



PERCEPTIONS



The PERCEPTIONS Handbook

A guide to understanding migration narratives
& addressing migration challenges

Lead Editor:

Fiona-Katharina **Seiger**

Authors :

Kahina **LeLouvier**

Alagie **Jinkang**

Sara Carrasco **Granger**

Fiona-Katharina **Seiger**

Lorenza **Villani**

Maha Yomn **Sbaa**

Valentina **Cappi**

Rut **Bermejo**

Gabriele **Puzzo**

Sergei **Shubin**

Romeo **Bratskas**

Copy Editing:

Beata **Corcoran**

Design & Layout

Leo **Mörtenhuber**

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Consortium

SYNYO GmbH (SYNYO), Austria
Sheffield Hallam University (CENTRIC), UK
Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (UNIBO), Italy
University of Granada (UGR), Spain
University Rey Juan Carlos (URJC), Spain
University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN), UK
Swansea University (SU), UK
University of Rome La Sapienza (SAPIENZA), Italy
Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Netherlands
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Ministry of Interior - Chief Directorate Border Police (CDBP), Bulgaria
University of Applied Sciences for Public Security in Bavaria, Germany

Contact

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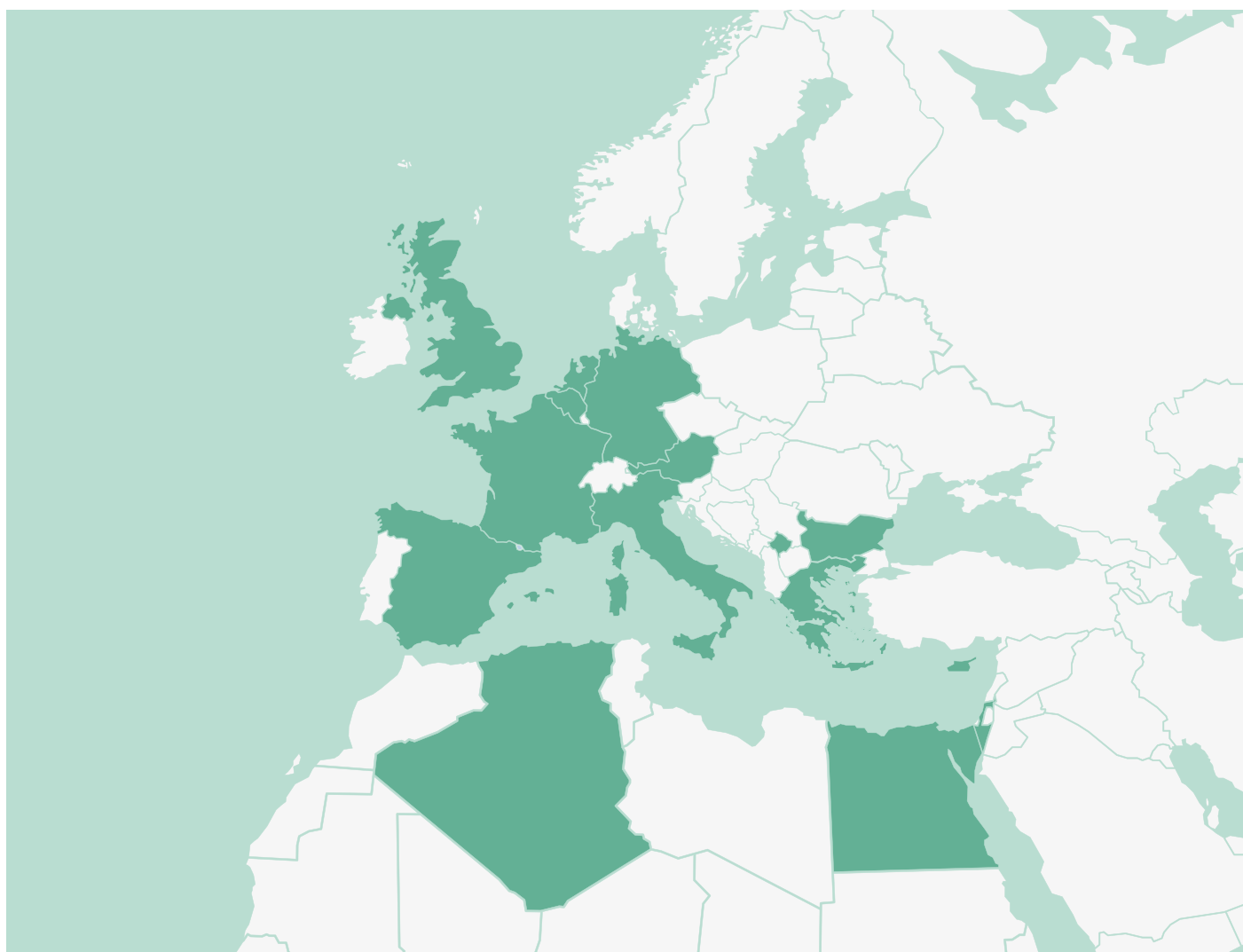
100References

Introducing the PERCEPTIONS project



This handbook was created to provide information and tools to different stakeholders within the field of migration, based on empirical research conducted as part of the PERCEPTIONS research project.

PERCEPTIONS is a project funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 Programme that conducts multidisciplinary research and innovative actions addressing questions related to migration. The project brings together 26 partners from different institutions (universities, research organisations, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations and border authorities) and from 15 different European and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries.



The PERCEPTIONS project investigates the various links between perceptions, information channels, challenges and policies related to migration. It explores how narratives, discourses and perceptions of Europe and of individual European countries¹ influence decisions to migrate as well as experiences of migration, how these perceptions circulate and what challenges may arise throughout the migration process. Finally, the project identifies practices that can contribute to mitigating some of these challenges. Such interventions can involve migrants, front-line practitioners and local communities, or address the issue at the level of policy and legislation.

The PERCEPTIONS project aims to:

- Identify narratives, images and perceptions of Europe held by people who have migrated to Europe or intend to migrate there, as well as perceptions of migration by policymakers and others stakeholders
- Investigate the different challenges and dangers linked to migration experiences, the causes and consequences of the mismatches between expectations and the reality, with a specific focus on misinformation
- Identify best practices and create toolkits for creative community engagement in response to misinformation, as well as policy recommendations to address some of the challenges investigated.

What are narratives?

Narratives are a particular way of explaining or understanding events². In common use, 'narratives' are sequences of events set in time, or more colloquially, stories that we tell one another and which sometimes become 'common knowledge'.

What do we mean by discourses?

As discourse we understand a *mode of organizing* knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts (such as history or institutions)³.

What are perceptions?

In the PERCEPTIONS project the focus lies on the 'perceptions' that (potential) migrants hold about Europe (or a particular European country), referring to the ideas, information, and knowledge migrants have about Europe generally or about one European country specifically. As such, 'perceptions' are understood as 'geographical imaginaries', which are defined as 'the subjectivity of the human conception of locations, spaces, countries and the people inhabiting these physical spaces'⁴. Important to note is that ideas and information are more than the sum of their referential components; they carry affective charge. This is to say, perceptions of a place are intrinsically subjective, and refer very broadly to ideas and information that embodied human subjects hold about that place.

Shared narratives⁵ about crossing international borders to resettle in Europe entwine with the aspirations that drive people to migrate - whether those are longings for human rights, the opportunity to rebuild lives, a sense of adventure, or greater aspirations for upward social mobility and material success. Previous research has shown that perceptions of life at the destination frequently rely on hopes and dreams, shaped by stories told by other migrants⁶, by seeing the tangible effects of remittances sent home⁷, but also by a 'culture of migration'⁸ in certain regions or communities. This is where the idea of narratives comes in. Narratives are 'stories that individuals and institutions tell themselves and others about the world they live in and their place within it'⁹. As such, they act as 'sense-making tools'¹⁰ that help individuals and collectives frame and understand their experiences. Stories can be told about the people who have migrated, about the act of emigrating, and about life in faraway places often considered to be greener pastures. Migration narratives can also include stories about the arrival of people, influencing perceptions of immigration.

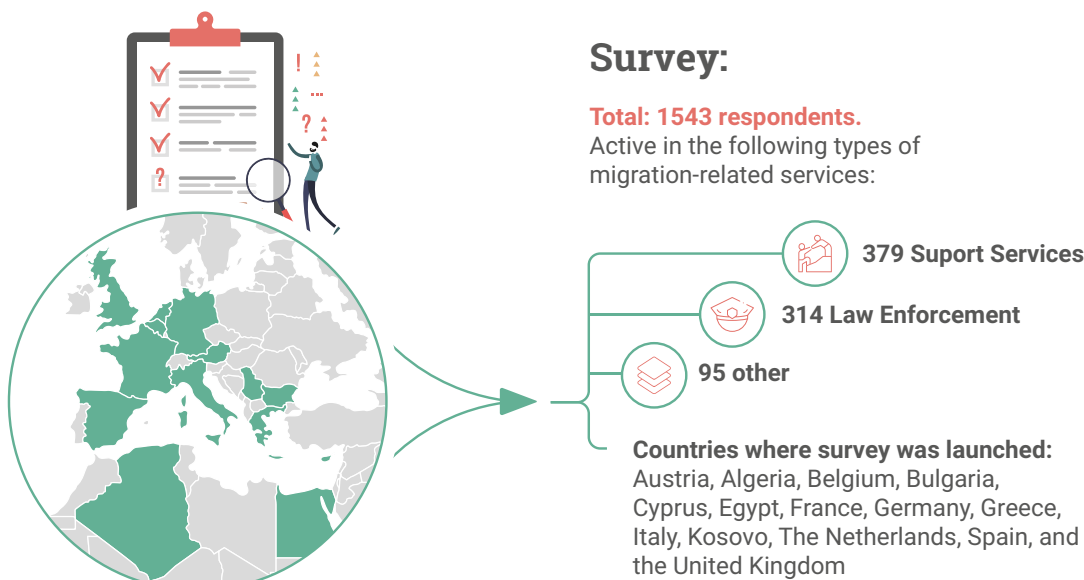
When discussing perceptions, narratives and discourses on migration to Europe, we must also consider debates around securitization and border control as they are used to frame migration policies. These securitization discourses – usually departing from the perspective of a host society – can be problematic to the extent that they threaten to undermine human rights. Restrictive migration regimes can lead to increased safety and security issues, as people without valid entry visas are forced to rely on smugglers and traffickers to find alternative routes to Europe. And once in Europe, they can face traumas, racism, stigmatisation, as well as social, economic, educational, legal and language barriers.



To gather knowledge and develop solutions, the PERCEPTIONS research team conducted both **desk and empirical research**, including the systematic analysis of existing academic studies and policy papers related to perceptions and narratives of Europe, migration, and challenges of migration as well as an **online survey, in-depth interviews** and **focus group discussions**, respectively.

We collected empirical data through:

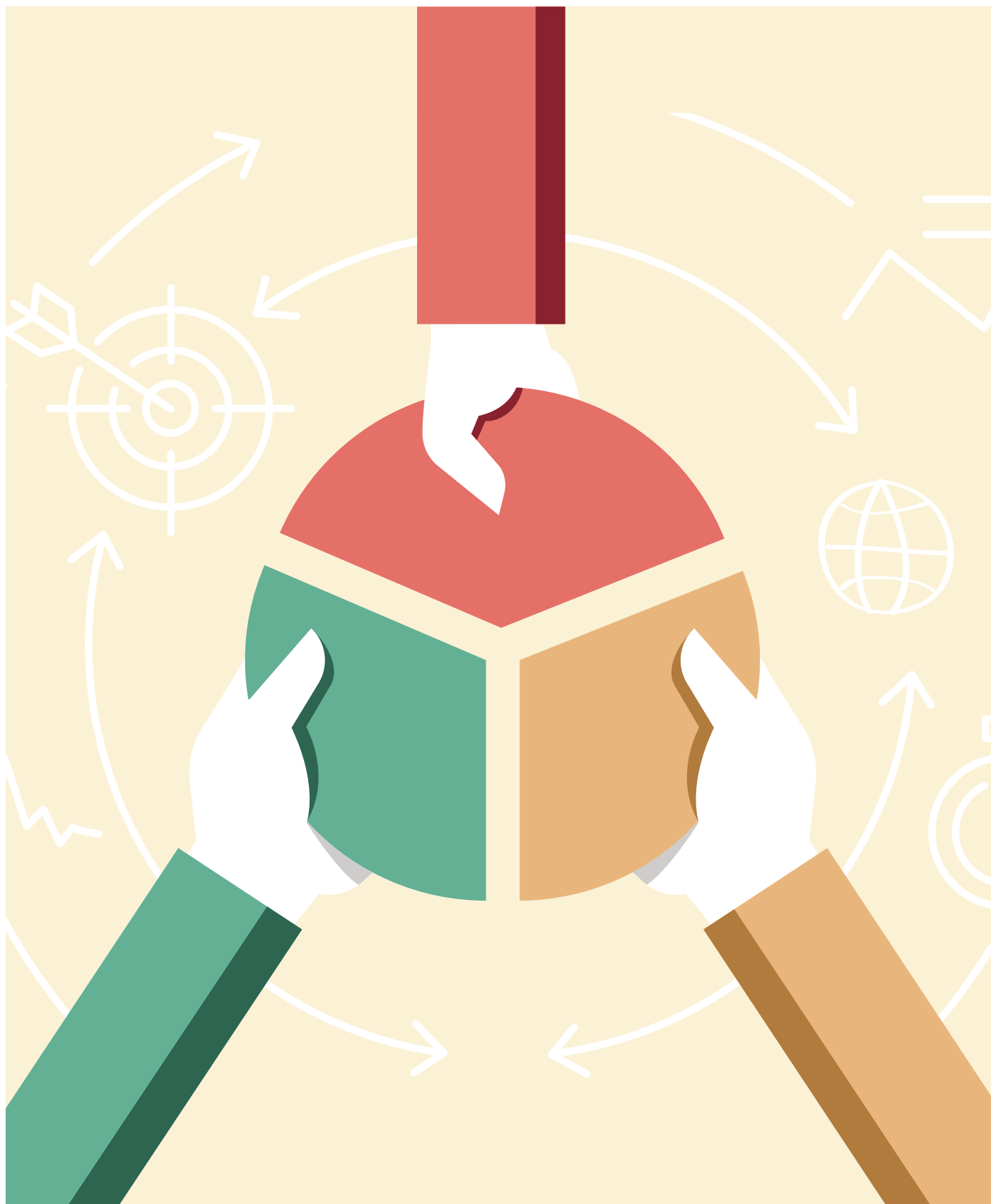
- Two quantitative surveys with practitioners working with migrants in **14 countries in European and MENA countries** (wave one: N=788; wave two: N=755)
- Qualitative interviews with **100 migrants**, of whom 61 were asylum seekers or recognised refugees
- Qualitative interviews with **169 stakeholders working in the field of migration** or in the field of migration management at the local, national, or international level (including practitioners in non-governmental and civil society organisations, policymakers and law enforcement agencies).



Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):



Yet, the PERCEPTIONS project has a number of limitations. As the field of migration studies is vast, and the questions tied to human mobility are plenty, the project on which this handbook is based investigates only a limited number of questions in relation to the highly complex phenomenon of international migration. Moreover, the questions addressed in the PERCEPTIONS project were formulated from the vantage point of a region grappling with rising numbers of irregular border crossings. This perspective is reflected in the handbook. The involvement of partners in countries of transit as well as the consultation of a variety of stakeholders in and outside of Europe aims to rebalance the various viewpoints.



Why use this Handbook?

The aim of this handbook is to support those who want to better understand some of the challenges related to migration to Europe, and to design research-informed responses for addressing these challenges. To ensure it attains this goal, a first version of the handbook was reviewed by practitioners in the field of migration. Points of critique were taken on board to produce this improved second version.

The handbook is designed as an easy-to-use resource that aims to provide:

- 1. Key insights and responses to common questions** about the role of perceptions and narratives in decisions to migrate to Europe and subsequent experiences of migration, based on insights from the PERCEPTIONS project.
- 2. Creative tools and good practices** that tackle some of the challenges related to migration by **engaging with communities at the local level**.
- 3. A review of immigration policies and recommendations** for improvements as provided by the stakeholders we interviewed, followed by policy briefs compiled by the PERCEPTIONS research team.





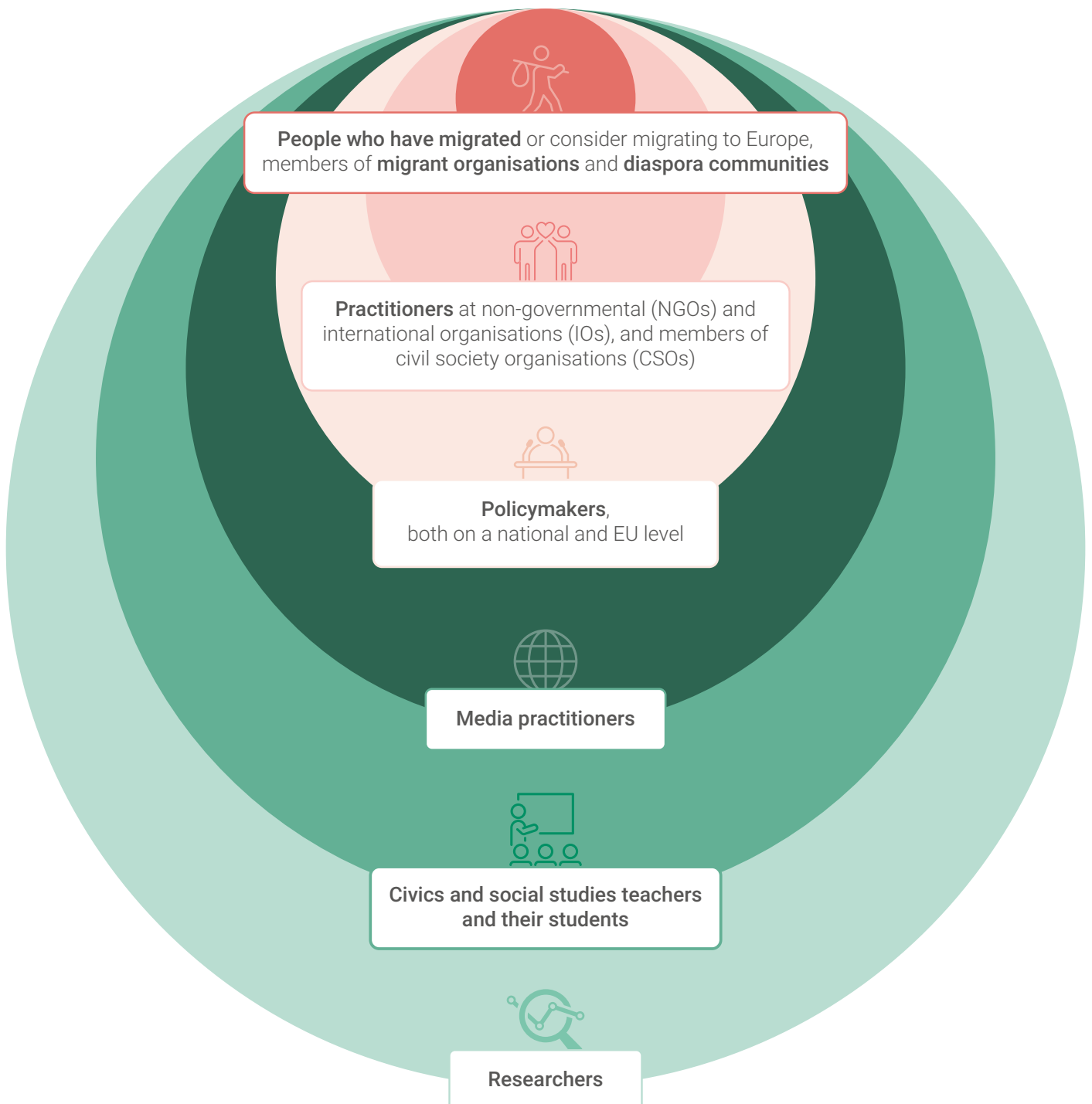
For more resources visit the **PERCEPTIONS Hub!** The hub provides users with an easy way to navigate the information and practice-oriented materials collated and created by the research team, based on their interests (i.e., I want to inform myself, I want to engage with communities and stakeholders, I want to address policies) and on the challenges they wish to address. The platform is [available here](#).

Besides publicly available resources, the Hub hosts a **closed collaboration and exchange area**. It was created for various experts active in the fields of migration and security with the objective to harness the collective expertise of registered users and to make use of this communal know-how as a platform to provide answers, provoke thought, generate new questions, and create an engaged community of knowledge sharers. Through collective sharing, the collaboration area will host a growing and dynamic catalogue of resources, including academic publication, reports, information on conferences and events, recommendations of relevant websites, internal documents on policy/strategy/new innovation with relevance to the community.

Register to become a member and join the community!

Who should use this Handbook?

This handbook is intended for a wide range of stakeholders involved in the field of migration who would like to access an evidence-based overview of the complex links between perceptions of Europe, migration decisions, (mis)information, challenges and policies. The handbook moreover offers examples of tools, creative community engagement practices, and policy recommendations. More specifically, it was designed to be of use to:



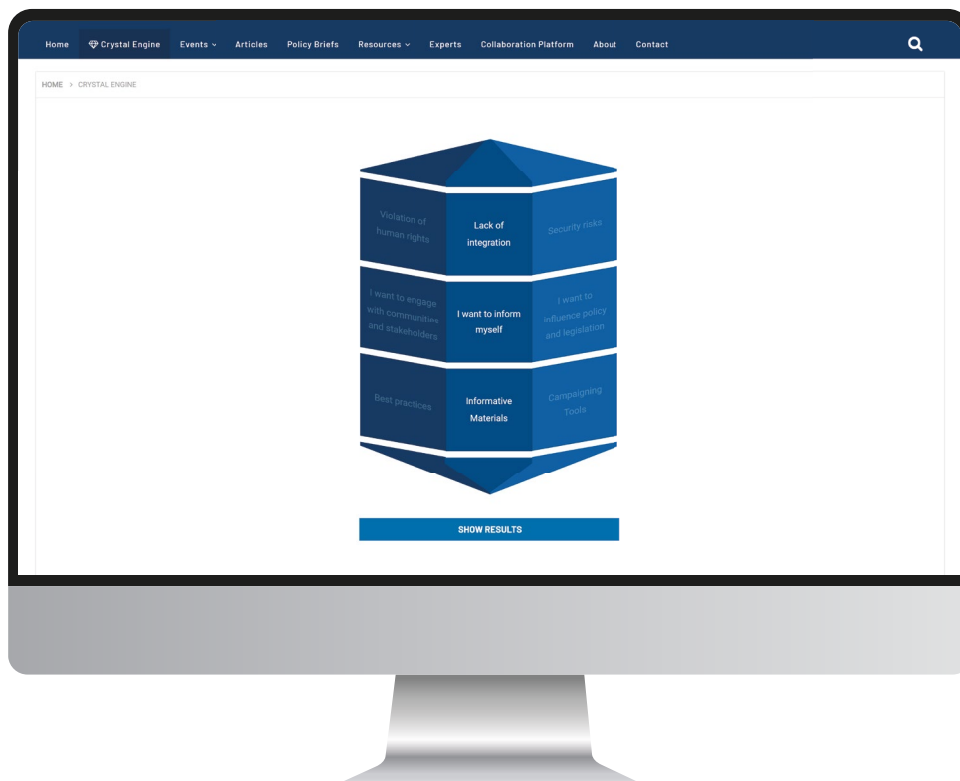
How to use this Handbook?

This handbook is divided into three different chapters, which capture the three levels at which issues surrounding migration can be understood and addressed.

