

**WHO  
MAKES THE  
NEWS?**



## **Belgium (Flanders)**

# **Global Media Monitoring Project 2015 National Report**



# Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2015 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with data analyst, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2015 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.



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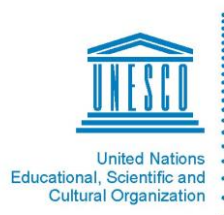
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## Preface

This report is written by Sara De Vuyst, Susan Vertoont and Sofie Van Bauwel from the department of communication sciences at the Ghent University (Belgium). The data for this report were collected by Yannick Dujardin and analysed by Sara De Vuyst, Yannick Dujardin, Susan Vertoont and Sofie Van Bauwel.

In Belgium the option was taken to provide two regional reports, this report will only elaborate on the results of the North of Belgium (Flanders).

## Global Context

- As newsroom staff around the world went about their day on 25 March 2015, hundreds of volunteers located in over 100 countries gathered to monitor their news media as part of the Fifth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).
- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women's presence in their national radio, television and print news. The research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. It found that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [was] more often being presented by women but it [was] still rarely about women.'<sup>1</sup>
- Seventy countries participated in the Second GMMP in 2000. This and all subsequent GMMPs were coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). The research found a relatively static picture: only 18% of news subjects were women, a statistically insignificant change over the 5-year period.<sup>2</sup>
- The first statistically significant change in women's overall presence in the news was registered in 2005 in the third iteration of the research.<sup>3</sup> Women comprised 21% of news subjects, a three percentage point increase over the period 2000 to 2005. Their near invisibility continued however, with only 10% of stories focussing centrally on women, underrepresentation in the major news topics and as voices in the news. The third GMMP made an important discovery: the sex of the journalist mattered for the gender dimensions of a story. For instance, the likelihood of female news subjects appearing in stories was higher in the case of stories by women journalists (25%) than in those by male journalists (20%).
- A second statistically significant change was noted in the results of the Fourth GMMP in 2010. In data collected from 108 countries, some progress in women's presence in the news was evident.<sup>4</sup> Women made up 24% of the people in the news, up three percentage points from the 2005 finding. However women's underrepresentation and near lack of voice remained. Only 13% of all stories focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda such as politics, government and the economy. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. Encouragingly, 44% of people providing popular opinion in the news were women – a ten percentage point increase from 2005. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. Similar to the Third GMMP, the Fourth in the series confirmed the finding on differences between female and male journalists in the gender dimensions of stories they reported. The likelihood of selection of female news subjects was higher for female journalists (28%) than for male journalists (22%). Stories by female reporters were more likely to challenge gender stereotypes (7%) than those by male reporters (4%). In pilot research on news online, 76 news websites in 16 countries and 8 international news websites were monitored. The results showed that women comprised only 23% of online news subjects – indicating that women's underrepresentation in traditional media had crossed over into the digital news world.
- The First GMMP and, as will be seen, the Fifth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Twenty years since the first GMMP, the challenges of news media sexism, gender

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<sup>1</sup> *Global Media Monitoring Project, Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media (MediaWatch) Inc. 1995

<sup>2</sup> Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. With additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Gallagher, Margaret. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*, 2005. World Association for Christian Communication.

<sup>4</sup> Macharia, Sarah, Dermot O'Connor and Lilian Ndangam, World Association for Christian Communication. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*, 2010.

stereotyping and gender bias are proving to be intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms. At the same time, there exist a few examples of successes towards gender-just, gender-fair media.

- The number of gender-just media portrayals in Belgium (Flanders) remains very scarce. Only one rather weak 'good practice' was identified in the Flemish monitor of the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. It concerns a newspaper article of 'Het Nieuwsblad' that covered the reactions on the German plane crash in the French Alps. The article extensively focused on the emotional reactions to this event from the male school principle and the male mayor of the German town Haltern am See. In contrast, the reaction of the female Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, is described rationally and brief. This subtly challenges the stereotype of the 'rational man' and the 'emotional woman'.

## National context

- News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. It is a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. A nation or society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to its citizens' aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. Across the world, the cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are reinforced through the media.
- As a department of communication sciences of the Ghent University we already participated from 1995 onwards until the latest monitor. As a department were the research on gender and media is one of the research lines we can build on expertise in research on gender and media and also on gender and news. We want to stress the importance of research of gender and media based on a monitor where all news and the representations of women and men is researched. The previous report is available in the GMMP <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2010-reports>.

## Executive Summary

The results and conclusions from the Belgian (Flemish) GMMP analysis of 2015 are based on a total of 167 news items, monitored on the 25th of March. That day was an atypical news day in Belgium (Flanders) because the news was mostly dominated by a German plane crash in the French Alps. The monitor composed of data from print media, radio, television and online news. Gender trends in internet and Twitter news are discussed separately from gender trends in classic media (print, radio and television). The monitor examined the presence of men and women in the news, as 'news subjects' and as 'reporters or presenters'. The analysis revealed that women are still overtly underrepresented in news media, both as 'news subjects' and as 'reporters or presenters', in both new and traditional media.

### Traditional news media

As '**news subjects**' women have an overall presence of 27% in traditional print, radio and television news media. In print media 34% of the news sources is female, in radio news 27% is female and in television news 20%. Regarding the scope of the news, most female news subjects appear in local news (38%). The presence of women in foreign (29%) or national (21%) news is lower.

When female subjects do function in the news it is mostly because of their personal experience (45%). Not often (only 18%) are they included as spokesperson, politician or minister.

As '**news reporters or presenters**' there remains a big gap between men and women. The gap is the biggest in print media, where only 1/4 news reporters is a woman (27% versus 73%). For radio and television, approximately 1/3 is a woman (38% versus 62%).

Most female reporters cover 'social and legal news' (63%) and issues on 'politics and government' (19%) and 'science and health' (19%). The majority of the male reporters also cover 'social and legal news' (55%), but they are also responsible for issues on 'crime and violence' (17%), 'politics and government' (12%) and 'celebrities, arts, media and sports' (12%).

Female reporters tend to include more female sources in the news, although the difference with male reporters is not big (25% versus 22%). Since there were only two news items identified that clearly highlighted issues of gender(in)equality, no statements can be made concerning the hypothesis that female reporters pay more attention to issues of gender equality.

### New news media

Similar to the results of traditional news media, the findings for internet news and news on Twitter do not paint an optimistic picture regarding the representation of women. Only 20% of the '**news subjects**' in internet news is female. Women are hugely underrepresented in both internet news and Twitter feeds. Very little stories had women as a central focus (13%) and none of the stories on Twitter challenged stereotypes. On the contrary, women were central in all tweets on 'celebrity news, births, marriage, royalty, etc.', which are typical soft news topics.

## A DAY IN THE NEWS IN BELGIUM (FLANDERS)

- **March 25 2015** was an atypical day in the news in Belgium (Flanders). The news was mostly dominated by a plane crash in the French Alps. On the 24th of March 2015 a Germanwings' Airbus on its way from Barcelona to Düsseldorf crashed in the French village Seyne-les-Alpes. All passengers died and amongst them was one Belgian. The day of the monitoring was the first day after this dramatic event and a lot of questions were still to be answered, such as 'what was the cause of the crash', 'who were the victims', etc. This news item received an exceptional amount of attention that day and pushed all the other news stories more into the back of the news.
- The monitor presented several cases that exemplify the GMMP findings that women are relatively absent or invisible in the news. One of the most striking examples was a television news item on the abduction of four hundred women and children by the terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria. The item was broadcast by the commercial television broadcaster VTM. Although the abduction of women and children was central to this story, the news item starts by referring to a Nigerian village that was captured by Boko Haram, but was recaptured by the Nigerian army. Then the reporter states that, while retreating, Boko Haram was able to abduct four hundred 'people' (not women and children) from the village. However, the item continues with an interview with a male Nigerian army officer that does not focus on the abduction. It is only at the end of the item that the abduction is mentioned again, but this time as a general problem in Nigeria. No woman's perspective was heard in this story, that hereby reinforces the notion of the passive, victimized women who need to be rescued by strong masculine heroes (from the army).

## THE CONTEXT

- **Country background**

The current Belgian federal state structure (Dutch-, French-, and German-speaking communities and three regions) is also visible in the country's media landscape, which consists of two large language-based markets, both characterised by increasing concentration. As we will provide you with the finding of the Northern part of Belgium (Flanders) we will discuss the media in Flanders.

The newspaper market in Flanders is dominated by two media groups: Het Mediahuis and De Persgroep. Another large media group is Roularta, which has interests in commercial broadcasting and the magazine market. The Walloon groups Rossel, IPM and Tecteo control the French-language newspaper market. The decline in newspaper readership is more prominent in Wallonia than in Flanders. Belgium has a strong public service broadcasting tradition. The Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroep (VRT) operates in Flanders and the Radio Télévision Belge Francophone (RTBF) in French-speaking Belgium. The most important commercial broadcaster in Flanders is Medialaan, which is owned by De Persgroep and Roularta. The German-Luxembourgian media group RTL/TVi dominates the Walloon commercial broadcasting market. Traditional media companies also have activities in the online news market.

