNN International, is that the former does not generally include issues related to the UK in its ‘World’ section. CNN on the other hand, includes stories about the ‘United States’ equally alongside other international content in its ‘International Edition’.

In contrast, RT and Al Jazeera are state owned companies with a more direct relationship to national sponsors. In the case of RT, the aim of international reporting in English (among other languages) reflects geopolitical concerns of the Russian Federation. The use of foreign languages is not aimed at Russian audiences, but rather at supporting a

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<sup>55</sup> As noted by a respondent to Ingrid Volkmer’s investigations in *The Global Public Sphere*: “you get CNN International, CNN domestic, BBC World, BBC Prime, BBC Select, BBC 24 - Al Jazeera is the same anywhere in the world.” (qtd. 151)

<sup>56</sup> Volkmer; 2014; 156

<sup>57</sup> <http://money.cnn.com/2016/10/27/news/economy/eu-canada-trade-deal-belgium/index.html>

Russian brand abroad. As Vlad Strukov explains in *Russian Geopolitics in the Age of New Media*, “Just like other international media operating in the post-broadcast era, RT faces the challenge of maintaining national attachment in the context of global media flows”.<sup>58</sup> Conversely, Al Jazeera aims to inform ‘international’ audiences in order to “link the Arab region as well as the diaspora through the delivery of the same content”.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the use of English here was meant to include and connect members of the Arab diaspora living abroad regardless of current location or language. As can be seen from a brief comparison of these outlets, each are influenced by distinct factors in their production of international content. While this study does not aim to draw conclusions about or assess the level of influence by specific actors on international news content, a basic understanding that differences do exist is necessary<sup>60</sup>.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, differences also exist among these outlets in terms of relative ‘outsiderness’ to the EU. CNN and Al Jazeera were selected because of their purely international focus and particular distance from the EU geographically. This geographical distance is balanced by the relative proximity of RT and the BBC. The fact that BBC’s home studio is in the current territory of a EU member country does not exclude it as an ‘outsider’; rather, the political distance of the UK as a member state in the EU allow the outlet and its subsequent gate keepers to be influenced more by external factors than internal ones. Similarly, in spite of sharing a common border with the EU, strained international relations between Russian Federation and the EU must also be considered when measuring ‘outsiderness’. Finally, while CNN and BBC use English as the a native language, RT and Al Jazeera reporting is done in the context of a foreign language meaning that headlines and stories are subjected to borrowing of texts originally written in English or a modification of texts from domestic languages<sup>61</sup>. Despite variations in ownership, audience, relative

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<sup>58</sup> Strukov, 2016; 191

<sup>59</sup> Volkmer, 2014; 151.

<sup>60</sup> Volkmer, 2014; 48. Notes that: “States still aim to retain influence on the complexities of information flows; for example, states protect their information space, enforced through what Price describes as ‘defensiveness’, ‘protection of domestic producers’. Territorial integrity’ and the ‘strengthening of citizenship’ as the ‘relationship between media and borders is always in transition’.”

<sup>61</sup> Bielsa, 2016; 200 states “News translation entails the thoroughgoing modification of texts in order to make them suitable for new audiences.”

‘outsiderness’ to the EU, and language, these outlets all have online platforms with the potential to reach and influence domestic audiences abroad.

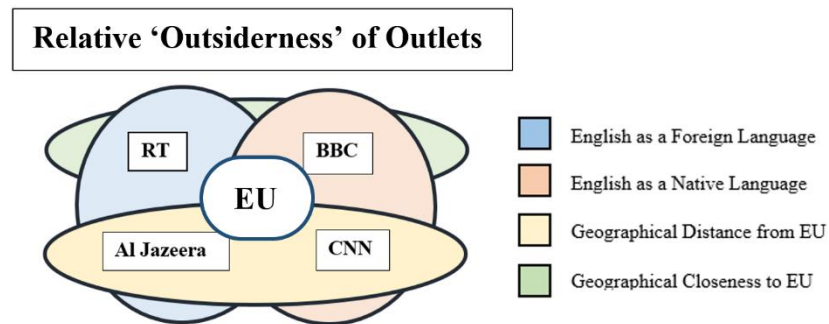


Figure 2.3

### **Data Collection**

For the first level of analysis, the headlines were collected from each of the outlets every day Monday through Friday at the same time each day during the selected time period of October 10, 2016 to December 16, 2016. The headlines from CNN (<http://edition.cnn.com/>) and BBC (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world>) were collected from the ‘International News Edition’ and World News tabs respectively while RT (<https://www.rt.com/news/>) and Al Jazeera (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/>) headlines were collected from the English version webpages. For all of the outlets, only headlines included in the central section of the main page were stored, excluding sidebar stories and opt-editorials in each outlet. One common feature of RT and Al Jazeera is that they both include ‘more’ and ‘read more’ buttons on the main page to show older articles. These options were selected once for each outlet. All outlets also shared a common feature of ‘similar stories’ (CNN and BBC), a news line (RT), and ‘related stories’ (Al Jazeera) which were included in the collection because of their influence on the visibility of particular issues.

Each day during the selected timeframe, roughly 15-20 headlines were collected from each outlet and stored in an excel spreadsheet. If the same headline was featured two days in a row, or even in the same section, the headline was recorded twice and this was documented with screen shots. When special sub-headings replaced the original ones included in the study, the articles under these subheadings were recorded and screen shots were also taken to document these changes. The fact that headline articles are taken in real time on a



systematic basis allows a direct view of which information is available at the time of media consumption rather than which media is stored in news outlet's archives.

The time period of two months was selected as a significant enough time to understand how the EU is represented in each outlet. One of the key components of this study is that it should be replicable in any timeframe to reflect the role of online international news media as an institutional means of information mediation;<sup>62</sup> however, the particular timeframe of October 10<sup>th</sup> to December 16<sup>th</sup> was interesting in terms of international news regarding the EU due to the international trade deals negotiated by the EU, post-Brexit negotiations, continuing migration policy implementation, and ongoing interventions and conflict prevention in the Middle East. These, and other unforeseen developments in international relationships or election politics of the United States may shift the focus of the EU in this time-period; however the framing of these events should remain consistent with the EU's externally recognized 'actorness' and be useful for future studies. After the collection period of October 10 to December 16, 2016, the headlines were reorganized and coded according to the pre-set coding frame (see Figures 2.4-2.7 below).

### *Process of Analysis*

Prior to the content analysis of the outlets themselves, a brief comparison of the outlets selected in this study was made to understand their relative 'closeness to' or 'distance from' the EU. This analysis compared five variables of proximity: geographical, political, economic, military, and cultural. While this comparison is rather broad and general, it is an essential component for conceptualizing the following content analysis and understanding the larger research question: **How does the relative 'outsiderness' of news outlets' host countries to the EU affect international news representations of the organization in terms of its projected ability to resolve or alleviate conflict?**

After graphing a general picture of the proximity of the four outlets in this study, a content analysis of these outlets was conducted. Content analysis took place in a two-step process: First, assessing the headlines themselves to determine the projected importance of

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<sup>62</sup> Elo, 2014; 2 cites Lincoln and Guba (1985) in designing their framework to assess the trustworthiness of content analysis through credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. According to their interpretation "dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions"

the EU as an international actor, type of EU issues reported, and the conveyed connotations of the headlines relating to the EU. Second, analyzing and comparing three issues with similarly themed headlines from each source to determine: in text notation of EU as an actor in dealing with international issues and in text connotation of EU actorness in terms of “conflict” or “resolution”.

The first stage of the coding frame was developed prior to headline collection to include coding for 1) Location, 2) EU actors, 3) EU internal and external issues, and 4) connotations towards conflict resolution or dissolution. These categories were selected to draw conclusions pertaining to the underlying research question of **how the representation of the EU as an actor in international news reporting differs based on a media outlet’s relative distance from or closeness to the EU**. For each level of analysis the coding frame included numbers 0-9 and further specifications (‘a’- up to ‘cc’). The headlines were all placed in an excel datasheet with the respective dates they were collected and coded first by the numbers for each category. Then they were further specified by letters in a separate column.

At the first stage of coding, all headlines from each outlet were coded according to region of the world that the headline referred to and then more specifically to location (see Figure 2.4 below). To avoid a bias of coverage in Europe that would not necessarily reflect coverage of EU-related issues, particularly in the case of RT’s coverage of Russia-related events, EU and non EU countries were coded separately. Then, only headlines pertaining to ‘Europe EU Countries’ were further coded according to exact location. The goal of the initial ‘Region’ coding was to assess how salient the *region* of EU membership is compared to other world regions. The aim of the ‘Location’ level of coding was to understand exactly how the EU as an institution ranked as a *visible actor* in comparison to other regions, countries, or cities. This level of coding primarily addressed the first level of agenda setting and how present the EU as an actor is compared with individual member states or other organizations.

<b>Region: (To show Europe in relevance to other regions)</b>		
1. <u>Europe EU (related Countries)</u>	4. South America, Central America and the Caribbean	7. Asia
2. <u>Europe Non-EU (non-related) countries</u>	5. Africa (Excluding North Africa)	8. Middle East, North Africa, and Greater Arabia
3. North America	6. Australia and Oceania	9. Unclear/Unknown
<b>Location (Coded for Region:1.A Only):</b>		
1. Europe (as a region)		
2. International Region (Eastern Europe, Nordic Countries, Baltics, Central Europe, Mediterranean, Other)		
3. Country (as a location)	j. France	t. The Netherlands
a. Austria	k. Germany	u. Poland
b. Belgium	l. Greece	v. Portugal
c. Bulgaria	m. Hungary	w. Romania
d. Croatia	n. Ireland	x. Slovakia
e. Cyprus	o. Italy	y. Slovenia
f. Czech Republic	p. Latvia	z. Spain
g. Denmark	q. Lithuania	aa. Sweden
h. Estonia	r. Luxembourg	bb. United Kingdom
i. Finland	s. Malta	cc. Other (NON EU)
4. National Region (Example 'Catalonia' ALSO CODE FOR COUNTRY)		
5. City (ALSO CODE FOR COUNTRY)		
6. Other-Unclear/location not specified (Country alluded to still coded)		

*Figure 2.4 Coding Frame for Location Reported in Headlines*

The second level of coding aimed to investigate who the main ‘actors’ representing the EU were (Figure 2.5). The aim of this portion of coding was to understand ‘who’ or ‘which institution’ was seen as an actor in handling international issues in general. For this level, actors related to the EU were considered to be ‘EU’ (1.a), ‘Brussels’ (1.b), and ‘EU Institution’ (1.c). These figures were considered to understand not only how the EU ranks in terms of main actor but also in cross-coding with other sections to understand the regions and issues in which the EU is viewed to have a more or less significant role.

<b>Actor:</b>	
1. International Organization	3. Terrorist Organization (ISIS)
a. By EU	4. Legal organization or Business
b. Brussels	5. Political Leader/ Public Figures
c. EU Institution (Parliament, Commission, Council, European Central Bank)	a. Current Head of State
d. NATO- (Military)	b. Former head of state
e. UN- (Humanitarian)	c. Other government leader
f. ICC	d. Religious Leader (Vatican)
g. WTO- (Eco Norms)	e. Leader of international Organization
h. IMF- (Development Funds)	f. Other
i. Council of Europe	6. Civilian(s) (Unaffiliated individual ('man'), Scientist/Celebrity, Worker/Business owner, Public official (police, legal, military))
j. EEU	7. Criminal/Terrorist/suspect
k. Other	8. Refugees, Migrants, Asylum Seekers
2. National political or security Organization (Political Party ("EPP") Governmental body (Example "Parliament" 'rebels' 'troops'))	9. Location/Other/Unknown/

*Figure 2.5 Coding Frame for Actor Reported in Headlines*

The ‘Topic’ coding was done in two steps. First headlines where the EU was a main actor (1.a, 1.b, or 1.c) were coded and analyzed, then the rest of the headlines were coded and cross-analyzed with the initial results. The topics were carefully selected prior to the coding process and tested in a pilot coding of a two-week sample from the collected data. The topics were chosen based on the ten goals listed in the Europa publication “The EU in 2015” and the main “Topics of the EU” listed on the European Union’s website and then color-coded according to six categories to help understand the implications of topics related to the EU in international news reporting (see Figure 2.6 below). This step in coding was integral to better understand how the EU is framed as an actor in international news outlets and in relation to which issues. Furthermore, a comparison of which issues are reported with the ‘EU’ as a main actor verses which are reported with a specific “Country” or “Political Leader” as key actors is necessary in understanding the organization’s comparative role as an international actor.

