

# CAPIRE

## Development of a digital culture simulator training tool to foster intercultural competence in Europe

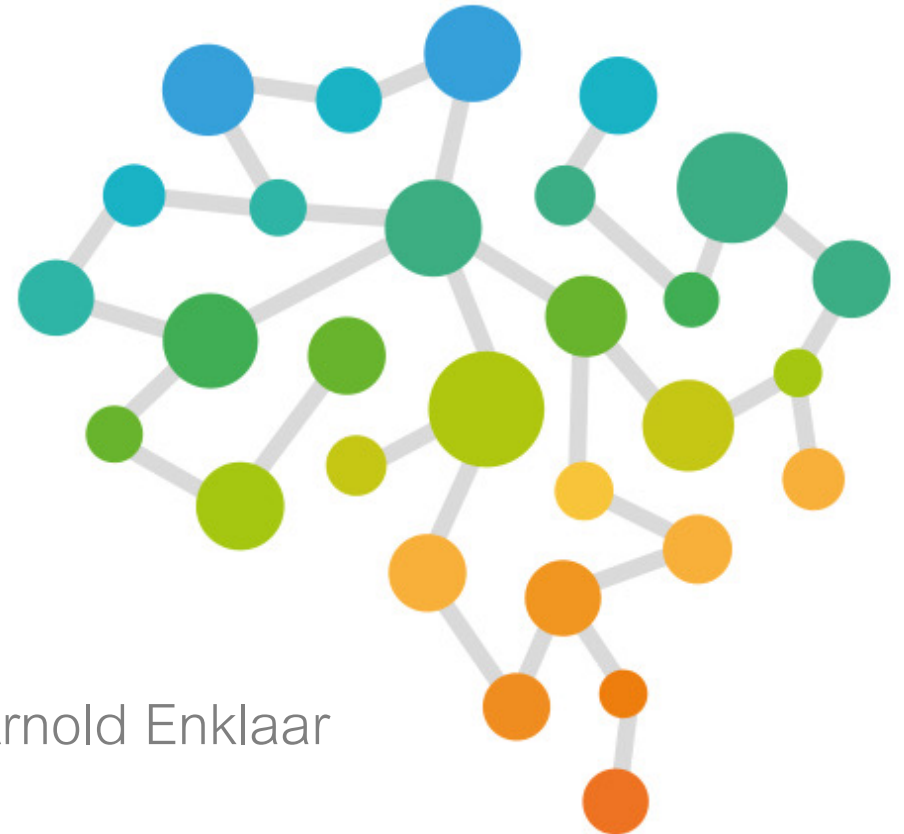
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the European Union



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# Fostering cross-cultural relations within the EU through intercultural competence development



People within the EU benefit from a common market and freedom of movement, where **intercultural competence (IC) plays a crucial role** in navigating the cultural diversity within the EU<sup>1, 2</sup>.



The training of IC in (higher) education and professional training (e.g., teams, leaders, expatriates) needs **reliable, easy-to-use, digital and enjoyable tools** that are accessible for a wide range of people regardless of time and space<sup>3, 4</sup>.



**Culture simulators** (or cultural assimilators<sup>5</sup>) train IC by presenting **intercultural situations, possible solutions and explanations** that participants can work through<sup>6</sup>. Traditionally, paper-based<sup>7</sup>, there are only few digital tools available today<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Beacco et al. (2016). Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education.

<sup>2</sup> Rai et al. (2023). Massive Open Online Courses and intercultural competence: analysis of courses fostering soft skills through language learning.

<sup>3</sup> Schumacher et al. (2023). Interkulturelle Trainings – digital: Online- und Blended-Learning-Formate erfolgreich gestalten.

<sup>4</sup> Chang & Gomes (2022). Why the Digitalization of International Education Matters.

<sup>5</sup> Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis (1971). The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training.

<sup>6</sup> Fowler & Blohm (2004). An analysis of methods for intercultural training.

