

REPORTING ABOUT MIGRATION

**Guidelines for the application
of the Charter of Rome**



“Reporting about migration - Guidelines for the application of the Charter of Rome” is the result of the translation and editing of “Linee guida per l’applicazione della Carta di Roma”.
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With the support of



“Linee guida per l’applicazione di Carta di Roma” [2015] were realized with the support of FNSI, UNAR, Ordine nazionale dei giornalisti, UNHCR.

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THE CHARTER OF ROME

The Italian National Council of the Association of Journalists (CNOG) and the National Federation of the Italian Press (FNSI) supported by UNHCR signed the Charter of Rome in 2008. The Charter is a code of conduct for media operators about migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking that promotes accurate and balanced representations of migration phenomena and issues.

Three years later, the same media representatives – together with a network of 14 civil organizations – founded the Charter of Rome Association to promote and monitor the implementation of the Charter by Italian media. Media monitoring and training, the dissemination of useful content through the website and newsletter are examples of the Association's efforts. Since its foundation, the Association has met thousands of journalists all over Italy (about 2,000 in 2016) and has been involved in various international meetings, panels, and media training opportunities across Europe. Since 2012, the Charter has become part of the curriculum in every Italian School of Journalism recognised in Italy.

The Association publishes an annual report on the main trends in media representation of refugees and migrants in Italy. According to the latest report, "Notizie oltre i muri" (News Beyond the Walls, December 2016), migration is at the top of the media agenda in Italy. While we have observed huge media attention in 2015 and earlier, migration has hit the headlines of monitored media every day but 12 between January and October 2016.

How do media represent migration and refugees? The narrative is often negative, worrisome, and stigmatizing. Refugees and migrants seldom have voice: their opinion on migration is heard 3% of the times on TV news, while national politicians speak 36% of the time. However, some trends and figures seem to be more encouraging. The Charter of Rome has already contributed to alter how migration issues are described: for instance, the wording used in stories about migration has significantly changed since 2008, with a strong decrease in the use of "clandestini", an expression the Italian media use to negatively depict undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.

Thanks to a network of journalists who implement the Code daily at work, the representation of migration issues has become more accurate. We are witnessing increased awareness across media operators of such a delicate and complicated topic.

The picture of migrants and refugees the media offer can strongly influence the general population's perception of and behaviour towards migrants. Even when the number of news reports does not affect the sense of insecurity the citizens perceive, the narrative frame and tone can. According to 2016 News beyond the

Walls Report, the level of insecurity perceived by the Italians as related to the presence of migrants has increased. This is also fuelled by a strong xenophobic political debate.

Not only the Charter of Rome Association monitors the implementation of the code and delivers training, but also promotes constant dialogue among journalists, the civil society, organizations, and researchers. Through such approach – in fact still a unique approach in Europe – we promote continued dialogue to present the needs of and challenges faced by each group with a view to finding shared ideas and solutions.

Our Guidelines for the implementation of the Charter of Rome result from initiatives that involve journalists as well as civil society organizations. In 2011 and 2012, they worked together on the first edition of the Guidelines. In 2015, the Guidelines were updated and in the following pages you will find a partial translation and adaptation of their latest version.

Since the Lampedusa shipwreck in 2013 and the beginning of the refugee crisis in 2015, international media have started covering refugee and migrant stories in Italy on a regular basis. Reporters have often little time and a lot of pressure onto them to find their stories and analyse complicated issues. This is the reason why we have decided to offer an updated English version of the Guidelines accompanied by useful information and sources.

CODE OF CONDUCT

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), sharing the concern voiced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as regards media coverage of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants; recalling the principles regarding journalists' professional ethics laid out in the Journalist's Charter of Duties (Carta dei Doveri del Giornalista) – especially as regards the fundamental duty to respect each and every person and his/his dignity and to not discriminate against anyone on account of their race, religion, gender, physical and mental conditions and political opinions – and the principles enshrined in national and international law on the subject; reaffirming the special safeguards to be taken when dealing with minors as established by the United Nations Convention on children's rights and by the principles laid out in the Charter of Treviso (Carta di Treviso) and in its additional Manual; on the basis of the fundamental principle stressing the importance of adhering to the truth as regards all events which are the subject of media coverage (art. 2 of the Law establishing the Journalists' Association), invite 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 and, in particular, to:

- ➔ Adopt an appropriate terminology which reflects national and international law so as to provide readers and viewers with the greatest adherence to the truth as regards all events which are the subject of media coverage, avoiding the use of inappropriate terms.
- ➔ Avoid spreading inaccurate, simplified or distorted information as regards asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants. CNOG and FNSI call all their colleagues' – and those responsible for editorial content in particular – attention to the negative effects of superficial or unprofessional behaviour on those who are the object of news coverage, on readers/viewers and, as a consequence, on media professionals' credibility. Superficial behaviour may include associating different news items in an inappropriate manner and may engender unwarranted apprehension among the public.
- ➔ Safeguard those asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who choose to speak with the media by adopting solutions as regards their identity and image so as to ensure that they are not identifiable. Asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who

are identifiable – as well as the latter’s relatives - may face reprisals on the part of the authorities in their country of origin, of non-state entities or of criminal organizations. Moreover, individuals who belong to a different socio-cultural context, where the press plays a limited role, may not be aware of global media dynamics and may thus not be able to foresee all the consequences of their decision to appear in the media.

