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The Impact of Cultural Stereotypes in European Multi-Level Policy Enforcement (EUROTYPES)

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Section a. State-of-the-art and objectives

1. Background and urgency of the proposed work

Cultural stereotypes have existed in Europe for centuries. On a continent comprising a mosaic of nation states, stereotypes developed as people started to associate ethnic, religious, or entire national groups with certain attributes, which could be either positive or negative (Leerssen 2018). Present in art, literature, and the media, cultural stereotypes were often satirical, focusing on character traits that made other groups appear dysfunctional in some way (Mamadouh 2017). Examples include the frivolous French, the humourless Germans, the stingy Dutch, the tax-dodging Italians, the heavy-drinking Poles, and so forth (Fenn 2012; Hidasi 1999). The problem with stereotypes has always been their connection to prejudice and discrimination; even when intended as positive, stereotypes are grounded in negative beliefs such as the existence of ‘natural’ differences among groups (Crandall *et al.* 2011; Devine 1989; Kay *et al.* 2013).

In the context of European integration and increasing redistribution in the European Union (EU), cultural stereotypes have acquired a new significance. **In the past decade, cultural stereotypes have often been present in the political and media discourse on EU decision-making.** The euro crisis (2009-2015) split the EU into Northern ‘saints’ and Southern ‘sinners’ to reflect cultural attitudes towards public spending (Matthijs and McNamara 2015). At the height of the crisis, many national politicians invoked stereotypical images of themselves or of other EU nations to justify policy positions (Sierp and Karner 2017). As German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged EU countries in financial difficulties to follow the model of the ‘Swabian housewife’ and adopt an economical approach to public budgets (Kollewe 2012), members of the Greek government complained about their weak negotiating position vis-à-vis Germany by referencing the Nazi occupation of Greece during the Second World War (Fuhrmans 2010). Likewise, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the national governments of Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden adopted the moniker of ‘the frugal four’ to signal virtue against the spendthrift countries of the South (Bialasiewicz 2020). Their position sparked a backlash from political leaders in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, whose countries had been strongly affected by both crises (Von der Burchard *et al.* 2020). When linked to the public, such discourses become self-reinforcing: politicians use stereotypes to capitalize on perceived biases among voters, which in turn perpetuates the spread of stereotypes (Connelly 2014; The Economist 2020). Overall, there is ample evidence that **the presence of cultural stereotypes in political and media rhetoric can create conflict between national governments** (EUobserver 2017) and **fuel Euroscepticism among voters** (Michailidou 2017).

What is unclear, however, is whether public discourses on cultural stereotypes have an actual impact on everyday decisions in EU governance. At the national level, recent studies have found that mobile EU citizens face stereotypes and discrimination by frontline bureaucrats (Adam *et al.* 2021; Scheibelhofer and Holzinger 2018), especially when they try to access social benefits in another Member State (Blauberger and Schmidt 2014). Nevertheless, **the assumption that stereotypes inform EU decisions or cooperation has never been systematically tested in different disciplines.** For instance, in cultural history and political science, there are studies on cultural stereotypes in political rhetoric and national media (Barkhoff and Leerssen 2021; Capelos and Exadaktylos 2015; Tzogopoulos 2020; Wodak 2015), but these do not cover the connection between stereotypes and behaviour in the EU setting. Instead, research on drivers of behaviour in EU institutions prioritizes the role of rational preferences (Pollack 2007), norms and identities (Risse 2009), or the power of ideas (McNamara 1999) in shaping decision-making. The emphasis has thus clearly been on what officials ‘think’ and less on what they ‘think from’ (Pouliot 2008) in EU governance. While research on everyday practices in EU institutions has expanded in recent years (Adler-Nissen 2016), this has not addressed cultural stereotypes in particular. Conversely, the few studies on national stereotypes inside EU institutions examine organizational cultures and career paths as opposed to their impact on the actions of civil servants (Ban 2013; Ellinas and Suleiman 2012; McDonald 1997). In other words, **we know that cultural stereotypes exist among politicians, the media, and national civil servants interacting with EU citizens, but not whether stereotypes impact EU policymaking or implementation.**

Against this background, EUROTYPES sets out to investigate the impact of cultural stereotypes in contemporary EU governance. Building on standard definitions from social psychology (Correll *et al.* 2010: 46), **cultural stereotypes are understood as automatic cognitive shortcuts through which individuals attribute specific traits to social groups based on their national, religious, regional, or supranational affiliation.** Although researchers can identify stereotypes in use at any given moment in time, such lists are neither exhaustive nor static; in fact, cultural stereotypes evolve over time in line with interactions between individuals in their social environment (Martin *et al.* 2017). Moreover, studying the impact of stereotypes on behaviour requires a micro level of analysis: in this case, officials who shape EU governance directly through their decisions and actions. While the notion of impact can be defined differently, EUROTYPES considers two dimensions relevant for interorganizational relations in multi-level settings (Lundin 2007; O'Toole 2003): i) the level of cooperation between officials (whether they *choose* to work together with others), and ii) the perceived effectiveness of that cooperation (whether they *think* they work well together). Accordingly, the focus is on stereotypes that national and EU officials have about each other as opposed to the public at large. In addition, it is assumed that the direction of stereotypes matters, as **negative stereotypes are expected to hamper cooperation between officials and decrease the perceived effectiveness of common actions**, while the opposite applies to positive stereotypes. The project thus asks a key central research question (CRQ):

CRQ: *How do cultural stereotypes impact cooperation and effectiveness in contemporary EU governance?*

To answer the question, **EUROTYPES proposes an original approach that shifts attention from political elites to civil servants involved in EU multi-level policy enforcement.** There are multiple reasons for this empirical choice. First, when it comes to explaining the impact of stereotypes on governance decisions, political elites can constitute a misleading source. Politicians often invoke stereotypes strategically in order to rationalize existing positions or appeal to perceived biases of the electorate, e.g., the stereotypical portrayals of immigrants by far-right parties (Wodak 2015). Consequently, politicians make it difficult to disentangle the unconscious activation of stereotypes in making judgements from their instrumental use for electoral gains. The discourse of the 'frugal four' during the pandemic is a case in point, with heads of governments seeking to appeal to national taxpayers by portraying themselves as defenders of 'responsible' EU spending (Kurz 2020). By contrast, civil servants do not face the electoral pressure or the media scrutiny of political elites. While their level of autonomy from political principals differs across policy fields and systems of governance, civil servants have significant discretion to take decisions informed by stereotypes (Harrits 2019; Keiser *et al.* 2004). Moreover, from a research perspective, civil servants are more accessible than politicians for both surveys and interviews (Kertzer and Renshon 2022), facilitating data collection about beliefs and behaviours.

Second, **multi-level policy enforcement constitutes a 'most-likely case' (Gerring 2007) for observing the impact of cultural stereotypes in EU governance.** Multi-level policy enforcement is a new phenomenon in European integration which captures the participation of national and EU civil servants in joint 'on-the-ground' operations¹ in border control, law enforcement cooperation, financial supervision, maritime safety inspections, etc (Freudlsperger *et al.* 2022). Traditionally, EU direct enforcement was limited to competition policy; in all other fields, Member States were responsible for ensuring compliance with EU law (Scholten 2017: 1350). The paradigm changed gradually with the expansion and empowerment of EU agencies, particularly during the last decade (Chamon 2016; Vos 2018). While some EU agencies hired new people to conduct joint operations, the majority continue to work for national public administrations (e.g., border guards, police officers, prosecutors, or inspectors). Unlike European Commission employees or national officials seconded to Brussels to take part in the Council, policy enforcers are civil servants who have neither the commitment to Europe nor the political stakes of national governments in EU decision-making (Lewis 2005; Trondal 2007). As a result, they are more likely to (genuinely) display cultural stereotypes in their day-to-day behaviours.

