Review of available material analysing and providing guidance on media coverage of migration in Europe, Middle East and North Africa

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on migration?

A study by journalists, for journalists and policy-makers

Migration media coverage in 17 countries from 2015 to 2016
Introduction

The objective of this research – carried out between November 2016 and January 2017 – was to review the major writings and analysis of how media in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa cover the story of migration. The review focuses on analysis of migration coverage and guidance on how to cover migration with a bias toward what is most relevant for journalists and does attempt to analyse coverage of migration, as this is the role of the 17 country chapters of this report. The review is structured in the following way:

- Key findings across all regions
- Codes of ethics, glossaries and guidelines on reporting migration
- Recommendations for and from media
- Campaigns and awards on migration reporting
- Review of Analysis of Media Coverage of Migration in Europe, Middle East and Africa

Key findings across all regions

As the desk research was conducted largely in English far more information is available on European media rather than the output from Middle East and North Africa. A follow up to this work looking at content in French and Arabic would be valuable.

1. Academic and policy rather than media perspectives

Existing analyses of media coverage of migration in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, are largely academic in nature and are rarely written from the point of view of journalists and media professionals. What is often missing is an appreciation of the extent and impact of self-censorship, political influence and how the market conditions and precarious nature of journalistic work affect the way media work, newsroom priorities and the framing of the news agenda.

2. The media’s role in public attitudes to migration

Analysis of public attitudes to migration and of editorial angles (positive, negative or more balanced) is common in many countries. However, research often stops short of investigating the role of media in shaping these attitudes. More research is needed to map the media coverage of migration against public attitudes over longer periods. Studies often do not detail whether policies and media coverage of migration (positive or negative) is driven by public opinion or the other way around. This is important to establish as policymakers often justify anti-migration policies on the grounds of public opinion. In some countries, Hungary for instance, some reports indicate that state-media played a deliberate role in promoting anti-refugee attitudes for political advantage.

3. Tone, Language and hate speech

There are many campaigns directed at media coverage and the work of journalists by the policy and NGO community, especially on the questions of inappropriate language and hate speech against migrants. Most are national campaigns and some with a cross-border focus, but the impact of these activities on media is unclear with little monitoring of response.
Further research is needed to understand:

» How much working and active journalists are involved in such campaigns;

» Whether the engagement of news industry figures or the active participation of journalists, their unions and associations makes a significant difference?

» Whether some striking national initiatives – such as the Charter of Rome in Italy and the and the Greek Charter of Idomeni – have an impact beyond Italy and Greece?

4. Workshop and seminars appear to far outnumber published studies

Human rights, journalism and media development organisations are actively promoting conferences and workshops to discuss migration coverage and to provide training. The study found that these are too rarely followed up with practical guidance for journalists. Often the nature of the debates and outcomes are hard to define. The number of activities, training and workshops were so numerous that only a select few have been included in the study.

5. Misleading and false information

False and fake news is becoming a problem for all media but it can have serious consequences when refugees and vulnerable people are the victims; even causing violence against refugees as documented in one example in this study. More research is needed into the specific issue of propaganda and fake news about migration in order to fully understand the extent of the problem and how to address it. With so many of the migrants entering Europe from predominantly Muslim countries, fake news about Muslims is especially common. This illustrates how understanding coverage of migration must be seen within the wider issues facing media.

Fake news about migration is a growing issue but this study focuses on literature directly related to migration.

Codes of ethics, glossaries and guidelines on reporting migration

**Carta Di Roma (2014). Code of Conduct Regarding Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Victims of Trafficking and Migrants**


The National Council of the Journalists’ Association (Consiglio Nazionale dell’Ordine dei Giornalisti, CNOG) and the Italian National Press Federation (Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, FNSI) Charter of Rome invites Italian journalists to “exercise the highest care in dealing with information regarding asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants living in Italy and elsewhere”.

**Deutsche Welle (2016). Study reveals shortcomings of Arab media**


This article gives some details of guidelines for improving Arab coverage of the refugee crisis that were adopted in Beirut by media professionals from the Middle East and North Africa. The guidelines, which are based on a study by the DW Akademie, state that journalists should “report in a responsible manner, supported by facts, without exploiting the suffering of the refugees in an unprofessional, biased or exaggerated manner.” (The full guidelines could not be found on DW website. An inquiry has been made.)

