

**DIRECTORATE GENERAL
HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW (DGI)**

DIRECTORATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
DIVISION ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEES



Strasbourg, 31 October 2025

Roundtable on Fact-based Communication on Migration

Concept Note and *Draft Agenda*

Strasbourg, 7 November 2025

Agora building, Room G05 and online



This initiative is a contribution towards the
New Democratic Pact for Europe

CONCEPT NOTE

Communicating on migration has become increasingly difficult, given the prominence of the issue in many countries and the proliferation of negative narratives about migration and migrants in the media, as well as in electoral, political, and public discourse – often not fact-based nor compliant with human rights standards.

While evidence-based communication drawing on reliable sources is a powerful tool, its effectiveness depends on context, messengers, and audiences, and may not always be the most impactful approach. Under certain circumstances, messages that appeal to shared values, common interests, or empathy, combined with counter- and alternative narratives, positive stories, and inclusive communication, can resonate more effectively and contribute to shifting perceptions.

To address these challenges, the Council of Europe's Division on Migration and Refugees will organise a one-day roundtable in a hybrid format, bringing together experts in communication on migration, alongside practitioners and institutional representatives.

The event will provide a platform to analyse current obstacles and share good practices for presenting accurate, balanced, and rights-based information on migration. The intended audience of the roundtable includes communication experts and practitioners, policy makers, and civil society organisations.

The Roundtable will consist **of three (thematic) sessions**:

Session I. The importance of using facts and credible data in migration communication

This session will examine how evidence-based communication, notably by national authorities and international organisations, can strengthen public trust and counter misinformation. It will explore questions such as:

What are the most reliable migration data sources?

How can complex migration data be translated into accessible and compelling messages?

Under which conditions is fact-based communication most effective, and where does it risk falling short?

Session II. Navigating the current communication environment, including mainstream media reporting and social networks

This session will take stock of how migration is currently communicated across different media - from mainstream outlets to digital platforms - and the challenges posed by polarisation, sensationalism, and misinformation. In addition to reviewing examples of good practices in Council of Europe member States, participants will address questions such as:

How can migration be communicated by media and social networks effectively in a polarised and sensationalist environment?

What role can journalists, influencers, and institutional actors play in promoting balanced narratives?

What types of messages resonate best in traditional media compared to social networks?

Session III. Learning from practices and potential for future action: Communication on migration and freedom of expression, and the need to prevent and combat hate speech and hate crime

The final session will examine how to balance the protection of freedom of expression with the need to prevent and counter harmful speech, including in the context of electoral campaigning. Discussions will address questions such as:

How can counter- and alternative narratives be crafted to shift public perceptions without limiting open debate, including in the context of elections?

Which strategies are most effective in preventing and eradicating hate speech and hate crime related to migration?

How can international human rights organisations, national authorities, civil society, and other stakeholders collaborate to further foster inclusive, respectful, and fact-based communication?

Selected references

- **Council of Europe Committee of Ministers**

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)4](#) on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)12](#) on electoral communication and media coverage of election campaigns

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)16](#) on combating hate speech

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2024\)4](#) on combating hate crime

- **PACE**

[The theme of migration and asylum in election campaigns and its consequences on the reception of migrants and their rights](#), Report, 2021

Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/alternative-narratives-and-inclusive-communication>

- **Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion - CDADI**

Draft [study on effectiveness risks and potentials of using counter and alternative narratives in combating hate speech, 2025](#)

[Study on preventing and combating hate speech in times of crisis](#), 2023

- **Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Media and Information Society - CDMSI**

[Guidance note on countering the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-checking and platform design solutions](#)

- **Council of Europe CDADI and CDMSI**

[Self-assessment tool to prevent and combat hate speech](#), 2024

[Compilation of promising practices on combating hate speech at national level](#), 2024

- **Other International Organisations**

UN [DESA Population Division International Migration](#)

UNHCR: [Refugee Data Finder - Key Indicators](#)

IOM [Migration Data Portal](#)

OECD [Databases on Migration | OECD](#)

EU [European Migration Network](#)

- **Open access publications**

V Adelmant et al., [The European Convention on Human Rights and Immigration Control in the UK: Informing the Public Debate](#), 2025

J Dennison, [A review of experimental evidence of how communication affects attitudes to immigration](#), 2022

EC JRC, [Navigating migration narratives: Research insights and strategies for effective communication](#), 2025

T McGonagle (UvA), '[Freedom of expression and hate speech: the approach of the European Court of Human Rights](#)', [Video](#) [28 minutes], 2024; [List of resources on hate speech](#), April 2024

O Field (ICC - Council of Europe), [Migration and integration - Which narratives work and why](#), 2021