- D. Topic (FIRST CODING ONLY FOR EU)**
1. Humanitarian aid
    - a. Internal for Natural or Mechanical Disasters
    - b. Internal-Made-Inflicted disaster (terrorist Attack)
    - c. External Aid for Natural or Mechanical Disasters
    - d. External Man-Made/inflicted disaster
    - e. External Development Funding/Projects/Support
  2. Migration Refugees
  3. Global Diplomacy
    - a. Meetings between heads of state/public figures
    - b. International bilateral/multilateral agreements/relations between countries
    - c. EU-Member State Relations (Brexit)
    - d. EU-Non EU Member State Relations
    - e. EU-Other international Organization (EU-UN)
    - f. EU Member State- Other International Organization relations (Germany-NATO)
    - g. Partnership Agreements (Eastern Partnership)
    - h. Public/Political Statements
  4. Military
    - a. Debate/Conflict/Movement
    - b. Intervention
  5. Security
    - a. National security (including Technological security, terrorism, other crime)
    - b. Terrorism (otherwise not specified)
    - c. International Security (including Technological security)
  6. Economics
    - a. Internal Market
    - b. TTIP
    - c. EU-Canadian Trade
    - d. Business (UK-RT ban)
    - e. Sanctions
    - f. Social Affairs (Employment, Poverty, Health and sanitation, Internal Migration/mobility)
    - g. Science (Health, Discovery, Technology)
  7. Human Rights (Women’s rights, LGBT, Religious Rights, Race) and Human Security (Treatment of prisoners/torture, Crimes Against Humanity (including War Crimes))
  8. Environment (Pollution, Climate Change, Animal protection, Natural Resources)
  9. Democracy and Governance (Elections, Other)
  10. Interest (Culture, Celebrity, Unexpectedness)

- Color Coded by Category:**
- Red- Humanitarian Aid/Support
  - Dark blue-Global Diplomacy/Politics
  - Brown-Military
  - Blue-Economics
  - Green-Normative Power
  - Black-Interest

Figure 2.6 Coding Frame for Topic Reported in Headlines

Finally the headlines were coded according to the connotations represented towards the main actor or the actor's projected ability to deal with or address a conflict and maintain peace. This level of coding on its own supports an understanding of the second level of agenda setting by the outlets in this study; in conjunction with the previous levels of coding however, it can provide a clearer understanding about the specific areas where the EU is projected positively in terms of actorness verses where it is projected negatively. Headlines which portrayed the actor in both a positive and a negative light were coded as mixed while those representing neutral language or unclear language were also coded accordingly.

<p><b>E. Connotation (Towards the EU or European actor)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Positive</li><li>2. Negative</li><li>3. Mixed</li><li>4. Neutral</li><li>5. Unclear</li></ol>
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*Figure 2.7 Connotations Reported in Headlines*

This first level of analysis gives a snapshot into how the headlines of regionally diverse news outlets frame the EU on the surface in terms of relevance or perceived actorness. To understand this framing on a deeper level, three topics of international news relating to the EU, which were covered by all four outlets during the collection period, are investigated more deeply using a qualitative content analysis of actors, topics, and connotations of the EU as an actor. While the precise topic selected is dependent on international developments during the selected period, criteria for selection includes that all four outlets cover the story. Furthermore an attempt was made to select topics relevant to different spheres of the EU's influence (i.e. economic, military, humanitarian, etc.) The main goal of this level of analysis is to compare findings from the analysis of headlines with this deeper, issue based analysis to confirm a broader depiction of the EU's actorness or highlight contradictions.

Based on the main topics reported on in relation to the EU (Figures 3.2 and 3.3, pg. 36) the three topics of the Military Intervention in Syria, Migration (closing of the Calais ‘Jungle’), and EU-Canada Trade Deal (CETA) were selected for the in-text coding. These three topics are not only related to the main topics reported by all the outlets (migration, economics, military, and global diplomacy) but they are reflective of how the EU is seen as an actor in promoting norms of human rights (Calais ‘Jungle’ and ‘responsibility to protect’ in Syria), leading international trade agreements (CETA), acting as a united military power (Syrian intervention), or leading in global diplomatic decision making (CETA and Syria).

The articles related to these specific topics were first collected in a separate database and then analyzed in three steps. The first step analyzed only the main headlines related to the specific topic and compared how they represented slight differences in reporting. A comparison of the time period when each issue became more salient, or present in reporting, of each outlet was graphed to identify any patterns in when the issue became visible and how long it remained present in the reporting of each outlet. One headline was selected from the time period when the issue was reported on most by each outlet, or the period of issue salience. These headlines were first compared across outlets and issues to understand the nuanced differences in the headline representation of the ‘same’ issue in different outlets. Then, one to three articles were selected from each outlet in relation to each issue to develop a preliminary model for identifying similarities and differences in the reporting of the EU in comparison with individual member states or Europe. In the final analysis, all of the articles related to the three issues were read and investigated for key words or phrases related to the main actors in each. The main goal of this investigation was to find areas of similarity and divergence among the outlets in the reporting on the EU as an actor.

The specific articles selected for this analysis were taken from the selection of all articles related to Europe (EU) as a region for two reasons: Firstly, the fact that the EU as an organization was mentioned significantly less than other Europe (EU) actors (and only three times total in CNN) means that analyzing articles with only EU-related headlines would be limited in perspective and in topics available for analysis. Secondly, considering that the main aim of this study is to analyze how the EU is perceived in comparison with these other

actors, a deeper analysis of how the EU is mentioned as an actor in the regions overall is important in understanding the comparative role it has in these issues.

These two levels of analysis were then compared across the four outlets to draw conclusions about their similarities and differences in external perceptions of the EU and consider what different external discourses exist in the reporting of international news and how these discourses frame the EU as an international actor.

### Chapter 3: Headline analysis

By analyzing the headlines of four online news outlets which project international news in English for broader audiences, this study aims to compare how international news institutions from various regions represent the EU in terms of actorness and take an essential step in identifying the ‘external’ discourses referring to the EU. While each of the outlets in this study has a clear national or regional (in the case of Al Jazeera) base, their international foci and reach exceed traditional, physical boundaries and represent more cultural and/or political ones. Even though the number of total headlines was relatively similar, percentages were still used to clearly understand the amount of coverage the regions, actors, issues, or connotations received in each outlet. The first level of coding, conducted to understand how much the EU-related countries are covered, found a substantial difference in coverage. RT and BBC, which are geographically closer to the territory of the EU, reported significantly more Europe (EU) related news than CNN or Al Jazeera (as seen by Table 3.1 below).

	CNN	BBC	Al Jazeera	RT
Total Headlines	946	777	813	843
EU Related Headlines	113	133	83	305
Percentage of EU	11.95%	17.12%	10.21%	36.18%

*Table 3.1 Headlines Related to the EU*

The fact that headlines could be coded for multiple regions means that the representation of headlines concerning Europe (EU) may be slightly larger when compared with the overall regional coding (Figure 3.1 below). A closer look at the regions covered in the headlines from each online platform show further how the EU as a region ranks in terms of visibility in these headlines.

Despite the primary separation made between EU and Non-EU Europe to avoid the bias of reporting on ‘Russian’ issues by RT, Europe (EU) was the most common region in headlines of RT English reporting. Both Europe EU and Non-EU were covered more by BBC and RT than the other two outlets. In BBC, headlines pertaining to Europe (EU) were secondary to those related to North America. As mentioned in the methodology however,



this could be due to the fact that BBC excludes issues related to the UK in international reporting. While ‘North America’ was still a significant region in the headlines of RT and Al Jazeera, it was secondary in both to the ‘Middle East, North Africa, Greater Arabia’ region. Not surprisingly, ‘North America’ was the most common region in CNN headlines and ‘Middle East, North Africa, Greater Arabia’ was the most common region in Al Jazeera. Headlines related to ‘Asia’ were also notable in all outlets and were comparably more present in Al Jazeera headlines, making up the third largest regional representation in reporting.

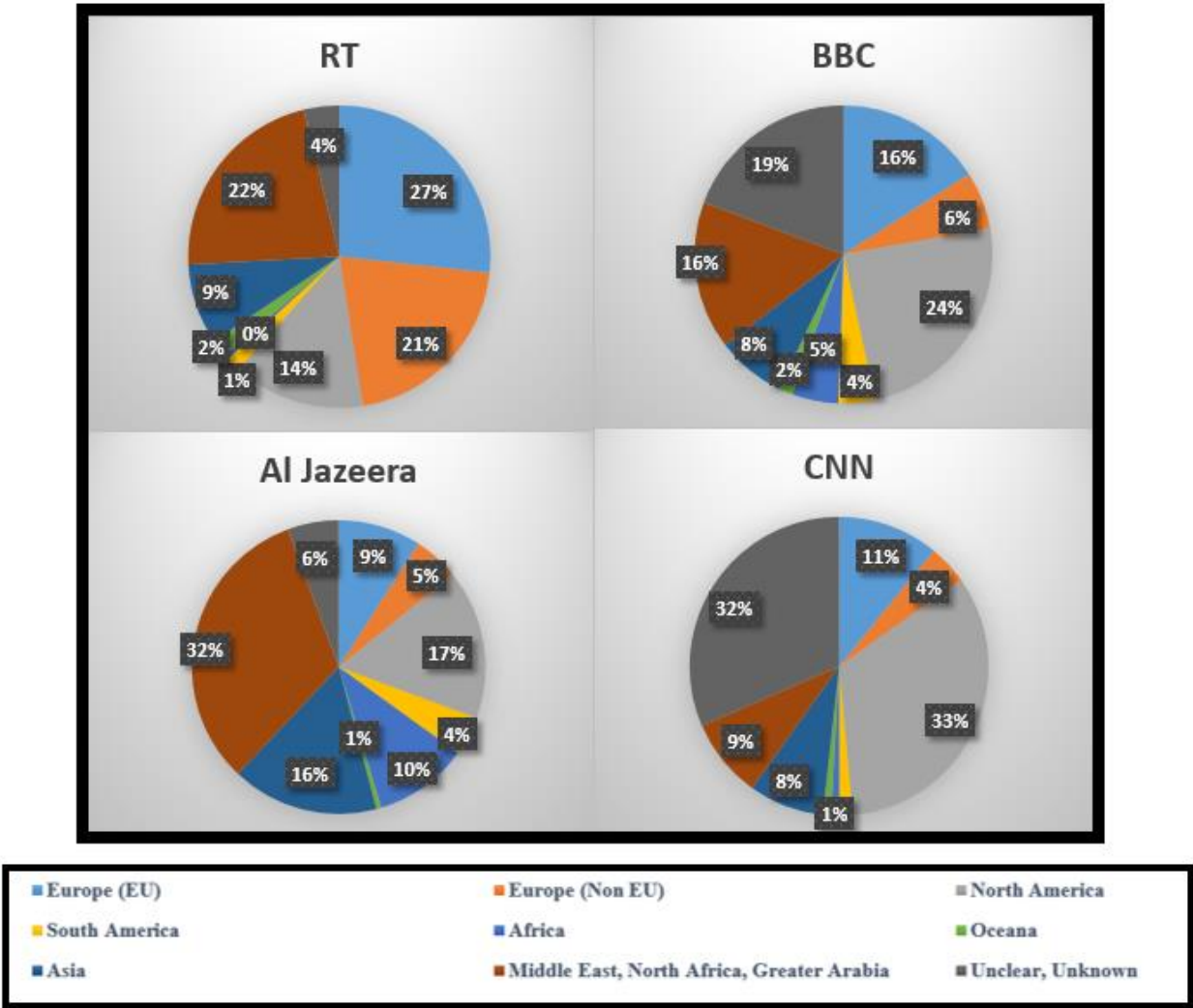


Figure 3.1 Headlines Per Region

Based on this first level of coding, conclusions can be drawn about the effect of geography and language (Figure 2.3, pg. 23) in the salience of the region related to the EU in general. In the two outlets which are geographically closer to the territory of the EU, Europe (EU) headlines were significantly more present in online reporting. Additionally, in CNN and BBC, which both report in English as a native language, headlines concerning ‘North America’ and ‘Unclear, Unknown’ took first and second priority in reporting. The significant number of ‘Unclear, Unknown’ in these two outlets can be attributed to the tendency to shorten the headlines for the main page of the online outlet (as noted previously in the methodology). Meanwhile, in Al Jazeera and RT, the region of ‘North America’, while still significant, was marginally less important in reporting than the ‘Middle East, North Africa, Greater Arabia’ region. A comparison of these results with the geographical proximity of the news outlet’s host country leads to the conclusion that geographical distance and language, to some extent, *do matter*.

