First report on the impact of dissemination strategies

Project's acronym	AspirE
Project's full title	Decision making of aspiring (re)migrants to and within the EU: the case of labour market-leading migrations from Asia
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Project Manager	Catherine Gonzalez (ULB)
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Disclaimer	The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission

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ABBREVIATIONS

CD&E = Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation Plan

DPO = Data Protection Officer

EC = European Commission

ECRs = Early Career Researchers

EP = European Parliament

EU = European Union

EUHK = The Education University of Hong Kong

GA = Grant Agreement

GUF = Goethe University Frankfurt

HE = Horizon Europe

Iscte = University Institute of Lisbon

IS-VASS = Institute of Sociology-Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

MAU = Mahidol University

MS = Member States

MU = Masaryk University

PI = Principal Investigator

REA = Research Executive Agency

SMC = Scalabrini Migration Center

TAU = Tampere University

ULB = Université libre de Bruxelles

UMIL = University of Milan

VAPEC = Vietnam Asia-Pacific Economic Center

WP = Work Package

WUT = Waseda University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present document is the first report on the impact of AspirE's dissemination strategies. Specifically, it aims to provide an overview of the effectiveness of AspirE's Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation (CD&E) Plan to reach both academic and non-academic public. It describes AspirE's two main dissemination strategies: publications and presentations. It also highlights the project's three major communication tools – website, podcasts, and social media – along with some statistics regarding people's visits of these tools.

1. INTRODUCTION

AspirE is a REA-funded project that examines the decision making of aspiring (re)migrants in 11 countries across Asia and Europe over the course of three years (from January 2023 until December 2025). One of the many milestones associated to AspirE is a yearly report on the impact of the project's dissemination strategies as regards the circulation of information about AspirE's activities and research results.

Dissemination strategies are part of the CD&E Plan (see Figure 1 below) which aims to ensure the project's scientific and social impact. These strategies target the following audiences: the international scientific community engaged in migration studies, be it from a sociological, anthropological, legal, geographical, or psychological point of view; the European policymaking community, be it at the European Union (EU) or Member State (MS) levels; Asian (aspiring) economic migrant communities; NGOs in Asia involved in supporting and following up on migratory challenges in the region; European (and Asian) (post-)graduate students; and engaged citizens.

Figure 1. AspirE's Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation Plan
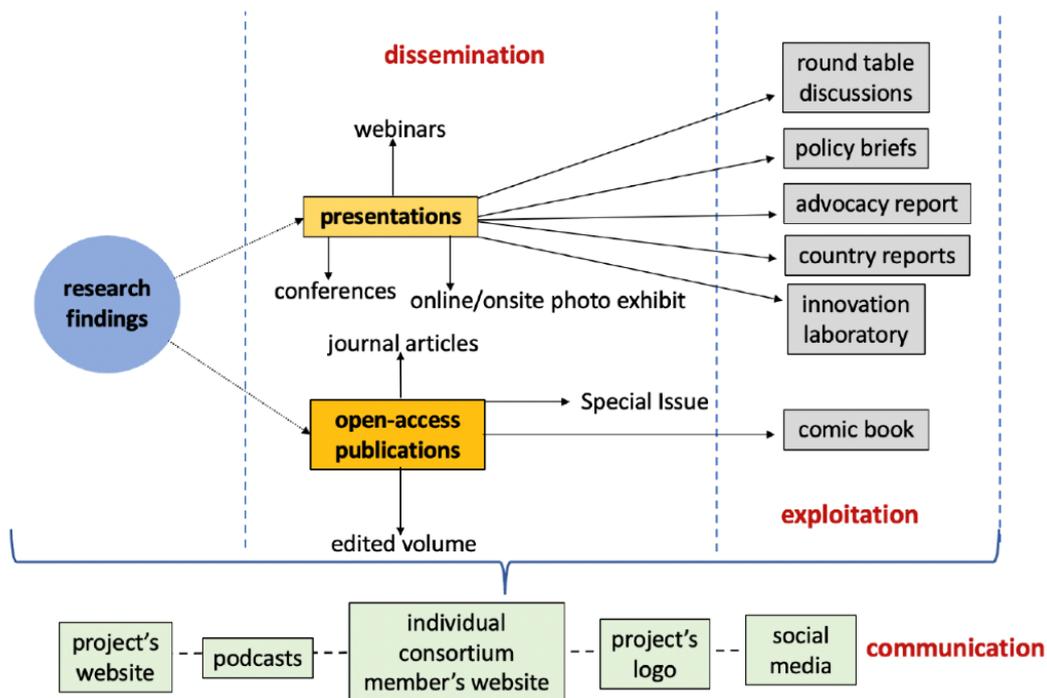
Considering that the project is still at its data collection and analysis phase, its dissemination strategies will be explained along with its concrete activities that took place. Additionally, the report will analyse the impact of the different communication tools that AspirE has been using to make its activities visible, namely the project's website, podcasts, and social media accounts.