Third, **if civil servants take decisions based on cultural stereotypes, this can have serious consequences for the practical cooperation between national authorities and the effectiveness of common actions.** Especially when EU joint operations are voluntary, civil servants have the discretion to systematically exclude or marginalize countries/EU institutions from multi-level cooperation and thus undermine common problem-solving efforts. The example of police cooperation is instructive: in an early study on cross-border cooperation between German and Belgian forces, German officers were described along Second World War lines (seen to follow orders blindly because 'an order is an order'), whereas the Belgians were portrayed as 'inaccurate and

¹ Joint operations are distinct from civilian and military missions in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (European External Action Service 2019) because their role is to ensure compliance with *domestic* rules as opposed to carrying out *external* policy. The location of joint operations is thus not the main distinguishing element: for example, the enforcement of migration rules can take place outside the EU's external borders.

clumsy Frenchmen’ (Soeters and Twuyver 1997). More generally, national police authorities are known to distrust Europol (the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation) due to stereotypes about its competence as an international police actor (Rozée *et al.* 2013). In the past, this has prevented effective intelligence-sharing: for instance, in the run-up to the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, the Belgian authorities did not upload the criminal records of the Abdeslam brothers in the Europol database, thus withholding vital information on potential suspects that could have helped the French police (Bureš 2016). In other words, cultural stereotypes need not belong to political elites in order to impact cooperation and effectiveness in EU governance.

2. Relevant literature and scientific contribution

EUROTYPES connects three bodies of literature relevant to understanding the impact of cultural stereotypes in EU multi-level policy enforcement. First, drawing on social psychology and its applications in political science and public administration, the project develops scholarship on the role of stereotypes ‘in the real world’ among a new group: civil servants involved in EU joint operations. Next, the empirical focus of the project expands the scope of studies on EU policy implementation by showing the specificity of multi-level policy enforcement. Third, EUROTYPES develops theorizations of drivers of behaviour within EU institutions by positioning the place of stereotypes among alternative explanations rooted in interests, norms, or ideas.

2.1. The study of stereotypes in social psychology and beyond

In social psychology, the study of stereotypes has a long tradition of over a century (Nelson 2016). Cognitively, stereotypes have been linked to automaticity and the unconscious mind (Dijksterhuis 2010): in fact, the attempt to control stereotypes can lead to the reproduction of the exact behaviour one is trying to avoid (Wegner and Bargh 1998). In addition to facilitating information-processing about other groups (Macrae *et al.* 1994), stereotypes have a justificatory function, allowing individuals to rationalize why they treat others in a certain way, which leads to discrimination (Crandall *et al.* 2011). Linguistically, stereotypes are communicated by describing situations (e.g., girls are bad at math), using abstract adjectives (girls are sensitive), but also through innuendo and omission (girls are nice, so by implication less competent leaders) (Durrheim 2021).

An ongoing debate in this body of literature concerns the measurement of stereotypes. As most studies rely on lab experiments using university students as participants, there are questions about the validity of the findings in ‘the real world’ (Stangor 2016: 3–4). Furthermore, given the emphasis on the cognitive and emotional aspects of stereotypes, there is far less research on the impact of thoughts and feelings on actual behaviours (Fiske *et al.* 2016). Outside the lab, people are likely to deny or avoid stereotypical categorizations (known as social desirability bias), making it even more difficult to assess their connection to discrimination (Durrheim 2021). Another problem of conventional measurement is the assumption that experiment designers already know the stereotypes in circulation and which subjects are going to display them (Correll *et al.* 2010). Overall, this literature includes important warnings concerning the difficulties of a) identifying stereotypes in the first place, b) separating them from one’s own expectations of stereotypical thinking, and c) measuring their effect on actual behaviours. **These are key challenges that EUROTYPES aims to overcome.**

Outside social psychology, research on the impact of stereotypes on political and administrative decisions is more recent (e.g., Epp *et al.* 2014). New methodological developments in political science and public administration have allowed scholars to find evidence of stereotypical thinking in the decisions of frontline bureaucrats (Adam *et al.* 2021; Harrits 2019; Møller 2016). However, this literature is limited to the local level and the interactions between civil servants and citizens. Existing studies fail to address the stereotypes civil servants hold towards each other and how these stereotypes relate to job performance. In international relations, scholars have a similar interest in the impact of cultural diversity on the effectiveness of multilateral peacekeeping operations (Bove and Ruggeri 2016; Elron *et al.* 1999). Nonetheless, their goal is not to single out stereotypes; instead, they look at the aggregate cultural diversity of peacekeeping missions. By focusing on civil servants in the EU, **EUROTYPES will provide insight into an entirely unexplored empirical setting that is valuable across disciplines for understanding the impact of stereotypes ‘in the real world.’**

2.2. Policy implementation in multi-level governance

Second, the empirical focus of the project on direct enforcement opens a new door to implementation studies in multi-level systems. Traditionally, EU policy implementation was understood as the transposition of EU rules into national legislation, with scholars examining degrees of compliance with EU law as well as reasons for divergences (Börzel and Heidbreder 2017; Falkner *et al.* 2005). The focus on transposition made sense in the historical context of market integration: after all, the EU developed as a ‘regulatory state’, operating within the constraints of a relatively small administrative apparatus and a limited budget (Majone 1996). In this paradigm, Member States were responsible for adopting EU rules and enforcing them within their territories.

The paradigm changed, however, in the last decade as **EU institutions became increasingly involved in direct policy enforcement on the territory of the Member States** (Scholten 2017). Nowadays, there are thousands of financial supervisors, inspectors, prosecutors, police officers, and border guards who routinely participate in joint ‘on-the-ground’ operations outside their home countries, working in cooperation with EU bodies and other national authorities. In the academic literature, the expansion of direct enforcement has attracted attention from lawyers (Allegrazza 2020; Scholten and Luchtman 2017), but has been largely overlooked by political scientists and public administration scholars. Among the latter, existing studies focus on mapping and typologizing institutional arrangements of the EU’s multi-level administration (Benz *et al.* 2016; Heidbreder 2011) and the broader ‘European administrative space’ (Hofmann 2008; Trondal and Peters 2013). From this perspective, direct enforcement is one constellation among many, conceptualized alongside policy formation and domestic implementation by the Member States. Despite providing some insight into the reasons why national authorities choose to participate in multi-level implementation (Benz 2015; Heidbreder 2017), **existing studies do not address the specific institutional context of direct enforcement.**

Conversely, there is limited case study research on the enforcement difficulties faced by EU agencies with operational tasks (Bureš 2016; Busuioc 2016; Fink 2020; Perkowski 2019; Tsourdi 2016). For instance, national and EU officials who participate in joint operations can refuse to share information with their counterparts (a form of obstruction), blame others for problems in enforcement (shifting responsibility to other actors), or fail to cooperate altogether (Freudlsperger *et al.* 2022). **EUROTYPES will expand this emerging literature by studying drivers of behaviour across different areas of direct enforcement – from regulation to politically sensitive fields.** In addition, the lens of cultural stereotypes has not been adopted yet in the context of policy implementation and will be tested against alternative explanations of cooperation in the EU.