- **Media monitored**

For the print analysis we selected three Flemish newspapers: De Morgen, De Standaard and Het Laatste Nieuws. These newspapers were selected based on their circulation. Het Laatste Nieuws has the most readers in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, followed by De Standaard and De Morgen. Het Laatste Nieuws is considered to be a tabloid-oriented newspaper, whereas De Standaard and De Morgen are labelled quality newspapers.

For the online analysis we selected two news websites: deredactie.be and hln.be. These websites get the most traffic in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Deredactie.be is connected to the Flemish public service broadcaster (VRT) and hln.be is related to the newspaper Het Laatste Nieuws. We also analysed the tweets on the official Twitter channels of these two news websites.

For the television analysis, we monitored the evening news broadcasts of two television channels: Eén and VTM. These two channels were selected based on their number of viewers. Eén belongs to the Vlaamse Radio-

en Televisieomroeporganisatie (VRT), which is the Flemish public service broadcaster. VTM (Vlaamse Televisie Maatschappij) belongs to Mediaaan and is the biggest commercial television station in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium.

For the radio analysis we monitored the morning news broadcast of two radio channels. We selected the radio news of the channel 'Radio 1', owned by the public service broadcaster, and of the commercial radio station Q-music. Radio 1 focuses on current affairs and interpretation, whereas Q-music focuses on popular music. Q-music is also owned by Mediaaan.

- **The monitors**

The news in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium was monitored by four people. Sofie Van Bauwel is an Associate Professor at the Department of Communication studies at the Ghent University where she teaches on cultural media studies, gender and media and television studies. She is part of the Centre for Cinema and Media Studies (CIMS). Susan Vertoont is a research and teaching assistant at the Department of Communication Studies at the Ghent University. She is part of the Centre for Cinema and Media Studies (CIMS). Sara De Vuyst is a PhD researcher at the Center for Journalism Studies (CJS) at the Department of Communication Studies at Ghent University. Yannick Dujardin holds a Master degree in Communication Studies and did an internship at the CIMS.

Some of the news was coded twice in order to guarantee the reliability of the results. In total 167 news items were monitored and 355 people in the monitors identified as subjects in the news.

## TOPICS IN THE NEWS

- **Topics in the news:** As mentioned March 25 2015 was an atypical day in the news in Belgium (Flanders) and most news items in the different media all focussed on the plane crash in the French Alps. Besides this specificity most news stories were on Social and Legal (N 163) Politics and Government (N 36), Celebrity, Arts and Media and Sports (N 33), Crime and Violence (N 23) Science and Health (N15) and Economy (N 2).
- In total 27% of the reporters and presenters in print media are female and 73% male (N 16) and for the medium radio we counted 38% female and 62% male (N 13) and for television the percentage of females equalises the medium radio by 38% and 62% male (N 53). When we look at the different topics we see that most female reporters communicate on Social and Legal topics (63%) and on Politics and Government (19%) and on Science and Health (19%) and Crime and Violence (22%) in classic media (aka print, radio and television).

## THE NEWS

- **Overall presence of women and men in the news in as news subjects**

The overall presence of women in the news in Flemish print, radio and television media is 27% and in news feed on the internet or Twitter 24%.

Most females are present in news items on Science and Health (40%), Social and Legal (35%) and Crime and Violence (22%). In contrast with news stories online where we can see a balanced gender representation in the news items on Celebrity, Arts and Media and Sports (50% female and 50 % male). Other news topics are male dominated on the net as for example news on Politics and Government represent 85% males and 15% females and news on Social and Legal (27% females and 73% males).

- **News Sources**

In print media we can find a total of 34% of feminine news sources and 27% for radio and 20% for television. If we look at the scope of the news, we can conclude that most females are a news subject



and source in local news (38%). This percentage is lower for foreign and international news (29%) and national news (21%).

- **Function of female and male news subjects**

Most females are portrayed as Personal Experience (45%), Spokesperson (37%) and Subject (24%) in news stories and not as Eye Witness and Popular opinion.

As a subject 18% of the females are government, politician, minister or spokesperson and 24% are males.

- **Who are the newsmakers?**

As Government, politician, minister and spokesperson 24% are male and 18% are female as subject. Similar topics we see that as a spokesperson on government, politicians, ministers that 65% are female and 52% male. Females are 14% represented in the occupation of expert or commentator and males in 8%. And most personal experiences are articulated on these topics by males by 29% and 0% females. And last on the topic of government and politics are 20% males in the occupation of eye witness and 0% females. In relation to the topic of Government employee, public servant, etc. we see that in the role of expert or commentator 14% are females and 10% are males.

We see more women in the role of subject in relation to the topic of Academic expert, lecturer, teacher (15% females and 0% males) and the same topic we see 43% females in the role of expert or commentators and less males in that role (30%). Remarkably when talking in the news story on Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc. we see no female experts or commenters (0%) and 20% males experts who are part of the news item.

