



# PERCEIVE Final Conference

An improved Cohesion Policy  
for a stronger EU

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2019

Brussels



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GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER 693529

# Guidelines on Cohesion Policy Communication:

PERCEIVE evidence, scenario  
analysis and policy  
recommendations

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# The study – motivation and idea

## Motivation

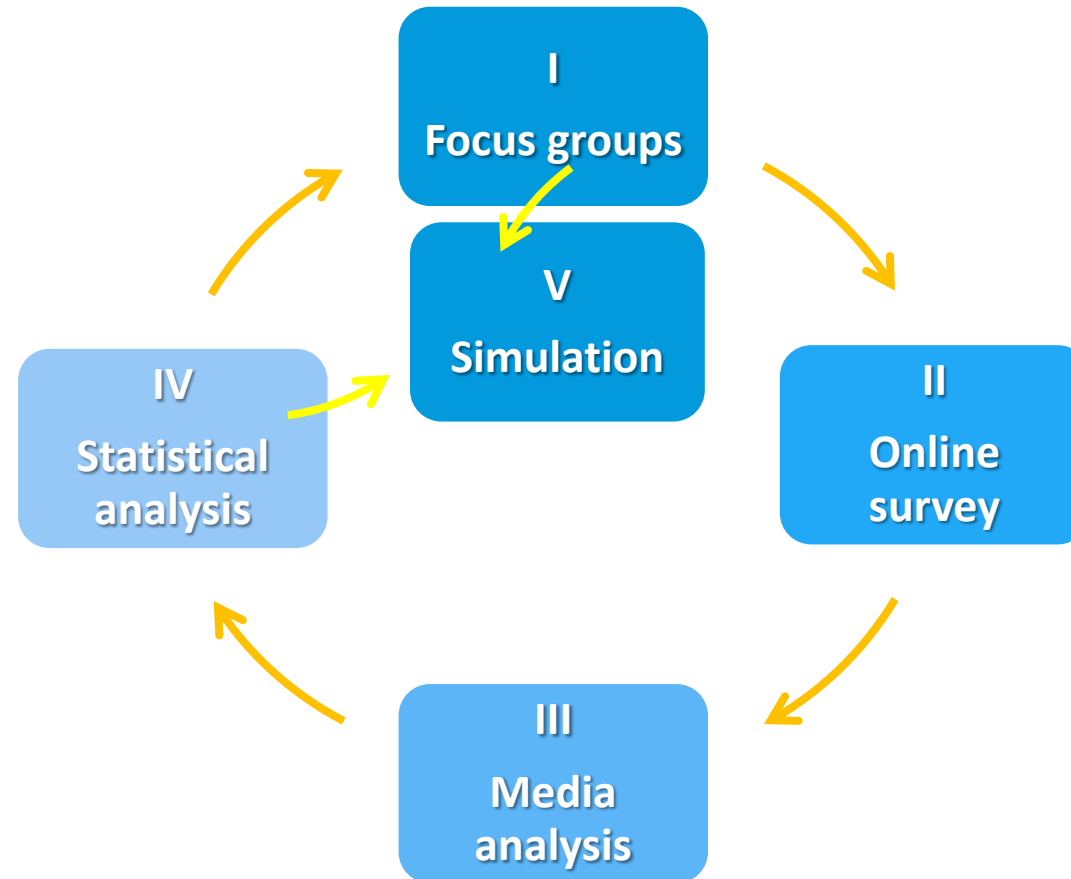
- The contrasted results on the impact of EU investment on support for integration and EU identification point to a potentially problematic role of communication

## Idea

- Is the EU getting out of the “ivory tower”?
- Can we suggest some measures for improvement based on evidence from data?



# The study - methodology



# EVIDENCE FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS AND ONLINE SURVEY



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# The general context

**P: overshadowing** of cohesion policy **by other EU issues** – i.e. migration or Brexit

**S:** strengthen its perception as a **social actor that intervenes** in global scenarios

**P: political opportunism** – politicians taking credit for accomplishments realized with EU support and blaming the EU for local and societal problems.

