



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Romanian  
National Commission  
for UNESCO

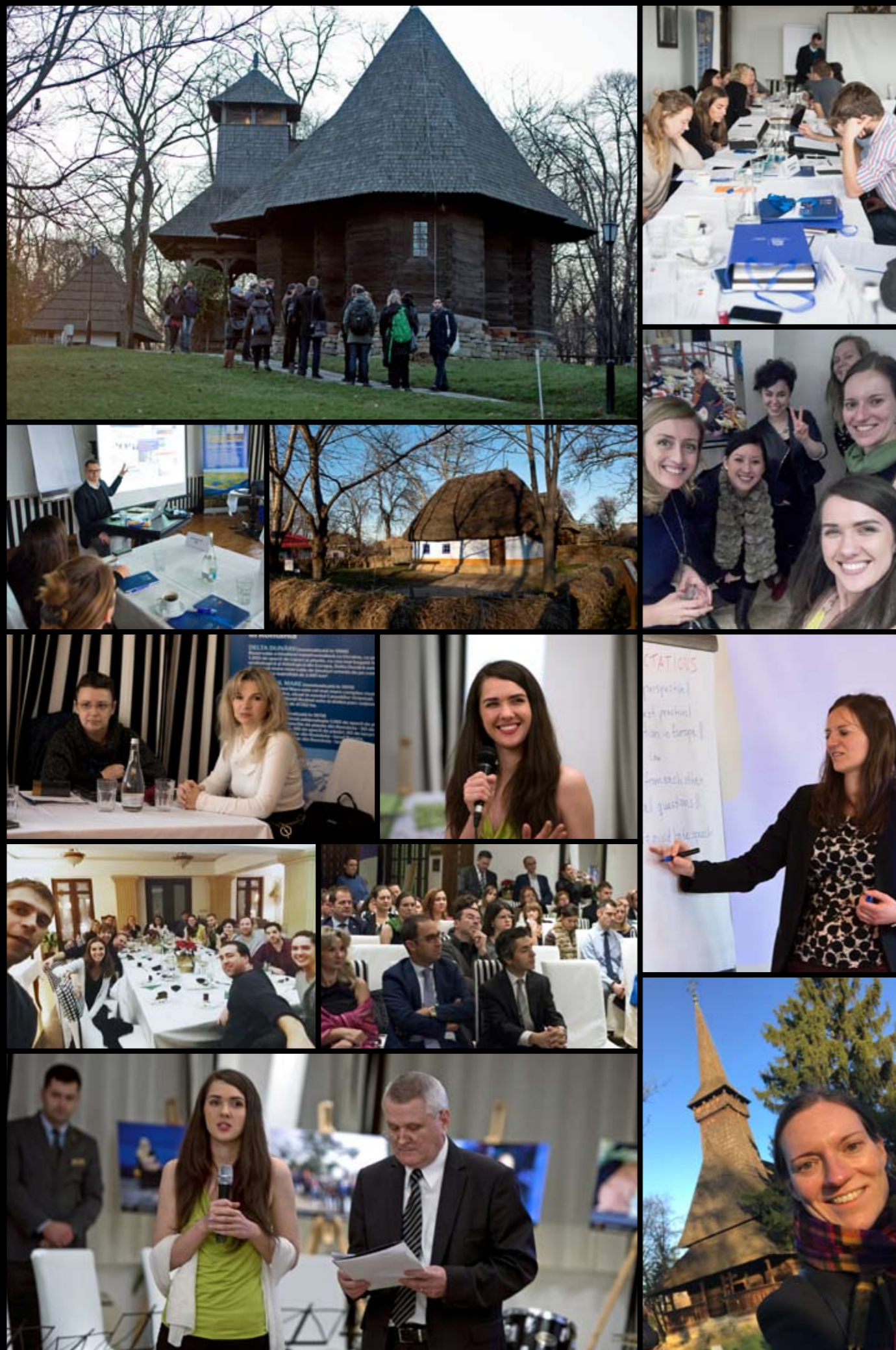
# The role of mass-media in treating the refugees and migrants topic

**With hope,  
to a new  
beginning**



Photo: DIMITRA STASINOPOULOU

**BUCHAREST 2017**



## UNESCO, an integrated approach to the theme of migrants and refugees

The organization by the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO in Bucharest of a complex project on the role of the media in treating the refugees and migrants topic is an eloquent proof of the integration of Romanian concerns into the European and international effort of a realistic and complex approach of one of the greatest challenges in today's society.

Conceived, organized and unfolded in an original manner that raised the interest and engaged representatives of prestigious international and national organizations and authorities, the project proved to be a real forum for debate, cooperation and projection for the future of new manifestations and attitudes that contribute to a better understanding of the complex issue of migrants and refugees. The initiative aimed to provide new ideas and solutions for the promotion of inclusive policies and strategies, multireligious and multi-cultural integration, professional recognition and family development.

The issue of migration, with its manifestations and realities in recent years, is certainly a complex one. UNESCO's contribution in this area arises from its mission to promote a culture of peace, poverty eradication, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue in education, sciences, culture, communication and information. Our organization is concerned with the human face of migration, the implications of the population's movement on human rights, the growth of the culture and civilization level of society as a whole.

In this perspective, the UNESCO objectives, consistently stated, refer to:

- Contributing to a policy environment that fosters social integration and inclusion of migrants;
- Understanding the links between migration and education and the challenges of intercultural education, brain drain, student mobility and international recognition of qualifications;
- Addressing the social dimensions of climate change and migration, especially in terms of governance, conflict, human rights and international law, gender equality, economic and human development and public health.

Resources, concerns and numerous efforts have been used to achieve these goals. We note the UNESCO Program on Social Change Management (MOST) acting internationally and nationally. Within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, MOST contributes to development, poverty eradication, inclusive and sustainable responses to environmental change and promotion of inclusive, efficient and responsible governance, as well as to the achievement of UNESCO's global priorities: Africa and gender equality.

UNESCO also actively participates in the collective efforts of the Global Migration Group (GMG). The organization was GMG president from July 2011 to May 2012. In 2013, UNESCO contributed to GMG preparation for the second high-level dialogue on migration and international development hosted by the UN General Assembly on October 3-4, 2013.

These are just a few of UNESCO's initiatives to provide a framework for a deep approach to topics covered by the network's meetings and activities, including the project „The role of the media in treating the refugees and migrants topic“ of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO. The reverberations of this manifestation were and will be multiple.

UNESCO, through its entire organizational gear, proves once again to be a militant entity, deeply involved in the social complexity of a world in constant evolution.

**Professor Ani Matei, Ph.D.**

Secretary-General National Commission of Romania for UNESCO



## The role of mass-media in treating the refugees & migrants topic

December 4 - 8, 2017, Bucharest

### DAY 1

- Training **"Moral act or legal duty? How to avoid myth-building in refugee reporting"** - Petra Sorge, Journalist and Media Analyst
- Presentation **"The media coverage of the actions undertaken by the Romanian Armed Forces during international missions in support of refugee and migrant groups"** - Colonel Valentin Vasile, Deputy Director, Information and Public Relations Directorate, Ministry of National Defense
- Presentation **"Shifting migration routes and the curse of poverty"** - Nicolae Melinescu, Journalist, PhD in International Relations

### DAY 2

- Training **"Global Displacement and UNHCR. Refugees: Journey from Challenges to Opportunities"** - Gabriela Leu, Public Information/ Communications Associate, UNHCR Romania
- **"Migration between apocalyptic myths and everyday reality"** - Visit to the International Organization for Migration, Romania office. Host: Mircea Mocanu, Head of Office IOM Romania

### DAY 3

- Training **"Media effects and migration - a backgrounder on an evolving field of research"** - Timo Tonassi, Migration Research Fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States
- Presentation **"Migration and Forced Displacement in EU Development Policy"** - Anna Schmidt, Policy Officer Migration & Forced Displacement, Directorate-General Development and International Cooperation, European Commission
- Presentation **"Legal, policy and operation framework in Romania. Facts and figures"** - Police Chief Commissioner Emil Niculescu, Director, Strategic Management Directorate, General Inspectorate for Immigration
- Presentation **"The war correspondent and the refugees"** - Adelin Petrișor, Chief International Correspondent, TVR (Romanian National Television)

### DAY 4

- Training **"The politics of media coverage: the framing of the «refugee crisis»"** - Eva Boggar, Senior Program Officer, Center for Media, Data and Society at the School of Public Policy of Central European University in Budapest
- Presentation **"Measures adopted by the Romanian Border Police for securing the state border"** - Police Chief Commissioner Adrian Popescu, Assignee Deputy Inspector General, Romanian Border Police
- Presentation **"Migrants and Political Correctness"** - Mircea Naidin, Diplomatic Counsellor, Globalisation General Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Gala of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO - 2017 edition**

### DAY 5

- Training **"Moving Stories: How to get the story but do no harm"** - Tom Law, Director of Campaigns and Communications, Ethical Journalism Network in UK
- **Visit to "Dimitrie Gusti" National Village Museum.**

#### Welcome to the participants!

Anna Goldenberg (Austria), Steven Decraene (Belgium), Francesca Fattori (France), Isil Özlem Nergiz (Germany), Alexandros Kontis (Greece), Szilárd Teczár (Hungary), Giovanni Vale (Italy), Kaspars Germanis (Latvia), Karolina Zbytniewska (Poland), Jasmina Štorman (Slovenia), Teresa Aburto Uceda (Spain), Maria Sköld (Sweden),

Simon Jäggi (Switzerland), Haluk Koc (Turkey), Eline Jeanne (UK), Victoria Sherwood (USA), Nicole Plymale (USA), Valentin Rupa-Mic, Ioana-Cristina Teșanu, Mihai Egorov, Sorin Oproiu Bogdan, Constantin Mireanu, Valentin Vasile, Cojocaru Bogdan Cornel, Alexandra Popescu, Gruia Catalin Octavian, Corina Matei, Mara Coman, Andreea Anghel, Daniela Mănuță (Romania).



## The theme of refugees and migrants, a challenge for the media

UNESCO's response to post crisis situations is one of the priorities at the core of its mandate. Europe as a whole must deal with the refugees & migrants issue in a coherent and sustainable manner and one of the most important pillars in achieving long - term peace is the mass-media. The mass media sets agendas and establishes debates, it impacts public policy and public attitudes. Journalists provide much of the information that citizens use to understand what is happening around them and how they'll be affected by it.

The refugees & migrants crisis is a huge opportunity for the media to prove quality journalism. The complexities of the topic need to be addressed in an integrated approach that is often left aside in favour of sensationalist and propagandistic headlines. Even if media in European countries is well-prepared and enjoys freedom of expression, certain topics are more sensitive and require in-depth, precise knowledge.

Media is highly polarized in Europe and equilibrium has not yet been achieved in treating the topic. Positive and negative media coverage of the refugees & migrants subject is influenced by political, economic context and the unique culture of each society. Media narratives can be improved in order to encourage a more balancing act for unbiased, useful, reliable and accurate representation of the topic, which is solely to the benefit of the receiver of the message, especially the public in the host societies.

The story must be told in a manner that rises to the challenge that history unveils. And mass-media must act on its role not only to inform, but also to educate.

The project "The role of mass-media in treating the refugees & migrants topic" implied five training courses, offered by specialists from Germany, Hungary, United Kingdom and Romania, as well as complementary presentations on topics related to the project theme, that challenges Europe at all levels. Among the institutions and organizations whose representatives were involved in the project activities are the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Center for Media, Data and Society at the School of Public Policy of the Central European University, the Ethical Journalism Network, UNHCR Romania, the International Organization for Migration - Romania office, the Directorate - General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) of the European Commission, TVR, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the General Inspectorate for Immigration, the Romanian Border Police.

Media is the main source of information for the mass population. So coming together for a purpose of informing, debating and practice exchange on reporting the subject is much needed. There were present in Bucharest for this project media representatives from 16 countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and UK.

We are grateful to the partners that supported our project: Bucharest City Hall - through ARCUB, Residence Hotels Bucharest, Via Viticola Sarica Niculițel, UNITER, Elite Art Club UNESCO, Ministry of National Defense, TVR, Radio România Actualități, Burda România.

**Iris Constantin**

Project Manager

Expert of National Commission of Romania for UNESCO



# Moral act or legal duty? How to avoid myth-building in refugee reporting

When more than a million refugees entered Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 and 2016, the Italian newspaper “Il Giornale” was not the only one using war terminology and conjuring up feelings of a cultural “invasion”. Media in many countries shifted between solidarity and rejection, between pity and outright hate speech. In both cases, the debate was largely happening with migrants being the “object” of reporting, not the subject. And almost never did they do the reporting themselves.

Author:  
Petra Sorge,  
Germany

**“Immigration chaos. Invasion by land. The landings continue but the alarm is now mainly on the Macedonian front: thousands of refugees push to enter Europe. It is an endless emergency.”**

Headline in Milan’s “Il Giornale”,  
on 24 August 2015.

These are some common findings of studies that have recently analyzed European refugee reporting, such as UNHCR (Press coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Cri-

sis in the EU, 2016), the Ethical Journalism Network (Moving Stories, 2015) or the Council of Europe (Media coverage of the “refugee crisis”: A cross-European perspective, 2017). These will be discussed in the conference “The role of mass-media in treating the refugees & migrants topic” by the Romanian UNESCO Commission in Bucharest on December 4th.

Their common conclusion: The majority of broadsheet press articles in Europe dealt with the topic from a hierarchic, top-down perspective. National politicians were

quoted first and foremost, followed by other politicians and EU representatives. Voices of refugees and native citizens were rarely heard.

Lilie Chouliakri and Tijana Stolic, two media scientists from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), describe five typical myths or “visual regimes” in refugee reporting. First, the media showed or described masses in camps or in nature. In doing so, refugees were reduced to mere biological life, and thus deprived of their individuality. A second trope was that of the victim, a third one that of the threat, the criminal, the terrorist. Lastly, if refugees were framed in the discourses of hospitality and celebrity benevolence, this happened “at the cost of marginalizing their voice” and predominantly served the Western conscience.

In a content analysis of 1200 news items in eight European countries, the LSE also analyzed how the media discussed positive effects of immigration. According to the results, many news reports included a moral claim in a form of an “imperative to act on vulnerable others without asking back at the heart of civilized Europe”. Other “positive” effects of

the arrivals, i.e. for the economy or culture of the host country, were rarely mentioned.

So, is it a question of religion and courtesy to help those fleeing war, terror or deprivation? Is it merely a question of “moral duty”?

A glimpse on international law on refugees might be helpful.

The EU states have adopted the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees (Geneva Convention) and the 1967 Protocol; in the world, 145 countries have signed it in total. These are the only international legal norms applying specifically to refugees. They establish the principle of non-refoulement stating that asylum seekers cannot be returned to a country in which they would face torture or persecution on the basis of “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”.

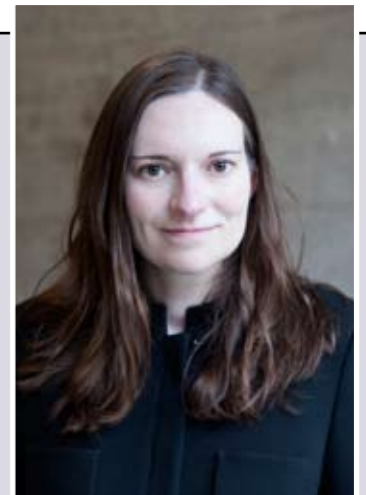
Developments in international human rights law have also reinforced that these principles are to be applied “without discrimination as to sex, age, disability, sexuality”. A recognized refugee is also the bearer of certain human rights guaranteed by the Geneva Convention. The EU has pledged to recognize these codes and to grant refugees protection under the Common European Asylum System.

Hence the refugee topic is not one of good morals but of one of human rights, of a universal principle. Compassionate journalism should not only focus on value debates but on abidance with legal norms. Push-backs at the EU border, ever-prolonged procedures, the de-facto incarceration of asylum seekers or the depriving of school to children offer plenty of opportunities for journalists to fact-check on Europe’s humanitarian legal promises.

However, shifting the perspective from morality to law also means continuing reporting when those who we pity become the perpetrators. If refugees get involved in smuggling, trafficking, or abusing women and children, this is news, and should be reported. In Germany, a content analysis published by journalism professor Michael Haller for the Otto Brenner Foundation, a left-wing German think tank, found that in summer 2015, when the “welcoming” trope was predominant, journalists didn’t look too closely at possible challenges of the refugees’ arrival. Similar as in the other

European countries, newspapers dealt with the topic on a high political level, close to the powerful, largely echoing Angela Merkel’s position. This has alienated many readers and has put journalism at a test.

Rather than echoing the fears and myths voiced by moral leaders, politicians or populists, journalists should hold those in power accountable. To what extent do state actors and public authorities abide by the law? Where are human rights breached? Refugees, local activists, NGO groups and citizens – those least heard in the public discourse – can be a valuable source in this research.



**Petra Sorge** is a freelance journalist, reporter and media analyst based in Berlin. Throughout her work on migration and refugee topics, she has been interested in media representations of “the other”, on in- and out-groups and concepts of “citizenship”, for example when she reported on Roma refugees who were forcibly returned to Kosovo, although many of them had lived in Germany for almost two decades and some had even been born in Germany. Mrs. Sorge was born in the Eastern German town of Jena. She studied journalism and political science in Leipzig and Toulouse, and started her career as a correspondent for the news agency DAPD in Saxony. In 2011 she joined the online team of the monthly political magazine “Cicero” in Berlin, where she later became managing editor. She was a fellow of the Robert Bosch Foundation’s program “Media Ambassador India-Germany” in 2016 and guest journalist with “The Indian Express” in Delhi where she reported on the rising Hindu nationalism. Upon her return, she started her career as a freelancer and investigative journalist. She was awarded the “Global Health Grant” of the European Centre for Journalism and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2017 for her project “Silicosis – The Silent Killer”. Petra Sorge is a member of Germany’s investigative journalists’ NGO “Netzwerk Recherche”, jury member of the News Enlightenment Initiative and treasurer of the Indo-German Media Network. Petra Sorge delivered the training “Moral act or legal duty? How to avoid myth-building in refugee reporting”.



# Global Displacement and UNHCR. Refugees: Journey from Challenges to Opportunities

On any given day, somewhere in the world, top headlines will likely include stories of people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. What do these stories tell us about refugees? Do they show dinghies packed with terrified people, and arms stretched towards the rescuers or they let the 30 years old Mohamad from Aleppo talk about his passion for classical music and his favourite instrument, *the oud*?

Author:  
Gabriela Leu,  
Romania

The way refugees are portrayed has an impact on our perception and may also change their life. We'll either see refugees as a burden for the society that receives them or we see the opportunities they bring to a welcoming community. The refugees' portrait in the public space is widely determined by the way media tells their stories. The

se stories may convince us to stand with refugees, welcoming and making them part of our world. There is also the narrative that plays with stereotypes, conflates terminology and scapegoats refugees.

If we are to see the opportunities refugees can bring to their host community, we need to start from using the terms "refugee" and "migrant" correctly. They have distinct

meanings and conflating them may have serious consequences for the lives and safety of refugees. It can undermine public support for refugees and the institution of asylum at a time when more refugees need such protection than ever before. In situations like the large arrivals to Europe, for example, it is correct to use both, "refugees" and "migrants".

The 2015 refugee and migrant crisis in Europe received lots of media coverage and dominated the world attention. However, if we look at the situation globally, we get the whole picture.

The UNHCR Global Trends Report<sup>2</sup> shows that at the end of 2016, war, violence and persecution had pushed displacement to new unprecedented high, with 65.6 million forcibly displaced globally. Out of them, 22.5 million were refugees, 40.3 million were displaced inside their own country, while 2.8 million were asylum-seekers, and people waiting for their asylum claim to be examined. On average, one in every 113 people in the world were forcibly displaced, a human cost that speaks louder than ever to the need for solidarity and common purpose in preventing and resolving crisis.

Most of the world refugees - 84% - were in low or middle income countries, in the proximity of the conflict areas. This illustrates the need for countries and communities supporting refugees and other displaced people to be robustly supported and resourced to avoid tragic impact on life-saving humanitarian work or secondary displacement. Syrians account for the biggest number of displaced people overall, with 12 million people affected. With 2.9 million people displaced, Turkey was the country hosting the largest refugee population while Lebanon with 1 refugee in 6 inhabitants, remains the country with the highest ratio refugees-local population.

These statistics show us the scope of human displacement but as such they do not capture the key developments in the refugee world.

One of them is the growing politicization of asylum in many countries along with wide-ranging violations of international refugee law, worldwide. An array of deterrence measure, deliberate policies of inhumane treatment evolved in a downward spiral of keeping refugees out.

Scapegoating refugees and challenging the essence of the international protection made headlines and provided a way to channel public anger and frustrations. Public debates promoting stereo-

types, hateful language and superficial depiction of refugees led to polarisation of communities, most of them already hosting refugees.