In relation to news items on Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc. most males are presented as eye witness in contrast to 0% of the females.

Looking at Business person, exec, manager, stock broker and so on we see 17% males as spokespersons and 6% of the females and 10% males who give their personal experience (0% of the females).

Lastly when looking at the occupations of Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee we see that 25% of the subject are males and 0% are females and 10% of the males give their personal experience in contrast of 0% of the females. And as Homemaker and parent it is the other way around with 12% females and 3% males as subject in the news items.

- **Constructing ‘victims’ in the news**

Of the news subjects who are portrayed as victims most females are presented as victims of Victim of an accident, natural disaster, poverty (67%) and males 75% and 13% of the males as victims of Victim of other non-domestic crime, robbery, etc.

- **Portrayal as “survivors” in the news**

Most females are portrayed as Survivor of an accident, natural disaster, poverty (17%) and this is the same for males (13%).

- **Identity and family status in the news**

In total 18% of the females and 11% of the males who are news subjects are identified by their family status. Of the portrayed news subject 3% of females are identified by their family status when the reporter was female. Same percentage (3%) of the males are also identified by their status. When the reporter is male 11% of the females are presented by their family status in contrast to 5% of the males who are subject in the news stories when the reporter is male.

- **Images in the news**

22% of the males and 19% of females are subjects who were photographed in the researched news stories.



## WHO DELIVERS THE NEWS?

- **Overall reporters and presenters**

The results illustrate that there is still a big gender gap in news personnel, concerning radio, television and print media. The gap is the biggest in print media, where only one out of four news reporters is a woman (27% versus 73%). The percentages for radio and television are exactly the same. For both media, 38% of the reporters and presenters is female, while 62% is male.

- **Age of presenters and reporters:**

The research sample did not offer a lot of data concerning the age of the people who deliver the news. With regard to the anchors, announcers or presenters who appear on screen (usually in the television studio), all men (100%) are aged between 35 and 49. 24% of all women in the television studio are between 19 and 34 and 76% of the women are between 50 and 64.

When it comes to the news reporters who do not appear on screen, but whose voice is heard (e.g. as voice-over), 15% of all men have an age between 35 and 49, and 5% have an age between 50 and 64. The age of the other 80% is unknown. The age is also unknown of 75% of all female news reporters. However 13% of the female reporters is between 19 and 34 and 13% is between 35 and 49. Nonetheless there is too little data available to determine whether there are significant age differences between the men and women who deliver the news.

- **Reporters, by scope:**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 there were no female reporters (0%) delivering local news. Of all female reporters delivering the news that day, 44% was responsible for national news and 56% for international or foreign news. Of all the male reporters, 14% delivered local news, 24% delivered national news and 62% took care of international or foreign items. It has to be taken into account that these percentages are based on an absolute number of 16 female reporters and 42 male reporters.

- **Reporters, by major topic:**

Most of the female reporters (63%) covered 'social and legal' news items on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. The other female reporters were responsible for news items on 'politics and government' (19%), and 'science and health' issues (19%). Also the majority of the male reporters covered 'social and legal news' (55%) that day. 17% of the male reporters delivered news about 'crime and violence'. 12% of the men took care of items on 'politics and government' and another 12% reported items on 'celebrities, arts, media and sports'. 2% of the male reporters covered issues on 'economy' and 2% covered issues on 'science and health'. Again these results are based on the same absolute numbers as above, which is 16 female reporters and 42 male reporters.

## GENDER AND THE NEWS

- **Women's centrality in the news:**

In 11% of all the analysed news items, women were a central focus of the item. There were only three major topics wherein women had a central focus: 'science and health' (29%), 'social and legal' (13%), 'crime and violence' (17%). In news items concerning 'politics and government', 'economy', 'celebrity, arts, media and sports' women never were the central focus of the item.

- **Stories that highlight issues of gender equality or inequality issues:**

There were only two news items that highlighted issues of gender equality/inequality on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. One item in the category 'human rights, women's rights, rights of sexual minorities, rights of religious minorities, etc.' and one item in the category 'other domestic politics, government, etc.'. All the other news items did not pay attention to issues of gender (in)equality.

- **Challenging or reinforcing stereotypes?**

In three of the major topic categories, gender stereotypes were challenged. It concerns issues on 'politics and government', 'science and health' and 'social and legal'. 14 items were registered within the category 'politics and government' and 7% of these items challenged gender stereotypes. In the category 'science and health' 7 news items were recorded, and 29% of them challenged gender stereotypes. Lastly 60 items were categorised as 'social and legal news' and only 3% of those items challenged stereotypes concerning gender.