It must be emphasised that this report is focused on what has been planned, which the AspirE consortium has been pursuing since its beginning on 1 January 2023. Changes in initial strategies may occur as the project advances, and an updated report will be provided in month 24.

2. DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES

Dissemination within the context of EU-funded research refers to the free sharing of knowledge and research findings to a wide audience including not only scientists, but also authorities, policymakers, sectors of interests, and the civil society. To do so, AspirE has two main dissemination strategies: open access publications and presentations. While some activities to disseminate the project as a whole and its findings are planned for a later stage, ongoing activities are detailed in this section.

2.1. Open-access publications

AspirE team members are encouraged to publish in open access. As of now, the main Principal Investigator of the project, Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot, submitted an essay on the Open Research Europe (ORE) platform which is "an open access publishing venue for European Commission-funded researchers across all disciplines, with no author fees" (see https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu). The essay received 2 reviews: approval and approval with reservations.

Figure 2. Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot's essay published in ORE

ESSAY 🔓

Humanising research on (non-)migration decision-making: a situated framework [version 1; peer review: 1 approved, 1 approved with reservations]

Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot ✉ 🆔

| This article is included in Migration collection |
| This article is included in Sociology gateway |

Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot's essay has the ambition to further conceptualise transnational migration by identifying what the drivers behind individuals' aspiration or intention to (re)migrate are or conversely, understand why they decide to stay where they are. This publication is at the core of the AspirE project because it aims to present different ways of humanising the research on (non-)migration decision-making. It is worth mentioning that an internal strategy has been put in place to keep track of AspirE team members' publications, whether in open-access or not. A Publication Google Form was set up for team members to fill in with the necessary information in order to highlight the publications on AspirE's website, social media accounts, and Newsletter.

In line with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable), all the data-gathering tools that will be used for interviews with experts and aspiring (re)migrants as well as for social network mapping and group discussions will be made open access (at least six months following the end of the project) on AspirE's website and on an internationally recognised online repository called ZENODO (https://zenodo.org/), using Creative Commons licences.

2.2 Presentations

Based on Figure 1, presentations encompass different types of activities: conferences, EU and country reports, webinars, policy briefs, innovation laboratory, comic book, roundtable discussions, photo exhibit, and advocacy report, among others. Only few, explained below, can be covered at this stage of the project.

CONFERENCES

AspirE team members are encouraged and expected to present findings in international conferences, which is one of the many milestones associated to the project: milestone D18 "panel proposal submitted to international conferences". The said milestone was addressed thanks to a panel proposal to the annual conference of IMISCOE (the largest European network of scholars in the area of migration and integration) involving five Principal Investigators, two External Advisory Board members and eight postdoctoral students. The panel is entitled "Constructed desirability of the EU as mobility destination from Asia: perspectives of social actors 'here' and 'there'". Team members from the ULB, SMC, UMIL, MAU, TAU, EUHK, Iscte, WU, and GUF have submitted paper abstracts, and it is the main PI (Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot) of AspirE and the PI (Paola Bonizzoni) of the local team in the University of Milan who will chair the panel while two advisory board members – Elisa Fornalé from the World Trade Institute in Switzerland and James Farrer from Sophia University in Japan – will act as discussants.

