

# Migrants

between

# News Media and Reality

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THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF MIGRATION IN ITALY

BY ANNA POZZI, FEBRUARY 2016





# CARTA DI ROMA | Charter of Rome

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ETHICAL PROTOCOL ON ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES, VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANTS

The National Council of the Italian Order of Journalists (NCODG) and the Italian Federation of the Media (FNSI) - sharing the concerns of UNHCR about the information on refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and migrants – provide the guidelines for the processing of information relating to asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants in Italy

12 June 2008 | [www.cartadiroma.org](http://www.cartadiroma.org)

## Carta di Roma

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### Main principles:

- Adopt legally appropriate terms and keep the maximum adherence to the reality, avoiding the use of misnomers;
- Avoid the dissemination of inaccurate or distorted information regarding asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants. NCOGD and FNSI draw the attention of all members, and persons in charge of editorial board in particular, on the damage caused by superficial and incorrect professional behaviors;
- Protect asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who choose to speak with reporters, adopting those attentions of the identity and the image which does not allow the identification of the person, in order to avoid exposing them to criminal retaliation;
- Ask - when this is possible - the collaboration of experts and organizations specialized in this area, in order to provide information in a clear and comprehensive context.



# NOTIZIE DI CONFINE | News at the Borders

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## THIRD REPORT OF CARTA DI ROMA 2015

Immigration in newspapers and on TV

January-October 2015

By European Observatory on the Security

# 2015. The «Year of Migrants»

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In 2015, the arrivals of refugees in Europe have grown exponentially. The issue of immigration raised the top of the political (and media) agenda. At the same time, terrorism contributed to feed our fears.

News criteria: quantity (number of arrivals...), emotional (shipwreck, deaths, children...) interests of the country (naval landings in Southern Italy, Balkan routes ...).

The number of news about migration increased over the same period in 2013:

+ **80 %** in the newspapers (**1.452 headlines** on the front page of the 6 main Italian newspapers)

+ **250 %** on television (**3.437 news in the 7** main TV news)

# Who are Migrants in the Media?

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The story of migration that have invested Italy and Europe unfolds between thousands of dramatic pictures and thousands of stories of acceptance and understanding:

- Refugees, people fleeing from poverty and violence
- Invaders, possible terrorists, Islamic extremists, criminals
- People that arouse pity, sorrow and compassion

# Tone of the News Coverage

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Almost half the news has an alarmistic tone (47%).

The rest is divided between reassuring and neutral tones.

The real issue provoking anxiety are not the stories about criminality, but the continuous focus on landing on shore. And the related headlines: "The Exodus», «The Great March”...

# "Hate Speech" and "Dangerous Speech"

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Sometime there is a very slight dividing line between "free speech" and "hate speech", especially when the media is not the original source, but the amplifier of someone else's speech. However, there are some elements of narrative journalism generically considered as "dangerous speech".



# THE «VALUE» OF IMMIGRATION

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPER COMMUNICATION ON IMMIGRATION

The use of proper terms, the style of communication and the attention to specific topics are essential elements in the world of information and, as a result, they contribute to spread or remove some stereotypes and in the promotion of a realistic image of immigration, especially in the economic area.

*Vademecun: Foundation Leone Moressa, 2014*

# Not Only a Problem

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In Italy, as in the rest of Europe, immigration has long been a structural phenomenon: migrants represent 8.2% of the resident population (5 million residents in January 1, 2015), 15% of newborns in 2013, the 9% of pupils (2013/2014) and account for 10.5% of total employment and 7.8% of the total entrepreneurs.

Speaking about immigration, we must not forget the data. The migration can no longer be considered only as an emergency or a temporary phenomenon, but as part of our times and our societies.

# A Complex Phenomenon

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Limiting the reporting about immigration only to news events mean to underestimate the complexity of the phenomenon. It is important to go in-depth into the global context, explaining the causes of events and the interrelation with other phenomena.

# Who is Speaking?

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What's missing from newspaper coverage of migration? The migrants!

Although the mere fact of being of foreign origin does not provide an added value to the "speech" on immigration, it is necessary to consider immigrants not only as an "objects" of the debate, but also as a "subject" of their own narrative.

Even in this case, the journalist must identify reputable sources to expand and diversify the immigration debate.

# Different from Who?

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It's necessary to consider the concept of "diversity" and give it a broader view, not just negative compared with the local culture. This is to avoid any forms of discrimination or exclusion and to promote an open debate on "diversity" and on the opportunities arising from a multiethnic society.

# Migrants and Economy

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Concerning foreign workers or entrepreneurs, usually the media tell stories of exploitation and "unfair competition", which would aggravate the crisis of local activities.

In

Italy, migrants run more than 500 thousands enterprises. This means that media cannot reduce the information only to negative episodes. This phenomenon can represent an opportunity for expansion (economic, cultural and social) and generate interactions and synergies between Italians and foreigners.



# CONCLUSIONS

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Immigration, as told by the media, is the mirror of our difficulty – not to say impotence – to understand and to deal with what is happening around us, a few kilometers from our shores or borders. For these reasons, we are hit by sudden waves of information. Overwhelming, like the rush of refugees at the borders of Europe or like the boats full of desperate people in the Mediterranean Sea. Floods of words, images, faces, emotions. Followed by an "ocean of silence". The ebb and flow that disappear and reappear with every new emergency. Local or International. Economic or political.

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This kind of narration, proposed and imposed by the media contribute to create our contemporary condition: disoriented citizens and spectators in front of a situation in which we should be protagonist.

That is why we have to go beyond the representation of the immigration and to cope with immigration in its reality. And to deal with people – migrants or non – than with their image.



CREATE A CULTURE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTEGRATION