



Protect

The Right to International Protection

Deliverable D9.4 Media and social media content I

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PROTECT CONSORTIUM

The PROTECT Consortium publishes original research on international refugee protection.

The Consortium is composed of:

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Media and Social Media Content I

Simon Usherwood, The Open University

1. Introduction

This is the first of two media reports for PROTECT, covering the period between 1 February 2021 and 31 January 2022. All work is undertaken within the framework for dissemination and engagement set out in Deliverable 9.1, which is reviewed and amended annually.

The aim of this report is to map out the nature and scale of the consortium's work to share its research with non-academic audiences, and to evaluate where further action is necessary. In particular, it is taken as an opportunity to reflect on how the adaptable approach initially presented has been able to cope with the significant disruption of the Covid pandemic across all partners and target audiences.

The overall summary of the report is that while Covid has required some reformulation of non-academic engagement and media/social media activity, this has not been to the overall detriment of building connections and laying the groundwork for the ramping up of activity in the final phase of PROTECT, as research findings become available. However, a watching brief is required, as the situation remains uncertain.

2. Engagement

Engagement work has been built in a number of PROTECT's key activities this year, most notably [D9.6](#) and [D9.8](#), that is the Mid-Term Conference (including the two international dissemination events) and D2.4 with three rounds of Expert Forums.

The **Mid-Term Conference** was held virtually at Ryerson University, Toronto, on 26-27 August 2021. In line with the Grant Agreement, a policy forum and an academic forum have been included in the program (see D9.8). In addition, the conference was designed to enable the PROTECT partners to present preliminary research findings and to maximize feedback from participants, including the audience. The organizing team resorted to a variety of channels to share information about the midterm conference, including the European Union's Cordis and EU-events services; teaser posts/videos in social media like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, the PROTECT website, e-mail lists and social media channels of large international migration research networks, and our consortium partners' own means of information sharing. For instance, in Canada, the conference announcement and program were shared with several universities (e.g., Ryerson University, York University, University of Toronto, Université de Montréal, McGill University), as well as with governmental and non-governmental organizations. We reached out to the main research centres and associations, including the Centre for Refugee Studies of York University; International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM); Canadian Association for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS); Ryerson University's Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration; Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement; to disseminate the information through their listservs and to reach a broad and diversified audience in Canada and globally.

The stakeholders invited were selected on the basis of their belonging to PROTECT's main target groups in dissemination, exploitation, and communication plans. The conference consisted of two half-day sessions to accommodate the time difference between North America and Europe/South Africa, regions where the vast majority of the audience is located. When the conference program was finalized, the PROTECT WP leaders and other presenters in the Day 2 concurrent panels were asked to pre-record their 15-minute full presentations and to submit them to WeTransfer two weeks before the midterm conference. The video recordings were made available ahead of the live plenary session to maximize interaction with the audience and allow more space for debate and discussion, as well as to further generate content for our

website: participant comments about this innovative approach were positive and we will take this through to our Final Conference in February 2023.

During the **three Expert Forums** held between September and October 2021, similar formats and strategies were used in order to engage with a broad audience. [The Expert Forums](#), organized by the German Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen (JLU), the South African University of the Witwatersrand and the Canadian Ryerson University, all sought to explore the legal potential and impacts of the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration, especially focusing on current protection challenges in three regions of the world: Europe, South(ern) Africa and Canada/North America. The forums brought together a wide range of scholars, policymakers, and practitioners involved in the global governance of migration and the international protection regime – as well as people from the public. All of which happened in a digital setting.

Regarding the D9.4 report on the work on media in general and social media in particular, the project **website** has gone through significant changes since the latest reporting period – in order to accommodate the thoughtful feedback received during the review report. The PROTECT website now includes a number of improved elements for increasing engagement:

- The main page firstly contains information about the project itself, and a promotion video (D9.14) introducing our research. In the homepage’s middle section, we showcase recent publications, blogs, including policy briefs and news, followed by a section with video-links to the Expert Forums of 2020, the Expert Forums of 2021 and the Midterm Conference, in addition to links to vlogs and presentations. The bottom section of the page includes links to our social media pages with excerpts from our Twitter account, as well as general information regarding our newsletter, media appearances, press releases and contact information. Afterwards comes more general information regarding our partner universities and fieldwork sites. The footer includes information about the project’s EU funding (with the EU flag and the Horizon 2020 logo), as well as a disclaimer. On the main page, every aspect of the project is presented in an easily accessible way.
- The section on “Communication” gathers our public deliverables related to communication, as well as the main methods and venues for sharing our research findings, the newsletter, media appearances, press releases, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts.
- “News”, “Blogs” and “Policy Briefs” have a separate section each, where under news we pin the most relevant recent news in regard to the project. Under “Policy Briefs”, one can access our first two policy briefs.
- “Events” gives detailed account of our main events (in the form of reports with video links if they have happened already). Under “All events”, it is possible to find all events organized by PROTECT or including PROTECT researchers, as well as upcoming events. Under “Events”, there is also a section on “Country-specific webinars”, which is a recent effort aiming to provide relevant national authorities with the opportunity of being informed of our research.
- For those wishing to contact us, the “Contact” section provides information about our e-mail, postal, visiting address and social media accounts.
- Finally, “PROTECT for Norge” provides information in Norwegian to Norwegian target audiences, like authorities and organizations, about our research findings, tailored events and about a specific network – built up of researchers and non-governmental organizations –, aiming to disseminate and communicate the research findings of PROTECT to Norwegian actors as well as getting their inputs to the project.

D9.14 (a promo video), which has been added as a deliverable in the last review meeting, has also been concluded, thanks to a collaboration with Science Animated. [It can be found](#) on the main page of PROTECT as well as on [PROTECT’s YouTube channel](#).

In general, PROTECT has now achieved strong access to representatives of UN bodies and of other **international organizations**, as well as to a number of **regional policymakers** (e.g., the African Union, European Union, Canadian). While representatives of the UN bodies, the African Union, and the Canadian government attended our events as speakers, occasionally at high levels, the EU authorities chose to attend mostly as audience despite our continuous efforts to have them as speakers. Because having EU politicians and officials attend our activities as speakers has proven difficult (because of Covid and their busy schedule), we have decided to reach them by sending our Policy Briefs to their addresses regularly and ask them and their offices to give us feedback (see the attached list of the EU politicians and officials that the policy briefs are being sent to).

Additional efforts to involve **national policymakers** in our research have been made in a number of different ways: for example the University of Ghent has been conducting interviews with asylum institutions in Belgium (CGVS), the Netherlands (IND) and France (OFPRA); the Queen Mary University of London has arranged a country-specific webinar between key practitioners (Adrian Berry, Garden Court Chambers and Dr Madeline Garlick, Chief of Protection Policy and Legal Advice, UNHCR) in borders, immigration and asylum law and practice from a UK perspective on 8th December. The University of Witwatersrand has planned a similar – but closed – event for early 2022, with the aim of facilitating high-level, open and honest discussions between key stakeholders and national authorities on states` duties to provide international protection under human rights instruments in Southern Africa. The University of Catania has planned meetings with national authorities (first instance Territorial Commissions and second instance Specialised Sections for international protection within Tribunals), so as to present and discuss project deliverables with them. Furthermore, WP2 co-lead, Jürgen Bast from the University of Giessen has given an [expert interview](#) in a German TV news show (“Monitor”) regarding the situation at the Polish-Belarus border, broadcasted on Nov 18, 2021.

Further action to reach out to **national policymakers** and maximize the impact of the H2020 action was undertaken through supplementary funds by the Norwegian Research Council. In January 2021, the University of Bergen started a ‘Norwegian Dissemination and Communication Network on International Refugee Protection and the UN Global Compact on Refugees’ (NORCOM), which were not included in the PROTECT’s original work plans. This initiative is financed by the Norwegian Research Council’s Supplementary Funding, with the purpose of encouraging a greater number of Norwegian actors to take on a key role in Horizon 2020 projects and to give a wider range of Norwegian actors access to knowledge developed through Horizon 2020 projects. NORCOM will organize three symposia and a final conference, where different Norwegian actors can come together and discuss Norway’s asylum and refugee policy, and Norway's work about the implementation of the UN Global Compacts on refugees and migration. The first NORCOM-symposium took place on 20th October, between 13.00-14.30, with the participation of the following research institutions, universities, NGOs, and national authorities: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD), Ministry of Justice (JD), Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), University of Bergen (UiB), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Institute for Social Research (ISF), European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Norwegian Red Cross (RK), A Drop in the Ocean (DiH), The Norwegian Centre against Racism (A-S), The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS), the Twelfth of January Association (1201). The symposium included three presentations and was concluded with a Q&A session, during which the audience and the presenters shared their remarks and

reflections'. The [report](#) from the first symposium has been made available on the project website.