- ➔ Whenever possible, consult experts and organizations with a specific expertise on the subject so as to provide the public with information which is clear, comprehensive and also analyses the underlying roots of phenomena.

ACTIONS

Commitments to be undertaken by CNOG, FNSI and UNHCR

I. The National Council of the Journalists’ Association (CNOG) and the Italian National Press Federation (FNSI), in collaboration with the Journalists’ Association’s Regional Councils, the Regional Press Associations and all the other organizations which have promoted this Charter, pledge to insert issues relating to asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants among the topics covered in training courses for journalists, ranging from those organized by journalism schools to seminars held for prospective reporters. CNOG and FNSI also pledge to hold regular study seminars on the way asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants are represented in the press by print, radio and TV media outlets.

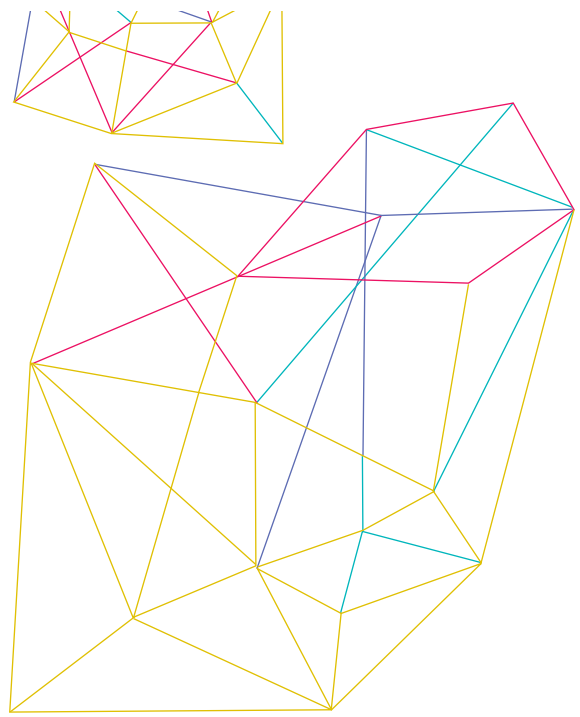
II. CNOG and FNSI, in collaboration with UNHCR, support the establishment of an independent Monitoring Centre which - working with universities, research institutes and stakeholders – will monitor developments in media coverage of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, migrants and members of minority groups so as to:

- ➔ provide qualitative and quantitative analyses of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants’ image in the Italian media to Italian and European research institutes and universities as well as to relevant European Union and Council of Europe agencies dealing with discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance;
- ➔ provide material on media coverage of these issues and on trends underway in this field to the Journalists’ Association’s Regional Councils, to editors and reporters and to media and communications specialists

so as to stimulate debate and discussion.

III. The National Council of the Journalists' Association and the Italian National Press Federation will work towards the establishment of awards specifically dedicated to media coverage of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants, drawing on similar initiatives at the European and international level which have proven to have positive effects.

The Charter has been drafted drawing on input from a Consultative Committee whose members include representatives of the Interior Ministry, the Social Solidarity Ministry, UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali – National Office Against Racial Discrimination)/Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Equal Opportunities, 'La Sapienza' University and Roma III University, Italian and foreign journalists.



TERMINOLOGY

1.1 Words matter

Adopt an appropriate terminology which reflects national and international law so as to provide readers and viewers with the greatest adherence to the truth as regards all events which are the subject of media coverage, avoiding the use of inappropriate terms.

Over the last years, generalization has characterised much of the information about immigration and the status of foreign citizens in Italy has often received little attention. The legal status of foreign persons sojourning in Italy is a basic piece of information that every journalist covering or wanting to cover these issues should know well.

Words such as irregular immigrant, asylum seeker, refugee, victim of human

trafficking cannot be used as synonyms since they indicate different legal and administrative statuses. Also, people entering our country irregularly should not be simply labelled as “irregular immigrants”, for this expression does not exist from a legal standpoint and carries very negative connotation.

MIGRANT OR REFUGEE?

While covering the huge number of people who seek asylum in Europe, media have wandered how to call these people as long as their country of origin remains unknown. “Many of the people who migrated in 2015, especially to Italy and Greece, comes from war-torn countries, or countries where huge flows of migrants originate, and therefore international protection for those people is required”, UNHCR said. “However, a smaller percentage comes from other countries and using the term ‘migrant’ to indicate these people would seem the right thing to do. UNHCR uses ‘refugees and migrants’ to refer to people who travel by sea, or under other circumstances, when both groups may be present.”

1.2 Glossary annexed to the Charter of Rome

- ➔ **Asylum seeker.** Is a person who is outside the country of his/her nationality and submits an application to be granted refugee status, or other forms of international protection, in a different country on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees. He/she is an asylum seeker and has the right to reside in the host country as a legal alien until a final decision has been reached by the competent authorities. Asylum seekers are thus not irregular migrants, though they may enter the host country without identity papers or in an irregular manner, e.g. through so-called ‘mixed migration flows’, which are made up of both irregular migrants and potential refugees.
- ➔ **Refugee.** Is a person who has been granted refugee status on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees, which Italy is a member to along with 143 other countries. Article 1 of the Convention defines a refugee as a person having a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [who] 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’. A person is granted refugee status if he/she can demonstrate that he/she is the victim of an individual persecution.
- ➔ **Beneficiary of subsidiary protection.** Is a person who cannot be strictly defined as a ‘refugee’ under the 1951 Convention because he/she is not persecuted as an individual, but who is nevertheless in need of protection as, were

he/she to be repatriated to his/her home country, he/she would be in grave danger due to armed conflict, generalised violence and/or widespread violations of human rights.

