



D10.3 DISSEMINATION, COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2

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Abstract	This report summarizes the communication and dissemination activities carried out by the EASIER consortium since the project kickoff in January 2021 until the project end in December 2023.
Keywords	Communication, dissemination, liaisons, events, communication campaigns, KPIs



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Project co-funded by the European Commission in the H2020 Programme		
Nature of the deliverable:		R*
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public, fully open, e.g., web	✓
CL	Classified, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	
CO	Confidential to EASIER project and Commission Services	

* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable builds on the set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined and agreed on before the project launch and deliverables D10.1 Impact Creation Strategy and Plan (submitted to the EC on April 30, 2021) and D10.2 Dissemination, Communication and Community Engagement Report 1 (submitted to the EC on June 30, 2022).

The report at hand summarizes and evaluates the effectiveness of the communication and dissemination activities carried out by the EASIER consortium since the project kickoff in January 2021 until the project end in December 2023. More specifically, the document provides an overview of communication and dissemination tools and channels used by the consortium, including the project website, social media, newsletter, scientific publications, and events, among others. Additionally, the report gives an overview of the type and number of stakeholders reached by the EASIER consortium through their outreach activities.



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ABBREVIATIONS

APIs	Application Programming Interfaces
EC	European Commission
ELE	European Language Equality Project
ELG	European Language Grid
EU	European Union
EURid	European Registry for Internet Domains
GA	General Assembly
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LT	Language Technology
M	Month
MT	Machine Translation
SL	Sign Language
WP	Work Package



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This document, prepared in the context of WP10 (Outreach and Impact Creation), summarizes the communication and dissemination strategy carried out by the EASIER consortium since the project kickoff in January 2021 until the project end in December 2023.

It describes different tools used and activities carried out by the project partners to guarantee EASIER's broad visibility, adequate promotion of its activities and achievements, and uptake of project results.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

This document is structured into three main sections.

1. Introduction: This section provides an overview of the document outlining its purpose and structure.
2. Communication and dissemination: This is the main section of the document presenting various types of communication and dissemination tools and activities carried out throughout the entire project and indicators that were used to monitor the effectiveness of the impact creation strategy developed at the beginning of the project.
3. Conclusions: This section concludes the document.



2 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

As a starting point for EASIER outreach activities, a comprehensive communication, dissemination, and community-building strategy (outlined in more detail in deliverable D10.1 Impact Creation Strategy and Plan) was developed at the beginning of the project to ensure the project's wide visibility among the target stakeholder groups. The strategy was meant to ensure that the following communication-related project objectives are met:

- ➔ an establishment of a distinctive and recognizable brand identity to support the project's promotional efforts,
- ➔ achieving broad visibility and raising awareness about EASIER and its results,
- ➔ ensuring uptake by deaf communities, particularly those using the languages covered by EASIER,
- ➔ reaching and engaging a critical mass of relevant stakeholders to effectively showcase the project results,
- ➔ establishing liaisons with relevant initiatives.

The strategy set the overall project communication and dissemination framework and provided clear directions for all consortium members so that they could smoothly and effectively perform outreach activities on behalf of the project. Specific tools and activities developed and used throughout the project are described in the below subsections.

2.1 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION TOOLS AND CHANNELS

2.1.1 Visual identity

One of the first tasks performed within WP10 was the development of the EASIER brand identity, including the color palette, logo and icon with different variations, typography, and templates for deliverables and presentations. To ensure the coherency and recognizability of the developed visual identity across all channels, a style manual was developed and shared with all project partners. To further enrich the EASIER brand identity, deaf consortium members gave EASIER a name sign. They decided on a "closed palm that opens" because it fitted well within the overall visual identity of the project.



FIGURE 1: EASIER LOGO

2.1.2 Website

The EASIER website was developed in the first months of the project to act as an information hub. The following content was featured on it:

- ➔ general information about the EASIER project, its vision, and objectives,
- ➔ information about the EASIER consortium,
- ➔ articles including relevant project news and press-releases,
- ➔ a library of resources, including public deliverables, scientific publications, videos, and presentations,
- ➔ information about relevant events,
- ➔ contact information,
- ➔ the acknowledgment and reference to the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Program funding.

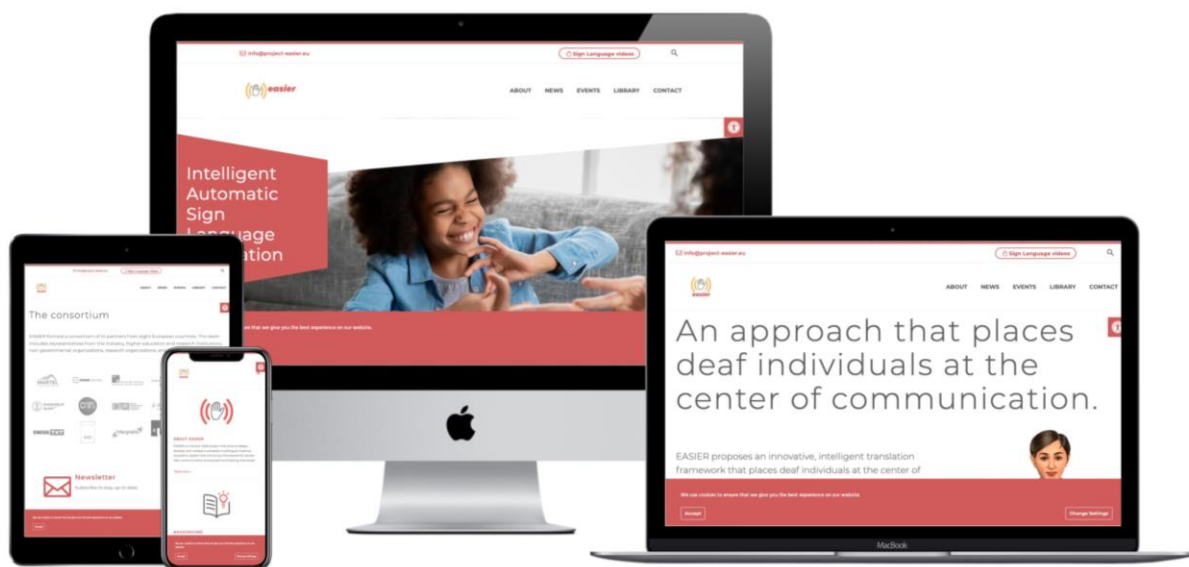


FIGURE 2: EASIER WEBSITE – RESPONSIVE VIEWS

The website was developed with the users' needs in mind. In addition to being multilingual, it features a light and responsive design characterized by high contrast, a keyboard navigation bar, and a dedicated customizable accessibility plug-in providing the following accessibility tools: resize font (increase/decrease text to make it readable on any device), readable font, grayscale, high contrast, negative contrast, light background, and links underline.