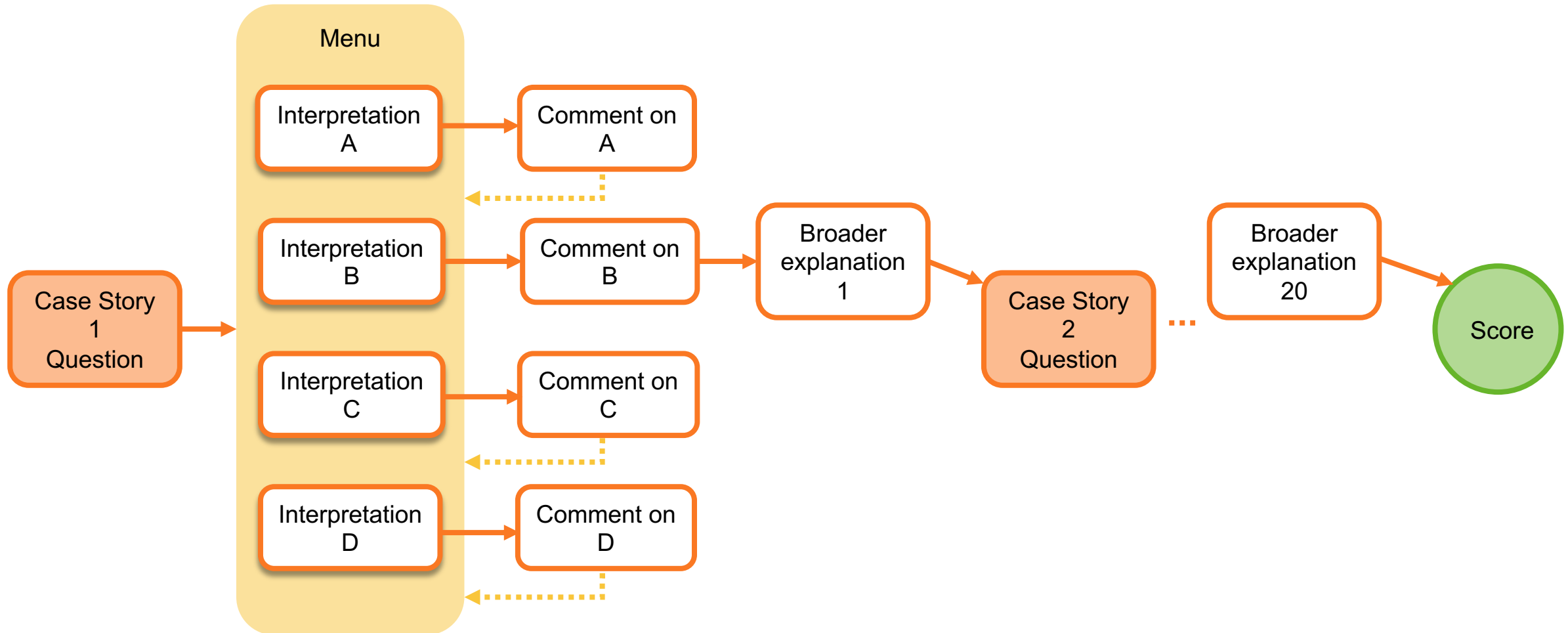
<sup>7</sup> Thomas, A. (Ed.) (since 2001): "Beruflich in..."

<sup>8</sup> e.g., George Simons International (n.d.). Diversophy. <https://www.diversophy.com>; Nipporica Associate (n.d.): Cultural Detective. <https://www.culturaldetective.com>; Vatter & Schepers, 1997: <http://www.andreas.de/ca>



# What is a Culture Simulator or Cultural Assimilator?

A culture simulator is based on the following structure<sup>5</sup>:



<sup>5</sup> Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis (1971). The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training.



The CAPIRE project aims to:

foster cross-cultural understanding within the EU

by **developing a digital, freely accessible culture simulator tool to train intercultural competence and knowledge**

about the German, Dutch, Polish, Italian, and French cultures.