AspirE's Czech and Vietnamese teams, from MU and IS-VASS respectively, have submitted a paper, and AspirE's main PI submitted a workshop with the PI (Simona Vezzoli) of one of AspirE's sister projects: PACES. "Sister projects" refers to the projects funded under the same call "HORIZON-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-04: Decision-making processes of (aspiring) migrants": PACES and DYNAMIG. The workshop is entitled "Mobility policies and migration decision-making: exploring their possible link(s) through researchers' reflexivity". The workshop will consist of scholars from different institutions based in Europe and one based in Japan. It is worth mentioning that one of those scholars is a researcher from the DYNAMIG team. Consequently, the workshop will be a major collaborative event between the three projects funded under the same call.

Aside from the IMISCOE conference, AspirE team members have been very active in participating in other calls for papers/panels/workshops such as the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSeas) Conference 2024 for which a panel was accepted, the Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration (ETMU) conference, and so on.

Moreover, AspirE took part in the European Commission's roundtable discussion "Bridging Research and Policy" on 14 December 2023 at Albert Borschette Centre. Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot (AspirE's main PI) and Fabio de Blasis (postdoctoral researcher at UMIL) presented the project, some of its preliminary findings, and recommendations to the Commission.

In order to share the details of the different calls, an internal strategy was set up: a document in the Cloud gathers all the information for each call, and team members are invited to update the table. Additionally, interesting calls are shared via email to all team members who are encouraged to fill in a Communication Google Form as to follow-up on their scientific activities.

EU AND COUNTRY REPORTS

AspirE will produce and publish an EU mobility policies report, in collaboration with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), a Brussels-based Think Tank organisation. The reports will concern the following matters: labour migration, tourism, family reunification, student migration, investment migration, and the EU's freedom of movement. Additionally, six MS country reports on mobility frameworks and five country reports on socio-legal framework of human spatial mobility across the five Asian countries involved in the project will be made available on the website. The results of the country-specific analysis will be both separately and comparatively assessed to determine whether the same set of policies at the EU level apply, and whether these policies have the same impact across different national and local contexts.

At this stage, the reports are being finalised and will be available on the project's website in January 2024.

WEBINARS

AspirE will organise three Webinars summarising the insights drawn from each stage of the project's data-collection and analysis. The first webinar named "Aspiring (re-)migrants behaviour in mobility policies", led by UMIL, is related to WP2 tackling the socio-legal context framing the migration decisions. The second webinar named "Micro- and meso-level drivers of (re)migration", led by the ULB, draws from insights from WP3 that is focused on the individual motivations driving the migration decisions. Finally, the third and last webinar named "Temporality of (re)migration decisions", led by Iscte, is related to WP4 that is oriented towards understanding the temporality of decision-making.

At this stage, the Consortium members are preparing for their first webinar that will take place in the mornings of the 29th and the 30th of January. AspirE presenters are asked to record their presentation 10 days in advance in order to send those to invited discussants.

PENDING PRESENTATIONS

A series of activities as follows cannot yet be covered at this stage. First, an annual set of *policy briefs* are expected to be produced throughout the lifespan of the AspirE project (month 14, 24 and 34) and they will be drawn from the findings of the empirical WPs. The aim of those briefs is to suggest possible improvements for the EU, and a report on the dissemination of these briefs will be available on month 36. Second, an *innovation laboratory* will be organised in month 29 in Brussels with the help of the coordinator of WP5 (MU) and the CEPS. The aim is to train migration agents and NGO social actors on specific topics. Third, AspirE will prepare a *comic book* in month 30 in order to disseminate its findings to a non-academic public. Fourth, a set of 11 local policy *roundtable discussions* in Asia and Europe are planned in month 33. Fifth, an *onsite and online photo exhibit* of key findings will be organised in month 34 under the supervision of WP4 coordinator (Iscte). The event will be open and free of charge to the public. And sixth, an *advocacy report* will be delivered in month 35.

3. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

It is worth going through the different communication tools set up with the aim of making AspirE's activities and soon, findings, available to a wider audience. In order to do so, this section will provide an analysis on how this goal is being achieved.

3.1. AspirE's website

AspirE communicates its activities and research results on its website that was created on month 5 of the project (see https://aspire.ulb.be). It is the most resourceful tool proving information on what the AspirE project is about, its objectives and methodology, Work Packages, team members and advisors, and its different communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities.

As explained in the CD&E plan, the ULB institutional web platform has been hosting AspirE's website, which ensures the latter's temporal durability and security from piracy. The web development agency "Typi Design" is the one that prepared the website in collaboration with AspirE's project manager and the main PI. Designs used on the website are created using the platform Canva in which AspirE has registered for three years. The website has the following rubrics: Home, Research, Team, News, Impact (to be activated once content is available), and Contact (see Figure 3).

The website has been approved by the ULB's DPO. Following the DPO's suggestions, Typi Design agency added a legal statement on the website to inform viewers on the purpose of the website, liability, intellectual property, right of portrayal, protection of personal data, applicable law and jurisdiction, confidentiality, security, rights and contacts, and cookie policy. On that last point, a cookie administrator was added on the site (CookieYes) to better understand viewers' browsing experience on the AspirE's website, but most importantly to allow viewers to give or withdraw consent.

Figure 3. Upper menu bar of the project's website

HOME   RESEARCH   TEAM   NEWS   IMPACT   CONTACT
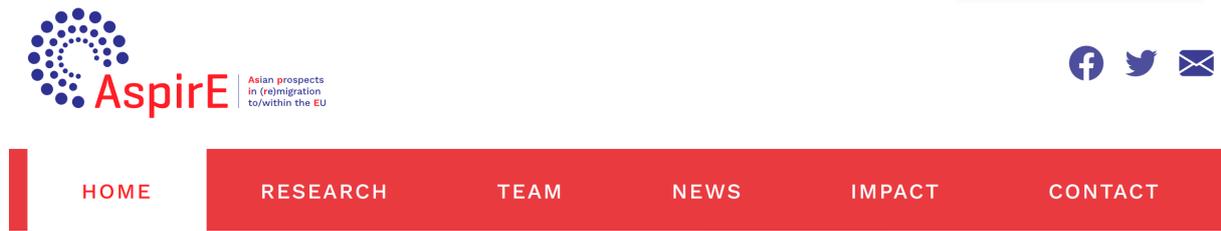
Connected to the cookies set up, the project uses Matomo (meaning "honesty" in Japanese) in order to have statistical information on the visits of the website. This open-source analytics platform is respectful of user data, ownership, and privacy. As such, the data collected preserves viewer's anonymity, is not passed on to third parties, and remains hosted on the ULB servers.

Figure 4. Visitor map worldwide (19/12/2023)

2,619 visits
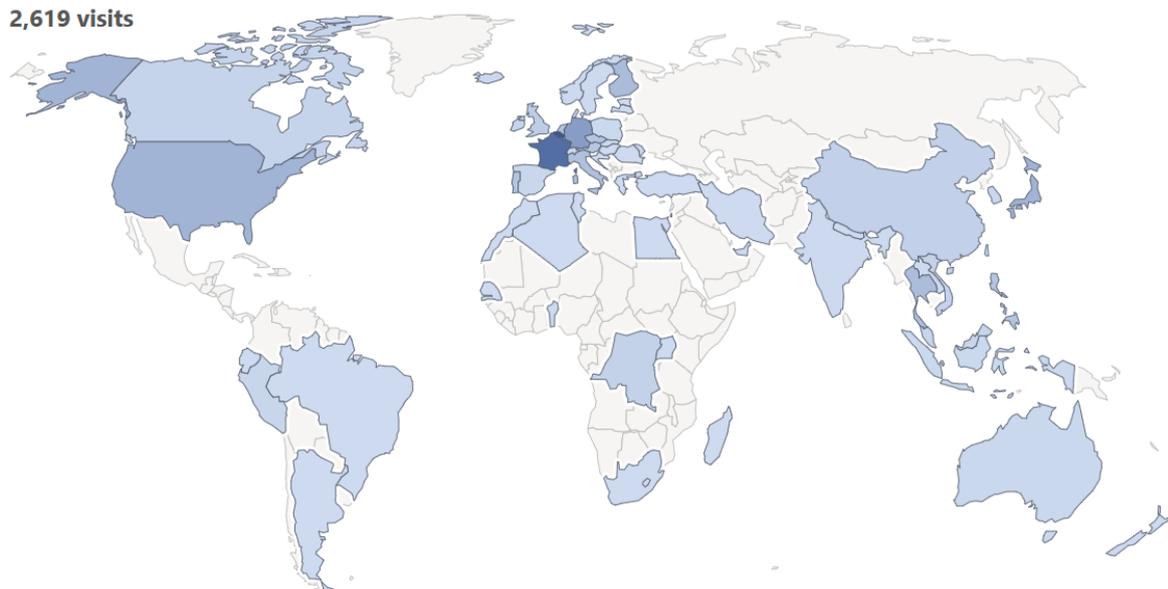
While most visitors are based in Europe, AspirE's website has been consulted in all continents. There are different ways of finding the website of the project, and Matomo provides additional information about it.