The website has been regularly updated throughout the project to provide all interested parties with up-to-date information about the progress of the project.

All the information and e-mails collected within the framework of EASIER have been protected under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). EASIER only contacted people who have submitted their inquiries, and the newsletter was distributed only to those who have explicitly requested to receive it. Any person who has subscribed was allowed to remove their e-mail address from the list upon request. The website provided information on the stored data and how they are used in alignment with the GDPR under the Privacy policy link (footer of the webpage).

Upon the recommendation received from the EC reviewers during the review meeting held on September 16, 2022, the EASIER consortium improved the accessibility on website.

As shown in Figure 3, throughout the project lifespan, the website counted 17,988 unique visitors who generated 36,335 page views with an average browsing time of 00:01:42.

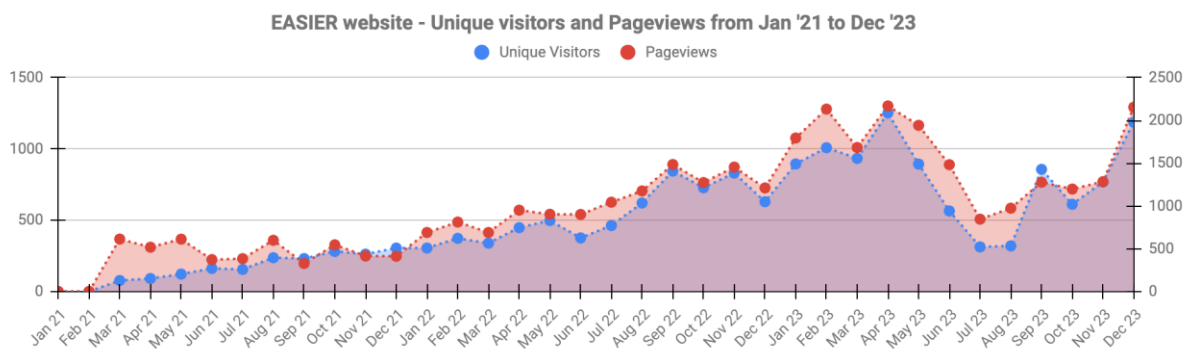


FIGURE 3: EASIER WEBSITE - TRAFFIC OVERVIEW

2.1.3 Communication campaigns

EASIER ran three communication campaigns during its lifespan. The first one was launched on April 13, 2021, and focused on introducing project partners via weekly posts on Twitter and LinkedIn.



FIGURE 4: #DISCOVEROURCONSORTIUM SOCIAL MEDIA CARD

The second communication campaign, titled “Did You Know That?” was launched on July 21, 2021, with the aim of bringing the subject of deafness, sign languages, and deaf culture closer to the hearing community. The campaign consisted of a series of informative articles and was promoted on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and through project newsletters.



FIGURE 5: #DIDYOUKNOWTHAT SOCIAL MEDIA CARD



The third and last campaign, titled “Discover EASIER” was launched on July 20, 2023, with the aim of shedding light on the technical work performed within the project. All articles within this campaign were available in International Sign and written English and focused on showing the work behind the scenes of the project while also explaining how the advancing technology can help reduce communication barriers. The campaign was developed thanks to a collaborative effort of several project partners, including Martel, EUD, the University of Zurich, and ATHENA.



FIGURE 6: #DISCOVEREASIER SOCIAL MEDIA CARD

2.1.4 News items and press releases

The EASIER consortium was actively sharing updates about the project through news items pushed out via the project website and promoted further via social media and periodic newsletters. During its lifespan, the project published 55 news items on various relevant subjects ranging from updates on papers published by the EASIER consortium and events attended by project partners to updates on policy and technological advancements. In addition, three multilingual press releases were published and shared with relevant press contacts. The fourth press release will be published once the project concludes and its results are presented to the EC.

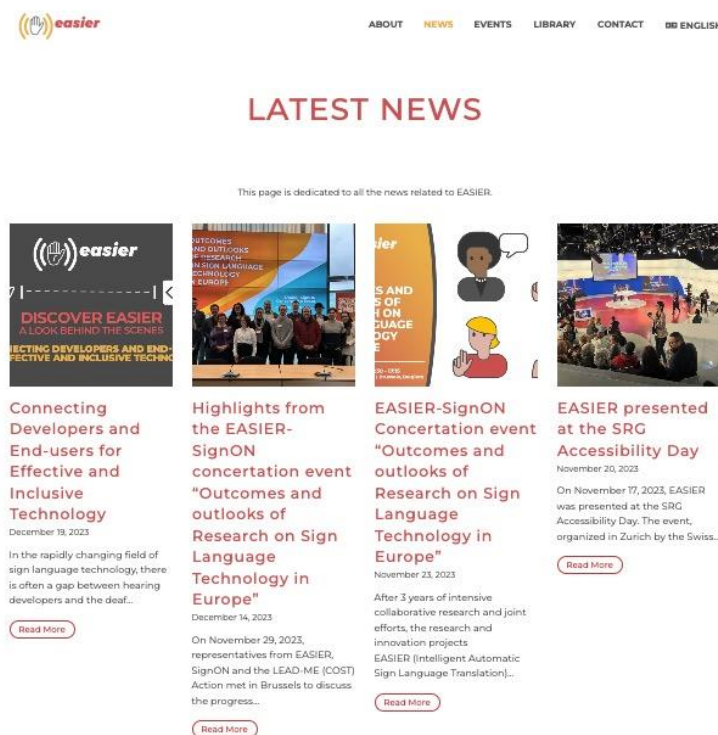


FIGURE 7: LATEST NEWS PAGE

2.1.5 Newsletters/Newsflashes

The newsletter, which was generally published on a quarterly basis, provided updates on project activities and results. The design of each newsletter was aligned with the EASIER brand identity and fully responsive to ensure its full readability on any device. All consortium members provided relevant information to ensure that the content of the newsletter was engaging, accurate, and timely. All issued newsletters were being uploaded on the EASIER website.

A mailing list based on subscription was created, giving the possibility to share the newsletter via a mass mailing functionality. Interested parties were able to subscribe to the newsletter directly on the project website. Messages with invitations to relevant workshops and webinars, consultations, and any other information that could not wait for the newsletter publication was being sent to the same database used for the newsletter in the form of a newsflash.

Since the beginning of the project, 10 newsletters and 5 newsflashes were issued and distributed to 96 direct subscribers. Once published, the newsletters were also promoted on the EASIER social media channels so that they could reach a broader audience.

Upon the recommendation received from the EC reviewers during the review meeting held on September 16, 2022, the EASIER consortium made the newsletter more accessible by translating its content into IS.

The latest edition of the newsletter, presented in Figure 8, was published on December 21, 2023 and featured a thank you message from the consortium to the EASIER community and the EC, a recap of the most important activities carried out in the last six months of the project, as well as holiday wishes.

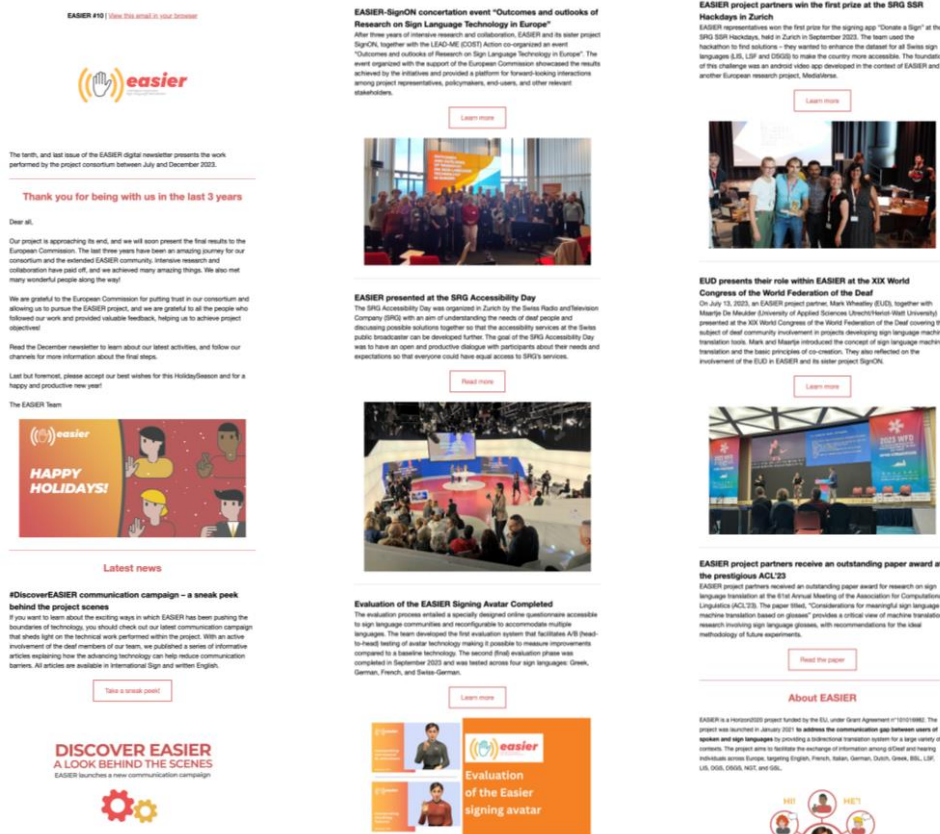


FIGURE 8: EASIER NEWSLETTER

2.1.6 Presence on social media

Accounts on several social networks were created as marketing tools and all were linked to the project website. Their goal was to promote the activities and outputs of the project and build a network around the project's work while encouraging a discussion on inclusive communication, technological developments, and other related topics. Below is an overview of all social media channels used by EASIER.

X/Twitter

The EASIER X¹ (formerly known as Twitter) account has been used since November 2020 to promote the project and share relevant news and events. It helped the consortium to establish meaningful connections with an active and relevant audience, including academics, policymakers, interpreters, and the general public. By following relevant users, EASIER gained access to relevant content and updates and acquired more followers. By the project end, EASIER had 300 followers.

¹ <https://twitter.com/EASIERproject>





FIGURE 9: EASIER X (TWITTER) ACCOUNT

LinkedIn

EASIER established its LinkedIn² account in November 2020 to supplement the website and drive traffic to it. The profile allowed the consortium to promote the project to a broader audience, including businesses, universities, and research centers. To create positive visibility exchanges, the project partners' LinkedIn pages were mentioned and tagged when appropriate. By the project end, EASIER had 198 followers.



FIGURE 10: EASIER LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE

Facebook

² <https://www.linkedin.com/company/easierproject/>

To reach a wider range of stakeholders, the EASIER consortium decided to create a project page on Facebook³. The profile has been active since June 2021 and was used mainly to promote project activities and achievements, targeting the general public. By the project end, EASIER had 178 followers.

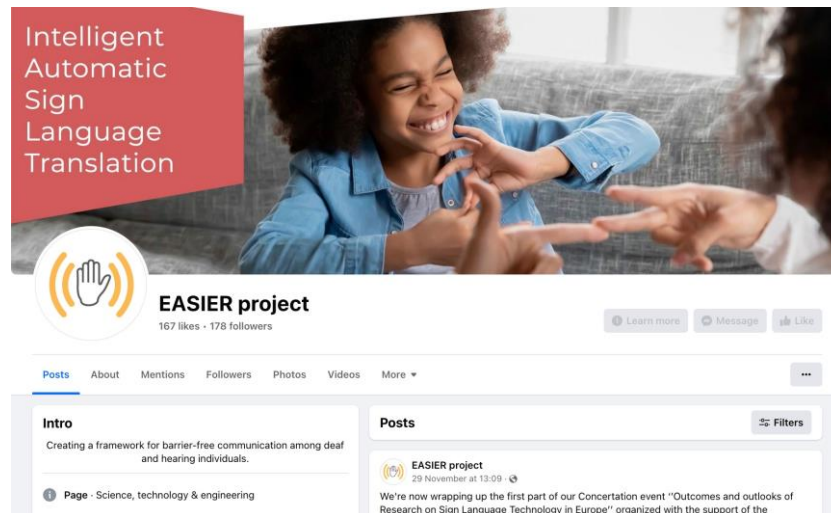


FIGURE 11: EASIER FACEBOOK PAGE

YouTube

EASIER created its YouTube channel⁴ at the beginning of the project to host the press releases in the form of SL videos. The channel was also used to disseminate the project vision, concepts, and objectives, and provide visibility to project partners and other engaged stakeholders. In the 36 months of the project, EASIER published 31 project-related videos, which generated 2,754 views.

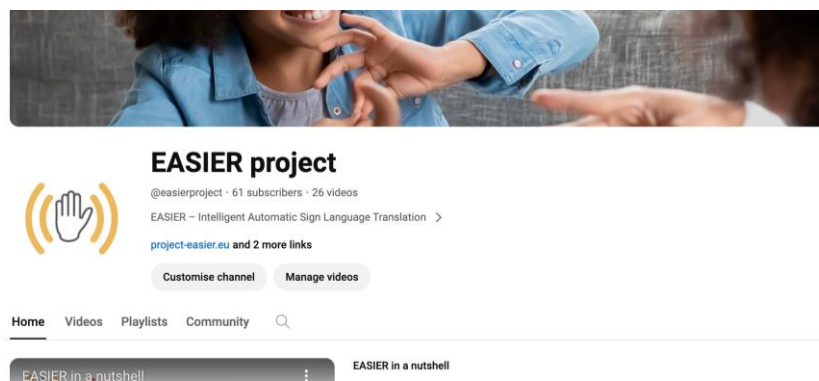


FIGURE 12: EASIER YOUTUBE CHANNEL

2.1.7 Promotional materials

The consortium developed various promotional materials to promote the project at events. The first project flyer in the form of a postcard was developed and printed before the .eu Web Awards. The postcard provided general information about the project, its vision, mission, and objectives. Later in the project, version 2 with updated information was produced.

³ <https://www.facebook.com/EASIERproject>

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOVQGqSzmz42l6ln_zBFuug



FIGURE 13: PROJECT POSTCARD – FRONT AND BACK

In addition to flyers, EASIER developed three rollups (one dedicated to the project, 2 dedicated to the “EASIER/SignON Concertation event”) and some project give-away in the form of stickers. The first stickers were produced in June 2022, before the LREC conference, and distributed at LREC and other conferences and events attended by the consortium members.



FIGURE 14: EASIER STICKERS

2.1.8 Videos

Introductory project video

In an effort to bring the project goals and activities closer to the general public, EASIER produced an animated video explaining its vision and objectives. The first part of the video provides a wider context, shedding light on the daily communication struggles caused by the lack of broadly available services in sign languages and introduces EASIER as a potential response to existing technological challenges. The second part of the video focuses on the project mission and the way EASIER intends to advance the current translation technology to support equal participation of deaf signers in a broad range of everyday-life activities. The final part of the video introduces the consortium members and provides an acknowledgement of the EU funding.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCf7gdlX4Iq>

Testimonial video shot by EURid

Following EASIER’s presence at the .eu Web Awards competition final, EURid invited the project to give a testimonial, allowing EASIER partners to shed light on their day-to-day work, online presence, and the way .eu helps the project to achieve its goals. Several consortium members from Martel, the University of Zurich, the University of Surrey, and the European Union of the Deaf have contributed their statements.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUgTonRdLlo>

Discover EASIER campaign videos

As mentioned before, several videos were produced as part of the communication campaign, titled “Discover EASIER.” The subjects raised in the videos included machine translation, its expansion to signers, the creation of signing avatars, as well as the importance of connecting developers with end-users for more effective and inclusive solutions.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeyPbY1oIYTYxcxoO2L6531O5Ck8q2otf>

2.1.9 Scientific publications

The EASIER consortium was highly committed to bringing research results closer to the scientific community and the general public and adhered to the Open Access guidelines set by the H2020 work program. In line with these guidelines, all the scientific publications emerging from the EASIER project are freely available to interested parties.

To date, 43 papers developed as part of the EASIER project have been published. Several others are awaiting publication. The full list of published papers (in chronological order) is available in below and on the project website (<https://www.project-easier.eu/publications/>).

TABLE 1: LIST OF PAPERS

Title	Authors	Year
The Myth of Signing Avatars	R. Wolfe, J. C. McDonald, E. Efthimiou, E. Fontinea, F. Picron, D. Van Landuyt, T. Sioen, A. Braffort, M. Filhol, S. Ebling, T. Hanke, V. Krausneker	2021
Mixed SIGNals: Sign Language Production via a Mixture of Motion Primitives	B Saunders, NC Camgoz, R Bowden	2021
AnonySIGN: Novel Human Appearance Synthesis for Sign Language Video Anonymisation	B Saunders, NC Camgoz, R Bowden	2021
Leveraging Semantic Scene Characteristics and Multi-Stream Convolutional Architectures in a Contextual Approach for Video-Based Visual Emotion Recognition in the Wild	I. Pikoulis, P. P. Filntisis, P. Maragos	2021
Exploiting Emotional Dependencies with Graph Convolutional Networks for Facial Expression Recognition	P. Antoniadis, P. P. Filntisis, P. Maragos	2021
Human Pose Manipulation and Novel View Synthesis using Differentiable Rendering	G. Rochette, C. Russell, R. Bowden	2021
Sign language avatars: A matter of representation	R. Wolfe, J.C. McDonald, T. Hanke, S. Ebling, D. Van Landuyt, F. Picron, V. Krausneker, E. Efthimiou, E. Fotinea, A. Braffort	2022
Signing Avatar Performance Evaluation within the EASIER Project	A.-L. Dimou, V. Papavassiliou, J. McDonald, T. Goulas, K. Vasilaki, A.	2022