2.3. Drivers of behaviour in EU governance

Finally, the question of what drives the behaviour of officials inside EU institutions has received a great deal of attention in the specialized literature. Theoretically, most studies borrow from new institutionalism or theories of social action in International Relations (March and Olsen 2008a; Risse 2000). Over time, scholars discussed four main logics of behaviour: instrumental calculations, normative evaluations, ideational assessments, and the logic of habits/practicality² (Pouliot 2008; Schmidt 2008). The first draws on rational choice theory and the assumption that individuals behave strategically in order to maximize their preferences (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000; North 1990). From this perspective, an official would weigh the material and reputational benefits of cooperating at the EU level and act accordingly (Busuioc 2016; Pollack 2007). Next, normative evaluations are linked to sociological institutionalism and constructivism in International Relations (March and Olsen 2008b; Wendt 1999). In this view, humans are motivated by norms, which in the EU context are either linked to national/European identities (Checkel 1999; Hooghe 2005) or to professional affiliations, e.g., epistemic communities (Verdun 1999). In connection to the latter, the importance of ideational assessments is explicitly present in discursive institutionalism and constructivism, capturing the explanatory power of ideas in driving European integration forward (McNamara 1999; Schmidt 2014).

The last logic of behaviour moves from deliberate reflection to ‘background knowledge’ in the context of the practice turn in International Relations (Adler and Pouliot 2011) and its applications in EU studies (Adler-Nissen 2016). Within this literature, one strand focuses on the importance of habits, building on Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of ‘doxa’ or ‘that which is taken for granted’ in human interactions. Unlike instrumental, normative, or ideational calculations, habits are non-reflective cognitive processes that allow individuals to make sense of the world without thinking (Hopf 2010). In contrast to practices – which are visible in what people do and how they interact with others – habits originate ‘in the mind’ and can both ‘evoke and suppress actions’ (Hopf 2010: 541). **Conceptually, cultural stereotypes constitute ‘habits of the mind’ (or cognitive shortcuts in social psychology) which can impact human decisions by predetermining how we relate to others.** Yet the relationship between habits and conscious deliberation remains unclear. For example, people acquire stereotypes by being socialized within certain identities and internalizing the norms of the group (cf. Checkel 2005: 804); however, when confronted with ‘meaningful and effective differences’ in their daily interactions, the same people can reflect on their beliefs and change them (Hopf 2018: 696). The question then becomes what triggers this internal reflection and the subsequent revision of stereotypical portrayals.

² Sociologists studying the EU contest the distinction between the four logics as artificial because the meaning of interests, norms, and ideas is only produced through social practices (Jenson and Mérand 2010). Such an ‘inclusive ontology’ (Kauppi 2010) would be different, however, from the one adopted in EUROTYPES, which requires dualisms – individuals/institutions, interests/norms, etc – to be able to pinpoint the specific effect of stereotypes on behaviour.

The theoretical innovation of EUROTYPES is to position the role of habitual thinking against other drivers of behaviour and identify scope conditions when cultural stereotypes impact decisions in multi-level policy enforcement. The premise here is that different drivers of behaviour are analytically distinct and their separate effects can be tested empirically, reflecting an interest in causality that is outside the scope of practice theory (Jackson 2011: 199). The next pages detail the project's goals and key expectations.

3. Objectives and approach

EUROTYPES has three objectives, divided across five work packages (WPs).

Objective I: Which cultural stereotypes? How do they vary across policy fields? (WP1)

The first objective is to provide a comprehensive empirical account of the cultural stereotypes in circulation in EU multi-level policy enforcement. Instead of assuming which stereotypes are present in EU joint operations, EUROTYPES considers this an empirical question that is crucial in itself because not all stereotypes will be applicable to civil servants, e.g., all Spaniards love bullfighting. Consequently, **the purpose is to establish which cultural stereotypes are relevant for multi-level policy enforcement, how frequently they are invoked, and the extent to which they vary across policy fields.** WP1 assumes that there is no stable 'bag of stereotypes' at the disposal of officials; instead, some stereotypes will be reinforced under certain circumstances (crises, scandals, domestic developments, etc) or in specific fields.

Theoretically, the identification of stereotypes is informed by the well-known Stereotype Content Model, borrowed from social psychology (Cuddy *et al.* 2009; Fiske 2018). The idea is that all stereotypes can be categorized along two dimensions – warmth and competence – which can receive either high or low ratings (Fiske *et al.* 2002). Warmth is about how individuals perceive the intent of other groups (whether they are seen as friendly), while competence is about the perceived ability to act on the intent (which requires capable, assertive agents). In contrast to warmth, competence is linked to perceptions of high status and power. **EUROTYPES builds on this taxonomy to identify types of stereotypes and associations made in EU multi-level policy enforcement.** This will help organize the empirical material and facilitate the observation of groups systematically portrayed as having low competence or low warmth, which paves the way for discrimination. Moreover, the stereotypes identified in WP1 will be used as a basis for survey and interview design in WPs 2-4, which require prior knowledge of the stereotypes held by civil servants.

Simultaneously, EUROTYPES aims to identify variation in the stereotypes of civil servants present in multi-level policy enforcement across policy fields. In this context, enforcement encompasses all the activities designed to ensure compliance with EU law by monitoring, investigating, or imposing sanctions on citizens, companies, and national authorities (Scholten 2017: 1350). To ensure generalizability and capture different EU policy fields, the project builds on the distinction between market regulation and core state powers in European integration (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2016). In EU governance, regulatory fields presuppose direct enforcement of EU law vis-à-vis private economic actors (businesses, banks, etc), while core state powers involve physical activities that concern citizens and state actors themselves (Freudlsperger *et al.* 2022). **The question is whether stereotypes differ from one policy field to another, and whether some fields are more prone to stereotypical thinking than others** (see also WPs 3-4).

Objective II: What impact? How to measure it? (WP2, WP3, WP4)

The second objective of the project is to assess the impact of cultural stereotypes on actual behaviours of civil servants involved in joint operations. Given the connection between negative stereotypes and discrimination – which is well-established in the literature (e.g., Williams and Williams-Morris 2000) – the focus is on negative stereotypes, although it is assumed that positive stereotypes will have the opposite hypothesized effect. The notion of impact implies a causal link to specific outcomes. While outcomes can be defined in different ways, there are two strands of literature relevant here: one concerns cooperative behaviour in interorganizational research, the other the effectiveness of interorganizational relations in policy studies.

First, interorganizational cooperation denotes 'interactions among actors aim[-ed] at solving public problems by working together rather than by working separately' (Lundin 2007: 653). In multi-level policy enforcement, it is expected that negative cultural stereotypes will cause different types of uncooperative behaviours, which range from i) failure to cooperate, to ii) passive obstruction, to iii) open conflict between participants in joint operations. The three dimensions are operationalized below, followed by the project's first hypothesis:

Dimensions	Operationalization of uncooperative behaviours
Failure to cooperate*	Avoid any participation in joint operations (lack of cooperation) * Only applicable to voluntary operations

Passive obstruction	Formal but unresponsive participation in joint operations, minimum use of joint resources (on-paper cooperation) Formal participation but delayed and limited engagement, medium use of joint resources (reluctant cooperation)
Open conflict	Formal and practical participation in joint operations, extensive use of joint resources, but accompanied by suspicion and open disagreements (guarded cooperation)

H₁: If civil servants hold negative stereotypes about other cultural groups in multi-level policy enforcement, they are more likely to display uncooperative behaviours in joint operations.