In the more specific coding of location, headlines related to only Europe (EU) were coded to better understand how the EU is represented and by whom. Due to the structure of most headlines in the reporting of each outlet to focus on *either* a location *or* actor but not both, the coding scheme yielded large percentages of ‘unspecified’ in terms of location and actors. Because coding did not assume a specific location where it was not mentioned, the coding of location and actors (in Figures 2.4 and 2.5, pg. 26) are not assumed to be mutually exclusive.

First of all, headlines related specifically to Europe (EU) were coded according to location and actor to understand what actors are most present in the reporting of news in the *territory* of the EU. In terms of ‘location’, there was a higher tendency in all the outlets to report issues related to specific countries rather than ‘Europe’ as a whole, regions, or cities (Table 3.2).

	CNN	BBC	Al Jazeera	RT
<b>Location</b>				
<b>Europe</b>	5	6	1	21
	4.24%	4.29%	1.12%	6.29%
<b>Region</b>	1	3	3	6
	0.85%	2.14%	3.37%	1.80%
<b>Country</b>	38	37	45	107
	32.20%	26.43%	50.56%	32.04%
<b>National Region</b>	1	5	0	7
	0.85%	3.57%	0.00%	2.10%
<b>City</b>	12	10	10	43
	10.17%	7.14%	11.24%	12.87%
<b>Location not Specified</b>	61	79	30	150
	51.69%	56.43%	33.71%	44.91%
<b>Total</b>	118	140	89	334

*Table 3.2 Coding Results per Location*

Looking more closely at the breakdown of countries covered in the headlines shows further diversification between the outlets. Of the 28 current EU-Member countries, four (Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, and Luxembourg,) were not explicitly mentioned in the headlines of any of the outlets during the collection period. Because many headlines mentioned more than one country at a time, all countries in the headlines were recorded. The headlines of RT reported on countries in the EU most diversely followed by BBC (Table 3.3). This is not overly surprising considering that these two outlets contained more headlines related to Europe EU in general and are geographically closer to the Europe EU territory.

	CNN	BBC	Al Jazeera	RT	ALL
<b>Total countries mentioned</b>	11	15	11	22	24
<b>Total Mentions of EU Countries</b>	75	96	57	249	477
<b>Percentage mentioned in outlet of total mentioned</b>	44.83%	66.67%	45.83%	91.67%	
<b>Percentage mentioned in outlet of EU countries</b>	37.93%	55.17%	37.93%	75.86%	82.76%

*Table 3.3 Headline Mentions By EU Countries*

Digging deeper, the percentage of coverage each EU country received compared with the total mentions of EU countries in the outlets also helps show which country actors are more visible and thus more notable in each outlet. The three top countries mentioned, France, Germany and The United Kingdom, were fairly consistent with the exception of BBC.<sup>63</sup> What was not entirely consistent was the amount of coverage each country received (Appendix 1).

For example, while the United Kingdom was mentioned in 41.56% of headlines related to the EU in CNN, it was only mentioned by 18.97%, 8.27%, and 8.25% in Al Jazeera, RT and BBC respectively. Furthermore, France was mentioned proportionally more than Germany in all outlets except RT. A combination of these differences give a snapshot of which countries are most important or even worth mentioning in each outlet and sheds light on ‘who’ in terms of country actors represents the Europe (EU) region.

<b><u>Mentions of EU Countries</u></b>				
	<b>CNN</b>	<b>BBC</b>	<b>Al Jazeera</b>	<b>RT</b>
<b>Most Mentioned</b>	United Kingdom	France	France	Germany
<b>Second</b>	France	Germany	United Kingdom	France
<b>Third</b>	Germany	Italy	Germany	United Kingdom
<b>Fourth</b>	Spain	Belgium	Poland	Sweden/Italy
<b>Fifth</b>	Italy	United Kingdom	Italy	The Netherlands
<b>Sixth</b>	Sweden	Spain	Greece/Bulgaria	Belgium

*Table 3.4 Countries by Mention in Headlines*

Looking more specifically at the actors represented in respective headlines related to Europe (EU) shows further differences among the outlet. The first actor of interest in this study was the EU. As seen in Table 3.5, the EU as an institution was mentioned as an actor a fairly insignificant amount in all outlets. The proportionately higher number of headlines where the EU is mentioned an actor in RT reporting make RT a bit of an outlier. While all outlets mentioned the ‘EU’ at least once, RT headlines were alone in mentioning an EU institution (8/61) or referring to ‘Brussels’ (2/61).

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<sup>63</sup> The reason for the United Kingdom not being more commonly mentioned in the headlines may be due to the BBC’s international focus which excludes reporting on the United Kingdom.

	<b>CNN</b>	<b>BBC</b>	<b>AL Jazeera</b>	<b>RT</b>
<b>Total Pertaining to EU Institution</b>	3	14	10	61
<b>Percentage of EU per EU related</b>	2.63%	10.53%	12.05%	20.00%
<b>Percentage of EU per total headlines</b>	0.32%	1.80%	1.23%	7.24%

*Table 3.5 Mentions of EU as an Institution in Headlines*

Al Jazeera also showed slightly larger percentages of EU per Europe (EU) coverage in comparison with BBC. Whereas BBC headlines covered Europe (EU) issues slightly more than Al Jazeera, the latter had a greater tendency to include specifically EU related issues in its headlines regarding the region of interest. While retesting is needed to confirm a pattern in the headlines of these outlets, these initial results hint that Al Jazeera and RT report on the EU as an actor in the Europe (EU) region more prevalently compared with the other two outlets. The second level of analysis will investigate further how present the EU is in the reporting of specific international issues in each outlet.

More prominently mentioned as actors than the EU, were political leaders, civilians, and legal officials or businesses. In Al Jazeera and RT, ‘refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers’ were twice as present in headlines compared with the other two outlets. Meanwhile, BBC was unique in its more prominent reporting of criminals and terrorists and less prominent reporting of legal/business actors in comparison with the other outlets.

<b>Non-EU Actors</b>				
	<b><u>CNN</u></b>	<b><u>BBC</u></b>	<b><u>Al Jazeera</u></b>	<b><u>RT</u></b>
<b>Legal/Business</b>	10	6	8	37
	8.85%	4.51%	9.64%	12.13%
<b>Political Leader</b>	35	24	17	69
	30.97%	18.05%	20.48%	22.62%
<b>Civilian</b>	27	20	9	38
	23.89%	15.04%	10.84%	12.46%
<b>Criminal/Terrorist</b>	3	17	4	15
	2.65%	12.78%	4.82%	4.92%
<b>Refugee, Migrants, Asylum Seeker</b>	7	9	12	43
	6.19%	6.77%	14.46%	14.10%
<b>Other/Unknown</b>	32	55	39	61
	28.32%	41.35%	46.99%	20.00%

*Table 3.6 Non-EU Actors Reported in Headlines*

Looking at the *issues* mentioned in headlines related to Europe (EU) shows first which issues are associated with the region of the EU in general. Then, a comparison of these issues with those directly linked with the EU as an institution shows which issues are associated with the EU versus other actors in the Europe (EU) region. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 below illustrate which issues are portrayed in the headlines of the outlets in this study. While Figure 3.2 highlights which issues all actors (the largest portion country-related) were linked with, Figure 3.3 presents more specifically the issues which were directly linked to the EU.

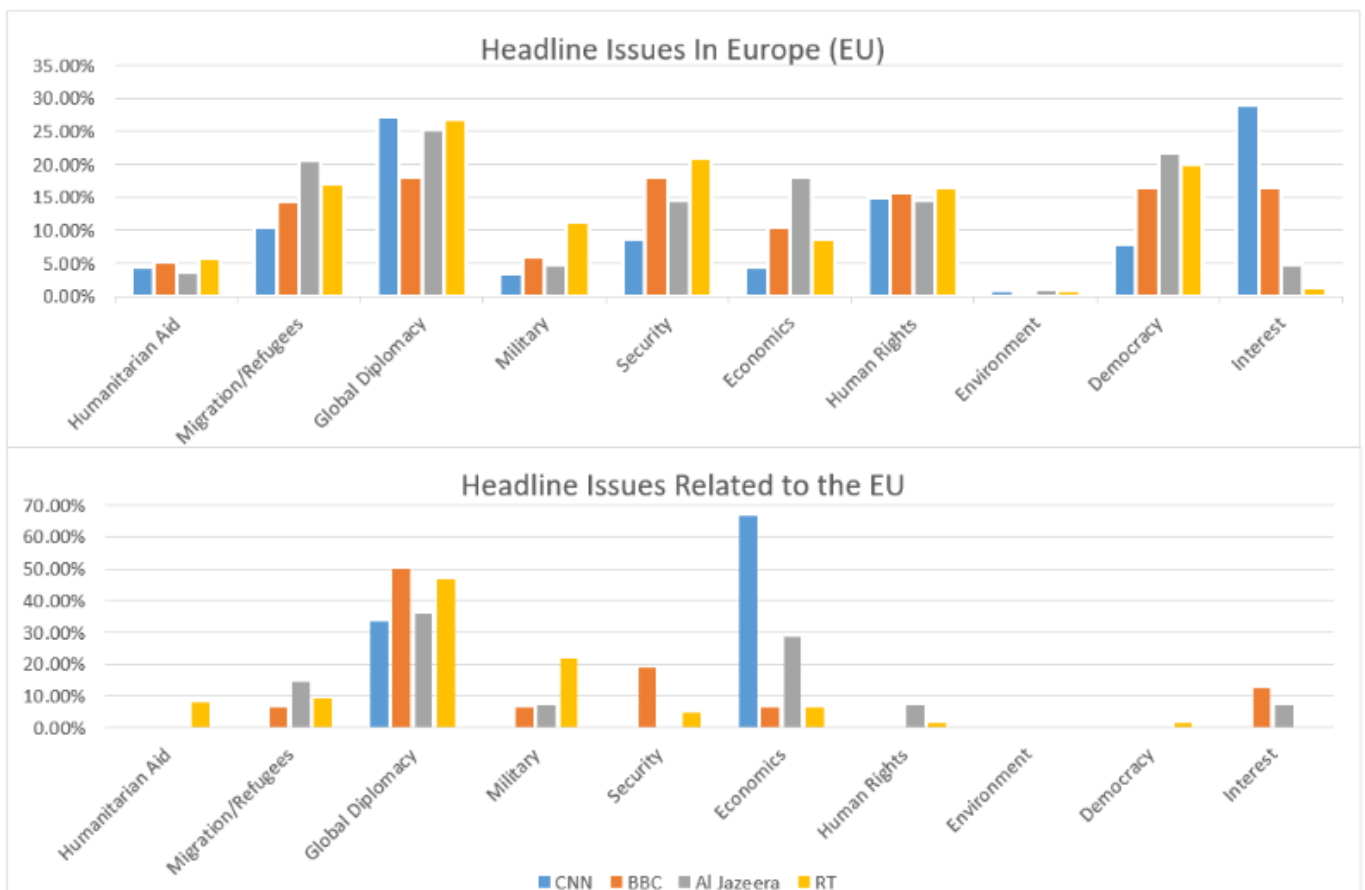


Figure 3.2 and 3.3 Coding of Issues in Reporting of Headlines

A comparison of Europe (EU) and specifically EU related issues reported in the headlines of each outlet revealed some key indicators for the EU as an international actor in comparison with other actors coded in this study. ‘Global Diplomacy’ seemed to be the main

area of comparison between the EU and other actors in the EU (Europe) region. While ‘Military’ issues and issues related to ‘Migration/Refugees’ were mentioned much less in connection with the EU than in the region overall, they were still notably linked to the international organization. Issues such as ‘Security’, ‘Human Rights’, and ‘Democracy’ on the other hand, while of significant importance in the EU (Europe) region, were not linked with the EU specifically.