	Vacalopoulou, S.-E. Fontinea, E. Efthimiou, R. Wolfe	
Supporting Mouthing in Sign Languages: New Innovations and a Proposal for Future Corpus Building	R. Wolfe, J. McDonald, R. Johnson, B. Stuff, S. Klinghoffer, A. Bonzani, A. Alexander, N. Barnekow	2022
Fine-tuning of convolutional neural networks for the recognition of facial expressions in sign language video samples	N. Deshpande, F. Nunnari, E. Avramidis	2022
Organizing a Bilingual Lexicographic Database with the Use of WordNet	A. Vacalopoulou, E. Efthimiou, S.-E. Fotinea, T. Goulas, A.-L. Dimou, K. Vasilaki	2022
What about synthetic signing? A methodology for signer involvement in the development of avatar technology with generative capacity	A.-L. Dimou, V. Papavassiliou, T. Goulas, K. Vasilaki, A. Vacalopoulou, S.-E. Fotinea, E. Efthimiou	2022
Language Accessibility for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	M. Debevc, R. Wolfe, S. Ebling	2022
Skeletal Graph Self-Attention: Embedding a Skeleton Inductive Bias into Sign Language Production	B. Saunders, N.C. Camgoz, R. Bowden	2022
Changing the Representation: Examining Language Representation for Neural Sign Language Production	H. Walsh, B. Saunders, R. Bowden	2022
Signing at Scale: Learning to Co-Articulate Signs for Large-Scale Photo-Realistic Sign Language Production	B. Saunders, N.C. Camgoz, R. Bowden	2022
A synthesized database of basic emotions	F. Burkhardt, F. Eyben and B. Schuller	2022
Nkululeko: A Tool for Rapid Speaker Characteristics Detection	F. Burkhardt, J. Wagner, H. Wierstorf, F. Eyben, B. Schuller	2022
A Comparative Cross Language View on Acted Databases Portraying Basic Emotions Utilising Machine Learning	F. Burkhardt, A. Hacker, U. Reichel, H. Wierstorf, F. Eyben, B. Schuller	2022
Introducing Sign Languages to a Multilingual Wordnet: Bootstrapping Corpora and Lexical Resources of Greek Sign Language and German Sign Language	S. Bigeard, M. Schulder, M. Kopf, T. Hanke, K. Vasilaki, A. Vacalopoulou, T. Goulas, A.-L. Dimou, S.-E. Fotinea, E. Efthimiou	2022
Representation and Synthesis of Geometric Relocations	M. Filhol, J. McDonald	2022
The Sign Language Dataset Compendium: Creating an Overview of Digital Linguistic Resources	M. Kopf, M. Schulder, T. Hanke	2022
Facilitating the Spread of New Sign Language Technologies across Europe	H.E. Morgan, O. Crasborn, M. Kopf, M. Schulder, T. Hanke	2022

Findings of the First WMT Shared Task on Sign Language Translation (WMT-SLT22)	M. Müller, S. Ebling, E. Avramidis, A. Battisti, M. Berger, R. Bowden, A. Braffort, N.C. Camgöz, C. España-bonet, R. Grundkiewicz, Z. Jiang, O. Koller, A. Moryossef, R. Perrollaz, S. Reinhard, A. Rios, D. Shterionov, S. Sidler-Miserez, K. Tissi, D. Van Landuyt	2022
Hierarchical I3D for Sign Spotting	R. Wong, N.C. Camgoz, R. Bowden	2022
Reducing Gender Bias in NMT with FUDGE	T. Lu, N. Aepli, A. Rios	2023
Improving 3D pose estimation for sign language	M. Ivashechkin, O. Mendez, R. Bowden	2023
Gloss alignment using word embeddings	H. Walsh, O. Mercanoglu, B. Saunders, R. Bowden	2023
SL-REDU GSL: A large Greek sign language recognition corpus	K. Papadimitriou, G. Sapountzaki, K. Vasilaki, E. Efthimiou, S.-E. Fotinea, G. Potamianos	2023
The Sign Language Interchange Format: Harmonising sign language datasets for computational processing	M. Schulder, S. Bigeard, T. Hanke, M. Kopf	2023
EASIER Notation: A proposal for a gloss-based scripting language for sign language generation based on lexical data	T. Hanke, L. König, R. Konrad, M. Kopf, M. Schulder	2023
Extending morphs in AZee using pose space deformations	P. Sharma, M. Filhol	2023
Representation matters: The case for diversifying sign language avatars	M. Kopf, R. Omardeen, D. Van Landuyt	2023
Speech-based Age and Gender Prediction with Transformers	F. Burkhardt, J. Wagner, H. Wierstorf, F. Eyben, B. Schuller	2023
Nkululeko: Machine Learning Experiments on Speaker Characteristics Without Programming	F. Burkhardt, F. Eyben, B. Schuller	2023
Multimodal Recognition of Valence, Arousal and Dominance via Late-Fusion of Text, Audio and Facial Expressions	A. Rios, U. Reichel, C. Bhuvaneshwara, P. Filintisis, Petros Maragos, F. Burkhardt, F. Eyben, B. Schuller, F. Nunnari, S. Ebling	2023
First WMT Shared Task on Sign Language Translation (WMT-SLT22)	M. Müller, S. Ebling, E. Avramidis, A. Battisti, M. Berger, R. Bowden, A. Braffort, N.C. Camgöz, C. España-bonet, R. Grundkiewicz, Z. Jiang, O. Koller, A. Moryossef, R. Perrollaz, S. Reinhard, A. Rios, D. Shterionov, S. Sidler-Miserez, K. Tissi, D. Van Landuyt	2023