**S:** it is important to work on the **visualization of the EU presence in local contexts.**  
seek for **engagement of local politicians** in visible initiatives.



# Objects and Means of Communication

**P:** **Building awareness and appreciation** is still very important. Also Local implementers often do **not see building European identity as part of their mission.**

**S:** if the EU motto is “unite in diversity” that unity, and a related sense of belonging together should be stressed more at the local level.

**P:** High level of heterogeneity in the evaluation experiences. Impossibility of developing standardized and comparative approach as well as of the transmission of good practices.

**S:** As of the means, it is advisable the **development of a more standardized system of measurement of investments and results.**



# Organization of communication

**P:** Lack of **transparency**

**S:** improve the circulation of data across levels so allowing for more transparency of the whole implementation process. A European platform, similar to Italy's **OpenCoesione** portal.

**P:** Communication actions are often too **narrowly focused toward projects'** communications and do not help making visible the idea of Europe.

**S:** European Commission should **lead the role** of communicating Europe with centrally developed actions.





# New channels

**P: Low percentage of people** are getting informed through social media.

**S:** To increase the effectiveness of social media it is important to have communication staff with up-to date **skills on social media communication.**

**P: little traffic** being generated by everyday working of EU organizational apparatus

**S:** importance of communicating **decisions and events**, as in those circumstances the EU tends to emerge as an autonomous and coherent **social actor.**



# Tone, messages and targets

**P: Too many technicalities and labels:** European Commission “misses the shot” in the communication strategy because there is a “**lack of soul**”. which are too focused on technical and economic aspects.

**S: Let the beneficiaries talk** as much as possible. In addition, **more identity focus** is to be achieved as well as **Values based communication** (not added value).

**P: communication with numbers** is often ineffective and confusing

**S:** more effort should be put in understanding the challenge of **communicating with data** (in the age of big data) communicating the aim and importance of cohesion policy in **contributor countries**.



# EVIDENCE FROM MEDIA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS



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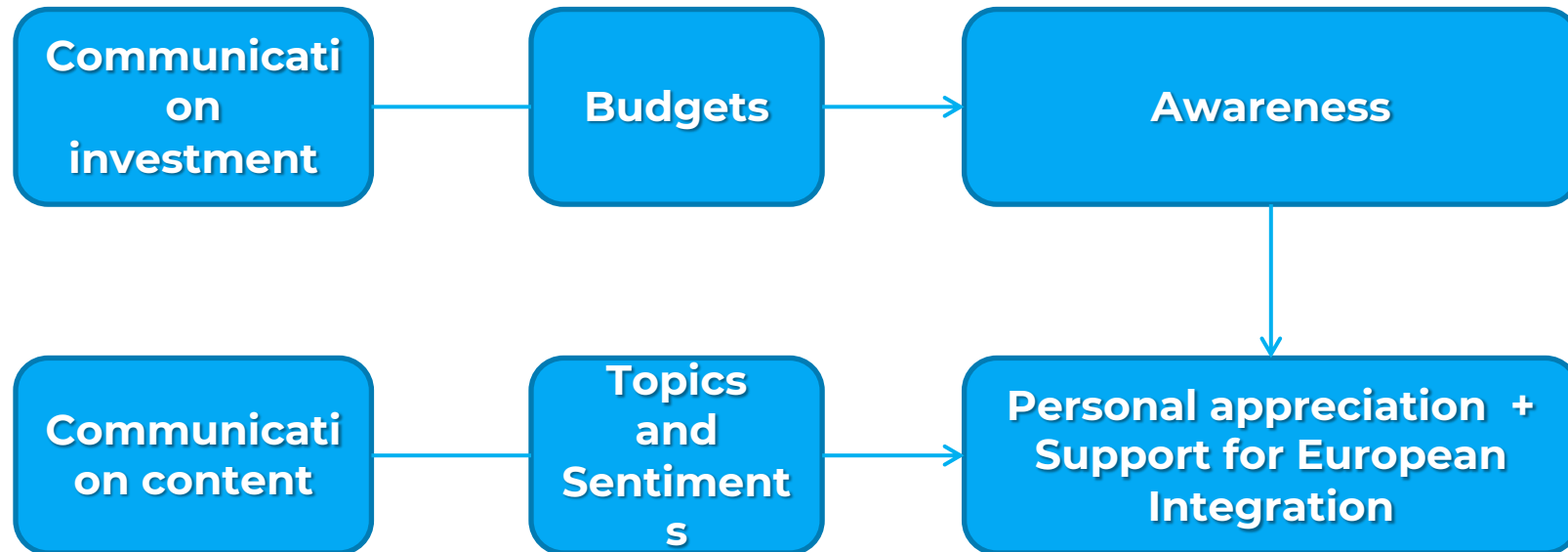
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# Conceptual Model