**Ethical Journalism Network (2016). Five-point guide for migration reporting**

See: http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/jein-launches-new-migration-reporting-guidelines-gfmd

Launched at the Global Forum for Media Development in Jakarta in September 2016 the EJN’s five-point guide for migration reporting is available as an infographic in over 10 languages. The guidelines were developed by journalists and advisers to the EJN with input from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and have been circulated within IOM circles.

**Ethical Journalism Network (2014). Five-point test for hate speech**

See: http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/hate-speech

See: http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/infographics

In 2016 the EJN’s five-point test for hate speech was translated into Arabic, French and many other languages spoken in the region, including Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, Italian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Portuguese, Serbian and Turkish. It is increasingly used in education and training programmes for journalists.
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European Broadcasting Union (2016). 
Big Data: a tool for journalists to fight stereotypes and prejudice?

This major network of public service broadcasters in Europe and North Africa has developed materials to assist journalists using data to cover migration. Infographics can give audiences a new outlook such as through “Migrants, mi-hommes” created by Sylvain Lapoix of #DataGueule whose video’s objective was to ‘fight stereotypes in media storytelling on refugees and migrants and to present them not just as ‘migrants’ but as real people, as hommes’.

European Federation of Journalists (2016). 
8 tips for migration coverage
See: http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2016/n/28/8-practical-tips-for-migration-coverage/

At the 10th edition of the Civil society media seminar held by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Vienna on the subject of “Communicating Migration”, Michael O’Flaherty, the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, shared practical tips for journalists covering migration. Inspired by Michael O’Flaherty’s speech the EFJ developed eight practical tips for migration coverage.

1. Collect impeccable data: big picture is known but we know little about the details and the lack of quality information is a problem when we write about human stories.
2. Report the whole story about migration policies by reporting on local communities and challenge myths about migrants.
3. Produce videos where refugees speak and explain their situation, give a voice to local communities.
4. Use correct wording: 3/5 people are coming from the top 10 refugee camps in the world, by deduction we can clearly say that the majority of them are fleeing persecution; instead of writing “migrant or refugee crisis” which makes the people a problem it’s better to write “crisis of migrant policy” instead of talking about the “EU / national values” or “moral values”, it’s better to talk about the “universal values which Europe hold dear”
5. Correct misleading images: refugees and migrants are not young strong men using smartphones or tourist family members travelling with expensive luggage. The fact is 9/10 migrant children are unaccompanied, they are tired, exhausted, hungry and need urgent help.
6. Use international tools like FRAs Media Toolkit, EJN’s ethical guidelines on migration reporting, Charter of Roma, Charter of Idomeni, to enhance your reporting skills on migration.
7. Develop better skills on media literacy, help your audience better understand how to consume your contents and counter fake news or propaganda.
8. Engage with social media and accept the fact that you can’t fully cover and understand that world.

IOM, Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law Series No. 25
See: http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms

The IOM’s publications section has no reports on communications. The IOM defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (i) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

For more migration definitions from the IOM see: http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms
http://www.iom.int/migration-law

ILO (2014). Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration

The ILO is using the Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration glossary created by Panos-UNAOC in 2014, as the basis for an Arabic language glossary, which is expected to be launched in early 2017.
Panos Europe Institute / United Alliance of Civilizations, UNAOC (2014). *Media Friendly Glossary on Migration*

This collaboration between the now closed Panos Europe and UNAOC sprung from a 2013 seminar for a group of editors-in-chief from Africa, Asia and Europe brought together by UNAOC and the Global Editors’ Network at which it was recommended that a "media-friendly glossary of terms in multiple languages" be created for journalists "to ensure specificity and accuracy in their word choice". According to the glossary’s foreword: ‘The request for such a tool comes as an answer to two ongoing trends. On one side, the changing aspect of human migrations and of words used to characterize these movements. On the other hand, the pressure put on journalists – who don’t always benefit from a specific training on migration – to report in print and audio-visual media with precision and appropriate terminology. The work of the media greatly influences how the public views migrants and issues related to migration. Media have the power to create positive or negative perceptions; accurate or inaccurate perceptions.’

UNHCR. *Reporting on Refugees: Guidance by & for journalists*

According to the UN http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions although often used interchangeably by the general public, there are crucial distinctions between the terms "refugee" and "migrant".

