



Deliverable D6.3 – *pending EC approval*

Communicating for generating trust by and through the media

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Contents

Abbreviations, Participant short names	v
Abbreviations	v
Participant short names	v
List of Figures	vi
List of Tables	vi
Summary	1
1. Introduction - TiGRE Work Package 6: The role of media for trust/distrust in regulatory regimes	2
2. Overview of central constructs and their empirical manifestations in case countries	3
2.1 Media systems	3
2.2 Valence of media coverage	4
2.3 Trust	5
3. Does media systems and trust influence communication strategies?	7
3.1 Agencies communication strategies	7
3.2 Role of the media as perceived by the actors involved	8
3.3 Perceived efficiency of communication	9
4. Conclusion	12
References	13
Annex: Communication strategies	14



Abbreviations, Participant short names

Abbreviations

WP | **Work Package**

Participant short names

UNIL	Université de Lausanne
UAntwerpen	Universiteit Antwerpen
IBEI	Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals, Fundacio Privada
HUJI	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Uni-Speyer	German University of Administrative Sciences
AU	Aarhus Universitet
UiO	Universitetet i Oslo
UU	Universiteit Utrecht
Kozminski	Akademia Leona Kozminskiego
SCIPROM	SCIPROM Sàrl



List of Figures

Figure 1: Confidence in regulatory regimes across countries and sectors (means, N=323-627)	5
Figure 2: Generalized trust in people (means, N=1192)	6

List of Tables

Table 1: Media system based upon Hallin & Mancini 2004; 2012; 2017 Mancini 2004; 2012; 2017	4
Table 2: Valence of media coverage	4
Table 3: Valence and media system comparison	6
Table 4: Communication strategy overview	7
Table 5: Perceived role of the media per incident with general trust and media system	8
Table 6: Perceived efficiency of communication and effect on the trust	10



Summary

In this deliverable we address whether contextual factors (such as media systems, framing of regulatory agencies in newspaper articles and trust levels in countries) are related to the way regulatory agencies communicate, how the role of the media is perceived, and whether agencies perceive this communication to be successful in Poland, The Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, Israel, Switzerland and Denmark. The deliverable is based upon data from previous deliverables in the TiGRE Work Packages WP6 and WP2 to illustrate how the countries vary on both media systems, the valence in coverage of regulatory agencies and trust levels.

We find that media systems, valence in media coverage and trust levels do correlate to some extent. We find that countries with Polarized Pluralist systems are less inclined to respond when critical incidents occur.

Furthermore, we find that the most common response strategies used by agencies in the media, when involved in an incident of trust violations, are justifications, blame shifting and denying of the problem.

We do not find any indications that contextual factors affect the efficiency of communication strategies as perceived by involved actors, however, we point to the fact that our data is somewhat limited in scope and suffer from missing observations.

1. Introduction - TiGRE Work Package 6: The role of media for trust/distrust in regulatory regimes

Work package 6 focuses on the role of the media in generating trust and distrust towards actors in regulatory regimes. This research report contains an analysis of the WP6 question D6.1. Hence, in this deliverable we investigate whether contextual factors such as media systems and trust levels are related to the communication strategies used by agencies involved in an incident of trust violation, the role of media and their perceived effectiveness. Combining quantitative and qualitative material, we seek to identify patterns across countries and policy sectors.

In deliverable D6.3, we discuss the most effective types of communication strategies for pre-empting incidents of trust violations as well as for repairing/generating trust after an incident of trust violation among some of the primary stakeholders using a field experiment. However, in this deliverable we summarise insights from data and empirical findings which are described in WP6 and WP2 deliverables. From these, we utilise both quantitative and qualitative material. We make reference to the relevant reports as we go along to ensure readers are able to consult relevant methods sections.

The report takes as a starting point by discussing media systems and trust and identify their empirical manifestations in the nine countries, which are a part of TiGRE, being Germany, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Israel, The Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and Poland. In these countries, we take a closer look at three policy sectors: data protection, finance and food.

We then discuss how these contextual factors correlate with communication strategies and their perceived effectiveness. These analyses include Spain, Switzerland, Israel, The Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and Poland which are part of TiGRE WP6 studies.

We do not systematically discuss questions country by country or policy sector by policy sector but present our findings in a summarised way. We kindly ask the reader to consult the referenced deliverables for more descriptive in-depth analysis.

