

VISUAL-EU Summer School



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Module 1

Governance Visual Lab: Mapping EU Institutions, Debates & Policy Cycles

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Visualizing the EU: Enhancing Public Awareness of European Policies, Values, and Initiatives at Polish HEIs

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Lecture Overview

Three Advanced Focus Areas



Multi-Layer Governance Maps

Beyond simple institutional organigrams to dynamic systems thinking



Policy Cycles & Pathways

Visualising controversies, implementation journeys, and actor dynamics



Critical Visual Analysis

Reading, critiquing, and redesigning existing EU visuals

Central Question

How can complex EU governance processes be visualised in a way that is analytically accurate , accessible , and meaningful for Polish HEIs ?



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Learning Approach

- 1 Theoretical foundations
- 2 Practical examples
- 3 Critical analysis tasks
- 4 Redesign exercises



Session Structure

Part I: Governance Mapping

Part II: Policy Cycles

Part III: Visual Critique

Learning Objectives



By the end of this lecture, participants will be able to:



Build Multi-Level Maps

Move beyond basic institutional diagrams to create dynamic governance maps showing actor relationships and influence pathways



Analyse Policy Debates

Understand how EU policy debates involve diverse actors, shifting alliances, and conflict lines across institutional levels



Visualise Policy Paths

Map the complete journey of an EU decision from Brussels proposal through to institutional practice at Polish HEIs



Critique EU Visuals

Identify strengths and weaknesses in official EU infographics and policy visuals with analytical precision



Apply Quality Criteria

Use criteria such as clarity, accuracy, inclusivity, and accessibility in visual governance communication



Produce Visuals

Create analytically grounded visual representations of EU policy processes for educational and communication purposes



Target Competency: Transform complex governance knowledge into accessible, educationally effective visual communication



From Introductory to Advanced Governance Mapping



Winter School

Foundation Level

Participants learned:

- ✓ **Institutional Recognition:** Who the main EU institutions are and their formal roles
- ✓ **Decision-Making Basics:** How EU decisions are broadly made and adopted
- ✓ **Implementation Pathways:** How EU decisions reach Polish HEIs in principle

Focus: Structure, hierarchy, and formal processes



Summer School

Advanced Level

Focus shifts to:

- ↑ **Complexity:** Multi-layered interactions and non-linear processes
- ↑ **Interaction:** How actors influence, negotiate, and adapt
- ↑ **Mediation:** National and institutional translation of EU policy
- ↑ **Visual Depth:** Sophisticated representation techniques
- ↑ **Critical Reading:** Analysing governance narratives in visuals

💡 **Key Insight:** Moving from knowing the institutions to understanding the governance system



Why Governance Visuals Matter



Simplify Complexity

Transform intricate institutional structures into comprehensible representations



Enhance Understanding

Make abstract policy processes concrete and accessible to diverse audiences



Reveal Relationships

Show connections between actors, institutions, and decision points



Support Teaching

Provide educational tools for classroom instruction and public communication



Institutional Positioning

Help institutions see **where they are located** in wider policy systems and understand their role in multi-level governance

“Core Principle

"A good visual does not merely **decorate** governance. It **explains it.**"

- Functional over decorative
- Analytical over aesthetic-only
- Educational over promotional

Target Audiences

- > University students
- > Academic staff
- > Administrators
- > Policy stakeholders
- > General public

Limits of Simple Organigrams



What Organigrams Show



Boxes

Institutional units



Arrows

Reporting lines



Hierarchy

Formal structure



Separation

Institutional borders

i Traditional organigrams are useful for **formal structure** but insufficient for **governance dynamics**

What They Fail to Show



Negotiation

Bargaining and compromise processes



Feedback Loops

Iterative revision and adaptation



Informal Influence

Unofficial channels and networks



Implementation Pathways

From policy to practice



Conflict & Contestation

Disagreement and resistance



Multi-Level Complexity

Interactions across governance levels

→ **The Challenge:** We need visuals that capture **dynamic processes**, not just **static structures**

From Boxes to Systems



Elements of Advanced Governance Visuals



Actors

Who participates



Relationships

How they connect



Influence

Direction of power



Sequence

Order of decisions



Mediation

Institutional roles



Implementation

Delivery layers



Context

External factors



More...