The role played by the media in depicting an honest portrait of refugees is essential. Our efforts to foster understanding, nurturing, and reasonable environment - ultimately the characteristics of good governance- rely on the help from many actors, including media. A positive, correct narrative will help motivating the silent majority and those on the fence so that, unlike before, refugee affairs become a whole-of-society matter.

The need for change in the way the world engages in refugee crisis led to the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants<sup>3</sup> adopted by all UN States. The Declaration offers a comprehensive model of response based on multi-stakeholder and whole of society approach that will be further crystallised in the Global Compact of Refugees 2018. This will broaden the support base by building new and enforcing old partnerships, such as private sector, media and civil society. With their help, the narrative on the displaced will turn more positive and refugees will have a better chance to be appreciated for what they can contribute with and the positive impact they may have on their adoptive communities<sup>4</sup>.



As Public Information and Communications Associate for the UN Refugee Agency Representation in Romania, **Gabriela Leu** works to give refugees a voice through media and public work. She is responsible for the strategic communication of the Office, designed to increase impact on various audiences, including media, government / nongovernmental partners and refugees themselves. She is also working to expand and consolidate a network of allies that would help UNHCR advocate for refugees. She joined UNHCR over ten years ago from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - Presence in Albania where she served for four years as Head of Field Station. Prior to OSCE, she has worked for refugees as social counsellor and then Executive Director of a specialised nongovernmental organisation - ARCA, Romanian Forum for Migrants and Refugees. In 1999, on behalf of ARCA, she managed the care and maintenance project helping Kosovar refugees relocated from FYROM, temporarily accommodated at the refugee camp in Sărata Monteoru (Eastern Romania). She graduated the Faculty of Psychology, Sociology and Pedagogy and a Master of Psychotherapy at Bucharest University. Gabriela Leu delivered the training "Global displacement and UNHCR. Refugees: journey from challenges to opportunities".

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/10/59d4cb234/unhcrs-volker-turk-warns-threats-global-asylum-environment-key-address.html>

# Media effects and migration – a backgrounder on an evolving field of research

Throughout the EU, questions of migration and integration have risen in prominence in recent years, with a focus on individuals coming from non-EU countries seeking protection in Europe.



Author:  
Timo Tonassi,  
Germany

In 2015 and 2016 in Germany, for example, various polls confirm that the issue of migration emerged from relative obscurity to become the number one political concern among Germans. The importance of migration during this time is reflected in mainstream media. In 2015 and 2016, few other policy issues received as much media coverage as the so-called “refugee crisis”. It can be assumed that the increased importance attributed to the subject of migration by the public and the media is the result of a cooperative relationship between newsmakers and their consumers.

The scale of the events that un-



folded in Germany around the “refugee crisis” and the attention they received continues to put pressure on reporters covering migration topics. Only a few years ago, mostly academics and human rights activists paid attention to the influx of refugees or EU and national migration policies and their societal implications; the situation is very different today. Experts and non-experts alike have strong opinions on and some knowledge of migration. While it is positive that people are beginning to realize the importance of migration, the sheer prominence of this contested issue and the speed with which it entered the public sphere has come with the spread of false facts and half-truths across the political spectrum and the media landscape. All these developments have a strong impact on the work of journalists attempting to cover this contested issue in a 24-hour news cycle.

In Germany, there have been fierce debates about political bias (e.g. reporting pro or anti immigration), inaccuracies (e.g. regarding legal terminology), exaggerations (e.g. regarding numbers), and the overall style (e.g. both positive and negative stereotypes) when it comes to reporting on migration. There is also increased attention paid to how the coverage of migration may impact how people formulate opinions on the topic. While it is very difficult to assess the way mass media influences public opinion on migration on a national level, any lessons we can learn about the impact of media on public opinion are important.

During our training, we will take a brief look at the way media effects are studied, including experimental, quantitative, and qualitative approaches, all of which aim to assess the way media coverage has influenced public opinion on migration. Furthermore, we will examine some of the main strands in communication studies that are used to analyse media effects on migra-

tion, including framing, agenda-setting, and priming. We will look into the findings of recent studies identifying important challenges and areas of improvement in recent reporting on refugees. We will delve into the following questions: Who has voice, who gets to speak in major news outlets and who does not? Where do sensationalism and misinformation regarding positive and negative aspects of migration begin? And how does one report extremist viewpoints on migration, which have recently gained traction in many EU countries? We will discuss some of the key challenges and shortcomings within the reporting on migration and what can be done to solve them.

The training will operate under the argument that migration is a highly complex phenomenon about which people need reliable information. We will discuss that this is especially the case during times when it has a high profile. When people’s reservations and concerns about the issue, rational or not, are ignored, they may lead to distrust and polarization. In Germany, for example, such tendencies came to the fore during the coverage of the “refugee crisis”. The term “lying press” (German: Lügenpresse) was revived in 2015 to refer to the coverage of the “crisis” in Germany. In blogs and online comments, a fierce anti-migrant rhetoric, rants

about protection-seekers, and hostility towards political elites dominated. The training will posit that to counter such tendencies and to fulfil their role as disseminators of information citizens can use to engage in critical discussions, media outlets must continue to strive to report all facets, positive and negative, of migration and protection and they should be as inclusive as possible when representing differing viewpoints and actors of migration.



**Timo Tonassi** is a Migration Research Fellow at the Berlin office of The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). Timo has worked on U.S. and European immigration issues on both sides of the Atlantic for more than a decade. Prior to joining the GMF, Timo worked as a project manager at the Berlin-based Media Service Migration (Mediendienst Integration) of the Council for Migration (Rat für Migration e.V.), a service platform for reporters that operates at the intersection of academia and journalism. Previously, Timo worked for Deloitte Consulting in Washington, DC. Timo’s main fields of interest include media representation of migrants, the intersection of academia and journalism as it pertains to migration, and communication strategies of populist and nativist fringe groups. Timo obtained his doctoral degree from the Cultural Studies Department at the Graduate School of North American Studies (Free University Berlin), where he received a scholarship from the Excellence Initiative of the German federal and state governments and the German Research Foundation. Timo Tonassi delivered the training “Media effects and migration – a backgrounder on an evolving field of research”.



# Moving Stories: Get the Story, Do No harm

Over the last few years media have learned the hard way that journalism is in danger of being overwhelmed by rogue politics and a communications revolution that accelerates the spread of lies, misinformation and unfounded speculation about migration and many other sensitive subjects.

Author:  
Tom Law,  
UK

New communication platforms are liberating and have transformed people's lives but this has come with constant flows of misinformation, falsehood and abuse. In this digital age, a commitment to ethical journalism and editorial independence is ever more important.

This workshop demonstrated how the core values of journalism – accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity and accountability – could guide ethical decision-making. Through practical exercises, participants analysed some of the fundamental ethical dilemmas faced by journalists when covering migration and how to resolve them.

## Guidelines for Migration Reporting

The training used the Ethical Journalism Network's Migration Re-

porting Guidelines to provide an ethical framework to help journalists make editorial judgments and resolve some of the most difficult ethical dilemmas related to migration reporting. The guidelines, which were developed in consultation with experienced journalists and draws upon the EJA's recent reports on migration, asks journalists a series of questions to consider when reporting on migration:

**1. Facts not bias:** Are we accurate and have we been impartial, inclusive and fact-based in our reporting? Are we acting independently from narratives that stem from politics and emotion rather than facts?

**2. Know the law:** Asylum seeker? Refugee? Trafficking Victim? Migrant worker? Do we use irregular migrant? Do we understand and use migrant definitions correctly and do we articulate to our audience the rights migrants are due under international, regional and na-

tional law?

**3. Show humanity:** Humanity is at the essence of ethical journalism. But we must keep our emotions in check; avoid victimization, over simplification and the framing of coverage in a narrow humanitarian context that takes no account of the bigger picture.

**4. Speak for all:** Do we have migrant voices? Are we listening to the communities they are passing through or joining? Question how representative self-appointed community and migrant spokespeople really are.

**5. Challenge hate:** Have we avoided extremism? Have we taken the time to judge whether inflammatory content about migrants or those who seek to limit migration can lead to hatred? Words like "swarms", "floods" and "waves" should be treated with caution, as should indiscriminate use of "racism" and "xenophobia."



## Hate Speech Against Migrants

One of the key issues documented in the EJA's studies of migration reporting, and raised by participants, was how to deal with dangerous and discriminatory language, images and videos against migrants and refugees. The session



approached this by demonstrating the importance of avoiding sensationalism and the rush to publish and asking participants to react to a breaking news scenario involving a piece of potentially dangerous material about migrants. Participants were encouraged to compare their initial efforts to when they were able to pause and have the time to judge the potential impact of the offensive, inflammatory content using the 5-Point Test for Hate Speech, developed by the EJA. Based on international standards, the test poses questions in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and helps place what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context:

**1. Status of the Speaker:** How might their position influence their motives?

Should they even be listened to or just ignored?

**2. Reach of the speech:** How far is the speech travelling? Is there a pattern of behaviour?

**3. Goals of the speech:** How does it benefit the speaker and their interests?

Is it deliberately intended to cause harm to others?

**4. The Content Itself:** Is the speech dangerous? Could it incite violence towards others?

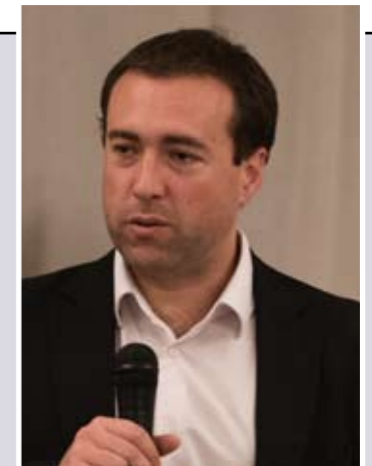
**5. Social, Economical and Political Climate:** Who might be negatively affected? Is there a history of conflict or discrimination?

## Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is one of the most complex and ethically challenging assignments as it involves staggering numbers and victims are often some of the most vulnerable people on the planet. Drawing on new guidelines created by the EJA for the International Centre For Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), participants learned that telling their stories requires care and sensitivity, not least because the language, portrayal and context journalists provide can incite hatred, perpetuate stereotypes, create misunderstanding, and deflect attention from root causes.

## Images with Refugees and Trafficking Victims

The session concluded with a screening of „Sea of Pictures“, a film that looks at the ethics of how media use images of refugees and vulnerable people, to trigger a debate on this issue.



**Tom Law** is the Director of Campaigns and Communications at the Ethical Journalism Network (UK), which he joined in December 2015 to lead the organisation's international media ethics campaigns with a focus on challenging hate speech, migration reporting, media literacy, and promotion of good governance and self-regulation. Tom's work with the EJA's supporters and partners has taken him to Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Macedonia, Malta, Nepal, Norway, Uganda, Serbia, Sudan, Switzerland, Romania, Thailand and Qatar. Prior to joining the EJA, Tom worked as a freelance journalist specialising in covering Sudan and South Sudan and for four years was the associate editor of Sudan Tribune, a leading East African news website. His previous experience in Sudan includes: being part of the team of journalists that founded The Juba Post – an independent newspaper for South Sudan; working as a researcher for UNICEF; as information officer at SIHA Network – an East African women's rights group; and as an English teacher at universities in Khartoum. Tom's undergraduate dissertation in International Development Studies was about migration between Sudan and South Sudan in the period after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. From 2014 until 2015 was the Head of Communications of Childreach International, leading the child rights organisation's Taught Not Trafficked campaign in collaboration with SOLD, a feature film about child trafficking from Nepal to India. Tom Law delivered the training „Moving Stories: how to get the story but do no harm“.

# The politics of media coverage: the framing of the “refugee crisis”

The goal of this session is to look at the main reporting patterns across Europe when it comes to migration and the so called “refugee crisis”, including characteristics of terminology and language, representation of key actors and voices, arguments and use of images in reporting about the topic.

Author:  
Eva Bognár,  
Hungary

In addition to the introduction of the main results of comparative studies and the descriptions of these findings, we aim to tackle and discuss some of the consequences (political and moral) of reporting.

We would like to draw attention to the inherently political nature of reporting on these topics and how pre-conceptions drive media representations which then impact attitudes as well as political and policy solutions and decisions. We plan to do this by introducing the concept of framing: “the presentation of facts and events that links the given phenomenon with social concepts, and pre-interprets them for audience’s perception, strongly correlated with social representations” (Moscovici 1984).

According to literature, the two most prevalent frames used in the media representation of the “refugee crisis” have been the “securitization frame” and the “humanitarian frame”<sup>1</sup>. The characteristics of these frames (in terms of the labels and terminology used, images and actors present, their definition of the problem, metaphors etc.) will be presented, problematized and discussed. Whilst both these frames construct the arrival of large numbers of migrants in Europe as a “crisis”, the meaning of this ‘crisis’ is partly different in the two frames (whose crisis is it, why is it a crisis, what are the solutions to the crisis, ...). We would like to emphasize how the choices made when it comes to these frames create different and powerful realities by showing an example from Hungarian media.

To tie these themes to the practice of journalism, we would like to discuss the following topics with participants:

- In the experience of participants, how are these editorial/journalistic decisions made? Where do they stand when it comes to these dilemmas?

- What influences these choices in their practice? (political pressure, economic pressure, owners’ expectations, editors’ expectations, circumstances (availability of (re)sources, time etc.), political culture in their country, personal bias etc.)

In the second part of the training we will present multiple research findings on the coverage of the migration crisis in various contexts/countries emphasizing the dynamic nature of frames used over time<sup>2</sup>. We will show and discuss the nature and the implications of visual representations of migration based on the results of a qualitative study on the topic<sup>3</sup>. Subsequently we would like to discuss the following related topics with participants:

- In their experience, how does the medium (print/tv/online/radio) influence the message?
- In their own country/context, what is the relationship between politics and journalism?
- Do journalists need to worry about the implications of what they write or their responsibility is solely to inform the public? Are they concerned with these issues?
- Media literacy: how do journalists imagine the audience (passive/active audiences, their capability to search, interpret, assess information)? Is it part of the journalists’ job to educate their audience?

<sup>1</sup>Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore: Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries – Report prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (December 2015) <http://www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Ethical Journalism Network (2017): How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration? A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/2017/Media\\_Migration\\_17\\_country\\_chapters.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/2017/Media_Migration_17_country_chapters.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Georgiou and Zaborowski: Media coverage of the “refugee crisis”: A cross-European perspective (2017) <https://rm.coe.int/1680706b00>

Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore: Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries – Report prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (December 2015) <http://www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.pdf>

Chouliaraki and Stolic (2017): Rethinking humanity and responsibility in the refugee ‘crisis’: A visual typology of news media <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/assets/documents/research/projects/media-and-migration/Chouliaraki-and-Stolic-Refugees-Visual-SUBMISSION.pdf>



**Éva Bognár** is Senior Program Officer and Researcher at the Center for Media, Data and Society of the School of Public Policy at Central European University in Budapest. Éva has been with the Center since 2006 managing projects (including EU-funded projects on Violent Online Political Extremism, Media Pluralism, Press and Media Freedom, and projects funded by the Open Society Foundations on Hungarian Media Laws in Europe, and Hungarian Media Ownership) and events (public lectures, workshops, conferences and the annual summer school) for the Center. She ran the Hungarian part of the European collaborative research project “Civicweb – Young people, the Internet and Civic Participation” funded by the European Commission’s 6th Framework Programme as Project research officer. She has conducted the Hungarian research for the project BROAD (Broadening the Awareness in Data Protection), a collaboration between Hungarian and Dutch not-for-profit organizations. Recently she has been studying Hungarian minorities and their use of online space, and media representation of migration. Her background is in sociology. Éva Bognár delivered the training “The politics of media coverage: the framing of the «refugee crisis»”.



# Migration routes and the curse of poverty

„Shifting migration routes and the curse of poverty”, Nicolae Melinescu’s presentation, journalist and doctor of International Relations, was a valuable experience shared with participants during the first day of the project.



After showing, through maps and infographies, which are the main routes of contemporary migration, Nicolae Melinescu has pointed out some aspects of the current international context:

■ Referring strictly to the situation in Romania, the journalist pointed out that, apart from Romanian Television and the public radio, “all commercial stations stop at extreme and spectacular migrant situations. Most media channels do not go to the root of the problem, so their audience can understand why it’s happening!”. He gave the example of Syria, an old, civilized country, in which 3 factions face: the Kurds, the Bashar regime and the opposition. “It is a very complicated situation and there must be sought the cause of the departure of the people from this country”.

■ A sensitive situation is related by the publication “Der Spiegel”, which has revealed some secret documents showing that EUR 30 million, money earmarked by the European Union for the purpose of strengthening borders in “vulnerable areas for the passage of refugees”, reached some

African dictators. “One of these is Omar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, the eternal president of Sudan, who is under international criminal prosecution”.

■ “Russia plans to launch six invisible submarines, two of which will patrol the Black Sea. Two have already entered the Russian military navy. They have extraordinary technical capabilities; they can stay in submersion almost indefinitely, because they have an oxygen production facility. Even if they are forbidden to leave the Black Sea, being undetectable they can go through straits, so they can-



not be controlled”.

■ The danger of ISIS. All potent Western intelligence services have highlighted this danger: terrorists also infiltrate the massive wave of migrants. “150 such mischievous people have been discovered in over one million migrants who have entered the EU in the past two years. On the one hand, Christianity is tolerant, but on the other hand, where does tolerance go?”.

■ Romania cannot manage such a problem because it does not have the legal mechanism to deal with migrants. Migration is a serious humanitarian problem. “That is why the issue of migrants and refugees is so sensitive. And if we do not talk about it, it does not mean it’s gone”.

“These are the issues that we need to discuss. When mankind thought a problem would disappear, it became a crisis. The best example is the crisis in Greece. It has been assumed that once it gets the money from Germany, Greece will resolve the crisis. Not only the problem is not gone, Greece has become insolvent: the Greeks put up for sale the Piraeus port, sold some islands, cut pensions, but the crisis persists”.

## Nicolae Melinescu

In 1972, after graduating at the English Language and Literature Department of the University of Bucharest, he was assigned to the editorial department of external news at the Romanian Television. As a certified journalist he made reports from Vietnam, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, Denmark, Indonesia, Great Britain, Chile, Ecuador and reported from Kosovo, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Great Britain, South Africa.

In 1992 he co-authored and presented the first television news marathon, “The American Election Day”, with a nine-hour

duration. From 1980 to 1997 he was the editor-coordinator and presenter of the main news program of TVR, the Romanian National Television. Between 1993 and 1997 he was the editor-in-chief of the Foreign News Editor’s Department.

Since 2005, he has been pursuing a teaching career and taught television journalism at BA and MA in English and Romanian at „Babeş Bolyai” University of Cluj Napoca. Between 1990 and 2001 he was an associate correspondent of the CNN World Report, attended six Annual Associate Conferences in Atlanta,

Georgia. In 1999, along with the team he led, he received the merit award of this show.

In 2009, he received the title of Doctor of International Relations at the University of Cluj, with the thesis „Sub-Saharan Africa, International Communicator in the Past Three Decades”, published in the form of a study titled „The Giant Who Awakens”.

During the period 2002 - 2005 and 2010-2012 he was a correspondent resident of the Romanian Television in Washington, where he got the first interview with an American president (November 2003), made 12

documentaries about Romanian communities in the USA and reported live about important events (President George Bush’s appointment, the 10th year anniversary of the New York and Pentagon bombings, United Nations works). He published articles, research, and scientific communications. Mr. Nicolae Melinescu also published books: “A Vision of Television”, “Introductory Notions for the Study of International Relations”, “Romanian Navigators and the Threats of Maritime Piracy”, “The Need for Romanianism”, “The Return to Romanianism”.

# Adelin Petrișor: “Refugees are the hottest stories for war correspondents”



Romanian journalist Adelin Petrișor spoke to the project participants about his correspondent experience in the conflict zones.

During the debates, he presented some of the photographs contained in the four books he published: „War correspondent”, photo album, Humanitas-2007; „My Wars,” making-of about trips to Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, Guantanamo prison, Polirom - 2010; „North Korea, a camp as big as a country”, photo album, Polirom - 2012; „The One-Fat Country,” about the North Korean experience, Polirom 2013. He also presented the documentary film „North Korea, Nothing To Envy”, made with Catalin Popescu. His choice proved particularly inspired. After the

projection, the questions and debates on political refugees were underway.

„In all the places where I was, I met thousands of refugees. For me, refugees have the craziest story in the war zones. I did hundreds of interviews with them. These people have dreams, have hopes, although they live in the toughest conditions. Working with refugees you see your own helplessness, because you want to help them, but you know you cannot help all of them. Every time you feel a kind of negative energy you assimilate. It sounds cynical, but it's a reality in the media: refugees are the hottest stories for war correspondents.