If you want to:

- **Inform yourself** about the findings of the PERCEPTIONS project and find out how they provide responses and key insights to pertinent questions that are often asked about migration, go to **Chapter 1**.
- **Engage with communities and stakeholders** by using creative engagement activities to facilitate connections between people and address different forms of discrimination, take a look at the examples of interventions and best practices presented in **Chapter 2**.
- **Address policy and legislation**, find out more about how recent immigration and asylum policies are framed, and how migrants and practitioners who took part in the PERCEPTIONS research think they could be improved, go to **Chapter 3**.





SCAN ME!

All our reports, briefs and tools can be found on the PERCEPTIONS Hub. Use our search tool, the **Crystal Engine**, to find the resources you are looking for. The crystal-shaped search logic allows you to refine your search along 3 criteria: threats or challenges to be tackled, intervention purpose, and resource type. Each layer can be further refined as additional options appear upon selection. This allows you to select all the relevant resources from our publicly available collection of materials.

Available here

¹“Europe” in this project is not limited to the administrative region of the European Union, but the European Union remains central in discussions of policy due to its prominence as a policy actor. “Europe” as a geographical imaginary overlaps with, but is neither limited to EU-member states nor includes all of them. Exploring people’s perceptions of Europe also meant exploring where they located “Europe” and its boundaries.

²Cambridge Dictionary online, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/narrative> , access: 23.11.2022

³Merriam-Webster online, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discourse> , access: 23.11.2022

⁴Coppola, N. (2018). Embodying migration: social representations of migrants’ body. In Pirani, B.M. (Ed.) *The Borders of Integration: Empowered Bodies and Social Cohesion*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

⁵Boswell, C., Geddes, A., & Scholten, P. (2011). The role of narratives in migration policy-making: A research framework. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 13(1), 1-11.; Portelli, A. (2011). *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* SUNY Series in Oral and Public History. New York: State University of New York Press.

⁶e.g., family members, acquaintances or chance encounters. See Boccagni, P. (2017). Aspirations and the subjective future of migration: comparing views and desires of the “time ahead” through the narratives of immigrant domestic workers. *Comparative Migration Studies* 5(4), 3-18. DOI 10.1186/s40878-016-0047-6.; Crawley, H., & Hagen-Zanker, J. (2018). Deciding Where to go: Policies, People and Perceptions Shaping Destination Preferences. *International Migration* Vol. 57(1) 20-35. DOI: 10.1111/imig.12537

⁷Bakewell, O., & Jolivet, J. (2015). Broadcast feedback as causal mechanisms for migration. *International Migration Institute working papers*, Oxford university, paper 113. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationinstitute.org/publications/wp-113-15> ; Uberti, S. (2014). Victims of their Fantasies or Heroes for a Day?: Media Representations, Local History and Daily Narratives on Boat Migrations from Senegal. *Cahiers d études africaines*. LIV (1-2), 213-214, 81-113. DOI:10.4000/etudesafriaines.17599. ; Jinkang, A. (2020). *Contemporary Slavery: The Exploitation of Migrants in Italian Agriculture* [Doctoral dissertation], University of Palermo and University of Valencia. Retrieved from: <https://roderic.uv.es/bitstream/handle/10550/75415/PHD%20THESIS%20ALAGIE%20JINKANG%2018-06-2020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁸Cf. Timmerman, C., Heyse, P. & C. Van Mol (2010). Project Paper1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework EUMAGINE Research Project. Antwerp: University of Antwerp. Retrieved from: <http://www.eumagine.org/outputs/PP1%20-%20Conceptual%20and%20Theoretical%20Framework.pdf>

⁹Cantat, C. (2015). Narratives and counter-narratives of Europe. Constructing and contesting Europeanity. *Cahiers ‘Mémoire et Politique’*, 3, 3-30. <https://popups.uliege.be/2295-0311/index.php?id=138>

¹⁰Macías-Gómez-Estern, B. (2015). Narrative as a Sense-making Tool in the Construction of Migrants’ Identities. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 173(13), 168-175

Chapter 1:

I WANT TO INFORM MYSELF



Check our

[Knowledge Articles](#)

Introduction

Migration to the European Union has risen significantly since the 1990s. Irregular border crossings involving perilous journeys across land and sea have increased as well, to which European governments have responded with border securitisation. With numerous reports about people getting exploited, being subjected to violence, or dying whilst trying to reach the continent, policymakers, media outlets, researchers, civil society organisations and citizens have asked what may lead individuals to continue taking such risks.

A common approach to understanding this phenomenon is the push and pull factor theory, which distinguishes between two categories of reasons why people migrate:

- adverse circumstances in the countries of residence – these are also called push factors and
- envisaged opportunities at migration destinations – these are called pull factors.

The 'pull factor imaginary'¹¹ upon which European migration policy making was based since the early 2000s, assumes that individuals decide to migrate largely because of perceived economic opportunities. From this viewpoint, policies such as stricter border controls, the limitation of access to healthcare, employment, housing or legal status, as well as raising awareness about the dangers of irregular crossings and stays via information campaigns, are framed as ways to protect both the integrity of European borders and the security of migrants. Yet, rather than improving security, securitisation policies have forced people into more dangerous routes, increased their precarity, and had little effect on deterrence¹². Moreover, studies have shown that the push and pull factor theory does not fully grasp the complexity of migration processes.

In the PERCEPTIONS project, we analysed the links between perceptions of migration, perceptions of destinations, migration decision-making and policies to better understand how to mitigate the negative consequences linked to migration. In this chapter, we summarise the findings of the surveys, interviews and focus groups we conducted with experts by experience and experts by profession, by responding to common questions about the role of perceptions in decisions to migrate to Europe and subsequent experiences of migration. More specifically, we explore:

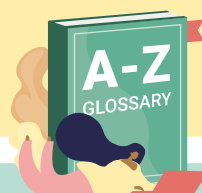
- What are the different factors that lead people to migrate to Europe and what is the role of perceptions in this process?
- Do people who immigrate to Europe encounter mis- or disinformation? What are some of the most common mismatches between pre-migration expectations and the reality encountered upon arrival in Europe?
- How do (mis)information and idealised perceptions of Europe circulate?
- Can information campaigns about the dangers of irregular migration be effective at reducing risks, and how? What are some of the limitations of these (local, international and European-funded) campaigns?

Perceptions: The ways someone thinks about a particular object, person or location, often based on ideas and beliefs rather than lived experience or the interpretation of an experience or piece of information.

Migration imaginaries: the narratives and beliefs about migration shared by a collective of people

Migrant: In this handbook, we focus on international migration and define the word 'migrant' as a person who crosses international borders and changes, or is expecting to change, his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the destination effectively becomes his or her new place of usual residence. Migrants include asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.

For more detailed definitions, consult the glossary at the end of this handbook.



**click to
jump to the
Glossary!**

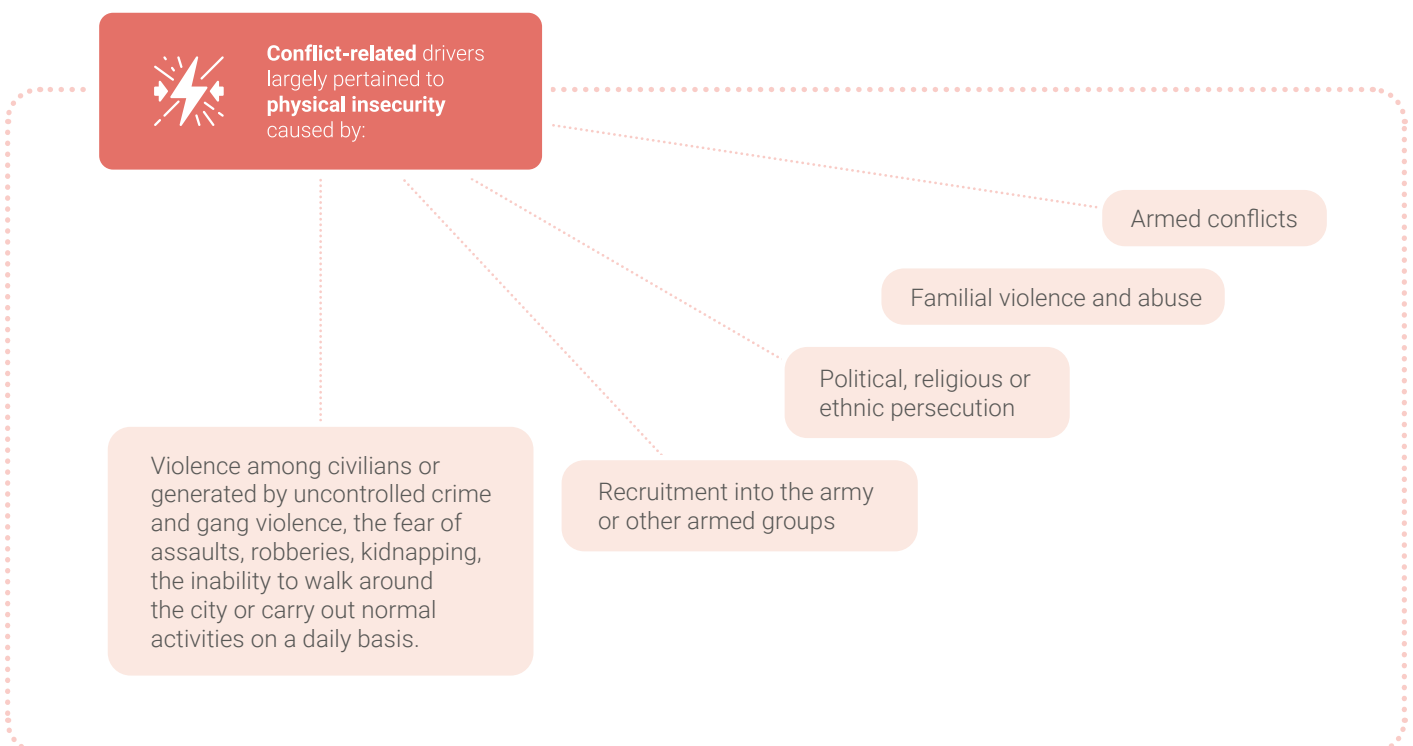
What are the different factors that lead people to migrate to Europe and what is the role of perceptions in this process?

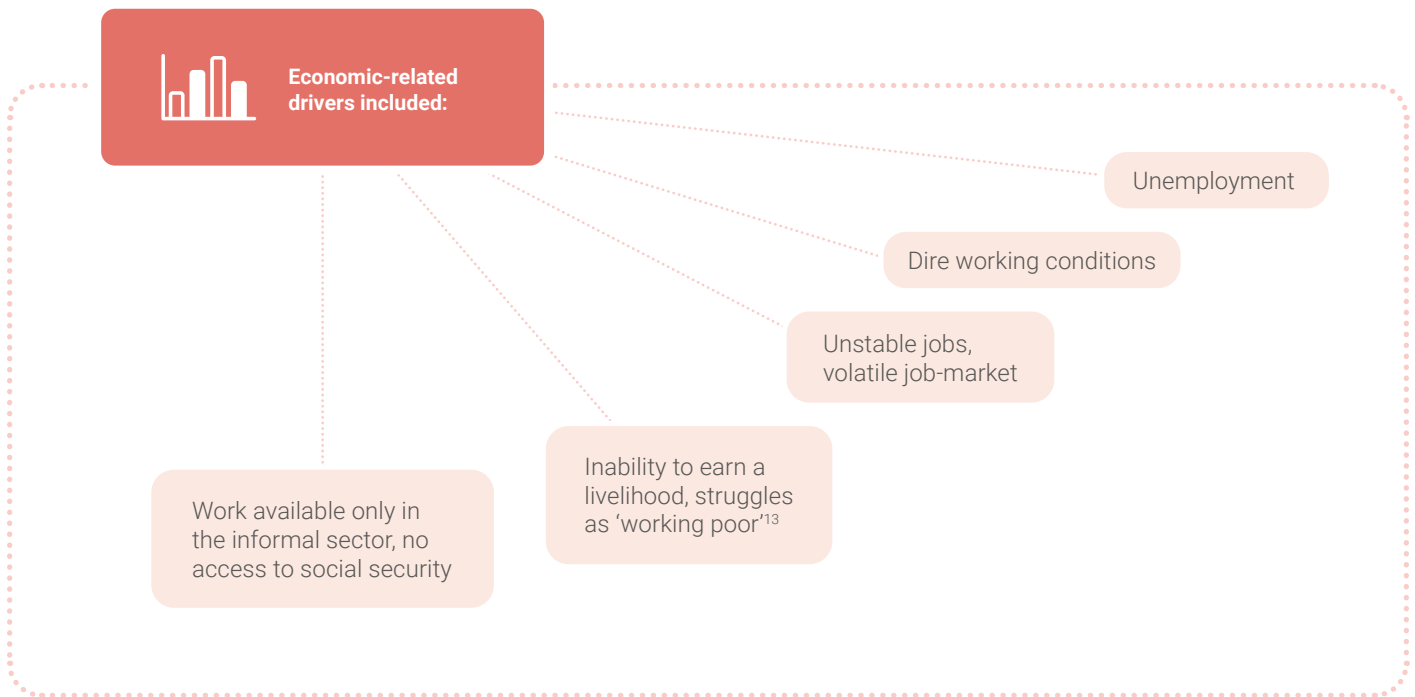


Reasons for people to migrate generally relate to a basic human need and desire: improving one's life. This can be by searching for better economic opportunities, escaping war and persecution, or reuniting with loved ones. Generally-speaking, Europe is a stable political area, geographically close to countries with high emigration rates that often have linguistic and cultural ties with other countries due to the colonial period and important diaspora networks. People can be driven by a sense of curiosity and adventure, by a general sense of comparatively better circumstances, as well as by positive stories about Europe circulating via personal networks and inherited from colonial imaginaries. However, some people also end up immigrating to Europe when it was not their first choice of destination. Thus, contrary to the widespread belief that idealised perceptions of Europe are the main drivers of migration to Europe, there is no direct, causal link between the two.



In general, our findings show that reasons why people want to migrate to Europe are multiple, and highly dependent on one's personal circumstances, geographical location and sociocultural background. Migration aspirations and the capability to travel long distances play a role, as well as migration regimes that govern who is allowed to access which territory, and under what conditions. Furthermore, migration infrastructure (the availability of information, of mobility brokers, of means of transportation) play a crucial role in people's ability to travel across greater distances. The latter also entails costs, meaning that only people able to afford travel, either by using their own savings or by securing loans, will be able to migrate. Tied to migration aspirations are various migration drivers, some propelling people to leave, others attracting them to particular destinations. Two types of drivers appeared to be of particular importance: **conflict** and **economic-related drivers**.





Economic and safety-related factors were often interrelated in our interviewees' accounts: physical insecurity was mentioned both as a precursor to and as a consequence of economic insecurity. The lack of personal freedom and rights was an expression of physical and economic insecurities. This lack of rights also created situations in which certain individuals became victims of physical or economic harm. Similarly, practitioners generally considered migration decisions to be driven by a **mix of chronic factors** (i.e. an ailing economy, high rates of youth unemployment, lacking opportunities for social upward mobility, endemic violence, weak states, authoritarian regimes, the lack of freedom and protection for various minorities) and **factors acutely triggering the decision to leave** (i.e. war, conscription, persecution, sudden local conflicts erupting). This led several practitioners to question the validity of the administrative distinctions between political and economic reasons for migration. In the experience of these practitioners, many migrants' profiles are somewhere in between these two categories. However, other practitioners made a clear distinction between 'economic migrants' and asylum seekers or refugees, considering it important to ensure a differentiated legal protection to those fleeing for their lives.

Across all our interviews, we could observe that whatever their personal circumstances, people who migrate to Europe generally seek to **improve**

their living conditions and seek a better life for themselves and their families. The following factors were said to influence people's decisions to migrate to Europe:

- **Human rights & the ability to exercise rights and freedoms (esp. young people, women, politically active persons, and members of sexual and ethnic minorities)**
- **Better functioning infrastructures**
- **Better access to public services, education, healthcare, and housing**
- **The belief in the possibility of self-actuation and greater future prospects**
- **Existing diaspora networks in Europe linked to the predominance of a 'culture of migration'¹⁴ in regions of origin**
- **Family ties, and the desire to reunite with family members**
- **Linguistic proximities, historical, socio-economic and colonial ties**
- **Geographical proximity**

These factors appeared to be linked, to some extent, to common perceptions of Europe in countries of origin. A majority of interviewees described their initial perceptions of Europe as a place of **happiness, wealth, development, culture, beauty, democracy, liberty, respect for human rights, equality, or tolerance**. Several stakeholders referred to these initial imaginaries using hyperboles that referenced religious or utopian images, such as **'el dorado', 'heaven', 'paradise', 'land of gold' or 'land of milk and honey'**. These positive associations were often made with 'the West' more generally, and depicted Europe as a homogeneous space of opportunities. This seemingly homogenous imaginary of Europe was often based on images of specific countries, which are either big players in international politics, economics, media (e.g. internationally available channels such as the BBC World Service, France24, or Deutsche Welle) and sports (i.e. Germany, France, Italy, Spain, or Great Britain), were believed to have a good welfare system (i.e. Germany, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands), or were former European colonial powers.

Idealised perceptions of Europe seem to emanate **from stereotypes** as perpetuated through books, movies, television, tourism advertisements, and images circulating online. Our social media research showed that football was central to the content produced in Europe and consumed especially by audiences in Africa. Examining content circulated via Twitter, the exchange of **information between Africa and Europe turned out to be very unbalanced**, with Europe-based profiles being the primary producers of content. The opposite was rarely the case. Several stakeholders mentioned the influence of **colonial imaginaries** in which Western knowledge and way of life were perceived as superior, and where mass media and content were dominated by Western media productions¹⁵. In some cases, diaspora networks, friends, and family living in Europe were seen as reinforcing these idealised perceptions, primarily by communicating about the good sides of life in an attempt not to worry their loved ones back home. In this sense, these idealised perceptions of Europe were often understood to be **deeply embedded and diffuse, meaning they could not be linked to one specific source of information**.

Have a look at our two reports about common perceptions many migrants hold of Europe, available on the PERCEPTIONS Hub

[Europe as a place of economic opportunity](#)

Click or Scan

[Europe as a place of social opportunity](#)

However, **contrary to the pull-factor imaginary underpinning many immigration policies in Europe¹⁶**, we found that **perceptions were a contributing factor to, but not the initial ignitor of, people's decisions to embark on a migration journey to Europe**. Our survey, focus group discussions and interviews show that **stakeholders generally consider poor living and working conditions in countries of origin (so-called push-factors) to be more important than idealised perceptions and imaginaries about Europe (pull-factors)** in individuals' decisions to migrate. Moreover, while for most migrant respondents Europe was the intended destination, it was not for everyone. For example, an interviewee who had fled Eritrea had initially immigrated to Sudan. Eventually, the dire living conditions and the conflicts they were confronted with in Sudan entailed the decision to travel to Europe. Similarly, a number of interviewees from West Africa (Senegal, Gambia, Ghana) said they were making a living in Libya and that migrating to Europe was not their initial goal. This example reflects that people's decision-making around

migration is more complex than a simple reaction to hopeful projections of what life in Europe could be like. Thus, we see that while the theoretical model of push and pull factors has some explanatory power of how aspirations to migrate

come about, it cannot explain why some people move and others do not, how destinations are chosen, or which routes migrants embark on.

Misinformation, disinformation and fake news. What's the difference?

Misinformation can be defined as accidental falsehood and likened to false facts or rumours¹⁷ spread unintentionally. Disinformation, however, is deliberate falsehood¹⁸ or a 'deliberate attempt to deceive or mislead'¹⁹ Fake News is 'always false and, thus, can be seen as a type of disinformation'²⁰

In the context of migration, misinformation may entail inaccurate or incomplete official information; outdated information that over time and with changing situations can become inaccurate information; information unintentionally diffused by gatekeepers and mediators; unrealistic expectations about the destination country that can often be diffused via social media; rumours and distorted information about 'job opportunities, social benefits, threat of deportation'²¹



Psychologist & CSO representative, Spain

I had conversations with young people, most of them decide to travel because, in their words: 'there is no future', there's nothing for them in their country of origin. [...] To a large extent they aspire to something: to be citizens, to have a job, to start a family, to develop themselves... In their country of origin, they can only find precarious jobs and situations. They can't find the development that any European country can provide them with. A priori these are the things that, in my opinion, are the reasons why they try to leave their country of origin.

Gambian man, Italy

I think everybody has the right to migrate. Because these are rights that people are born with, so the main reasons why I left my country is to exercise my freedom of movement... I wanted to discover the other parts of the world, which is Europe. At the same time, I also wanted to pursue higher education...

First line practitioner, Italy

In my opinion, people are moved by the need to see their rights recognized. So, sometimes people want to have the opportunity to have a better job, to have the opportunity to study, to be in a safe space... because some people escape from places of war, some people leave their place not because of the war, but because of social conditions, because of political reasons or because they are persecuted, because of the religion or their gender identity and many other human reasons, so there are many motivation for migrating and all reasons are rights.



**REASONS
FOR
MIGRATION**

Coordinator at NGO, Cyprus

There are a lot of asylum seekers who come from India here [to Cyprus]. And they come, because again this is somewhat a joke country because they have this route here where they pay, there are some dodgy colleges here where you pay a ridiculous amount of money, you pay 1000 or 2000 euros, and pay for one semester, and the moment the semester is over you apply for asylum from a student visa. So this is all part of their system, everyone knows how this works. There are a lot of Indians that have come as students, and then applied for asylum to stay. And just talking to them that's purely an economic means. I wouldn't say anyone mentioned one particular thing except the fact they are looking for better opportunities.

Syrian man, Bulgaria

I left for Europe the moment I took my last exam at the University. If I hadn't emigrated, this would have been the end for me. Either I had to hide, live illegally, and secretly leave home, which meant a slow death for me, or I had to join the regular army. In both cases, I saw it as death. In the first case for me it would be a mental death, in the second after the war I would bear the consequences of what I did, I would have to cause harm or death to many people.

Do people who immigrate to Europe encounter mis- or disinformation? What are some of the most common mismatches between pre-migration expectations and the reality encountered upon arrival in Europe?

People who migrate to Europe do so in many different contexts. While some have the time, skills and means to engage in proactive information research, others have little time or capacity to inform themselves. People do not always expect the challenges they face after migrating to Europe due to a lack of information, curated or incomplete information coming from family and friends, or in some cases, deliberate disinformation from smugglers and traffickers. While unreliable information (channels and sources), can create challenges and vulnerabilities, the latter are often exacerbated by restrictive immigration policies that limit access to rights, as well as discrimination and cultural barriers.



Whether migrants are well-informed or ill-informed is debated in the literature. On the one hand, people who want to immigrate to Europe are perceived to be put at risk by false information²². On the other hand, migrants are depicted as being well informed about their options, or well aware of the dangers they may face²³. In our research, both groups were identified. First, those who, upon experiencing triggering events, decided to leave in a rush with very little time to inform themselves about what they could expect. This was mostly the case for asylum seekers and refugees, but also applied to people who migrated for other motives. The second group included people who had the time, skills and means to engage in proactive research. Yet, the ability to seek out information does not guarantee its reliability and truthfulness. Moreover, the quality of information seems to depend on information sources and channels, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

According to practitioners, the greatest mismatches - meaning sharp and often negative contrasts- between migrants' expectations and their lived realities pertained to accessing the labour market, to unfulfilled aspirations of 'better lives', expectations of legal protection and support from authorities in the context of asylum claims, to the length of the asylum application processes, renewal of permits, and notions of safety. Many migrant interviewees spoke of aspirations for their lives in Europe that they could not fulfil upon their arrival, or not as easily as initially

hoped. Especially the difficulty of accessing regular employment without a residence permit or refugee status, and the very long waiting periods for the outcome of an asylum application were unexpected and hard to deal with, particularly in poorly serviced reception centres. These disappointments could be linked to an idealised perception of socio-economic opportunities in Europe as well as a lack of accessible, adequate, reliable and relevant information regarding the rights and privileges associated with particular legal statuses (e.g. asylum seeker, recognised refugee, person under subsidiary protection) and residence permits in the country of transit or destination.