- **Does the sex of the reporter make a difference for the gender dimensions of a story?**

- **Are more female news sources found in stories reported by women in your country?**

There is still a big gender gap between the selected news sources. Of all the news sources coded, 98 of them were female and 330 of them were male. None of the news sources were coded as transgender or other. Female reporters do tend to select more women as news sources than male reporters, although the difference is not big. 25% of the female reporters selected female news sources, whereas 22% of the male reporters selected women as news source.

- **Is there a difference between the proportion of stories reported by women that have women as a central focus and those reported by men?**

Based on the data of the 25<sup>th</sup> March, only 6% of all the female reporters covered news items with women as a central focus. By contrast, 14% of all the male reporters covered items with women as central focus.

- **Is there a difference between the proportion of stories reported by women that raise issues of gender equality or inequality and those reported by men?**

Since there are only two news items that highlight issues of gender (in)equality it is impossible to conclude if the sex of the reporter makes a difference in this case. The news item on 'human rights, women's rights, rights of sexual minorities, rights of religious minorities, etc.' that raises issues on gender (in)equality was covered by a male reporter. The item within the category 'other domestic politics, government, etc.' was covered by one male and one female reporter.

- **Is there a difference between the proportion of stories reported by women that clearly challenge gender stereotypes and those reported by men?**

Data not available.

## **GENDER TRENDS IN INTERNET AND TWITTER NEWS**

### **Overview: The digital news world**

- Internet - Main topics

The main topics of the internet news were Social and Legal (48%), Politics and Government (30%), Crime and Violence (13%) and Celebrity, Arts and Media (4%). There were no internet stories concerning Economy.

- Internet – Proportion of stories shared on Twitter and on Facebook

20% of the stories shared on Twitter focused on Politics and Government and 80% on Social and Legal.

17% of the stories shared on Facebook focused on Politics and Government, 17% on Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports and 67% on Social and Legal.

- Twitter - Proportion of stories that are original tweet, proportion of stories that are retweets

All the stories on Twitter that focused on Other domestic politics, government, etc., Global Partnerships, Economic policies, strategies, modules, indicators, stock markets, etc, Economic crisis, state bailouts of companies, company takeovers and mergers, etc., Science, technology, research, discoveries..., Other stories on science, Disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash, etc., War, civil war, terrorism, other state-based violence, Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc., Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, books, dance, Sports, events, players, facilities, training, funding; Other celebrity/arts/media news were original tweets. None of the stories on Twitter were retweets.

## News subjects in the digital world

- Internet - Overall presence of women

The overall presence of women in the internet news is 20%. 18% of the subjects in Politics and Government were women (N=17), 21% in Social and Legal (N=14). All subjects in Science and Health were women (N=1).

- Twitter - Overall presence of women

The overall presence of women on Twitter is 29%. Women were present in news on Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc. (20%), Arts, entertainment, leisure, cinema, books, dance (60%) and Other celebrity/arts/media news (20%).

- Internet - Occupation of Female news subjects

Data not available.

- Internet - Functions of news subjects

Most of the females are portrayed as Subject (64%), Spokesperson (14%), Expert or Commentator (10%), Personal Experience (10%) or Eye Witness (2%). None of them was portrayed as Popular Opinion.

- Internet - News subjects who are identified by family status

40% of the news subjects who are identified by family status are female and 60% were male.

- Internet - News subjects in multimedia web components

27% of the news subjects in multimedia web components were female and 73% male.

- Internet - Age of news subjects

All the news subjects in the age group 35-49 were female. All the news subjects in the age group 50-64 were male. There were no news subjects in the age groups 12 and under, 13-18, 19-34 and 65 years or more in internet news.

- Internet - News subjects who are directly quoted

27% of the news subjects that were directly quoted were female and 64% were male.

## **Delivering the news in digital spaces**

- Internet - Female reporters in main stories

33% of the reporters that cover Politics and Government are female (N=3) and 13% of the reporters that cover Social and Legal are female (N=8). There were no female reporters that cover Economy, Science and Health, Crime and Violence and Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports.

- Twitter - Female reporters & journalists

All the female reporters of Twitter stories covered Social and Legal (N=3).

- Internet - Selection of News Subjects

25% of the female journalists covered news on news female subjects and 75% covered news on male subjects. 86% of the male journalists covered news on female subjects and 14% covered news in which the sex of the subject was not known.

## **Gender in digital news content**

- Internet - Reference to gender equality/HR policies

4% of the internet stories had a reference to gender equality/HR policies (N=1). All of these stories focused on Other domestic politics, government, etc.

- Internet - Stories where issues of gender equality/inequality are raised by topic

In 4% of the internet stories gender equality/inequality is raised by topic (N=1). All of those stories focused on Other domestic politics, government, etc.