As needed

↔ Paradigm Shift



Static Structure

Fixed boxes and reporting lines



Dynamic Systems

Flows, interactions, and adaptations

💡 Systems Thinking

- ✓ **Interconnectedness:** Parts influence each other
- ✓ **Emergence:** Whole is greater than sum of parts
- ✓ **Feedback:** Outputs become inputs
- ✓ **Adaptation:** Systems evolve over time
- ✓ **Boundaries:** Where system meets environment



What is Multi-Level Governance?

Definition

Multi-level governance refers to a system in which **decision-making and implementation are distributed** across multiple interconnected levels rather than concentrated in a single authority.



Key Point: Governance is rarely purely top-down. Authority is shared, negotiated, and mediated across levels.



EU Institutions

Commission, Parliament, Council, Courts



Member States

National governments and ministries



Regional & Local

Regional authorities, municipalities



Sectoral

Agencies, bodies, committees

Civil Society

Public Actors

Citizens, interest groups

Private Sector

Businesses, industry

NGOs

Advocacy organizations

Experts

Academics, consultants

Critical Insight

Multi-level governance means **no single level has complete control**. Policy emerges from interaction, negotiation, and adaptation across all levels.

Levels Relevant for Polish HEIs



EU Level

European institutions and frameworks

- European Commission
- Council of the EU
- European Parliament
- EU Agencies



National Level (Poland)

Polish government and ministries

- Ministry of Education
- National Agencies
- Ministry of Science
- Parliament committees



Regional & Local

Voivodeships, local authorities, regional development agencies



Institutional

University leadership, faculties, administration, governance bodies

Stakeholder Environment

Students

Student unions, associations

Staff

Academic and administrative

Partners

Industry, other HEIs, NGOs

Communities

Local, professional, international



Each level shapes how a policy is understood, adapted, and communicated at Polish HEIs



What Makes a Governance Map Useful?

Essential Elements for Analytical Value

Key Actors

Who are the main participants in this governance process?

Influence Flows

Who influences whom? In what direction?

Decision Points

Where are the key decisions taken?

Implementation

Where does implementation occur?

Tensions

Where do conflicts or bottlenecks arise?

Intervention Points

Where can HEIs respond or act?

✔ Without These Elements

Superficial

The visual remains **descriptive but not explanatory**. It shows what exists but not how it works.

- Cannot support strategic planning
- Does not reveal leverage points
- Hides implementation challenges

★ With These Elements

Analytically Powerful

The visual becomes a **tool for understanding and action**. It reveals dynamics and opportunities.

- + Enables strategic positioning
- + Identifies engagement opportunities
- + Supports implementation planning

Core Elements of a Governance Map



Institutions

Formal bodies with official mandates and decision-making authority



Stakeholders

Actors affected by or interested in policy outcomes



Competences

Powers and responsibilities at each governance level



Procedural Stages

Steps in policy development and implementation



Communication Flows

How information moves between actors



Implementation Channels

Pathways from policy to practice



Bottlenecks

Points where progress may stall



Feedback Loops

Mechanisms for revision and adaptation



Selection Principle: These elements should be selected according to analytical purpose —not all need to appear in every visual. Choose based on what you need to explain.

Visualising Competences



Visual Techniques for Competence Representation

Competences should not be presented only textually. Visual encoding makes power distribution immediately comprehensible.

Colour Coding

Different colours for different competence types

Layered Zones

Horizontal bands showing level-specific powers

Nested Circles

Concentric rings showing scope of authority

Pathway Diagrams

Flow showing how competences interact

Differentiated Arrows

Line thickness, style, or colour indicating strength of competence

 **Visual encoding** makes abstract power relationships concrete and memorable

EU Competence Types



Exclusive

Only EU can legislate

e.g., customs union, competition rules



Shared

EU and Member States

e.g., environment, education, research



Supporting

EU complements Member States

e.g., culture, tourism, education coordination



Visualising Relationships Between Actors

Critical Principle

Not all actor relationships are equal. Visuals must **distinguish relationship types** to improve both accuracy and interpretability.



