What's Newsworthy?

If a research paper or abstract satisfies one or, preferably, more of the criteria listed below, then there is a good chance that it is newsworthy. If you think it is, pitch the research to a press officer, such as the EGU Media and Communications Manager, to find out whether the work should be highlighted through a press conference or a press release.

Timing

It presents new or timely research findings (of particular scientific interest), that the public has not yet been informed of.

Example EGU press release: New study shows Antarctic ice shelf is thinning from above and below http://www.egu.eu/news/170/new-study-shows-antarctic-ice-shelf-is-thinning-from-above-and-below/

Significance

It is about an issue with direct or indirect influence on people's lives, particularly one that results in fatalities or material damage.

Example EGU press release: Cut emissions further or face risks of high air pollution, study shows, http://www.egu.eu/news/36/cut-emissions-further-or-face-risks-of-high-air-pollution-study-shows/

Proximity

It has a local (European) appeal or interest. For example, the explosion of a volcano in Europe will likely have more media coverage in Europe than the explosion of a volcano in Indonesia, even if more people are affected by the latter.

Example EGU press release: Europe to suffer from more severe and persistent droughts, http://www.egu.eu/news/97/europe-to-suffer-from-more-severe-and-persistent-droughts/

Major discovery

It presents the discovery of a new phenomena or new type of structure or object, or a significant increment in knowledge in a major research field.

Example EGU press release: Unprecedented glacier melting in the Andes blamed on climate change, http://www.egu.eu/news/55/unprecedented-glacier-melting-in-the-andes-blamed-on-climate-change/

Implications and conflict

It is a result with profound consequences, for example, one that requires the revision of a major theory, or that sparks a debate or settles a conflict.

Example EGU press release: 'Dead zones' found in Atlantic open waters, http://www.egu.eu/news/165/dead-zones-found-in-atlantic-open-waters/

Mystery

It presents a strange phenomena, an unexpected or surprising result or a chance discovery.

Example EGU press release: Has Antarctic sea ice expansion been overestimated?, http://www.egu.eu/news/118/has-antarctic-sea-ice-expansion-been-overestimated/

Human or social interest

It is about a topic that appeals to emotion. For example, it could be about a science issue in the developing world, one that has social implications, or it could be about an extraordinary person.

Example BBC article: Ryan Milligan: The truck driver turned Nasa astrophysicist, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-25637736

Hot topic

It is about a topic that typically attracts the attention of the public. Examples include climate change, sea-level rise, natural disasters, renewable energy, 'green' issues (sustainable living, pollution, resource depletion, etc.), geoengineering, extrasolar planets and extraterrestrial habitability.

Example EGU press release: Geoengineering could disrupt rainfall patterns, http://www.egu.eu/news/4/geoengineering-could-disrupt-rainfall-patterns/

A record

It is about the discovery of the largest, the smallest, the deepest, the highest, the oldest, etc. (structure or object), or about the best, most precise, most complete, etc. (measurement or study).

Example EGU press release: The oldest ice core – Finding a 1.5 million-year record of Earth's climate, http://www.egu.eu/news/77/the-oldest-ice-core-finding-a-15-million-year-record-of-earths-climate/

Quirkiness

It is interesting or quirky: something different from what you usually read in the news.

Example EGU press release: Fungus shapes hair ice – Researchers identify fungus responsible for peculiar ice filaments that grow on dead wood, http://www.egu.eu/news/180/fungus-shapes-hair-ice-researchers-identify-fungus-responsible-for-peculiar-ice-filaments-that-grow-on-dead-wood/

Adapted from Lindberg Christensen, L.: The Hands-on Guide for Science Communicators, Springer, 2007, by EGU Media and Communications Manager Bárbara Ferreira. For more information, please contact Bárbara at media@egu.eu.