But it's not about cynicism. The relationship between journalists and refugees is mutual. Journalists have a story and refugees can tell their story.

Filming with refugees leaves traces, loads you negatively. Many times I had to confront myself, tell me that I am not part of a humanitarian mission, that I am a journalist and that I have to do my job.

I realized that the easiest way to help the refugees is to tell correctly their story. It's easy to talk about refugees from editorial offices or conference rooms at the hotel. It's hard to put yourself in their situation”.

**Adelin Petrișor** is a journalist and TV program maker with a rich experience in producing documentary films and stories from conflict areas, being awarded numerous APRT (Romanian Television Professionals Association) awards.

He transmitted live from some important events: taking hostages from the Moscow Theater in 2002; the attacks in Turkey in 2004; the Madrid attacks in 2004.

He was correspondent in: Lebanon, 1996; Albania, 1997; Algeria, 1998; Operation „The Fox of the Desert”, Iraq, 1998; NATO

Campaign in Yugoslavia, 1999; Afghanistan, 2002; West Bank and Gaza, 2002; Iraq, 2003 - 2008; Libya, 2005, at the first meeting of a Romanian official with Col. Muammar Gaddafi after lifting the penalties; Libya 2011; Lebanon and Israel 2006, the war between Israel and Hezbollah; Egypt, February 2011; Libya, May 2011; Cairo, anti-Mubarak revolt, January-February 2011.

He produced a documentary about Guantanamo prison (2006).

He interviewed: Jeliko Raznatovic „Arkan” (Spring of 1999, during the bombing in Belgrade);

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (in August 2002 in Ramallah); Ehud Barak, former Israeli Prime Minister; Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister; Ayatollah Mohammad Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of Hezbollah; Sheikh Omar Bakri, the first Sunni extremist who threatened with attacks Romania and Bulgaria; General Michael Hayden, who led the NSA and the CIA for a decade.

In March 2012, he conducted two documentaries on Japan, one year after the tsunami.

In April 2012, he transmitted live from North Korea the cere-

monies for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Ir Sen. He was the first Romanian TV journalist to visit this country after 1989.



PHOTO: www.politiadefrontiera.ro

## The Romanian Border Police, a trustworthy partner in the fight against cross-border crime



Author:  
Police Chief  
Commissioner  
Adrian Popescu

The Romanian Border Police, a relatively young institution, but with centuries of tradition behind, is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and is the specialized state organization which takes care of border surveillance and border crossing control, prevention and fight against irregular migration and against the specific acts of cross border criminality occurring in its area of competence, all in accordance with the legal regime of the state border.

Responsible for approximately 3,150 km of border, the Romanian Border Police permanently deals with various forms of crime and irregular border crossings, from irregular migration, drug, gun and stolen vehicle trafficking to smuggling - in every form.

Organized in a way similar to the institutions in other European Union States, from the very moment the Romanian border is crossed, the Romanian Border Police officers display the image of the rule of law, democracy and civilization.

To increase the level of safety at the Romanian borders, the Romanian Border Police has undertaken firm actions to detect and detain in due time the persons who want to illegally enter our country, with the aim of increasing the citizen's level of safety and to efficiently prevent the cross-border crime.

In order to function at the highest standards, the Romanian Border Police has an Operational Coordination Center, where all information coming from the border surveillance and control systems is collected and processed, in order to optimize

the time response and to efficiently manage all resources, and a National Passenger Information Unit, which manages data on passengers, to prevent and counter terrorist acts and other related crimes, as well as to prevent and eliminate threats against national security.

The Romanian Border Police is an active partner in Frontex (European Border and Coast Guard Agency) operations and a competent and trustworthy partner in the fight against cross-border crime, being appreciated several times by its European partners.

# Visit to the International Organization for Migration



"Migration, between apocalyptic myths and daily reality" was the topic of the visit to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Bucharest. Mr. Mircea Mocanu, Head of Office IOM Romania, welcomed us and talked about the activities he is coordinating.

IOM as the global lead agency on migration has been at the forefront of providing support and assistance to migrants throughout the world for over 65 years. During this immensely challenging journey, the media has been IOM's constant companion track-

ing the man-made disasters of the past 65 years - Hungary 1956; Czechoslovakia 1968; Chile 1973; the Viet Nam Boat People 1975; Kuwait 1990, Kosovo and Timor 1999; the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Natural catastrophes also: Asian tsunamis, the Pakistan earthquake of 2005

and Haiti's 2010 earthquake.

In recent years, IOM has worked with the media to attract the world's attention to the plight of the people the Organization serves. Governments, migrants, potential migrants, and average citizens have heard the stories and have fol-

lowed the often fatal journeys the migrants take to escape being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

If we are to ensure the world becomes a place where migration is Safe, Orderly and Regular, we all have a responsibility to understand the context of migration and offer more accurate, balanced, evidence-based reporting. As such, the discussions with IOM specialists and beneficiaries in the context of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO project "The role of mass-media in treating the refugees & migrants topic" was designed to do just that. During our discussions we tackled the problem of definitions, so that reports capture the difference between relocation, resettlement, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, vulnerable migrants and complex migration flows. We also looked at the drivers of migration, the challenges of the journey as well as the conditions and perception in the hosting community.

How we communicate the stories of migration is likely to impact not only our present but also our future in an ever so dynamic and globalized world.



Mircea Mocanu, Head of Office IOM Romania

## Migration to Romania in figures

In Romania, there are currently 116,000 foreign citizens. Of these, 60% are from outside EU space, and the remaining 40% are from EU countries, Switzerland and Norway. Of these, as asylum seekers, over the last ten years, with the exception of the last two years, there were around 2,000 people. In the last two years, the number of asylum seekers has exceeded 4,500. If by 2012 an average of 700 applicants received protection, the figure now rose to 1,000. Most of them come from outside the EU, from Moldova, Turkey, Syria, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, USA.

## Refugee in Romania

At the IOM's Help and Counseling Center on the first floor, you find yourself in an environment like a school. On the walls there are colored cards bearing letters A to Z and figures from zero to ten. You immediately realize that in that place some children learn the alphabet and the first words in Romanian.

Our assertion turns out accurate, because the voices of some children are heard from the nearby room. Then the room we are invited in becomes a passage for the parents who come to take their children. You immediately recognize that they are migrants, because mothers have their heads covered. Some have learned Romanian. Others do not know either English or



Romanian, only the language of their country. E.E., a 45 aged man, astonishes us with the perfect pronunciation in Romanian. We immediately find out the "secret": more than 20 years ago, he studied Pharmacy in Romania and returned here for a better life. Every refugee has a story. Sometimes the stories of migrants are disturbing. E.E. is ready to tell us his story.

"We left Aleppo five years ago, we spent some time in Turkey, me, my wife and 3 children, where it was not a good time for us. In Romania, we were very well received, and the children adapted very well. Children go to school, they are in grades III, IV and V. They learned the language, and the big one is the first in the class. Now he also helps his smaller brothers. That keeps me on my feet and gives me hope. I'm doing my job as a pharmacist. The wife deals

with the children. My father is 92 years old and did not want to leave Syria, and my brother, to be near him, decided to stay there. We come from the area occupied by ISIS and have lived an experience that I do not want to remember. We are Kurdish, and for this reason we have been condemned by ISIS. I came here after I received the invitation of a friend and I filed the documents for refugee status", says the man in front of us. The journalist's questions flow, "Do you like it here? Are you going back to Syria?" "I would go back to my family, but my children have adapted here, and the little one does not know the correct language from a grammar point of view. I would destroy their lives if I return to Syria". "Have you felt rejected at some point?" E.E. remembers an episode that happened during his stay in Turkey: his children were playing in the park

with other children when, at some point, some mothers quickly took their children away and said: "Do not play with their children!". "I know the Turkish language and I understand everything they said. I realized that my children in Turkey would have no certainty. Here, instead, they feel very good, they have made friends. I was visiting my father-in-law in Germany, and the younger child asked me when we return home to Romania. I'm glad to see the little ones feel good in Romania", says E.E..

Sabah is a Syrian young man aged 20 years who left Syrian city Aleppo two years ago. He does not yet know Romanian and English does not master it, so his countryman is the interpreter. Sabah has one foot in plaster, and as he walks into the room, the gaze returns to him with compassion. Sabah smiles all the time. When every-



one expected him to say a sad story about his foot in plaster, Sabah smiles broadly. "I had an accident in football!". His smile is contagious. He tells us that

he is learning Romanian, and when asked how he sees his future in Romania, he responds with a short sentence: "I am optimistic!".



Migration, media and military are increasingly associated within the complex equation of finding solutions to the problems caused by the protracted crises and conflicts in different parts of the world.

## Migration, media and military

Author:  
Colonel  
Valentin Vasile

Migration is not a new phenomenon. Its causes are multiple, from economic differences, standard of living and quality of life, demand for labor force and demographic trends, to crises and interethnic conflicts, civil or interstate wars which are forcing people to emigrate. Additionally, the natural disasters and climate changes, which compromise the agricultural production, reducing the access of people to vital resources, water and food primarily. When occurring simultaneously, as in vast areas of Africa and Middle East nowadays, the impossibility of securing vital resources associated with climate change and demographic growth amid prolonged crises and wars may have one result only: the refugees and migrants' waves we are confronted with.

Everywhere on duty, the media is doing the best to make us aware about what is going on next door in our global village where the golden rules of good vicinity and mutual support should be strictly respected. The role of the media in reflecting the refugees and migrants' stories is essential for increasing the level of public understanding, acceptance, human solidarity and social action for solving migration-related problems. The solutions consist mainly of providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants, and offering opportunities for their integration into the host societies. In this regard, all the responsible IOs, NGOs and states' agencies must work hand in hand by carrying out civil assistance, peacekeeping, stabilization, reconstruction and development in the areas the migrants are coming from. All the identified solutions might cross the frontiers of wishful thinking to become reality only if there is real political will

and public consensus. Therefore, the media's fundamental roles must be exercised ethically for the correct public information on the causes of migration, sanctioning xenophobic discourse, hate and intolerance.

If they are not part of the problem, the military are part of the solution even if they do not have direct responsibilities to manage the refugees and migrants' flows. Especially when the crisis becomes critical, the military organizations might be called upon to support the authorities in charge with border police, public order and humanitarian assistance. The media reported largely such cases when the armed forces were tasked to intervene in support of civilian authorities to overcome the problems generated by refugees and migrants in Turkey, Greece, FYROM, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary and even Sweden, to name a few. The military are also an essential component of the international missions deployed in crisis and war-affected areas to stabilize the situation by providing humanitarian assistance and implementing reconstruction and development projects. The Romanian Armed Forces are not exempt from this model!