Formal Authority

Legal power to make binding decisions, set rules, or enforce compliance

Visual: Bold solid lines, authoritative symbols



Consultation

Seeking input, advice, or feedback without binding authority

Visual: Dashed lines, speech bubble icons



Coordination

Working together to align actions, share information, avoid duplication

Visual: Double-headed arrows, network nodes



Influence

Shaping decisions or outcomes without formal authority

Visual: Gradient lines, proximity indicators



Implementation

Putting policy into practice, operational delivery

Visual: Process arrows, action symbols



Monitoring

Observing, evaluating, reporting on implementation

Visual: Dotted lines, checkmark icons

Veto Points and Decision Bottlenecks



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What Advanced Visuals Should Identify



Process Slowdowns

Where decision-making may be delayed due to complexity, disagreement, or procedural requirements



Compromise Requirements

Points where negotiation and mutual accommodation are necessary to proceed



Blocking Potential

Where disagreement may halt progress or require alternative approaches



National Adaptation

Where Member State interpretation changes the original policy logic

Visual Indicators



Warning Symbols

Icons marking potential obstacles



Narrowing Pathways

Visual constriction showing bottlenecks



Pause Points

Markers for required stops or reviews



Branching Paths

Alternative routes around obstacles



Annotations

Explanatory notes about challenges

★ **These features are crucial** for realistic governance representation—without them, visuals present an idealized, friction-free world

Why This Matters

Identifying bottlenecks helps HEIs anticipate challenges and plan engagement strategies

Feedback Loops in EU Governance



Governance is Iterative, Not Linear

EU policy processes do not end with adoption. Strong visuals should show that governance is **continuous and adaptive**.

 **Key Principle:** Feedback transforms policy over time, creating cycles of revision and improvement

Implementation Reports

Member States report on progress and challenges

Public Reactions

Citizens and stakeholders respond to policy effects

Consultations

Structured input from affected parties

Institutional Responses

EU bodies react to implementation experience

Legal Interpretation

Courts clarify policy meaning and scope

Revision Cycles

Scheduled reviews and updates

Visual Techniques

Circular Arrows

Show return paths and iteration

Loop Symbols


Indicate cyclical processes

Return Pathways

Connect outputs back to inputs

Time Markers

Indicate review periods

 **Without feedback loops,** visuals suggest policy is static once adopted—missing the reality of ongoing adaptation

Short Analytical Task



Critical Question

What is usually **missing** from official diagrams of EU governance?

Conflict

Disagreement, competing interests, and political contestation are rarely visible

Mediation

How disputes are resolved and compromises reached

Adaptation

How national and institutional contexts transform EU policy

Unequal Influence


Power asymmetries between actors and Member States

Implementation Complexity

The messy reality of putting policy into practice

Local Realities

How policy is experienced at institutional and individual levels

 **Discussion Prompt:** Think of an EU policy area you know. Which of these elements would be most important to visualize for Polish HEI audiences?



From Institutional Structure to Policy File Analysis

→ The Next Step

Move from analysing **institutional architecture** to analysing **specific policy files or areas**. The aim is to visualise not only institutions, but **policy movement**.



Digital Education

Digital transformation in learning, online platforms, digital skills frameworks

✓ High relevance for HEIs



Inclusion

Widening participation, accessibility, equity, diversity in higher education

✓ Strategic priority area



Cohesion Policy

Regional development, structural funds, reducing disparities

✓ Funding opportunities



Research Cooperation

Horizon Europe, research frameworks, international collaboration

✓ Core HEI activity



Mobility Programmes

Erasmus+, student exchange, staff mobility, internationalisation

✓ Well-known pathway



Goal: Visualise the **journey of a policy**—from initial concept through negotiation, adoption, implementation, and revision

What is a Policy Cycle?

Definition

A policy cycle is a **simplified model** of how public policy develops through sequential stages. It is useful, but must not be treated as perfectly linear.

⚠ Important Caveat: Real policy processes often loop back, skip stages, or run parallel—use the cycle as a heuristic, not a rigid formula

1 Agenda-Setting

Issues rise to political attention

2 Problem Definition

How the issue is framed and understood

3 Consultation

Stakeholder input and expert advice

4 Proposal

Drafting policy options

5 Negotiation

Bargaining and compromise

6 Adoption

Formal decision and legal status

7 Implementation

Putting policy into practice

8 Monitoring

Tracking progress and effects

9 Revision

Learning and adaptation

Visual Formats

→ Timeline

Linear sequence with time markers

↻ Circular Model

Emphasizes iteration and cycles

≡ Layered Pathway

Shows parallel processes

🗺 Process Map

Detailed flow with decision points

🌳 Decision Tree

Branching alternatives

Policy Cycles as Visual Stories



Choosing the Right Format

Each visual format **highlights different aspects** of governance. The choice depends on what you want to emphasize and for which audience.