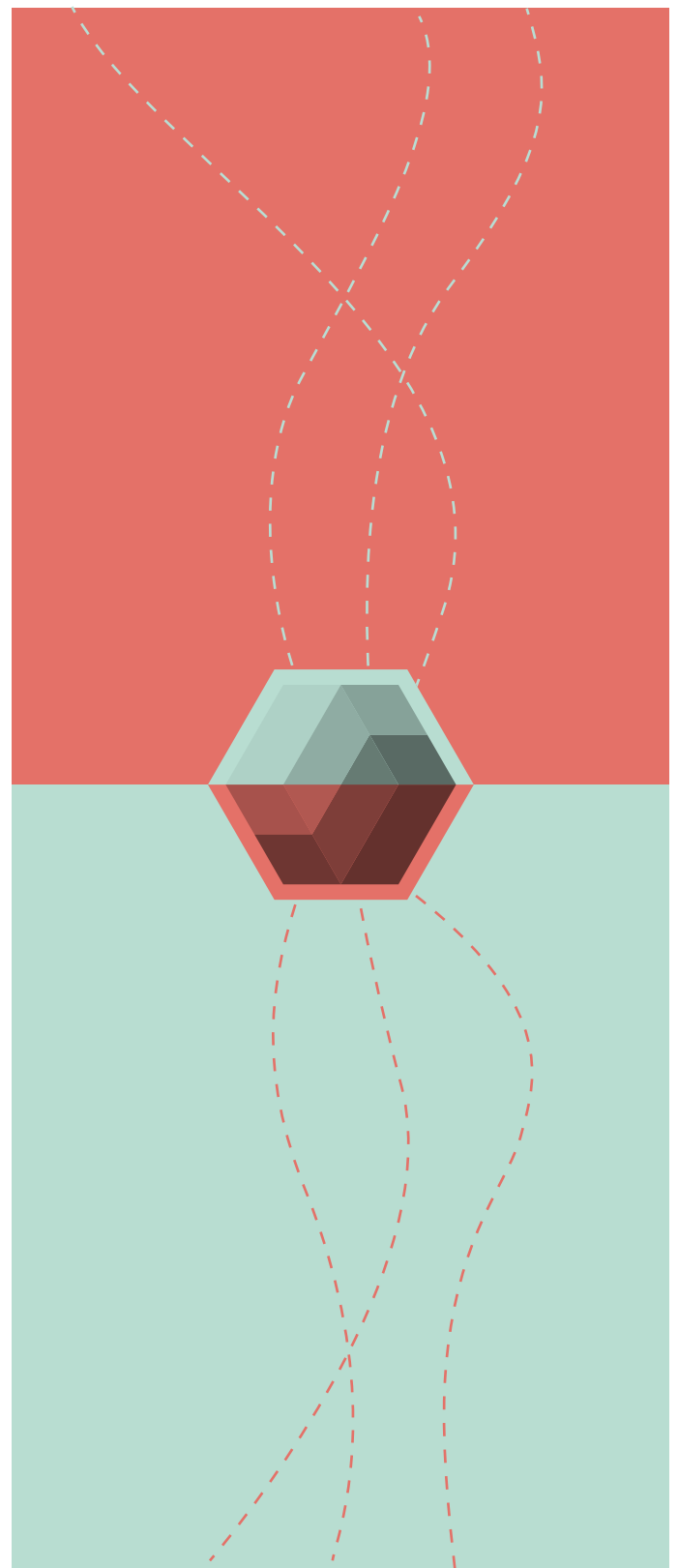
While this does not mean that the information and narratives that inspired migrants' perceptions were entirely false, our findings suggest that widespread narratives about Europe may have been incomplete, selective and biased. At the same time, many stakeholders pointed out that the cause of these challenges is often not simply the lack of information, but also immigration policies which are seen to increase vulnerabilities by limiting people's access to rights and key sectors of society (house, employment, welfare, etc), or to safe legal migration pathways. Lastly, a distinction must be made between perceptions, aspirations and expectations, as people do not necessarily expect to immediately achieve the successes they aspire to, but rather expect to find conducive conditions to do so.

Nevertheless, respondents generally agreed that the situation they faced in Europe, albeit difficult, remained more favourable than in their countries of origin. Moreover, access to healthcare was usually reflected upon in positive terms, as were the quality of public infrastructure such as public spaces, parks and transportation, and public safety. Some practitioners pointed out how disparities between living conditions in Europe and in migrants' countries of origin, acute political instability, wars and/or dictatorial regimes accentuate the positive aspects that life in Europe may yield despite the hardship.

Prospective migrants and those already on the move however also encounter deliberate disinformation. Several practitioners emphasised the role of smugglers, human traffickers, and criminal organisations in recruiting migrants through active deception²⁴. One practitioner remembered advertisements in Iraqi newspapers, ostensibly placed there by traffickers to cash in on willing travellers, claiming that anyone who managed to come to Germany would receive a driver's license, a car, and finally an apartment. This type of misinformation often builds on common perceptions of Europe as a land of opportunities. For instance, a charity worker in London reported that idealistic perceptions of Europe were capitalised upon by traffickers in suspicious jobs and study ads to scam and lure people from the Philippines, women in particular, into situations of exploitation. Our fieldwork in Cyprus also showed that the previously mentioned widespread homogeneous imaginary of Europe was reinforced by brokers to attract customers. In some cases this led to disappointments and frustration, as many individuals claiming asylum in the Republic of Cyprus and struggling with deplorable reception conditions and limited opportunities to find work, did not realise Cyprus was an island outside the Schengen zone. To make sense of their ensuing disappointments, the majority of the interviewees in Cyprus re-projected idealised perceptions of Europe onto other European countries, such as France, Germany, or Italy.

Asked about risk awareness, most stakeholders including migrants themselves stated that, generally, people who cross borders irregularly are aware of the risks they take²⁵. The reasons for them taking those risks are linked to drivers that pushed them to migrate in the first place, but also to the 'success' stories that they heard, and to a belief that harm

and misfortunes would not affect them. Sharing his own migration experience, one of our respondents explained that when in need there is also '*a necessity to believe in the dream*'. Differently, many interviewees explained how their perception of migration to Europe changed once they had arrived in Morocco, Niger, or Libya as they learned more about the dangers involved in crossing the Mediterranean through irregular routes. This shows that migration journeys are not always linear, and people may also be more or less informed at different points in their trajectories.



First Line Practitioner, Italy

The time that people have to wait before getting their papers that make them free to do [pursue] their life. This is something that people don't expect to go through, all this complexity and structured and tricky steps.

Algerian man, France

But when we came here, I mean, it wasn't what we were told because it's very difficult to find a job for people who don't have papers. It's very difficult.

Coordinator at NGO, Cyprus

I think a lot of them come to Cyprus and they feel conned. They think they're coming to Europe and they are on a tiny island in the Middle-East. [...] And it's not even part of Schengen so they can't even go to Europe. So I feel that their perception of what they think Europe is in terms of where they would like to be and opportunities they would like to have, you know, traditional destination countries like Sweden or Germany or the UK. Whereas when they come to Cyprus it's a rude kick in the face for them, because they're in the Middle East, there is no work here, there is no economy here, there is nothing they can do.

Senegalese man, Italy

Look, like 100% of the information concerning living (situation) are false. Once I see how they live, some people who were saying they live well. But you find that 8 people live in one room and come to Senegal well dressed, with a car, so you realize that is not the reality.



First line practitioner, Cyprus

I think it has to do with work, how they can support themselves. Because in Cyprus there are very specific restrictions as to what an asylum seeker can or cannot do, employment wise. So they don't know about this. And they don't know that the only allowable jobs are the worst paying jobs ever. And they also are very, very hard, because they are out, on a farm, in the hills, far away from the centre, from towns. And they, with very bad accommodation conditions if there are any. And they cannot even get those jobs. So the promise of work and the working conditions are the biggest disappointments.

What threats and challenges could be caused by misleading information and idealised visions of Europe?

Idealised visions of Europe may result in threats to migrants. They can drive decisions to migrate via routes that entail various dangers to the person on the move. Immigration policies built on the idea that idealised visions of Europe lead to threats can be counter-productive, as increasingly restrictive migration regimes lead to a greater need to rely on organised crime networks for travel and livelihood. Nevertheless, the PERCEPTIONS project did not find evidence for a direct link between idealised visions of Europe and crime or radicalisation.



Our fieldwork showed that dangers and challenges could appear at various points in the migration journey. People who could not travel using legal pathways often experienced dangerous journeys through land and sea. In transit countries and in Europe, additional dangers included detention and deportation, modern slavery, violence, abuse, and discrimination²⁶. As discussed in the previous section, people who immigrated to Europe often faced challenges such as administrative, language and cultural barriers, difficulties in finding jobs and appropriate housing, and high cost of living that prevented them from saving and remitting money to their families, social isolation and racism, whether they were asylum seekers or had acquired a permit to stay. Depending on people's circumstances, these challenges could have consequences ranging from frustration to social exclusion, destitution, and mental health problems, which negatively impacted their life conditions and wellbeing.

For people who had gone through irregular migration and/or the asylum process in Europe, stakeholders mentioned **challenges that were particularly severe**:

- *Death (e.g., at the border in Ceuta)*
- *Distrust of authorities, media, and peers*
- *Fear of authorities, especially in relation to violence, detention and deportation*
- *Mental health issues and trauma*
- *Dehumanization*
- *Modern slavery, trafficking, involvement in the shadow economy*
- *Stigmatization and hate crime*
- *Exploitation, especially in the labour market*

While these dangers and challenges to individuals were highlighted by most stakeholders, some policymakers and law enforcement agents, particularly in *countries of transit in and outside the EU*, also mentioned **dangers or challenges to states**, including:

- *Border pressure*
- *Rise in right-wing extremism and xenophobia*
- *Health risks*
- *Corruption*
- *Brain drain*
- *Security risks among migrants, and risks of criminality*
- *Pressures on public resources, welfare systems and the labour market*
- *Possibility of radicalisation*

In some cases, porous borders may attract migrants in particular directions on their journey into Europe. In other instances, migrants take advantage of the opportunity to enter an EU country on a temporary or time-bound visa (student or worker) and then overstay or apply for asylum before their initial title expires.

Irregular entry and irregular sojourn aside, the link between misleading information, (irregular) migration to the EU, and security threats to host societies emanating from migrants was greatly contested by the majority of stakeholders²⁷. Therefore, misinformation or disinformation among (prospective) migrants regarding their migration journey and life in Europe does not appear to have any direct relationship with crime, violent radicalisation and terrorism, according to the stakeholders we interviewed. As per our survey results, the majority of respondents, too, disagreed with there being any relationship between inaccurate information about the destination country and a greater likelihood of committing crimes or being prone to radicalisation.

Nevertheless, the responses were quite polarised with intergovernmental practitioners, persons working in law enforcement, as well as respondents from transit countries, more frequently supporting the assertion that inaccurate information can lead to increased

crime and radicalisation. Practitioners working in support services disagreed on this point²⁸. Rather, misleading narratives about life in Europe could contribute to exacerbating challenges encountered in Europe by newcomers as they were unforeseen, but misleading information was rarely the source of these challenges. Stakeholders highlighted the responsibility of the increasing securitisation of migration policies, which led many states to limit legal pathways of immigration, increase border control, and limit access to rights for those considered undocumented or irregular. These policies were often seen as increasing vulnerabilities. In a country like the UK, which put in place 'hostile environment'²⁹ policies aiming at deterring migrants, policies denying access to basic rights to those considered as 'unwanted' were seen as increasing people's vulnerability to exploitation, by preventing them from meeting basic needs and making them fearful of contacting the police or support organisations. Such policies were pointed out as complicating the work of law enforcement agencies, as they led more individuals to disappear into the informal economy and be exploited by criminal networks. Stakeholders moreover mentioned that stringent or hostile immigration policies contributed to increasing anti-migrant sentiment in the media, which could lead to more discrimination and hate crime in the population.

CSO representative, Germany

I have the impression that the proportion of those who are severely psychologically burdened has increased. In other words, we have many people who have been traumatised in a complex way or who have complex mental, psychiatric disorders and who have a great need for support and often fall through the cracks.

Spanish woman from Morocco, Spain

Well, starting with the fact that we are not very welcome, especially if we're looking for financial assistance. Spanish people don't like this very much. [...] They have the image of us as 'Moorish thieves', and looking at the unemployment rates, if the Spanish cannot find work, we will not find it. And if a Moroccan does find it, it will be out there in the fields, where they're mistreated, enslaved...

Afghan woman, Greece

The difficult thing is here because, it's not your real destination, it's not your goal here, and the thing here is a little difficult you don't know what to expect. For example, right now, my interview for my asylum it's in 2023 and, until then, I don't know what to do. [...] Migrants or refugees that live in Greece, maybe more than like four years, three years, five years and most of them, like 70%, most of them, they are waiting to get the documents for the ID card, the passport and to leave Greece to go to a better country in Europe. Why do European countries not let people decide for themselves where to go? Why are they closing, for example, borders? Because the point for refugees, the point why they are living in Greece is to get documents here and to leave for better countries for living.



CHALLENGES

Academic, Spain

Of course there are threats and risks, but it is in the interest of some groups to generate a discourse of fear, because the population is then more easily manipulated. When you generate this kind of discourse and you instil the idea that there are bad guys and guilty parties in the collective imaginary, it's easier to control us all, of course.

How do (mis)information and idealised perceptions of Europe circulate?

Migrants make use of a wide range of information sources and channels, but tend to privilege word of mouth, both in person and via social media. Informal sources are generally more trusted, although they frequently turn out to be less reliable than expected, especially when portraying 'a better Europe' than what is actually found. The difficulty in obtaining accurate and comprehensive information together with the lack of safe legal passageways pushes some people to depend on mobility brokers (people smugglers, human traffickers, unscrupulous 'travel agents') as sources of information, which are not always reliable. Finally, traditional mass media, the film industry (e.g Nollywood, Hollywood), and fiction play a secondary role as channels for information that contribute to shaping idealised perceptions of Europe.



Research to date has shown that narratives about life in Europe are mainly transmitted via personal communication both offline and online. Especially 'word of mouth' remains important for the decision to migrate³⁰. These information and communication channels are embedded in personal networks and matter throughout several phases of migration trajectories; they shape initial perceptions on Europe and influence aspirations tied to the idea of a life in Europe. Our interviews with migrants and practitioners confirmed this trend: the most commonly used and trusted sources were close contacts, either family members, close friends, or acquaintances or people from the same territory or language group that had already migrated to Europe. Generally, activating one's social network means tapping into support to find information about life at the destination, on how to navigate the local culture, the labour market, administrative procedures, and finding new connections with other people in a wider (personal and institutional) support network providing a wide array of services including legal advice, aid in access to housing, the job market, language courses, etc. Informal sources are the most relevant ones because migrants perceive them as the most trustworthy.

Despite the great trust put into information provided by personal contacts, our findings show that stakeholders found informal networks of friends, peers, and acquaintances to frequently act as vectors for misinformation, either because they

share information that is inaccurate, or because they contribute to shaping an idealised perception about Europe³¹. This is the case, especially, when individuals who have migrated to Europe are less willing to share failed migration experiences or negative stories about life in Europe with their networks. Some interviewees mentioned being aware of perpetuating idealised images, which can misinform, but feel they cannot do otherwise. Stakeholders put forward different explanations for this, such as the fear of causing concern to their close ones, or the fear of being labelled liars³². When positive perceptions are very embedded, migrants may feel shame associated with their precarious situation, or they may feel they have failed a community that has made important sacrifices so they could leave. They may also feel reluctant to complain about their situation when people back home face greater hardships.

Intermediaries such as people smugglers and human traffickers have also surfaced as crucial sources of information. They seem to have a great bearing on decisions related to chosen routes, timing and destination. Here again, the information provided by these brokers was perceived in different ways. Migrants described the relationship with them as ambiguous and changing over time, depending on the final outcome of their experience. In some cases, migrant respondents told us that their brokers provided them with advice and planning that helped them cross borders, and were grateful for their services. In

other cases, they told us brokers kept information from them or deliberately deceived them with lies about the destination and about the people they ostensibly helped lead successful lives in Europe. In some cases, brokers secured migration decisions with promises of 'an easy way out'. A number of practitioners interviewed, stated that traffickers and other criminal groups would deliberately circulate disinformation and were often 'light years ahead' of state institutions in their sophistication producing convincing migrant-targeted messaging, especially via social media.

What is the difference between a migrant smuggler and a human trafficker?

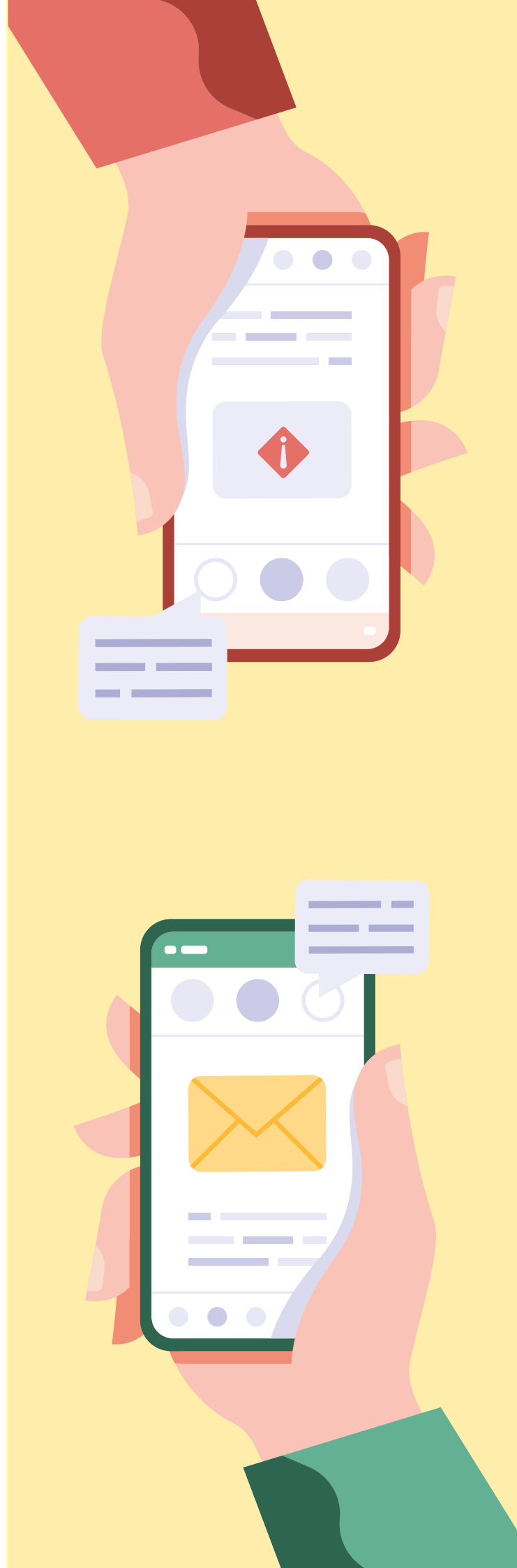
Watch this YouTube video by migration scholar Melissa Siegel to find out:

[Human Trafficking vs Smuggling - YouTube](#)



SCAN ME!

According to practitioners, the development of technological infrastructures and the lower costs of devices led to a substantial change in the dissemination and consumption of information by migrants before, during and upon arrival in Europe. Indeed, the channels for seeking and receiving information almost inevitably pass through the **mobile phone**, which becomes a central artefact, forming an integrated framework of complementary sources. Through it, formal and informal sources are tapped into to locate and consume (mis)information, as well as to broadcast the same.

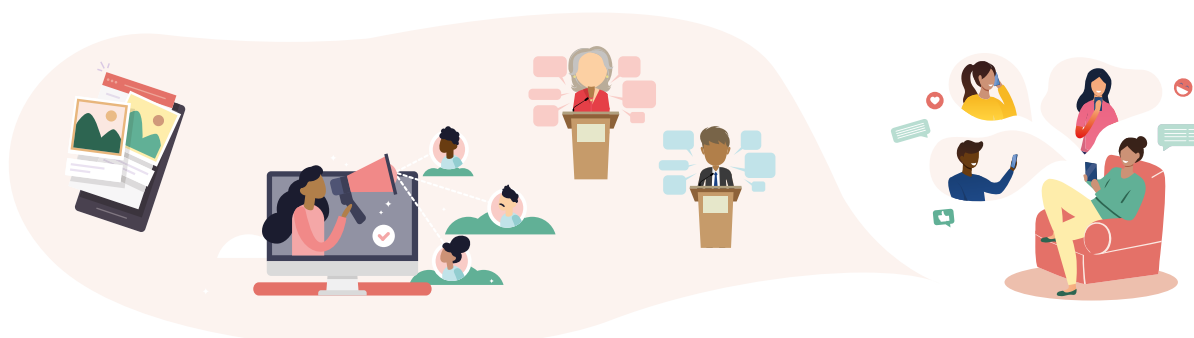




The most frequently mentioned channels used in the process of migration were **WhatsApp**, followed by **Facebook** and **Telegram**; these channels were used to maintain communication with friends and family at home, as well as to connect with others through groups and virtual meetings. Facebook is also used to access the news, raise awareness and money for specific causes, and to engage in conversations with strangers.



Further mentioned were **Instagram** and **YouTube**, as well as **Skype**, **Viber**, and **Twitter**³³. Migrant YouTubers are a relevant source of information because they share experiences at the destination and often provide advice for people wanting to migrate abroad. The possibility to share pictures makes Instagram a relevant channel shaping migrants' impression of Europe. Skype and Viber are used for personal communication with family members, friends and acquaintances, while Twitter stands out as a platform for news and social and political debate. Various social media platforms thus became channels for different sources to spread (misleading) information, and their use is therefore a double-edged sword.



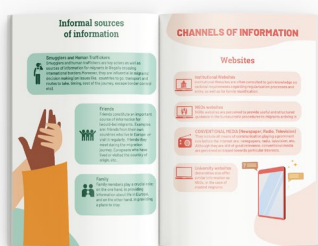
Practitioners tended to believe that social media, as a technology, expedited the circulation of inaccurate narratives of life in Europe and of misleading information, thus easing the jobs of people smugglers and human traffickers and leading to instances such as attempted mass border crossings. They mentioned regulations, lack of cultural and technical fluency, and the nature of the platforms in question (e.g. closed platforms, encryption) as factors that hindered state institutions' attempts to counteract such misleading information.

In comparison to information provided via personal networks and brokers, official sources were rarely consulted. The large majority of migrants we interviewed were either unaware of their existence, distrusted governmental sources more generally, or were unable to find information on irregular border crossing via the websites of governmental institutions or international organisations. Practitioners concurred that migrants' trust in official channels was negatively impacted by their experience with autocratic regimes and controlled media environments. Government websites and institutional sites only generally gained in importance in their search for information once people had reached Europe. Finally, mass media and cultural media were also information channels that were seen to contribute to misinformation. Film and TV series were occasionally mentioned, not as a source of concrete information, but as cultural productions

that fed into the imaginary of Europe. European and US media and films, as well as the Nollywood (Nigerian) film industry were described as complicit in the production of unrealistic narratives of life in Europe or 'the West' more generally.

Traditional mass media were not used to search for information on migration, although prospective migrants could sometimes hear about migration stories while reading or watching the news, including reports on people dying whilst attempting to enter Europe irregularly. Our interviews showed that if seeing the news may lead to greater awareness of the dangers of the journey, it does not necessarily discourage people to take the risk to take on that journey³⁴. For instance, one of our respondents recounted: *'when I had to come here, I knew... France24 showed a lot of corpses in the water... I knew everything, I knew everything... but, it depends on... There are situations that you are put into... life is like that.'*

Attempting to explain why negative images in mass media did not discourage prospective migrants from taking the risk anyway, the communication scholar Ayobami Ojebode speaks of 'cognitive consonance'³⁵. He concludes that people who have set their mind to seeking a 'better life' abroad will consciously or unconsciously accept information that confirms their bias, but dismiss information that runs contrary to their beliefs.