- Internet -Stories where stereotypes are clearly challenged

4% of the internet stories clearly challenged stereotypes (N=1). All of these stories focused on National defence, military spending, internal security, etc.

- Internet -Stories with Women as a central Focus

13% of the internet stories had women as a central focus. 64% of those stories focused on Other domestic politics, government, etc. and 33% on National defence, military spending, internal security, etc.

- Twitter - Women's centrality

Women were central in all the tweets on Celebrity news, births, marriages, royalty, etc. and Other celebrity/arts/media news.

- Twitter - Challenging Stereotypes

None of the stories on Twitter challenged stereotypes.

- Twitter- Images

There were no images analysed on Twitter.

## Summary of findings

The findings for internet news and news on Twitter do not paint an optimistic picture regarding the representation of women. Females were hugely underrepresented in both media. Very little stories had women as a central focus and none of the stories on Twitter challenged stereotypes. On the contrary, women were central in all tweets on Celebrity news, births, marriage, royalty, etc, which are typical soft news topics.

## GENDER AND JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

- An example of **blatant stereotyping**

The item of the television news that was selected focussed on the theme of human rights, women's rights of sexual minorities and was broadcast by the public service broadcaster on channel One (Een) in the main evening news. The television news item is focussing on a new system of registration of sex workers by using a tablet. The reporter says that digital registration enables the police to have an overview of who's working and with the idea of helping to prevent human trafficking. A news reporter follows a policeman walking through the red light district and explains how the system works. The policeman refers to the sex workers as 'ladies' and the reporter refers to them as 'girls'. The way images are used to support visually the news items are examples of blatant stereotypical representation as we see the sex workers only by the means of fragmented representations of legs or feet in high heels of anonymous sex workers. The male police man is portrayed as the hero in the story who is there to 'save' the 'women'. The way this item is structured, the use of the language, the fact that only men are a speaking subject and the visual images which are used construct an example of blatant gender stereotyping.

- An example of **subtle stereotyping**



The title of the article that was selected is 'Vreselijk, maar het leven gaat door' (Terrible, but life goes on). We found this article in the Flemish quality newspaper De Morgen. The topic could be categorized under 'Disaster, accident, feminine, flood, plane crash etc.'. The main journalistic skill that was highlighted in the story was the headline. This article could be considered as a news story.

The article focused on the crash of Germanwings flight 409925. The story about this plane crash was dominating the news on the day of the media monitoring. The journalist in the article was located at the airport of Düsseldorf, which was the destination of the crashed plane. He reports on the general atmosphere in the airport. He describes, for example, how police officers and employees of the Flughafen Care Team are taking care of the relatives of the victims of the plane crash. The reporter witnesses a very emotional scene. He describes how two women arrive at the airport and begin to cry in public. He gives a detailed outline of this scene and uses words such as 'hartverscheurend' (heartbreaking). The article is accompanied by a large picture which fills half the newspaper page. The picture shows the two women crying. Although the story is not really about them and their names are not even mentioned in the article, they are the central point of attention in the picture. This reinforces the stereotype of women being very emotional and incapable of containing their

emotions. The story and the picture of these women are used to increase the emotional involvement of the reader in the article. The picture also shows four employees of the Flughafen Care Team. They can be recognized by their blue coats. All of them are women. This reinforces the stereotype that taking care of people is typically a female task.

- An example of a **missed opportunity** to provide a gender-aware perspective

An example of a **missed opportunity** to provide a gender aware perspective was found on the internet news website [www.deredactie.be](http://www.deredactie.be). The title of the news item is ‘Groen licht voor antidiscriminatieplan met praktijktesten in Gent’ (Green light for anti-discrimination project with practical try-outs in Ghent). The topic of this item can be categorized as ‘other domestic politics, government, etc.’, because it focuses on a local political conflict surrounding a new anti-discrimination project. Although the project contains all forms of discrimination and can be based on ethnicity, disability, religion, gender, etc., the article reduces the issue solely to ethnicity and misses the opportunity to raise awareness concerning gender discrimination.

- An example which **challenges stereotypes**

The article ‘Nadenken of we binnen defensie nog alle taken moeten doen’ (Consider whether defence should still do all tasks) was published on the internet news website [www.deredactie.be](http://www.deredactie.be) and **challenges gender stereotypes**. The topic is categorized as ‘other domestic politics, government, etc.’, and the news story focuses on the criticism, given by a female politician, on the policy on Defense and Energy. She states that the organization of defense and the management of energy in Belgium should be reevaluated. She criticizes the plans of the male minister of Defense and his male colleagues, concerning the tasks of the air force, the marine and the land forces. Within this news item the female politician is portrayed as a strong, competent woman, with expertise in ‘male’ topics such as defense and energy, while she rationally critiques her male colleagues.