# The CAPIRE Culture Simulator will provide many benefits



## Content

- **Simulations of cultural interactions** based on real situations of expatriates in the workplace that are an aggregation of similar experiences of multiple expatriates
  - **80 critical incidents for each country** set (mostly) in the workplace developed through interviews with expatriates
  - Focus on **experiences of interviewed expatriates** regarding most frequent frictions/surprises between host culture and expatriates' culture as a starting point for developing the cases (instead of transporting etiquette, rules or trivia etc.)
- Users are trained to **recognise cultural behavioural patterns, decipher and understand the cultural logic** behind behaviors (e.g., values, ideals)

## Application

- **Digital tool** aimed at a high user experience (regarding usability and pleasure)
- For **free** (EU funded)
- Available for **five countries** (i.e., Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Netherlands)
- Available in **6 languages** (i.e., German, French, Italian, Polish, Dutch, English)
- **Flexible setting**: For individual training or classroom use in diverse target groups (e.g., schools, higher education, leadership training, expatriation preparation)





# Who we are – Our research team

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UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



Université Gustave Eiffel



NICOLAUS COPERNICUS UNIVERSITY IN TORUŃ



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Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences | Organizational Behavior, Change Management & Consultancy (OBCC)| IEBIS

Institute of Psychology | Department of Work- and Organizational Psychology – Emphasis Cross-Cultural Business Psychology

Department of Management  
Institut de Recherche en Gestion  
ESIEE Paris

Department of Sociology and Social Research

Department of Organisational Behaviour and Marketing

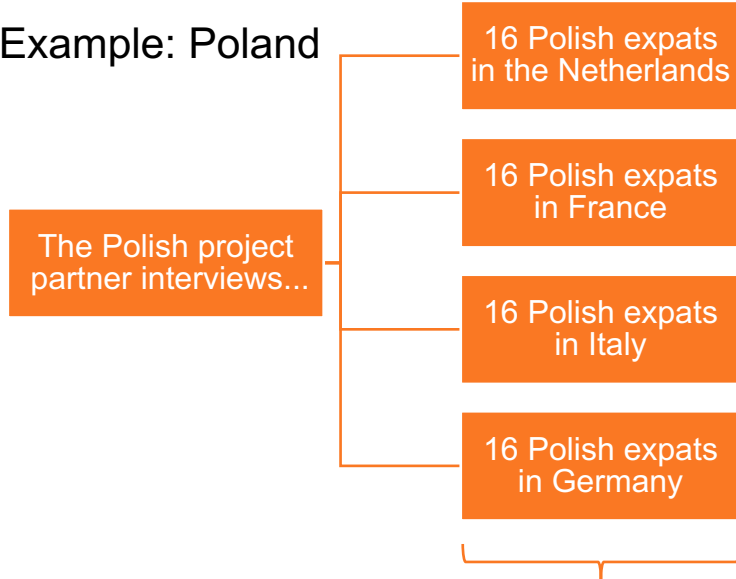


# Gathering critical incidents from expatriates

Interviewing expatriates from 5 countries for:  
(Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Poland, France)