While we have a strong comparative set-up, our N is not large enough for statistical generalisations, hence, we discuss variations between these countries as they appear at face value in the used data. Furthermore, we suffer from missing data regarding some case studies which leads to treat our findings with some caution.



2. Overview of central constructs and their empirical manifestations in case countries

In this section, we discuss the nature of media systems and reflecting on these, the valence of media coverage in the nine participating countries as well as their overall trust levels. We refer to previous deliverables for a thorough discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of our use of terms and concepts.

2.1 Media systems

This section explains how the different media systems can be categorised and then classifies the different countries according to these.

The countries included vary across the *Democratic Corporatist* and the *Polarized Pluralist* model suggested by Hallin and Mancini in their seminal 2004 book on *Comparing Media Systems*. These differences in media systems are expectedly related to differences in trust levels across the countries, as we will elaborate below after presenting the different types of media systems.

The Democratic Corporatist model is characterised by, first, a declining degree of political parallelism (Hallin and Mancini 2004:145), including the degree to which the media content reflects distinct political orientations and the degree of organisational connections between the media and political parties (Hallin and Mancini 2004:28). Second, the Democratic Corporatist model is characterised by an (increasing) strong degree of journalistic professionalism and autonomy (Hallin and Mancini 2004:174), which is backed by ‘strong formalized systems of self-regulation of the press’ (Hallin and Mancini 2004:172), e.g., press councils. However, there is also substantial variations between countries with this type of system (Hallin and Mancini 2017:160), e.g., the Danish Press Council was established in 1964, whereas the one in Belgium only goes back to 2002.

In contrast, countries within the Polarized Pluralist system have more politicised media. There is a higher degree of party-political parallelism and lower degree of autonomy of the journalistic profession. This means that the media are rather ‘ruled by external forces’ (Hallin and Mancini 2004:113) including the world of politics. This further implies that the media get a more instrumental role and are used as and serve the interests of political and other powerful corporate interests in society ‘to intervene in the political world’. (Hallin and Mancini 2004:113).

While differences across systems are to be understood as matters of degrees, two points are of relevance:

1. First, while some evidence points to an increasing convergence among the media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2017:162), important differences still prevail among the type of systems and countries included in this study. That is, among others, reflected in the degree of political parallelism, which seems to have widened between Democratic Corporatist systems (e.g., in Denmark) and the Polarized Pluralist system in Spain (Albæk et al 2015).
2. Second, the differences described across the two types of media systems are expectedly related to various aspects of trust in regulatory regimes. The degree to which citizens trust the media as a gate keeper selecting which information is to be reported and their objectivity would expectedly vary with the degree of professionalism and autonomy of the journalists reporting in the media.

In addition, the degree of autonomy combined with the degree of political parallelism would expectedly be related to the valence and framing of agencies (the role of the media as an intermediary), which we have suggested to be related to, first, whether and the degree to which citizens trust the regulatory agencies. Secondly, the degree of autonomy would expectedly be related to the ability for other actors in the regulatory framework to use the media as an intermediary for conveying their opinions on the regulatory agencies and their policies, which ultimately also is expected to be related to citizens’ trust in regulatory agencies.



Hence, we would expect higher degrees of trust in the media per se in countries with Democratic Corporatist systems compared to countries with Polarized Pluralist systems.

We would also expect the media to be more nuanced in their framing of regulatory agencies and less an instrument for serving specific interests in countries with Democratic Corporatist systems compared to countries with Polarized Pluralist systems leading to higher degrees of trust in regulatory agencies in the Democratic Corporatist systems.

According to the above, countries can be divided into the following media systems as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Media system based upon Hallin & Mancini 2004; 2012; 2017 Mancini 2004; 2012; 2017

Country	Hallin & Mancini 2004	Hallin & Mancini 2017 based upon empirical findings from Brüggermann et al. 2014	Hallin & Mancini 2012
Spain	Polarized Pluralist	Southern cluster	
Switzerland	Democratic Corporatist	Central cluster	
Israel	-	-	Hybrid of the three original systems from 2004
The Netherlands	Democratic Corporatist	Western cluster	
Denmark	Democratic Corporatist	Northern cluster	
Norway	Democratic Corporatist	Democratic cluster	
Germany	Democratic Corporatist	Central cluster	
Belgium	Democratic Corporatist	Western cluster	
Poland	-	-	Polarized Pluralist

The classification makes it particularly interesting to consider whether regulatory agencies in Spain or Poland, which are in a different type of media system compared to the other participating countries, use the media in a different way. Furthermore, it is interesting to compare across the different clusters to see if there is a pattern that is recognisable.