Do you want to know more about where migrants sourced their information from?

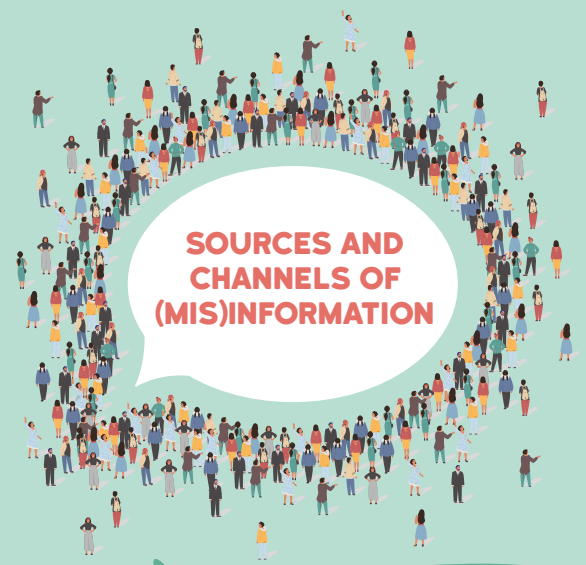
Check out *our report* on the PERCEPTIONS Hub.



SCAN ME!

Gambian man, Italy

So, what I'm saying is we are also part of the problem, because most of the time what we do is we create a new Facebook page. And once you create that new Facebook page, then taking pictures, you will take them of cars, near beautiful houses, and you will post it on Facebook. My brother, you are destroying the lives of other people. Because once your brothers and sisters in Africa and Gambia, once they see it, they will think that what they have seen on TV is the correct, is something true. So, you are telling them to come to Europe, come to Europe, come to Europe, why not ... tell them the reality of what you are living here?



SOURCES AND CHANNELS OF (MIS)INFORMATION

First line practitioner, Italy

In my opinion the main references are social media. For instance, media like Facebook, Instagram, so, what they see through what people from Europe published. So, be those pictures, texts, so, people are influenced by these contents and also mainly from this [...] I think that people use Facebook as a way to show the better side of their personal life. So, this is what people can see, what people from far away can see, the good side and this influences the idea of the people about Europe in this case. So, Europe in which you can find beauty.

Ghanian man, Italy

My opinion about Europe when I was living in my country was that Europe was a safe and a better place for everybody to live, and the meaning is that all the curriculums we use were imposed by our slave masters. So, anything you learn, all the articles we do in school, the literature, the history books, the math, science, everything has the name which was written by Europeans. ...and you follow the curriculum which they gave us, you are going to think that Europe is paradise. Europe is the best place for you to live, [better] than your motherland.

Ivorian woman, Morocco

Let us say that in television, we cannot get detailed information. We cannot know what is really happening. On Facebook people would speak about particular issues from inside, they talk about migrants' situation. There are a lot of them living well by the way. Others have difficulties of course. So people bravely speak, and make videos that they share on Social Media about their situation. Otherwise, you won't be able to know what is going on. We would just speculate about what the governments did. But we would never know the truth.

Social worker, Cyprus

I think the main sources of information, okay, the tool they use is their mobile phone. No two worries about that. Now the mobile phone has enabled a lot of information flow. Even if it is information or misinformation, it doesn't matter, it is the mobile phone that makes all this possible. Now their source of information I think other friends of them here, say people, a friend of a friend, who has been there, on Facebook, they put a lot of photos of themselves in front of nice buildings, in front of nice parks, dressed up in the best clothes they have, and that, because who want to seem like a failure to their friends and families? You want to show to them you made it. So you put in the social media photographs of you, picturing you as successful [...] And they get also, traffickers present things very nice. [...] So they present them an image, 'yes you will get a job, yes it will be decent, yes you will get enough money. Look at your friend, he is standing next to his car'. I don't think anyone would google on the internet and find out the truth about what has happened to people who have already landed on the shores of Cyprus.

Syrian woman, Belgium

No, the smuggler, the smuggler, he's an old man and he said. So, I asked him because he, I think he was a very smart man. So we had a conversation and he's like, what do you think? You know [...] some choices. And then I asked a few friends who were just like, you know, oh, where are you guys going? Like I, we are in Sweden [...] Germany, please come. Please come. My students, they were calling me. Miss, please. Your visa got rejected. Come to us. Here it's good... [the smuggler] He's like look at [...] Social Security and like social help. Money wise, Germany is better, Sweden is better, Belgium is less. But there are a lot of people there [...]. I'm like, OK, we go there then.

Can information campaigns about the dangers of irregular migration be effective at reducing risks, and what are some of the limitations of these (local, international and European-funded) campaigns?

Clear and reliable information was considered an important tool to effectively raise awareness of the risks of migration and inform prospective migrants of the important differences in rights and opportunities tied to various entry visas and residency statuses. Information campaigns were generally not seen as effective in leading to behavioural change. Notably, first-line practitioners who were familiar with information campaigns critiqued them for being dissuasion campaigns rather than providing relevant information. Moreover, information campaigns came under critique for not being evidence-based, analytical or adequately contextualised as well as for focusing exclusively on the dangers of irregular migration and failing to involve migrants and their expertise in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the successes and failures of such campaigns.

Practitioners identified information and awareness raising campaigns as important, yet not very effective to address threats linked with irregular migration³⁶. Most practitioners knew of information campaigns as a measure, but were unaware of any specific examples of campaigns. This may, to some extent, be reflective of the practitioners who participated in the study, as the majority were based in Europe and not in locations where such campaigns can be expected to be launched. The information campaigns that were known about and mentioned during the interviews referred to 'dissuasion' or 'deterrence' campaigns that targeted communities (for example in The Gambia and Senegal) with important rates of irregular migration and cases of trafficking in their countries of origin or transit, and focused on the dangers linked to irregular border crossings³⁷.

In general, practitioners were quite **critical of such campaigns and highlighted limitations** related to:

- **Target groups:** according to some practitioners, migrants who are in real danger, or are looking for a better life and have little to lose, are not influenced by information/dissuasion campaigns.
- **Content:** some practitioners noted that very often, information campaigns do not present new information as the dangers highlighted are usually already known to people, thus making the messaging of these campaigns moot. This focus on dangers was also criticised, as some practitioners considered that providing more concrete information such as where they can access support would be more effective. Other practitioners highlighted the fact that these campaigns were often not sufficiently based on evidence, and therefore not sufficiently tailored to the local context. For instance, a campaign that focused heavily on the risks to travel overseas, when the country where it was implemented was mostly affected by internal trafficking, was seen as very limited.

- **Objectives:** some practitioners said that many campaigns were not effective because they aimed at alerting about the risks of irregular journeys rather than addressing the drivers that lead people to leave their countries.
- **Source:** authorities and international organisations are not always seen as trusted sources of information, which hampers the effectiveness of their message³⁸.
- **Effects:** information campaigns were also seen as filling migrants with even more insecurity as they portray negative images of smugglers and the possibility of dying, thus making a *'scary journey even scarier'*.
- **Design:** some practitioners highlighted limitations linked to the lack of involvement of people who have experienced irregular migration and trafficking in the design of information campaigns and in their implementation, as well as the lack of robust evaluation mechanisms³⁹.

Results from our social media analyses indicated that these information campaigns often make use of a range of social media platforms, but they do so in a disjointed manner and generally receive very low levels of active engagement from social media users.

Stakeholders recommended that information campaigns should be tailored to specific contexts and audiences, designed through **an inclusive approach that involves the target group**, and provide information about people's rights, rather than focusing on frightening messages (see chapter 3). Information campaigns that promote a positive image of migration within Europe were also highlighted as needed to change the narrative in Europe⁴⁰.



Ghanaian man, Italy

The type of information campaign which we can do is first, we (are) supposed to do home-schooling about ourselves, because if you don't know yourself you cannot go to any place. So, we are supposed to do campaigning about this... that our brothers should sit at home and stop coming to Europe hoping to have a better life, we should speak the truth about how migration is. 100% will come (to Europe) but 70% will suffer and 30% will not suffer and mother Africa will lose her youths 70%...

Migrant centre coordinator, Cyprus

We have the European Asylum Organisation, maybe EASO should open an office [in countries of origin], but not an office, something bigger something more social, more dynamic. Where you have many interactions, where you have many types of interactions. Where you can speak concretely about job opportunities in a place, or pay base or bureaucracy in a specific country. I know it's difficult, I don't know how to create something like this, but they should create centres, information centres. Where they try to give the best information ever. I know there are a lot of information, we are talking a lot of information. Also, because imagine I am from Cameroon. So I go to the internet to this European information centre. I want to go to Italy, the person after me wants to go to France, the next person wants to go to Germany. You need to be able first of all to assess if the person is entitled or not. So yes, he is entitled okay. What is going to happen? You need to inform the person, the person will have thousands of questions you would need to be able to answer. I don't know how to structure it but this would help a lot. At least to filter the huge amount of people who are coming here by mistake because some of them are a problem to Europe and some of them want to go back.

Social worker, Bulgaria

And the question is - do we really believe that through such campaigns the EU can achieve efficiency? And my answer is rather no. In fact, this shows the reality, because no matter how many such campaigns are made, this is not the way. That is, one must look for information through sources that are considered reliable. Maybe these are some non-governmental organizations, although what is the role of civil society in the Middle East - this is also another matter, but certainly the official sources are not the best option. Maybe we would look for some, I would say more neutral sources, again from the European institutions, but the purpose should be for information - it should contain information on how one can legally reach Europe. So that you do not get the impression how bad it is in Europe and stop coming. Rather to inform individuals. Where there are risks, however, and where there are some opportunities - for example, to talk about family reunification, about humanitarian programs that different European countries have. In terms of education, in terms of community sponsorship - there are ways - the question is to present a balance. When a person sees that he has a balance, he may believe, but one-sided information will not help.



Ghanaian man, Italy

Stop showing always information about people dying every day on the sea through this migration. Stop that one and tell the life (living and working conditions). If you say that somebody has died on the sea, in Africa we have some belief that it is his destiny.

Venezuelan woman, Spain

Yes, yes [information campaigns] would be good because even though maybe they don't do campaigns or something like I said, there will always be someone who has already gone there and will say, look, look. I mean I always think that the fastest and most reliable information is word of mouth, hey look you know that I went and I've known, and I feel that this is the information, this will always be the most valuable and reliable information, which generates trust in people.

We hope this chapter has provided you with insights into the role of perceptions, narratives and (mis)information in decisions to migrate to Europe, and subsequent experiences of migration. The following two chapters provide roadmaps on how to mitigate some of the negative consequences challenging migrants, local communities and reception societies at large. We provide toolkits and best practice examples on how to engage with local stakeholders and communities (see Chapter 2), and recommendations on the future direction of policy and legislation (see Chapter 3).

Click to jump to **Chapter 2**

Click to jump to **Chapter 3**

If you are interested in learning more about migration narratives about Europe and approaches to migration since 2015, have a look at our report 'A review of narratives and approaches'. The report maps the landscape of narratives on migration and Europe as discussed in the literature, and thereby provides a broader picture of the findings in research into migration narratives. You can access the brochure on our Hub. **[Available here.](#)**

Are you curious to learn more about how first-line practitioners in Europe and the MENA region assess migrants' perception of Europe and the consequences of misinformation? Have a look at our report "Migration to the EU- A survey of first-line practitioners' perceptions during the CoViD-19 pandemic". You can access the report on our Hub: **[Available here.](#)**

Find definitions of key terms used in this handbook in the Glossary (pp. 85-97)

click to
jump to the
Glossary!

Would you like to access further information on recent migration trends and policy developments in the 15 countries covered in the PERCEPTIONS research project? Have a look at our Country Profiles and check out our Knowledge Articles on the PERCEPTIONS Hub **[Available here.](#)**

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Chapter 2:

I WANT TO ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Introduction

Across the range of professions working with migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, it is essential that stakeholders and practitioners engage the communities and service users with whom they work. As shown in the previous chapter, prospective migrants to Europe usually hold positive, hopeful, and in some cases overly optimistic expectations about their opportunities on the continent. In some cases, this leads them to underestimate the administrative hurdles and everyday obstacles encountered on their trajectories and in the host society. Identifying ways of providing greater information about the destination, supporting newcomers upon arrival, and tackling harmful migration narratives in receiving contexts are of significant importance to migrants, civil society organisations, municipal governments, and other groups organising at the community level.

In this chapter, you will find a set of practices that can be used to mitigate some of the difficulties and challenges that migrants often encounter along their journey and upon arrival in Europe. This chapter was written primarily for people active at the grassroots level, such as volunteers, staff, or migrant and diaspora advocates, religious communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), neighbourhood associations, and other civil society groups (CSOs) that act primarily locally, and maintain personal interaction spaces with migrants.

What is community engagement and why is it important?

Community engagement is a form of work with communities based on equitable decision-making processes, aimed at achieving sustainable outcomes and at increasing relationships of trust between public bodies, communities and service users.

Community engagement can be used in community building, as well as in policy design or implementation. Engaging communities in (bottom-up) decision-making processes around initiatives, actions or policy changes that will subsequently affect them, is a route to greater participation and self-determination. This can also result in better targeted, more relevant, and more widely accepted interventions. Communities can be engaged through participatory methods, at different stages and to various extents of a project.

The best practices listed in this chapter were identified both through desk research and fieldwork with stakeholders included in the project. Our research allowed us to draw up a collection of best practices, measures, tools and projects implemented at various levels of governance - from regional to international. This collection assembles possible solutions and approaches that have been implemented since the year 2015. It is worth mentioning that the majority of best practices identified through the project addressed a specific challenge posed either to host countries and border security, to migrants themselves, or affecting both migrants and host societies.

A best practice is a process or methodology that has been shown to work well, achieves its objectives and can be proposed for standard or widespread adoption. A best practice is often adaptable to different contexts.

In this handbook, the focus lies on best practices, measures, tools and strategies used to counteract challenges linked to misinformation, idealised pre-migration perceptions of life in Europe, and narratives of migration to Europe. The team deemed a practice to be a "best practice" if it was characterised by **five aspects**: impact, respect and protection of rights, sustainability, transferability, and intersectoral coordination.

The PERCEPTIONS Best Practice Library

This library is a collection of practices, measures, tools, and strategies that can be employed to address the negative repercussions of misinformation, mismatches between expectations and reality, and challenges arising from migration more broadly which can affect migrants upon arrival in Europe, as well as host communities. The initial collection of practices was collated by the research team through desk research, and then completed with the inputs from interviews, focus groups, online questionnaires as well as a second round of desk research focused on COVID-19 related practices, policies, and initiatives.

The identified interventions were deemed best practices based on the following criteria: 1) impact, 2) respect and protection of rights, 3) sustainability, 4) transferability, and 5) intersectoral coordination. The weighted score for each of the practices was computed, with the goal of including only those items that achieved a score above the mean. You can search our best practices library, addressing any of the five types of intervention mentioned above. The library will be available in 2023, *via the PERCEPTIONS collaborative platform*.

Which community engagement practices work?

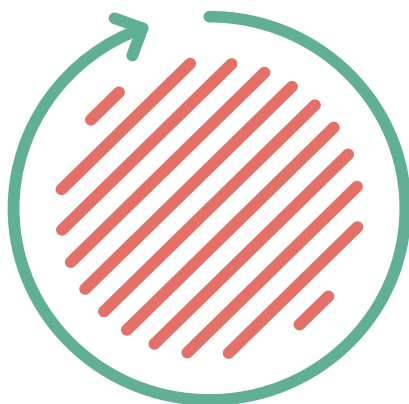
Practices that impact positively are those that foster relationships and build trust between public bodies, communities and service users. Practices that work also guarantee people's rights are respected and protected, aim for sustainability, transferability, and facilitate intersectoral coordination.



All interventions and projects introduced in this chapter were designed to be implemented at the local level, meaning in particular cities, towns, communities and neighbourhoods or with particular online communities, or expert communities in mind. Some of the practices referred to in this chapter were mentioned by the stakeholders that the research team interviewed. These practices thus reflect the subjective opinion of policymakers and practitioners rather than an objective assessment and evaluation of these practices. The community practices showcased in separate boxes are best practice examples in which at least one PERCEPTIONS partner currently is or previously was involved.

Some practices were developed at the grassroots level, other interventions were conceived and designed at institutions acting at the national or supranational level (such as national ministries, EU bodies, or internationally active organisations). What all practices introduced in this chapter have in common, is that they were implemented in specific places, with the goal of directly engaging stakeholders and communities. The collection assembles a variety of types of best practices, measures and tools addressing five areas of intervention.

Areas of intervention



Types of community practices





Areas of intervention

- Fostering the integration of migrants in the host country
- Protecting the human rights of migrants
- Raising awareness of the risks associated with the journey along irregular migration routes
- Addressing misleading media representations of migrants and misinformation
- Addressing negative public perceptions, racism and xenophobia towards migrants



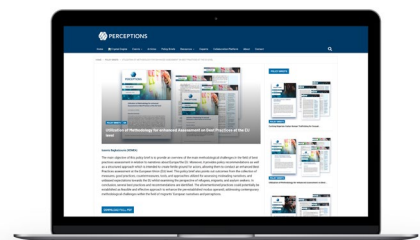
Types of community practices

- Online trainings and workshops
- E-learning platforms
- Mentoring systems
- Buddy-schemes
- Co-housing schemes
- Orientation courses for newcomers
- Skills workshops
- Language classes
- World café
- Cultural exchanges
- Communal cooking
- Recreational activities
- Theme-focused traveling cinema screenings
- Train-the-trainer approaches
- Creative community engagement
- Art exhibitions
- Information guide to local services via mobile application
- Information portal for prospective migrants
- Internships
- Counselling and assistance services
- Knowledge sharing among stakeholders

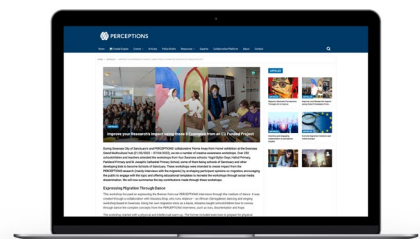


- Collaboration schemes between migrant and refugee community organisations and mainstream service providers
- Online medical directory of multilingual doctors
- Collection and provision of multilingual children's books and CDs
- Tailored integration into the education system for children
- Creation of counternarratives to online extremism and hate speech
- Family support to prevent the radicalisation of youth
- Workshops and trainings for media professionals
- Code of Practice on Disinformation for media professionals
- Online campaigns (various areas of intervention)
- Strategic communication campaigns (multimedia, various areas of intervention)
- Testimonial-based information campaigns tackling irregular migration
- Peer-to-peer exchanges
- Celebrity ambassadors for campaigns
- Fact checking initiatives
- Roadshows and public seminars
- Training and sensibilisation of relevant stakeholder groups (e.g. border police)
- Educational city-tours

Hey! Do you want to know more about best practice assessment? You can find our policy brief on [how to enhance the assessment on best practices at the EU level](#) on our PERCEPTIONS Hub.



There, we also have a brief on [how to improve your research's impact using, 5 examples from an EU funded project](#)



Fostering Integration

Migrants arriving in a new location often feel disoriented and unfamiliar with the city and how services work. They may struggle to find housing, or to access the labour market. Migrant integration can be quickened and improved by providing newcomers with resources to familiarise themselves with the place and the culture, the bureaucracy, and get practical information about where to find support, access services, transport, and social connections. Integration may also entail instructing newcomers about their rights and duties in the country of reception. But integration is not merely a one-way street: it is a dynamic process that requires efforts by all parties involved⁴¹.

Initiatives, practices and measures that support migrant integration in the host countries can directly and indirectly shape how migrants experience and thus perceive their new environment. Most strategies focused on migrant integration, as identified by the research team in their best practice collection, are formulated at the national level. However, projects get organised and implemented at the level of communities and neighbourhoods, such as welcome cafés, buddy systems, co-housing initiatives, career coaching and labour market integration, activities furthering social networking and sports, or initiatives offering online-learning platforms, such as the creation of the platform VALUE⁴² supporting schools in fostering multilingualism.

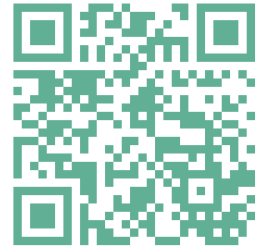
Asked about their recommendations to prospective migrants, migrant respondents who draw their expertise from their own experience indicated that a positive attitude and patience were essential behavioural characteristics for persons intending to make the journey to Europe. Good proficiency in the local language was also seen as a strong tool facilitating integration and decreasing the isolation that

often accompanies newcomers' arrival in Europe. Despite the difficulties in transferring non-EU qualifications when migrating to Europe, many migrants recommend others to arrive with work experience, skills, or a profession that could be put to use in the host country.

Practitioner's examples of best practices included job fairs, mentoring programs and entrepreneurship training. A practitioner from Bulgaria cited the organisation of education and job fairs for migrants and refugees in 2017. The initiative contributed to changing migrants' perceptions of Bulgaria as a country of transit to one of opportunities, to show greater interest in pursuing a university degree and to later enter the Bulgarian job market. Employers visiting the fairs changed their perceptions of migrants and were more open to hiring them. A practitioner based in Cyprus cited the mentoring of newcomers and entrepreneurship training⁴³. With a similar focus, the Centre for Entrepreneurs, based in the United Kingdom, hosts the Refugee Entrepreneurship Network⁴⁴, which connects organisations involved in supporting refugee-led start-ups internationally.

Aside from practices geared towards the creation of livelihoods, stakeholders mentioned measures tackling education, acculturation, and housing. In Bremen (Germany), refugee accommodation is distributed throughout the city rather than concentrated in one location or district, to prevent the segregation of refugees in low-cost residential neighbourhoods. The city of Antwerp (Belgium) introduced buddying schemes, bringing together young adult refugees with young adult locals to provide affordable good quality housing and support the former with acquiring knowledge about the host society. This project, CURANT, is introduced below.

Co.Housing and Case Management for Unaccompanied Young Adult Refugees in Antwerp (CURANT)



When: 2016-2019
Where: Antwerp, BELGIUM

Web:

Project Description:

The CURANT project supports unaccompanied young adults who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection. The project is a social policy intervention combining intensive individualized guidance, cohabitation, training and therapy with the aim of supporting social integration. One of the innovative aspects of CURANT concerns the involvement of young, volunteer Dutch-speaking locals, called 'buddies', in a cohousing setting. After a screening and intake procedure, the refugees and buddies are matched and become flat-mates. Both the buddies and the refugees receive substantial support in the framework of CURANT and pay an affordable rent (€250). With the buddying system, CURANT aims to develop informal learning processes, to make the social networks of the refugees and buddies more diverse and improve the Dutch language competencies of the refugees. Young refugees cohabit with Flemish buddies for at least 1 year. The buddy helps the refugee with different aspects, for example: looking for a job, building a network, learning Dutch.

The experience of communal living did not necessarily lead to long and durable friendships, but affected both groups' mutual perceptions and (intercultural) social competencies positively, facilitated informal support and learning and increased proficiency in Dutch and confidence speaking it.