- ➔ **Beneficiary of humanitarian protection.** belongs to the third category of protection. Until 2008 in Italy, as well as in other countries of the European Union, humanitarian protection was granted instead of subsidiary protection. Humanitarian protection has remained within the Italian regulation although it grants less rights than the subsidiary protection and the refugee status.
- ➔ **Victim of trafficking.** Is a person who - unlike irregular migrants, who decide to entrust their fate to people smugglers - has not given his/her consent to be transferred to another country or, if he/she has given his/her consent, the latter has been rendered void by the coercive and/or deceitful actions of the traffickers or by the abuse which he/she has been the victim of or has been threatened with. Traffickers aim to achieve control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. 'Exploitation' includes the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
- ➔ **Migrant/immigrant.** Is a person who chooses of his/her own accord to leave his/her home country in search of work and of better economic conditions elsewhere. Unlike refugees, migrants may return home without prejudice to their safety.
- ➔ **Irregular migrant.** Often defined as a 'clandestine' migrant in Italy, is a person who: a) has entered a country avoiding detection at the border; b) has entered the country in a regular manner, e.g. on a tourist visa, and has not left after his/her entry visa has expired (thus becoming a so-called 'overstayer'); or c) has not left the territory of the destination country subsequent to receipt of an expulsion order.

1.3 More vocabulary for media operators

- ➔ **A stateless person** is not considered as a national by any state, or a person whose citizenship is not or cannot be ascertained. The condition of statelessness was recognised for the first time in 1954 within the UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons signed in New York. Statelessness can be primary or consequential, the latter because of a change in the political situation of the state someone was a citizen of. The status of stateless person can be decided in court or by a government and gives the right to a residence permit (de jure statelessness). The Italian Law also includes statutory provisions to overcome statelessness and issue Italian citizenship, e.g., the son of stateless parents who was born in Italy is an Italian citizen; people can apply for citizenship by naturalization after 5 years of continued residence, instead of 10.

- ➔ An **Unaccompanied Foreign Child** is a child who is not an Italian citizen or of any other EU State and reaches the territory of an EU State without being accompanied by an adult who is legally or customary responsible for him/her. He/She maintains the same status until an adult takes custody of him/her. The same status applies to a child who is a citizen of a non-EU country and is no longer accompanied after he/she enters a EU State.

A child can be a foreign child because he/she is the offspring of immigrant parents and – besides being born in Italy or arrived in Italy in his infancy – he/she has not become an Italian citizen, yet. Children born in Italy by immigrant parents cannot be called ‘immigrants’ and even less ‘foreign children’. Should this piece of information be significant to the news event, the expression ‘son/daughter of immigrants’ can be used.

- ➔ **Reception** consists in a set of standards a sovereign State offers to asylum seekers – e.g., accommodation, food, clothing – offered in the form of allowances or vouchers. These are currently regulated by Directive 2003/9/CE and by the later Directive 2013/33/CE. Reception is offered in dedicated centres such as the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, and more (see “Reception Centres”).
- ➔ A **Residence Permit** is an administrative regulation issued by the Provincial Police Headquarters (Italian: *Questura*) to allow foreign citizens the right to stay in Italy with different prerogatives depending on the type of permit.
- ➔ A **Working Residence Permit** is issued based on a regular immigration process within what is known as the Immigration Flows Decree for Seasonal or Non-Seasonal Work. It can also be issued to beyond-quota workers who belong to special categories, such as nurses, sport athletes, show business performers, etc. An EU Residence Permit for long-term residents can be requested after 5 years of residence, which grants a wider span of prerogatives. Those who enter Italy for family reunification purposes are issued a Residence Permit for family reasons.
- ➔ A **Reception Centre** is a place for reception, treatment, and fulfilment of asylum seekers’ immediate needs upon their arrival in a country where they applied for asylum and until a decision is made on such application by the Commission for Asylum.

A difference should be drawn among: (i) Reception Centres, i.e., the centres providing relief to immigrants as they land, irrespective of their legal status; (ii) the **National Asylum Support Service (NASS)** (Italian: Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo, CARA), which hosts migrants who apply for asylum in Italy; and the **Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees** (Italian: Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati, SPRAR), which provides reception services for people under or applying for international protection. The latter is a network of local authorities managed by the National Association of Italian Municipalities and the Ministry of Interior. Other recep-

tion centres, such as the Special Reception Centres, are established based on necessity by means of special legal provisions.

→ **Resettlement** is a process through which refugees who have fled their countries of origin and found temporary shelter in another country are transferred to a third country where they receive permanent protection. Resettlement is a vital provision for those refugees who cannot be properly protected in the country they have temporarily reached since they will not return to their country of origin to avoid the risk of persecution.

→ **Refoulement** is the return of an individual in a State where he/she can be persecuted due to his/her race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion, or where he/she is at risk of being tortured.

The opposite, i.e. **non-refoulement**, is a general principle in international law applied to refugees, as States are prohibited to let refugees return to countries or territories where their life or freedom would be endangered.