An Open-Source Gloss-Based Baseline for Spoken to Signed Language Translation	A. Moryossef, M. Müller, A. Göhring, Z. Jiang, Y. Goldberg, S. Ebling	2023
AfriSign: Machine Translation for African Sign Languages	S. Gueuwou, K. Takyi, M. Müller, M. Stanley Nyarko, R. Adade, R.-M. Owusuaa Mensah Gyening	2023
SLTUNET: A Simple Unified Model for Sign Language Translation	B. Zhang, M. Müller, R. Sennrich	2023
Machine Translation between Spoken Languages and Signed Languages Represented in SignWriting	Z. Jiang, A. Moryossef, M. Müller, S. Ebling	2023
Considerations for meaningful sign language machine translation based on glosses	M. Müller, Z. Jiang, A. Moryossef, A. Rios, S. Ebling	2023
Best practices for sign language technology research	N. Fox, B. Woll, K. Cormier	2023

2.2 EVENTS

2.2.1 Selected events attended by the EASIER consortium

Event attendance was an important promotional tool and networking opportunity for EASIER. Project partners attended various scientific and industry events not only to stay updated and in touch with the relevant communities but also to promote EASIER and its progress. Some of the events attended by the consortium have been listed below.

AT4SSL2021

On August 20, 2021, EASIER was presented at the International Workshop on Automatic Translation for Sign and Verbal Languages (AT4SSL2021), collocated with the 18th Biennial Machine Translation Summit 2021 (MT Summit 2021). Several EASIER representatives attended the event, among others: Sarah Ebling (UZH), Thomas Hanke (UHH), Mark Wheatley (EUD), and Rosalee Wolfe (ATHENA). As part of the proceedings of the MT Summit 2021, a paper, titled “The myth of signing avatars” was published.

.eu Web Awards ceremony

In August 2021, we were informed that the EASIER website had been selected as one of the three finalists of the .eu Web Awards competition organized by the European Registry for Internet Domains (EURid). The EASIER website was nominated within the Laurels category established for educational institutions, charitable organizations, and ongoing pan-European projects. The organizers invited EASIER representatives to the .eu Web Awards ceremony held in Taormina, Sicily on 14 October 2021, where the winners were announced. The project was represented by MARTEL’s Klaudia dos Santos and Margherita Facca.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2021/08/16/the-easier-website-made-it-to-the-finals-of-the-eu-web-awards/>

Expert conferences and committees in Switzerland

- EASIER was presented at several editions of the eAccessibility experts conference, which takes place annually in Switzerland. The project was presented and promoted by STXT, which was part of the organizing committee. The conference gathers hundreds of participants from across Europe every year. In 2023, EASIER was presented during the slot titled “*Sign language translation today and tomorrow: avatars & online systems.*” The presentation delivered by SwissTXT provided an insight into the current state of development and the new possibilities in the field of sign language translations. The focus was on the following questions: (1) How can texts be translated efficiently into sign language and how is this currently being realized? (2) Where is the development of sign language avatars and automatic translation into sign language and where and when can they be used?
- SILAS and EASIER were presented at the Accessibility Round Table Switzerland, a long-established expert group that meets twice a year to exchange about new possibilities, projects, and offers in the field of accessibility. Members of this expert group are representatives of public institutions, government, and government-tied companies. During the past meetings SwissTXT represented EASIER and provided an insight into the latest developments of SILAS and its extensions developed as part of EASIER.
- SILAS and EASIER were presented to different companies and public institutions, which have the need of providing accessible communication. The presentations were successful: many institutions will integrate the tool on their websites or already did, namely Swiss Post, SRG SSR (mother institution of Swiss broadcaster), SRF (Swiss German Broadcaster), SatAccess (institution to ensure broadcast perception for TV, radio, and internet in Switzerland).
- On November 17, 2023, EASIER was presented at the SRG Accessibility Day. The event, organized in Zurich by the Swiss Radio and Television Company (SRG) had as its main objectives understanding the needs of deaf people and discussing possible solutions together so that the accessibility services at the Swiss public broadcaster can be developed further. EASIER was represented by SwissTXT’s Michaela Nachtrab and Robin Ribback who shed light on EASIER during a slot dedicated to digital developments. <https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2023/11/20/easier-presented-at-the-srg-accessibility-day/>

ESANN 2023

On October 4-6, 2023, EASIER was represented at the European Symposium on Artificial Neural Networks, Computational Intelligence, and Machine Learning (ESANN) in Bruges, Belgium. Uwe Reichel (AUD) attended the event to present a paper on the EASIER emotion modules titled "Multimodal Recognition of Valence, Arousal and Dominance via Late-Fusion of Text, Audio and Facial Expressions". The paper was written jointly by several EASIER partners including UZH, DFKI, AUD, and ATHENA.

SRG SSR Hackdays

On September 5-6, 2023, members of the EASIER consortium attended the SRG SSR Hackdays in Zurich where they won the first prize for the signing app “Donate a Sign” developed in the context of EASIER and another European research project, MediaVerse. In the hackathon, the team wanted to reach a more user-friendly design to upload specific signed content, preferably with metadata (language, translation, sign language level etc.) and finally connect the app via API to the accessibility repository, which can then be accessed via PDP.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2023/09/11/easier-project-partners-win-the-first-prize-at-the-srg-ssr-hackdays-in-zurich/>

Thessaloniki International Fair

In September 2022 and 2023, EASIER was represented at the 86th and 87th editions of Thessaloniki International Fair by ATHENA who presented the project and explained how communication can be facilitated by artificial intelligence, and more specifically by Paula, the multilingual avatar.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2022/09/28/easier-at-tif22/>

2.2.2 Events organized by EASIER

LREC 2022

The 10th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages: Multilingual Sign Language Resources (LREC 2022) held on June 25, 2022, in Marseille, France, saw large participation and involvement of the EASIER partners, also in the events organizing committee. The EASIER members of the organizing committee included ATHENA's Eleni Efthimiou and Evita Fotinea and UHH's Thomas Hanke. Out of 35 accepted submissions, five related to the activities performed by EASIER. This full-date, hybrid event held as part of the Language Resources and Evaluation Conference 2022 enjoyed high interest and participation. The event gathered 77 participants from around the world. (On-site attendees from across Europe, Israel, Korea, Australia, the US and Canada, remote participants also from South America and Iran.) EASIER representatives from ATHENA, UHH, CNRS, DFKI, RU, UZH, UniS and UCL attended the event.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2022/06/27/easier-at-lrec-2022/>