## A GOOD PRACTICE CASE

WOENSDAG 25 MAART 2015 HET NIEUWSBLAD

# VLIEGTUIGCRASH 4U9525

# VERENIGD IN VERDRIET

## Tranen, kaarsjes en witte rozen

**Duitsland verliest 67 landgenoten in crash, onder wie 16 scholieren**

**'Dit is helaas de zwartste dag uit de geschiedenis van onze stad geworden. Erger dan ik mij ooit had kunnen voorstellen', zei burgemeester Bodo Klimpel over de plotsse treurnis in zijn stad. Zestien leerlingen en twee jonge juffen uit Haltern am See lieten het leven tijdens de noodlottige vlucht 4U9525. Allen op terugweg van een weekje taalbad in Catalonië. Met 67 doden werd Duitsland veruit het zwaarst getroffen.**

Van ONZE REPORTER IN HALTERN AM SEE  
**PIETER HUYBERECHTS**



Les. Gina, Elena, Paula, Kristin, Selina, Caja, Robea, Linda, Alina, Steffen, Fabio, Julia, An-Kristin, Helena. Zo heten de Duitse jongeren die gisteren om het leven kwamen in de Franse Alpen. Op de terugweg van een weekje Spaanse uitwisseling. Allemaal amper vijftien en zestien jaar oud. Allemaal leerlingen uit klas 9A en 9B van het Joseph König-Gymnasium, de grootste school uit Haltern am See. De stad met 40.000 inwoners in deelstaat Noordrijn-Westfalen haalde tot gisteren zelden het nieuws. Of het was een korte vermelding tijdens het WK voetbal in Brazilië: dat Haltern am See de geboortestad is van wereldkampioen Benedikt Höwedes én die van ex-international Christoph Metzelder. Maar meer viel er over het stadje echt niet te zeggen. Tot gisteren dus, tot het in één klap ongewild uitgroeide tot symbool van het Duitse verdriet. 'We zijn in de diepste mogelijke rouw', zei bondskanselier Angela Merkel, net nadat ze vernomen had dat liefst zestien jongeren uit hetzelfde stadje om het leven waren gekomen. Na een duikvlucht van acht oneindig lange minuten. Samen met hun twee geliefde juffen, Peter Cerceek en Zym Tegelhof, die het ook niet overleefden. En niet te vergeten: nog 40 andere Duitsers, na een reis op de terugweg van Barcelona naar Düsseldorf.

'Duitsland is bijzonder zwaar getroffen', zei Merkel. 'Net als Frankrijk, Spanje, Turkije en zoveel andere landen. Dit is een catastrofe.' De bondskanselier smuleerde meteen al haar afspraken en trekt vandaag in navolging van twee van haar ministers, hoofdspersoonlijk per helikopter naar de ramp-plek.

**Zwartste dag**

In Haltern viel alles stil. Burgemeester Bodo Klimpel vriet met zijn emoties geen blijf nadat 's namiddags duidelijk werd dat er niet meer gezocht moest worden op een formele identificatie. 'We hebben 's ochtend de bevestiging gekregen dat ze aan boord zijn ge- gaan in Barcelona. Op die vlucht, met drie Airbus. En niemand van hun familie, vrienden en klasgenootjes heeft intussen een geruststellend telefoontje gekregen.'

Langer hoop koesteren is naïef, zei hij ook. 'En zo is dit helaas de zwartste dag uit de geschiedenis van onze stad.' Schooldirecteur Ulrich Wessal trad hem bij. 'Dit is zo plots, zo onverwacht. We hebben nog geen tijd gehad om dit te verwerken. Noch de school, noch mijn leerlingen.'

Die zakten gisteravond massaal af naar de schoolpoort. Met witte rozen, kaarsen en handgeschreven briefjes. Honderden leerlingen, leerkrachten en ouders, zonder woorden verenigd in verdriet. Beseft dat ieder van hen op die vlucht had kunnen zitten. 'En om de beste juf Spans ooit te gedenken', zei Elena, een meisje dat pas volgde 'jaar een eerste keer naar Spanje mag, maar wel al les kreeg van mevrouw Cerceek. Elena (15) was goed bevriend met Robea, een van de zestien leerlingen die het drama niet overleefde. 'Een dag eerder had ze op Facebook nog foto's van uit Spanje gepost', vertelt ze. 'Ter sma liet ze weten dat het fantastisch was geweest. Robea zei dat ze blij was dat ze haar Spaanse vrienden had teruggezien, nadat ze maanden geleden ook hier in Haltern waren geweest. Maar ook dat ze blij was dat ze na een week weer naar huis kon komen. We maakten per sms plannen voor als ze geland was. En dan gebeurt zo iets.'