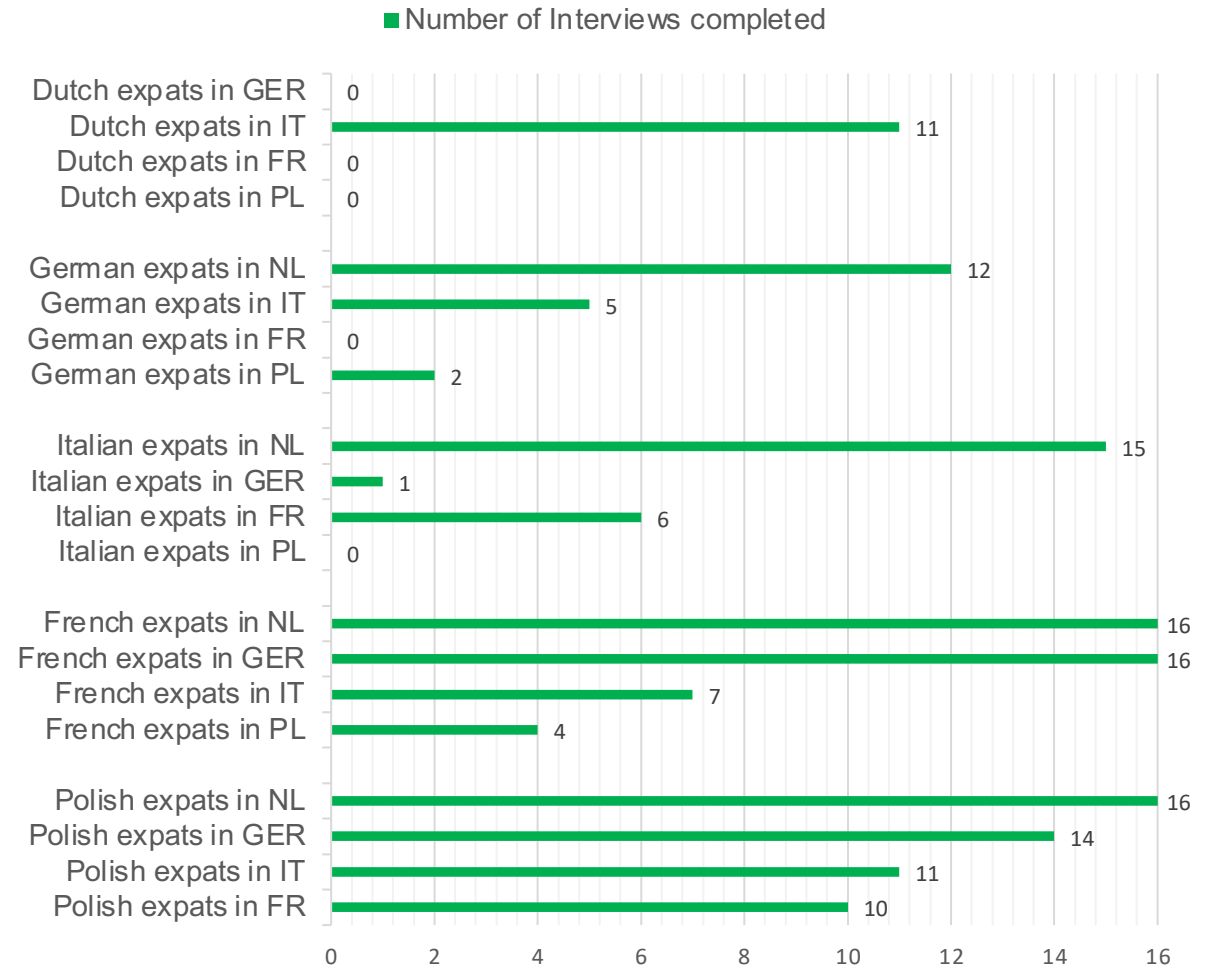
- Target: 80 critical incidents per country
- Critical incidents based on recurring real-life work situations experienced by various expatriates in the respective host country
- Recruiting expatriates from a range of industries, professions, and regions within the respective host country