Who:

The City of Antwerp, Avansa, Atlas, Jes, Solentra,
Center for Migration and Intercultural Studies
(CeMIS) at the University of Antwerp

YouTube:



Financing body:

Urban Innovation Actions (UIA) Fund via the European Regional Development Fund

PERCEPTIONS consortium partners involved:

CeMIS, University of Antwerp

Type(s) of intervention:

Migrant integration in the host country

Protection of Human Rights of Migrants

Policies and legal recommendations stemming from governmental and policy making bodies as well as civil society and NGOs are the main tools used to protect the human rights of migrants in Europe. These rights also include physical safety and access to healthcare.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bulgarian Red Cross opened a hotline⁴⁵ for refugees in 6 languages to provide information on the virus as well as other modes of support. According to the practitioner in Bulgaria who highlighted this initiative as best practice, the service turned

out to be on high demand. A practitioner in Kosovo highlighted the launch of *Miniila*, a phone application⁴⁶ destined for children on the street, on the move, and migrant children to inform them about where they can access psychological care, a shelter, and other services.

Sheffield Hallam University has since 2018 provided refugees with access to legal help and sanctuary scholarships. This best practice is described below in more detail.



Refugee Rights Hub and Sanctuary Scholarships

When: 2018-ongoing

Where: Sheffield, UNITED KINGDOM

Web:



Project Description:

In June 2021, Sheffield Hallam University was named a University of Sanctuary in recognition of its support and contribution to awareness raising and promoting the rights for refugees and people seeking sanctuary across all areas of higher education.

This support includes the Refugee Rights Hub which teaches undergraduate students to work alongside qualified immigration solicitors and caseworkers, helping refugees navigate the complex processes and procedures for making family reunification applications.

The hub provides eligible individuals with free access to essential advice, practical support and guidance throughout the application process.

Since the formation of the hub in 2018, family members from all over the world have been supported in making applications and appeals to the Tribunal to join loved ones in the UK. Hub staff are all involved in wider training and consultation activity.

The University offers three Sanctuary Scholarships per academic year (one for undergraduate and two for postgraduate study) to talented students who have sought asylum in the UK.

Through the SHU Progress scheme, the University also helps applicants whose personal circumstances might mean that there are barriers to going to university, including those from a refugee or an asylum-seeking background.

This could include exclusive and personal visits to the university to meet current students and staff, support with the costs of visiting the university for our events and open days and help with making an application, including access to workshops on preparing for interviews.

Who:

Sheffield Hallam University

YouTube:



Financing body:

co-funded by Sheffield Hallam University via the Hallam fund and private donors

PERCEPTIONS consortium partners involved:

Sheffield Hallam University

Type(s) of intervention:

Protection of human rights of migrants,
migrant integration in the host country

Raising awareness of the risks associated with the journey along irregular migration routes

The experiences of migration to Europe made by many of our study participants have influenced their reflections on how future migrants could benefit from minimising the mismatches between expectations and reality, and how they would gain from a smoother migration and integration process. Many recommendations include strategies to reduce harm to migrants and to increase their access to reliable information. The recommendations provided are fairly consistent across the group of migrant interviewees, suggesting that despite the heterogeneity of narratives of migration and means through which migrants arrived in Europe, our respondents hold a common understanding about the need to mitigate mismatches between expectations and realities of the migration journey. Migrants highlight the danger of harm or death that comes with irregular border crossings and advocate to avoid using such routes to reach Europe. They mention that having information about what to expect during the migration journey and upon arrival in Europe is essential to adjust expectations with reality, and that this information should come from a variety of trustworthy sources. Practitioners, too, emphasized that disinformation spread by smugglers and traffickers not only put migrants in danger along their journey, but also led to a lack of awareness regarding European bureaucracy and administrative hurdles, the length of asylum procedures, the lack of affordable housing, education, and healthcare, and the lack of opportunity for legal employment.

Best practices that aim to raise migrants' awareness regarding the risks that they may face during their journey to Europe are often reflected in information campaigns⁴⁷, although the **effectiveness of these campaigns have been disputed** in academic scholarship and by the stakeholders involved in our study. Information campaigns are frequently conceived and commissioned at the supranational or national level. However, grassroots initiatives addressing misinformation and awareness raising exist as well; NGOs and other civil society organisations are frequently implementing partners of EU or national government-led initiatives. Nevertheless, more can be done to actively involve migrants in the creation of such campaigns through, for instance, participatory methods.

Best practices mentioned by practitioners included initiatives making information and knowledge openly and easily accessible. Initiated by Bulgarian authorities, the website www.asylum.bg provides information in different languages. This information is provided not only in written form but also in an audio format, and includes information on the asylum procedure in Bulgaria and asylum seekers' rights and obligations. The idea was to provide people with access to information from anywhere in the world and anywhere in Bulgaria and to prevent false information from circulating. The site has an average of about 300-400 visits per month, half from Bulgaria and half from other countries, especially from Turkey.

Similarly, a practitioner in Germany pointed out the "Welcome to BW" portal⁴⁸, created by the Refugee Council of Baden-Württemberg and supported by the European Union and United Nations. The portal is multilingual and contains easy-to-understand information on arrival and registration in Germany, asylum procedures, the Dublin regulation, what to do if an asylum application is rejected, conditions for residency and grounds for deportation, information for people from "safe countries of origin" and much more.

Authorities in Kosovo, too, launched a website providing information translated into several languages relevant to migrants. The website provides information on COVID-19 measures, asylum procedures, access to free legal aid, psychosocial assistance, access to services and assistance from NGOs. Moreover, a practitioner from Kosovo highlighted the distribution of informational leaflets translated into nine languages at border crossing points, and at police stations near the green border, in addition to volunteers distributing them in urban centres as one example of a best practice. The leaflets contain information on migrants' rights and obligations in Kosovo and on the asylum procedures.

The PARIM project, implemented in Pakistan together with local authorities is another example of an initiative aimed at raising awareness of the perils and consequences of irregular migration to Europe among persons who consider doing so.

Raising Awareness on Migration in Pakistan, PARIM

When: 2021-2022

Where: Region of Punjab, Pakistan

Web:



Project Description:

Information on migration has become a crucial element of empowering potential migrants to take an informed decision on their migration trajectory. Providing people with knowledge on the dangers and consequences of irregular migration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling as well as the legal pathways of migration is important to counteract myths and wrongful information spread by smuggling and trafficking networks. The overall objective is to sensitise and empower potential migrants to make informed decisions about migration, particularly irregular migration, and in turn, contribute to reducing irregular migration towards European and other countries. At the same time, the project will aim to build sustainable networks and platforms among different groups of stakeholders to enhance their capacity in raising awareness, providing balanced information and promoting legal pathways. It will increase the understanding of key influencers of potential migrants about the dangerous consequences of irregular migration and the potential benefits of regular pathways. This initiative focuses on information dissemination and awareness raising among potential migrants in Pakistan already known (irregular) migration-prone areas in Pakistan, mostly in Punjab. The initiative consist of a combination of community engagement and multi-media communication activities. As the project is ongoing at the time this information is included in the handbook, its outcome and efficacy are yet to be evaluated.

Who:

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Ministry of Interior Austria, Ministry of Interior Bulgaria, Migrant Resource Centres situated in the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD), Department of Labour Punjab (DoL)

Factsheet:



Financing body:

co-funded by the European Union (AMIF), Ministry of Interior Austria, Ministry of Interior Bulgaria

Videos:



PERCEPTIONS consortium partners involved:

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Type(s) of intervention:

Raising awareness of the risks associated with the journey along irregular migration routes

Addressing misleading media representations of migrants and misinformation

Best practices included in our library refer mainly to media professionals and media outlets providing platforms for the voices of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to address toxic narratives and to provide balanced reporting. In our interviews, practitioners mentioned a few initiatives related to this topic. Changing the ways in which we speak about migration is one way of addressing policy and legislation. As outlined in

more detail in Chapter 3, narratives on migration are tied to policies and policy making. The work with the community of media practitioners by the Association Carta di Roma deserves mentioning, as they formulated an ethical code to be followed by journalists when reporting on migration and minorities, as well as other tools to address misleading media representations and the stigmatisation of migrants and other minorities.

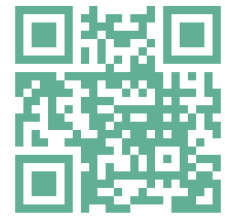


Associazione Carta di Roma (Association Charter of Rome)

When: 2011-ongoing

Where: Italy

Web:



Project Description:

The Association **Carta di Roma** is an initiative that targets a community of practice: media practitioners. It was founded in December 2011 with the goal of implementing the Journalist's Code of Conduct on immigration, signed by the National Council of Journalists (CNOG) and the National Federation of the Italian Press (FNSI) in June 2008. Carta di Roma seeks to be a stable reference point for those who work in or with the media on issues of migration and minorities: journalists, media operators, as well as various institutions, associations and activists involved in promoting and supporting the rights of asylum seekers, refugees, minorities and migrants in the field of media reporting. This is achieved by providing training activities for media operators, research and monitoring activities, initiatives and public events aimed to encourage the correct and responsible reporting about immigration, minorities or the right to seek asylum, collaboration between media practitioners and other stakeholder, among other activities. The Association Carta di Roma has published a toolkit for media practitioners including a Code of Ethics, a Glossary, and Guidelines on reporting available in Italian, English, French, and Arabic.

Who:

The National Council Of Journalists, the National Federation of the Italian Press (Founders)

Facebook:



PERCEPTIONS consortium partners involved:

University of Bologna

Type(s) of intervention:

Addressing misleading media representations of migrants and misinformation, addressing negative public perceptions, racism and xenophobia towards migrants

Addressing negative public perceptions, racism and xenophobia towards migrants

In many countries, groups of migrants experience being treated as 'others' when their values, traditions and their cultural, racial differences are met with rejection, or when they become (economically) marginalised from mainstream society. There are several coordinated actions dedicated to tackling negative public perceptions towards migrant populations at the local, at the national, at the supranational, or at the international level. Most initiatives are set up by civil society organizations and NGOs at the community or neighbourhood level. These include workshops, online platforms for story and data sharing, campaigns, and art-driven programmes. Community-based projects frequently aim at engaging youth and young adults who are seen as most vulnerable to extremist propaganda as they often struggle with identity, belonging, or faith.

A practitioner in Germany mentioned a socio-pedagogical project for football fans implemented in Cologne. Through the project, several activities are carried out around the themes of football and flight to prevent discrimination and raise

awareness. Activities include organising trips to memorial site, including guided tours of National Socialist (Nazi) memorial sites in the city, organising exhibitions about football, as well as telling the stories of footballers who have fled their countries of origin. Activities are also organised in school classrooms to address different topics in football, for example discrimination and flight. Also organised in Germany were exhibitions highlighting positive stories of individual migrants and refugees who had arrived from Syria to Germany, destined for the general public.

YouthRightOn is a project that addresses the problem of far-right influence over youth in Bulgaria, aged 14-19. In doing so, the project also confronts racism and xenophobia towards migrants.



Find Another Way

When: 2019-2021

Where: Bulgaria

Web:



Project Description:

Find Another Way addresses the problem of far-right influence over youth in Bulgaria by developing alternative narratives to confront extremist messages and ideas propagated online. The project mainly engages with online users and communities, targeting youth aged 14-19. The activities of the project aim to enhance resilience, inspire critical thinking and increase civic engagement among youth in Bulgaria susceptible to extremist content. The project partners are developing preventive online measures for specific target audiences susceptible to far right radicalisation. Striving for sustaining its impact in the long term, the project also provides sound and replicable diagnostic approaches of at-risk- target audiences, push and pull factors, along with working methods for addressing radicalisation risks and effective messaging online, which can be replicated both in the national context but also transferrable to other contexts. In February 2020, the project launched its campaign to challenge far right messages online, not by opposing them but by encouraging positive civic engagement and proposing alternative viewpoints. The online campaign was accompanied by an offline initiative which consisted of developing of a lesson guide and methodology for teachers, building resilience, fostering emotional intelligence, enhancing conflict resolution skills, developing tolerance and empathy, developing media literacy and critical thinking of students when consuming content online.

Who:

The Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD), Distinkt Group,
The Applied Research and Communications Fund (Arc Fund)

YouTube:



Financing body:

European Union's Internal Security Fund

Instagram:



PERCEPTIONS consortium partners involved:

The Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD)

Type(s) of intervention:

Addressing negative public perceptions, racism and xenophobia towards migrants,

How can I engage creatively?

Community engagement has been used for many years to enhance and strengthen academic research and the work of practitioners, and offers the potential of empowering communities and service users.



Giving newcomers to a community the possibility to participate in meaningful creative activities with others can help them to fully engage in the life of their new environment. We understand creative community engagement as an opportunity for migrants to make social connections, to develop and share skills, to have space to connect with the local community and to share their thoughts and ideas.

Creative engagement is collaborative, participative, inclusive and impactful. It is a collaboration between one or more creative practitioners or entities and one or more community groups, and can involve other partners such as academics or practitioners. Creative engagement involves one or a variety of creative practices such as visual arts, photography, performance, storytelling, etc. The creative activity often addresses one or several social issues relevant to the community. Participatory creative activities have attracted attention for their beneficial interventions with groups deemed vulnerable or marginalised⁴⁹ and the design of such activity should be carefully planned to adequately suit the needs of these groups.


What is creative engagement?

"Creative engagement is an approach to community engagement that uses creative tools and artistic experiences to help diverse stakeholders imagine new approaches to planning processes and spark creative problem solving" (Arts and Planning Toolkit, What is creative engagement)



The PERCEPTIONS Team designed creative awareness and campaigning tools to inspire you. A step-by-step description of how the activities were set up is available on our Hub.

SCAN ME!
Or [click here](#) for all reports.



Engaging with migrant groups and individuals can be accomplished through creative initiatives which can promote migrant rights, encourage awareness of migration issues, and facilitate the inclusion of migrants in the life of these communities. Community stakeholders can identify migrants' needs, plan new initiatives, and generate solutions through creative projects. The use of creative methods for community engagement is an effective way to overcome barriers to participation and to thereby include hard-to-reach groups, such as persons with limited language skills. The benefits of such engagement ranges from stimulating communities and individuals to work together towards a common response to building confidence and self-expression. Creative engagement is a process which should be designed primarily to enable the building of trust and relationships⁵⁰. There is no one-fits-all approach to identifying an effective engagement method.



What follows are examples of creative engagement activities involving refugees, individuals seeking asylum, and other migrants implemented by members of the PERCEPTIONS research team. The two initiatives showcased- the film DYSTOPIA and the R.E.D. Carpet installation- creatively communicate findings from the PERCEPTIONS project.



Tackling migrant imaginaries through the R.E.D. (Reframing the European Dream) Carpet

The R.E.D. Carpet (Reframing the European Dream) installation has the purpose of raising awareness of the different perceptions of Europe, allowing the audience to hear the words of interviewees as interpreted through the voices of international actors. The R.E.D. Carpet illustrations and videos promote a reflexive approach to perceptions of “self” and “others”, migrants and practitioners, thereby highlighting the challenges and opportunities of newcomers’ reception and integration in Italy.

The installation has thus far been shown in conjunct with a presentation of the PERCEPTIONS project, and used to engage audiences more creatively and impactfully. The exhibition of the carpet in different public spaces and its interactive design stimulate learning and critical awareness, and has proven to be an accessible form of research communication. In addition, the way the installation has come about has contributed to the co-construction of non-linear, critical and complex knowledge about Europe and migration, as well as strengthened collaboration between artists, academics, first line practitioners and migrants.

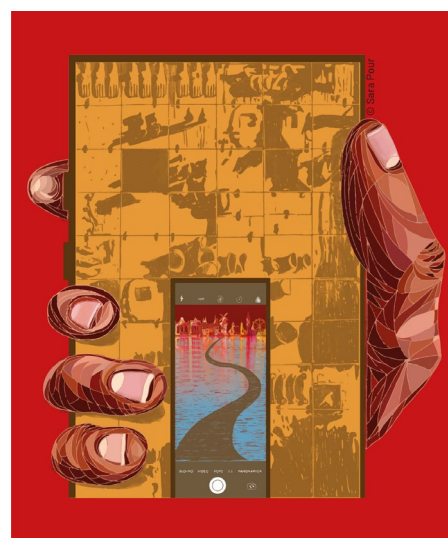


Illustration by Sara Pour

The Concept

Choosing a carpet as the centre piece of this installation elicits a gesture of welcome: the red carpet is reminiscent of success, as it is usually laid out for very important people. The carpet further boasts an intricate design created by Iranian artists Sara Pour, who references paradise on earth with her illustrations of a lush garden in bloom, full of ripe fruit. The choice of a carpet was made to symbolise the imaginings of opportunities and success projected onto Europe from afar, by people intending to migrate. But when the carpet is approached and inspected, its illustrations reveal more complicated and unpleasant details.

The concept of the R.E.D. carpet captures how Europe, for many, is imagined as a paradise where access to „fruit“ will be at their fingertips: stretch out an arm and gainful employment, a home, or an education will be within reach. Yet, at closer inspection, the struggles and challenges involved in the migration journey are revealed. The installation builds on fieldwork conducted in Italy for the PERCEPTIONS project.

How to?

The R.E.D. Carpet (Reframing the European Dream) installation consists of

- **A 13 x 1.30 m sized carpet made of plasticised material**
- **QR codes that are part of the carpet, to be scanned with a mobile device**
- **33 short video clips based on real interview quotes**
- **12 video clips providing an explanation of the illustrations integrated in the carpet design**
- **9 video clips featuring actors' testimonies and reflections on the process**

Each QR code directs viewers to one of the 33 short video clip (30 seconds to 1.30 minute in length) in which actors interpret quotes extracted from the interviews conducted in Italy as part of the PERCEPTIONS fieldwork. The quotes were interpreted in Italian or English, and subtitled accordingly.

The Carpet illustrations created by the artist Sara Pour and the video clips address the main 12 topics which had emerged from the Italian fieldwork, namely:

1. Europe through screens
2. the European dream
3. border crossings
4. integrations
5. relations with community of origin
6. security
7. human rights
8. bureaucracy
9. training
10. home
11. job
12. prospects

Impact

The R.E.D. Carpet has thus far been an effective means of developing new spaces and modes of collective expression to facilitate the recognition of the needs and challenges faced by migrants and refugees in host communities. The availability of the R.E.D. carpet videos and illustrations in digital format on the PERCEPTIONS web platform, allows for dissemination and reuse of the videos in the context of workshops or teaching activities.

The creation of the R.E.D. carpet thus opened up a new opportunities for these stories of migrants and refugees to be disseminated and heard, that are more accessible than scientific journal articles or reports. Instead, the R.E.D. carpet allows audiences to hear the words spoken by the interviewees and to learn more about their perceptions, thus furthering the development of (inter)cultural competences.

Re-Imagining research findings through film: *DYSTOPIA*



SCAN ME!

dystopiathefilm.org

Research is no stranger to using the medium of film. Film has been employed as a method to collect data, as well as a means to communicate findings. Film, when used as audio-visual storytelling, can convey the various experiences of migrants through both dialogue and non-verbal communication (i.e. imagery, symbolism, the creation of moods). This way, the use of film helps to reach audiences that traditional academic publishing oftentimes overlooks.

The Concept

What should an audience know about the issue you investigated? What is the story you want to tell? What can you draw inspiration from to inform the story you are about to tell through film? A good starting point are texts (secondary literatures), images (drawings, photos) co-produced with research participants, or interviews (empirical data). These materials can inform the synopsis and visual approach used in the film.



In the film *DYSTOPIA*, the filmmakers collaborated with the PERCEPTIONS team to identify and select key themes emerging from the research: space, time, encounters with the unknown and the foreign. The film integrated drawings and quotes from interviews conducted with migrants within the PERCEPTIONS project. Topics that emerged from our interviews with asylum seekers included disorientation and uncertainty due to their legal status. The filmmakers translated this into the carnivalesque and unpredictable space of the Valencian Fallas Festival. The main character's dwelling and the spaces she wanders through as she gets to know the city, reference the uncertainty, invisibility, and hope experienced in migration.

How to?

Collaborative work always requires planning. The most important decision to be taken from the onset pertains to how the collaboration will be set up: who will be involved, at what stage, and to what extent? Which stakeholders do you want to involve besides the research team and the filmmakers, if any? Will the research team (and perhaps other stakeholders) take on merely a consulting role, or will they co-write and co-produce? These decisions will affect how and by whom the project is managed, who writes the story, who has a say in the production of the film, and later on, how the film will be disseminated. Decisions regarding the nature of the collaboration will also affect timelines, as complex coordination across different project members requires time and space for dialogue.

The different stages at which collaboration can take place are:

- **The creation of a film concept**
- **The writing of the film script**
- **The production of the film**
- **The post-production of the film**
- **The dissemination of the film**

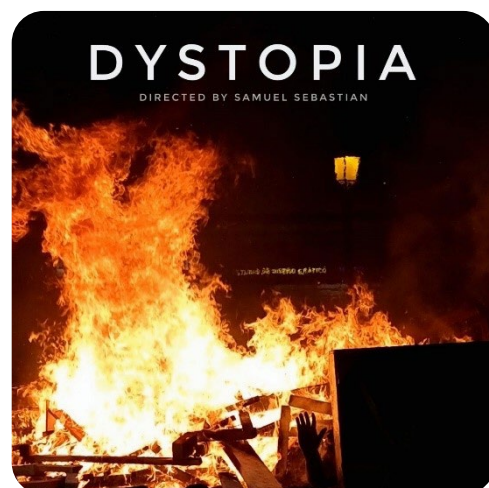
Think of these steps in the creative process as opportunities to work across stakeholder groups, but also remember to clearly define the level of involvement of each partner in each of these steps.

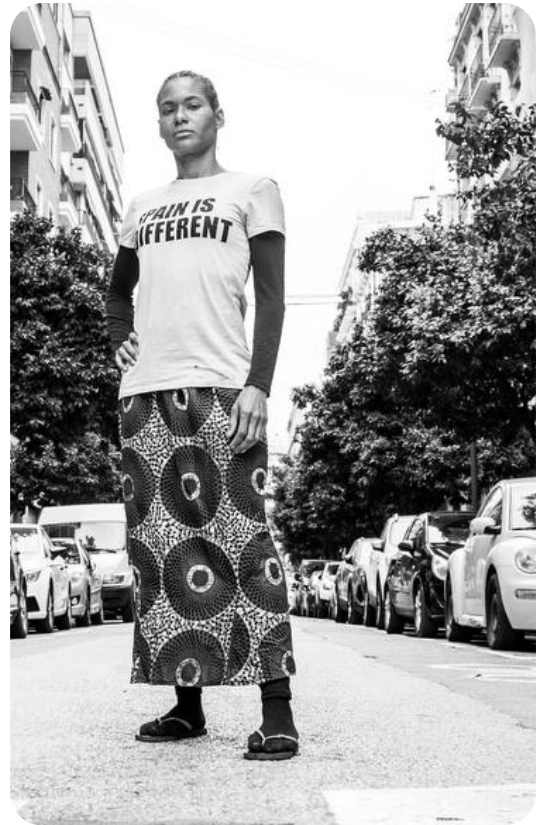
How will the film be used in the future and who owns the rights to it, are matters that tie into how the collaboration was set up. It is advisable to make agreements on how the film will be used, and who owns which rights from the outset to avoid any potential conflicts in the future. Consider how the film is publicised, promoted and exploited, discuss all rental and lending rights, the right of communication to the public, TV and online broadcasting rights. Who will own intellectual property rights and for how long? Decide and agree with the filmmaker on who will financially benefit from sharing and screening the film, and how such financial benefits are regulated.

The process leading to the making of the film DYSTOPIA involved the research team primarily as consultants. The team provided input and feedback on the script, and suggested ways to incorporate project outputs into the film (e.g. drawings created during a creative workshop). However, the team took no active role in the filmmaking processes.

Impact

However you decide to arrange your collaboration, **disseminating the film is important to reach that broader audience you hoped to reach**. Here, the various networks and industry-specific processes can be of good use. Think of a strategy on where to show the film: select film festivals and complete application forms, look for non-profit dissemination events, leverage on existing networks to organise screenings, and make use of festival exposure, reviews and word of mouth within the academic and professional networks to promote the film. Produce marketing materials (posters, trailers, stills, social media assets etc.) and advertise for the film. Consider direct distribution and contact cinemas directly and hold exhibitor screenings for cinema audiences.





