



**Speak  
Up!**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**Media for inclusion**

# **MANIFESTO**

Media & Migration

Executive Summary

September 2021

[www.speak-up-eu.com](http://www.speak-up-eu.com)

This Executive Summary of the Speak Up Manifesto on Media and Migration has been realised in the framework of the ERASMUS+ co-funded project “**Speak Up! Media for Inclusion**”. Speak Up! is a 24-month project aiming at integrating young, newly arrived migrants through video and radio production and media literacy training and culminating in the Ithaka International Film and Media Festivals held in five European countries (France, Greece, Hungary, Italy and The Netherlands). Simultaneously, international experts’ meetings have been held in Utrecht (online 2020) and in Budapest (2021), leading to the drafting of the Speak Up Manifesto.

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## Why study migration?

Migration provokes **powerful emotions**, **bitter debates** and **influences political and social change**. Migration - and especially forced migration - is always newsworthy.

A glance at the dizzying numbers of UNHCR's annual Global Trends report, released in June each year, shows how millions of people around the globe live in a state of emergency. **An estimated 11 million people were forcibly displaced from their homes in 2020**, as a consequence of persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations. A record 82.4 million are currently displaced, of whom 26.4 million are refugees (42% of these are children under 18). The EU accommodates merely 0.6% of refugees worldwide.

By January 2019, 4.7% of the EU's total population, 20.9 million people, were non-EU citizens. In the eloquent words of the European Commission web page: **“Without migration, the European population would have shrunk by half a million”**.



*Speak Up Media training in the Netherlands © Common Frames*



## Why look at media representations of migrants and refugees?

**Media representations** shape our understanding of social reality, and influence our understanding of ourselves, of others, and of the nations to which we belong. Existing research shows that media often report on refugees and migrants in a negative way, either as social, economic or cultural threats to the hosting societies or as voiceless and powerless victims in need. Refugees and migrants very seldom speak for themselves in news articles.



**Media reporting** often over-simplifies the complex phenomena of migration, neglecting the perspective of migrants and refugees. Migration is often treated as a problem rather than as a structural feature of human history. Established media routines and closed structures often exclude migrant and refugee journalists from the media industry. To address this, there is a need to monitor coverage to prevent stereotypical, negative expressions in the media and aim for more balanced reporting that covers different aspects of migration.



**Media images** have symbolic power to shape public opinion and influence migration and asylum policies. At the same time, the tone and content of news reports are also influenced by the social and cultural context and by political developments in each country and internationally.



## Raising migrant and refugee people's voices in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Italy

Although the negative treatment of migration is dominant, numerous initiatives have been created in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Italy with a different approach.

In **France**, [L'Oeil de la Maison des journalistes](#) and [Guiti News](#) offer the opportunity for migrants to write their own stories. [Infomigrants](#) share news related to migration in several languages and provide useful information to migrants before, during and after the journey. In partnership with [Désinfox Migrations](#), [Gisti](#) and [Migreurop](#), some french media produce decryption files and reports to deconstruct fake news on migration. On the web, educational and scientific content is made available by [Migrations en questions](#) and [Tido Media](#), with the aim of clarifying the debate on this subject.



In **Germany**, the [radio station Cosmo](#) includes world music and reports about cultural diversity in many languages. [Neue deutsche Medienmacher](#) is a network of journalists that offers a guideline for diversity in the media and an expansive glossary for vocabulary related to migration, asylum, integration and cultural diversity. They also offer diversity training for media institutions. [Civis Media Foundation](#) is an organisation that supports media reporting on the issues of migration and offers a prize for good journalistic reports since 1988.



In **Greece**, the “Young Journalists” initiative is a team of young migrants, refugees and Greeks, that produces podcasts for the Web Radio [“Dandelion”](#) and publishes the [“Migratory Birds”](#) newspaper in many languages. [EFIVOS](#) is a European Erasmus + KA3 program promoting inclusive education among young people, by raising awareness and enhancing their digital skills in media literacy. [@Now you see me moria](#) is a campaign by Moria Camp refugees to raise awareness about the harsh conditions in the camp and to issue a call for change to European policy makers. [Karpos](#) is an independent organisation on media education that provides audiovisual story-telling training for youth and refugees.



In **Hungary**, independent media as [RTL Klub](#), [index.hu](#), [telex.hu](#), [24.hu](#), [444.hu](#), [hvg.hu](#), [valaszonline.hu](#), [hang.hu](#), [magyarnarancs.hu](#) and [nepszava.hu](#) provide a more reliable picture of migration, than pro-government media outlets which push a strongly anti-migrant, anti-refugee narrative.



In **Italy**, the national network [UNIRE](#) (Unione Italiana Rifugiati ed Esuli) supports initiatives led by refugees and activists. The [“Carta di Roma” Association](#), curates an annual report on the image of migration in the media. The [“Io accolgo”](#) (“I welcome”) campaign aims to give voice and visibility to citizens who share the values of hospitality and solidarity, to counteract anti-migrant laws, to promote migrants as protagonists and to initiate a dialogue with citizens who do not explicitly embrace anti-migrant policies.



## Recommendations in a nutshell

### A. Choose the right words

- Use **appropriate terms** and choose your words carefully to **avoid the prevailing negative stereotypes, stigmatization, discrimination, Islamophobia, xenophobia and hate speech.**
- **Know the laws** and the legal terminology about migration and asylum processes as well as the different regulations that might apply to people from different nationalities, ethnicities, cultures and religions.
- **Make use of available glossaries** which offer precise definitions for the terms related to migration. Consult the [IOM](#) and [UNHCR](#) glossaries, available online, in order to use the most appropriate words.



### B. Promote dignity

- **Show humanity:** Treat refugees and migrants with dignity, respect and sensitivity. Avoid disrespect, forcing them to answer, triggering their traumas, treating them as a means to create news and press reports.
- **Promote diversity, individuality, identity and ethnic, cultural, religious, gender equality in representation.** Mention the persons' names where permitted, their origins, their profession, their expertise. Avoid homogeneity and anonymous crowd references.
- **Change the narrative:** Focus on the positive images of refugees and migrants, mention their qualifications and strengths, their culture, their arts, achievements and dreams, their positive contribution to the society, the mutual benefits, the cultural bonds, the arising opportunities and/or entrepreneurship and the economic development. Avoid victimization and portrayal of migrants and refugees as weak and poor people, do not only focus on conflicts and negative events.

#### **FOR THE MEDIA:**

→ Develop counter-narratives to combat stereotypes, discrimination, hate speech and populism.

## C. Facilitate inclusion

- Facilitate social integration, social inclusion and networking.
- Instil a feeling of belonging for the refugees and migrants to the community. Avoid focusing on differences.

### **FOR THE MEDIA:**

→ Recruit journalists from migrant and refugee backgrounds.



## D. Maintain accuracy

- **Be fair and just:** Stick to the facts, reliable sources and verified information. Avoid conflict framing, fabricated news and popular rhetoric.
- **Be independent:** Show all sides of the story. Do not stick to political agendas, personal ambitions and commercialism.
- **Report on the causes of migration** (war, violence etc.), the dangers, risks, threats, harsh conditions, bureaucracy of the asylum process.

### **FOR THE MEDIA:**

→ Train journalists and media professionals on everything related to the matter: codes of ethics, political context of the countries of origins, international and national laws, human rights, diversity and equality.



## E. Share the knowledge

- **Simplify the language:** Scientific, sociological and political aspects of migration are difficult for most readers to understand. Write in a simplified way, with concrete examples that are easily understood.
- **Be original:** clarify complex topics and write about subjects that are rarely covered by the media, in order to give a broader view of what migration is.

