

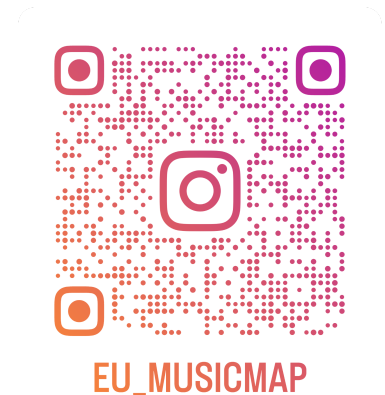
EU Music Map Project

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Problem statement

Over the past years, Europe has seen a rise in nationalist and isolationist politics, leading to so-called Euroscepticism regarding the viability of the European Union as a political entity. In smaller nations within the EU, this sentiment is often fuelled by a rhetoric of invisibility: the idea that smaller countries are not reckoned with by the bigger nations within the Union and are perhaps at risk of cultural assimilation (Kaeding et al. 2020).



Counteracting these populist narratives is key to ensuring a harmonious future of the European Union, and popular culture plays a big role in this (García & Magnúsdóttir 2019). This relates to the idea of *soft power*, coined by Joseph Nye in 1990 and described by Dennison and Dwyer (2021) as 'the ability of a country to influence through attraction rather than coercion' by highlighting 'new and attractive features ... and producing a coherent narrative that incorporates these attractive features'. In this project, we aimed to use popular music as a form of soft power and an entry point for people in Europe to learn more about other European countries and their culture.

The goal was to initiate a social media challenge whereby participants would discover new artists from each of the EU's 27 member countries, as well as Ukraine.

Project description

The **focus** of the EU Music Map Challenge is to highlight music from European Union countries and from Ukraine and share our findings on social media in order to encourage people to discover new artists and songs from countries whose music they know little about. (The **broader goal** is to use popular music as a way to promote a shared European identity while at the same time encouraging people to learn more about the diversity of European cultures.)

To fulfill the goals of the project, we created an Instagram page (@eu_musicmap) dedicated to our challenge. The Instagram account is divided into two parts. The main feed introduces each country and provides the audience with a short description of the country, while also highlighting some of the main artists that we discovered. In every caption we encourage those who are interested to comment on their favourite artists

and songs from each country. To pair with the feed, the Instagram Stories feature is used to facilitate the challenge by encouraging others to use the specific 'Add yours' sticker that we create for each country. From there we add all interacting stories to the page's highlights, so users can see what others have discovered and shared.

In addition to the Instagram page, we have set up Youtube and Spotify accounts which we use to create a playlist for each country containing a selection of songs to get the participants started. For every country's playlist we search for songs in 6 genres: pop, indie/alternative, electronic, rock, folk/ethnic and rap. We also provide a list of links to resources that can help participants discover more artists from each country (radio stations, music databases, etc.)

The project has a participatory focus with the main **stakeholders** being regular people - more specifically, social media users who like listening to music and who the challenge is aimed at. They are involved in two ways: first, the content we create on social media will educate them about popular music in different EU countries (and those countries themselves); second, they will help disseminate the project by participating in the challenge. A secondary stakeholder are the artists from European Union countries whose music is highlighted in the project. They benefit from the project indirectly through exposure to a wider audience.

On 14 October, we commenced with the practical part of the project. Before that, we needed to do a lot of pre-work, which consisted of outlining the schedule, dividing tasks and prepping for the posts. We followed a regular schedule of posting, during which team members took turns composing an educational Instagram post as well as an interactive series of Instagram stories.

The **action plan** with the time frame for completing the project and the task list can be found at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ekGRSTsbKOMwR3xOiyRr3KEF_egWbyM97IiQO4-BhvE/edit?usp=sharing.

Project results

The project was completed on December 13, 2022, producing an Instagram page that contains a mini encyclopedia of EU music, with a selection of artists, songs, and facts about each country in the challenge. Overall, we have created:

- 28 playlists of ca. 15 songs each
- 30 posts: 28 country posts containing information about each participating country and a selection of artists from there; plus the project introduction and the final post
- 29 story highlights: 28 country highlights, plus the introduction highlight (how to participate, links etc.)
- A selection of useful links to help participants discover new music: https://linktr.ee/eu_musicmap.

This can be used as a foundation for future iterations of the challenge.

Overall, we would say that our challenge was a success, but there is still room for improvement and adjustments in future endeavors.

Our Instagram account reached a reasonable amount of followers given the short time frame. As of December 8th, the page has 76 followers, although we predict more interaction with our Ukraine post. According to Instagram insights, our account reached 650 accounts and 78 accounts were engaged. Although, our most successful post was Italy, which reached 512 accounts and was archived by 20 people.