The illegal migration is considered in Romania among the threats to the national security. In this regard, "The Romanian National Defense Strategy 2015 - 2019, A Strong Romania within Europe and the World", endorsed by the Presidential Administration in 2015, introduced the concept of extensive national security. It requires increased coordination of the activities conducted by ministries and agencies in the areas of defence, public order, intelligence, counterintelligence and security, economy and energy, diplomacy, crisis management, education, healthcare and demo-

graphy. Thus, the Romanian approach towards the threats generated by migration has as a key word - integration. It is in accordance with the extensive national security concept, and follows the EU's recommendations. Accordingly, there are three categories of complementary measures regarding the threats generated by illegal migration.

It is worth mentioning the efforts to amend the national legislation so that to facilitate the implementation of EU-wide measures on refugees and migrants, the procedures for asylum and integration of refugees who benefit of international protection.

Since Romania became EU's member not only the efforts and the investments but also the achievements must be noted that have been made to strengthen the border security, in particular the EU's external border, to combat illegal migration, traffic of human beings and other risks. In this context, internally, the Romanian Armed Forces might be required to support the authorities which are in the lead for managing issues of refugees and migrants.

Externally, the Romanian Armed Forces have intervened many times under UN Security Council mandate to support refugees and migrants in circumstances of humanitarian crisis as evidenced by the UN, NATO, UE and OSCE operations they have taken part since 1990. The external dimension of solving the migration-related problems in the area where they originated from is given by the international operations - a shared responsibility of the UN member states, required to assume equally full responsibility for the common and peaceful future of all the people, regardless of their nationality, color, language and religion.

Author/Photo:  
Alexandros Kontis,  
Greece

## They'll keep coming and coming...

I met Homan two years ago in the port of Piraeus. He has been staying there for more than a month, along with 5.000 people, stranded in the biggest port of Greece, with no place to go, until he was finally moved to a refugee camp. Today Homan leaves in Berlin. And what is really interesting, is how he got there...

Homan's English was perfect, since he grew up near a U.S. military base in Afghanistan. When people - identified as "Taliban" - shot his older brother down, Homan was right next to him. Then, at the age of 17, he decided to leave his homeland. Two years later, he arrived at the island of Samos and stepped on European soil for the first time. But until then, he has paid more than 1.500 dollars to smugglers and had no money left. The ticket from Samos to Piraeus was paid by a guy who was also Afghan, but not his friend. And when Homan failed to pay him back, the guy went violent. "Alex, please, I need 40 euros, he will kill me", Homan sent me on Messenger.

When his debt was paid, he needed to show his gratitude. I ended up visiting camps and other places that were almost impossible for other journalists to visit and had some really nice stories to write and tell. And Homan always tried to find another story for me, since he really didn't have anything else to do. You see, Homan couldn't actually leave Greece, because when he finally made it there the other countries have closed their borders. "I will make it Alex, I just need 2.000 dollars for the smugglers, I have an uncle in Berlin, he is trying to find the money, he will send it to me via Western Union"... "But how, Homan, you'll need to cross so many countries and the borders are closed"... "Alex, you've been coming to the camp for months, haven't you realized that so many people have left?". It was the autumn of 2016, when Homan made it to Berlin. He was smuggled through the Greek borders, hidden in a huge truck, he



stayed for a few weeks in Serbia, his smugglers bribed the border police almost everywhere, he was hunted by the authorities almost everywhere and he finally made it. "I told my story, I got an asylum and now I am legal, for the first time in two years", he texted me.

Last year, FRONTEX officials stated that the illegal trafficking of refugees is more profitable for the organized crime than the smuggling of drugs or illegal weapons. So, Homan's story is nothing special. Actually it is an ordinary one, this is what has been happening for the past few years in Turkey, Greece,

Italy and everywhere else in Europe. But what we really need to learn out of this is that there is no actual way to stop migration to Europe. No matter the fences that will be erected, the laws that will be enforced, the police officers that will guard the borders, thousands and thousands of people will continue their effort to reach Europe. And the vast majority of them will make it.

It is up to Europe to face the reality. It is up to Europe to achieve that values and principles like freedom, security, democracy, education will continue to be respected. For all.

# Friday the 13th

Author/Photo:  
Constantin Mireanu,  
Romania

During operation "Unified Protector" the F221 frigate "Regele Ferdinand", with a crew of 205, sailed approximately 7,400 nautical miles and executed 765 embargo enforcement missions including surveillance, interception, search

and rescue and boarding activities.

F221 frigate "Regele Ferdinand" took part in "Unified Protector" to enforce the armament embargo on Libya. But one night, the mission we had to fulfill had nothing to do with the embargo. As a coincidence, at the exact moment the watches for a new eventless night were about to be announced on May 12 at 8 o'clock p.m., the captain announced on the ship's intercom system: "Attention all crew! We've been ordered to perform a search and rescue mission at sea! A ship with 150 refugees is in danger and signals for help!". A small Libyan ship carrying African emigrants was seeking help. It was drifting about 100 nautical miles north of Tripoli and was about to sink. Without worrying about fatigue, the long standing hours during the watch that had just ended, without thinking of the sleep they yearned for more than anything else, the sailors begin the search for refugees on whom the information was scarce. Operations are carried out in a natural order, as if it were a drill. The boarding team is getting ready, mineral water and food are brought in the hangar. The medical team is ready to intervene. So is the team responsible for launching the boat. On Decks 1 and 2 sailors are moving about quickly to get to their stations. It is not yet known whether the refugees are to be taken aboard or not. One thing has a flicker of cer-

tainty: somewhere on the waves a drifting boat is asking for help. The search takes hours however and the information comes from everywhere. Passengers are out of supplies. In addition there are serious technical problems on board. The ship needs engine repairs and also to be set on the right course. It probably was the long awaited journey to a place without starvation, with no bullets flying by and no fear that your children could die at any moment.

Overloaded in a desperate hope for survival and perhaps for the purpose of enriching the boat owner, the floating shell inspires pity. Passengers, mostly of African origin, mingle in a strange combination of bodies, sardines, women, men, children, each with their own specially created place that is probably to disappear in case they think about getting up.

They eat heartily the bread and drink the water brought aboard by sailors and wait to have their engine problem fixed.

After making sure the ship was ready to sail safely and everything is in order, the team sent aboard the refugee boat returned to the frigate. The craft was accompanied and overseen on the course towards the Lampedusa Island.

A colleague is whispering: "Do you realize that these people will not forget their whole life that they were saved by a NATO ship?"

Who would have thought that a Friday the 13th morning was to be remembered by 150 people as a life-saving one? The humanitarian action of the Romanian frigate crew is provisioned by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and all NATO ships taking part in operation "Unified Protector" had the mission to aid endangered vessels.



## Ethical questions along the Balkans' route

Author/Photo:  
Giovanni Vale,  
Italy

As a Balkan correspondent, my experience with refugees and migrants is mostly connected to the so-called "Balkan route" and the flux of people that, coming from the Middle East, travelled through the Balkans' peninsula in 2015 in order to reach Central and Northern Europe countries. I would like to recall here two episodes related to my experience in covering the so-called "refugees crisis", that might be useful to question the role of reporters in regard to this particular issue.

In August 2015, I joined a small crew of journalists at the Serbian-Hungarian border. At that time, the Hungarian government had already started the construction of the fence, which would be completed in September 2015, and the border was crossed every night by hundreds of people. After spending a couple of days around the refugee camp of Kanjiza in Serbia, we agreed with a small group of Iraqi people to follow them during their 10-kilometers night walk towards Hungary. We left the camp as the sun set and reached the river Tisza, whose course, perpendicular to the border, helped migrants and refugees find their way to the Hungarian territory and the Schengen

area. The group walked for hours, taking a break from time to time to rest, drink or check the GPS position. As the night got darker, though, children started to cry, putting the group's security in danger (as police patrols weren't far). Also, some members of the group were too tired to keep walking. Mustafa, who had a rigid prosthesis at his right leg, was one of them. A photographer and myself were therefore asked to carry this young man for some time, and so we did. But as we reached the border, we journalists decided to stop and come back, as Hungarian police could have accused us of smuggling. On the way back, several questions raised among the crew of journalists. What was the most ethical behavior to have in that context? Was it a right decision not to cross the border with the refugees?

In September of the same year, I travelled from Athens to Budapest together with a French colleague following the flux of migrants and refugees coming mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. In those days, 10,000 people on average were landing everyday at Piraeus, crossing the Balkans Northwards with buses, trains, or walking. For ten days we travelled in those very

same conditions, but stopping most of the nights in hostels in order to write our stories and file our radio reports. Also, we decided not to cheat on NGOs and refugee camps staff and always introduced ourselves as journalists, asking in advance for the necessary accreditations along the road (from Gevgelija to Presevo and Horgoš). At the Macedonian-Serbian border, though, we chose to follow the rest of the group we were in, crossing a corn field instead of regaining the main road and looking for a formal border crossing point. Luckily, the Serbian police, who realized we were journalists, seemed not to care about our action and simply sent us to the refugees center in Presevo, in order to ask for more information. More questions about the role of reporters in treating the refugees and migrants topic raised during this longer trip. As we met more people and exchanged our contacts with young men and women fleeing the Middle East, we were often asked for support and help, either logistical or financial and that situation continued as our newly met friends found themselves waiting stranded in Northern Europe. What was the best way of covering the "Balkans' route"?



## The remarkable story of Yusra Mardini, a Syrian refugee

Author/Photo:  
Steven Victor  
Decraene,  
Belgium

During the summer of 2015, at the peak of the migration crisis in Europe, I was making several reports on refugees and migrants arriving in Greece from Turkey. Of those thousands of people crossing the Aegean Sea, there was one girl I will never forget. Her story was special and till this day it captures the imagination of many.

I met her on a big square in Belgrade, Serbia. She was just 17 and together with her sister and some friends, she had fled her home in Damascus, Syria to seek a new future in Germany. On her way from Southern Europe to Western Europe,

she had made a stop in the middle of the Balkan route. As I was also covering a news report on younger refugees, she struck me as someone being open to journalists and at the same time, she was very fluent in English.

"My name is Yusra Mardini", she told me, "and I fled Damascus because terrorists from ISIL are closing in towards my neighbourhood. I am a muslim but my parents didn't focus too much on religion as other might do. They felt my safety and future were in danger and so they sent me away to Europe". Yusra could explain in very plain and simple English why she was running away

from her country, why she had left her parents and what she was dreaming of. "One day, I want to swim at the Olympics. I was a swimmer in the national youth team of Syria and I have swum in several international competitions", she went on before telling a most extraordinary thing that happened to her when coming to Europe.

At night, in Turkey, just before Yusra was ready to climb aboard on one of the rubber boats which would take her illegally across the Aegean Sea, one of the men heard that Yusra and her sister were swimmers in the Syrian national team, so they decided to push them off the boat. "I



had to swim in the cold sea for two or three hours, in the middle of the night. I couldn't see anything and I was very scared", she recounts her dangerous experience. I was stunned but Yusra told it as if she understood why the men had made her swim from Turkey to Greece.

As I decided to stay in contact with Yusra to see how she would travel to Germany, she told me she received thousands of followers on Facebook. Her story on the Belgian TV was picked up by Dutch, German, French, Austrian and Syrian broadcasters. She turned into a symbol for the young strongminded refu-

gees coming to Europe. On her trip towards Germany, we texted each other almost every day. She was afraid in Budapest at the Keleti station where the police was rounding up all refugees and migrants to detain them in a big camp. She managed to escape the police there and made it to Vienna. In Vienna I met her again and our news crew followed her on a special refugee train taking her to Munich.

In Germany, Yusra was adopted by a swim club in Berlin where her coach helped her to integrate into German life. When the International Olympic Organisation decided

to launch a refugee team for the Rio Olympics in 2016, Yusra was selected. Not only did she swim at the Olympics in Rio, just one year after I had met her in Belgrade, the next month she gave the opening speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. Her story as a refugee on determination and faith brought her all over the world.

Today, Yusra is a goodwill ambassador to the UNHCR and she keeps inspiring thousands of young people around the globe. Her story will be published in a book and a film director is busy trying to adapt Yusra's life to the big screen.



Foto: DIMITRASIASINOPOULOU

## “...And that’s how I became a person again!”

Author:  
Maria Sköld,  
Sweden

Maybe we should stop talking about refugees as a category of people. Rather, it is a condition that an increasing number of people find themselves in. They hope that others see them as the fathers and hairdressers and school-children they still are.

“...And that’s how I became a person again!”. Many refugees I have interviewed over the years would end their story saying something like that. At least the lucky ones, those who have been able to reach a destination where they have been allowed to settle down and start over.

Most people who have been forced to leave their homes, for fear of war or persecution, don’t think of themselves as refugees. They are women or men. Or, in half of the cases, they are children, boys and girls. They are hairdressers, nurses, firemen and school-children. They are wives, husbands, daughters and sons. They are not refugees. But one day, maybe all of a sudden, they find that they have to abandon all that they have, all that they are and leap into the great unknown.

Many people who are forced to flee do that after losing family members and friends. They have lost their homes and their belongings. Others manage to escape together with their loved ones but get tragically separated from them

along the way.

After enduring all those hardships, many find that they slowly also begin to lose themselves. On the journey to safety, they meet people who don’t see them as the persons they are. Instead, they are suddenly treated as belonging to the mysterious category of refugees, as a number in a mass of people without a past or a personality or a passion.

I have been a reporter for more than 20 years, working in Europe, Asia and Central America. Sometimes I have interviewed people who I could easily relate to, at other times I have had to work harder to understand them but I always try to find some common ground.

My home country, Sweden, has over the years welcomed quite a large number of refugees. Some I have interviewed for stories about migration, but many appear in news articles about other topics because they have established themselves as teachers, nurses and business leaders. A common theme when they describe their lives is that it was very unsettling to be treated as an anonymous refugee and that all they wanted was to become contributing members of society as soon as possible.

I think this is worth remembering for everyone who is meeting a person who is fleeing or migrating. Or anyone viewing news stories about people in that situation. This

is a temporary abnormality that could suddenly derail your life and if that happens to you, you’re probably eager to soon go back to leading your life again and being respected as a person.

From that experience, I find it problematic that media is increasingly talking about “refugees”, “migrants” or “asylum-seekers” as a homogeneous group of people, seldom letting individuals share their stories. At the same time, most European countries are implementing policies of suspicion, where they no longer trust newcomers to be able and willing to integrate. Increasingly, countries are implementing policies that drive up the cost of migration by making it difficult for people to get a job and by giving only short-term permits to stay so that people never feel they are able to settle down.

I recently talked to a man who fled to Sweden from Iraq two years ago and is now about to enter his old job as a car mechanic. “Back home, I used to be an expert, the guy people would come to with cars that didn’t work and I would always try to help them. That was who I was. When I came to Sweden, nobody needed me anymore and it felt terrible. But now I have been fortunate to receive training so that I can go back to working as a mechanic. I just can’t wait – it’s like I’m finally me again!”.

Author/Photo:  
Jasmina Štorman,  
Slovenia

## He is finally safe from war. But he is not calm

Safiullah used to be a successful IT engineer – he owned his own company that employed 150 workers. From time to time he travelled from Kabul, Afghanistan to luxurious Dubai. He took pictures with his new SUV car, just like almost any other 27-year-old on this planet would do. Three years later we meet in Slovenia, a small European country which is hard to find on a world map even for its neighbours. Safiullah is now a refugee.

We first met at the beginning of the summer of 2016 in the backyard of once successful, but now abandoned bicycle manufacturer in our capital city Ljubljana, called Rog. For the last few years Rog has been a centre of alternative culture and a second home to many refugees who decided to stay in our country. They could not have chosen a better place. Rog is like a monument of broken dreams.

It is a cold hard fact that even if refugees like Slovenia, this does not necessarily mean they will be allowed to stay in the country. Safiullah knew this already when we were sitting on two old chairs and having an interview in front of TV-cameras the first time we met.

I could read frustration from his face. Someone less sensitive would say that he was angry. But honestly, who wouldn’t be? Safiullah paid 5000 euros to smugglers for his escape from Afghanistan to Germany. But he has never reached it. When



walking among hundreds of people on their way to safety on the Western Balkan Route, he recognized the name of our country on a road sign. “I knew Slovenia because your soldiers were in Afghanistan,” he explained the reason why he applied for asylum here. “We thought your country would accept us. We did not even imagine that we could be rejected”.

A few weeks later we met again. “Dober dan, kako si?” (“Hello, how are you?”) he greeted me in the Slovenian language, smiling. At that moment the atmosphere became much more relaxed and because the first few words he spoke were in my native language, the distance between us suddenly grew shorter. Foreigners find our language, Slovenian, rather hard to learn, especially if their mother tongue is from a completely different language family. “I really doubt that I would be

able to learn Farsi in a few months,” I thought to myself. The more we talked – now in English – on that sunny day, the more I was aware that – if we, for just a moment, forgot that he experienced war and I didn’t – we were not that different. There were stereotypes in my head which influenced my perception of him. But now they were gone. He wasn’t an angry man anymore. He was a man who just wants to live in peace and not be afraid that the Taliban might kill him. A man who wants to realize his full potential.

Safiullah and I have stayed in touch and he has never forgotten to ask about my family even though he doesn’t know them. It is really thoughtful of him, knowing that around five thousand kilometres away his relatives live in continual danger while mine are living happily in one of the safest countries in the world. It just doesn’t seem fair that the answer depends on the fact which of us was born in a wrong country.

At the beginning of this year my father died because of cancer. Since then I have lived in constant fear of losing people I love. Only now can I imagine what people such as Safiullah are going through every day. They left their country, but mentally they are still together with their families. Safiullah hasn’t seen his mother for two years. She still lives in Afghanistan. He now works as a worker in a factory and rents an apartment. After almost two years in Slovenia he still hasn’t got an asylum. His future remains uncertain.



Photo: Svetlana Kanalič



## With confidence, about future projects

The Romanian National Commission for UNESCO's Gala is at its second edition. Slowly, this annual manifestation will enter into tradition. This year, the Gala was an integral part of the project **"The role of mass media in treating the refugees and migrants topic"**, which gave it a special feature. In this context, we are talking about the inclusion in the program of an exceptional exhibition of photographic art **"On the Path of Hope"** by Mrs. Dimitra Stasinopoulou, dedicated to significant aspects of the lives of migrants, as well as the presence of numerous representatives of the diplomatic corps from Greece, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Poland, Austria or Turkey.

The specificity we are referring to was also given by the projects dedicated to the Centenary of the Great Union, which the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO intends to organize in 2018.

**"Let's love Romania"** is one of the most important of these and will be an urge to all Romanians to love and honor the country, as those who have written the history of Modern Romania.

Romanian National Commission for UNESCO, together with Ovidius European Cooperation Association and other partners, will capitalize on the potential of expression and value of the Romanian heritage included on the UNESCO World Heritage List and will produce a documentary film, exhibition, photo album and a fashion show inspired by the beauty of the heritage sites. This project will also be joined by honouring the Romanian personalities celebrated by UNESCO, as well as the **"Modern Romania - The history lesson"**, **"Memory of the union - Samoilă Mirza photographic testimony"** or the Romanian romance national program **"The romance song unites us"**.

The Gala program also featured an exceptional concert with the participation of Master Marin Cazacu and the Violoncellissimo ensemble. The Romanian National Commission for UNESCO's Gala, conceived and organized under the direction of Ms. Iulia Jugănar, presented a review of the main events organized in 2017, and a projection of activities for 2018.