Second, the impact of cultural stereotypes will be visible in how officials perceive the effectiveness of joint operations. In policy studies, there is an established literature on the link between interorganizational relations in public administration and policy performance (Jennings and Ewalt 1998; O'Toole 2003). Although the indicators used for measuring the effectiveness of interorganizational relations in policy implementation are not directly applicable here, they can be adapted to the views of EU and national officials working in the field. Accordingly, the notion of effectiveness is based on individual perceptions of i) the division of responsibilities between actors involved in multi-level policy enforcement, ii) increases in combined outputs resulting from joint operations, and iii) the extent to which common goals are achieved. The operationalization of the three dimensions is listed below, together with the project's second hypothesis:

Dimensions	Operationalization of perceived effectiveness
Division of responsibilities	Clear = standard procedures for joint operations, clear chain of command Medium = ad hoc specification of tasks for different actors in joint operations Ambiguous = duplication of activities, lack of coordination
Combined outputs	Higher = joint operations lead to increased outputs Unchanged = joint operations have the same outputs as national enforcement Lower = joint operations have fewer outputs than national enforcement
Attainment of goals (results)	Satisfactory = objectives of joint operations are reached in their entirety Sufficient = objectives of joint operations are partially reached Unsatisfactory = objectives of joint operations have not been fulfilled

H₂: If civil servants hold negative stereotypes about other cultural groups in multi-level policy enforcement, this will lower the perceived effectiveness of joint operations.

To measure the impact of stereotypes on cooperation and perceived effectiveness in practice, EUROTYPES will apply an experimental logic both through surveys (WP2) and elite interviews (WP3, WP4) with officials involved in joint operations. Drawing on the stereotypes identified in WP1, the project will introduce respondents to different situational vignettes that randomly vary the nationality/stereotypes of potential partners in joint operations. The purpose is to observe whether changing the affiliation of a group makes a difference in how officials judge the likelihood of cooperating in multi-level policy enforcement or the results they expect from joint actions. If respondents make systematic associations between certain nationalities or institutions and given stereotypes, this constitutes evidence of the impact of a stereotype at play.

Objective III: When do stereotypes matter? (WP 5.1) How can they be countered? (WP5.2)

The final objective of the project is to further theorize the role of cultural stereotypes in EU governance and propose ways to combat them. This is an inductive exercise that draws on the data collected in WPs 1-4. **In a first step, EUROTYPES refines a preliminary theoretical account (see p. 11) of the conditions under which cultural stereotypes hinder cooperation and effectiveness in multi-level policy enforcement (WP 5.1).** The theoretical reflection links back to the debate about drivers of behaviour within EU institutions. What is the relationship between cultural stereotypes and the other logics of social action? Under what conditions do rational calculations or European identities limit the influence of cultural stereotypes on behaviour?

The final step of the project is forward looking and aims to provide policy prescriptions to counter stereotypes among civil servants involved in multi-level policy enforcement (WP 5.2). Based on the results of WPs 2-4, EUROTYPES will create a list of 'lessons learnt' from studying stereotypes in multi-level policy enforcement, and how these can be combatted in EU governance more broadly. In addition, the project will take into account the prospect that cultural stereotypes might have the opposite effect from the one hypothesized above. Indeed, it is technically possible that negative cultural stereotypes enhance cooperation among EU and national officials or increase the perceived effectiveness of joint operations. From a normative perspective, such findings would be highly problematic, contradicting fundamental principles that the EU set for itself. Relevant here is the principle of equality (cf. Rossi and Casolari 2017) – whose violation would pave

the way for the discrimination of both citizens and Member States. If encountered, WP5.2 will address the normative implications of this outcome. The box below summarizes the project's key innovations:

Box 1: EUROTYPES ground-breaking innovations

- The first study of stereotypes among a new group: civil servants involved in multi-level policy enforcement. Focus on cultural stereotypes that civil servants have about each other as opposed to the public.
- Combine an original variant of content analysis to detect stereotypes in use (WP1) with survey experiments (WP2) and interviews (WP3, WP4) to assess the impact of stereotypes on behavioural intentions.
- Push the boundaries of research on drivers of behaviour in EU governance and beyond (WP5.1) and identify strategies to counter stereotypical thinking among civil servants (WP5.2).

Section b. Methodology

1. Description of work packages

The next pages describe the work plan and team composition of the project in line with the three objectives listed above (where PI=principal investigator and RAs=research assistants).

WP1. Identifying stereotypes through innovative methods (PI + 2 RAs): The first step of the project is to identify which cultural stereotypes are relevant for multi-level policy enforcement, how frequently they are invoked, and the extent to which they target the same groups. As stereotypes are articulated through language (Durrheim 2021), EUROTYPES starts by examining the public discourse of officials involved in joint operations. To achieve this goal, the project adapts an established method of qualitative content analysis – namely claims analysis (Koopmans and Statham 1999) – to the study of stereotypes. By combining actor-centred and discourse-centred approaches, claims analysis has the advantage of linking actors to their respective positions and the frames of justification used to support them (Leifeld and Haunss 2010).

The originality of EUROTYPES comes from modifying the method to facilitate the identification of stereotypes in public discourse. Accordingly, WP1 will first detect and then categorize public statements of relevant officials in line with: 1) the affiliation of the person speaking (the claimant), 2) the issue under discussion (the topic), 3) the action they have taken/are proposing to take on the matter (the position), 4) the justification of the position through the attribution of traits to social groups (the stereotype), 5) the national/regional/religious/supranational group they are referring to (the object of stereotyping), and 6) the audience they are targeting (the addressee). Unlike in claims analysis, the focus is explicitly on the justification of policy positions through the association of personal attributes with cultural groups of civil servants, which illustrates stereotypical thinking. The method is hence dubbed ‘stereotype claims analysis.’³

To ensure the systematic identification of stereotypes in circulation, **EUROTYPES triangulates data from three sources: European Parliament oversight hearings of EU agencies, European news outlets, and national media.** The choice is informed by the PI's extensive experience conducting content analysis of both legislative oversight interactions (Akbik 2022b; Maricut-Akbik 2020; 2021) and media sources (Maricut-Akbik 2019; 2020). Since the target group is made up of civil servants – as opposed to political elites – there are fewer instances when such officials talk publicly about their work. WP1 starts with committee hearings in the European Parliament as a key medium through which bureaucrats regularly account for their activities in a public forum (Aberbach 1990; Martin 2011). In general, answers to parliamentary questions allow civil servants to defend their conduct before members of parliaments, often shifting the blame to someone else (Akbik 2022b; Hood 2010). Another advantage of committee hearings is that they are fully available on the European Parliament's website and include *all* EU institutions and agencies conducting joint operations.

By comparison, media sources capture only *some* institutions but cover issues deemed newsworthy in the field (e.g., institutional changes, crises, scandals, etc). At the European level, EUROTYPES will select three general-interest publications (Politico Europe, EUobserver, EurActiv) that report EU news across the Member States. As regards national media, EUROTYPES will focus on four countries representative of regional differences in the EU (Sweden, Germany, Romania, and Greece). In each country, the project team will identify one mainstream newspaper and one tabloid publication, and then search for relevant articles by using the names of EU agencies as keywords. To account for the increased politicization of EU affairs from the euro crisis to the Covid-19 pandemic (Hutter and Kriesi 2019), the period under investigation is 2010-2021. For this timeframe, it is expected to gather around 4,000 answers to parliamentary questions and 7,500 news items. This will allow the project team to **ascertain both the presence and frequency of stereotypes in circulation.**

³ For another adaptation of claims analysis, see the work of De Wilde et al (2014) on ‘representative claims analysis.’