2.2 Valence of media coverage

Hence, we would expect based on the media systems, that countries vary in the way media cover regulatory agencies. We summarise data from D6.1¹, where a thorough discussion of the methodology is also represented. We look at the average percentage of coverage, which is negative, positive or neutral. As deliverable D6.1 illustrates, there is a substantial variation in the valence of media coverage between policy areas within countries. Therefore, the average sums presented here should be considered in relation to this context.

Table 2: Valence of media coverage

Country	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Cluster	Media system
Spain	13%	5%	82%	Southern cluster	Polarized Pluralist
Switzerland	8%	4%	88%	Central cluster	Democratic Corporatist

¹ Available for download at <https://www.tigre-project.eu/tigre-library/#public-deliverables>



Israel	18%	8%	74%	(hybrid)	
The Netherlands	19%	6%	75%	Western Cluster	Democratic Corporatist
Denmark	13%	1%	84%	Northern Cluster	Democratic Corporatist
Belgium	8%	1%	91%	Western Cluster	Democratic Corporatist
Poland	22%	5%	73%	-	Polarized Pluralist

Source: Deliverable D6.1 - Figure 3, Figure 11, Figure 19, Figure 27, Figure 35, Figure 43, and Figure 51

We expected differences between the Polarized Pluralistic media systems and the Democratic corporatist systems. We find that at face value, the Polarized Pluralistic systems seem more inclined towards negative coverage. However, we do not find a similar tendency towards a positive coverage in democratic corporatist systems.

2.3 Trust

Figure 1 illustrates the trust levels in regulatory regimes² across the three policy areas as perceived by citizens. Data is drawn from deliverable D 2.2³, which also includes a discussion of how data is collected. The figure illustrates that there are both substantial variations between policy sectors as well as between the participating member states. Trust levels are generally highest within Finance and lowest within Data Protection. We have not controlled for statistical significance.