SLTAT 2022

The 7th Workshop on Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT): The Junction of the Visual & the Textual was held on June 24, 2022, as part of the Language Resources and Evaluation Conference 2022 in Marseille, France. This half-day, hybrid event was jointly organized by EASIER and SignON. The EASIER members in the organizing committee included ATHENA's Eleni Efthimiou, Evita Fotinea, and Rosalee Wolfe, UHH's Thomas Hanke, and CNRS' John C. McDonald. Among 19 submissions accepted, nine had authors associated with EASIER. The workshop was a big success, having gathered over 72 participants.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2022/06/27/easier-at-lrec-2022/>

The Sign Neologisms Workshop

On February 10, 2023, EASIER held a workshop on sign neologisms in Athens, Greece, which brought together many different specialists working on lexical gaps and new words in sign languages from various perspectives. The workshop featured descriptions of well-tested processes in several national sign language projects to develop community-based neologisms. It also covered the ethical role of hearing interpreters in sign creation, linguistic analyses of sign formation in neologisms, and how avatars might handle neologisms. Future directions were identified, e.g., creating a collective storehouse of neologisms for users of other sign languages to use as a resource or inspiration; looking for ways that technological tools can improve the process of addressing lexical gaps; and making sure post-editors in translation have sufficient access to existing community-based resources of neologisms. The workshop gathered 48 international specialists in various fields including architecture, animation, avatars, computer science, linguistics, lexicography, deaf education, interpreting, mathematics, poetry, software development, and translation, among others.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2023/03/01/the-sign-neologisms-workshop/>

Workshop at EUD General Assembly 2023

On May 25, 2023, the EASIER team, in collaboration with SignON, organized a workshop at the annual general assembly of the European Union of the Deaf in Stockholm, Sweden. During this half day workshop, members of the two consortia (including representatives from Martel, University of Surrey, and EUD) presented insights into the cutting-edge research into sign language technology to an audience of deaf community leaders from around Europe. The event provided an opportunity for a productive and open discussion between the EASIER project and the European deaf community representatives, not only about how the rapid progress of technology will affect deaf communities but also about what deaf communities expect from hearing researchers with respect to allyship and social responsibility.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2023/05/30/easier-participates-in-a-workshop-on-sign-language-machine-translation/>

SLTAT 2023

On June 10, 2023, the EASIER team, together with the teams from DePaul University (USA) and EQ4ALL (Korea) organized the 8th edition of a full-day workshop on sign language translation and avatar technology. The goal of this satellite workshop of the 2023 IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing (ICASSP 2023), held in Rhodes Island, Greece, was to bring together researchers engaged in sign language translation with those who develop sign language avatar technologies. The workshop was a great success having gathered over 170 registered participants from around the world. Among the 25 accepted submissions, eight were authored by authors associated with EASIER.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2023/06/15/easier-at-icassp-2023/>

Outcomes and outlooks of Research on Sign Language Technology in Europe

On November 29, 2023, EASIER together with SignON and the LEAD-ME (COST) action, and with the support of the European Commission organized an event “Outcomes and outlooks of Research on Sign Language Technology in Europe” on the premises of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium. The event showcased the results achieved by the projects and provided a platform for forward-looking interactions among project representatives, policymakers, end users and relevant stakeholders. The event featured a panel discussion moderated by Humberto Insolera (Executive Committee Member of the European Disability Forum), which explored the way forward for sign language research in Europe. The panel included Frankie Picron (SignON, EASIER, EUD), Dimitar Shterionov (SignON), Eleni Efthimiou (EASIER), and Krishna Chandramouli (LEAD-ME). “Outcomes and outlooks of Research on Sign Language Technology in Europe” brought together over 50 experts and professionals.

In addition to distributing a press release about the event, the highlights from it were also published on the project website. More detailed notes from the panel discussion are available upon request.

<https://www.project-easier.eu/news/2023/12/14/highlights-from-the-easier-signon-concertation-event-outcomes-and-outlooks-of-research-on-sign-language-technology-in-europe/>





FIGURE 15: EASIER AND SIGNON PARTNERS AT THE "OUTCOMES AND OUTLOOKS OF RESEARCH ON SIGN LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY IN EUROPE" EVENT

2.3 COMMUNITY BUILDING

EASIER and its activities and results regarded a large community of end users, which required bringing together a large group of individuals including deaf and hearing signers, sign language interpreters, as well as academic and industrial stakeholders from the human sciences and innovative technologies domains. Effective collaboration among these stakeholder groups was necessary to ensure the design of an effective, user-driven, inclusive, and human-centric solution. During the first half of the project, the consortium has reached out predominantly to the deaf and SL communities that the individual project partners were already part of.

One of the ways EASIER used to engage end users was through the establishment of focus groups. The purpose of these activities was to gather the end users' opinions on their needs and practices, as well as the projected use of the EASIER tool. The results stemming from the focus groups were documented at length in deliverable D1.1.

The EASIER end user community grew further in the framework of end-user evaluations. Through ongoing feedback and evaluation rounds, the EASIER project continued to engage with users across the target communities. In the first evaluation phase, 62 deaf and hearing participants across 7 countries took part, testing, discussing, and giving valuable feedback on the technologies. Given the sustained interest of many participants to follow up the progress of the project and technologies, several were invited back to the final evaluation phase. In this phase, the pool of participants was expanded to 59 deaf and hearing end users, as well as 41 deaf and hearing translation professionals. Thus, the evaluation phases have presented the opportunity to engage with end users from different backgrounds, both professional and laypeople, across a range of different signing communities.

2.4 COOPERATION AND LIAISONS WITH RELATED PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

To ensure a broad project outreach and its successful uptake and validation and smooth knowledge transfer, liaisons and synergies with several related initiatives and projects were established by the EASIER consortium.