Pictures: courtesy of Samuel Sebastian, director of „Dystopia“.

We hope this chapter has provided you with inspiring examples for good community engagement practices, and has encouraged you to get creative with our awareness toolkit. Below we collected a few more external resources that can help you with the conceptualisation and design of (creative) community engagement. The next chapter (Chapter 3) provides recommendations on the future direction of policy and legislation.

Click to jump to **Chapter 1**

Click to jump to **Chapter 3**



Further Resources

Literature:

Newcomer Integration in Europe: Best Practices and Innovations since 2015, edited by Agnese Lace. Published by FEPS, Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Brussels, 2018. [Available here](#).

The Counter-Narrative Handbook, written by Henry Tuck Tanya Silverman. Published by The Institute for Strategic Dialogue, London, 2016. [Available here](#).

The Radicalisation Awareness network (RAN) publication collection on radicalisation and violent extremism, authored by members of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2020-ongoing. [Available here](#).

The RAN papers consolidate the network's expertise and knowledge on radicalisation and violent extremism into an accessible format, with up-to-date information. The papers introduce the latest research findings as collected by members of the network. All manuscripts are reviewed by the RAN Editorial Board before publication online. RAN is a network of frontline practitioners who work daily with both those vulnerable to radicalisation and those who have already been radicalised. They are funded by the EU Commission's Internal Security Fund.

We Can! Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives written by Agata de Latour, Nina Perger, Ron Salaj Claudio Tocchi and Paloma Viejo Otero and edited by Celina Del Felice, Menno Ettema, and Rui Gomes, 2017. [Available here](#). (01.12.2022)

Hate Speech. Guida breve per combattere i discorsi d'odio online (A short guide to fight hate speech online), published by Amnesty International (Italy), in Italian, 2020. [Available here](#). (01.12.2022)

Online Tools:

The interactive Map on Diaspora Engagement, created by the European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF), [Available here](#). (01.12.2022)

The interactive library on Diaspora Engagement created by the European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF), [Available here](#). (01.12.2022)

EUDiF works to consolidate efforts on diaspora engagement for development, to bridge existing gaps between policy development and research, to test out concrete modes of engagement and to create a laboratory of innovative ideas and policies, based on needs and priorities. Their website provides information on diaspora engagement policies and organisations as well as accessible data, best practice examples and other materials. EUDiF receives financial support from the European Union.

A collection of inspiring practices against radicalisation, created by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), [Available here](#). (01.12.2022)

The RAN network collates practices implemented in European Union and European Economic Area member states, aimed at countering violent extremism. This collection is continually expanding to include more practices with the aim of providing a valuable source of information and inspiration for practitioners, policymakers and researchers. RAN is a network of frontline practitioners who work daily with both those vulnerable to radicalisation and those who have already been radicalised. They are funded by the EU Commission's Internal Security Fund.

The Engage2020 Action Catalogue, created by a consortium of academic and technological partners, [Available here](#). (01.12.2022)

The Engage2020 Action Catalogue is an online decision support tool for researchers, policy-makers and others wanting to conduct inclusive research, to find the research methods best suited for their specific project needs. The creation of the catalogue was funded through the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration.

The Participatory Methods Toolkit: A practitioner's manual, written by Slocum, N. (2003) and published by the United Nations University (UNU-CRIS) is available for download [here](#).

This hands-on toolkit will help you start up and manage participatory projects. Albeit a couple of years old by now, it remains relevant and helpful.

The Arts & Planning Toolkit, created by the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), [Available here](#). (05.11.2021)

The Arts and Planning Toolkit offers a variety of tools and strategies to help planners advance arts and culture for community engagement and development. It provides resources for planners and other government staff who are interested in innovating their planning and community development work through projects and partnerships that engage arts, culture, and the creative community. The website provides tools and strategies as well as case studies.

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- ⁴¹ UNHCR Nicosia. (2014). The integration of refugees: a discussion paper. accessible at https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/integration_discussion_paper_July_2014_EN.pdf accessed 22.11.2021
- ⁴² VALUE is an Erasmus + project that equips and encourages schools to improve their educational processes through the use of multilingual practices. It provides teachers with methodologies, tools, and practices (innovative interactive teaching techniques, ICT, digital storytelling, open interactive platform) to include students of migrant background in their classes effectively and support them in being integrated into the school community. For more information see: <http://valuemultilingualism.org/>
- ⁴³ see <https://refugeetalenthub.com/> or <https://forwardincubator.com/> in the Netherlands as examples for similar approaches. Last accessed 12.11.2021
- ⁴⁴ <https://ren.centreforentrepreneurs.org/>, last accessed 12.11.2021
- ⁴⁵ https://migrantlife.bg/HOTLINE_COVID-19 (no longer in use)
- ⁴⁶ The app and more information on it is available at: <https://miniila.com/> (access 12.11.2021)
- ⁴⁷ Some information campaigns have been used to discourage asylum seekers from travelling to particular European countries. Targeted messages were sent by the Belgian Office of Foreigners via social media platforms using Facebook ads to specific nationals, informing migrants in transit about asylum procedures and potential courses of action regarding asylum applications. The awareness campaign Lost Dreams, funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs was launched in 2016, with the aim to expose the dangers of irregular migration and to prevent the loss of lives. The target audiences of the campaign and film were mostly African nationals from Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The campaign centred on an informational film based on real life experiences of African refugees who travelled to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. The film included the appearance of African Celebrities in Germany to achieve greater appeal with the target audiences.
- ⁴⁸ Information available on the portal itself at: <https://w2bw.de/de/start> (access 12.11.2021)
- ⁴⁹ Zeilig, H., Killick, J., & Fox, C. (2014). The participative arts for people living with a dementia: a critical review. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*, 9(1), 7-34.
- ⁵⁰ Rees & Shubin (2022). *Improve your Research's Impact using these 5 Examples from an EU Funded Project*, <https://www.perceptions.eu/improve-your-researchs-impact-using-these-5-examples-from-an-eu-funded-project/>

Chapter 3:

I WANT TO ADDRESS POLICY AND LEGISLATION



Introduction

To understand and address policy and legislation, it is crucial to know the challenges they aim to tackle. Identifying, delineating and describing policy problems is the first step in thinking about current policy challenges and how to improve them. However, to understand how issues become policy problems and how support is mobilised for certain policy actions, we need to critically examine certain narratives about migration that set the policy context. Understanding dominant narratives and counternarratives is a first step towards understanding the context in which policy choices are made⁵¹.

This chapter is intended for readers interested in improving current policies. It addresses not only the policy context, but also policy changes and challenges within Europe and in the Middle-East and North African (MENA) region since 2015. This chapter then outlines improvements as proposed by stakeholders – first-line practitioners, law enforcement agents, policymakers, migrants and other experts- and concludes with policy recommendations addressing some of the identified challenges.

Setting the scene: how is immigration to Europe talked about?

Media in Europe regularly present migration in a polarised way that either promotes narratives of solidarity, openness and human rights, or that of crisis and threats which at times intertwines with xenophobic discourse. These media representations both reflect and influence the polarised views on migration that can be observed in European societies at large, where increasingly strict policy discourses come into conflict with solidarity practices at the grassroots level.



Migration narratives are important as they influence policy outcomes that have tangible consequences for migrant communities and society at large. Told through a variety of channels (via friends, family, journalists, traditional mass media and social media, via academic experts, lobbyists, or politicians), dominant narratives create the 'common knowledge' through which policy discourses are framed. Our systematic review of the literature⁵² on the topic of migration narratives has shown that conflicting perceptions of migrants and migration coexist in receiving contexts in Europe.

Positive perceptions:

- Upholding human rights obligations enshrined in International Law
- Supportive of accepting refugees into the country
- Expressing solidarity with refugees and other migrants
- Openness to skilled migrants, especially from high-earning EU countries



Negative perceptions:

- Belief that migration leads to an increased threat of terrorism related crimes
- Migrants are perceived to pose economic, political and cultural threats to the host population due to challenges related to assimilation and integration
- Migrants are sometimes viewed in xenophobic, racist, stereotypical ways due to media discourses representing migrants in a negative superficial manner using loaded terms such as 'flood', 'invasion', 'tsunami', 'wave', even where immigration rates remains low



These perceptions are particularly visible in traditional media in Europe, which frequently frame migration as a challenge that needs tackling through policy making. The Migration Policy Institute identified three common narratives used to frame stories about migration and migrants: the benefit/hero frame, the victim frame, and the threat/villain frame⁵³. Similarly, our literature review showed four different narratives that are commonly used to refer to migration in mainstream media: crisis, xenophobia, solidarity, and victimisation.

Crisis narrative: The media often frames migration as a 'crisis' that needs emergency legislation and intervention. The notion that Europe faced a 'migration crisis' is contested within academia where some scholars apply the term 'humanitarian crisis', or 'human rights crisis'. The notion of a crisis itself is also contested since it implies a state of emergency. This reflects the politicised nature of defining migration issues in Europe. Counternarratives to the 'crisis narratives' point out that the majority of refugees do not make it to Europe, but remain in countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan, and Pakistan, to mention only a few.

Xenophobic narrative: Some media outlets tend to portray migrants and their descendants as inherently different, fostering a xenophobic narrative that can increase discriminations and negative sentiments towards migrants. This narrative was exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Solidarity narrative: The framing of a solidarity narrative in the media depicts host societies as feeling close to the refugees' plight and offering solidarity. Migration is framed in a humanitarian discourse, with narratives focusing on European societies' emotional reactions to migrants in vulnerable situations. Such narratives focus on identifying with the struggles and constraints that migrants experience, including risking their lives in order to reach Europe.

Victim narrative: The framing of migrants as 'victims' tends to dehumanise migrants, and presumes migrants to be lacking agency. Victimisation seems linked to building solidarity-based narratives. At the same time, this narrative is often mobilised to promote investments in information campaigns aimed at decreasing irregular migration to Europe including TV ads, educational radio programs, newspaper campaigns and cinema spots⁵⁴.



*Narratives in Mainstream Media -
Frequencies of narratives reported for mainstream media*

Thus, narratives on migration are largely polarised between those that promote openness to immigration, either due to its positive effects for receiving societies or because of a duty to offer international protection (morally or legally) to persons seeking asylum and other migrants, and those that advocate restrictive migration regimes due to potential challenges and (perceived) threats migration entails for receiving societies. This polarisation is also reflected in policy developments since 2015, where policies aimed at easing and improving the integration of migrants coexist with securitisation measures. While practitioners at the grassroots level have invested in measures to support and integrate newcomers, policy debates in Europe - and elsewhere - have in the past decades frequently addressed migration through a securitization lens.

The narrative of **migration as a security threat** emerged in European policy circles in conjunction with two events. First, the creation of the European Union and the Schengen zone entailed tighter external border controls. Then, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York strengthened the link between security and migration in Europe, as migration came to be discussed in relation to campaigns against terrorism⁵⁵. The attacks also brought closer together two agendas that used to be treated separately: integration and migration control⁵⁶. The terrorist attacks in London and Madrid in the early 2000s carried out by long-term resident immigrants, put (failing) integration policies in focus and led to the European Council's agreement in November 2004 on 'common basic principles' of immigrant integration policy⁵⁷.

The securitisation lens, which builds on the narrative of migration as a crisis and on the perception of immigrants as 'threats'⁵⁸, has had significant influence on policy development and responses to immigration, notably to irregular border crossings, over the past years. Yet, the risk in analysing migration as a security problem is that this contributes to the (re)production of the "security drama"⁵⁹ and the negative portrayal of groups of migrants that can lead to xenophobia and discrimination in day to day interactions. Moreover, the appeal to the emotion of fear that the narrative of migration as a threat entails, can become an instrument to manipulate actions

and attitudes of citizens towards migrants. This is not to say that the challenges and threats (i.e. terrorism and radicalisation) are imaginary, but it is prudent to remember that the security discourse is characterised by overstating an issue as having absolute priority⁶⁰. By focussing solely on the prevention of terrorist attacks, policy-makers may place migrants' safety at the bottom of their priorities. Also, looking at migration through a securitisation lens can lead to misunderstanding (certain forms of) migration as standalone causes of such threats, and to public narratives and policies that criminalise certain migrant communities. Authors have argued that such policies may not only lack effectiveness, but turn out to be counterproductive as unjust criminalisation may trigger people's likelihood to sympathise with the use of violent means in response (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Lastly, presenting a public issue as a serious security threat means elevating this issue to an absolute priority to which the logical consequence will be to take emergency measures or an exceptional course of action⁶¹.



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To learn more about the landscape of narratives on migration to Europe, have a look at our brochure "A review of narratives and approaches".



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Also check out this report on "How We Talk about Migration: The Link between Migration Narratives, Policy, and Power" by Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, Haim Malka and Shelly Culbertson at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI)

What were the trends in policy and legislation since 2015 and what do stakeholders recommend for the future?

The securitisation discourse has had a strong influence on trends in European migration policy-making since 2015. The partly uncontrolled arrival of large numbers of people at Europe's external borders between the years 2014 and 2016 was largely framed as 'refugee crisis' and has led to an increase in securitisation trends. This term has been contested by scholars and also criticised by civil society organisation and intergovernmental agency representatives who preferred to speak of a 'human rights crisis' or a crisis of the 'asylum system'. Stakeholders across the board also criticised the term 'crisis' in itself which fails to acknowledge shifts in international mobility as a long-term phenomenon. To tackle the challenges that accompanied the stark increase of new and irregular arrivals over the past years, stakeholders provided suggestions on how to move towards a migration management that is more beneficial for all. The research team has also compiled policy briefs which can be accessed via the links and QR codes provided below.

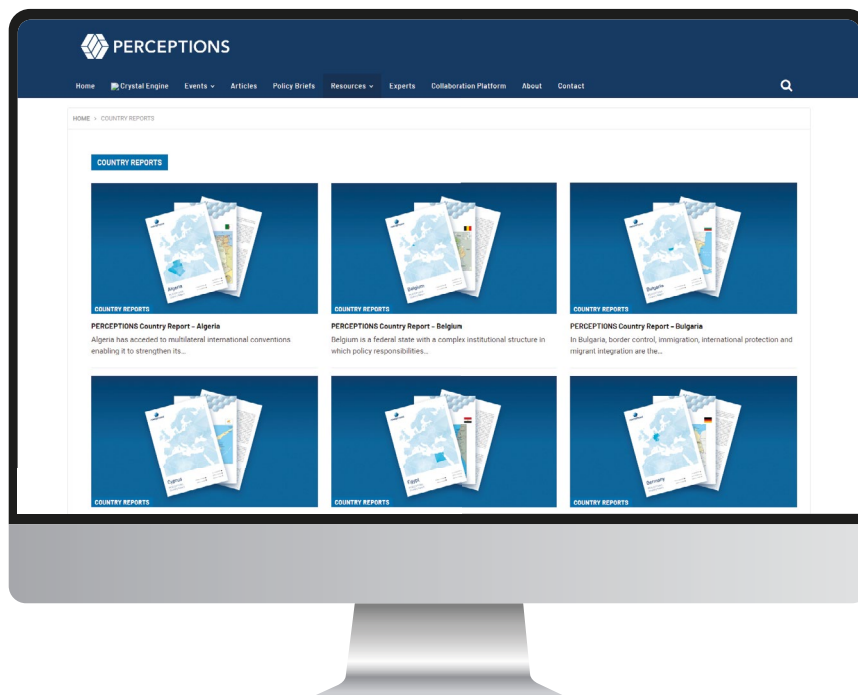


A number of policy measures have been implemented since 2015 in response to threats, real and perceived, related to cross-border migration. These measures often operate at the intersection of migration policy and security management and include policies in the area of border management, irregular migration, human trafficking, integration and asylum⁶². Here, we discuss policy developments in recent years and what stakeholders recommend for the future.

Stakeholders have offered a wide range of proposals to be applied by national governments or at the EU level. Recommendations provided address the risks and threats perceived to affect host societies on the one hand, and risks and threats affecting migrants on the other. Overall, practitioners' views reflected high levels of dissatisfaction with migration and integration policies, and showed concern in particular about threats to migrants' safety. Many of the proposals made by law enforcement authorities overlap with those made by practitioners; one central point of agreement is the need to tackle the quality of information available to prospective migrants. Stakeholders generally believe that governments play a central role in ensuring that migrants have access to updated information available in different languages. Accordingly, stakeholders recommendations primarily pertain to:

- the homogenization of the asylum system among EU states with an ease of restrictions on rights and freedoms for asylum seekers and refugees;
- the de-bureaucratization of administrative procedures in relation to migration status and channels for regularisation in the case of undocumented migrants;
- an increase in available legal migration opportunities;
- an increase in the recognition of economic and social rights for migrants, promoting integration, solidarity and inclusiveness;

- improved information about migrants' access to rights in Europe including governments' information channels (such as websites) ensuring they are accurate, updated and easily understood;
- make information campaigns inclusive, context specific and trustworthy;
- ensure that international cooperation between EU countries and countries of origin and transit aligns with reaching development goals and achieving human rights.



For country specific developments, check out the country reports available on the [PERCEPTIONS Hub!](#)

Border management policies

Border management policies have intensified the control of internal and external EU borders⁶³. Greater border controls have also been implemented in the North African countries under research. Furthermore, **bilateral agreements between the EU and North African countries** have been instrumental in strengthening third countries' capacities at managing their borders but have also impacted migrants' behaviour, safety, and the development of people smuggling and human trafficking networks. The increasing involvement of law-enforcement authorities at different stages of the migration process, the emphasis put on the collection and sharing of information on migrants across institutions and states, and the stricter methods used to enforce compliance, both in relation to neighbouring states as well as individuals, are aimed at deterring migrants from using irregular border crossings through this command and control approach.

Stakeholders criticised the fact that these agreements are often disguised as international cooperation for development agreements, which can obscure the fact that international development funds are being misused to 'buy legislative and executive changes' concerning migration policy in receiving countries. Furthermore, changes in border management have been linked to migrants' increased vulnerability to human traffickers, torture, and even death at the hands of border officials⁶⁴. Consequently, stakeholders recommend the creation of safe legal migration pathways particularly for low skilled workers⁶⁵.

Stakeholders call for a reorientation of migration and border management policies and increased funding and coordination of border agencies.

Law Enforcement Agents in particular called for the need to implement long-term increased funding and coordination among security agencies directed at reducing undetected entries, mostly in relation to individuals who may pose a threat to destination countries. They stated to be ill-equipped to effectively tackle irregular entries, and called for increased support from the EU to manage periods of strain at the borders or of reception infrastructures, and to safeguard borders via increased cooperation with agencies such as

FRONTEX⁶⁶. Several shared frustration at the lack of adequate humanitarian response and policies in relation to migration, which may oblige them to direct their efforts away from tackling various forms of criminal activity. For example, sometimes they need to make decisions that are beyond their purview, such as needing to distinguish who is eligible to request asylum and who is not. For such difficult decisions, more support from institutions and other professionals is required in order to effectively fulfil their responsibilities. In this regard, stakeholders saw benefits in increased coordination between security agencies and governmental and non-governmental entities. Doing so promotes a holistic approach among different institutions responsible for migration management. At the same time, policies that would establish new legal migration channels would decrease the demand on LEAs to carry out such tasks that are beyond their purview.

Law enforcement officer, Italy

The worst thing about the flow of migration is that maybe we don't realize that they are people who really have needs, but we pretend not to see them, not to feel them, not to touch them

Head to the PERCEPTIONS Information Hub and check out our policy brief titled "[UK asylum and immigration policy in focus: improved security or increased insecurity](#)" for a critical look at securitization and the UK asylum and immigration policy.



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Irregular migration policies

Two narratives dominant at EU policy level were instrumental in scaffolding the fight against irregular migration: one associating irregular migrants with posing a security risk and a potential terrorist threat, and the other, considering the fight against irregular migration as a means to dismantling organised criminal groups involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking. These two narratives were endorsed by both pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary Tunisian governments⁶⁷. PERCEPTIONS stakeholders opposed the implementation of strict border, immigration and asylum policies as this increases insecurities instead of improving security according to them and thus propose more humanitarian policies and visa regimes⁶⁸. At the level of migration-related policy making, practitioners' insights on the drivers of migration invite consideration of policies based on improving conditions in migrants' countries of origin. Indeed, stakeholders highlighted creating positive conditions in sending countries might be the best way of addressing irregular migration.

Most policies aiming to address **irregular migration since 2015** do so through policies of criminalisation, largely taking place in countries of transit through **EU externalisation practices**⁶⁹. **Algeria** has put in place legal, structural, and security measures as well as economic measures to counter irregular migration, which include deportation, through expulsion or push-backs to the borders, as well as criminal sentences including fines and imprisonment⁷⁰. In **Tunisia**, the 2014 Constitution provides for the right to seek asylum⁷¹, yet the country does not have an asylum law. Asylum seekers arriving to Tunisia irregularly are treated as irregular migrants, meaning as criminal offenders, and are kept in detention and unable to reach the UNHCR to submit their asylum claim. There have been several reports of authorities deploying a strategy to stop irregular migrants from attempting to make asylum claims. Detention and push-backs at the borders are common practices, not only in Tunisia, but in other North African countries⁷².

From a European perspective, Tunisia is a key partner in creating a pre-frontier buffer zone against irregular migration from Tunisian citizens

seeking better lives in Europe as well as migrants from other African countries trying to reach Europe⁷³. In the case of **Tunisia** criminalisation policies apply to smugglers as well as to volunteers, who can face a 4-year sentence and a fine for directly or indirectly attempting to facilitate the entry, exit, or stay of irregular migrants into the country, as well as for giving them shelter or providing transportation. The law also criminalises the non-denouncement of irregular migrants and individuals helping them by sentencing those who, even covered by the obligation of professional secrecy fail to instantly report any activities involving irregular migrants⁷⁴.

European countries with an external EU border, such as **Bulgaria, Italy and Greece**, invested in **fencing policies**, enlarged border capacities in **coordination with Frontex**, and promoted awareness and dissuasion campaigns regarding migration to Europe. These campaigns, discussed further below, also warn migrants about the dangers of falling victims of traffickers or being lured by deceitful smugglers⁷⁵. People smuggling and human trafficking are key concerns on European policy agendas and have become securitised as the **'war on smuggling'**.

But the literature and stakeholders recommendations from the fieldwork also warns that poor migration management policies and practices may exacerbate the issues of human trafficking and people smuggling rather than resolving them⁷⁶. For example, after Bulgaria significantly increased its border security by erecting fences along almost the entire land border and reinforced border police patrols with the national army seconded by border guards from Frontex, the number of irregular migrants registered into the Automated Fingerprint Identification System increased. While the latter may also be linked to improved detection, new criminal networks emerged and smuggling activities continued to take place⁷⁷. Put in a nutshell: the riskier the journey to Europe, the more expensive it becomes. As borders are increasingly secured and patrolled, smuggling and trafficking becomes ever more lucrative. As such, careful consideration of the issue and unintended consequences is recommended by stakeholders⁷⁸.

Stakeholders called for an increase in available legal migration opportunities.

Stakeholders have recommended that an alternative to irregular border crossings be established across all countries to prevent harm being done to migrants undertaking dangerous journeys. Law enforcement agents deemed irregular migration routes to be highly unsafe and a major threat to migrants' rights and general welfare as well as a lucrative business for organised crime. It is because of this that they propose fostering legal migration channels and safe corridors. Migrant respondents recommended other future migrants to avoid irregular border crossings, while also pointing to the need to provide alternatives to irregular migration, creating safe corridors while relaxing restrictions on freedom of movement. Visa schemes that allow for circular migration, reflecting destination countries' demand for labour would decrease the number of migrants' working in the informal economy or using irregular border crossings, such as falling victims to human traffickers.

human rights. Practitioners sustain that there would be potential reduction in emigration if people have opportunities of achieving a good standard of living, and if their fundamental rights are guaranteed in their countries of origin⁷⁹.