Figures 3.4 and 3.5 help to further assess how headlines related to Europe (EU) as a region were connoted in comparison to specific EU actors. Here the connotations of the headlines related to Europe (EU) and the EU as an institution were relatively similar which signifies a general pattern in the framing of news headlines.

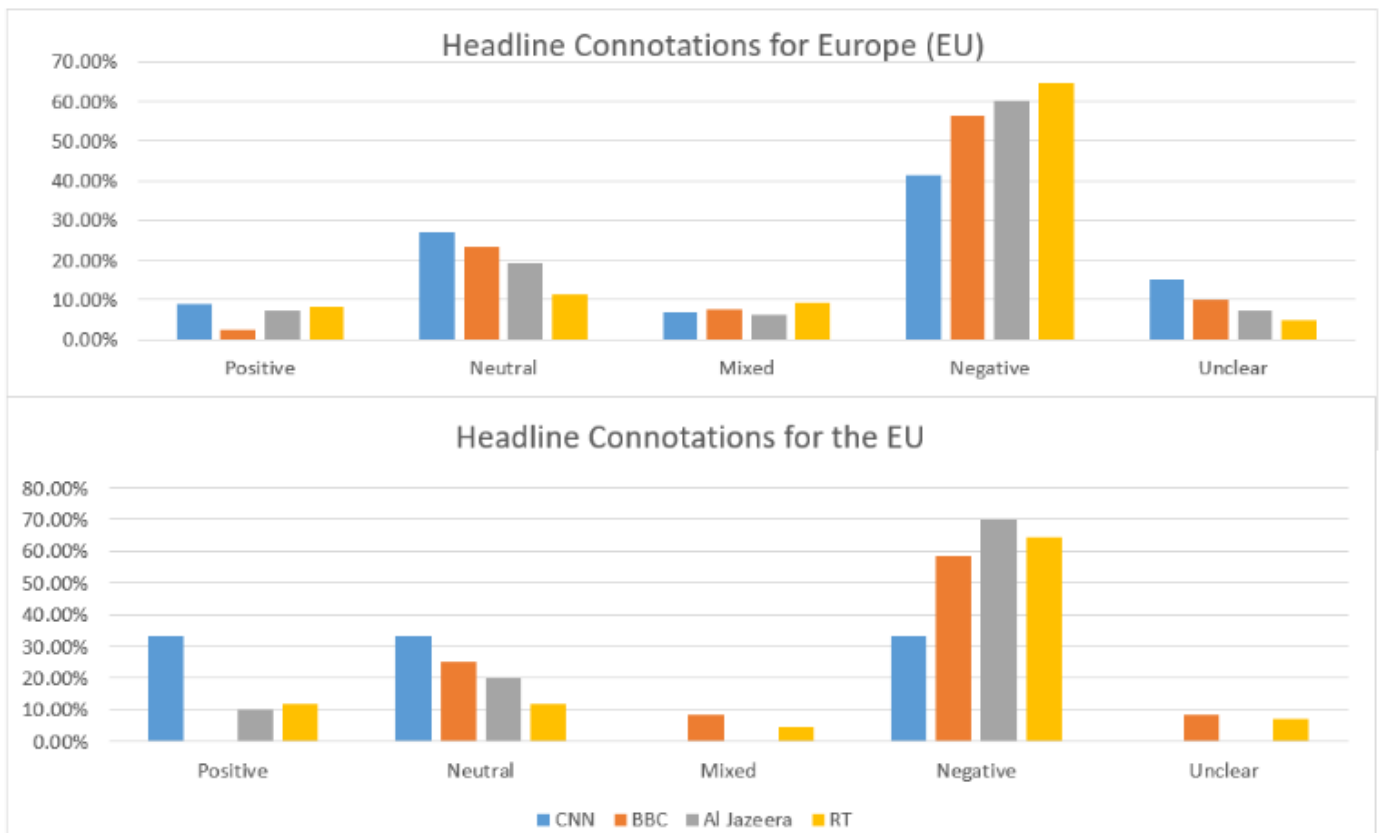


Figure 3.4 and 3.5 Coding of connotations in Reporting of Headlines

Together, Figures 3.2-2.5 suggest that, while the connotations of EU and other actors in the EU (Europe) region are similar, the issues represented as specifically EU-issues in the online reporting of international news outlets differs from issues important to the region at large.

Based on the initial headlines coding and analysis, the EU as an actor is relatively underrepresented in all outlets compared to other actors such as states, political leaders, civilians and businesses. While the territory of Europe (EU) is more present in the international news reporting of those outlets which are geographically closer to the EU, the EU as an organization was mentioned as an actor in headlines proportionally more in Al Jazeera than in the geographically closer “BBC”. Thus, the preliminary results from the first level of coding support Lucarelli’s hypothesis that there is a distinct difference in how the EU is perceived in comparison with ‘Europe’. Considering that specific EU ‘countries’ were mentioned in headlines more than the EU or ‘Europe’ further supports that the EU is viewed differently as an international actor in comparison with individual member states or Europe as a region. The second level of analysis in Chapter 4 aims to further expand on these differences and investigate whether the relative ‘closeness’ of the outlets to the EU, sketched out in Chapter 2, correlates with how the organization is represented in the reporting of specific topics.



## **Chapter 4: In Article Coding and Deeper Understanding**

The topic of ‘Syria’ and the key events of ‘The closing of the Calais migration center’, and the negotiation of ‘CETA’ were selected for deeper analysis because they were key issues in the reporting of each outlet and covered a wide range of broader issues. Despite the fact that ‘Syria’ and ‘Migration’ might be considered larger topics while ‘The closing of Calais’ and ‘Negotiations of CETA’ were events occurring within a specific timeframe, they will all be referred to as simply ‘issues’ or ‘topics’ for simplicity. The topic of ‘Syria’, referring mainly to the international intervention in Syria, was linked to a number of issues such as humanitarian aid, political agreements, military intervention, and migration. Because ‘The closing of the Calais migration center’ was linked more broadly with migration, this topic was considered as a key issue in the reporting of migration in the EU-Europe region overall and investigated how the EU is viewed as an actor in handling the migration crisis in comparison with individual member states or Europe. Finally, the complications in signing the CETA trade deal between the EU and Canada show how the EU is represented as a political and economic actor capable of completing ‘complicated’ and ‘ambitious’ global agreements.

The first in-text qualitative analysis of reporting on Syria, the closing of Calais, and CETA compared 1-3 articles from each outlet on each topic to identify primary differences in the framing of the EU as an actor in relation to each issue. The headlines for each of the articles analyzed can be seen in Table 4.1 (below). Based on these headlines alone, there appears to be a slight difference in how the issues are framed in the reporting of each outlet.

	<b>CNN</b>	<b>BBC</b>	<b>RT</b>	<b>Al Jazeera</b>
<b>Syrian Intervention October 11<sup>th</sup></b>	*Syria war: UK minister says Russia risks ‘pariah’ status  **Vladimir Putin snubs France after Syria war crimes comments	Syria conflict: Russia’s Putin halts France visit amid row	Putin cancels France trip amid rift over Syria	Putin cancels visit to France amid Syria tensions
<b>Closing of Calais Refugee Camp October 26-27</b>	Calais Jungle: France to shut migrant camp ‘by nightfall’	Calais ‘Jungle’ cleared of migrants, French prefect says	Calais migrants attempt to break through police line to return to ‘Jungle’ camp – report	French authorities declare Calais refugee camp empty
<b>CETA October 24</b>	Rogue Belgian region blocks massive EU trade deal	Belgium Walloons block key EU CETA trade deal with Canada		Belgium holds up EU-Canada CETA trade pact
<b>CETA October 27-28</b>	Europe rescues its huge free trade deal with Canada	EU-Canada trade deal: Belgians break CETA deadlock	**Belgium reaches EU-Canada trade deal compromise  **EU-Canada trade deal in shambles with Belgium’s arbitration revision demand	Belgium makes breakthrough in EU-Canada trade deal

\*CNN and BBC headline here are those used in the actual article. These differed slightly from those used on the international news outlet’s homepage.  
 \*\* These Headlines were not originally listed on the respective outlet’s online international news section at the time of collection but were found in archives after the fact. They are listed here to emphasize that there is a selection process which influences which stories become more salient.

*Table 4.1 Headline Selection per Issue*

One of the first noticeable differences is that the most commonly reported topic in relation to Syria by the other three outlets, “Putin cancels visit to France”, was absent from CNN International’s homepage. While headlines in BBC, RT, and Al Jazeera all focused on relations between France and ‘Russia’s Putin’ or ‘Putin’, the initial CNN headline honed in on the statement that ‘Russia risks ‘pariah’ status’ as an actor in Syria. While an archive search yielded a CNN article related directly to Vladimir Putin’s ‘snubbing’ France, this headline is not only less visible to readers, but it also identifies a more direct single conflict between Russia’s leader and France. Whereas CNN refers directly to ‘Vladimir Putin’ as a main actor responding to comments made by France, BBC, RT and Al Jazeera refer to ‘a row’, ‘rift, or ‘tensions’ between the two countries in general. Furthermore, the specific language used in each of the outlets’ headlines plays a role in framing the diplomatic relations involving Syria. In the case of BBC, the use of ‘Russia’s Putin halts’ as opposed to simply ‘Putin cancels’, as used in RT and Al Jazeera, implies more of a need to define ‘Putin’ as the leader of Russia and further suggests that the meeting has been halted rather than entirely canceled. Additionally, the language used to describe the relations between France and

‘Putin’ or ‘Russia’s Putin’ in these issues portrays a slightly different message. While BBC and RT refer to a more specific ‘row’ or ‘rift’ between the two actors over Syria, the Al Jazeera headline alludes to longer and more ongoing ‘tensions’.