## Example: Poland



= 64 interviews with Polish expats

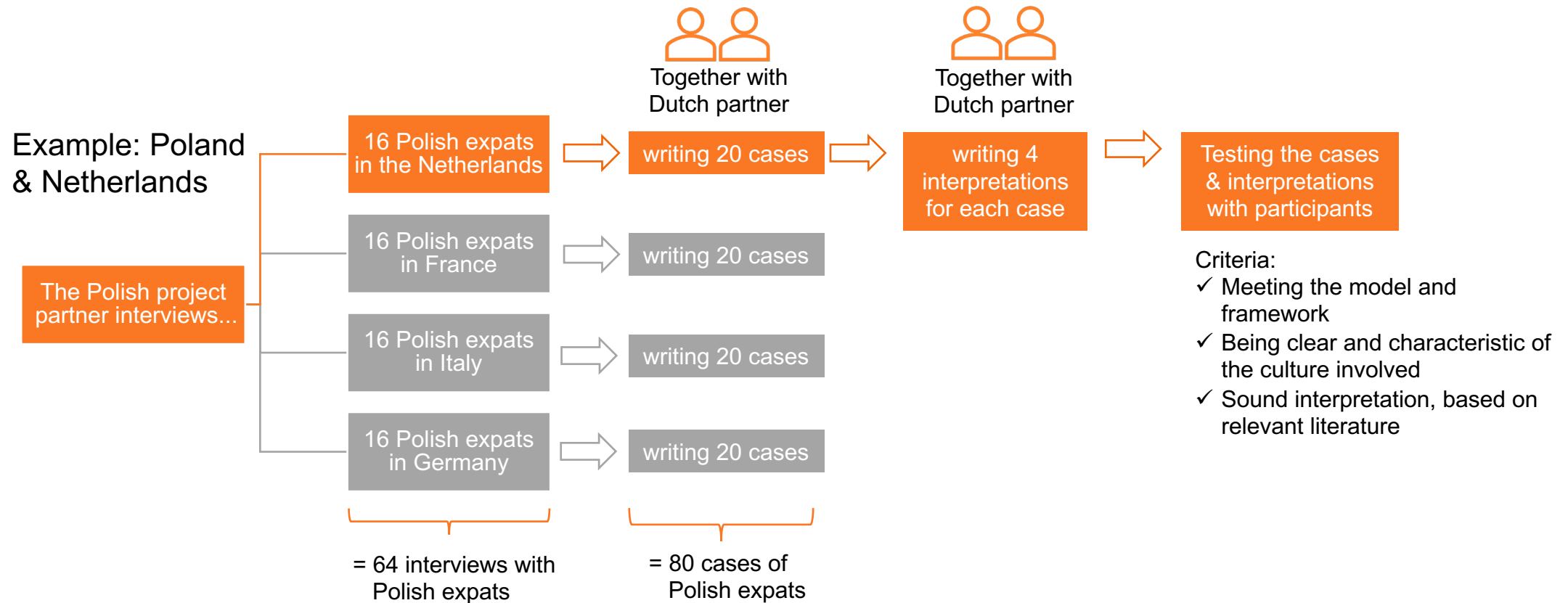
## Current Status of Interviews





## Writing the cases based on the interviews

- The cases and interpretations are aggregated from recurring themes from the critical incidents told by expatriates and summarized by the project partners whose cultures are involved to include both perspectives.







# Developing an online tool with a positive user experience

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Adaptable for different application contexts



Responsive



Freely accessible



# Sneak Preview: CAPIRE tool (Mock-up by Julien Bosnjak, Nadine Belinga, Adrien Houee, & Heyu Feng – Université Gustave Eiffel)

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## Culture Simulator: Netherlands

The Culture Simulator will offer you twenty situations from the Netherlands that might be puzzling to foreigners. You are challenged to solve these puzzles by choosing the right answer from four alternative interpretations. Don't worry, if you do not get it right the first time. Just try again! When you have solved a case, you will receive some more information on the Dutch cultural logic involved. You will receive a score after finishing all twenty cases. You can earn more points for getting it right on your first try. Good luck!

Start



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## Working slowly

Karol is collaborating with Dutch colleagues in laying fiber-optic cables. What strikes him is that they proceed in a slow pace, every so often sit down for a chat or smoking a cigarette. At fixed times, they also take a break to drink coffee or have lunch. This irritates Karol, because he wants to finish the work as quickly as possible so that they can possibly go home early. However, the Dutch colleagues do not seem to be in a hurry. It seems to Karol that they do not take the work very seriously and unnecessarily prolong the working day.

## Why are the Dutch colleagues not keen on finishing the work as quickly as possible?

A

They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

B

They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

C

They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

D

They put a strong emphasis on work, which plays a great part in their lives. Thus, relationships at work are cherished.



# Sneak Preview: Case example in CAPIRE tool (mock-up – work in progress)

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The Dutch colleagues perform best when there is an amiable atmosphere at work and in the team, and chatting and making jokes during breaks contributes to this. Although this interpretation is partly true, it does not explain why they work at – according to Karol, the Polish colleague – a slower pace. So, there is another interpretation which explains the situation better.