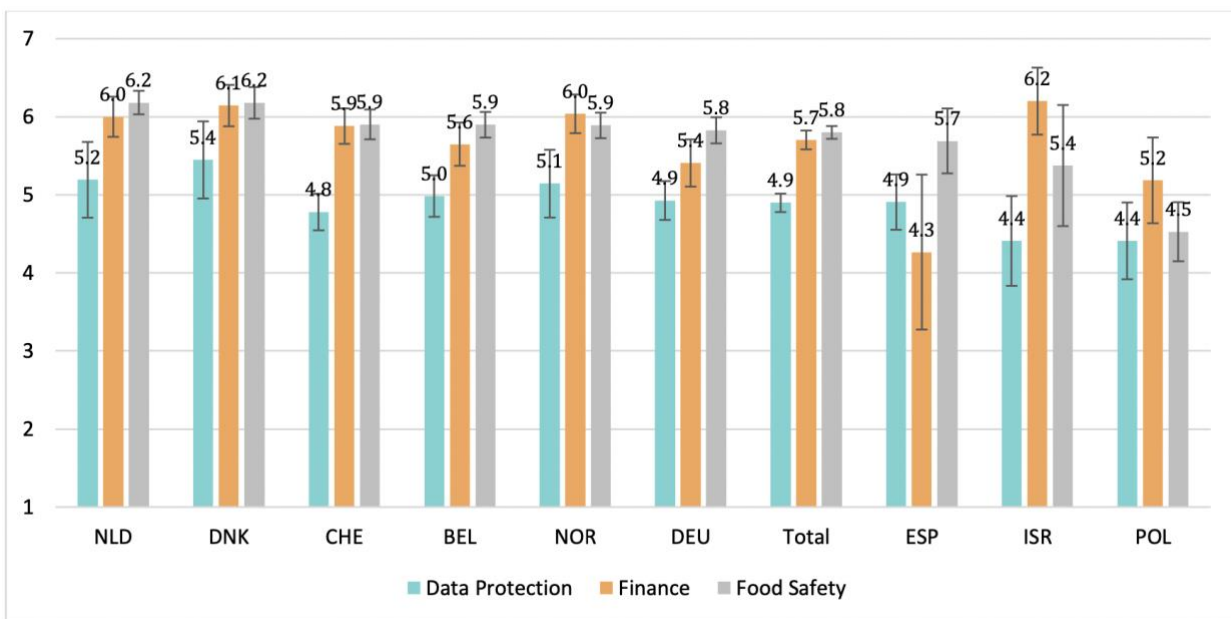


Figure 1: Confidence in regulatory regimes across countries and sectors (means, N=323-627). (Source: Deliverable 2.2 - Figure 17)

² Based on questions like “Consider how the protection of [personal data/financial services/food] is regulated in [country]. How confident can citizens be that their personal data is handled safely?”

³ Available for download at <https://www.tigre-project.eu/tigre-library/#public-deliverables>



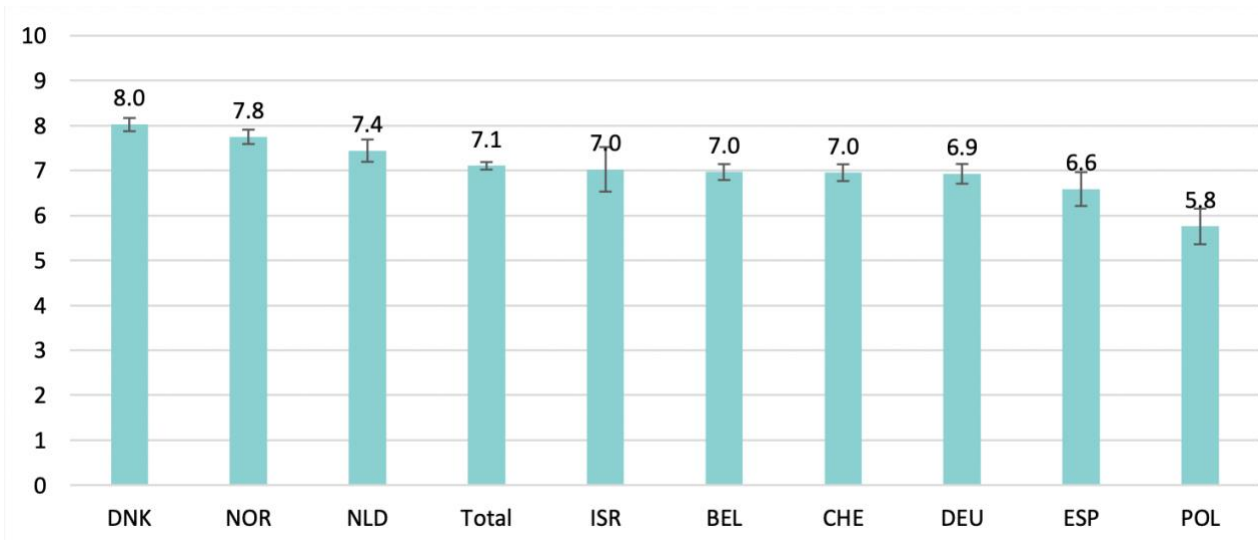


Figure 2: Generalized trust in people (means, N=1192). (Source: Deliverable 2.2 – Figure 8)

Figure 2 illustrates the generalized trust as measured in the survey reported in deliverable D2.2.

Table 3 links media systems, media coverage and trust levels.

Looking at the means across the participating countries, the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark have the highest trust levels while Poland and Spain have the lowest. We find a correlation between the media systems and trust levels. We find no clear patterns linking trust levels to valence of media coverage.

Table 3: Valence and media system comparison

Country	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Cluster	Media system	Average trust level, sectors	Generalized trust
Spain	13%	5%	82%	Southern cluster	Polarized Pluralist	4.97	6.6
Switzerland	8%	4%	88%	Central cluster	Democratic Corporatist	5.53	7.0
Israel	18%	8%	74%	(hybrid)		5.33	7.0
The Netherlands	19%	6%	75%	Western Cluster	Democratic Corporatist	5.8	7.4
Denmark	13%	1%	84%	Northern Cluster	Democratic Corporatist	5.9	8.0
Belgium	8%	1%	91%	Western Cluster	Democratic Corporatist	5.5	7.0
Poland	22%	5%	73%	-	Polarized Pluralist	4.7	5.8

Source: Deliverable 6.1 - Figure 3, Figure 11, Figure 19, Figure 27, Figure 35, Figure 43, and Figure 51



3. Does media systems and trust influence communication strategies?

We now turn to the analysis of whether media systems and trust have influenced the communication strategy used by agencies when involved in an incident of trust violation, how the role of media is perceived, and finally, we analyse to what extent the chosen strategy has been experienced as successful in restoring trust after the incident.