Timeline

Clear sequence of events with specific dates and durations

Highlights: Sequence, chronology



Circular Model

Emphasizes continuous iteration and feedback loops

Highlights: Repetition, cycles



Layered Pathway

Shows parallel processes at different governance levels

Highlights: Multi-level complexity



Process Map

Detailed flow with actors, decisions, and bottlenecks

Highlights: Actor involvement



Decision Tree

Branching alternatives and scenario pathways

Highlights: Branching, options



Design Principle: Match format to **communication purpose** —what does your audience need to understand?

Why Controversies Matter



Governance is Political, Not Just Procedural

EU governance involves **contestation, disagreement, and power struggles**. Visualising governance without controversy gives an incomplete picture.

Reality Check: Behind every policy is a story of competing interests and negotiated compromises



Competing Priorities

Different actors want different outcomes from the same policy



Institutional Disagreement

EU institutions may have conflicting views on approach



National Interests

Member States defend different positions based on domestic priorities



Public Resistance

Citizens or stakeholders may oppose policy direction



Implementation Divergence

Different interpretations and applications across contexts



Resource Constraints

Limited budgets create zero-sum competition

The Cost of Hiding Controversy

✗ Misleading

Suggests governance is smooth and consensual

✗ Unpreparing

Does not alert audiences to potential challenges

✗ Simplistic

Misses the political dimension of policy

✗ Unstrategic

Hides leverage points and intervention opportunities

“

Honest visuals show both the **process** and the **politics**



How to Visualise Policy Controversy

Making Contestation Visible

Contestation can be visualised through various techniques that make governance communication **more realistic and analytically useful**.



Diverging Arrows

Show different directions or outcomes that competing actors seek

Use: Alternative policy paths



Colour Contrasts

Different colours for opposing positions or conflicting interests

Use: Pro vs. con, support vs. oppose



Actor Clusters

Group actors by position to show coalition formation

Use: Allies vs. opponents



Annotated Pressure Points

Labels and notes explaining where tensions arise and why

Use: Context and explanation



Conflict-Line Diagrams

Lines or zones marking areas of disagreement or friction

Use: Frontiers of contestation



Position Maps

Spatial representation showing where actors stand on key issues

Use: Issue positioning



Goal: Make controversy **analytically productive** —not just visible, but understandable



Actors, Alliances, and Conflict Lines

↔ From Procedural Map to Governance Map

In a contested EU policy field, we need to identify **who is involved and how they relate** to each other. This transforms a procedural map into a governance map.



Initiating Actors

Who starts the policy process? Who puts issues on the agenda?

Example: Commission, Member States, Parliament committees



Supporting Coalitions

Who backs the initiative? Who forms alliances to advance it?

Example: Like-minded Member States, stakeholder groups



Resistant Actors

Who opposes or seeks to modify the policy? What are their concerns?

Example: Veto players, sceptical Member States



Mediating Institutions

Who facilitates compromise? Who brokers agreements between opposing sides?

Example: Council Presidency, Commission, COREPER



Affected Stakeholders

Who is impacted by the policy? Whose interests must be considered?

Example: HEIs, students, staff, industry, civil society



Final Implementers

Who ultimately puts the policy into practice? Where does it become real?

Example: National ministries, agencies, HEI administration



Mapping these elements reveals the **political landscape** within which policy moves

Example Policy Area: Digital Education



Why Digital Education?

A digital education file is an **ideal case for governance visualisation**—it cuts across multiple levels and involves diverse actors with different interests.

★ **Relevance:** High priority for EU, Member States, and HEIs; involves technology, pedagogy, and policy



EU Agenda-Setting

Digital transformation as strategic priority

European Commission identifies digital education as key for competitiveness and inclusion



Commission Initiatives

Frameworks, strategies, action plans

Digital Education Action Plan, funding programmes, guidelines development



Member State Adaptation

National strategies and priorities

Different countries adopt varying approaches based on context and capacity

Implementation Chain



Polish Ministries & Agencies

National interpretation and operationalisation



University-Level Implementation

Institutional strategies and infrastructure



Staff & Student Experience

Where policy becomes lived reality



Visualisation opportunity: Show how digital education policy travels through all governance levels

Example Policy Area: Inclusion



Why Inclusion?