At first, the only engagement we had was with people within the project. However, as we began using tools such as hashtags, tagging, adding location, and following other accounts, our page began to grow, and the amount of interaction increased.

Our best-performing posts in terms of likes were: from Italy (63), Slovakia (44), and Luxembourg (160), while the rest of the posts varied ranging from 6-22. As for interaction with our stories, France was the most successful. Eight people commented on our sticker. Italy and Ireland followed, with three and four people replying. The other countries had less engagement with each story.

People reposted our story or used our 'add yours' sticker with the following countries: the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Malta, and Italy, which had the most engagement.

Noticing that reposting might be too much to ask for in a challenge that had just begun, we decided to include the option to comment songs under our posts. Overall, around 1-3 people chose this option when it was available.

Media coverage

The EU Music Map project is centered around sharing on social media, meaning that media coverage is an integral and constant part of the process, taking the form of comments under the posts, other users sharing the posts in their

stories, and so on. Additionally, the project was publicized through Tallinn University's weekly

TALLINNA ÜLIKOOL
Üliõpilaskond

TLÜ üliõpilaste
uudiskiri
28. november 2022

Uuringud ja küsitlused

European music map challenge.

Share your favourite songs and discover new ones from our playlists every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Join us in discovering iconic tracks and hidden gems across Europe



EU_MUSICMAP

ELU projekt: Avasta uut muusikat kogu Euroopast

Grupp Tallinna Ülikooli tudengeid on vaeva näinud uue põneva ELU projekti kallal, mille eesmärk on tutvustada läbi sotsiaalmeedia avaruste senikuulmatuid artiste igast Euroopa nurgast. EU Music Map Challenge tutvustab iga nädal oma Instagrami kontol kolme erinevat riiki, kelle kultuur ning mitmekülgne muusikamaastik vääriks suuremat tähelepanu ja tunnustust! Kui juhtud olema suur muusikaarmastaja, siis kindlasti viska pilk peale iga riigi postitusele ja kaasnevale esitusloendile, mille žanrid kõiguvad melanhoolsest folgist kuni paukuva alternatiivrokiini. Ära unusta osa võtta väljakutsest ning jagada enda lemmikuid - kes teab, äkki on Sinu järgmine lemmikbänd vaid ühe kuulamise kaugusel!

[Leia meid Instagramist. @eu_musicmap](#)

newsletter, both in the English and Estonian version. This greatly helped grow the project audience, resulting in numerous new followers with whom we could share the message. We also were promoted through Tallinn University's Instagram account, as well as that of the Student Council.

Besides the immediate university family, a lot of other Instagram accounts (fan accounts and artists themselves) shared our posts in their stories, which resulted in broader discoverability and reach.

Individual reflection

- **Arabella Saks:** The most important thing I learned from this project was social media marketing do's and don'ts - now I have the initial necessary knowledge to market my own music and social media. I discovered countless different great musicians and songs that I would not have uncovered without participating in the challenge. I became more interested in discovering and sharing music from different countries and I would like to do more similar challenges in my own accounts in the future.
- **Karolin Tsuiman:** For me the biggest learning experience was how much work goes into maintaining a social media account, especially one that works around a schedule, aims to share knowledge and get people to participate. I discovered numerous artists, found fascinating information about different countries and learned a lot about teamwork. Additionally, it was rewarding to see artists being grateful for us noticing and sharing their creations.
- **Allie Goble:** As someone who typically waits until later to do tasks, this project was a good reminder that thinking and working ahead are essential to being a reliable and considerate team member. The project showed me productive ways to divide and organize tasks, which I will keep in mind for future endeavors. Most importantly, I have a better appreciation and understanding of the countries we covered, and I discovered songs and artists that I would not have found otherwise.
- **Merzeede Liis Ork:** This project has taught me the importance of constant and clear communication within a successful team project, in addition to the learned skill set pertaining to the intricacies of social media management. I thoroughly enjoyed adventuring into unfamiliar genres and seeking out colourful artists around Europe, all of which ended up emphasizing a need for interconnectedness and communication - with other cultures, but within our team as well. Additionally, this project aided to help hone my knowledge in graphic design, as well as time management within a group project overall.

- **Laura Mätlik:** For me the biggest lesson was that time planning is the key for smooth operation. I take the knowledge with me and try to use those skills in everyday activities to get all my things done in time. This project also opened my eyes on how crucial is the aspect of constant communication with others on achieving the same goal. I also discovered many new interesting artists that I would probably never know about without this project.
- **Haldi Välimäe:** The most important thing I learned in this project was cooperation. In addition to cooperation I learned a lot about social media marketing. I think the knowledge I gained from this project will help me as a musician on social media. How to promote my music for example, on Instagram. I also found many great artists and discovered a lot about different European countries and their culture.

References

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