3.1 Agencies communication strategies

In the following, the different types of communicative responses coming from the regulatory agencies are analysed. This is conducted based on data from deliverable D6.1⁴ in which the methods are discussed, and the different categories are explored more thoroughly. While deliverable D6.1 breaks data down by incident, the below reflects an aggregate of the two discussed cases. Table 4 shows the communication strategies across sectors, i.e., the number of times that regulators have publicly commented on the incident. The different strategies reflect agencies responses to criticism in relation to the two incidents described in D6.1. Categories are further explained in the Annex.

Table 4: Communication strategy overview

	Switzerland	Belgium	Spain	Israel*	Denmark	The Netherlands	Poland
Shift Blame	0	13	0	-	4	2	0
Amending actions	1	6	0	-	2	0	1
Justifications	0	19	0	-	4	2	0
Apologies	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Shared responsibility	1	1	0	-	0	0	0
Sole responsibility	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Admission of responsibility	1	1	0	-	2	0	0
Denial of responsibility	0	5	0	-	6	1	0
Admission of problem	0	4	0	-	4	0	0
Denial of problem	0	9	0	-	3	3	7
Silence despite being asked to react	0	1	0	-	7	0	3
Total	3	59	0	-	32	9	11

*Data is not available from Israel. Source: Deliverable 6.1

⁴ Available for download at <https://www.tigre-project.eu/tigre-library/#public-deliverables>



First of all, the table clearly illustrates that the extent to which agencies respond to incidents vary widely between the participating countries. In Spain, agencies do not respond at all to any of the cases, whereas in Belgium there is a response recorded in 59 instances. We find that both Poland and Spain who have Polarized Pluralist media systems have low levels of response.

Looking at the types of communicative responses from the agencies, there is a high number of justifications used by 3 of the 7 countries, that is responses where the agency attempts to convince trustors to reassess the magnitude of nature of the violation itself. The same is true for blame shifting as a strategy, which is used by 3 out of 7 countries. Blame shifting as a strategy does not effectively imply that the regulatory agency is to be blamed for what went wrong (nothing about guilt is proven yet at the time of communication), it just means that the regulatory agency thinks somebody else is to be blamed instead of them. *Denying of problem* is used in 4 of the 7 countries. However, we do not seem to find any link between trust levels and response strategies when investigating data at face value.

3.2 Role of the media as perceived by the actors involved

The following section describes the different actors' perception of the role of the media during the incidents. Data comes from deliverable D6.1⁵ where the methods for carrying out interviews are discussed at length. Similarly, an in-depth discussion of the incidents is represented here.

Table 5: Perceived role of the media per incident with general trust and media system

Country	Incident 1	Incident 2	Media system	Trust level (mean=5,47)
Switzerland	The incident was perceived as a very technical issue which was not really of the citizens' interest.	The media were seen as misrepresenting the nature of the case.	Democratic Corporatist	5.53
Belgium	Due to an ongoing lawsuit which limited the communication from the agency, the media coverage was one-sided. The perception from the agency was that it was objectively covered despite the fact that media coverage was one-sided.	The media were seen as creating undue criticism.	Democratic Corporatist	5.5
Spain	Spanish medias had a political agenda and were biased in their representation, while Catalan medias represented the incident from the opposite angle.	Some stakeholders did not communicate about the incident unless asked specifically about it.	Polarized Pluralist	4.97
Israel	Some news was perceived to give an accurate description, but stakeholders generally perceived the media to follow their own agenda.	The media were seen as active political players in the incident.	-	5.33
Denmark	The media pursued a negative angle in relation to the authority but did so objectively. The agency believes that this has affected the trust in the agency.	The media lacked nuances in their coverage of the incident; they focused on worst case scenarios and primarily interviewed experts who were very critical.	Democratic Corporatist	5.9