The information published on AspirE's website is being further disseminated through the project's Newsletters and individual consortium member's websites. Following the recommendation of ULB-based DPO, the project is using Brevo (ex-sendinblue) to prepare its online Newsletter.

Figure 5. Channel types through which the project's website was found (19/12/2023)

Channel Types

CHANNEL TYPE	▼ VISITS	ACTIONS	ACTIONS PER VISIT	AVG. TIME ON WEBSITE	BOUNCE RATE
Direct Entry	1,561	5,814	3.7	3 min 40s	41%
⊞ Social Networ…	481	1,506	3.1	2 min 22s	50%
⊞ Search Engines	422	1,337	3.2	2 min 33s	40%
⊞ Websites	155	520	3.4	1 min 58s	41%

3.2. Podcasts

As the fourth deliverable of WP7, AspirE will launch on its website three sets of podcasts on the decision making of aspiring (re)migrants. These podcasts will feature interviews with AspirE's researchers, who will explain their respective case studies.

The first set of podcasts contains seven episodes introducing the project to a wider audience. It has been published on AspirE's website in October 2023. The first episode focuses on what AspirE is all about: Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot (the project's main PI) explained the project in 15 minutes: its scope, research questions, objectives, methodologies, organigram, and expected results. The other episodes (2 to 7) feature specific migration corridors linking Europe and Asia. These episodes include the presentations of local PIs and some AspirE researchers: Mari Korpela, Sirijit Sunanta, and Hathairat Phaholtap for the Thailand-Finland migration case study; Paola Bonizzoni and Maruja Asis for the Philippines-Italy migration case study; Ruth Achenbach and Gracia Liu-Farrer for the Japan-Germany migration case study; Adéla Souralova, Anh Nguyen Dang, and Kim Sa Le for the Vietnam-Czech Republic migration case study; Sofia Gaspar and Isabella Ng Fung-sheung for the China-Portugal migration case study; and Lucas Monteil, Laure Sizaire, and Antoine Roblain for the Asian immigration to Belgium case study. Those episodes have been published on SoundCloud and Spotify (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Podcast overview on SoundCloud (19/12/2023)