Figure 1 illustrates the envisaged use of stereotype claims analysis by coding testimonies of officials from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) concerning their former director, Fabrice Leggeri. In April 2022, Leggeri resigned amid accusations of workplace mismanagement and complicity in the illegal pushbacks of asylum seekers (Rankin 2022). The excerpt below is part of a media investigation conducted by Spiegel International (Christides *et al.* 2021) and focuses on staff perceptions of Leggeri triggered by his nationality and background in the French Interior Ministry:

During the course of Frontex's expansion, Leggeri tailored the agency to precisely fit his needs. He expanded his cabinet, filling many important posts with fellow French compatriots. Frontex workers say Leggeri is only rarely seen in the hallways, and that all important decisions are made by a small inner circle. Leggeri "runs the agency like it's a sub-prefecture," says someone who has worked with him for a long time. "You may be able to run a French ministry that way, but not an international organization." Frontex staffers have taken to calling Leggeri's cabinet "France Télécom" when the bosses aren't around. It's a reference to the scandal at the French telecommunications authority, which involved systematic bullying and harassment so bad that it drove a number of employees to commit suicide.	Spiegel International_2021.02.05.docx
Codings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ 1. Claimant_EU official ◇ 2. Topic_Frontex ◇ 3. Position_poor performance ◇ 4. Stereotype_LW/LC_elitism ◇ 5. Object_civil servants_French ◇ 6. Addressee_media_German 	

In this example, the claimants (EU officials) spoke anonymously to the German media (the addressee) to explain Frontex's poor performance in recent years (the position) in connection to problematic attitudes among the agency's leadership. These attitudes are repeatedly associated with the nationality of the Frontex Director, assumed to embody the general behaviour of French civil servants (the object of stereotyping). The attributes identified are categorised as elitism, including features of exclusivism ('filling many important posts with French compatriots'), haughtiness ('runs the agency like it's a sub-prefecture') and even bullying (the reference to France Télécom). In line with the typology of the Stereotype Content Model (see Objective I), elitism is classified as 'low warmth/low competence' (Fiske 2018) – also taking into account the context of the article and the mismanagement accusations levelled against Leggeri. Moreover, even if the statements are based on prior interactions with the former Frontex Director, this does not diminish their stereotypical nature, i.e., explaining isolated experiences through generalizations to entire national groups of civil servants.⁴

One research assistant will be tasked with data collection and coding, after being trained by the PI. To ensure **intercoder reliability**, a second RA will later classify random samples of quotes. The stereotypes identified in WP1 will serve as a basis for the construction of vignettes in the survey experiments of WP2 and the interviews planned for WP3 and WP4. Furthermore, the stereotypes detected in WP1 will be compared to findings of the Stereotype Content Model in social psychology in order to point out differences between cultural stereotypes 'in the lab' (cf. Cuddy *et al.* 2009) and stereotypes in 'the real world.'

WP2. Measuring the impact of stereotypes through survey experiments (1 Postdoc): Having established the most common stereotypes in circulation, the next step is to measure their impact on the behaviour of officials working in multi-level policy enforcement. In political science and public administration, survey experiments are among the most innovative ways to measure stereotypes 'in the real world' (Naurin *et al.* 2019; Peffley *et al.* 1997; Timberlake and Estes 2007). Given the target population under study – composed of civil servants involved in EU joint operations – EUROTYPES follows recent developments in the discipline that include elite experiments (Kertzer and Renshon 2022) and behavioural public administration (Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.* 2017).

Specifically, WP2 relies on factorial survey experiments (FSEs), a method well suited to stereotype research because it offers an unobtrusive way of posing questions about sensitive topics (Walzenbach 2019). FSEs ask participants to rate or react to multidimensional decision scenarios – known as vignettes – in which key aspects of the scenario are varied (Auspurg and Hinz 2014; Liebe *et al.* 2020). By 'burying the lead' of stereotypes among multiple dimensions included in a vignette, FSEs distract respondents from the sensitivity of the dimension of interest. Moreover, the randomization of vignettes presented to respondents facilitates causal analysis of single factors that impact individual judgement. In recent years, FSEs have been used successfully to show how individuals make judgements in professional settings, including in relation to age or gender stereotypes (Fernandez-Lozano *et al.* 2020; Karpinska *et al.* 2013; Wallander and Molander 2014).

As with all strands of stereotype research, there are challenges to disentangling the effect of stereotypes from other factors that affect the reasoning of individuals. It is thus essential to construct vignettes that clearly distinguish stereotypes from other explanations of behaviour and include realistic scenarios which respondents could potentially face on the job (Harrits and Møller 2021). To make hypothesis testing feasible, WP2 will

⁴ In social psychology, stereotype accuracy is a standalone line of research that examines empirical evidence on the correspondence between people's beliefs and reality (Jussim *et al.* 2016). For EUROTYPES, this question remains outside the scope because the project focuses on the effect of stereotypical portrayals on the behaviour of individuals. From this perspective, evidence-based stereotypes will impact behaviour as much as unsubstantiated stereotypes.

narrow down the number of cultural groups and stereotypes presented to respondents because including all Member States and all stereotypes in multi-level policy enforcement is simply impractical. Instead, **building on the findings of WP1, EUROTYPES will select the 5 most frequent cultural stereotypes in circulation in multi-level policy enforcement**, while also considering their representativeness in terms of region (northern/southern/western/eastern EU) and level of governance (subnational/national/supranational). The choice to focus on frequent stereotypes also illustrates how the project's WPs relate to each other.

Consequently, **WP2 envisages two surveys: one examining the determinants of cooperative behaviour in joint operations** (H₁, p. 5), **the other the perceived effectiveness of multi-level policy enforcement** (H₂, p. 6). In both surveys, the impact of cultural stereotypes is tested against alternative explanations such as institutional structures (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), material and reputational benefits (Busuioc 2016; North 1990), shared professional norms (Haas 1992), or degree of previous socialization (Checkel 2005). Although FSEs have many dimensions that create a large vignette universe, the use of D-efficient fractionalized sampling (Dülmer 2016) will reduce the number of vignettes employed while ensuring high statistical efficiency.

Figure 2 shows an example of a vignette envisaged for law enforcement cooperation, which includes the organization of joint investigation teams with the support of Eurojust and Europol. When the survey is administered, the texts of the vignettes will be adapted to the specificities of joint operations in each policy field; nevertheless, the dependent and independent variables will remain applicable across fields.

An organized crime network originating in [Romania] has recently expanded in your Member State. You have heard rumours about [corruption in Romanian public administration], but nothing specific about law enforcement authorities and organized crime. Your unit has [little] experience working in multi-national teams with police officers or prosecutors from this country. Eurojust and Europol offer [significant] funding for this type of joint operations, but national authorities in this Member State have not yet proposed a Joint Investigation Team.

How likely is your unit to propose a Joint Investigation Team?

Not at all likely Neither likely, nor unlikely Very likely

☐ -5 ☐ -4 ☐ -3 ☐ -2 ☐ -1 ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

How likely are you to propose a Joint Investigation Team?

Not at all likely Neither likely, nor unlikely Very likely

☐ -5 ☐ -4 ☐ -3 ☐ -2 ☐ -1 ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Figure 2: Sample vignette to be applied in the first FSE of WP2.

Each vignette has two questions distinguishing the perceived behaviour of the institution from one's individual reasoning.

Figure 2 shows four dimensions that will be randomized in the surveys: the nationality of the potential partner (in this case Romania), the cultural stereotype in circulation (that the entire Romanian public administration is corrupt), the level of socialization with the country (based on little experience in the past), and the presence of material benefits (given by the availability of significant EU funding). To illustrate how causal inferences can be made, one can imagine the same scenario with Sweden instead of Romania. If answers change when the vignette is about the corruption of Romanian police (but not the Swedish police), this constitutes evidence that stereotypes impact the decisions of officials working in multi-level policy enforcement.

