

The importance and forms of press interaction

There is scope for all CIVITAS projects to raise awareness of their work through press interaction. This can serve a variety of purposes, such as fostering the engagement and participation of key stakeholders and encouraging the acceptance and uptake of measures.

Interaction can occur in numerous ways. For instance, you may write a press release for distribution to media outlets; be interviewed for a print article; be filmed for a video interview; or be quoted in a social media post by a media source. In addition, the press that you engage can span print, broadcast, or internet forms of media.

Irrespective of the form the interaction takes and whom it is with, there are a number of things to keep in mind. This short guidance document sets them out.

The golden rule

If partners speak or appear in any form of media (be it print, broadcast, or internet) to discuss their mobility policies or measures, they should **mention their participation in the project** and that activities are **made possible by EU funding**.

Further tips

Designate a press contact

Make it clear who will take charge of writing press releases and managing media relations. Ensure that their name and contact information is clearly stated on press releases and that they have enough knowledge of the project to deal with questions that come in.

Always nominate a spokesperson

When approached by the press for an interview or quotation, have a spokesperson in mind. This person should be knowledgeable enough to respond clearly, and have a strong command of the interview language. If possible, they should also have authority and be known within your organisation.

Give that person talking points and ensure that they are well prepared

The (spokes) person is unlikely to have all relevant information all of the time. Before writing a press release or holding an interview, ensure that they agree with and are clear on the most important points to convey. These points should form the majority of the press interaction and you should communicate them succinctly.

Have clear messaging and limit the amount of key messages you have

The prepared talking points should express a clear message. What are you trying to say through your presswork? Make sure that it is clear and logical to all beforehand. In addition, limit the number of messages in an interview – try to stick to a maximum of **three main points** that the journalist can focus on.

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Emphasise your key message(s) repeatedly

If you have one key takeaway (think of a headline) above all, ensure that it is mentioned at very beginning, in the middle and at the end of your press release or interview. Of course, it is not necessary to use the same wording each time. However, repeating the message will ensure that the press takes notice.

Have figures and statistics to hand

Figures, numbers and statistics are ideal for grabbing media attention, and often the best material to disseminate. Before interacting with the press, have relevant figures, statistics and “fast facts” ready to share.

Use **comparisons** to make points. For instance, if you talk about the tonnes of waste produced in a city, this will not be clear in anyone’s mind. However, if you say that this amount could fill up two football stadiums, then people will grasp it better.

If you do not know an answer, admit it

You may sometimes receive a question you do not know the answer to. In these cases, it is always better to admit this, instead of trying to construct a (potentially false) response. You can always offer to put the interviewer in touch with a colleague who would have the answer. If you do so, make sure to follow up on this.

Do not forget: this is an EU-funded project and part of the CIVITAS Initiative!

When speaking to or in any form of media to discuss your mobility policies or measures, please **always mention** your participation in the project and that EU funding makes your activities possible.

Add the following to your background information at the end of press releases (after the main article). See an example of these “Notes to editors” in the press release template:

- The EU flag - [download here](#).
- The following statement - “**XXX** is a project under the CIVITAS Initiative, one of the flagship programmes helping the European Commission achieve its ambitious mobility and transport goals. Since 2002, it has been working to make sustainable and smart mobility a reality for all in towns and cities across Europe. Find out more here: <https://civitas.eu>.”

You can also find the flag and statement in the press release template.

Provide visual materials

Whether for a press release or if you are being interviewed, always provide access to visual materials such as the project logo, relevant photographs, and any other elements of your visual identity that are important to display.

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Share details of your communication channels

Ask that the press link to your website and social media channels to ensure that interactions drive more traffic to your sites.

Press interaction formats

Below are different potential formats for press interaction:

- Press briefing
- Press conference
- Press tour
- Q&A session
- Press breakfast