→ **Refusal of Entry** means entry at the outer border for a non-EU citizen has been denied because he/she does not meet all requirements for entry envisaged by the legislation on immigration. Entry cannot be refused to non-EU citizens who cross the border to apply for asylum, nor to people whom removal is not permitted – e.g., pregnant women, under-age persons, victims of persecution.

→ **Return** means abandoning the country where someone has spent a significant amount of time toward his/her own country of origin or arrival. Return can be voluntary or forced. The latter case is referred to as removal.

→ **Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)** is financed by the Ministry of the Interior to cover travel costs and reintegration of repatriated persons in their countries.

→ **Forced Removal** is the consequence of a Removal Order and sometimes follows custody at a Removal Centre.

→ **Removal (or Forced Removal)** is both an administrative regulation issued by the Ministry of Interior or by the Prefect and causes the physical deportation of an individual outside the national borders of the state where such individual was staying illegally, having the country of origin or country of arrival as the final destination. Removal may be ordered for several reasons.

Removal by order of the Ministry of Interior is administered when public order or national security are at risk. Removal by order of the Prefect is ordered in case of: illegal entry without a Refusal to Entry; regular entry not followed by an application for residence permit; expiration of the residence permit not preceded by application for renewal (also called 'overstay'); inclusion in the list of socially dangerous people. Removal is carried out by the Provincial Police Headquarters in several ways: immediate escort to the border after the decision has been upheld by a Justice of the Peace; custody at a Removal Centre for identification of subjects and until a transportation vector is available;

order to leave the country within 7 days, with failure to comply being a criminal offence; voluntary departure within an established deadline. In case of danger to society, the judge can decide for removal as a preventative security measure. Alternate removal or imprisonment-surrogate removal do also exist.

- ➔ The term **Trafficker** usually indicates a person facilitating illegal migration of non-EU citizens – also known as smuggling or migrants – or traffic of human beings (cfr. “Victim of Trafficking”). Likewise, ‘trafficker’ is used with respect to other forms of trafficking, including drugs, weapons, tobacco, or other products processed abroad. Depending on the type of offense, illegal activities may include promoting, managing, financing, and transporting foreign citizens inside the national territory. Recruitment, kidnapping and similar offences may be part of trafficking.
- ➔ **Smuggler** (Italian: *scafista*) indicates those who operate the boat carrying illegal immigrants towards Italian shores. It is an equivalent of the French expression ‘passeur’ indicating those who helped Italians cross the French or Swiss borders in the past.

FAQ

Are we defining vocabulary in a rigid and unalterable manner while the semantic value of terms changes over time, also thanks to how they are used?

It goes without saying that every choice about lexicon should be consistent with the relevant context and time. It is not about carving laws in stone, but acting in the present. An open attitude to dialogue within media and with citizens and groups may serve as a foundation for constant monitoring and future updates.

ROMA AND SINTI PEOPLE: UNDERSTANDING BY KNOWLEDGE

By Associazione 21 luglio

Roma and Sinti people are the largest minority in Europe today, accounting for about 11 million people, of which 6 in the 28 member states of the EU³. According to the latest report of UN Special Rapporteur for Minorities, this community continues to suffer from discrimination and social exclusion⁴.

The presence in Italy

The Council of Europe has assessed the presence of Roma and Sinti people in Italy ranges between 120,000 and 180,000, that is about 0.25% of our country's population. This is in fact one of the lowest percentages in Europe⁵. Despite that, the situation in Italy is strongly characterised by widespread and growing anti-Gypsy feelings. According to a 2015 study of the Pew Research Center, which investigated the magnitude of anti-Gypsyism in 6 European countries, Italy ranks first in anti-Gypsyism with 86%, before France with 60%, the UK with 37% and Spain with 35%⁶.

Such attitude – as rooted in common feelings as it is and fuelled by political and media rhetoric – does often translate in openly discriminatory actions.

The country of Gipsy Camps

In 2012, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Nils Muižnieks, denounced the policy about gipsy camps in our country as places of segregation based on ethnicity, established and managed by institutions, which represent an anomaly in the European framework⁷. A year later, the Council of Europe adopted a resolution asking the Member States to fill the divide between Roma people and the rest of society, especially concerning the right to accommodation, education, labour and health⁸. However, as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reaffirmed in 2015, Italy is still far behind in the implementation of the National Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Sinti People: its policy of forced evacuations that are inconsistent with international law procedures continues⁹.

In a recent Resolution, the European Parliament reiterated its deep concern for the discriminations against Roma People in Europe and stressed the need by Member States to fight anti-Gypsyism at all levels and by any means possible¹⁰.

Stereotypes and Prejudice

“They steal children”. In 2008, the Migrantes Foundation ordered a research carried out by Sabrina Tosi Cambini and titled “La zingara rapritrice” (The Abducting Gipsy Woman) to the Department of Psychology and Anthropology of the University of Verona. Based on real data, the research demolished the stereotype

of Roma people as children abductors. About 30 news items from 1985 through 2007 on supposed children abduction cases by Roma people were analysed in an attempt to understand whether the cases had criminal after-effects or not. The research revealed that in fact no child had been abducted by Roma or Sinti people. “They have no interest in integration, jobs, or sending their children to school”. The clear majority of Roma and Sinti people in our country (4 out of 5) lives in conventional houses, studies, works, and lives a life that is like any other Italian or foreign citizen in Italy. Their stories, however, are little known, also because many refuse to disclose their identity scared as they are of prejudice and a widespread hostile climate. News focus mainly on squalor, negative stories about life in camps, that only concern one Roma or Sinti individual in five, i.e., about 40,000 people who suffer the direct consequences of such a segregating policy¹¹.