S Wodak, M Erdene-Ochir, B Fung, D Ghezelbash, L Martin, F Voon (Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law at UNSW Sydney) [Countering misinformation about refugees and migrants: An evidence-based framework](#)

Council of Europe Steering Committee for Media and Information Society (CDMSI), [Guidance Note on countering the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-checking and platform design solutions in a human rights compliant manner](#), 2024

DRAFT AGENDA

Roundtable on Fact-based Communication on Migration

Strasbourg, 7 November 2025

AGORA G05 AND ONLINE

Link TBC Zoom Meeting ID: TBC

09:15 – 09:30	OPENING SESSION
	Nikos Sitaropoulos, Head of the Council of Europe Division on Migration and Refugees Dusan Vojnovic, Media and Communications Officer, Council of Europe Division on Migration and Refugees
09:30 – 10:15	SESSION I. THE IMPORTANCE OF USING FACTS AND CREDIBLE DATA IN MIGRATION COMMUNICATION <i>Moderated by Dusan Vojnovic</i>
	Daniel Ghezelbash , Professor and Director of the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, University of New South Wales, Australia: <i>Countering misinformation about refugees and migrants: An evidence-based framework</i> (online)
	Ophelia Field , Independent Researcher and Consultant, ICC Programme: <i>The 'fertile fact': localism and other strategies for effectively presenting the facts about migration and integration</i>
	Başak Çalı , Professor of International Law, Head of Research at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford: <i>Misreporting on the European Convention on Human Rights and immigration control in the UK</i> (online)
10:15 - 10:30	Q&A
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 12:00	SESSION II. NAVIGATING THE CURRENT COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING MAINSTREAM MEDIA REPORTING AND SOCIAL NETWORKS <i>Moderated by Andrew Cutting, Spokesperson/Media Officer, Media Department, Council of Europe Office, Brussels</i>
	Tania Racho , PhD in Fundamental rights, Consultant Désinfox-Migrations: <i>How and why researchers should communicate on migration topics</i>
	Leïla Amar , Journalist, Guiti News, France: <i>Migration: on changing the common narrative in the media</i>
	Muriel Hanot , Secretary General, Council for Journalistic Ethics (CDJ), Belgium: <i>Press councils and journalistic responsibility facing migration issue: the case of the Belgian Council for Journalistic Ethics (CDJ)</i> (online)
	Tamas Berecz , General Manager, International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH): <i>When politics trump policy: the discursive capture of migration debates</i> (online)

12:00 – 12:15	Q&A
12:15-14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 14:30	ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS RELATED TO SESSIONS I AND II <i>Moderated by Andrew Cutting, Spokesperson/Media Officer, Media Department, Council of Europe Office, Brussels</i> James Dennison, Professor at Harvard Kennedy School & Part-time Professor, Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, Florence (online): <i>Using values and emotions in migration communication</i> Myria Georgiou, Professor of Media and Communications, Head of Department, London School of Economics and Political Science (online): <i>title tbc</i>
14:30 - 14:40	Q&A
14:40 – 15:30	SESSION III. LEARNING FROM PRACTICES AND POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ACTION: COMMUNICATION ON MIGRATION AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, AND THE NEED TO PREVENT AND COMBAT HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIME <i>Moderated by Dusan Vojnovic</i> Tarlach McGonagle, Professor of Media Law and Information Society, University of Amsterdam: <i>title tbc</i> Jacob Davey, Director of Policy and Research, Counter-Hate, Institute for Strategic Dialogue (online): <i>title tbc</i> Judith Höllmann, Neue deutsche Medienmacher*innen e.V.: <i>Tackling hate, shaping debate: why media responsibility matters in migration coverage on social media</i> (online)
15:30 – 15:45	Q&A
15:45 – 16:15	Coffee break
16:15 – 16:30	WRAP UP OF DISCUSSIONS – CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTION Nikos Sitaropoulos and Dusan Vojnovic

Why a New Democratic Pact for Europe?

Democratic backsliding, disinformation, impunity, and authoritarianism are undermining democracy in Europe. People are increasingly afraid and frustrated. It comes at a time when democratic security – the resilience of our democratic institutions, freedoms, and values – is our first line of defence against the threats we face. A collective response is needed. There is no quick fix and no single solution. With the New Democratic Pact, the Council of Europe unites with its partners to boost solutions that work and create new responses. To identify them, consultations are needed. The Pact will serve as a collective and inclusive process – not to reinvent democracy, but to reinforce its foundations, amplify its benefits, and innovate its form to make it tangible for everyone, especially younger generations. The directions set during the consultation phase running through 2026 will shape the work that follows.



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