CSO representative, Spain

the vision based on security and border control would clearly have to be changed and host societies would have to be educated. Governments should give the media messages that are more in line with reality. Migration is an inherent part of human life... cooperation and development policies should be changed. The right to migrate and the right not to have to emigrate really should be guaranteed [as] safe routes are practically non-existent

Are you interested in reading more about how to improve resilience in countries of origin? Check out our Policy Brief on using remittances to boost household resilience and discourage irregular migration in Senegal and the Gambia.



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Stakeholders also highlighted the need to ensure international cooperation agreements promote human rights and development goals.

Practitioners, both in the humanitarian field and in law enforcement, highlighted the need for international agreements to promote economic and democratic development in countries of origin. Several of them criticised how the funds for development agreements are being used to orient migration management policies, often at the expense of migrants' safety in origin and transit. They recommend these funds be used strictly for the support of democratic processes and the achievement of development goals and



Human trafficking policies

Policies addressing **human trafficking** do so from mainly two perspectives. The first perspective looks at human trafficking from the perspective of penal law. Building further on the Palermo Protocol (UN Anti-trafficking protocol⁸⁰), the fight against human trafficking can be seen as a way to ensure security. The second perspective approaches human trafficking from a human rights perspective. In this line of policy measures, there has been a shift from penalisation, to the protection of victims and to the prevention of trafficking. One of the leading initiatives is that, following the European Directive 2011/36/EU, EU member states have adopted and implemented anti-trafficking legislations at the national level that strives to combat and prevent human trafficking.

Stakeholders recommend regular monitoring, the development of surveillance systems, as well as transparent and accountable policy implementation in order to prevent, protect and assist (potential victims) and prosecute perpetrators. In that vein, there needs to be more and sustained protection (not only temporary protection) of victims willing to testify, safe housing, protection available for their families, and avoidance of deportation which often occurs on the grounds of safety/protection. Furthermore, there is a need for better screening processes (during interviews for asylum processes) to detect cases of trafficking involving male victims as well. Policymakers need to better involve NGOs, INGOs, and CSOs as actors who have direct access to (potential) victims in detention. These actors should be trained in providing better protection services, mental health counselling services, childcare and healthcare services especially for those (potential) victims of Human Trafficking who are with children or are unwell. In addition, policymakers need to address corruption and Human Trafficking jointly by facilitating cross-border cooperation, better enforcement and monitoring. A focus on combating corruption is necessary in order to effectively curb human trafficking. As previously discussed, border control directed at preventing irregular entries have increased migrants' vulnerability to human traffickers. As such, stakeholders' recommendations for legal migration channels,

safe passageways, and international cooperation and development agreements that strengthen human rights protection are all needed to effectively combat human trafficking.

Stakeholders recommend information campaigns in origin and transit countries to be more inclusive and trustworthy. Information campaigns on the dangers involved in irregular migration crossings are conducted with the stated objective of preventing migrants' use of such crossings in order to decrease their vulnerability to various threats including the threat of becoming victims of human trafficking. However, stakeholders were mostly critical of information campaigns currently implemented abroad. These campaigns were widely viewed as 'deterrence campaigns' and as highly ineffective. In contrast, several policy-makers stood out by stating that information campaigns served an important humanitarian purpose. A point of agreement

You also might want to read our policy brief "[The impact of UK immigration policies on the antimodern slavery agenda](#)", available here on the **PERCEPTIONS Hub.**



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among all stakeholders was that correct and reliable information is a key element influencing migrants' satisfaction with the migration process. Stakeholders' recommendations to improve information campaigns included paying greater attention to target group segmentation, the mode of communication, the medium of communication, and focusing on the informational needs of migrants rather than on the political agenda of different institutions⁸¹.

Target group segmentation:

- tailor campaigns to specific contexts and audiences including i.e gender, location in urban/rural communities, level of literacy, or phase of migration (pre-departure, in transit, at destination), among others.



Content of Information Campaigns:

- the messaging should address the drivers of migration;
- provide relevant, adequate and accurate information that could help migrants along their journeys and in destination countries concerning legal migration pathways and how to seek asylum from abroad;
- inform them about rights as well as duties at the destination;
- provide accurate information on opportunities at the destination (e.g. job market, unemployment, exploitative work) and
- address disinformation on housing and social benefits as well as on access to a residence permit.



Messenger:

- engage actors trusted by migrants to multiply the message;
- involve migrants (e.g. returnees) who have experienced the migration journey to convey in their own words their experiences, or contribute to the design and content of such campaigns and
- build trust and credibility among stakeholders (humanitarian NGO, target groups, governments, border police etc).



How can digital tools be used to better reach migrants? Read out policy brief
"How to Use Digital Tools and Digital Media to Reach Migrants"



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Integration policies

Migrant integration policies have gained a crucial place in the global agenda and are addressed by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda's aim to 'leave no one behind' (UNSDG, 2019). They can be designed and implemented at various levels (national, regional, local). Sometimes, integration measures are offered regionally or locally only, with a national strategy missing altogether. Integration policies usually offer a framework or set minimum of services (such as language or job orientation courses) and refinement of such efforts is sometimes linked to the idea that the challenges migrants create for host societies stem from their lack of integration or social inclusion. CSO or NGO integration initiatives often go beyond these minimum services and can take different forms, through projects in specific locations and neighbourhoods that seek to foster intercultural dialogue and horizontal relationships. Such initiatives are often conceptualised and put into practice by communities, at the grassroots making use of funds available through framework set by policy. Furthermore, existing legal frameworks and more recently concluded agreements with social media platform providers are in place to **shield users in Europe from discrimination and hate speech**⁸² thereby setting standards for the protection of migrants and other minorities from abuse online.

Social Media platforms are often used for the spread of hate speech, but to what extent can such platforms be held accountable?

Read our policy brief "[Liability of Internet Service Providers for Hate Speech in Migration Contexts](#)" for further insights.



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In acknowledgment of the specific needs of various migrant groups, integration initiatives have become more specialised, targeting for instance recognized refugees, unaccompanied minors, foreign spouses, or persons arriving via family reunification programs. Efforts to improve pathways for societal integration stem from evidence showing that third-country nationals tend to perform less well in employment, education and social inclusion, and more often live in poverty, compared to EU citizens⁸³. Insufficient economic integration and social inclusion in host countries is moreover associated with the risk of radicalisation, a rise in criminal activities, segregated living in low-cost residential neighbourhoods, and the formation of ghettos⁸⁴. This also led to some initiatives to prepare migrants before departure (e.g., language preparation, or professional training), when taking up a job or reuniting with their families. When asked about integration, stakeholders highlighted the need to apply a rights-based approach, meaning a **recognition of migrants' rights, improved information about their rights, and the de-bureaucratisation of administrative procedures** in relation to migrants' status which often served as a barrier to access such rights.

In this vein, stakeholders emphasised integration support as a way to respond to the marginalisation of migrants and to empower them through creating opportunities for economic and inclusion. Civil society organisations and local policymakers suggested legislative amendments at the national level to improve migrant integration and guarantee their rights. In addition to legislative changes, they also point to the need for increased funding destined towards integration efforts and an increase in the number of public officers working in the area of migration.

Law enforcement agents have pointed out that integration is not a unidirectional process, and that host societies should also increase efforts to accommodate different beliefs and customs of migrants. This will reduce the risk of ethno-social segregation which can feed into radicalisation.

Moreover, civil society actors mentioned that the last few years saw a decrease in available funding in the area of integration (e.g reception centres), which is further compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A conducive environment will determine the extent to which migrants can integrate and experience inclusion in host societies, and expand their social networks⁸⁵.

Adequate housing is often a problem for vulnerable migrants in Europe. Check out our policy brief *"Mismatched: migrant housing"* for suggestions on how to improve the situation.



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Improved information about how to access one's rights in Europe

In destination countries, stakeholders emphasised that national governments have the responsibility to **provide accurate, updated and transparent information on the processes concerning regularisation procedures, visa renewals, and permits**. Migrants and practitioners alike criticised the lack of accessible up to date information on how these procedures work. They pointed out that outdated government web-pages became sources of misinformation. Furthermore, quickly changing legislation increases the levels of uncertainty. Practitioners reported how changing legislation made it difficult for them to provide reliable advice, or required adjustments to an initially given advice. This indirectly led to migrants losing their trust in them as counsellors in migration matters. High levels of mistrust of institutional sources among migrants is thus exacerbated by the lack of effective messaging. Furthermore, many migrants are either unaware of their rights, or do not know what bureaucratic steps to take, increasing their levels of vulnerability. In addressing these inadequacies, stakeholders appeal to State responsibility in providing regularly updated accessible information in a clear language with appropriate translations available on migration-related administrative procedures, and promoting general knowledge on migrants' rights. That said, quality information is not the only problem, as **administrative procedures have been criticised for their level of complexity and high level of requirements**, which were deemed unrealistic and non-reflective of economic demands of migrant labour, nor of migration realities⁸⁶.

Practitioners in the humanitarian sector stressed the need for a de-bureaucratization of administrative procedures in relation to migration status. Especially problematic is the duration of asylum procedures, many of which are

currently very lengthy with severe implications (traumatic and frustrating experiences, poor living conditions in reception centres) for asylum seekers. Moreover, delayed regularisation and irregular status bar individuals from accessing dignified housing, the formal labour market or welfare services⁸⁷. This leads to marginalisation, poor living conditions, and may drive people to seek out work in the informal sector rendering them vulnerable to exploitative working conditions⁸⁸. Law enforcement agents indicate that **poverty and precariousness can compel migrants to engage in criminal or unlawful activities**. Practitioners therefore recommend providing migrants with the means to live decently to avoid such results and to adopt sustainable and systemic change, as migrants' vulnerability and labour exploitation need to be understood as structural to the current immigration system. They moreover highlight the need for guaranteed humanitarian protection as well as economic inclusion and democratic participation. In the same vein, they see a need to recognize the skills, experiences and qualifications of migrants and provide them with opportunities for retraining, relearning, and improving skills⁸⁹.

Last but not least, in response to the high numbers of undocumented migrants in destination countries, stakeholders recommended implementing regularisation campaigns⁹⁰.

Read our policy brief "COVID-19, Migration and Human Rights in the EU" to access recommendations and good practices to better plan, test and implement migration policies at times of crisis.



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Law enforcement agent, Italy

If we don't manage to give a job to all the people who arrive, and who are here, it is clear that, ok, you can do a welfare life some time, there is no problem. But the man needs to feel involved, to feel alive, working! To feel autonomous... You don't need to have a Porsche, but the dignity given by the work you do! (...) We have to guarantee a real possibility for everyone, certain for everyone, giving a dignity to the person.

CSO coordinator, Cyprus

But I think practically what you would need is much more advertising and raising awareness over their [asylum seekers'] rights. One of the problems is that a lot of people, a lot of migrants and refugees don't understand their rights and the power they could have to demand due procedure.



Asylum policies

Since 2015, trends in **asylum policies** are often based on the narrative of abuse of the asylum system, according to which a disproportionate number of migrants seek asylum despite not having a legitimate basis for it. For example, Belgium and Germany introduced policies to tackle the problem of multiple and fraudulent asylum claims. Based on the account of people filing multiple asylum claims in different languages, sometimes under different aliases, Belgium advised in a Policy Note that faster procedures be applied⁹¹. In 2015, Germany decreased benefits and limited access to the labour market based on nationality as well as reducing cost associated with the processing of (false) asylum claims⁹².

EU member states forming the Union's external borders had come under immense pressure when asylum application peaked between 2014 and 2016. In response to the need of registering, accommodating and processing the asylum claims of large numbers of individuals, **so called 'hotspot'** approaches were introduced in several EU border countries, such as in Greece and Cyprus. Following the **EU-Turkey deal**⁹³, so called 'hotspots' on the Greek Aegean islands were transformed from screening centres to detention facilities. Consequently, Greece transitioned from a country of transit to a country of destination⁹⁴. In March 2020, the government suspended all new asylum applications of migrants asylum seekers entering the country irregularly after the Turkish President Erdogan announced he would no longer stop migrants from getting into neighbouring EU member states Greece and Bulgaria⁹⁵.

The large numbers of people arriving in Europe and submitting their claims for asylum between 2014 and 2016 had exposed the weaknesses of the "Dublin system", the European Union's rules for asylum procedures stating that Member States where asylum seekers first arrive need to handle their application. Under this agreement, relocations were only conducted if there were significant grounds for a relocation (such as family

members situated in a different member state). To address the disproportionate responsibility in receiving asylum seekers and processing their claims shouldered by some member states, especially those situated at the EU's external borders, the European Commission adopted the New Pact on Migration and Asylum on 23 September 2020⁹⁶. The new pact aims to succeed the Dublin III regulation in place since 2013, to overhaul the EU's asylum system in terms of benefit and burden sharing among member states. As of 2022, this overhaul has yet to be agreed upon and implemented.

Practitioners spoke about the need to harmonise migration and asylum policies across all member states. They critiqued the inefficiency of current migration management and also what many perceived as unequal distribution of 'burden' and resources to tackle the costs of migration management. In this sense, the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum could prove to be a step in the right direction. However, most practitioners advocated for the asylum system to ease restrictions on the rights and freedoms of asylum-seekers and refugees in ways that it remains to be seen whether the pact will incorporate. Specifically, practitioners recommended that asylum-seekers be able to choose the EU Member State in which they file their asylum claim and to be allowed to move freely among Member States. Recommendations also included increasing asylum seekers' access to economic and social rights, such as housing and healthcare (including psychological support), reducing their residence in refugee camps and reception centres and increasing their access to needed economic benefits when in need, as well as creating job opportunities and upskilling allowing them to work if able to do so⁹⁷. Several migrants shared distressing accounts of their time at refugee camps and centres, demanding radical improvements or calling for the abolishment of such practices entirely.

Read our policy brief *“Safer transits or legal oblivion for Syrian refugees”* on the effects of the EU-Turkey Deal and our five recommendations on how to improve its negative consequences. Policy recommendations include placing Turkey under a European sanctions and monitoring mechanism, repealing the Joint Ministerial Decision to acknowledge the threats refugees face in Turkey, and activating the Voluntary Humanitarian Admissions Scheme to increase the number of resettled Syrian refugees



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Gambian man, Italy

I would say you know I don't think everybody –don't think people deserve especially after risking yourself, taking all this journey from Gambia to Senegal, then to Mali, then to Burkina Faso, to Niger, then finally to Libya then from there you take the boat across the Mediterranean Sea, with all those struggles that you went through and then crossing the Mediterranean Sea, and you reach Europe – you of all people, thinking that you can build up your future. You can create a new life, you can be, have a better life. Then Europe, where human rights are born according to history, this Europe will take you and put you in a kitchen, those hotspots No. Because psychologically it's so painful.

Sudanese man, Great Britain

Asylum seeking is a right. They know that but they have many ways to protect those people, those people are vulnerable, they came here to seek protection. Now we are in a position where asylum-seekers are kept in prisons, that's what's happening now with the Home Office if you know about the Durham prison.



Don't forget to have a look at our [Knowledge Articles](#) on the PERCEPTIONS Hub!

You may be interested to read our short publication

["Migration Policies and Behavioural Change: How governments are addressing threats linked to migration"](#)



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Are you interested in gathering support for integration measures among relevant stakeholders? Have a look at this publication by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) on [How to Communicate strategically about Immigrant Integration](#).

Ahad, A. & Banulescu-Bogdan N. (2019) *Communicating Strategically About Immigrant Integration: Policy Maker Perspectives*, Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe.



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Are you looking for evidence-based integration strategies to inform policy? You may find this [summary of existing evidence on integrating refugees useful](#).

Coley J., Godin, M., Morrice L., Phillimore J., and C. Tah (2019) *Integrating refugees What works? What can work? What does not work? A summary of the evidence*, second edition, London: Home Office.



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You have arrived at the end of this chapter. We hope this chapter has provided you with insights into the role of the securitisation narrative in shaping perceptions of migration to Europe in countries of reception, and in influencing policies addressing irregular migration in particular. We also hope you found the recommendations provided by stakeholders working in the field of migration insightful. Policy and legislation are part of the structures that shape migration routes, channels, and experiences. If you want to learn more about how migration is experienced, and how perceptions, narratives and (mis) information circulating among (prospective) migrants influence decisions to migrate to Europe, read Chapter 1. If you are looking for inspiration to address ensuing policy challenges affecting migrants and host communities, check out our growing catalogue of policy briefs and our knowledge articles on the PERCEPTIONS Hub. Also, see Chapter 2 for ideas on how to engage directly with stakeholders and local communities.

Click to jump to **Chapter 1**

Click to jump to **Chapter 2**

- ⁵¹ About the link between narratives and policy, see Banulescu-Bogdan, N., Malka, H., Culbertson, S. (2021) *How We Talk about Migration: The Link between Migration Narratives, Policy, and Power*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/narratives-about-migration-2021_final.pdf (migrationpolicy.org)
- ⁵² The systematic literature review included 198 articles in 102 journals, 4 books, 11 conference proceedings and 8 book chapters.
- ⁵³ Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan et al. (2021) investigated social media and media analysis, open-source reporting, regional and international polling and surveys, policy briefs and research papers, speeches and other official government documents for their analysis of main migration narratives. Their research included European and non-European settings.
- ⁵⁴ Fiedler, *From Being Aware to Going There*
- ⁵⁵ Karyotis, G. (2007) "European migration policy in the aftermath of September 11: The security-migration nexus," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 20:1. pp.6-8
- ⁵⁶ Carrera, S. (2006). "A Comparison of Integration Programmes in the EU". Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Challenge Papers No. 1, March; Joppke, C. (2007). "Beyond National Models: Civic Integration Policies for Immigrants in Western Europe", *West European Politics*, 30 (1), p. 8
- ⁵⁷ Joppke, *Beyond National Models*
- ⁵⁸ Banulescu-Bogdan, N. et al., *How We Talk about Migration*
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- ⁸² The first law against hate speech was adopted by the EU in 1996, through its Joint action to combat racism and xenophobia (Joint action/96/443/JHA of 15 July 1996). The latter was replaced in November 2008 by the Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. Since mid-2016, the European Commission maintains the High Level Group on combating Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of Intolerance. The same year, the EC agreed with major social media platform providers on signing a Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online and issued further communications and codes of conduct regarding disinformation online (Bayer & Bárd, *Hate speech and hate crime in the EU and the evaluation of online content regulation approaches*, 2020).
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- ⁸⁷ Riachi, C. & Javed, *Mismatched housing*
- ⁸⁸ Jinkang, *Vulnerability and exploitation ; Using remittances*
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- ⁹³ On 18 March 2016, EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey agreed on the EU-Turkey Statement to end irregular migration flows from Turkey to the EU, ensure improved reception conditions for refugees in Turkey and open up organised, safe and legal channels to Europe for Syrian refugees (European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, 2018)
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- ⁹⁵ See "Greece suspends asylum applications as migrants seek to leave Turkey", BBC news, 01.03.2020. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-51695468> News (accessed 01.12.2022). Also read "The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint" by Kyilah Terry, Migration Information Source, 08.04.2021 (last accessed 01.12.2022) <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on#:~:text=In%20March%202021%2C%20nearly%203.7%20million%20Syrian%20refugees,of%20closer%20ties%20with%20Europe%2C%20including%20EU%20ascension>
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GLOSSARY

- **Acculturation:** the process of group and individual changes in culture and behaviour that result from intercultural contact (Berry & Sam, 1997).
- **Asylum seeker:** An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided upon by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every recognised refugee was initially an asylum seeker (Source: United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, Master Glossary of Terms, 2006).

In the *EU context*, a third-country national or stateless person who has made an application for protection under the Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken. (Derived by EMN from IOM glossary on migration, 2 ed. 2011, Art. 2 (b) Council Directive 2005/85/EC (Asylum Procedures Directive).

- **Bordering:** Attempts by diverse actors to identify and control the mobility of certain people, services and goods. In the context of the PERCEPTIONS project, 'bordering' always refers to a socio-political reality and takes into account all the actions and behaviours that set a border among nations or continents and set the limits of political entities and legal jurisdiction. Also see: *Symbolic Bordering*.
- **Borders (international):** Politically defined boundaries separating territory or maritime zones between political entities and the areas where political entities exercise border governance measures on their territory or extraterritorially. Such areas include border crossing points (airports, land border crossing points, ports), immigration and transit zones, the "no-man's land" between crossing points of neighbouring countries, as well as embassies and consulates (insofar as visa issuance is concerned). This definition was adapted from the, Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders (UNHCR, 2014, p.4) Note: This broad definition extending to any areas where border governance is exercised, such as embassies or consulates issuing visas, has been chosen because of its relevance in the migration context. Generally, the term "international borders" is used as a synonym for boundary. (Source: IOM Glossary 2019)
- **Border control:** Border checks and border surveillance activities conducted at the physical borders – air (airports), sea (sea, lake, river ports) and land borders (land, railway) – of the State aimed at regulating the entry (or the intention to enter) and departure of persons, animals and goods to and from the State's territory, in exercise of its sovereignty (IOM, 2019).

At the European level, it is considered as the activity carried out at a border, in accordance with and for the purposes of Schengen Borders Code (Regulation (EU) 2016/399), in response exclusively to an intention to cross or the act of crossing that border, regardless of any other consideration, consisting of border checks and border surveillance. (Source: Art. 2(9) of Regulation (EU) 2016/399.)

- **Border externalisation:** the transfer of border controls to non-EU countries (Ceccorulli & Lucarelli, 2017)
- **Border internalisation:** practices that extend borders to within the territorial boundaries of the host state (Ceccorulli & Lucarelli, 2017).
- **Border management:** The administration of measures related to authorized movement of persons (regular migration) and goods, whilst preventing unauthorized movement of persons (irregular migration) and goods, detecting those responsible for smuggling, trafficking and related crimes and identifying the victims of such crimes or any other person in need of immediate or longer-term assistance and/or (international) protection. (IOM, 2011)
- **Buffer Zone/ Green Line (Cyprus):** Since 1974, most of Cyprus's Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have lived separately in northern and southern portions of the island that are currently divided by a UN-controlled Buffer Zone. The Buffer Zone - also sometimes called 'the Green Line' - extends approximately 180 km across the island. In some parts of old Nicosia it is only a few meters wide, while in other areas it is a few kilometres wide. Its northern and southern limits are the lines where the belligerents stood following the ceasefire of 16 August 1974, as recorded by UNFICYP. While crossings between the two sides are possible at checkpoints, irregular crossings from the area controlled by the Turkish Cypriots into the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus has contributed to the dramatic increase in those seeking asylum. (UNFICYP webpage, 2020)
- **Clandestine migrant:** Refer to "irregular migrant" or "undocumented migrant"
- **Co-ethnic:** person of the same ethnicity.
- **Counternarratives:** stories/narratives that challenge widely accepted truths about people, cultures, and institutions as well as the value of those institutions, and of the knowledge produced by and within those cultural institutions (Given, 2008).
- **Crimmigration approach:** policy approach that criminalises irregular migrants, including asylum seekers.
- **Culture of migration:** the feedback mechanisms of international migration that, by sending information about the immigration country and migration trajectories by migrants result in a particular culture that portrays migration in a particular fashion, and influences the development of migration aspirations in the region of origin (Timmerman et al., 2014).
- **Centros de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes (CETI) or Immigrant Temporary Stay Centres (Spain):** The Immigrant Temporary Stay Centres are institutions of the Spanish Public Administration. Envisaged as sites for provisional first reception of migrants, they aim to provide services and basic social benefits to immigrant collectives and asylum seekers who arrive in one of the cities with Statutes of Autonomy. They also carry out identification procedures and medical check-ups prior to any decisions regarding the most appropriate appeal for immigrants, according to their administrative status in Spain. These centres offer different services and social benefits to the immigrant population: from accommodation and maintenance support, to psychological, sanitary, and social assistance, legal advice, training, and leisure activities. More information can be found here: https://www.mites.gob.es/es/Guia/texto/guia_15/contenidos/guia_15_37_3.htm

- **Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros (CIE) or Alien Detention Centres (Spain):** Institutions of a non-penitentiary nature, in which foreign persons awaiting the enactment of an expulsion order are preventatively detained. These centres also serve as institutions for other types of repatriation (deportations, refusal of entry). At present, there is intense debate, which the COVID-19 situation has accentuated, about the permanent closure of these centres in Spain on the grounds of human rights. More information can be found here: <https://www.europapress.es/sociedad/noticia-son-cies-cuantas-personas-hay-internados-ellos-20161019124456.html>
- **Country of destination:** The country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly. (IOM, 2019)
- **Country of origin:** The country that is a source of migratory flows (regular or irregular). According to Directive 2004/83/EC, the „country of origin“ means the country or countries of nationality or, for stateless persons, of former habitual residence. (IOM, 2019)
- **Country of transit:** The country through which migratory flows (regular or irregular) move. This is taken to mean the country (or countries), different from the country of origin, through which a migrant passes in order to enter a country of destination. (IOM, 2019)

Categories along migration pathways - e.g. "country of origin", "country of destination", "country of transit" - are not mutually exclusive as countries can be both a place of origin for some and of transit/destination for others, and can change over time. Furthermore, migration journeys are often spatially and temporally fragmented. Because individual perceptions of places change over time, it is often difficult to shoehorn places into one or the other category vis-à-vis either a particular individual's journey or migration trends in general.