“Let’s send them back where they come from”. More than half of Roma and Sinti people in Italy are Italian citizens¹², to which many people born and raised in Italy who are not Italian citizens should be added. They have never visited their parents’ country of origin, nor they speak their national language. According to an estimate, about 15,000 under-age stateless persons or persons exposed to the risk of statelessness would be present in Italy¹³.

3. Study of the Special Rapporteur for Minorities about the status of human rights of Roma people, with a focus on anti-Gypsyism <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/GlobalStudyonRomaworldwide.aspx>

4. Ibid.

5. Council of Europe, “The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States”, July 2012.

6. <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2015/06/Pew-Research-Center-European-Union-Report-FINALJune-2-20151.pdf>

7. Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. Report on the Visit to Italy from 3 to 6 July 2012. https://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1348554916_com-instranetdh.pdf

8. Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states - http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/139979.pdf

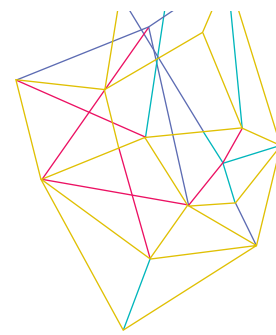
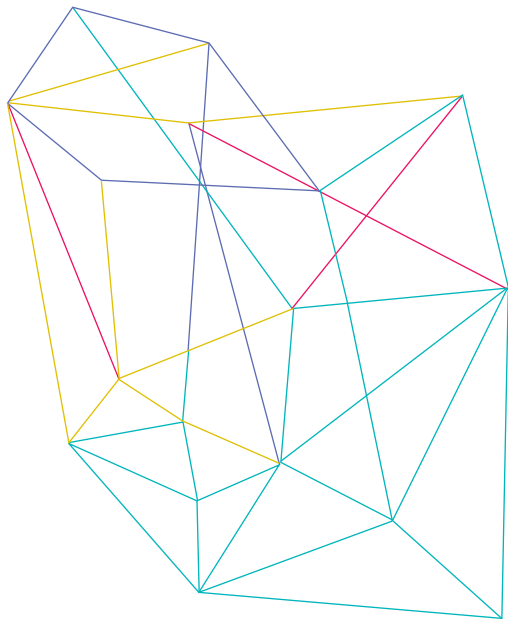
9. ECRI Conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations for Italy <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Italy/IT A-IFU-IV -2015-004-ENG.pdf>

10. Resolution of the European Parliament on the Roma International Day <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+B8-2015-0326+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

11. Senate Special Commission for the protection and promotion of human rights. Final report on the survey on the condition of Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Italy. February 9, 2011.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.



CORRECT AND COMPLETE INFORMATION

2.1 News accuracy and fairness

Avoid spreading inaccurate, simplified or distorted information as regards asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants. CNOG and FNSI call all their colleagues' – and those responsible for editorial content in particular – attention to the negative effects of superficial or unprofessional behaviour on those who are the object of news coverage, on readers/viewers and, as a consequence, on media professionals' credibility. Superficial behaviour may include associating different news items in an inappropriate manner and may engender unwarranted apprehension among the public.

Many journalists share a concern for press with an increasingly sensationalist attitude. When applied to news concerning immigration, this may evoke “terror, fear, or chaos in public opinion”, as reported by the Council of Europe¹⁴, or affect the peaceful and respectful cohabitation within our cities and territories.

HEALTH, MIGRATIONS AND SENSATIONALISM

by Doctors Without Borders

Other examples of this sensationalist attitude are the unjustified health warnings. Over the years, these warnings have focused on different diseases and announced an alleged and yet non-existent medical emergency connected with the presence of immigrants in Italy. Countless and authoritative sources have methodically demolished these assumptions and proved their groundlessness with real data.

Nevertheless, racist reasoning in the health care sector reappears at regular intervals in the Italian public debate. Since 2014, on several occasions and with the malicious intent to portray false truths, immigrants have been held responsible to facilitate re-delivery or resurgence of more or less exotic infectious diseases or epidemics. It was Ebola in the beginning, with several articles published for months about the possible contagion in our country, besides reassurance by the Ministry of Health that the risk for Italy was on virtually non-existent. Then tuberculosis came into the spotlight after several announcements were made about an epidemic that had allegedly hit police officers on duty at the landing docks. These were merely a few cases of positive skin reaction to tuberculin after contact with the bacillus of tuberculosis. Scabies – an ordinary skin infection also present in our country among disadvantaged classes and others - just followed next.

On several occasions, Doctors without Borders among others has reacted to these cases of misinformation. Details apart, immigrants are in fact subject to peculiar risk factors connected to some infectious diseases mainly because (i) those diseases are still widespread in their countries of origin, such as HIV and tuberculosis; (ii) they experience unhealthy living and working conditions in the transit countries and once they reach ours.