Furthermore, **the surveys will distinguish respondents prone to stereotypical thinking from those unlikely to display such reasoning**. For instance, before moving to the presentation of randomized vignettes, the surveys will include a question introducing five fictional newspaper titles that epitomize stereotypes about different cultural groups in the EU. The point is to ask respondents how many of the stories they think are true and, based on their replies, to divide them into two subgroups (the *stereotype sensitive* vs the *stereotype blind*). Subgroup analyses will allow the identification of differences between responses to treatments (e.g., whether stereotype-sensitive civil servants are more likely to expect the Romanian police to be corrupt).

One challenge of WP2 is to delimit the population of the surveys correctly because they target a diverse group of nationalities and professions (national border guards, police officers, prosecutors, inspectors, and other civil servants working in various fields). There is no readily available data on the number or contact information of civil servants who work in multi-level policy enforcement. However, EU institutions are generally transparent about the identity of officials who work for/with them; based on the PI's experience, it is possible to obtain

contact details upon request to individual EU agencies and bodies. A conservative estimate⁵ for the 2009-2021 period is around 70,000 people, a number which includes national and EU officials. Since the population group is highly heterogeneous, it is necessary to target a higher number of respondents and use stratified sampling to achieve representativeness. At the start of WP2, power calculations will be conducted to determine the exact size of the sample required for the surveys (expected N=750).

To ensure a high response rate, the project team will employ several strategies. The first is to ask EU agencies for the contact details of civil servants who have worked in joint operations in the last 10 years. In this context, it is essential to emphasize the independence of the study from EU institutions, as there is a risk that civil servants will provide different answers if they think their superiors will have access to their responses. If only a few people respond to the initial invitation, the second strategy is to attend public conferences organized by EU agencies in different fields because such events are open to everyone upon registration (e.g., Europol 2021). This would allow the research team to publicize the surveys among the target group and enhance the response rate. Moreover, while the use of rewards is common for citizens participating in surveys as a way to boost response rates, civil servants are unlikely to be incentivized by small payments or prizes (Conn *et al.* 2019; Fulton 2018). Instead, EUROTYPES seeks to appeal to the professional interest of respondents in the subject matter. For instance, in law enforcement cooperation, there are no metrics to measure the success of joint investigation teams (Eurojust 2021). Since effectiveness is an important dimension of criminal investigations, we can assume that both police officers and prosecutors are eager to understand what makes joint operations successful or likely to be initiated in the first place.

As regards team composition, WP2 will be developed and conducted by a postdoctoral researcher with experience in FSEs, with the support of the PI. At the start of the second year of the project, the entire team will conduct small pilot studies to refine vignette construction and ensure the credibility of the scenarios across policy fields. In parallel, the surveys' Pre-Analysis Plans will be pre-registered with the Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) Registry. Later, the PhD students will help identify and contact the respondents to distribute the online surveys. Since this is not a public opinion survey and the identity of the target group constitutes public information (civil servants who work for/with EU agencies), it is not necessary to employ a specialized firm to recruit participants (for backup plans to contact respondents, see section 3).

WP3 and WP4. Capturing the impact of stereotypes through qualitative case studies (2 PhD students):

To further explore how cultural stereotypes impact joint operations, EUROTYPES will conduct in-depth comparative case studies of the experiences of civil servants involved in multi-level policy enforcement. The purpose is to complement and deepen the findings of WP2 by capturing variation between as well as within EU policy fields. To ensure coverage of different types of policy areas, the project builds on the distinction between market regulation (WP3) and core state powers (WP4) in EU governance.

There are important reasons for this distinction. First, market regulation comprises highly technical subjects – such as food safety or competition policy – and is hence less likely to be politicized by enforcing actors (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018). Previous research has shown that people working in these fields are experts seeking to solve common problems through deliberation and partnership (Joerges and Neyer 1997). Conversely, core state powers denote key constitutive functions of states such as the capacity for coercive force (through police and border control in this case), the ability to tax and spend using an individual 'coin' (fiscal and monetary policy), and the establishment of a centralized system of public administration (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018). Unlike regulatory fields, core state powers are openly redistributive because 'every euro of public revenue can only be spent once; every border guard can only be in one place at one time' (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018, p. 181). Moreover, core state powers are integral to the identity of states, so they are more likely to be subject to public contestation over European integration (Kuhn and Nicoli 2020). Intuitively, one could expect cultural stereotypes to have a higher impact in areas of core state powers (WP4) than in regulatory fields (WP3) because officials working in the fields are more exposed to politicization and redistributive conflicts between Member States. However, the variation between policy fields is an empirical matter that requires methodical investigation across policy areas.

The two WPs follow the same structure. Using a most-similar systems design (Seawright and Gerring 2008), WP3 explores the impact of stereotypes in market regulation by studying officials involved in enforcing compliance with EU rules by financial institutions (via the European Central Bank) and airlines (via the European Union Aviation Safety Agency). Both subfields have a similar hierarchical structure, with EU

⁵ For instance, during 2009-2021, 708 joint investigation teams were organized in law enforcement cooperation, with 25 people participating on average. That means 17,700 potential respondents. The PI obtained these numbers after submitting an official request for information (2021/INF/11) to Eurojust, the EU agency for criminal justice cooperation.

bodies deciding on issues such as certification and the withdrawing of a licence (Scholten 2017). In a similar vein, **WP4 will compare two domains of core state powers** that have seen the most significant operational expansion in the last decade in terms of EU-allocated budget and personnel (Freudlsperger *et al.* 2022; Migliorati 2020). Accordingly, WP4 will focus on criminal justice cooperation (via Europol and Eurojust, which are both involved in joint investigation teams) and border management (via Frontex, responsible for border management at the EU's external borders). The comparison of two similar policy fields allows the identification of subtle differences that make cultural stereotypes more salient under specific conditions. In fact, this is a way to test the strength of alternative drivers of behaviour in EU joint operations (considering material or reputational benefits, shared professional norms, common European identity, etc).

Moreover, both WPs rely on semi-structured interviews which incorporate an experimental component.

Following the logic of WP2, EUROTYPES will use 'qualitative vignette experiments' (Harrits and Møller 2021), a new mixed method in public administration research that has shown promise in the study of stereotypes held by civil servants vis-à-vis citizens (Harrits 2019; Møller 2016). The idea is to introduce different vignettes into the interview guide that are then randomly allocated to a treatment and control group of interviewees. For example, in an interview guide with three parts, sections I and III will include traditional semi-structured questions about the respondents' profession and involvement in joint operations as well as their own understanding of how they make judgements in multi-level policy enforcement or how they assess the effectiveness of common actions. By contrast, section II will comprise 4 vignettes outlining hypothetical situations which embed cultural stereotypes as explanations for cooperative behaviour (2 vignettes) and the effectiveness of joint operations (2 vignettes). The purpose is to get respondents to describe 'what they thought about' the situation and how they would act under the circumstances.