- **Data Protection:** The systematic application of a set of institutional, technical, and physical safeguards that preserve the right to privacy with respect to the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal data. (International Organization for Migration (IOM), IOM Data Protection Manual (2010) p. 13.).
- **Detention:** Literally the act or fact of detaining or holding back (Merriam-Webster online dictionary). Immigration detention is the policy of holding individuals suspected of visa violations, illegal entry or unauthorised arrival, and those subject to deportation and removal in detention until a decision is made by immigration authorities to grant a visa and release them into the community, or to repatriate them to their country of departure. Immigration detention is often an administrative measure, but in States where unauthorised entry is a criminal act, detention can be imposed pursuant to criminal law. Most international bodies consider the criminalisation of irregular entry as disproportionate and recommend that it be considered an administrative infringement (IOM).

Detention is the confinement of an applicant by a Member State within a particular place, where the applicant is deprived of his freedom of movement (Source: Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection).

- **Diaspora:** Individuals and members or networks, associations and communities, who have left their country of origin, but maintain links with their homelands (Source: IOM).
- **Discourse:** a mode of organising knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts (such as history or institutions) (Merriam webster online dictionary)

- **Discrimination:** A situation in which one person or a group is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin (EMN Glossary).

Discrimination based on any protected grounds such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, is prohibited. (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966)

Discrimination shall mean any differential treatment based on a ground such as "race", colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin, as well as descent, belief, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics or status, which has no objective and reasonable justification (§ 7 of the Explanatory Memorandum to ECRI's General Policy Recommendation 15; ECRI Glossary).

Discrimination against Women: any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women)

Direct discrimination shall be taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin; indirect discrimination shall be taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary. (Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin)

The term „racial discrimination“ shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)

- **Disinformation:** The spreading of deliberate falsehood (Stahl, 2006) or a 'deliberate attempt to deceive or mislead' (Alonso et al., 2021).
- **Economic Migrant:** A person who leaves their country of origin purely for economic reasons that are not in any way related to the refugee definition, in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood. (EU Migration and Home Affairs Glossary)
- **Ethnicity:** The definition of what ethnicity is and what it is not is contested; generally it is considered a form of cultural belonging, oftentimes premised on common descent, a common history and a common homeland. Ethnic belonging can be expressed through language, religion, or material culture such as clothing and cuisine, and other cultural products.
- **European Asylum Support Office:** A European Union agency mandated to focus on three major responsibilities: to contribute to the coherent implementation and development of the [Common European Asylum System \(CEAS\)](#), to support and strengthen practical cooperation among EU Member States on [asylum](#) and to provide and / or coordinate the provision of operational support to EU Member States, subject to particular pressure on their asylum and reception systems. Source:

- **Fake news:** False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views, or as a joke. (Cambridge dictionary online). The deliberate spread of false facts and stories, a type of disinformation.
- **Forced migration:** A migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion. Note: While not an international legal concept, this term has been used to describe the movements of refugees, displaced persons (including those displaced by natural disasters or development projects), and, in some instances, victims of trafficking. Practitioners are also calling for a recognition of migration resulting from climate change to be recognised as forced. At the international level the use of this term is debated because of the widespread recognition that a continuum of agency exists rather than a voluntary/forced dichotomy and that it might undermine the existing legal international protection regime (IOM Glossary 2019)
- **Forced return:** In the *global context*, it is the compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, transit or third country (i.e. country of return), on the basis of an administrative or judicial act. In the *EU context*, it is the process of going back – whether in voluntary or enforced compliance with an obligation to return – to: one's country of origin; or a country of transit in accordance with EU or bilateral readmission agreements or other arrangements; or another third country, to which the third-country national concerned voluntarily decides to return and in which they will be accepted. Source: IOM Glossary on Migration, Art. 3(3) of Directive 2008/115/EC.
- **Frontex:** The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, also known as Frontex, is an agency of the European Union headquartered in Warsaw, Poland, tasked with border control of the European Schengen Area, in coordination with the national authorities of Member States responsible for border management, including coast guards to the extent that they carry out border control tasks, the national authorities responsible for return, shall constitute the European Border and Coast Guard, according to regulation 1896/2019.

A European Union agency tasked with the border control of the Schengen area, in coordination with the national authorities of the Schengen Member States (and IC, NO, IE and UK) responsible for border management and for the implementation of the European Integrated Border Management as a shared responsibility of the Agency and the national authorities. (Regulation 2016/1624)

- **Gangmastering (“Caporalato” Italy):** “Caporalato” is the Italian term for illegal recruitment and labour exploitation in agriculture (article 603 bis as amended by Law No. 199/2016 Italian Criminal Code). Offenders can be employers, close or distant relations but also fellow migrant workers who function as agricultural ghetto administrators, intermediaries, sub-contractors and are in charge of logistics (Jinkang, 2021). The employment offered in these circumstances is without formal contracts, thus without guarantee for health, safety and social security. In combating agricultural exploitation of migrants Italian criminal law focuses on atypical working conditions which potentially affects workers' health and safety and injures their human dignity.
- **Geneva convention and protocol:** The UN multilateral treaty which is the key legal document defining who is a refugee and who is not, the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of States towards them. The Convention is both a status and rights-based instrument and is underpinned by a number of fundamental principles, most notably non-discrimination, non-penalisation and non-refoulement (EMN Glossary).
- **Geographical imaginaries:** the subjectivity of the human conception of locations, spaces, countries and the people inhabiting these physical spaces (Coppola, 2018)

- **Greek Asylum Service:** It has been established under Law no. 3907/2011. It is an autonomous body in charge of the examination of international protection claims, reporting directly to the Minister of Citizen Protection. It is composed of the Central Administration and the (24) Regional Asylum Offices and units where asylum seekers are able to submit their asylum claims. Registration with the Hellenic Police on arrival is a necessary step to be able to submit an asylum application. (<http://asylo.gov.gr/>)
- **Greek Reception and Identification Service:** It has been established by Law 4375/2016, is an independent agency under the General Secretariat of Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum, and Special Secretariat of Reception of Ministry of Migration and Asylum. Mission of The Reception and Identification Service is the effective management of third country nationals who cross the Hellenic borders without legal documents and/or procedures, under conditions that respect their dignity, by placing them in first reception procedures.
- **Hate speech and actions:** Any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor. This is often rooted in, and generates intolerance and hatred and, in certain contexts, can be demeaning and divisive (UN, 2019).

Hate speech is the advocacy, promotion or incitement, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons and the justification of all the preceding types of expression, on the ground of „race“, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, language, religion or belief, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and other personal characteristics or status; it may take the form of the public denial, trivialisation, justification or condonation of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes which have been found by courts to have occurred, and of the glorification of persons convicted for having committed such crimes (§§ 5 to 6 of the Preamble to ECRI's General Policy Recommendation 15; ECRI Glossary)

- **Host country:** Host Country is the EU Member State in which a non-EU national takes up legal residence (EMN Glossary)
- **Hot spot area:** An area in which the host EU Member State, the European Commission, relevant EU agencies and participating EU Member States cooperate, with the aim of managing an existing or a potential migratory challenge characterised by a significant increase in the number of migrants arriving at the external EU border (EMN Glossary).

According to the European Commission report on the Hotspot Approach to managing exceptional migratory flows (11 September 2015), it is the Approach where the EUAA (formerly EASO), FRONTEX, EUROPOL and EUROJUST work on the ground with the authorities of frontline EU Member States which are facing disproportionate migratory pressures at the EU's external borders to help to fulfil their obligations under EU law and swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants.

Hot spot areas, as other closed reception camps in Europe's border regions, have come under critique for the dire and inhumane housing conditions on site.

- **Human smuggling:** a crime that takes place only across borders. It consists in assisting migrants to enter or stay in a country illegally, for financial or material gain. Smugglers make a profitable business out of migrants' need and/or desire to enter a country and the lack of legal documents to do so. International law requires governments to criminalise migrant smuggling, but not those who are smuggled. Since migrants give their consent to the smuggling venture, mostly due to the lack

of regular ways to migrate, they are not considered victims in absolute terms. However, smuggled migrants are often put in dangerous situations by smugglers (such as hazardous sea crossings), and might therefore become victims of other crimes during the smuggling process, including severe human rights violations. (UNODC, Doha declaration)

- **Human trafficking:** the recruitment, movement or harbouring of people for the purpose of exploitation - such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or organ removal. Victims can be anyone, regardless of age or sex/gender, trafficked by the use of improper means such as the threat or use of force, fraudulent schemes, deception, or abuse of power. It can occur within a country or across borders. Human trafficking is therefore characterized by an act (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people), specific means (threats or use of force, deception, fraud, abuse of power, or abusing someone's vulnerable condition) for the purpose of exploitation (for example sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or organ removal). (Source: UNODC, Doha declaration)

In 2000 the UN General Assembly adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Palermo Protocol in short.

Trafficking in human beings is a grave violation of fundamental human rights and an extremely pernicious and highly lucrative form of transnational organised crime. As such, it is prohibited by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 5.3) and defined by the TFEU as a particularly serious form of organised crime (Article 83), with links to immigration policy (Article 79). (Source: Migration and Home Affairs, EC.)

- **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT):** A diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. These technological tools and resources include computers, the Internet (websites, blogs and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players and storage devices), and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing, etc.). (UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, 2019): <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary>
- **Intercultural Education:** An understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence, in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; promoting social cohesion through education, through the development of citizenship education programmes, emphasising core values (e.g. pluralism, human rights, tolerance, participatory democracy, equality of opportunity, justice). (UNESCO in a Globalizing World, April 2000, p. 4)
- **(International) Protection:** The actions accorded by the international community, on the basis of international law, to individuals or groups who are outside their own country and are unable to return home because their return would infringe upon the principle of non-refoulement, and their country is unable or unwilling to protect them. (IOM) Note that the exact terminology can vary depending on country context. In principle, two forms of international protection exist:

Humanitarian: Humanitarian protection consists of preventing, reducing/mitigating and responding to the risks and consequences of violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse for persons, groups and communities in the context of humanitarian crises. This can be pursued through three specific objectives: to prevent, to reduce vulnerabilities and to strengthen the capacity of the humanitarian system. (DG ECHO, 2016)

Subsidiary: The protection given to a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that

the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person to their country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm (EMN Glossary)

- **Involvement:** The initial process of identifying, examining and finally including a stakeholder within the project network
- **Irregular migrant:** In the *global context*, a person who, owing to irregular entry, breach of a condition of entry or the expiry of their legal basis for entering and residing, lacks legal status in a transit or host country (Source: IOM Glossary on Migration, 2011).

In the *EU context*, a third-country national present on the territory of a Member State who does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils, the conditions of entry as set out in the Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code) or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that EU Member State. (EMN)

- **Irregular migration:** movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination (IOM, 2019)

See also "*undocumented migrant*"

- **Law Enforcement Agency (LEA):** any government agency responsible for the enforcement of the laws.
- **Migrant:** In international law defined as a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure the person will be a long-term emigrant and from that of the country of arrival the person will be a long-term immigrant. (UN, 1998: 9)

In the *global context*, a person who is outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. (EMN Glossary)

In the *EU/EFTA context*, a person who either:

(i) establishes their usual residence in the territory of an EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another EU/EFTA Member State or a third country; or

(ii) having previously been usually resident in the territory of the EU/EFTA Member State, ceases to have their usual residence in the EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months. (Source: Derived by EMN from Eurostat's Concepts and Definitions Database and the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration)

The academic literature reveals a lack of standardised typologies of migrants and migration that can be traced to the complexity of the migratory process as well as the high degree of politicisation of terms. This politicisation of terms is evidenced by the contested use of terms such as "illegal" or "clandestine" vs. "irregular" or "undocumented" migrant.

- **Migrant Worker:** a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated

activity in a State of which he or she is not a national (International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families)

- **Migrants' perceptions of the EU or of a country:** refers to the imaginaries and beliefs held about the EU or about that country, based on the information and images they receive from their migrant networks, social media, policy makers, politicians and other sources.
- **Migration:** The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border (international migration), or within a State (internal migration). It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification. In the *EU context*, a broader-term of an immigration and emigration, i.e. the action by which a person either: establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of an EU State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least twelve months, having previously been usually resident in another EU State or a non-EU country, or having previously been usually resident in the territory of an EU State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that EU State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least twelve months. (Source: IOM)
- **Misinformation:** Accidental falsehood, such as rumours (Donato et al, 2022) and false facts spread unintentionally. In the context of migration, misinformation may entail inaccurate or incomplete official information; outdated information that over time and with changing situations can become inaccurate information; information unintentionally diffused by gatekeepers and mediators; unrealistic expectations about the destination country that can often be diffused via social media; rumours and distorted information about 'job opportunities, social benefits, threat of deportation' (Ruokolainen & Widén 2020, p. 8).
- **Misperception:** a false or inaccurate perception (Merriam-Webster, online dictionary). However, the assessment of a perception as inaccurate is tricky as perceptions depend on vantage points. When we talk of misperception, it is always a misperception according to a specific subject or group of people.
- **Modern slavery:** this term covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking. Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts. (Source: Walk Free, <https://www.walkfree.org/what-is-modern-slavery/> access 01.12.2022)
- **Narrative:** a particular way of explaining or understanding events (Cambridge dictionary online). In common use, "narratives" are sequences of events set in time, or more colloquially, stories.
- **Non-politicisation:** involving and engaging stakeholders, especially policy makers, without discrimination based on their political affiliations, with the exception already mentioned for entities and individuals publicly known to be showing discriminatory attitudes.
- **Non refoulement:** In the *global context*, it's a core principle of international refugee and human rights law that prohibits States from returning individuals to a country where there is a real risk of being subject to persecution, torture, **inhuman or degrading treatment** or any other human rights violation. In the refugee context, a core principle of international refugee law that prohibits States from returning **refugees** in any manner whatsoever to countries or territories in which their lives or freedom may be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. (Source(s) EMN, Art. 33 of the Geneva Convention and Protocol.)
- **Perceptions:** The conceptualisation of "perceptions" is very complex. In the PERCEPTIONS project,

the focus lies on ideas and information (in the sense of knowledge) migrants have about the EU or about that country. As such, "perceptions" are approached as "geographical imaginaries", which are defined as "the subjectivity of the human conception of locations, spaces, countries and the people inhabiting these physical spaces" (Coppola, 2018). Important to note is that "ideas and information" as humanly experienced are more than the sum of their referential components: they also carry affective charges and all the other experiential connotations that accompany embodiment. Which is to say, "perceptions of [a place]" refer very broadly to ideas and information that embodied human subjects hold about that place.

Note: In the course of the PERCEPTIONS project, a gradual shift has occurred from using the broad term "perceptions" to more specific terms such as: "narratives" (e.g. about migration), "aspirations" (e.g. for life in a particular place), "desires" (e.g. for particular outcomes), "expectations" (e.g. about life in a particular place), "images" (e.g. of countries).

- **Personal data:** Any information that relates to an identified or identifiable living individual. Different pieces of information, which collected together can lead to the identification of a particular person, such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person, also constitute personal data. Personal data that has been de-identified, encrypted or pseudonymised but can be used to re-identify a person remains personal data and falls within the scope of the GDPR. Personal data that has been rendered anonymous in such a way that the individual is not or no longer identifiable, is no longer considered personal data. For data to be truly anonymised, the anonymisation must be irreversible. (Source: EC).
- **Public Information Campaigns:** A form of social intervention prompted by a determination that some situation represents a social problem meriting social action. It includes the conception, execution and control of systematic and focused communication activities with the aim of influencing awareness of problems, the attitudes and the behavioural patterns of certain target groups in relation to social ideas, tasks or practices in a positive manner (Barron, 2012).
- **Racism:** An ideological construct that assigns a certain race and/or ethnic group to a position of power over others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes, as well as economic wealth, involving hierarchical relations where the 'other' race exercises domination and control over others (Source: OHCHR, 2003).

Racism shall mean the belief that a ground such as "race", colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons; (§ 1 of ECRI's General Policy Recommendation 7; ECRI Glossary).

- **Radicalisation:** a process whereby people adopt extremist belief systems—including the willingness to use, encourage or facilitate violence—with the aim of promoting an ideology, political project or cause as a means of social transformation (Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence, 2019)

Radicalisation can be understood a phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence, including acts of terrorism within the meaning of the Directive (2017/541) on combating terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose. While radicalisation is not a new phenomenon, the trends, means and patterns of radicalisation evolved. Home-grown lone actors and (returning) foreign terrorist fighters raise security issues and specific challenges for prevent work, while the Internet and social media gave extremist and terrorist groups and their sympathisers new opportunities for mobilisation and communication. (Source: Migration and Home Affairs, EC)

Radicalisation shall mean the process whereby someone adopts extreme political, religious or social values which are inconsistent with those of a democratic society; (§ 7 of the Explanatory Memorandum to ECRI's General Policy Recommendation 15; ECRI Glossary).

- **Referent object:** what is under threat (cf. used in securitization theory, Balzacq, 2011)
- **Referent subject:** source of the threat (cf. used in securitization theory, Balzacq, 2011)
- **Refugee:** In the *EU context*, a non-European citizen or a person who is not enjoying the European Union right to free movement who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom Art. 12 (Exclusion) of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) does not apply (Source: EMN Glossary).

The recognition by an EU Member State of a third-country national or stateless person as a refugee is the refugee status. Source: Art. 2(e) of Directive 2011/95/EU.

A person is a refugee as soon as they fulfil the criteria set in the refugee definition. The recognition of the refugee status is not an element of the definition; therefore such recognition does not make them a refugee but simply declares that they are one. (UNHCR, 1951)

The term "refugee" shall apply to any person who, as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (ibid.).

- **Regular migration:** Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination. (Source: IOM Glossary 2019)
- **Regular migration pathways:** Migration schemes, programmes or other migration options that allow eligible persons to migrate regularly for various purposes to a concerned country of destination based on conditions and for a duration defined by such country. (IOM Glossary 2019)
- **Regulatory State:** a state which attached relatively more importance to processes of regulation than to other means of policymaking.
- **Securitization of borders:** an extreme version of politicization that enables extraordinary means to be used in the name of security (Buzan et al., 1998)
- **Securitization of migration:** increasingly framing migration policies in the realm of security by using narratives of threat and danger aimed at justifying the adoption of extraordinary measures.
- **SIPROIMI (Italy):** The Protection System for holders of international protection and unaccompanied minors (SIPROIMI, ex SPRAR) is made up of the network of local authorities that use the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services for the implementation of integrated reception projects. Access to SIPROIMI and related projects aimed at offering assistance, social inclusion services and fostering integration processes is reserved to: a) holders of international protection; b) unaccompanied minors,

including those who are not asylum seekers; c) foreigners holding a residence permit for special cases; d) foreigners who have obtained a residence permit for medical treatment; e) beneficiaries of humanitarian protection, until the expiry of the reception project in which they have been placed.

- **Smuggling of persons:** see "*Human smuggling*"
- **Symbolic bordering:** the whole of – often discursive – exclusionary practices, that actually keep migrants out of symbolic spaces of representation and deliberation in EU host countries (Chouliaraki, 2017)
- **Threat:** threat is a force or pressure acting at the external borders, characterised by its magnitude and likelihood. (the Ciram definition, Frontex Risk Analysis Model on border management)

In the PERCEPTIONS project, the focus lies on "threats" that are related to security-policy areas, with "threats" referring to real or perceived risks migration processes pose to migrants, to host countries, as well as to migrants and host countries together.

- **Trafficking in human beings:** see "*Human Trafficking*"
- **Transit country:** see "*country of transit*"
- **Transmigrant (Belgium):** The term has no legal meaning but has become part of the common vocabulary used by politicians and the media in Belgium when talking about matters of migration and border control (de Massol de Rebetz, 2018). Defined by the Flemish online dictionary as "In Belgium, a migrant who is in transit, or staying temporarily in the country, with the UK as final destination".
- **Unaccompanied minor:** A minor who arrives on the territory of an EU Member State, unaccompanied by the adult responsible for him/her by law or by the practice of the EU Member State concerned, and for as long as he/she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person; or who is left unaccompanied after he/she has entered the territory of the EU Member State. (Source Art. 2(I) of Directive 2011/95/EU.)
- **Undocumented migrant:** A non-national who enters or stays in a country without the appropriate documentation. This includes, among others, a person:
 - who has no legal documentation to enter a country but manages to enter clandestinely,
 - who enters or stays using fraudulent documentation,
 - who, after entering using legal documentation, has stayed beyond the time authorised or otherwise violated the terms of entry and remained without authorisation. (IOM, 2019)

See also "*irregular migrant*"

- **Violent extremism:** Violent extremism is a violent type of mobilisation that aims to elevate the status of one group, while excluding or dominating its 'others' based on markers, such as gender, religion, culture and ethnicity. In doing so, violent extremist organisations destroy existing political and cultural institutions, and supplant them with alternative governance structures that work according to the principles of a totalitarian and intolerant ideology (Bak et al., 2019)

Violent extremism: a behaviour, promoting, supporting or committing acts which may lead to terrorism and which are aimed at defending an ideology advocating racial, national, ethnic or religious supremacy (Source: CoE Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism)

- **Voluntary return:** the assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or another country based on the voluntary decision of the returnee. (IOM Glossary 2019; EU Migration and Home Affairs Glossary)
- **Vulnerable person:** Minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, victims of trafficking. (Source: Directive 2013/33)

Indicatively they include: minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation within the meaning of Directive 2013/33/EU Of The European Parliament And Of The Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)

- **Xenophobia:** Attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity (Source: IOM)

Xenophobia is the excessive fear, dislike, and even hostility toward of anything "foreign" or to anything and anybody from outside one's own social group, nation, or country (Hjerm, 1998, 2009; McEvoy, 1995; Orenstein, 1985).

Xenophobia is the term which comes from the Greek words ξένος (xenos), meaning "foreigner", "stranger", and φόβος (phobos), meaning "fear". Manifestations of xenophobia are usually triggered by intense dislike or hatred against people that are perceived as outsiders, strangers or foreigners to a group, community or nation, based on their presumed or real descent, national, ethnic or social origin, race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other grounds (Source: OHCHR).

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