# Results on Investments

In case study regions (not whole EU)

+ pro capita structural funding → + awareness of the policy, + perceived personal benefit and + political appreciation.

+ pro capita communication investment (2014-20) → + citizens perceive a personal benefit deriving from EU policy.

+ pro capita communication investment (2014-20) → - political appreciation (i.e. country membership in the EU is a good thing).

pro capita communication investment (2007-13) → \*\* + awareness, while it does have no effect on personal benefit or appreciate EU actions through policies. This result points to the **decaying effectiveness of communication** in shaping the opinions of citizens over time.



# Policy implications

**Communication as a mechanism for amplifying awareness and personal appreciation of EU policy:** As from our analyses, more funding translates into both more awareness and personal appreciation. The same, however, does not appear to be entirely true for communication budgets allocated by LMAs. These latter seem to have unclear (negative for 2016) impact on support for integration

**Idea of a decreasing effect of communication impact:** We suggest that communication strategies should be implemented that specifically deal with the **objective of ‘sustaining’ awareness and appreciation levels** in local territories once regions eventually advance to higher development levels (GDP-based) and therefore experience drops in EU structural funding.

Social media discourse might affect awareness and appreciation of EU policy in ‘non-linear’ ways. Therefore major attention should be devoted **to developing advanced and up-to-date communicative skills at the local implementation level.**