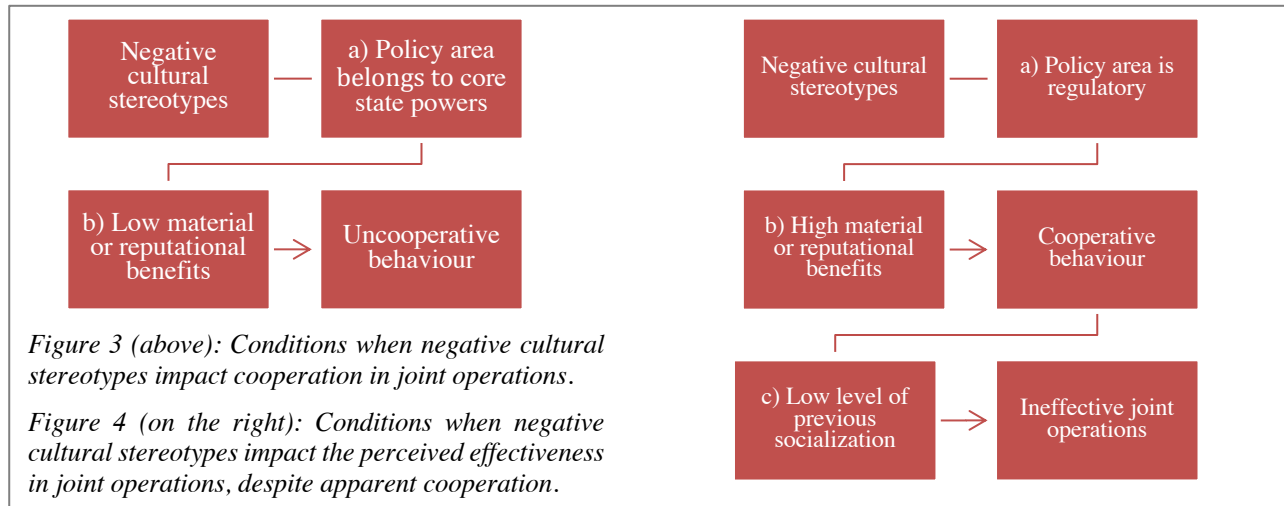
The advantage of this method is the combination of causal analysis with interpretation and meaning-making as causal mechanisms (Harrits and Møller 2021: 7). Although the sample of respondents in interviews is smaller, it is possible to code responses to closed questions and quantify them in order to compare differences between groups (e.g., using Fisher's exact test). To make such a comparison, WPs 3 and 4 will limit the variation in vignettes: to go back to the example in Figure 2, all interviewees receive a vignette about corruption in police forces – half about Romania and the other half about Sweden – while all the other dimensions remain constant. In addition, interviews allow the collection of crucial qualitative data, such as participants' perception of the vignettes and reflections on the subject in their own words. This strengthens the theoretical validity of expected hypotheses and helps with theory refinement in WP5. An essential element here is the construction of plausible scenarios that correspond to reality. To achieve this goal, at the start of the second year of the project, the team will conduct two pilot studies with officials from the European Central Bank (ECB) and Eurojust respectively (where the PI already has contacts). Once the interview guide is finalized, respondents will be identified using stratified sampling to ensure representativeness in the population (N=50 for each WP). Depending on their availability, some interviewees will overlap with those surveyed in WP2, thus complementing its findings.

Two PhD students with training in qualitative and experimental methods will work on WP3 and WP4. The interviews will be conducted throughout the second year and third year of their employment on the project.

WP5. Theory building and policy prescriptions (PI): The final WP is divided into two parts: one dedicated to theoretical refinement, the other having a prescriptive component. **First, the data collected during EUROTYPES will help theorize the conditions under which cultural stereotypes impact cooperation and effectiveness in EU governance.** At this stage, it is expected that cultural stereotypes will play a role in multi-level policy enforcement depending on the presence of other factors that limit the scope of their influence. For instance, if participation in joint operations is legally required (e.g., in banking supervision), the space for uncooperative behaviour is automatically restricted. The importance of other variables is unclear, as the impact of stereotypes may be affected by the nature of the policy area, material and reputational considerations, or the degree of previous socialization between officials.

Figures 3 and 4 tentatively identify scope conditions under which cultural stereotypes shape individual decisions in multi-level policy enforcement (*own account*). It is expected that negative cultural stereotypes will impact cooperative behaviours in joint operations: a) in politically sensitive areas that belong to core state powers, and b) when there are low material or reputational benefits for the Member State considering or already involved in joint operations. Simultaneously, negative cultural stereotypes will affect the perceived effectiveness of multi-level policy enforcement in fields c) where the prior socialization between officials is low, regardless of the policy area under consideration or the material and reputational benefits available. **Theoretically, this suggests that the logic of habits (Hopf 2010) is exacerbated by politicization and drives**

the behaviour of officials in the absence of clear stakes prompting instrumental calculations or normative assessments developed through socialization.



Having established the impact of cultural stereotypes in multi-level policy enforcement, **the final step of the project is to evaluate their implications** in EU governance. If stereotypes indeed affect cooperation in joint operations, it is imperative to find ways to counter them. Borrowing from social psychology, the question is whether intergroup contact moderates the effect of stereotypes, or alternatively, whether repeated interactions reinforce stereotypes by bolstering structural inequalities between groups (Bar-Tal 1997; Greenland 2022). EUROTYPES does not take an *a priori* position on the matter; the evidence collected during the project will feed into recommendations on how to combat stereotypes in practice. To this end, the interviews conducted in WPs 3-4 are crucial because they allow the in-depth analysis of interactions between officials and socialization practices. Building on the PI's experience with the study of accountability (Akbik 2022a; Maricut-Akbik 2018a), **WP 5.2 will create an evidence-based list of policy prescriptions that will cover situations when cultural stereotypes were absent, did not matter, or had been mitigated in joint operations.** This will facilitate a broader discussion on how to combat stereotypes in EU governance in general.

Preliminary work In June 2022, the PI hired a research assistant to compile a dataset of all EU legislation pertaining to joint operations. This is important because multi-level policy enforcement does not occur in an institutional vacuum: in fact, joint operations vary in respect to their hierarchy, voluntary character, duration, or level of standardization. The dataset will be complete by December 2022 and will help the EUROTYPES team improve survey and interview questions to better reflect the institutional context of joint operations.

2. Timetable and human resources

The project will consist of the PI, 1 postdoc, 2 PhD students, and 2 RAs (master's level). The PI will devote 50% of her working time to the project. The PI will train the RAs working on WP1, collaborate with the postdoc on WP2, and supervise the PhD students in WP3 and WP4. The postdoc will be hired for 2.5 years (100%), the PhD students for 4 years (100%), and RAs for 1 year each (50%). The postdoc and PhD students will work independently in WPs 2-4, so any potential personal issues will have a limited effect on the rest of the project. Table 2 illustrates the envisaged timeline, including expected contributions to project outputs:

Table 2. Project timeline						
	WP	PI	Postdoc	PhD 1	PhD 2	RAs
Ongoing: Podcast 'Types of Europe' (see section 5)						
Year 1 (PhD students will be hired halfway through year 1)						
Team recruitment						
Train RA#1	1					
Data collection parliamentary hearings & media, start coding	1					
Groundwork for survey & interviews, ethics approval	2					
PhD proposals, methodological training	3, 4					
Year 2 (Postdoc will be hired at the start of year 2)						
Train RA#2 for intercoder reliability checks	1					
Complete coding WP1, data analysis	1					
Conduct pilot studies for vignette construction	3, 4					
Design, pre-register, and conduct survey 1	2					
Start fieldwork & interviews	3, 4					

Year 3						
Draft version manuscript A1	1					
Set and run survey 2, data analysis, start A2* and A5	2					
Complete fieldwork & interviews	3,4					
Interview analysis, start manuscripts A3* and A4*	3, 4					
Theory development	5.1					
Year 4						
Complete manuscripts A2*/A5/work on A6	2					
Write up dissertation, complete A3*/A4*	3, 4					
Contract edited volume, organize academic workshop	5.1					
Prescriptive component, policy recommendations	5.2					
Year 5						
Complete articles at various stages of review						
Defend dissertation, monograph contract	3, 4					
Finalize and submit edited volume	5					

A=article; *Co-authored with other team members; lighter red colour=support role

3. Risk assessment and mitigation strategies

By default, stereotype research is prone to social desirability bias, i.e., respondents avoid articulating or admitting to stereotypical thinking. Such bias is potentially stronger in the EU, which celebrates ‘united in diversity’ as its official motto (European Union 2022). **While this makes EUROTYPES an inherently high-risk project, there are mitigation strategies to deal with prospective problems of measurement error and insufficient data to assess the main hypothesis.** First, the risk of measurement error can be tackled through additional pilot testing of the survey and interview design. One alternative is to pre-test the vignettes on a sample of international students likely to work in EU institutions later in their lives. These can be recruited from universities with specialized EU programmes, such as the College of Europe or Maastricht University. The international profile of the students makes them less likely to hold cultural stereotypes, which can aid the project team in refining vignettes so as to reduce social desirability bias before conducting WPs 2-4.