De leerlingen van het Joseph König-Gymnasium verzamelden aan hun school, om samen te

**Title:**

**'Verenigd in verdriet' (United in grief)**

**Short description:**

This newspaper article concerns the plane crash in the French Alps and therefore the subject can be categorised as a 'disaster, accident, famine, flood, plane crash'. The article was published in the newspaper 'Het Nieuwsblad'.

**Background:**

The article focuses on the grief in Germany, because 67 victims of the plane crash were Germans. Amongst the deceased passengers were 67 schoolboys and -girls from the Joseph König-Gymnasium. Most of them were inhabitants of the town Haltern am See.

**Objective/Purpose:**

The article extensively describes the emotional reactions to this event from the male school principle and the male mayor of the town. In contrast, the reaction of the female Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, is described rationally and rather brief.

**Summary:**

The descriptions of the reactions to this dramatic event subtly challenge the stereotypes concerning men and women when it comes to emotions.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results and conclusions from the Belgian (Flemish) GMMP analysis of 2015 are based on a total of 167 news items, monitored on the 25th of March. That day was an atypical news day in Belgium (Flanders) because the news was mostly dominated by a German plane crash in the French Alps.

The analysis revealed that women are still overtly underrepresented in news media, both as 'news subjects' and as 'reporters or presenters', in both new and traditional media. In traditional news media women have an overall presence of 27% as news subjects. Most women are found as news subjects in print news but the number is only 34%. As previous findings showed nationally and internationally most women appear in local news (38%).

When female subjects are interviewed in the news it is mostly because of their personal experience (45%). Not often (only 18%) are they included as spokesperson, politician or minister.

As 'news reporters or presenters' there remains a big gap between men and women and the gap is the biggest in print media, where only 1/4 news reporters is a woman. Most female reporters cover 'social and legal news' (63%) and issues on 'politics and government' (19%) and 'science and health' (19%). The majority of the male reporters also cover 'social and legal news' (55%), but they are also responsible for issues on 'crime and violence' (17%), 'politics and government' (12%) and 'celebrities, arts, media and sports' (12%).

Female reporters tend to include more female sources in the news, although the difference with male reporters is not big (25% versus 22%).

For new news media the results are similar with the traditional news media and the findings for internet news and news on Twitter do not paint an optimistic picture regarding the representation of women.

Only 20% of the 'news subjects' in internet news is female. Women are hugely underrepresented in both internet news and Twitter feeds. Very little stories had women as a central focus (13%) and none of the stories on Twitter challenged stereotypes. On the contrary, women were central in all tweets on 'celebrity news, births, marriage, royalty, etc.', which are typical soft news topics.

We can conclude that there is no or limited improvement of the balanced gender representations in news stories in Flanders. There is still an imbalance in news stories on the level of the reporting and in the subjects.

## ACTIONS IN THE POST-2015 ERA: A five-year plan

We still need to stress the need to develop a gender policy on the level of production and representation in all media and more specifically in news media. Policymakers need to constructively stimulate balanced gender representations and encourage news makers to take a non-stereotypical representation into account as a good and qualitative content.

Possible actions:

1. Prize for the best balanced gender representations
2. Gender quota in the production teams of news stories
3. A gender policy not only for a public broadcaster but also for commercial media companies
4. A gender media monitoring

## Annex 1. Methodology

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, radio and television newscasts, online news sites and twitter feeds to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure global results represented the distribution of the world's news media, while respecting the need to balance results from smaller countries with those of larger countries. The number and selection of media outlets monitored in each country reflects the density and diversity – audience, ownership, language – of media in each country.

Efforts were made to ensure a uniform understanding and application of the methodology was practiced across the world. Clear instructions on how to code were provided. Some regional and national coordinators benefited from face-to-face or virtual training while others and the broader global teams of volunteers developed skills in monitoring through online self-administered tutorials. In one region, national coordinators were trained by the regional coordinator via teleconference. In some countries, national coordinators provided advance training to volunteer monitoring groups.

In each country monitors coded the most important television and radio newscasts of the day in their entirety. For newspapers, 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news – were coded. Country teams could opt into the online and twitter news monitoring based on their knowledge of the importance of these channels for news delivery to local audiences.

The quantitative research captured statistical data on news topics, women and men in the news, the types of news stories in which they appeared, and their function in the news. Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa was responsible for managing and processing the monitoring data.

An in-depth and more nuanced analysis of selected news stories examined the means, themes and patterns of gender in the news. This qualitative analysis took into account the role of story angle, language and visual representations in constructing and sustaining or challenging gender stereotypes.

A full discussion of the methodology, including considerations on reliability, accuracy and limitations, is contained in the global report *Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*.

## **Annex 2. List of Monitors**

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