An inclusion-related file reveals the **gap between declaration and operationalisation**—a critical insight for governance visualisation.



Challenge: Inclusion is often strongly declared at EU level but variably implemented at institutional level



EU Values Discourse

Strong commitment to inclusion and equity

European treaties, strategic documents, political statements emphasizing inclusion as core value



Strategic Frameworks

Guidelines and objectives for widening participation

EU-level strategies setting goals for access, success, and completion for underrepresented groups



National Equality Measures

Polish legislation and policies

National laws, regulations, and programmes translating EU commitments into domestic frameworks

🔍 The Gap Analysis



Institutional Regulations

HEI policies and formal commitments



The Critical Question

Where is inclusion **declared** vs. where is it **operationalised**?



Practical Support Systems

Actual services and resources on campus



A good visual should show this **implementation gap**

Governance Path: Brussels to Warsaw

The Central Path to Map

This is the **core governance pathway** participants should learn to visualise—from EU proposal to national reception.



Governance Path: Warsaw to the HEI



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Where Policy Becomes Lived Practice

Once the national level receives the EU framework, universities encounter it through **multiple channels**. This is where abstract policy becomes concrete reality.

★ **Critical Insight:** The same EU policy can be experienced very differently depending on which channel it enters the HEI



Strategic Planning

EU priorities integrated into institutional strategy and mission



Project Calls

Funding opportunities requiring EU alignment



Regulatory Guidance

Ministerial directives and requirements



Curriculum Redesign

Programme changes reflecting EU priorities



Quality Assurance

Standards and evaluation criteria



Accessibility Standards

Inclusion and support requirements

Additional Channels

Reporting Requirements

Data collection and accountability

Visibility Requirements

Communication and dissemination obligations

Partnership Networks

Collaboration with other EU institutions

Staff Development

Training and capacity building

💡 **Visualisation challenge:** Show how one EU policy enters HEIs through **multiple entry points**



Why HEIs Need Governance Literacy

The Case for Understanding EU Governance

Polish HEIs need governance literacy because it enables them to **navigate the EU policy environment strategically**, not just react to it bureaucratically.



Understand Policy Origins

Know where policies come from, why they were created, and what problems they aim to solve

Benefit: Informed strategic positioning



Interpret Obligations

Understand what is required vs. what is optional, and how to comply effectively

Benefit: Efficient compliance



Respond Strategically

Align institutional priorities with EU agendas to maximize relevance and impact

Benefit: Strategic advantage



Identify Opportunities

Spot funding streams, partnership possibilities, and collaboration openings

Benefit: Resource mobilization



Communicate Relevance

Explain to students and staff why EU policies matter for their work and study

Benefit: Engagement and buy-in



Avoid Passive Implementation

Move beyond checkbox compliance to active, meaningful engagement

Benefit: Institutional agency



Bottom Line: Governance literacy transforms HEIs from passive recipients to active participants in EU policy

Reading Existing EU Visuals Critically



Don't Accept Uncritically

Official EU visuals are useful resources, but they should be **read critically**. They often serve institutional interests and may simplify or omit important elements.

⚠ Critical Stance: Ask what the visual is trying to achieve and what it might be hiding

Is it Clear?

Can you understand the message quickly? Is the purpose obvious?

Is it Complete?

What important elements are missing? What's been left out?

Does it Oversimplify?

Has complexity been reduced to the point of inaccuracy?

Does it Hide Controversy?

Is conflict and contestation visible or suppressed?

Is it Accessible?

Can non-experts understand it? Is the language appropriate?

Is it Inclusive?

Does it consider diverse audiences and perspectives?

Critical Questions

? Who created this?

What institutional perspective does it represent?

? Who is the audience?


Is it designed for experts or general public?

? What is the purpose?

Inform, persuade, comply, promote?

? What's missing?

What gaps or silences do you notice?

 **Critical reading** is the first step toward **better visual production**



Criteria for Evaluating Governance Visuals

✓ Core Evaluation Framework

A visually attractive diagram may still be **analytically weak**. Use these criteria to assess quality beyond surface appearance.