The second risk concerns the lack of sufficient claims in WP1 to determine frequent stereotypes in use in multi-level policy enforcement. The risk here is medium and can lead to the inaccurate conclusion that cultural stereotypes are not present among targeted civil servants. In this case, the issue could be the text corpus used for stereotype claims analysis, namely public or media statements of officials involved in joint operations. As a backup plan, the project team can conduct a pre-survey of the target population using the stereotypes identified in WP1, even if they are infrequent. The goal would be to generate a longer yet closed list of relevant stereotypes, which would then be presented to respondents in a short survey about ‘cultural traits’ in joint operations. This explicit measure of stereotypes will likely trigger social desirability biases, but these can be reduced by phrasing questions implying distance from the subjects, e.g., ‘some people feel that...’ (Bos *et al.* 2018). The solution will require the recruitment of more respondents (different from those contacted in WPs 2-4); however, the results will allow the team to proceed with the rest of the project as planned.

The third risk concerns the inability to reach sufficient respondents for surveys (WP2) and interviews (WPs 3&4). To address the problem, an alternative strategy is to conduct the surveys directly through EU agencies in exchange for including a few questions that are relevant to them. Although this might affect the types of responses given by officials, one can anticipate social desirability biases and adjust the survey design accordingly. In case some agencies are not open for such a collaboration, the project team will contact national authorities and organize snowball sampling. For the surveys, this is necessary to achieve sufficiently powered results, despite being a second-best alternative to stratified sampling. For the interviews, snowball sampling will similarly ensure access to a larger pool of respondents, as demonstrated by the PI during her PhD.

Overall, EUROTYPES can be described as a high-risk/high-gain project. When the risks of the project are successfully mitigated, the added value will be tremendous. If the key hypotheses listed in this proposal are falsified, we can conclude that cultural stereotypes do not affect civil servants and can be dismissed as political rhetoric designed to sell newspapers or gain votes at the national level. However, if the project collects evidence that shows the impact of stereotypes on individual behaviour in multi-level policy enforcement, this has repercussions for EU governance more broadly. **If stereotypes hamper (or on the contrary, if they enhance) cooperation and effectiveness in joint operations, it is essential to find feasible strategies to counter them** – in line with the EU’s own principle of equality between citizens and Member States. In this respect, the prescriptive component of EUROTYPES (WP5.2) will be crucial.

Ethics considerations: WPs 2-4 require the recruitment of adult respondents employed in national and EU public administration. The participants do not represent an economically vulnerable group and the project does not carry any risk to their health or safety. The goals of surveys and interviews will be made clear to respondents; there is no deception involved. The project team will obtain informed consent from participants and ensure the confidentiality of their responses. In addition, the team will pay close attention to the phrasing of questions so as not to risk the further spread of stereotypes (for details, see part A of the application).

4. Suitability of the PI and host institution

The PI is uniquely positioned to conduct this research owing to her extensive expertise in EU institutional and policy issues. She has previously worked on the fields of migration and criminal justice cooperation (Maricut-Akbik 2018b; 2019; 2020), financial supervision (Akbik 2022b; Maricut-Akbik 2020), and EU agencies (Freudlsperger *et al.* 2022), which are all relevant for EUROTYPES. Methodologically, she specializes in qualitative content analysis (WP1) and elite interviewing (WPs 3 and 4). To complement her knowledge of survey experiments, the project will hire a postdoc with experience in FSEs to conduct WP2. Simultaneously, the PI has experience writing for policy audiences (Akbik 2022a; Maricut-Akbik 2018a), as envisaged in WP5.

Moreover, during her time at the Hertie School of Governance, the PI trained 4 research assistants to conduct claims analysis and mentored 2 PhD students to help them complete their theses. At Leiden University, the PI has served as supervisor for both bachelor and master students. When it comes to EUROTYPES, one advantage is that the project's host institution – the Institute of Political Science at Leiden University – organizes co-supervision of PhD students with senior professors, thus supplementing the PI's experience in the field. Additionally, the Institute has excellent scholars working on experimental research (Matthew di Giuseppe, Femke Bakker, Joshua Robison) who can advise the project team on the design of vignette experiments. More generally, Leiden University is an ideal host institution for the project due to its excellent network of scholars working on European integration (Karolina Pomorska, Nikoleta Yordanova, Daniel Thomas, Tom Theuns, Antoaneta Dimitrova, Madeleine Hosli, Dimiter Toshkov, etc.).

5. Dissemination and outreach

EUROTYPES will target top academic publishers and leading journals in political science, public administration, international relations, and EU studies. The project team will deliver at least 6 journal articles, 2 monographs (authored by the PhD students), and 1 volume (edited by the PI). The table below outlines potential journals and publishers (using their official abbreviations), grouped according to key topics:

WP	Topic	Deliverable	Target journal / publisher
1, 5	Cooperation in European integration, EU institutions, interorganizational relations	A1/A6/edited volume	<i>Comp Pol Studies</i> , <i>Brit J of Pol Sci</i> , <i>Eur J Int Relat</i> , <i>Int Organ</i> + OUP/CUP
2	Attitudes and beliefs in public administration, survey experiments	A2*/A5	<i>Am Polit Sci Rev</i> , <i>J Pub Adm Res & Theory</i> , <i>Pub Adm Rev</i> + OUP/CUP
3	Multi-level policy implementation in	PD/MN/A3*	<i>J Eur Public Policy</i> , <i>J Common Mark Stud</i> , <i>West Eur Polit</i> + OUP/CUP
4	regulatory fields & core state powers	PD/MN/A4*	

A=journal article; *=co-authored with other team members; PD=public dataset; MN=monograph

Furthermore, public outreach will include reports directed at EU-focused think tanks (Jacques Delors Centre, CEPS, EPC), and EU institutions (European Parliament, Commission, EU agencies). In this way, the project will benefit both the scientific community and policy practitioners working in multi-level policy enforcement. Additionally, EUROTYPES will organize a podcast series titled 'Types of Europe', which will invite academics from different disciplines (political science, public administration, sociology, imagology, cultural history) to discuss their work on stereotypical thinking in Europe. The PI and the PhD students will organize the podcast, preparing 5 episodes per year for 4 years. The podcast will help build a network of people who work on the topic and would be interested in participating in the edited volume planned towards the end of the project. In the 4th year, the PI will also organize an academic workshop with 15-20 participants to coordinate the contributions to the edited volume (see part A of the application on budget justification). In this way, the project will ensure a transdisciplinary impact on the study of cultural stereotypes in Europe.

Vision: At the end of EUROTYPES, the project team will have shown *whether* and *how* stereotypes hinder EU cooperation. In the long run, the PI aims to establish a wider research agenda on cultural stereotypes in EU governance and transnational bureaucracies more broadly. In EU studies, the agenda can connect to the emerging literature on the stereotypes faced by EU citizens in other Member States (Adam *et al.* 2021; Hjorth 2016). In International Relations, the topic is relevant for studies on the bureaucracies of international and regional organizations (cf. Bauer *et al.* 2017). EUROTYPES will lay the foundation for this research agenda.

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