Even though headlines selected in relation to the closing of the Calais Jungle covered different phases of the event, the wording in these headlines indicates a divergence in the overall reporting. In CNN and Al Jazeera, ‘France’ and ‘French authorities’ were the main actors; meanwhile, BBC and RT reported on more specific actors such as a ‘French prefect’ and the ‘Calais migrants’ themselves. This main difference in relation to these issues also draws a line between those outlets geographically distant from the EU (CNN and Al Jazeera) and those closer (BBC and RT); the closer outlets reporting on actors more specifically and the more distant ones less specifically. The ‘closeness’ of Al Jazeera to the issue of migration in particular, considering the number of Syrian refugees to Europe, further brings the outlet slightly closer to the Europe (EU) region in terms of common interest in comparison with CNN. Also notable is the focus of RT reporting on the shortcomings of the process of clearing the camp.<sup>64</sup>

The final topic of analysis, which focused on the Canada-EU CETA Agreement, also highlighted some key differences. In RT, no reference to CETA was made in the outlet’s online homepage during the collection period. Additional searches of RT’s database yielded comparatively fewer results pertaining to the deal than headlines collected from the other outlets during the collection period. This lack of reporting by RT in comparison with the other outlets signifies a divide in issues of importance among the outlets. Taking a closer look at the actors represented in CETA headlines also reflects ‘who’ is important in negotiating this ‘massive’ or ‘key’ trade deal. Most notably is that CNN headlines refer to the ‘EU’ and ‘Europe’ almost interchangeably while the other outlets are consistent in naming the EU as the main negotiator of the deal. In the case of CNN and BBC, the main actor is a ‘Rogue Belgian region’ or the ‘Belgium Walloons’. In RT and Al Jazeera however, ‘Belgium’ in general is the main actor which ‘holds up’ the ‘trade pact’. Canada’s

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<sup>64</sup> All eight of the RT headlines related directly to Calais focused on conflicts with closing the camp.

geographical proximity to the US and similar negotiations with TTIP<sup>65</sup> accounts for the more present and detailed reporting of this economic issue. Conversely, the distance of RT and Al Jazeera from this issue in terms of interest are reflected in the lack of reporting on the issue by RT and the more general overview by Al Jazeera.

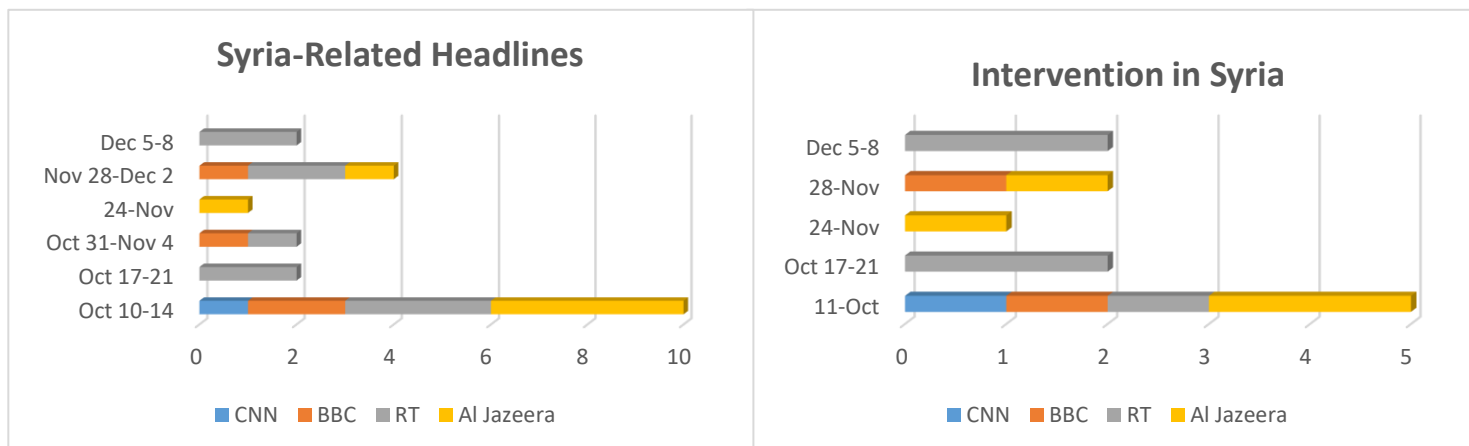
In the final reading of all three issues, all articles in each outlet pertaining to ‘Syria’, ‘Calais’ (considering Migration at large), and ‘CETA’ were analyzed to draw final conclusions about how the EU is reflected in the articles of each outlet. The order in which these topics are analyzed here is based on the time period in which each topic became salient, or most visible, in the reporting of the outlets in this study.

### ***Syrian Intervention***

Of the three issues of in depth analysis, ‘Syria’ was the most prevalent and consistently mentioned throughout the collection period. The first headlines related to ‘Syria’ were collected on October 10<sup>th</sup> and the last ones were collected December 8<sup>th</sup> and only about half of the headlines referring to ‘Syria’ were directly related to military intervention. Around the same time as issues of intervention became more visible, headlines related to ‘Syrian Refugees’ living in third countries, ‘Syrian with IS link’, or ‘Syrian Bomb Suspect’ also became more prevalent. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below show the timeframe when ‘Syria’ became more salient (left), or visible in the reporting of the outlets of this study, in comparison to when issues related directly to the intervention in Syria were reported on (right).

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<sup>65</sup> The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative (<https://ustr.gov/ttip>), “an ambitious, comprehensive, and high-standard trade and investment agreement being negotiated between the United States and the European Union”. This agreement has caused similar controversy to the CETA agreement being negotiated with Canada.



Figures 4.1 and 4.2 'Syria' Issue Period of Salience

Since CNN reported very little on the Syria conflict or related topics in general, it is important to highlight the relative distance of the outlet from this issue. The small amount of information surrounding the conflict did not mention the EU or Europe as actors. Rather, they focused on political leaders, primarily the UK's Foreign Minister Boris Johnson and France's President Francois Hollande as the main actors using the ICC and UNSC to address war crimes in Syria. The articles focused mainly on political tensions between countries, namely France and Russia, over a UNSC resolution put forth by France and Spain. CNN reporting was unique in mentioning 'Spain' as a country actor in negotiations and US Secretary of State John Kerry as a key figure in initiating European countries to act.

BBC mentioned French leader Francois Hollande as a main actor and Boris Johnson to a lesser extent. While BBC focused primarily on France as a key actor in drafting a UNSC resolution in Syria, the UN, Germany, various aid organizations, and 'UK forces' were also mentioned as actors in the conflict. The UN and a number of aid organizations were mentioned in BBC reporting as sources identifying ongoing conflict or areas for future risk in Syria. Whereas France was seen mainly as a political actor, 'UK forces' were represented as the ones delivering humanitarian aid in conflict zones. Germany, on the other hand, received only a minor amount of attention in relation to the country's handling of asylum seekers.

In RT, political disputes between France (or Paris) and Russia (Moscow) were connected more broadly with relations between Russia and the west<sup>66</sup>. Even though France and Hollande were still represented as political actors, they were seen to be acting alongside other European leaders. Angela Merkel and Germany played a much stronger role in RT reporting in relation to Syria than the other outlets. Merkel was mentioned as a key actor in considering ‘new European Union economic sanctions on Russia’ for war crimes in Syria and Germany was cited as a main destination for Syrian refugees. Once again, RT reporting was the most diverse in linking Syria with the widest variety of actors and topics. RT was alone in reporting in mentioning EU High Representative Federica Mogherini as a key figure in cooperation between the EU and Russia in Syria. It was also the only outlet to link specific events in the Syrian conflict with ‘terrorist threats in Europe’, France and Britain’s previous involvement in Libya, and Russia’s involvement in Ukraine<sup>67</sup>. RT’s focus on specific EU actors and linkage of Syria to previous intervention conflicts signifies a link between the RT’s international news reporting and current political tensions between the Russian Federation and the EU in the Syrian conflict.

In Al Jazeera’s reporting, France was also seen as a main actor, utilizing the UNSC. Like RT, Al Jazeera mentioned Germany and Merkel as more prevalent actors; however, both were mentioned in relation to Merkel’s open door policy and linked with terror threats in Germany due to an influx of refugees. Rather than simply highlighting France as a main political actor in Europe, Al Jazeera was distinct in linking Syria with the US elections, stating that: “France has accused Syria and its allies of using political uncertainty in the United States to launch "total war" against opposition-held areas in the country and called for new sanctions”. Furthermore, the outlet repeatedly referenced that ‘a joint US-Russia ceasefire collapsed’ which was unmentioned in the other three outlets.

In summary, ‘France’ was seen as a key political actor within the framework of other international organizations such as the UNSC or ICC; however the context under which

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<sup>66</sup> “In some ways we should see the Syrian conflict as a conflict between the West and Russia”

<sup>67</sup> “The solution is not unlike what Russia proposed for Ukraine’s civil conflict – a diminished role of the central government with regions.”

France as an actor in Syria differed in each outlet. In CNN, France as a country was secondary to political leaders. In BBC, France was seen as the primary figure only in interacting with Russia while 'UK forces' were responsible for military intervention and specific aid groups for humanitarian support. According to RT reporting, France's role in Syria is only a minor part in the wide array of players, including EU leaders and German leader Angela Merkel. Both RT and Al Jazeera focused more on German actors and the Syrian refugees coming to Europe than either CNN or BBC. Finally, both RT and Al Jazeera cited the political conflict in Syria as a representation of the larger tensions between Russia and 'the west', a notion that was mentioned only once in CNN and not at all in BBC. While RT representation of these conflicts highlighted potential sanctions on Russia in relation to the conflict, Al Jazeera was unique in emphasizing the role of the US elections in Syria.

### ***Migration: Closing of the Calais Refugee Camp***

While the closing of the Calais Refugee Camp was not the only migration-related issue reported on during this time period, it was the most prevalent issue related to migration in all of the outlets. The first headlines regarding 'Migration' in general were collected on October 10<sup>th</sup> and the last on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Headlines related specifically to Calais were collected from the period of October 13<sup>th</sup> to December 13<sup>th</sup>; however, 70% of Calais-related headlines were recorded from October 24-28<sup>th</sup>, making this the key period of issue salience. In CNN and BBC, stories related to the closing of Calais accounted for 54.55% and 57.89% of total stories related to migration respectively. Meanwhile, reporting of the closing of Calais made up only 38.89% and 16.98% of reporting on migration in Al Jazeera and RT. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 compare the coverage of migration versus 'Calais' in each outlet.

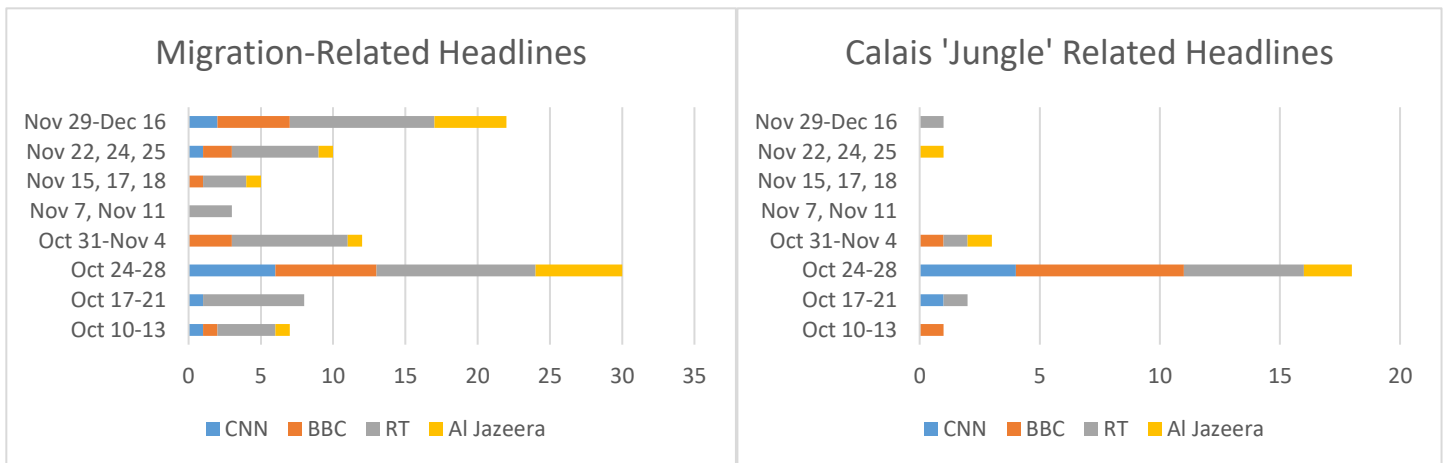


Figure 4.3 and 4.4 Migration and Calais Issue Period of Salience

Considering the difference in relative importance of Calais compared with other migration-related issues, all articles related to migration were analyzed with the consideration of Calais as a key issue accounting for more than half of the reporting in CNN and BBC. The first common theme in reporting of all the outlets was a tendency to link the closing of the Calais ‘Jungle’ more broadly to the recent migration crisis. In CNN, this event was referred to as a ‘grim’ or ‘gritty’ symbol of ‘Europe’s migrant crisis’ and a ‘wretched’ symbol of ‘Europe’s refugee crisis’. While Calais in particular was connected with migrants’ ‘hopes of reaching Britain’ and France, ‘which has taken the lead in dismantling the camp’, migration in general was also connected to a lesser extent to a ‘happy and secure life’ expected by refugees under German Chancellor Merkel’s open door policy. The French government and Angela Merkel were therefore projected as the main actors working to address ‘Europe’s failure to handle the refugee crisis.’