SignON

Collaboration with the SignON project was initiated because just like EASIER, SignON was a user-centric and community-driven project that aimed to facilitate the exchange of information between deaf and hearing individuals across Europe. The two consortia have closely collaborated and exchanged knowledge since the early project stages. The meetings between the two project coordinators take place periodically, providing a great opportunity for discussions about ongoing and planned activities and the exchange of lessons learned. The two consortia also collaborated on organizing several events (see 2.1.10.2 above).

ELG

As outlined in the project Technical Annex, the EASIER project is tightly connected with the European Language Grid (ELG) at the infrastructural level (extension of the ELG portfolio with SL Language Technology (LT) and APIs). The relevant works have been incorporated within WP8 Integration. They began at M25 and ran during the last 12 months of the project.

SocialWear

Part of the research on affective computing (i.e., the recognition of affective components of sign language and its realization on the avatar) conducted as part of EASIER had been shared with the SocialWear project (Socially Interactive Smart Fashion, DFKI Kst 22132), supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The research conducted within the SocialWear project focuses on the synthesis and recognition of sign language and its affective components through wearable devices will help in implementing and improving the synthesis and recognition of affective dimensions of sign language for EASIER. The difference is that SocialWear focuses on the grounding technology at the signal level, while such technology was applied in EASIER as a tool for an analysis at the linguistic level.

European Language Equality Project

Members of EASIER (EUD and UHH) and SignON coauthored a report contributing to the European Language Equality Project (ELE). The report focused on the state of language technology and sign languages in Europe and was a key contribution to ensuring that sign languages were represented in ELE's mapping of the linguistic landscape of European languages.

2.5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT, LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE ACTIONS

2.5.1 Progress tracking against KPIs

The communication and dissemination strategy has been closely monitored since the inception of the project. A set of KPIs was defined before the project launch to measure the impact and help conduct the most accurate assessment of the communication and dissemination activities (see Table 2). The evaluation was carried out on a regular basis to ensure that all KPIs were met.

TABLE 2: COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION KPIS

Measure	Indicator	Target at M36	Source and methodology	Status at M36
Flyers	No. of flyers.	>3	Physical copies distributed at dedicated events.	2 (+ 2 stickers)
Posters/roll-ups	No. of posters/roll-ups.	>3	Electronic distribution via the project website.	3
Project website	Yearly average number of unique visitors to the website.	> 1500	News items, Publications, Videos, Newsletter, Deliverables.	17,988
Social networks	Yearly average number of followers on:	> 200	Keeping EASIER profiles active through regular monitoring and posts.	300
	- Twitter - LinkedIn	> 100		198
Press releases/ press publications	No. of press releases issued to specialized and general media channels at key project milestones.	>4	A press/media kit will be developed containing press releases, videos, publishable images, and flyers.	3 published (+1 scheduled – it will be published after the final review meeting)
Quarterly newsletter	No. of distributed newsletters.	12	Recording of subscribers to the electronic newsletter.	15 (10 newsletters + 5 newsflashes)
Videos	No. of videos published on the EASIER website and social media channels. Average number of views.	4 videos per year 100 views/video	Press releases in forms of videos and introduction and training videos supporting awareness creation, stakeholders' engagement, and the use of applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 multilingual press releases • 5 videos from the #DiscoverEASIER campaign • 1 project video by EURid • 1 project video by MARTEL • 4 videos (3 promo + 1 interviews) by SwissTXT • 6 newsletter summaries videos

				Total videos: 31 (26 + 5 exterverveal videos) Total views: 2,754
Workshops (at least two by the end of the project)	Average number of participants per workshop.	15-25 participants per event	Attendance proof, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports depending on scope and co- location.	4 workshops 25+ participants per event
Participation in events and presentations	Number of external events EASIER partners attended to promote the project, including scientific conferences, demos, and/or presentations.	At least 5 events per year (including virtual events)	Attendance proof, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports.	5+ per year
Webinars (one by the end of the project)	Average number of participants.	At least 20 participants	Attendance proof, video streaming, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports.	2 in-person events instead of webinars: 1. The Neologisms Workshop 2. The EASIER Autumn School +25 participants per event
Scientific publications	Number of published or submitted publications by the end of the project.	At least 10	Publication number, link to repository.	44
Presentations	Number of presentations, keynotes, and invited lectures.	At least 10	Attendance proof, video streaming, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports.	18

2.5.2 Lessons learned

Through participation in the EASIER project, many project partners, including EUD gained important insights into how to best communicate complex topics surrounding sign language technologies to deaf communities in an accessible way, particularly how to frame evaluation

of work in progress. Throughout the project, it became clear that there is an urgent need for deaf media/communication professionals to have a central role in dissemination to ensure smooth and efficient communication to the target users. Nevertheless, from our experience in the project, we found that deaf communities are keen to engage with topics surrounding sign language technology when they are made accessible, and they are eager to engage in open and honest discussions as seen at the EUD GA 2023.

2.5.3 Dissemination beyond the project lifetime

The EASIER consortium members will continue to disseminate the results of the project beyond its lifetime (December 2023). As such:

EUD plans to disseminate information about the results and impact of the EASIER project to its members, both via newsletter and during the 2024 General Assembly. If the opportunity arises during one of the events taking place at the European institutions, EUD also plans to present the results of EASIER and lessons learned in the context of the project.

As co-organizers of the 11th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages: Evaluation of Sign Language Resources in the framework of the next LREC-COLING 2024 Conference, which will take place in Turin (Italy) on May 20-25, 2024, UHH, ATHENA, and DFKI plan to present the results of EASIER to the large audience composed of researchers, industry representatives, and funding agencies.



3 CONCLUSIONS

The deliverable at hand provided updates on specific communication and dissemination activities carried out by the EASIER consortium during the project lifespan and the performance of the EASIER Impact Creation Strategy and Plan against the KPIs defined before the project launch.

We are happy to report that the execution of the communication and dissemination strategy was successful, having brought positive results, which have been described in more detail in the above section. This was largely due to the regular monitoring of performance against the set of communication and dissemination KPIs, which allowed the project consortium to track progress and quickly identify areas for potential improvement. With an active support and participation of all EASIER project partners, we were able to meet the targets and even surpass some of the initial communication and dissemination-related objectives.