**Recommendations for and from the media industry**

**AFP (2012 to present). Covering the refugee crisis**
See: https://correspondent.afp.com/covering-refugee-crisis

The AFP Correspondent blog aims to take readers behind the scenes at the global news agency Agence France-Presse with a focus on handling the migration story.

**Al Jazeera (2015). Why Al Jazeera will not say Mediterranean ‘migrants’**

Barry Malone an online editor at Al Jazeera English wrote in August 2015: The umbrella term migrant is no longer fit for purpose when it comes to describing the horror unfolding in the Mediterranean. It has evolved from its dictionary definitions into a tool that dehumanises and distances, a blunt pejorative [...] Migrant is a word that strips suffering people of voice. Substituting refugee for it is – in the smallest way – an attempt to give some back.


“The original report was published in Hungarian with the title ‘Szélre tolva. Kutatási zárójelentés a roma közösségek többségi médiaképéről, 2011. This working paper discusses results of a content analysis of the coverage of Roma by the mainstream media in 2011. The analysis is a continuation of the authors’ two decades’ long cooperation uncovering and analysing the ways in which mainstream media represents Hungary’s Roma communities and contributes to the reproduction of public stereotypes about this ethnic group. The research analysed a wide range of media including largest political dailies, weekly papers, tabloid dailies, internet news portals, and TV news programs. Special attention was paid to the thorough analysis of the visual images published in newspapers and TV news programmes.

**Central European University (2015). Infiltration of political meaning – production: security threat or humanitarian crisis? The coverage of the refugee ‘crisis’ in the Austrian and Hungarian media in early autumn**
See: https://cmds.ceu.edu/sites/cmcs.ceu.hu/files/attachment/article/1041/infiltrationofpoliticalmeaning.pdf

**DW Akademie in Lebanon**

DW Akademie: Working with its local partners, Basmeh & Zeitooneh and the Maharat Foundation, DW Akademie is supporting the creation of an online community platform in the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon. Community journalists are being trained here and local trainers are being qualified. Standards for reporting on sensitive topics such as displacement and migration are collaboratively being developed and applied.
The media have a responsibility journalists should not forget about when reporting and writing articles. Inaccuracy should be avoided, as it might build a misleading portrait of the public opinion or, even worse, have a negative influence on it.

See: http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/moving-stories/recommendations

The EJN report argues that media can help audiences “better understand the complex migration story by applying ethical principles, avoiding crude stereotypes, developing good newsroom practice and engaging with the audience.” When covering migration journalists should abide by the five core principles of journalism in their work; accountability; humanity; impartiality; independence; and accuracy. The recommendations also cover newsroom practice and the role of unions and associations; how to engage with the media audience and connect with migrants; challenge hate-speech; and the need to demand access to information.

European Journalism Centre (2013). How journalism can rid migration of its sour reputation
See: http://ejc.net/magazine/article/how-journalism-can-rid-migration-of-its-sour-reputation#.WC8PxenLdSU

“To what extent do the media reflect the public opinion, and to what extent do they shape it? In both cases, the media have a responsibility journalists should not forget about when reporting and writing articles. Inaccuracy should be avoided, as it might build a misleading portrait of the public opinion or, even worse, have a negative influence on it.” The EJC highlights some common mistakes and good practices that should be taken into account when writing about migration.

European Federation of Journalists (2016). More solidarity needed while reporting on migration issues
See: http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2016/10/25/more-solidarity-needed-while-reporting-on-migration-issues/

The EFJ has called for more solidarity while reporting on migration issues and has been increasing the attention it gives to improving coverage of migrants and refugees for the last few years. Regarding specific actions from our affiliates the EFJ highlights the Idomeni Charter in Greece (involving the Greek Union Esiemth) and the Carta di Roma in Italy (involving the Italian union, FNSI). They also expect that this issue will be part of their current DG Justice Project on Hate Speech.

Hungarian Europe Society (2016). The Refugee Crisis and the Reactions of the Visegrad Countries
The Hungarian Europe Society conducted comprehensive and comparative research in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary examining the arrival of mostly Muslim asylum seekers from the Middle East into Europe. The report analyses the how the V4 countries responded. The research included a survey that found that, according to the answers, received migrants arriving from the conflict zones were most usually referred to by the media as migrants (71%) and as

European Broadcasting Union (2016). How public service media are helping public understanding of the refugee crisis

This EBU talk in Brussels, focused on how its members are contributing to understanding of the refugee crisis are bringing together refugees and locals. The work of ERT (Greece), ARD /WDR (Germany) and SR (Sweden), are highlighted as examples.
refugees (65%) while the label of illegal migrants was also rather frequently used (51%). Less used terms were economic immigrant (29%) and asylum-seekers (14%).