Clarity

Message is immediately understandable, purpose is clear

Ask: Can I get the main point quickly?



Accuracy

Represents governance reality without distortion

Ask: Does this match how things actually work?



Relevance

Addresses the needs and interests of the target audience

Ask: Is this useful for my purposes?



Transparency

Makes assumptions, sources, and limitations explicit

Ask: What's been simplified or omitted?



Inclusivity

Considers diverse perspectives and avoids bias

Ask: Whose voice is missing?



Accessibility

Usable by people with varying expertise and abilities

Ask: Can non-experts understand this?



Audience Fit

Appropriate level of detail and complexity for intended users

Ask: Is this right for the target audience?



Visual Hierarchy

Clear organization that guides the viewer's attention appropriately

Ask: Is the most important information prominent?

Clarity and Analytical Accuracy



Don't Sacrifice Meaning for Elegance

A governance visual should be **clear but not simplistic, elegant but not misleading**. Analytical accuracy is paramount.

Warning: Clarity without analytical accuracy is misleading—beautiful but wrong

× What to Avoid

⊘ Overloaded Arrows

Too many connections that obscure rather than clarify relationships

⊘ Vague Labels

Unclear or generic terms that don't convey specific meaning

⊘ Unexplained Icons

Symbols without keys or legends that confuse viewers

× More Pitfalls to Avoid

⊘ False Linearity

Presenting iterative processes as simple sequences

⊘ Missing Levels

Omitting important institutional layers

⊘ Decorative Design

Elements that look good but serve no analytical function

⊘ Inconsistent Encoding

Using the same visual element to mean different things

Test: Can someone use this visual to **explain the governance process** to others?

Accessibility and Inclusivity



Governance Communication for All

Accessible visuals should consider **diverse user needs**. Governance communication should not be reserved for specialists alone.

 **Principle:** Design for the widest possible audience, including those with limited background knowledge

Readable Font Size

Minimum 12pt for body text, larger for presentations

Logical Hierarchy

Clear visual organization that guides the eye

Sufficient Contrast

Text easily readable against background

Plain Language

Avoid jargon, explain technical terms

Meaningful Labels

Clear, descriptive text that explains what elements represent

Reduced Cognitive Load

Not overwhelming viewers with too much information at once

Inclusive Design

Non-Expert Audiences

Students, general public, new staff who lack specialised knowledge

Multilingual Contexts


Consider translation needs and cultural differences

Diverse Abilities

Colour blindness, visual impairments, cognitive differences

Multiple Formats

Digital, print, screen reader compatible versions

 **Inclusive visuals** demonstrate that governance belongs to **everyone**, not just experts



Common Weaknesses of Official Visuals

Frequent Problems in Official EU Visuals

These gaps are **especially important in educational settings** where students need to understand real governance dynamics, not just formal structures.



Too Much Simplification

Reducing complex processes to the point of losing analytical value

Impact: Misleading representation



Missing Implementation

No reference to how policy moves from Brussels to practice

Impact: Abstract, disconnected



No National Mediation

Ignoring how Member States interpret and translate EU policy

Impact: Misses key transformation



Invisible HEI Implications

Not showing what EU policy means for higher education institutions

Impact: Low relevance for HEIs



Weak Feedback Loops

Poor representation of iteration, revision, and adaptation

Impact: Suggests static policy



No Informal Influence

Only showing formal authority, missing networks and pressure

Impact: Incomplete picture



These weaknesses create opportunities for HEIs to produce **better, more useful visuals**

Redesign as a Pedagogical Exercise



Why Redesign Matters

Redesigning an existing EU visual is a **powerful learning activity** that develops both analytical and practical skills.



Dual Benefit: Redesign is both analytical (understanding what's wrong) and practical (creating something better)



Identify What's Missing

Develop critical eye for gaps and weaknesses in existing visuals



Improve Audience Fit

Learn to adapt communication for specific user groups



Strengthen Logic

Practice organizing information for clarity and coherence



Adapt for Education

Create materials suitable for students and staff

Learning Outcomes

Deep Understanding

Must understand governance to represent it accurately

Critical Thinking


Evaluating strengths and weaknesses analytically

Communication Skills

Translating complex ideas into visual form

Practical Application

Creating usable educational materials

 **Turn institutional knowledge** into **educational material** that benefits the whole community



Suggested Redesign Workflow

☰ A Structured Approach to Visual Redesign

Follow this systematic process to transform an official EU visual into a more useful educational resource.