# Effect of given topics in local dialogues (social media analysis) on support for integration



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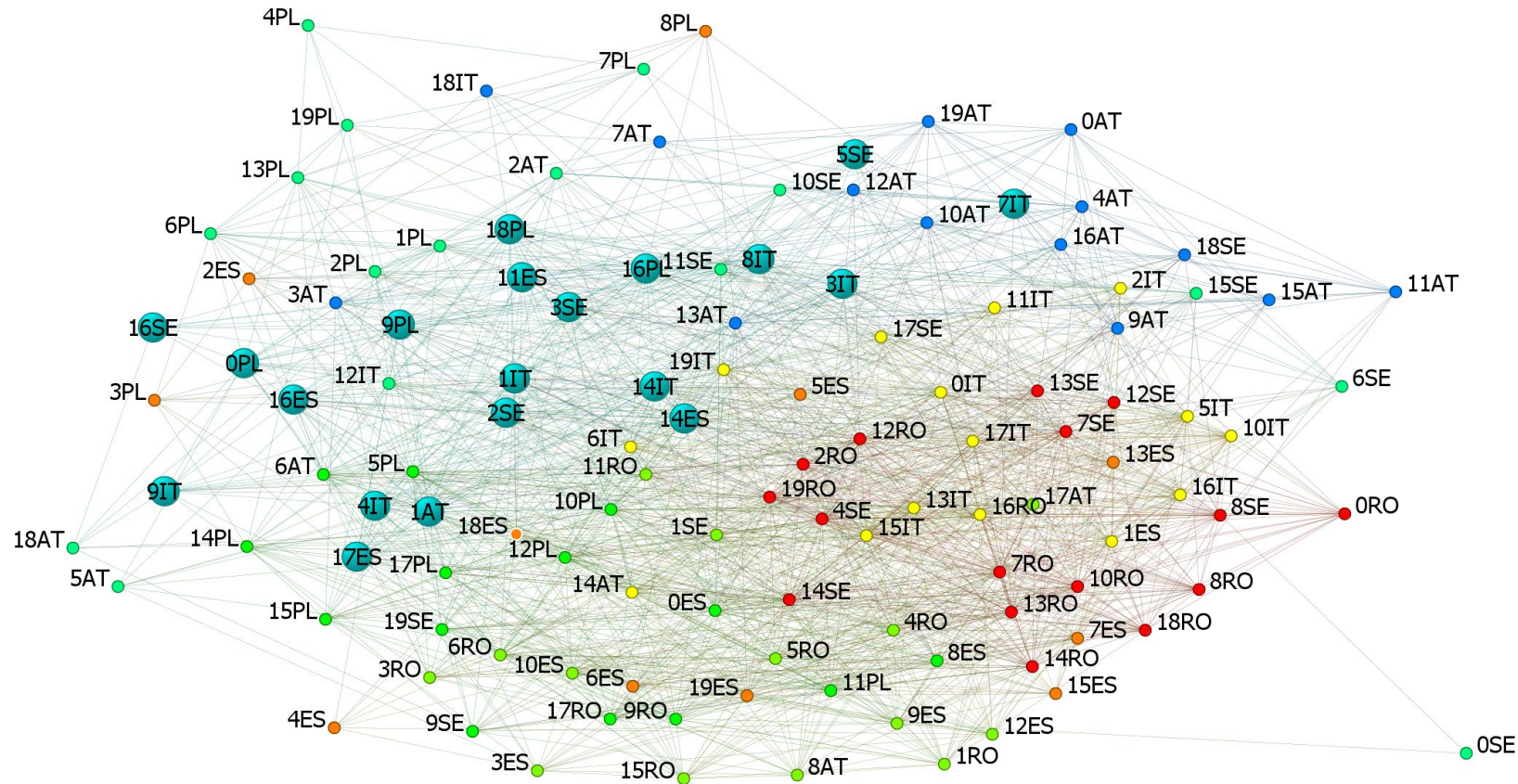
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# Complaints and national and/or regional issues – CLUSTER 1