Try again!

A

They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

B

They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

C

They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

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Instead of finalizing the work as quickly as possible, the Dutch colleagues prefer to work steadily and diligently to avoid mistakes. In this situation, a plan has probably been made in advance, so the workers know how many meters of fibre optic cable they should lay per day to meet the deadline. They could probably not maintain working at a higher pace throughout the day and errors might occur. This interpretation explains best why the Dutch colleagues in this story are not keen to finish the work as quick as possible.

[Tell me more!](#)[Next question](#)**A**

They are afraid that the workload will increase in the future, if they rush to finalize the project as quickly as possible.

**B**

They like to create a nice atmosphere at work including breaks and chats to be most productive.

**C**

They aim to proceed with their work in a structured way, taking the time to do their work carefully. Having regular breaks helps them to stay focused.

**D**

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**Netherlands**

The Dutch value a highly structured environment. They think that society needs a clear order, neatness and rules, because this creates a predictable and safe world to live in. When nobody sticks to the rules, it becomes a mess and things might get out of hand, so that one loses control.

Above all order is maintained in time management. The life of most Dutch people is reigned by the clock. Most activities are tied to a fixed time of the day, such as times for eating, sleeping, working that most Dutch people stick to. Life is arranged precisely according to a fixed schedule. Appointments and commitments are recorded. Forgetting appointments or being late is considered very annoying, as it is creating disorder and damaging the tight schedule of others.

Both at work and in private life, planning ahead is important. Once you know at what date a task should be achieved, you can split the work up in small parts and can check everyday day, whether you are on track or speed up. If you have to rush to meet a deadline or even miss it, this means that either you have too much work or you are a bad organizer, a disordered person.

okay!



## How you can get involved



- Connect us with expatriates for the interviewing phase
- Take part in events for intercultural educators/trainers hosted by project partners
- Test the tool with your students/participants
- Help evaluate the tool by giving feedback on your user experience



# THANK YOU!

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## For more information contact us here:







- <sup>1</sup> Beacco, J.-C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Egli Cuenat, M., Goullier, F., & Panthier, J. (2016). Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education. Council of Europe Publishing. <https://rm.coe.int/16806ae621>
- <sup>2</sup> Rai, L., Deng, C., Lin, S., & Fan, L. (2023). Massive Open Online Courses and intercultural competence: analysis of courses fostering soft skills through language learning. *Front. Psychol.* 14:1219478. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1219478>
- <sup>3</sup> Schumacher, S., Kempen, R., Hollands, L., Engel, A. M. (2023). Interkulturelle Trainings – digital: Onlin- und Blended-Learning-Formate erfolgreich gestalten. Hogrefe. <https://doi.org/10.1026/03164-000>
- <sup>4</sup> Chang, S., & Gomes, C. (2022). Why the Digitalization of International Education Matters. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 26(2), 119-127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153221095163>
- <sup>5</sup> Fiedler, F. E., Mitchell, T., & Triandis, H. C. (1971). The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 55(2), 95–102. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030704>
- <sup>6</sup> Fowler, S. M. & Blohm, J. M. (2004). An analysis of methods for intercultural training. In D. Landis, J. M. Bennett, & M. J. Bennett (Eds.), *Handbook of Intercultural Training* (pp. 37-84). Sage.
- <sup>7</sup> Thomas, A. (Ed.) (since 2001): Series „Handlungskompetenz im Ausland“, 36 Volumes, together with additional authors, under the title: “Beruflich in...”, Göttingen.
- <sup>8</sup> e.g., George Simons International (n.d.). Diversophy. Retrieved Sep, 18, 2023, from <https://www.diversophy.com>; Nipporica Associate (n.d.): Cultural Detective. Retrieved Sep, 18, 2023, from <https://www.culturaldetective.com>; Vatter, C., & Schepers, A. (1997). Culture Assimilator: Ein Tutorium. Retrieved Sep, 18, 2023, from <http://www.andreas.de/ca>