**Independent (2016).** Nazi language becoming increasingly common in Germany’s discussion of refugee crisis, researchers say


“Rise in use of Nazi phrases comes amid unprecedented growth in number of attacks on asylum seekers and refugee accommodation [...] Words belonging to the years of the Third Reich are increasingly being used by German politicians and members of the public to criticise their government’s response to the refugee crisis. The increase in the use of Nazi terminology comes amid an unprecedented rise in the number of attacks on asylum seekers and refugee accommodation.”

**International News Safety Institute (and The Dart Centre)**

See: http://dartcenter.org/event/workshop-covering-immigrants-and-mental-health

The International News Safety Institute has launched a survey into the psychological impact on journalists covering the migrant crisis, following anecdotal evidence that some journalists are finding it is taking a high emotional toll on them. The project has featured in the BBC and Guardian. Awareness about this began in 2013 when the Dart Center hosted a workshop for journalists to improve news coverage of immigrants and refugees, with a special focus on mental health.

**Le Monde (2016).** Journalistes à Calais : la loi de la « jungle » ?

See: http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2016/10/27/journalistes-a-calais-la-loi-de-la-jungle-_502114__3236.html

In the this article published on October 27, 2016, Le Monde journalists criticise coverage of the “Jungle” camp and reflect on their own coverage about how their journalists experienced covering the dismantling of the camp. The article describes how reporters felt covering the story, what they saw and how they thought journalists in general were behaving while reporting on the migrants stranded at the camp in Calais. The report makes the journalists part of the story. It compares the journalists wrapped up in ski jackets and woollen hats and the migrants wearing only sweaters and plastic sandals. It is a self-critical article highlighting how the journalists – and they are 800 of them, 48 for the BBC alone – have little regard for the privacy of the migrants walking into their shacks and shoving microphones into their faces.

The Le Monde journalists explain that it is often difficult to get the balance right between getting the information and respecting the dignity of the person that is the subject of the story. They say that whenever there is a big media event (and this could be a natural disaster or a terror attack or just the dismantling of the “Jungle” camp) the larger the number of journalists, the tougher the competition, the sooner fundamental principles, even the law are thrown aside. “If the others do it, what not me?” The article concludes that doing anything for the story as if the journalist’s life depended on it is always disturbing but especially so if the life of those covered in the story is really on the line.

**Organisation of News Ombudsmen**

See: http://newsombudsmen.org/columns/a-policy-change-on-illegal-immigration-terminology

See: http://newsombudsmen.org/columns/the-debate-over-immigration-language

See: http://newsombudsmen.org/columns/l-a-times-updates-guidelines-for-covering-immigration

**South East European Network for the Professionalisation of Media (2016).** OSCE Representative issues recommendations on rights and safety of members of the media reporting on refugees


**PICUM (2001), Ethical Guidelines**

See: http://picum.org/en/resources/ethical-guidelines/

After workshops on migration reporting PICUM – the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants – published guidelines in five languages; English; Français; Español; Italiano; Nederlands.

**Refugee Journalism Project (2016).** A project from the London College of Communication and the Migrants Resource Centre

See: http://migrantjournalism.org/

“By bringing together disparate individuals, The Refugee Journalism Project aims to create a network that reaps the benefits of collaborative working. Whether it’s a UK journalism student filming with a Syrian translator; an Afghan film-maker reporting on location in Calais with an Irish journalist; or an Eritrean producer working within a global media organisation, these unions create a reciprocal flow of understanding and learning, ultimately helping to aid integration.”
Communications campaigns & competitions

**A Day Without Migrants’ social media campaign**
**Run by:** IOM and launched in 2016  
**Location:** Global  
In 2016 IOM launched a social media campaign, ‘A Day Without Migrants,’ in partnership with the Egyptian award-winning click-funding innovators Bassita, to highlight the real and positive impacts that migrants have on the communities that host them. See: [https://www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-day-without-migrants-social-media-campaign](https://www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-day-without-migrants-social-media-campaign)