Union



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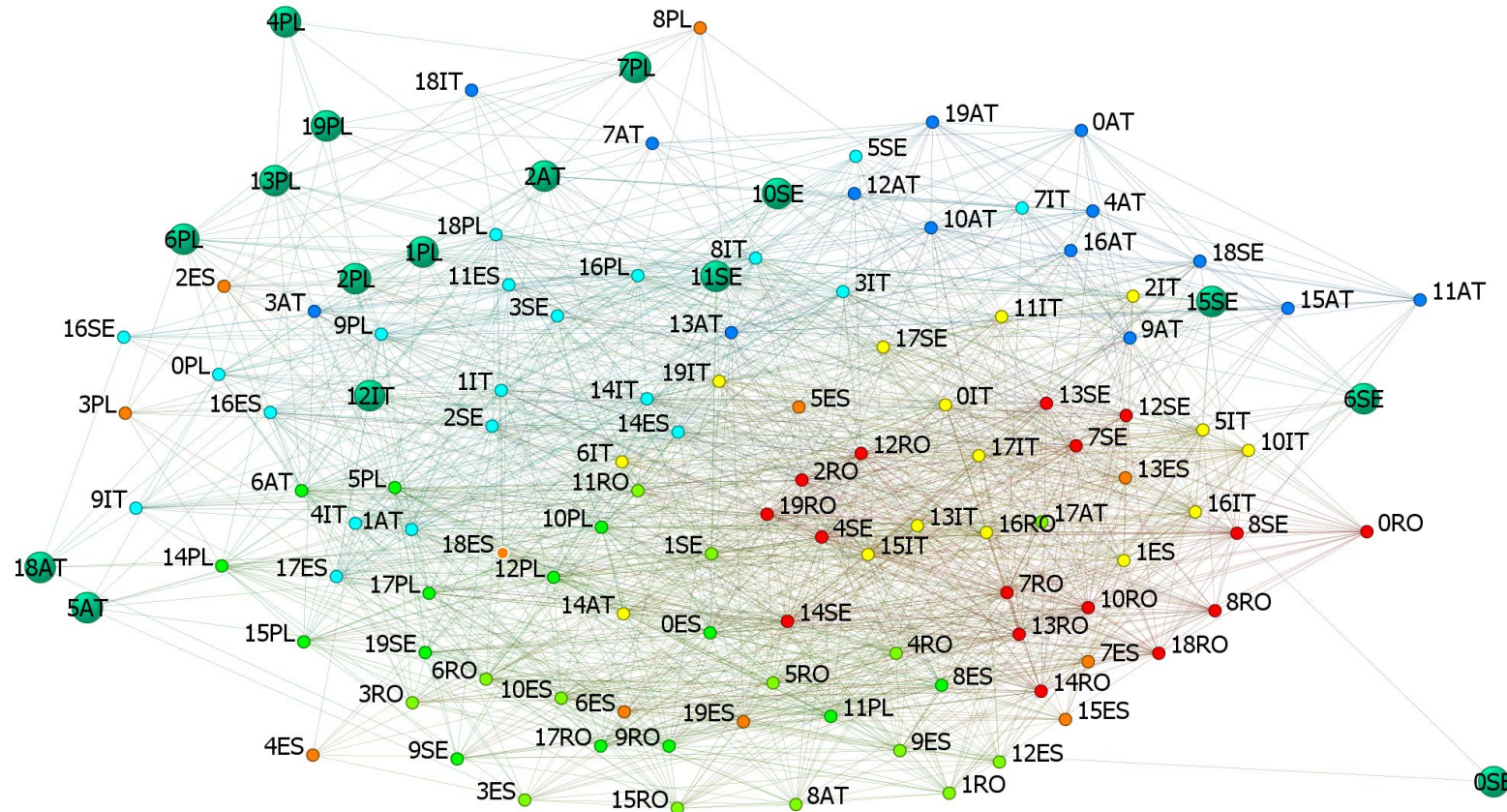


# Complaints and national and/or regional issues

ID	NAME OF THE TOPIC	Sentiment	% in posts	% in comments
1AT	EMPLOYEES OF THE LMA	0	5,0%	4,4%
11ES	HEALTH SYSTEM AND SOCIAL SERVICES	1,5	5,0%	4,1%
14ES	DATA IN THE REGION OF EXTREMADURA	0.8	4,8%	4,8%
16ES	GENERAL COMPLAINTS	1	2,4%	17,3%
17ES	SOCIAL SERVICES	0.4	4,6%	4,2%
11IT	GENERAL COMPLAINTS	1.1	1,8%	8,0%
3IT	HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION	0.3	4,0%	5,5%
4IT	INFRASTRUCTURE	0.5	3,7%	4,7%
7IT	DISINFESTATION	0.7	2,1%	6,2%
8IT	SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS	0.5	1,8%	8,9%
9IT	VACCINES	1.8	1,9%	6,4%
14IT	YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT	0.5	5,3%	4,6%
0PL	BRIDGE	0.1	4,2%	4,8%
9PL	ELBLĄG CHANNEL	0.2	3,2%	5,9%
16PL	HOTEL	0.1	5,8%	5,1%
18PL	EVENTS	0	3,3%	4,9%
2SE	SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	0.4	5,9%	4,6%
3SE	INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	0	4,5%	4,7%
5SE	INVESTMENT IN GLASSWORKS	0.4	2,9%	7,0%
16SE	INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY	0.1	2,8%	8,7%