1 Select Visual

Choose an official EU visual related to a policy area relevant to your HEI

Tip: Start with something your audience encounters

2 Define Audience

Identify who will use this visual and what they need to understand

Tip: Be specific about user characteristics

3 Identify Problem

Determine the main communication problem with the original visual

Tip: Use the evaluation criteria

4 Restructure

Simplify or reorganize information to improve clarity and flow

Tip: Consider different visual formats

5 Add Layers

Include missing governance elements: implementation, feedback, controversy

Tip: Focus on what was omitted

6 Improve Hierarchy

Ensure visual organization guides attention to key information

Tip: Use size, colour, position strategically

7 Check Accessibility

Verify readability, contrast, clarity for non-experts

Tip: Test with target users

8 Iterate

Get feedback and refine based on user testing

Tip: Redesign is iterative

Short Discussion Task



? Provocative Question

What is more important in a governance visual: **completeness** or **accessibility** ?

The Completeness Argument

- ✓ Full picture prevents misunderstanding
- ✓ Experts need detailed information
- ✓ Omission can be misleading
- ✓ Complexity reflects reality

The Accessibility Argument

- ✓ Unusable information has no value
- ✓ Non-experts need to understand too
- ✓ Simplicity enables action
- ✓ Democratic governance requires broad understanding

★ Better Answer



The goal is not maximum detail or maximum simplicity, but **appropriate balance for a specific audience and purpose**. Different contexts require different approaches.



From Visual Critique to Institutional Communication

🎯 The Final Aim

The goal is not only to analyse visuals, but to **produce better ones** for practical use at your institution. This is where VISUAL-EU becomes practically relevant.



HE Teaching

Lecture materials, course content, student resources

Use: Classroom instruction



Project Dissemination

Explaining EU-funded initiatives and their governance context

Use: Outreach and reporting



Student Guidance

Helping students understand how EU policies affect their education

Use: Orientation and advising



Stakeholder Communication

Engaging with partners, policymakers, community members

Use: External relations



Digital Hubs

Public-facing resources on websites and social media

Use: Public engagement



Practical Impact: Better visuals lead to **better understanding**, which leads to **better engagement** with EU governance

Key Takeaways



Today's Main Conclusions

1 Beyond Organigrams

Advanced governance mapping must move beyond simple institutional diagrams to dynamic systems thinking

2 Dynamic Multi-Level Process

EU governance should be visualised as an interactive, iterative process across multiple levels

3 Policy Cycles with Context

Policy cycles are useful when combined with actors, alliances, and implementation pathways

4 Controversy and Feedback

Controversies and feedback loops are central to realistic governance communication

5 Critical Reading and Redesign

Official visuals should be read critically and, where necessary, redesigned for clarity, accuracy, and accessibility

Remember

- Governance is rarely purely top-down
- Visuals should explain, not just decorate
- Controversy is part of real governance

Apply

- Use multi-level governance maps
- Visualise policy pathways
- Critique and redesign official visuals

Share

- Create visuals for teaching
- Support student understanding
- Build governance literacy



Suggested Follow-Up Activity

Mini-Task for Participants

Select one EU policy area relevant to Polish HEIs and **build a governance-path visual** that incorporates the elements we've discussed today.



EU-Level Actors

Identify Commission, Parliament, Council, and other EU institutions involved in your chosen policy area



Polish National Actors

Map relevant ministries, agencies, and bodies that interpret and implement the policy in Poland



HEI Implementation Point

Show where and how your institution encounters and operationalises this policy



Bottleneck or Conflict

Identify one point where the process may slow down, face opposition, or require compromise



Feedback Loop

Show how information or responses flow back to influence the policy or its implementation



Accessibility Feature

Include one element that makes the visual usable by non-expert audiences (plain language, clear labels, etc.)



Tip: Start with a policy area you know well. The goal is **practice**, not perfection.



Thank You for Your Attention

Dr. Bożena Iwanowska

Module 1. Governance Visual Lab:
Mapping EU Institutions, Debates & Policy Cycles

VISUAL-EU Summer School

Visualising governance is not just about making pretty pictures—it's about making complex systems understandable, actionable, and democratically accessible.