**Arab Media Hub against Hate Speech**
**Run by:** EJN and launched in 2015  
**Location:** North Africa and Middle East  
Hate speech is growing in Arabic language media including against migrants. A meeting of the hub organised by the Ethical Journalism Network, The American University in Cairo (AUC) and Egypt Media Development Programme (EMPD) in Cairo in December 2016 resolved to find new ways to challenge hate speech across all platforms in Arab media. See: [http://ethicaljournalism-network.org/turning-page-hate-arab-world](http://ethicaljournalism-network.org/turning-page-hate-arab-world)

**Award for Excellence in Reporting Fairly on Labour Migration**
**Run by:** ILO / Location: Global  

**“I am migrant”**
**Run by:** IOM / Location: Global  
The IOM’s campaign aims to provide an easy to access alternative to negative stories on migration so that journalists can find positive individual stories of migration. See: [http://iamamigrant.org/about](http://iamamigrant.org/about)

**FAIRWAY**
**Run by:** ILO / Location: Gulf  
The FAIRWAY project develops research to inform policy making, to support implementation of laws and policies, and to work with the media and through advocacy campaigns to reduce discrimination against migrant workers. See: [http://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/fairway/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/fairway/lang--en/index.htm) and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yv8oXfh_tCI&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yv8oXfh_tCI&feature=youtu.be)

**MedMedia**
**Run by:** EU-funded programme implemented by a consortium by BBC Media Action (lead), the International Federation of Journalists, IREX Europe, the Blanquerna School of Communications and the Jordan Media Institute.  
**Location:** North Africa and Middle East  
MedMedia aims to facilitate the progress of media reforms by offering policy-makers, regulators, broadcasters and union leaders access to relevant experience and know-how from both sides of the Mediterranean. [http://www.med-media.eu/projects-database/](http://www.med-media.eu/projects-database/)

**Migrant Voice**
Migrant Voice a UK NGO hosted a debate on migration and media coverage at its third annual conference focusing this year on media and immigration. Media, academics, migrants and the public engaged in an inclusive debate on migration, examining public attitude and media representation of migrants, and raising alternatives voices and messages. See: [http://www.migrantvoice.org/](http://www.migrantvoice.org/)

**Media Against Hate**
**Run by:** EFJ and launched in 2015  
**Location:** Europe  
#MediaAgainstHate is a Europe-wide campaign led by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and a coalition of civil society organisations. We aim to counter hate speech and discrimination in the media, both on and offline, by promoting ethical standards, while maintaining respect for freedom of expression. Its objectives include improving media coverage related to migration, refugees, religion and marginalised groups. See: [http://europeanjournalists.org/mediaagainsthate/](http://europeanjournalists.org/mediaagainsthate/)

**Refugee Journalism Project**
The Refugee Journalism Project run by the London College of Communication works to help our participants re-establish their journalism careers in the UK. In 2016 the project included journalists from Syrian, Sudan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Gaza and the Yemen. [http://migrantjournalism.org/](http://migrantjournalism.org/)

**The Migration Dilemma**
**Run by:** Deutsche Welle / Location: West Africa  
DW’s new multi-media project traces the dangerous journey to Europe undertaken by West African refugees. Reporters look into the social consequences of this exodus on the families and communities that have been left behind, and they discuss alternatives to fleeing with African youths and decision-makers. See: [http://www.dw.com/en/dws-new-multimedia-project-for-west-africa-the-migration-dilemma/a-36410361](http://www.dw.com/en/dws-new-multimedia-project-for-west-africa-the-migration-dilemma/a-36410361)

**The New Arrivals**
The European Journalism Centre launched The New Arrivals in 2017, “a collaborative journalism project that brings together El País (Spain), The Guardian (UK), Le Monde (France) and Spiegel Online (Germany) to report on migration to Europe. Over a period of 18 months, the four news organisations will closely follow newly-arrived migrant communities to illustrate their integration challenges, humanitarian situation, professional aspirations, and the impact of their arrival on both the host and the home countries.” [https://thenewarrivalseu](https://thenewarrivalseu)  

**World Refugee Day**
**Run by:** UNHCR and launched in 2000  
**Location:** Global  

The complete literature review is available via a link at [www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration_narrative](http://www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration_narrative)