## **(Mis-)Use of structural funds, events and difficulties in implementation – CLUSTER 2**



# (Mis-)Use of structural funds, events and difficulties in implementation – CLUSTER 2

ID	NAME OF THE TOPIC	Sentiment	% post	% comment
2AT	LUDIC EVENTS	0.1	0,066	0,044
5AT	SUMMER FEST WITH MUSICIANS	0.2	0,046	0,051
18AT	POSSIBILITY TO WIN SOMETHING FROM LMAs	0	0,042	0,043
12IT	MANAGING STRUCTURAL FUNDS IN CALABRIA	0.6	0,056	0,054
1PL	OPEN DAYS OF EU FUNDS	0	0,066	0,039
2PL	HOTEL	0	0,042	0,050
4PL	MAZURIE FOR ALL SEASONS	0.1	0,030	0,062
6PL	ANPHITEATHER	0.1	0,030	0,062
7PL	REGIONAL AMENITIES	0.1	0,030	0,063
13PL	LOVE WARMIA E MAZURI	0	0,035	0,070
19PL	PHOTOS	0.1	0,039	0,061
0SE	MISUSE OF TAX MONEYS	1.6	0,023	0,096
6SE	TOURISM AND GROWTH	0	0,058	0,040
10SE	INTERNATIONALIZATION AND GROWTH	0	0,057	0,042
11SE	STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS	0	0,052	0,042
15SE	CONFERENCE OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION	0.4	0,039	0,047