Figure 5. Podcast overview on Spotify for Podcasters (19/12/2023)
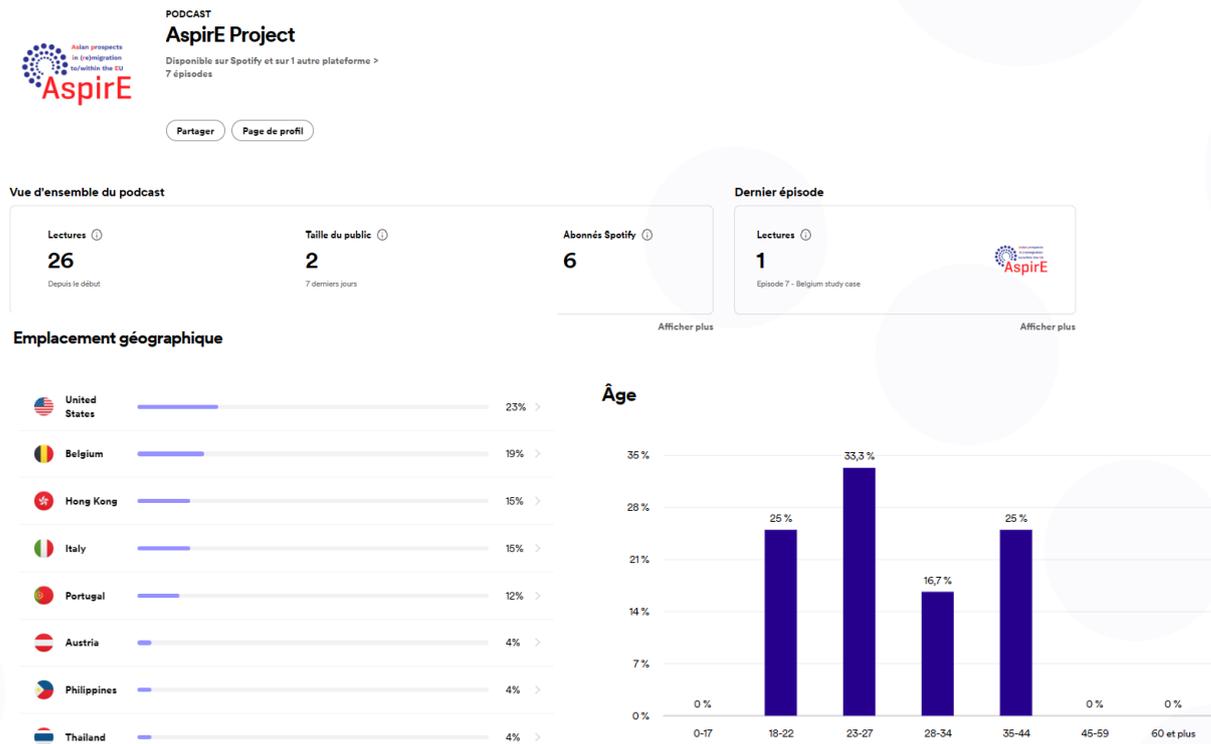
The second set of podcasts will be available on the project's website on month 20 and will be composed of three episodes. The first one will present the key findings of WP2 and will feature early career researchers who collected and analysed data for WP2 per country. The second episode will unveil the results of WP3's semi-structured interviews with aspiring (re)migrants, whereas the third episode will highlight the key findings of WP3's social network mapping.

Finally, the third and last set of podcasts will be published on the project's website on month 30. Like the first and second set of podcasts, this series will contain several episodes. The first episode will bring to the fore the results of WP4's video diaries collection. The second episode will be about the results of WP4's group discussions. The final episode will explain the project's overall findings and revisit its research questions and objectives.

3.3. Social media presence

As specified in the Grant Agreement (GA), the project plans to promote its activities and findings using social media platforms, specifically X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook. AspirE's X account (@AspirE_EU_Asia) and Facebook (@AspirE2023EUproject) accounts are connected to the project's website.

A social media publication plan was prepared to assess the impact of the project. The latter provides information on the project's social media accounts on X and Facebook. More specifically, it outlines the type of contents to share via the project's social media accounts, the interactions foreseen, the accounts to follow on X, the pages to like/follow on Facebook, the use of visual materials, the use of hashtags, the posting frequency, and the metrics. Since both social media accounts have been active, it is possible to quantitatively measure the visibility of the project. With the help of the Publication and Communication Google Forms explained in the beginning of the report, a social media calendar was prepared to make sure AspirE social media accounts are active on a regular basis and to ensure at least 3 posts a week.

X (formerly TWITTER)

AspirE's account on X follows the same logic as the Facebook page based on the social media calendar. As such, all information shared passes through both channels, usually, on the same day.

