

Diplo Media Report 2023/01

National Centre for Research on Europe

MEDIA REPORT

**Summary of New Zealand Media Coverage of
the European Union: January December 2022**

Dr Serena Kelly

Brittany Baugh

DIPLO Project
National Centre for Research on Europe
University of Canterbury, New Zealand

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June 2022 Media report, Dr Serena Kelly and Brittany Baugh, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

The summary below highlights key points found from the media analysis conducted from leading media outlets in New Zealand from 1 January – 31 December 2022.

2022 was an important year for Europe,

the EU and Ukraine in the latter half of the year. Despite the continuation of fighting in Ukraine, New Zealand editors and readers appeared to lose interest in the issue. This was not a unique phenomenon – it has been reported that Western media lost interest in the war in Ukraine in comparison to other news (60595.396.6e).

Ukraine in the first half of the year helped to emphasise this narrative -- the majority of Ukraine news stories were framed under Politics.

was no solution reached in June 2022, and talks between the EU and Britain resumed in October on matters pertaining to fixing the Northern Ireland Protocols checks³.

Regarding the presence of actors in the media in relation to coverage of the EU, China and Russia were the most frequent. China was mentioned in 72 stories whilst Russia was mentioned in 504. The increase of Russian visibility has already been attributed to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. However, the visibility of China was not linked to this. Only 15 out of 72 of the stories linked China to Russia. The other 57 stories contained sentences relating to the EU in relation to climate change and to the FTA. 15 of these stories also correlated with coverage of COVID-19, addressing the ongoing impact of the outbreak.⁴

Conclusion

In sum, our detailed analysis of media coverage of the European Union in key New Zealand outlets in 2022 notes that the year held significance for Europe due to ongoing events such as the war in Ukraine and the long-awaited Free Trade Agreement between the EU and New Zealand. In total, 1,213 articles were identified for the dataset, a decrease from the 1,683 stories in 2021, with fluctuations in coverage observed throughout the year. Notably, August showed a decline in coverage, aligning with the trend of reduced European news during the holiday season.

There was dominant focus on the EU's role in the ongoing tensions with the war in Ukraine in the first half of 2022. During this period, the EU was primarily framed as a minor actor in New Zealand news concerning the Ukrainian crisis. However, despite the continuation of fighting in Ukraine, there was a decline in stories concerning the EU and Ukraine in the latter half of the year. This trend, while notable, is not unique, as it reflects a broader global pattern of waning interest in the Ukrainian conflict.

Framing categories were crucial in understanding how the EU was portrayed. The majority of news items categorised the EU as a political actor (66% of total stories), again with a notable emphasis on the war in Ukraine. Conversely, the EU was infrequently framed as a Science & Technology (1.1%) or Health (2.6%) actor. The evaluation of the EU's portrayal was predominantly neutral when it was presented as a major or secondary actor. Negative evaluations slightly outweighed positive ones, with negative news items totalling 11.25% and positive ones at 6.6%. The degree of centrality revealed that the EU was predominantly presented as a minor actor across various media sources, with the exception of the New Zealand Farmers Weekly.

The report also touched on the continued presence of Brexit in New Zealand media in 2022. While it received less coverage compared to 2021, Brexit remained a salient issue, primarily due to reportage on changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol. Additionally, Russia's visibility was closely linked to its invasion of Ukraine, while China's presence was associated with climate change and the EU