⁵ Available for download at <https://www.tigre-project.eu/tigre-library/#public-deliverables>



The Netherlands	Parts of the media were representing the case fairly, others were less objective and with a sparser knowledge of the case.	Some were objective and fair, while other news media focused more on an amusing angle. The incident could potentially affect trust levels but does not seem to do so.	Democratic Corporatist	5.8
Poland	Some found that, due to the complexity of the case, it was difficult for the media to cover it correctly.	Actors mainly represented the media as the tools of political forces which tried to frame the case.	Polarized Pluralist	4.7

Source: Deliverable 6.1

Table 5 shows an abbreviated description of the different countries' perception of the media during the incident. Overall, it shows that how the media covered the incident varied from episode to episode. Across the incidents, we find that the media often are perceived as taking a critical view on incidents; that in several instances, the media are experienced as not understanding the complexity of a given case and, in some instances, the media are regarded as characterising a political agenda. However, we also find several instances where the media are perceived as covering the incidents in a fair manner.

Linking these findings to the media systems and trust levels, the findings become much more blurred.

Taking Switzerland as an example, the first incident does not receive much media coverage and is perceived as neutral due to the complexity of the case. Conversely, in the second case, there is a clear perception that the media are not covering the case properly. The country has an average trust level of 5.53 which deviates positively from the average trust level of the selected countries.

The same is true for Belgium where, in the first incident, there is a perception that the media covered the case objectively, whereas in the second case there is a perception that the media create unnecessary criticism. Again, the country is above average with an overall trust score of 5.5.

Spain is one of the countries below the average level with a trust score of 4.97 and is also in a different media system than the above mentioned two countries. Here, the first incident shows that the media are not perceived as covering the case objectively and was biased in its representation of the incident. In the second incident, the communication was only mediated through others, so it did not affect the stock market, and they only commented when specifically asked to do so. Not forgetting that Spain, as mentioned earlier, had not commented at all on either of the incidents. Thus, it is difficult to say whether the amount of communication and the perceived bias have an impact in rebuilding the trust after the incidents.

Looking at the next country, which is Denmark, it is pointed out for both incidents that the media coverage was not objective or neutral. This does not seem to have affected the trust in the supervisory authorities, as Denmark has an average trust rating of 5.9, which is above average. Furthermore, Denmark, like Belgium, is in a Democratic Corporatist media system. Looking to the past, it also appears that Denmark, like Belgium, is one of the countries where agencies, to a higher degree, expressed themselves to the media.

From the above comparison across countries and media systems, it is difficult to conclude that perceived media coverage by agents is related to trust in authorities or the nature of media systems.

3.3 Perceived efficiency of communication

We finally turn to the last question; the extent to which communication strategies succeeded. Data is reported in deliverable D6.1⁶. We address both the extent to which regulatory agencies communicated to the media and the extent to which they experienced to be successful in re-building trust.

⁶ Available for download at <https://www.tigre-project.eu/tigre-library/#public-deliverables>



The following analysis is based on interviews conducted for the (confidential) deliverable D6.4. We summarise the findings below in Table 6.

Table 6: Perceived efficiency of communication and effect on the trust

Country	Perceived efficiency of communication	Influence on trust towards the agency	Media system	Trust level
Switzerland	<u>Finance</u> : N/A <u>Data protection</u> : very limited communication.	<u>Finance</u> : N/A <u>Data protection</u> : It either affected the trust negatively, or not at all depending on different interviews.	Democratic Corporatist	5.53
Belgium	<u>Food safety</u> : Their communication strategy was not optimal. They tried to keep the citizens informed but made suboptimal choices in crisis communication. <u>Finance</u> : The only statements that have been made by the Bank came via the public hearings and the trial, which were public. Therefore no direct communication.	<u>Food safety</u> : No affect since the focus was the social media. Though two actors from the Ministry did not think the communication had an effect on the trust. <u>Finance</u> : N/A	Democratic Corporatist	5.5
Spain	<u>Data protection</u> : N/A <u>Finance</u> : Only communication from the Ministry of Finance, so therefore very limited.	<u>Data protection</u> : N/A <u>Finance</u> : N/A	Polarized Pluralist	4.97
Israel	<u>Data protection</u> : Used one specific platform and tried to be as transparent as possible to succeed in their communication, although central stakeholders are under the perception that they lied. Other interviews indicated that they did not communicate at all.	<u>Data protection</u> : Some stakeholders have a more positive trust, others have no change in their trust level due to low expectations.	-	5.33
Denmark	<u>Finance</u> : External communication was primarily carried out by management but included individuals, the media, their website, and press conferences. But there does not seem to have been a fixed strategic plan for communication. <u>Food safety</u> : The Agriculture and Food Policy Board had a role in communicating the case. Likewise, there was communication directly with the Food Administration during the incident, as well as with politicians.	<u>Finance</u> : N/A <u>Food safety</u> : N/A	Democratic Corporatist	5.9
The Netherlands	<u>Food Safety</u> : Some saw it as transparent and tried to communicate as much as possible. Members of the parliament perceived it as “clumsy”. Others did not see their communication as sufficient compared to the impact of the incident. All in all, the perceptions of the information differ a lot.	<u>Food Safety</u> : The agency did not provide enough information to restore the trust level for those who answered that there was a lack of information. Other saw the lack as a consequence of a low trust level.	Democratic Corporatist	5.8



Poland	<u>Finance:</u> The communication went thought PR. Others perceived the communication as silent. The agency stated that their strategy was “don’t bury your head in the sand” and focused therefore on staying open in their communication.	<u>Finance:</u> The drop in the trust was short-lived. People in relation to institutions quickly forgot. Others think that the lack of communication was a sign of incompetence and therefore affected the trust negatively.	Polarized Pluralist	4.7
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Source: Deliverable 6.4

First of all, the table illustrates that our data is only partial. For several case studies, we lack important information to be able to draw strong conclusions. However, the cases for which we do have data illustrate the wide variation within country cases that we also find at other stages of this analysis. We find that the impact on trust levels is perceived quite differently between actors in some cases, but that the general trust levels are not expected to have been affected in most cases.

We find that, in a number of incidents, agencies aim to communicate openly. However, we also find that this is not always perceived in the same way by stakeholders, and that sometimes contextual factors, e.g., a lawsuit, keeps regulating authorities from communicating.

As data from Spain is lacking, we do not make any conclusions with regard to the relationship between our findings and the nature of the media systems. Looking at trust levels, we do not see any clear patterns either. Keeping in mind the limited nature of our data, we do not conclude that these relations do not exist, but simply conclude that they are not visible in our data.



4. Conclusion

In this deliverable, we discuss what role contextual factors play for the way regulatory agencies communicate and the effects of their communication.

We find that media systems, valence in media coverage and trust levels are somewhat related. We find that agencies in countries with Polarized Pluralist systems are less inclined to respond when critical incidents occur just as we find that trust levels in these countries are generally lower than in the rest of the countries we investigate. Hence, we may cautiously conclude that media systems and trust levels may be related and may in turn relate to the way trust violation incidents are handled.

Furthermore, we find that the most common response strategies used by agencies when involved in an incident of trust violation are justifications, blame shifting and denying of the problem.

We do not find any indications that contextual factors are related to the efficiency of communication strategies; however, we point to the fact that our data is somewhat limited in scope and suffer from missing observations.

While our data material is not sufficiently strong to deny any potential causal relationships, we cannot find them in our data. Rather our data speaks to a complex interplay between local contingencies, sector differences and structural characteristics which are at play in our cases. Hence it may be that the efficiency of communication in trust violation incidents is contingent on more contingencies than what we discuss here or that the perception of communication by the involved actors is also shaped by their contexts. This leads us to be cautious in making recommendations for the actors in the field.

We suggest that future research develops methods which embed the richness of our case studies in larger studies than what we have done here.



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Annex: Communication strategies

	Definition
Shift Blame	Blame someone else for trust violation
Amending actions	Committing to actions which will remedy trust violation
Justifications	Justifies how trust violation could happen
Apologies	Acknowledging responsibility and showing regret for trust violation
Shared responsibility	Admitting shared responsibility for trust violation
Sole responsibility	Admitting sole responsibility for trust violation
Admission of responsibility	Admitting responsibility for trust violation
Denial of responsibility	Denying responsibility for trust violation
Admission of problem	Admitting trust violation has happened
Denial of problem	Denying the existence of a problem in the first place
Silence despite being asked to react	Not reacting to requests for comment