Overall, efforts have been made in order to disseminate and communicate our research in the best possible way, both on an international and national level. To that end, we use the following external communications strategies: publication in academic books/journals; writing blogs and running blog-series; participation in academic conferences, workshops and seminars; participation in joint efforts for activities involving international actors; inviting international actors to events organized; tailored events, policy & governance briefs; interviews with asylum institutions; informal contacts with a consortium of NGOs; building a national dissemination and communication network; running a national website in the country's own language to disseminate findings to national actors; direct mediation with the EU project officer; exhibitions; flyers; social media; press releases; media appearances; video blogs etc.

3. Targets for and Achievements against KPIs

The Key Performance Indicators set out in D9.1 are intended to help measure the reach of dissemination and engagement work of PROTECT.

The annual targets given in D9.1 were not fixed, therefore there are some indicators that have not been reached yet at this stage of the project, while others are already exceeding even the ones set for Year 3. In certain cases, our effort has been moved from given Key Performance Indicators (like physical materials etc.) to others, either to combat the challenges (like physically-distanced work) induced by Covid-19 or because some WPs have only started to produce major outcomes towards the latter part of this year. Therefore, some targets (like press releases) will have more focus during the last year of the project when the research evolves from data collection to summarizing findings and results.

The annual targets below show a cumulative, year-to-year growth, up until 31st January 2021 (in regard to Year 2). Numbers in **bold** show the actual performance compared to the one forecasted in D9.1. Numbers in **red** highlight targets that have been not reached yet in Year 2.

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

0	Target		
	Y1	Y2	Y3
Policy briefs: Number of briefs	1	1 -> 2	8
Press releases: Number	20	25 -> 24	30
Events/workshops/seminars Number of events	25	35 -> 67	45
Media coverage: Numbers of references to PROTECT and its work in sub-national, national and international media (see Annex 1 for full list)	5	10 -> 14	15
Website: Unique page views	15 000	20 000 -> 33 780	25 000
Newsletter: Number of issues Number of subscribers	4 600	6 700 -> 720	8 800
Popular scientific publications(including blogs): Number of posts	80	90 -> 121	100

Other physical materials (e.g.posters, leaflets, pamphlets): Number	75	90 -> 77	150
YouTube: Number of views Number of subscribers	2500 50	3500 -> 6053 60 -> 80	4000 70
Twitter: Number of followers	800	1000 -> 1269	1100
Facebook: Number of followers	750	800 -> 860	850
LinkedIn: Number of followers	120	150 -> 313	200

4. Evaluation

The overall pattern of the summary is that targets have been met or exceeded in almost all cases. Notably our social media footprint, event engagement and popular scientific publications performance have pushed well beyond even our Year 3 targets, through a combination of concerted work with consortium partners and increased demand through Covid for online materials. Similarly, work on physical materials was minimal, reflecting the decision of partners to not put resource into a channel with minimal potential during a period with few, if any, opportunities for in-person leafleting.

One rather different area where targets have not been met is in the number of press releases. While we recognise that these can be a useful way to generate more media interest, this was not pursued to the extent we had initially planned. A partial explanation comes from the moving of some activities online, where their original in-person equivalents might have generated better opportunities to produce media-worthy content (for example, through capturing interviews to the side of the event), but more important was an over-estimation of the extent to which it would be possible to sub-divide what research findings were produced in the period into separate press releases. This is a positive reflection on the extent to which consortium partners have worked to integrate their individual activities into the PROTECT framework, which will make for more impactful materials in the final year (when most findings become available), but it has made it hard to produce sub-divided work at this stage.

More generally, we note that the move to online working has meant that consortium members have become more familiar with tools such as blogging, which has been to the advantage of PROTECT’s production of social media and helps to ensure that there is improved resilience for any future disruption that Covid restrictions may bring through the remainder of the project.