BBC meanwhile, was more specific in reporting on Calais as a ‘powerful symbol of Europe’s failure to cope with African and Middle Eastern refugees’ and ‘a key symbol of Europe’s migration crisis.’ Rather than linking Calais and migration to specific actors, there seemed to be a trend in BBC articles to connect these issues with larger political agreements. In addition to linking Calais to a division between EU countries ‘over how best to deal with



resettling people’<sup>68</sup> BBC reporting also assessed steps being taken to improve the current migration situation in Europe.

Despite several stories covering ‘tensions’ in Turkey-EU negotiations surrounding the crisis and in refugee centers in Greece and Bulgaria, articles in BBC also alluded to improvements in the handling of the crisis stating that: ‘today there is a properly organized system for dealing with the migrants’. The fact that ‘Mrs Merkel was widely criticized for her “open door” policy on refugees’ was also mentioned in BBC; however, the role of Merkel or even Germany was less prevalent in reporting on migration overall than the role of the EU or Europe at large. France’s role as an actor in the closing of Calais was also connected much more broadly with ‘the huge growth of immigration to Europe of the past few years’ overall, as opposed to simply a ‘French’ concern. Worries that the Calais camp would simply be repopulated after its closing<sup>69</sup> were linked with improving systems for redistributing and registering migrants with few hints as to who exactly is responsible for these improvements. At the same time, Calais, and migration in general, were identified as important issues in upcoming country elections in Germany and France, especially considering Marie Le Pen’s ambitions to ban education for illegal immigrants and to hold a referendum on France’s membership of the European Union. Therefore, while the EU as an institution is a background actor in BBC reporting, there are stronger allusions as to how the EU’s political agreements impact individual member countries when it comes to migration.

Rather than naming Calais as a unique symbol for the migration crisis<sup>70</sup>, RT reported on a wider range of conflicts with repeated references that: “The EU is still struggling to handle the refugee crisis, which is the continent’s worst since World War II”. RT articles, like the headlines, reported on the most diverse number of actors including not only countries but a wide array of political figures and regions. It was also unique in referring most often to the common divides between EU member countries and a common ‘blame on Brussels’ for

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<sup>68</sup> Original Headline: “Countries struggled to cope and division arose in the EU over how best to deal with resettling people.”

<sup>69</sup> Original Headline: “Does emptying the Jungle mean the Calais problem is solved once and for all? Or will the same process soon start all over again?”

<sup>70</sup> RT headlines referred to Calais as: “one of the most visible symbols of Europe’s migrant crisis’

a number of problems including: ‘insufficient border policy’, ‘Brussels’ austerity policy’ in Greece, abandonment of certain countries<sup>71</sup>, and criticism of EU ‘relocation schemes that listed the specific share of asylum seekers each of the bloc’s states was obligated to take in’<sup>72</sup>.

Special attention was also given in RT articles to crimes committed by asylum seekers: “the majority of offenses asylum seekers were accused of last year were property crimes (42,010 cases), followed by those causing bodily harm (23,951).” Such statements were linked with growing concerns in European countries of “trying to deal with a huge influx of migrants and refugees that has led to concerns about integration and the rise of nationalist parties”. The mention of crimes committed by asylum seekers was, at the same time, interconnected with warnings that European citizens should not ‘scapegoat refugees’ for crime. Thus, in the reporting of RT, the EU or ‘Brussels’ was a present, yet divided actor in terms of leaders and countries. Furthermore, the paradox between reporting the crimes committed by asylum seekers and pointing out ‘local fears or prejudice’ against new migrants was a repeated issue not only in relation to Calais but in relation to migration in general.

Al Jazeera also referred to Calais as ‘*one* of the most visible symbols of Europe’s migration crisis’ rather than *a key* or *grim* symbol. Similar to RT articles, Al Jazeera’s focus on Calais and migration in general was on the Jungle as ‘a symbol of Europe’s failed migration policies as member states bicker over who should take in asylum seekers and economic migrants.’ In addition to Calais, the relations between Turkey and ‘Brussels’ was also a prevalent issue which was connected with increasing danger that the migrants themselves face in their journey to Europe. Al Jazeera was unique from the other three outlets in its particular attention to the ‘refugees fleeing war, persecution, and poverty’ who face ‘overcrowding, coupled with poor living conditions and severe delays in processing of asylum claims’ once they reach Europe.

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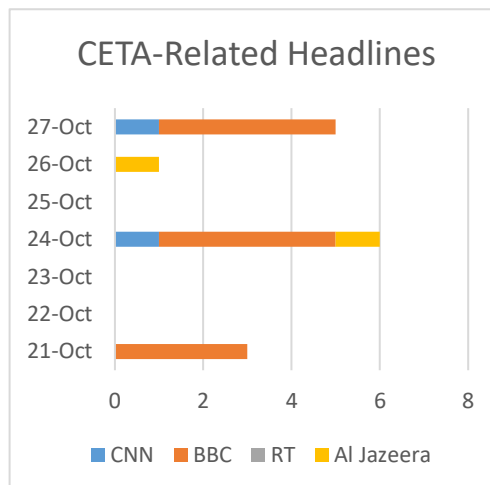
<sup>71</sup> In particular Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, and Hungary: “European Parliament Vice President Dimitrios Papadimoulis said that his home country, Greece, still carries the burden of caring for almost 60,000 refugees with almost no help from the EU.” “Lesbos Mayor Spyros Galinos said that the EU is not trying hard enough to shoulder responsibility fairly, leaving Greece to deal with the brunt of the migrant crisis. “EU policy does not help either Lesbos or Europe,” he said.”

<sup>72</sup> “Countries in Eastern and Central Europe vehemently opposed to the plan aimed at relocating 160,000 people”

A broader comparison of the articles from each of these outlets revealed several similarities and differences. Even though each of the outlets referred to the EU as an actor in dealing with migration, the institution itself was largely non-present in CNN and only alluded to in BBC. On the other hand, RT and Al Jazeera both referred to the EU in terms of ‘bickering Member States’, ‘Brussels’, and ‘the bloc’.

**CETA:**

The final issues of in-depth analysis, the EU’s free trade agreement with Canada, had the smallest window of reporting of the three issues, despite the fact that the agreement had actually been in the process of negotiation for seven years. Headlines related to the CETA agreement were collected from October 21<sup>st</sup> to October 27<sup>th</sup> with the key days of reporting being October 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Since this topic was rather specific, the headlines alone did not reveal direct connections to other issues such as the migration in the closing of Calais or Syrian refugees in the Syrian intervention.



*Figure 4.5 CETA Issue Period of Salience*

The lack of RT reporting regarding the CETA agreement shows, first of all, a relative distance between RT and Europe EU in terms of the bilateral trade negotiations. While RT articles regarding this topic could be found in the archives, these issues are not the ones typical readers are likely to follow and be up to date on. CNN reporting on the trade deal also showed relative distance from the EU by once again naming the EU and ‘Europe’

interchangeably as the main actor in the deal. The fact that CETA was among the few issues CNN reporting linked directly with the EU shows that the EU is represented most clearly, in CNN at least, as an actor in international, bilateral trade agreements. The CETA agreement in particular was viewed as a signal of the EU's ability to negotiate large-scale international trade agreements. When the region of Wallonia held up the deal, it was represented in CNN reporting as a sign that "the European Union is not capable of having an international agreement, not even with a country that has European values like Canada, not even with a country so nice and patient as Canada".

BBC reported more specifically on the 'EU Commission' as the main actor in negotiating the trade agreement. While the refusal of the region of Wallonia to sign the agreement was also viewed as a symbol of the "dysfunctional way the EU tries to make big decisions", it was further represented as a necessary measure for the EU to listen to and consider 'local concerns'. These disputes were repeatedly linked with an overall sentiment of anti-globalization 'in Europe and beyond'. When the region of Wallonia finally reached a compromise that allowed it to support the agreement, BBC reporting reflected that, even though the agreement took a bit of time, "what we achieved here is important, not only for Wallonia but for all Europeans".

The RT reporting on the agreement which was retrieved from the archives, linked CETA with the protests against similar free trade agreements across Europe. RT was the only outlet to mention the specific revision of the agreement which allowed the Belgian parliament to 'hastily approve the proposed amendment'. This minor revision in the CETA agreement added clarity to what RT reporting referred to as a "secret arbitration [that] undermines democracy by letting multinational corporations dictate state policy". RT was also alone in mentioning the EU Council Presidency, currently in Slovakia, as a key figure in this agreement.

Al Jazeera reporting emphasized pressures being placed on the Belgian region to sign the agreement, noting that: "EU leaders have been putting pressure on Wallonia, population of 3.5 million, to drop its objectives over a deal that covers over 500 million EU citizens and 35 million Canadians". RT reporting mentioned the European Council president Donald Tusk

as a key spokesperson for the agreement which put the ‘worldwide reputation of the EU’ at stake.

Based on an analysis of the reporting from all four outlets on the CETA trade agreement, there are some similarities and differences. The main similarity being that the EU does play a strong role in international trade agreements and that this agreement in particular represents the organization’s reliability or unreliability as an international partner. There are still stark differences in reporting when it comes to who represents the EU more specifically in the trade agreement. In CNN, the EU is represented broadly as the EU or Europe. Meanwhile, in BBC, the EU Commission is mentioned as the main institution negotiating the deal. More specific links were also made with the CETA agreement to TTIP and Brexit, especially in CNN and BBC, and democratic means to reaching consensus to agreements in RT and Al Jazeera.

***Summary of in-depth issue analysis:***

A comparison of the three issues of deeper analysis further supports the hypotheses for the smaller research questions that the relative ‘closeness’ of an international media outlet in terms of geography and common interests *does* influence how the EU is represented in relation to other actors. More precisely, this comparison showed that not only is the EU more present as an actor in issues which are closer in terms of common interest of the host country of the media outlet, but also that different actors within the EU are more clearly specified the closer the issue is to the host country or region of the international media outlet.

The tendency of CNN to refer to the EU and Europe interchangeably in the reporting of all issues shows the initial distance between the outlet and the EU. CNN’s reporting of CETA yielded the most diverse and specific range of EU actors showing a relative closeness in terms of issues concerning trade, particularly in the region of North America. This corresponds with the original analysis of the ‘Relative Outsiderness’ of CNN in terms of trade (refer to Figure 2.1, pg. 14). Conversely, the BBC was much more specific and consistent in its coverage of actors in all the issues showing relative closeness in comparison to CNN. Looking at the coverage of different actors involved in the Syria conflict in

particular, shows how BBC specifies the role of each actor in relation to the conflict. For example, countries were depicted as the main actors involved in diplomatic relations, military forces from specific countries were reflected as the main actors on the ground, and various aid organizations were seen as relevant in terms of humanitarian aid. This division of the responsibilities of each actor reflects a clearer break-down of actors in the conflict and thus, closeness to the issue at hand.

Even though RT reported on the Europe (EU) region most in the headlines, the diversity of topics covered by RT was narrowly focused on the organization in terms of global diplomacy and military participation with other ‘western’ actors in the international system. The CETA agreement, as one of the key issues pertaining to the EU in the period of coding, was proportionally unreported on in RT compared with other outlets. Meanwhile the issues of Calais and Syria were covered with attention to specific actors. Particularly in RT’s reporting on the intervention in Syria, leaders of the EU’s institutions were mentioned much more than in the reporting of other outlets. Furthermore, RT reporting represented Germany and Angela Merkel as a more present figures in the EU decision making than the other outlets.

The coverage of these three issues in Al Jazeera also revealed a tendency to refer to the EU in relation to ‘western powers’ or ‘Brussels’. While Germany was also represented as a slightly stronger actor in the EU, this was mostly in relation to migration policy. The issues of Syria and Calais (Migration) were reported on with strong attention to the conditions of refugees and migrants themselves. Even though CETA was covered in Al Jazeera reporting despite a relative distance to the deal in general, this reporting focused on the more technical process of ‘democratic’ decision making in the EU.

These results support the initial hypothesis that there is a relationship between how the EU is perceived by external actors and the relative ‘outsiderness’ in terms of both geography and common interest. An analysis of specific actors mentioned in relation to each issue further shows how the representation of EU actors, principally in terms of clarity, changes based on the issue. A final assessment of the previous headline analysis in conjunction with the theoretical framework in chapter five will combine these findings and help identify the different discourses represented by each of the outlets in this study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

Former studies of the EU as an actor and more recent analyses of the external perceptions of the EU continue to shape and depict the organization from within and from the outside. What has been missing from these studies is an investigation of the *interactive nature of perceptions*, a *comparative perspective* of how the EU is perceived relative to other global actors, and the *relation between images of the EU and images of Europe*.<sup>73</sup> Considering the findings of previous investigations into network agenda setting that “media network agendas constructed by online news media had the strongest correlations with those constructed by other media outlets”<sup>74</sup>, this study uses the previous content analyses to understand perceptions of the EU. While national news and social forums may influence public perceptions within a nation, international news institutions reflect these opinions and serve as a bridge of communication with and between other institutions such as the EU.

Therefore, this study has investigated and compared the online content of four regionally diverse international news outlets to understand how the EU is represented in terms of ‘actorness’ compared with ‘Europe’ overall and individual countries. The current trend in studying the EU as a certain ‘type’ of power, particularly through discourse analysis depends on a clearer understanding of what these specific discourses are, and how they differ depending on the relative closeness to or distance of those creating the discourse.

Based on the deeper analysis of the selected issues, in conjunction with the previous finding in Chapter 3, three common models for viewing how the EU is represented as an actor by the reporting of various international news outlets can be proposed. This model adds an external dimension to previous models such as Barbé’s<sup>75</sup> in order to logically categorize external perceptions of the organization.

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<sup>73</sup> In an overview of the literature on External Perceptions of the EU, Sonia Lucarelli (2014) emphasizes the need to develop more methodological means for understanding the interaction between the ‘self’ and ‘other’ and how this other ranks in comparison with different actors.

<sup>74</sup> Vu, Et al. (2014) p. 682

<sup>75</sup> Barbé, et al. (2015) used discourse analysis of various speeches by EU politicians to form the models of: The EU as a MODEL, PLAYER, or INSTRUMENT as outlined previously in this research, pg. 12

<b>EU as a.....</b>	<b>In relation to.....</b>
1. Secondary or Non-Existent to... a) Heads of State b) Countries c) Countries with membership in other International Organizations d) 'Western Powers' e) Europe	Presence in Headline Reporting  Syria and Calais (Migration overall)
2. Reliable/Unreliable Partner or Actor a) Ambitions/Overly Ambitions b) Projecting Real/Unreal Success	CETA (CNN: 'at a time of political opposition to globalism')  CETA, Calais (Migration overall)  CETA, Calais (Migration overall, Syria (RT: 'failure despite claims of its complete success'))
3. Bureaucratic/Complicated/Misunderstood Organization a) Organization of Weakest region b) Represented by unknown 'EU' officials c) Promoting/Preventing Democratic Debate	CETA (BBC: 'deal needs unanimity')  CETA (CNN: 'EU Officials' 'European Leaders')  CETA, Syria (Al Jazeera: 'democratic debate impossible')

*Table 5.1 Models for EU as Reported in International News Outlets*

The first model, which lists the EU as a secondary or non-existent actor, comes mainly from an analysis of the headlines of each outlet (Chapter 3) and the issues of Syria and Calais. The initial headline analysis proved that, overall, the EU as an institution was represented as a fairly insignificant actor in international news. While the Europe (EU) region was much more prominent in outlets which were closer to the EU, the EU itself was mentioned rarely as an actor overall. The EU's stronger presence in RT reporting is also still secondary as an actor to specific countries in the region. The in-depth analysis further revealed that headlines related to Syria focused on individual countries, and particularly France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the US. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), France was a main actor in all outlets alongside other international organizations such as the UNSC itself and the International Criminal Court (ICC). In the case of CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera, France and Germany were represented by their respective heads of state. In RT, on the other hand, Britain, France, and the US were specifically clustered together as 'western powers' where 'Britain and France compete with each other to



run after the Americans’. While CNN and Al Jazeera also mentioned the relationship between Russia and ‘western powers’ or ‘the West’, there was no specific clarification in these outlets as to who these powers, or the main actors wielding power, are considered to be.

In all outlets, ‘Syria’ was presented as both a humanitarian and a global diplomacy issue. CNN exemplified a ‘growing gap between Russia and France and Russia with Europe’ and Al Jazeera noted a ‘deterioration in ties between Moscow and the West’. Even though the EU was a relatively non-existent actor in relation to this issue, the relations between France and Putin were linked more subtly (in the case of BBC and RT) and less subtly (in CNN and Al Jazeera) to larger political relations. CNN reporting was alone in mentioning the EU specifically as an important actor in Syria, by linking the political relations between France, the UNSC, the ICC and ‘Putin’ with the EU-common defense policy.

The second model, ‘the EU as a Reliable/Unreliable Partner or Actor’, was seen initially in the headline coding from the fact that the EU was presented as an actor only in relation to specific topics concerning the Europe (EU) region. Even though the EU was not considered a partner in all of these issues (represented in Figures 3.2 and 3.3, pg. 37), the connotation towards the EU was not any more or less negative by any of the outlets in comparison with the rest of the region (Figures 3.4 and 3.5, pg. 38). For the in-depth, issue analysis, this model was present in the reporting of the closing of Calais and CETA. Reporting of the closing of the Calais ‘Jungle’ was linked to the migration crisis overall and more specifically to the actors dealing with this crisis. In CNN and BBC, Calais was reported as a ‘symbol of *Europe’s* migrant crisis.’ Al Jazeera linked the Jungle camp with the ‘refugee crisis’ without naming it specifically a *European* issue. RT reporting focused on comparing ‘claims of complete success’ with realities that the ‘operations look like failure’. While all of the outlets mentioned the closing of the camp as a humanitarian issue, there were different problems highlighted in each outlet. CNN focused primarily on the poor living conditions and ‘ramshackle huts’ that had become a ‘grim symbol’ of the crisis. Meanwhile, BBC and Al Jazeera focused on more specific details regarding registration of migrants or the ‘fate of minors’ after the camp’s closure. Al Jazeera in particular mentioned the support of ‘aid groups’ working in the camp without referencing what the aid groups are or where they come

from. RT, on the other hand, accentuated the failures of the operation to close the camp and specifically ‘violent clashes between police and inhabitants’ which prevented a smooth closure of the camp.

The reporting of CETA also showed how the EU is framed based on the success, or in this case setbacks, of international trade agreements. In CNN and BBC in particular, the EU was framed as a bureaucratic and unsure partner. In CNN the ‘near collapse’ of the trade deal ‘raised fresh questions whether Europe is a reliable trade partner’. This statement reflects two common themes in CNN reporting:

- 1) The tendency to refer to the EU and Europe interchangeably
- 2) A less specific approach in identifying ‘who’ European actors are<sup>76</sup>

Whereas BBC tended to reference specific leaders such as Donald Tusk, both CNN and Al Jazeera referred to unspecified ‘EU Officials’ as main actors in negotiating the deal. In the articles retrieved from the RT archives, the main actors in the CETA deal were also more specified and included the ‘EU Council’ or ‘Brussels’. The tendency of BBC and RT to name more specific actors on the EU side of the deal further supports a link between the geographical distance between each outlet’s region and the EU and clearer indication of who EU actors are. Thus, in the third model, the EU is considered as: ‘A Bureaucratic, Complicated, or Misunderstood Organization’.

The finding that the EU is represented more broadly as ‘Europe’ or secondarily to other actors can be a result of the organization being seen as too complex or misunderstood to more clearly report on events in international news for broader domestic audiences. This helps to further explain why the headlines of international news outlets refer so little to the organization in general. While all three of the issues selected for deeper analysis alluded to the EU as an actor, the CETA agreement in particular highlighted the complexity of the organization’s decision making structure. BBC, RT and Al Jazeera all specified that CETA (and similar trade deals) needs unanimity among the 28 EU countries and these countries’

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<sup>76</sup> CNN reporting also referred various times to: ‘European leaders’ or ‘EU officials’ rather than naming the specific individuals.

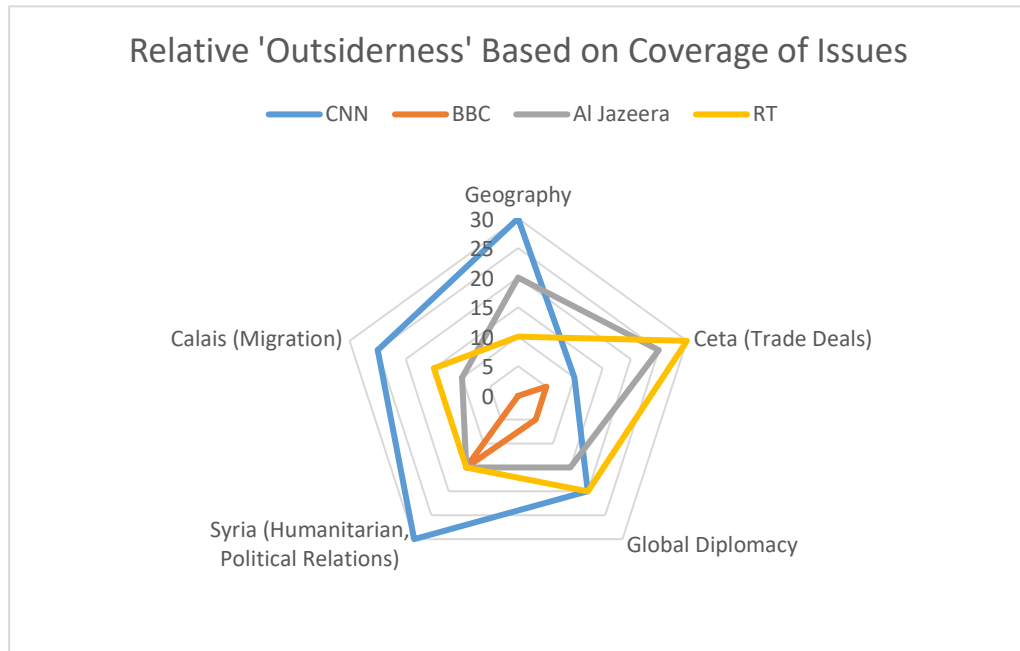
respective regions. Therefore, negotiating such an ‘ambitions’ agreement is complicated and takes time, seven years of time, as pointed out repeatedly in BBC reporting. While CNN mentioned that the CETA talks had been ongoing for seven years and were quite complex, there was less specification as to the effects of the EU’s institutional framework on negotiating international deals. Al Jazeera reporting focused on how the pressure for unanimity and ‘complex constitutional arrangements’ in conjunction with deadlines to reach such bilateral agreements ‘make democratic debate impossible’ and RT linked the agreement with domestic concerns of employment and product safety.