*Figure 6. Number of followers on X (19/12/2023)*
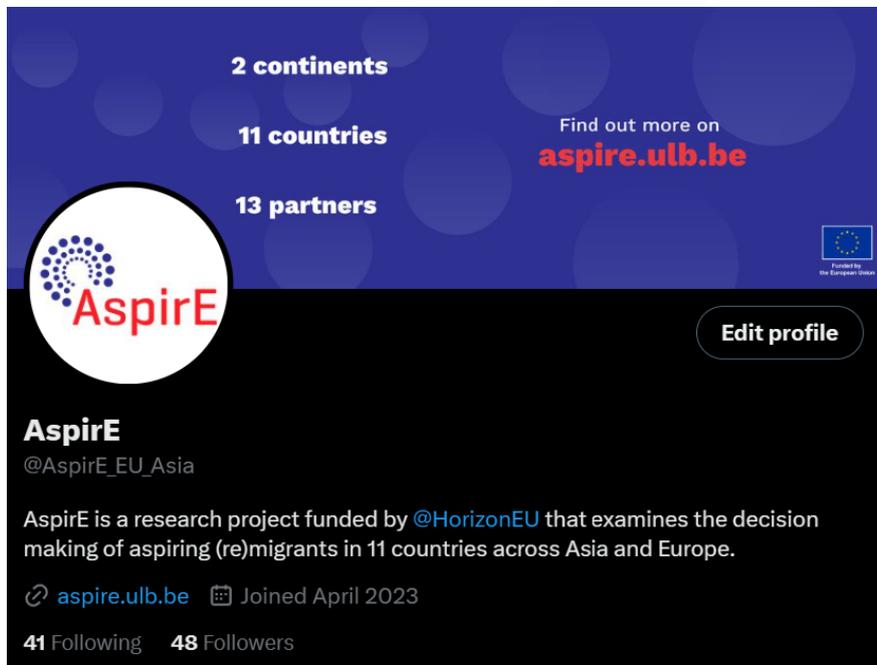
According to X analytics, in December 2023, the content shared on X was seen more than 2,300 times. The engagement rate (number of times a user has interacted with the content shared by liking it, reposting it, and replying to it) is however limited to 8,8 %.

FACEBOOK

AspirE's Facebook account has been existing since the end of June and immediately became active with a series of posts presenting the team members, the advisors, external collaborators, and the study cases.

Figure 7. Number of likes and followers on Facebook (19/12/2023)
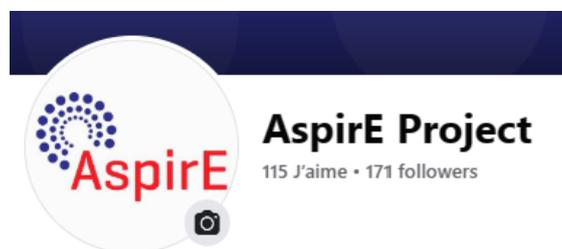
Facebook provides statistics via the Meta Business Suite. The cumulated performance number illustrated in Figure 8 refers to the number of times the content shared on Facebook was seen (estimation). This visibility includes the sharing of AspirE's Facebook page via another page, platform, website, and such. The number of visits, illustrated in Figure 9, refers to the approximate number of times AspirE's Facebook page was directly consulted.