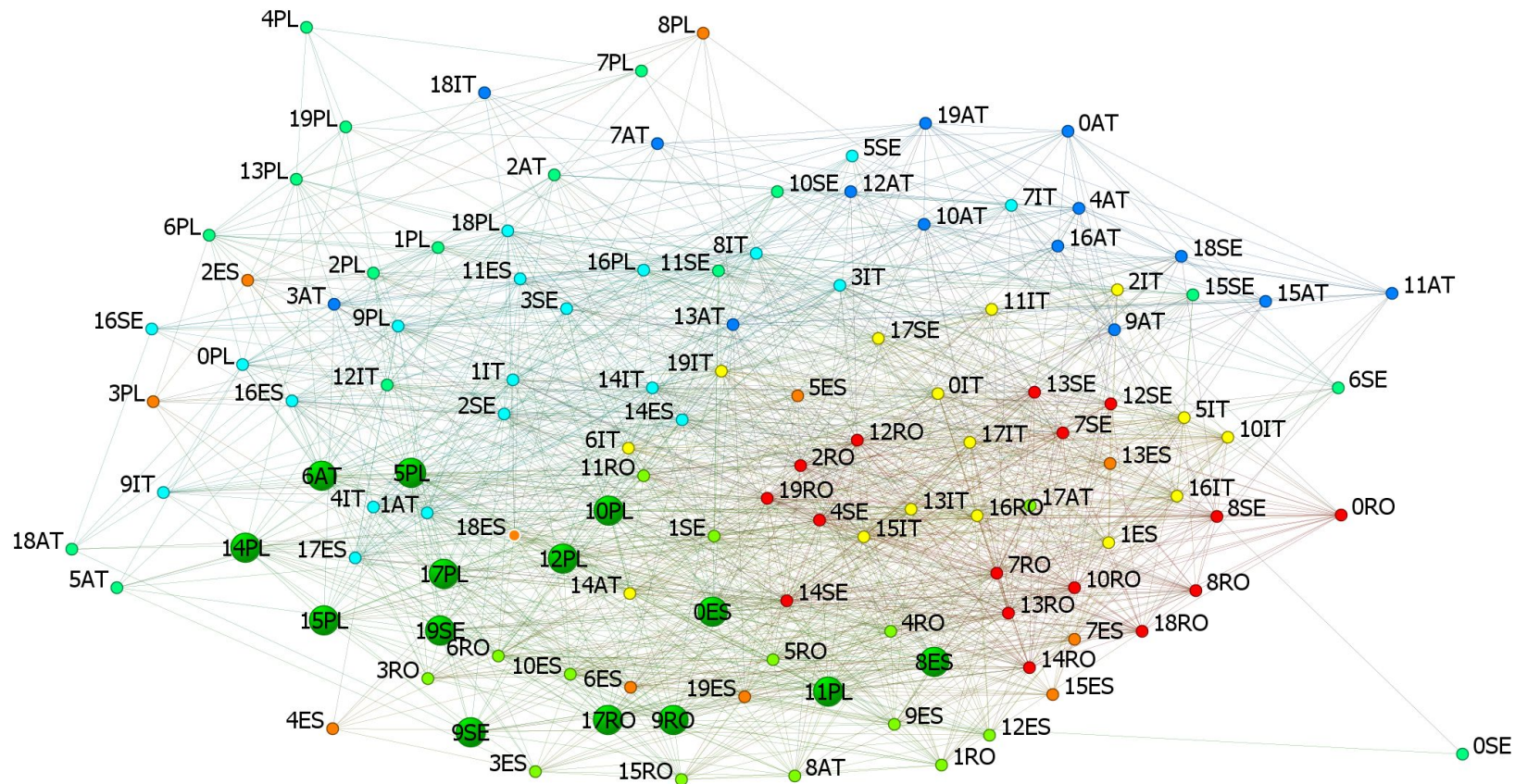


## Instructions for applying to calls and promoting projects – CLUSTER 3

Union

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# Instructions for applying to calls and promoting projects – CLUSTER 3

ID	NAME OF THE TOPIC	Sentiment	% post	% comment
6AT	COMMUNICATING EUROPE	0	0,043	0,085
0ES	EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY IN EXTREMADURA	0	0,055	0,033
8ES	GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS	0	0,057	0,034
5PL	EU FUNDS	0.2	0,044	0,042
10PL	EU GRANTS	0.1	0,081	0,036
11PL	PROGRAMMES	0.3	0,086	0,036
12PL	JOB AND THE EU	0	0,076	0,036
14PL	FUNDS IN A LENS	0.1	0,086	0,042
15PL	FUNDS FOR INVESTMENTS	0	0,056	0,042
17PL	EU FUNDED RESCUE SERVICES	0.3	0,073	0,037
9RO	EU FUNDS	0	0,048	0,060
17RO	NOISE/COMPLAINTS	0	0,019	0,038
9SE	START UPS	0.1	0,052	0,047
19SE	GROWTH AND SOCIETY	0.2	0,044	0,049



# Interpretation of the results and policy implications

Topics cluster 1 – has a negative impact on support when it appears on posts or comments. Interaction: the more it appears on the comments and posts at the same time, the less negative the overall effect – policy implication: a) engaged audience?

Topics cluster 2 – has a positive impact on support when appearing in posts but a negative one when appearing in comments. Negative. Interaction is negative the more this cluster appear in the comments and posts at the same time the less likely is to observe support. Policy implication: LMA justification, Misuse is hard to justify.

Topics cluster 3 – positive effect of these topics on support for European integration to be observed in both posts and comments instances. Interaction is negative. Policy implication: promotion seems to point to engagement of local implementers, while the increase in comments could point to complaints to the complicated process.



# Useful links

- Technical reports
  - <https://www.perceiveproject.eu/public-deliverables/>
- PERCEIVE Web-Journal articles
  - <https://www.perceiveproject.eu/journal/>
- Simulation platform – scenario analysis
  - forthcoming



# Thank you.

## Vitaliano Barberio

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