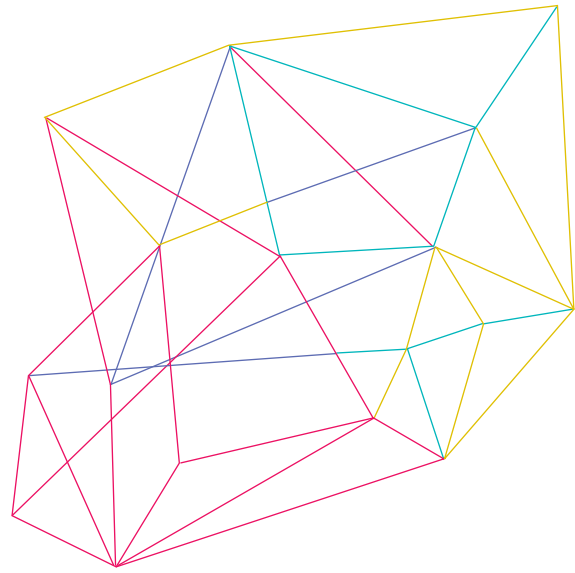
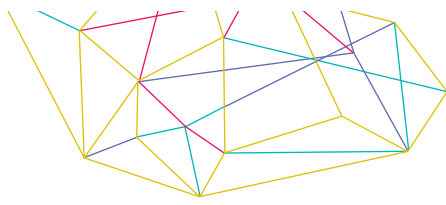
Despite all of this, these diseases do not represent a medical emergency, their magnitude and effects being much more limited than what most people commonly believe. Also, the permanent focus of the public on health warnings only breeds a climate of racism and discrimination, thus weakening the attention on the true emergency, that is managing reception correctly and defining immigration policies that respect human dignity and do not endanger people's lives.

According to this general attitude, media operators tend not to verify information as accurately as they should when foreign people are the alleged protagonists of stories. The conditional tense is no longer used and even unconfirmed facts are presented as verified evidence.

Nationality, ethnic group, race, place of origin, religion, legal status of the person involved in an event covered by media should be reported with stronger sense of responsibility and care. These factors should not qualify the person(s) involved if they are not help instrumental in understanding the event itself.

Headline writers, editors-in-chief and internal executives should consider to which extent stressing these elements in headlines and pamphlets may undermine civilized coexistence and fuel racist and xenophobic thrusts in our society.

14. Recommendation 1277, 'On migrants, ethnic minorities and media' (2005) and Recommendation 1768, 'The image of asylum seekers, migrants and refugees in the media' (2006) by the Council of Europe; Recommendation no., 'On media and terrorism' (2005) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.



PROTECTING THE IDENTITY

3.1 A responsible storytelling

Safeguard those asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who choose to speak with the media by adopting solutions as regards their identity and image so as to ensure that they are not identifiable. Asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who are identifiable – as well as the latter’s relatives – may face reprisals on the part of the authorities in their country of origin, of non-state entities or of criminal organizations.

Moreover, individuals who belong to a different socio-cultural context, where the press plays a limited role, may not be aware of global media dynamics and may thus not be able to foresee all the consequences of their decision to appear in the media.

'Refugee' has been the most widely used word over the last two years to indicate people fleeing from wars and persecution. [As recalled in the glossary at page 12,] The appropriate legal term, however, is 'asylum seeker', meaning those who are outside their own country and apply for asylum in another state for recognition of the status of refugee according to the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, or to receive other forms of international protection.

Asylum seekers, and of course those who have already been granted the status of refugee, deserve special attention by journalists and press.

Should media exposure be injudicious, the **reasons why they fled their own country may potentially expose those refugees or their relatives to retaliations** from the authorities of the country of origin, non-state entities, or criminal organisations.

IN CASE OF MEDIA INTERVIEWS, THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE CONSIDERED:

1. People coming from a different cultural environment where the role of media is limited may not know how media work. Therefore, they may not be able to properly assess the effects of media exposure.
2. People who accept to be interviewed while staying at Removal Centres or the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) should be duly warned about the possible consequences, so that proper preventative measures can be taken and the actual risks of repression following the interview can be evaluated. Special attention should be paid to the medical status and the possible physical or psychological trauma these people may have suffered having been rescued at sea, especially pregnant women or new mothers.
3. For an interview to be successful, a **cultural mediator and/or community interpreter** is required to properly convey information and respect the opinion and cultural background of the interviewed person.
4. In the case of asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking, any information that may lead to their identification shall be withheld, as required. In such cases, the name, face, and voice of individuals should be masked/ altered and attention must be paid to all details that could reveal the identity of the interviewed person, such as description of individual physical details or special anecdotes.
5. Irrespective of the free and informed consent of the interviewed person, his/her full name should **never** be published: do not reveal the family name of the interviewed person. Instead, use an invented name.

A case in point is that of two Eritreans who had failed to report for mandatory conscription without term in their country. After consenting to an interview with a well-known Italian newspaper, their fathers were taken into custody by local authorities and the judge set a very consistent bail for their release (Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees).

Even people from other countries are exposed to such direct risks or retaliations against their relatives in their country of origin. When detailed information about the country of origin of the interviewed person are not available, consulting with international organizations such as UNHCR is advised to avoid revealing his/her identity.

3.2 Audiovisual elements and identity protection

Audio and visual elements play a pivotal role in protecting the identity of asylum seekers and refugees who tell their stories to journalists.

After the shipwreck of Lampedusa on October 3, 2013 that led to the death of 366 migrants fleeing from the Eritrean regime, the website of a major Italian newspaper published an insight about the tragedy, with a detailed list of survivors, including their names and pictures. The managing editors considered this initiative praiseworthy as it revealed to the families of the survivors that they were still alive. However, the situation in country of origin had been underestimated. Those people were fleeing from the Eritrean dictatorship where relatives of political fugitives had already been detained in the past as opponents of the regime. In the case of Eritrea, brothers, fathers and mothers may be held prisoners by the State and – as said before – required to pay a high price for their release.