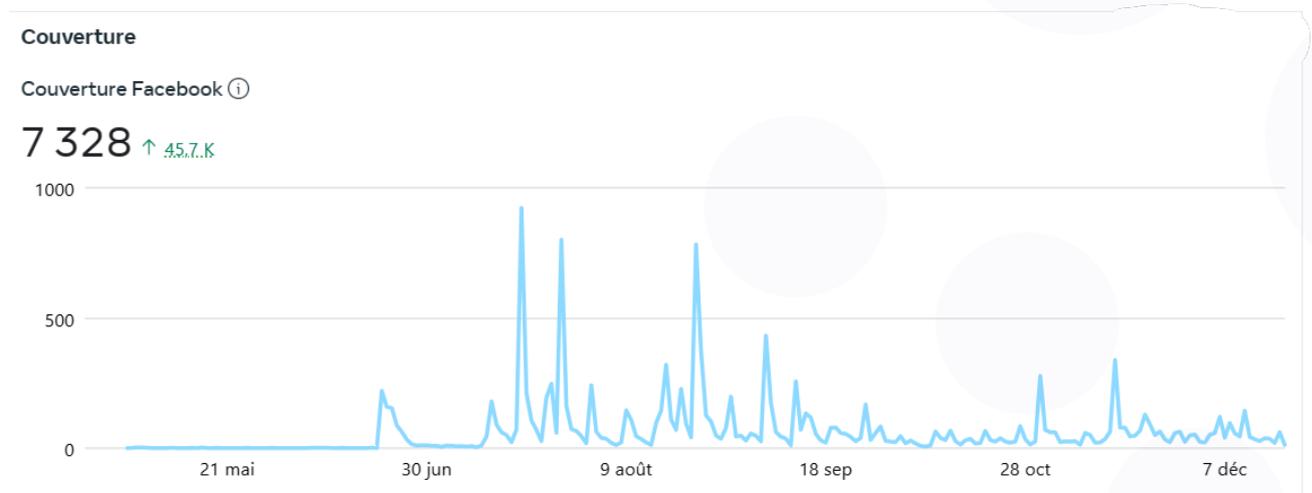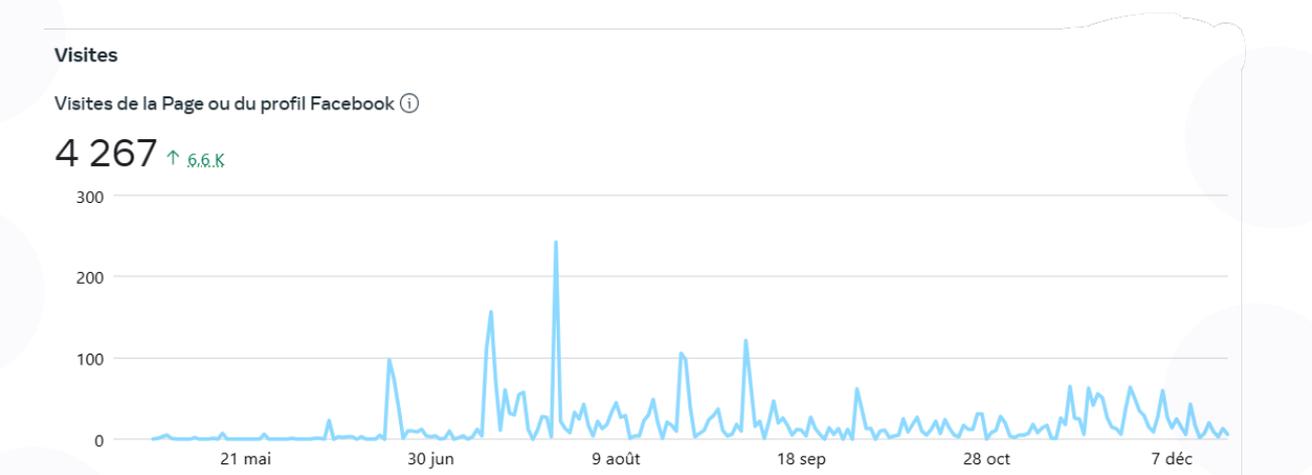*Figure 8. Cumulated coverage performance on Facebook (19/12/2023)*

Figure 9. Approximate number of visits on Facebook (19/12/2023)

4. CONCLUSION

AspirE's CD&E Plan suggests the dedication of the project's consortium members to humanising approaches to the study of decision-making of aspiring (re)migrants. Through its CD&E Plan, AspirE will make sure that both academic and non-academic public be informed about the project's results and be interested in the improvement of mobility policies in the EU. If there would be changes in the present CD&E Plan in the months to come, it would be for the reinforcement of the project's social, scientific, and political impact. AspirE will inform the EC in this regard to obtain its approval and support. At the end of the project, AspirE consortium during its last Steering Committee meeting will evaluate the overall effectiveness of its CD&E Plan.