

# SMiD 2024 “Media (and) sustainability: Crises, paradoxes and potentials”

## Response to Open Call

### Proposed participation: Presentation + follow-up discussion

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## The Impact of Mass Media in Times of Skill Shortage Crises

European Union's economics face significant skill shortages in professional fields essential for their societies' security and welfare. This especially accounts for the sectors law enforcement and health care (Ernst, 2021; Politi Forbundet 2023). In Denmark, for example, the number of new police officers is at a record low (Politi Forbundet 2023). In Addition, the country will face a shortage of 25.000 healthcare professionals by 2030 (IRIS Group, 2021). Reasons for shortages of skilled labor are multifaceted. Next to the retirement of older generations from the workforce, one main factor is the unattractive perception of the professional fields (Gaedt, 2021). When tackling skill shortages, it is thus crucial to understand that occupational images play a key role in attracting new generations to careers in law enforcement and health care. Current media effects research suggests that mass media have a significant impact on such occupational images (Gehrau et al., 2016; Kinast et al., 2023).

Against this backdrop, the joint research project “Streaming for Talents” investigates how fictional and non-fictional media exposure influences the public images of police officers and health care workers in Denmark and Germany. To answer the question, the project conducts a mixed-methods panel study, surveying police officers and nurses in both countries. This is achieved with a quantitative online survey and a qualitative interview study, each following individual professionals over a period of three years. Due to its longitudinal design and exclusive research access, the study offers a rare insight into how mass media cultivate occupational images in areas highly important for a sustainable society. At SMiD 2024, we would like to present the first quantitative, preliminary results of the first panel wave and discuss the potential of media for employer branding campaigns.

## Sources

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