In this case, after the publication of names and pictures, the Eritrean authorities may have discovered the identity of the asylum seekers easily, despite the good faith of the editors and even of the latter did not mean to expose the families of survivors to the dangers described above. The Rome Charter Monitoring Team intervened quickly and obtained the removal of names and pictures, thus avoiding that the families of survivors may run potential risks.

Our recommendations are as follows:

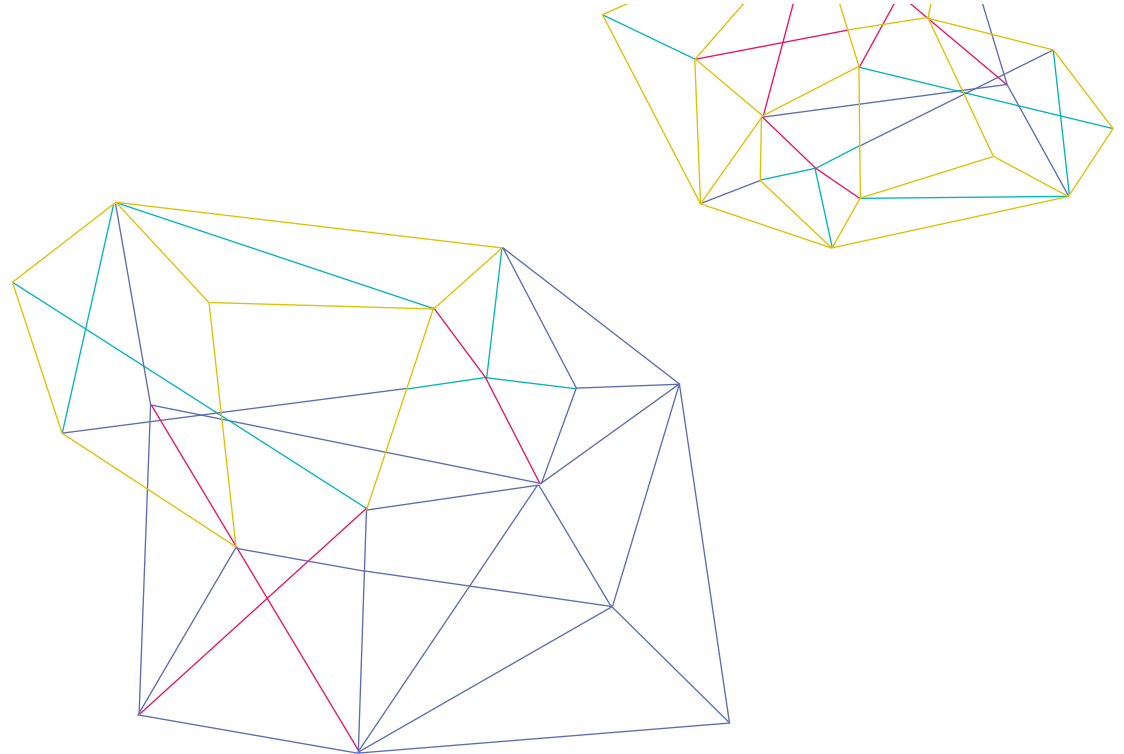
- ➔ A free and informed consent of the interviewed persons is always required before any picture or video is published that can lead to their identification. Should be impossible to receive their consent due to lack of time or other reasons, see point 3 below.
- ➔ Before publishing images or broadcasting videos of people that may lead to their identification, the possible downsides resulting from the political and

social conditions in the country of origin should be assessed. During the post-production phase of audiovisual material, all elements leading to identification should be removed, even if consent has been given.

- ➔ Verifying the country of origin of all migrants aboard rescue ships before landing may not be possible due to lack of time, or because early information is unclear or partial, or if consent for an interview cannot be asked. In these and other similar cases, use **wide image fields or out of focus images, or camera takes from behind, or frame non-easily recognizable body parts**. For example, close-ups can be out of focus or against the light, so that only the silhouette is visible.
- ➔ In case of audio or video interviews, the voice of the interviewed person can be altered to protect his/her identity. Depending on the publishing policy and desired perspective, altering or dubbing the voice are among the options.

FAQ

Could anonymity be the best ally for those who want to deport refugees thanks the world's indifference and logic that treats them only as figures?
Giving visibility to the conditions of asylum seekers does not imply their identity should be revealed or details of individual stories should be published. Hiding the identity of these individuals is no new practice in journalism.



SOURCES

4.1 A pluralistic and balanced debate

Whenever possible, consult experts and organizations with a specific expertise on the subject so as to provide the public with information which is clear, comprehensive and also analyses the underlying roots of phenomena.

What follows is a list of sources by sector that journalists and media operators may use to find up-to-date figures and information on migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and minorities.

4.2 Useful sources

Italian Institutional Sources

www.lavoro.gov.it Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. National law and data. Language: Italian.

www.interno.it Ministry of Interior. National law and data. Language: Italian

www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/documentazione/statistica/cruscotto-statistico-giornaliero A daily report by the Ministry of Interior offers the main data and trends regarding: the arrival of refugees and migrants by sea and the relocation programme. Language: Italian.

www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it Online platform promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. National law, data, events, initiatives concerning immigration. Language: Italian.