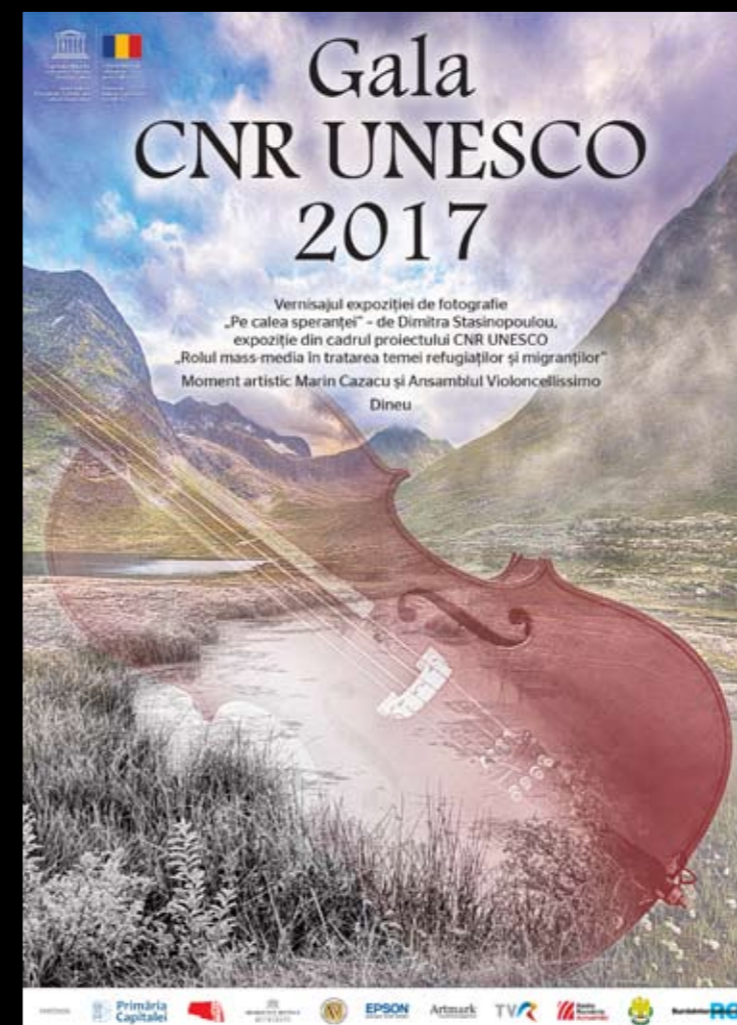
**Prof. Ani Matei, PhD**

Secretary-General of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO

## The Gala, a festive and elegant moment

The welcoming decor of the Residence Hotel Domenii Plaza was the elegant framework of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO 2017 Gala, which brought together the participants in the project **"The role of mass - media in treating the refugees and migrants topic"** with the institutional partners of the Commission, respectively representatives of the diplomatic corps, national and local authorities, as well as collaborators, personalities from UNESCO's areas of interest - education, science, culture, communication and information.

Dimitra Stasinopoulou, renowned photography artist from Greece, the maker of numerous exhibitions and more than 13,000 photographic albums, has respected the motto that has characterized her for almost 15 years since she captures, through photography, people and landscapes all over the world: **"The world exists only when it is shared"**. This paraphrase that Dimitra took from a Greek poet has accompanied her everywhere on all her travels in many corners of the world, including in this exhibition, suggestively titled **"On the path of hope"**. The 30 images of refugees exodus have been made by Dimitra in Greece since the first days of their landing on Kos island. They capture through the objective of



## The Gala, at the end of the year and the beginning of the road

The first edition of the Gala organized by the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO took place in December last year. This first edition was occasioned by the 60th anniversary of Romania's accession to UNESCO and the establishment of the National Commission of Romania for UNESCO. This second edition marks the entry into the Centenary Year. We hope that this succession of anniversaries will be auspicious in our approach when we were making the first plans on paper about the project we called, generically, the **"Gala"**. After two years, we made a point of putting the balance of achievements in a growing and ever more diversified graph. We want this event to be wider and more varied every year. We are proposing that the upcoming editions of NCR UNESCO Gala will be more than a homage moment - and become a landmark in valorizing and promoting Excellence in the fields of Education, Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information. Romania has valuable people in all areas, and they must be encouraged and validated by competent forums in their areas of expertise. This is our thought of goodwill at the end of the year and a new beginning of the road. We wish you all Happy New Year!

**Iulia Jugănar**

Economic Director National Commission of Romania for UNESCO





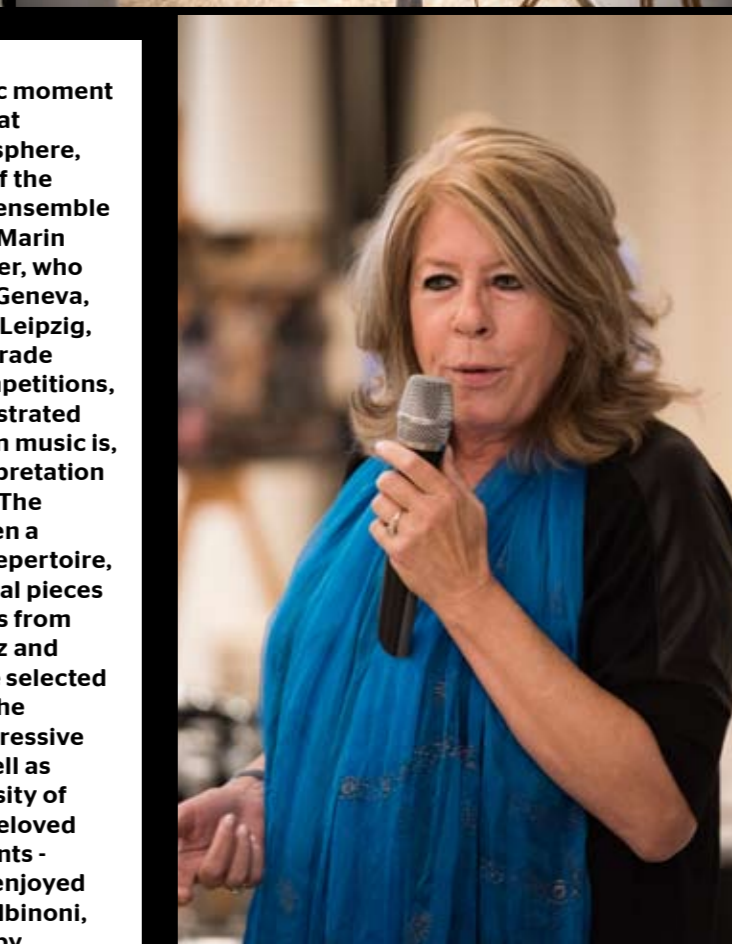
the camera, in a gentle light of comprehension and compassion, one of the greatest collective human dramas of the last decades: migration, as the ultimate rescue solution to wars of all kinds. Women, men, children, adolescents and young people in tents, campuses or streets are the main characters in the artist's photos.

The presentation of the film of the project "Let's love Romania", made by the Ovidius European Cooperation Association, has turned the attention of the viewers, for a few minutes, on the 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Romania, which the project will document in 2018. The topic of migrants and refugees was also found in a short video made and presented by journalist Adina Mutăr.



Another artistic moment of the evening, that relaxed the atmosphere, was the concert of the Violoncellissimo ensemble led by conductor Marin Cazacu. The master, who is laureate of the Geneva, Markneukirchen, Leipzig, Bologna and Belgrade international competitions, has easily demonstrated what excellence in music is, through the interpretation of famous songs. The artists have chosen a varied and alert repertoire, made up of original pieces and transcriptions from classical, pop, jazz and folk music. All the selected pieces reflected the technical and expressive possibilities as well as the stylistic diversity of one of the most beloved musical instruments - the cello. Guests enjoyed the "Adagio" by Albinoni, "Peasant Dance" by Constantin Dimitrescu, "March" by Johan Schrammel, "The Pirates of the Caribbean" by Hans Zimmer, "Waltz" by Dimitri Shostakovich and many others. And because music is often synonymous with magic, the 45 minutes spent in the sound environment offered by Violoncellissimo have gone too fast.

The Gala ended with a dinner during which the guests had the opportunity to exchange impressions.





“ In Bucharest, I most enjoyed the beautiful architecture and the picturesque facades of the houses. With the UNESCO group we went to the Village Museum discovering century-old building styles. So cute! As for the program, I really enjoyed the exchange with so many journalists across Europe.  
**Petra Sorge, GERMANY**



“ My first impression of Bucharest was that it was just the perfect place for getting lost. Walking around the city, I frequently had to ask for directions and always found people willing to help me find my way. Not just that, those who did not themselves speak English would look for someone who did and most people would also come up with additional information that might be of interest to a foreigner. As soon as I have the opportunity I would like to visit Bucharest and Romania again, to learn more about this hospitable country!  
**Maria Sköld, SWEDEN**



“ As a runner I am always glad to run in the cities where I have never been. Bucharest gave me the chance to enjoy my hobby more than I expected. There are several big parks with great views to the city and high - rise buildings. It is fantastic to see on early mornings how the city starts its daily life. Nevertheless, not all the city guests are runners. In this case I suggest to see the city during a long walk. There are huge areas where one can see narrow streets with trams, very special architecture and different kind of churches. And finally - one can always go to the Old City that is always lively and dynamic. Everyone can find his place there - starting from silent and intimate cafes and ending with noisy pubs.  
**Kaspars Germanis, LATVIA**



“ We experienced Bucharest from its most pleasant side. The weather was wonderful, the Muzeul Satului revealed us the rich cultural heritage of the country. And in the evenings we experienced the rich nightlife in the city's center.  
**Simon Jäggi, SWITZERLAND**



“ I could not have had a better time during my days in Bucharest. I was truly impressed by its beautiful architecture and had the chance to experience its joyful nightlife. I met some amazing local people, so friendly and welcoming. As a tourist, I enjoyed the National Village Museum, a great place to get to know more about the rich history of a country that for sure I will visit again.  
**Teresa Aburto Uceda, SPAIN**



“ During my first visit in the city of Bucharest, I realized that it may be faster and easier to walk between two hotels than to travel by car. It is also more fun, as you can enjoy the mild and sunny winter and have a conversation with a dozen amazing journalists from all over Europe. Locals are hospitable, love colorful Christmas lighting, hanging out in noisy clubs, and the renowned chocolate cake. At the illustrious Village Museum I learned how much Romanians admire their cultural heritage, parts of which happens to be revered in Hungary as well. I hope that in the future this fact will foster much more friendship than quarrel between the two nations.  
**Teczár Szilárd, HUNGARY**



“ I really enjoyed exploring Bucharest as a city during my time at the conference. From what I saw, it is a city with a lot of history. I enjoyed seeing the many beautiful buildings around the city. I would love to come back to Bucharest in the future to see more of the city, and Romania as a country!  
**Eline Jeanne, UK**



“ Bucharest intrigues me. At first, you think to have landed in a big anonymous city where grand avenues are leading you to vast squares full of old-Sovjet style buildings. But once you start looking better, you see a lot of gems: beautiful buildings, cute houses and a vibrant old city center. The contrast between the modern Lipscani neighborhood and the historical buildings in the Village Museum testifies of a great history. The soul of Romania will never die, you could feel that in both places we visited. The current city seems to be full of energy and people are so open and friendly. I could sense a feeling of positive expectation with most of them. Curious about what the future holds for them, as if life has just begun. It is refreshing to absorb that energy coming from a Western European city!  
**Steven Decraene, BELGIUM**



“ The first thing I noticed in Bucharest is its greatness. When I entered Cărturești Carusel bookstore I found its charm. And when I was leaving the city after six amazing days with great people I knew I would like to come again.  
**Jasmina Štorman, SLOVENIA**