Overall, the broad success of meeting and exceeding targets is a positive reflection on the flexible model adopted from the start of PROTECT. The broad range of target audiences and the intrinsic uncertainty of public and political debate around the issue of refugees and immigration meant that it was felt to be prudent to set up the dissemination and engagement strategy in a way that could cope with rather different circumstances. That approach was vindicated both by the adjustment to Covid in general, but also by the sudden need to produce materials relating to refugee-related aspects of the pandemic, with a number of media and social media outputs that have helped to place consortium members in a strong position to bring their PROTECT research findings to audiences further down the line.

5. Revised Year3 targets

In light of the above, it is prudent to make a number of revisions to several targets for engagement. These are presented below.

Table 2: Revised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

	Y2 performance	Original Y3 target	Revised Y3 target
Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique page views 	33 780	25 000	37 000
Popular scientific publications (including blogs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of posts 	121	100	140
Other physical materials (e.g. posters, leaflets, pamphlets): Number	77	150	80
YouTube: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of views Number of subscribers 	6053 80	4000 70	6500 90
Twitter: Number of followers	1269	1100	1350
Facebook: Number of followers	860	850	880
LinkedIn: Number of followers	313	200	350
Events/workshops/seminars Number of events	67	45	90

Annex 1: Media content

The PROTECT website will maintain a dedicated page to media coverage of the project (<https://protectproject.w.uib.no/protect-in-the-media/>). In the annual reviews of this current document, the following list will reproduce the details of that coverage. The most up-to-date version of coverage will be found on the website.

3. Tab. All media coverage

Date	Source	Title	Link
16 March 2020	Daily Maverick, South Africa	Hypocrisy in the time of Covid-19	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-16-hypocrisy-in-the-time-of-covid-19/
16 March 2020	SABC News Unfiltered, South Africa	What are you doing to protect yourself from Coronavirus?	https://youtu.be/AlZVBjZ6Ffg
20 March 2020	Daily Maverick, South Africa	Foreign migrants must be included in Covid-19 response	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-20-foreign-migrants-must-be-included-in-covid-19-response/
20 March 2020	Monday Morning Meetings on Migration, South Africa	Winter is coming	https://4mpodcast.com/2020/03/21/winter-is-coming/
26 March 2020	Utrop, Norway	Fremmer flyktningvern i et turbulent politisk klima	https://www.utrop.no/nyheter/nytt/211983/
31 March 2020	Bhekisisa, South Africa	Border walls don't stop viruses. But this might	https://bhekisisa.org/article/2020-03-31-immigration-coronavirus-south-africa-healthcare-covid19/
18 June 2020	WITS Impacts for Good, South Africa	Why are migrants being excluded from SA's response to Covid-19?	https://lifepodcasts.fm/podcasts/386-wits-impacts-for-good/episode/331630-why-are-migrants-being-excluded-from-sa-s-response-to-covid-19
16 September 2020	NRK, Norway	Tror ny asylordning kan bli vanskelig å få til	https://www.nrk.no/norge/tror-ny-asylordning-kan-bli-vanskelig-a-fa-til-1.15163650
7 January 2021	Newzroom Afrika, South Africa	How the governments can deal with immigration during the Covid-19 pandemic?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy7L8iE01Qo
8 January 2021	Maverick citizen, South Africa	Drone, dinghies and an army helicopter – why the state's new toys won't help South Africa's response to Covid-19	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-01-08-drones-dinghies-and-an-army-helicopter-why-the-states-new-toys-wont-help-south-africas-response-to-covid-19/
16 March 2021	Utrop, Norway	Nesten halvparten av flyktningene er barn	https://www.utrop.no/nyheter/nytt/250603/
27 June 2021	Bergens Tidende, Norway	Debatt: – Dette er det aller viktigste tiltaket for å sikre flyktningers rettigheter	https://www.bt.no/btmeneringer/debatt/i/qAG5em/flyktningkrisen-er-verre-enn-noensinne

25 August 2021	EurekaAlert!, Canada	What should an ideal refugee protection system look like?	https://www.eurekaalert.org/news-releases/926404
18 November 2021	Monitor, Germany	Europa macht dicht: Flüchtlinge vor geschlossenen Grenzen	https://www1.wdr.de/daserste/monitor/sendungen/grenzen-europa-100.html

Annex 2: Targeted EU Institutions

Institution
Committee of the Regions
European Commission
EESC
EP