European and International Institutions

<http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en> Website on Integration. Language: English.

<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs> EU website on Migration and Home Affairs.

[www.ec.europa.eu/social /1](http://www.ec.europa.eu/social/1) EU website on Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

www.frontex.europa.eu EU Agency for the European Border Management. Maps and trends concerning the main migration routes available.

<http://fra.europa.eu> EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

www.mipex.eu EU Migrant Integration Policy Index. A tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States.

International Organizations

www.italy.iom.int International Organization for Migration. Language: Ita/Eng.

www.unhcr.it United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (regional representation for Southern European countries). Language: Italian.

Italian and European legal framework

www.asgi.it Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration. It is composed by a pool of lawyers and law experts and focused on all the legal aspects of migration. Language: Italian.

www.meltingpot.org Multilanguage project and website with commentar-

ies, articles and news regarding migration and asylum-related issues and legal framework.

www.stranieriinitalia.it/briguglio/immigrazione-e-asilo A collection of articles focused on the legal aspects of migration. Language: Italian.

<http://www.refugeelawobservatory.eu> Video and commentaries by law experts regarding asylum and migration.

Data and Statistics

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics EU latest statistics on the asylum applications. Infographs and analysis available.

<http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean> UNHCR online collection of data, statistics and analysis about the Mediterranean situation. Infographs and maps available.

www.stra-dati.istat.it Online database of the National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) focused on the population of migrants and new citizens.

www.dossierimmigrazione.it Website of the Statistical Dossier on Immigration realized by IDOS. The dossier examines various aspects of the immigration phenomenon, on the basis of a wide range of statistics. Language: Ita/Eng.

www.missingmigrants.iom.int Website which tracks fatalities of migrants, including refugees, traveling along mixed migration routes around the world. Infographs and maps available

www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/documentazione/statistica/cruscotto-statistico-giornaliero A daily report (graphs) released by the Ministry of Interior offers the main data and trends regarding the arrival of refugees and migrants by sea and the relocation programme. Language: Italian.

www.themigrantsfiles.com A data journalism project regarding the human costs of the European border policies.

Research and studies

www.censis.it A socio-economic research institute which offers the most complete report about the Italian society. Language: Italian.

www.ismu.org Independent scientific body which promotes studies and research regarding the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Italian society. Language: Ita/Eng.

www.fieri.it International and european forum for migration research. Language: Ita/Eng.

www.fondazioneleonemoressa.org Reports and data on migration with a special focus on the economy and labour-related themes. Language: Italian.

www.lunaria.org Research about migration with a focus on racism and discrimination. Language: Italian (part of the material is also available in English).

Economy & Labour

www.unioncamere.gov.it The National Union of the Chambers of Commerce offers data and news regarding the foreign entrepreneurs in Italy. Language: Italian.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

www.sprar.it Website of the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, with data and news. Language: Ita/Eng.

www.centroastalli.it Website of the Italian Jesuit Refugee Service, which offers support to refugees and migrants. Language: Italian.

www.fedevangelica.it Website of the Federation of the Protestant Churches. The Federation is among the promoters of the so-called “humanitarian corridors” - a legal and safe way to bring refugees and vulnerable people in Europe which is privately funded. The humanitarian corridors were launched in Italy in 2016 in collaboration with the Government. Language: Ita/Eng.

Discrimination

<http://www.unar.it> The website of the Italian National Office Against Racial Discrimination. Language: Italian.

Migration and Human Rights

www.amnesty.it Italian section of the NGO which promotes the respect of human rights. Language: Italian.

www.abuondiritto.it Website of the NGO which promotes awareness towards migrant rights. A periodical report is focused in the conditions of detention inside the repatriation centers. Language: Ita/Eng.

www.arci.it Website of the NGO which support migrants and refugees and promotes the rights of the new generations. Language: Italian.

www.acli.it Website of the NGO which offers legal counseling and promotes activities for the inclusion of migrants and refugees. Language: Italian.

www.cospe.org Website of the NGO dedicated to the international cooperation, with data, research and news regarding migrants, refugees, and diversity. Language: Italian.

www.savethechildren.it Website of the NGO with reports and data regarding child migrants and refugees. Language: Italian.

Rom and sinti

www.21luglio.org Italian NGO offering data and news regarding Roma and Sinti people. Language: Italian.

Centers for the repatriation of migrants

www.lasciatecentrare.it Activists and journalists monitoring the conditions inside the CPRs. Language: Italian.

www.befreecooperativa.org Organization which offers support to the victims of human trafficking. Language: Italian.

Health

www.medicisenzafrontiere.it Website of the Italian Doctors Without Borders. Language: Italian.

www.mediciperidirittiumani.org Italian NGO composed by doctors promoting human rights. Among their publications a periodical report regarding the conditions of refugees and migrants who work in the fields. Language: Italian.

www.cri.it Website of the Italian Red Cross. Among its activities it provides support to refugees and migrants in several ways. Language: Italian.

www.emergency.it The NGO composed by doctors among its activities has an outpatient clinic in Palermo (Sicily) to provide free healthcare to migrants, whether with or without residence permit. Language: Ita/Eng.

Specialized media

www.redattosociale.it Press agency dedicated to the social topics and issues. Language: Italian.

www.stranieriinitalia.it Online platform focused on migration-related news. Language: Italian.