All outlets linked CETA with other international agreements; however, the linkage to Brexit and TTIP, in BBC and CNN in particular, included more detail about the effects or relationship between these separate issues while RT and Al Jazeera both suggested links without further explanation. For example, RT reported only that: “There have been protests across Europe against global free trade deals, including the Transatlantic Trade and Industrial Pact (TTIP) with the United States” while BBC addressed more specifically “what the CETA debacle with Canada means for EU politics” and “is CETA a good model for Brexit”. Recalling from the theoretical framework that the media works to make far away issues more understandable<sup>77</sup> helps to explain why certain actors or issues are more or less clearly specified. This difference in explanation or clarity of the specific issue linkage and the implication of international decisions in relation to CETA further shows the relative closeness of the host country to the EU.

A comparison of the two levels of analysis of these four international news outlets demonstrates how the representation of the EU as an actor varies depending on relative ‘closeness’ to the EU not only geographically, but also in terms of common interest. Figure 5.2 (below) reconfigures the original variables (from Figure 2.1, pg. 14) to include the specific issues of investigation as represented in each outlet. While these events are not direct exchanges for each variable, they are indicators for considering relative ‘outsiderness’ according to each of these issues.

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<sup>77</sup> Refer to pg. 19 of this work: Clausen, 2004; 28



\*Data determined based on an original analysis of the EU's role in each issue as reported by the respective outlets in this study. 'Geography' does not change from the original model. 'CETA' is considered a reflection of 'Trade', 'Syria' is a reflection of 'Political' and 'Military' Relations, 'Calais' is a combination of 'Geography', 'Culture', and 'Political Relations', and 'Global Diplomacy' is the average of the calculated 'closeness' based on the three issues in this

*Figure 5.1 Relative Closeness to the EU Based on Issue Reporting*

Based on the current research, this model provides a visual representation of the different external discourses regarding the EU as represented by each of the four outlets in this study. While these outlets are not the only ones creating news that defines the EU in terms of 'actorness', the theoretical framework of this study supports that they are among the most wide-reaching and interactive. BBC, as the outlet which is geographically closest to the EU territory did seem to represent the EU most prevalently and clearly in relation to the issues of analysis in this study. Geographical proximity however, cannot account for variations in the other three outlets. Whereas CNN and Al Jazeera would both seem to be more distant from the EU than RT due to the fact that Russia shares a common border with the EU, the divergence in common interests is reflected in how the EU is represented by each outlet.

### ***Conclusion:***

In an increasingly globalized world where numerous actors are vying for power, or at least the capability to achieve some desirable outcome, understanding the discourses that shape and define these actors is more essential than ever. As Moises Naim argues: “In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, power is easier to get, harder to use, and easier to lose... battles for power are intense as ever, but they are yielding diminishing returns.”<sup>78</sup> Therefore, in order for international actors to solve increasingly transnational problems, it is important to understand what the discourses defining international organization such as the EU are, and how these discourses are shaped in a globalized world.

The application of three fields of research, as juxtaposed in the theoretical framework, has helped to lay the groundwork to understand the larger question of **how the relative ‘outsiderness’ of news outlets’ host countries to the EU affects international news representations of the organization in terms of its projected ability to resolve or alleviate conflict.** Based on the theoretical framework and analysis of the specific outlets of CNN International, BBC World, RT (English), and Al Jazeera (English), this study supports that there is, in fact an existing link between the domestic framing of international news and external perceptions of an international organization’s ‘actorhood’. Moreover, this link is important to understand in order to assess how or whether the EU is externally recognized as a legitimate actor in solving various global problems.

A simplified understanding of ‘outsiderness’ would refer more limitedly to ‘geographical proximity’; the theoretical framework and content analysis of this study however, has shown how multiple variables work to render an issue ‘closer to’ or more ‘distant from’ the common interest of a country with the EU. While there is no denying that geography *does* play an important role in how the EU is represented and perceived (as exemplified in Figure 3.1, pg. 32), other variables such as: economic, political, and military

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<sup>78</sup> Naim, 2014; 2

relations along with language and culture must also be considered as factors making an international issues more or less important to public audiences and elite decision makers.<sup>79</sup>

The multi-level analyzation of the headlines and content of the international news outlets in this study further attempted to address the more specific question about **how representations of the EU as an actor differ in international news reporting based on a media outlet's relative distance from or closeness to the EU**. The first level of investigation used content analysis with emergent coding of headlines from the period of October 10<sup>th</sup> to December 16<sup>th</sup> to inquire about how representations of the EU were similar or different in the reporting of each outlet. This coding suggested five initial findings:

- 1) the EU as an organization is relatively non-present or secondary in the reporting of all outlets
- 2) the region of Europe (EU) was more present in the reporting of outlets which are geographically closer
- 3) relatively few countries account for reporting in the Europe (EU) region
- 4) the EU as an organization is mentioned in relation to specific issues contrasting with representation of the Europe (EU) region as a whole
- 5) the connotations of the EU are no more or less negative compared to the Europe (EU) region overall.

These initial findings agree with both hypotheses that there *is a distinct difference* in how the EU is perceived in conjunction with 'Europe' and 'individual member states' and that the relative closeness of a media outlet *does* influence how the EU is represented in international news reporting.

Moreover, this initial level of analysis further proved that geographical proximity to the EU *does not* automatically mean that the organization will be more present in headline reporting. A pre-analysis comparison of the four outlets in this study emphasized the

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<sup>79</sup> Refer to Figure 2.2, pg. 19 for how International News and Domestic News connect public and elite external perceptions to define the 'Actorness' of a close or distant international organization.

important role that language plays in the headline representation of international actors and events (Figure 2.3 , pg. 23). While the outlets closer to the Europe EU region (BBC and RT) did cover the *region* more, Al Jazeera actually referred to the EU more specifically in headlines.<sup>80</sup> The reason for this may not be due to language alone, but further testing and consideration of additional variables is needed to understand this divergence further.

The second level of issue-based qualitative content analysis delved deeper into the question of ‘how’ these representations differ in the reporting of specific issues. A cross-comparison of how the issues of ‘Syria’, ‘Calais (Migration)’, and ‘CETA’ were reported in the articles of each outlet further supported both hypotheses. The actors representing the EU in each of these issues differed based on the outlet and the issue. The clarification of actors involved seemed to become more specific the closer the international news outlet was to the EU in terms of common interest of the issues being investigated. This finding helps to strengthen the hypothesis that there is a correlation between how the EU is perceived externally and the relative ‘outsiderness’ of an international media outlets in terms of not only geography, but also economics, politics, military, and culture.

Based on the application of the theoretical framework to the two levels of analysis, two models were constructed (Table 5.1, pg. 55 and Figure 5.1, pg. 59) to present the common discourses of external perceptions of the EU as presented in the content of the outlets in this study. Table 5.1 adds three models of external perceptions of the EU’s ‘actorness’ to previously designed frameworks which have been biasedly ‘eurocentric’. These models include: The EU as... “a secondary or non-existent actor to other actors”, “a reliable/unreliable partner or actor” and “a Bureaucratic/Complicated/Misunderstood Organization”. Figure 5.1 more precisely maps out the discourses of the four international news outlets, as some of the most internationally visible in constructing the EU in this study.

The final analysis of results shows that, even though CNN and Al Jazeera do appear to be more distant in relation to the issues of deeper investigation overall, this distance varies

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<sup>80</sup> Table 3.5, pg. 37 shows the percentage EU was mentioned as an actor per Europe EU issues and discusses the reasons for this related to the more specific reporting used in the headlines on the homepage of outlets where English is not the native language.

depending on the specific issue at hand. Moreover, the coverage of international events by RT, which is geographically closer to the EU, signified a relative distance of the outlet in terms of trade, migration, and global diplomacy. The overall closeness that BBC reporting projects is also not exclusive considering that the outlet, which is in the territory of the EU itself, was still not closer to the organization when it came to reporting of ‘Syria’. Therefore the final conclusions can be made that there are significant overlaps and divergences which reflect how host countries influence the representation of the EU in the reporting of international news.

The content analysis and models presented in this research have helped to identify the external discourses defining the EU as an actor; however, this research has only been the first, foundational step in more clearly understanding how the international organization is represented by external actors.<sup>81</sup> In order for a leader in global problem solving to emerge from the ‘crazy quilt’ of international actors in the current system, further research should assess how these issue-based discourses influence the ‘actorness’ of international organizations. The variables of trade, politics, military relations, and culture, presented in this study, should be individually investigated and added to for a clearer understanding of which factors affect international news representations of the EU’s actorness in relation to a specific issue. Inquiries into international news headlines’ depictions of an actor or issue are also needed to understand what influence the small nuances, such as those presented in this study, have on distant public or elite perceptions.

If the EU in particular is to become a ‘hybrid’, ‘different’, or ‘new’ kind of power, it will rely on a broader external perception of its ‘actorness’ in relation to a more diverse range of issues in order to do so. This research supports that these perceptions are increasingly dependent on, and influenced by, international news media which has an increasingly interactive role in defining international organizations such as the EU and determining how capable these institutions are in solving increasingly trans-national problems.

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<sup>81</sup> Dunn and Neumann (2016), p. 105 state that: “Because discourse analysis relies heavily on interpretation, one of the first steps must be to identify and locate the discourses under investigation”



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## Appendix 1: Countries My Mention

	CNN		BBC		Al Jazeera		RT	
Austria	0	0.00%	2	2.06%	1	1.72%	7	2.76%
Belgium	0	0.00%	9	9.28%	0	0.00%	8	3.15%
Bulgaria	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	5.17%	2	0.79%
Croatia	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Cyprus	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Czech Republic	1	1.30%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Denmark	0	0.00%	1	1.03%	0	0.00%	4	1.57%
Estonia	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Finland	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	1.57%
France	19	24.68%	25	25.77%	17	29.31%	56	22.05%
Germany	8	10.39%	19	19.59%	10	17.24%	76	29.92%
Greece	0	0.00%	1	1.03%	3	5.17%	6	2.36%
Hungary	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8	3.15%
Ireland	0	0.00%	1	1.03%	0	0.00%	2	0.79%
Italy	5	6.49%	12	12.37%	4	6.90%	15	5.91%
Latvia	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.39%
Lithuania	1	1.30%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.39%
Luxembourg	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Malta	0	0.00%	3	3.09%	0	0.00%	3	1.18%
The Netherlands	1	1.30%	4	4.12%	1	1.72%	11	4.33%
Poland	0	0.00%	3	3.09%	5	8.62%	7	2.76%
Portugal	0	0.00%	1	1.03%	1	1.72%	1	0.39%
Romania	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Slovakia	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.39%
Slovenia	1	1.30%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Spain	7	9.09%	6	6.19%	2	3.45%	5	1.97%
Sweden	2	2.60%	2	2.06%	0	0.00%	15	5.91%
United Kingdom	32	41.56%	8	8.25%	11	18.97%	21	8.27%
Other (NON EU)	4		4		0		9	
Total countries mentioned	11		16		11		22	
Total Number of Mentions of EU Countries	77		97		58		254	