RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA
On how to report on migrations

RELY ON EVIDENCE
Data, figures, percentages, surveys and statistics allow for a more accurate, objective and evidence-based communication and might help to avoid simplified and unreal narratives. References to real-life situations and personal stories can also contribute to building a more compelling message widening the receiver’s understanding of the issue.

ADOPT APPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY
Adopt appropriate terminology which reflects national and international law when referring to migrants’ status; respect definitions provided by the Glossary annexed to the Charter of Rome and avoid generalized labelling.

NO PITIFUL LANGUAGE
When describing painful and harsh living conditions always respect human dignity; avoid spectacle of suffering, victimisation, depiction of misery, voyeurism of pain of others. Adopt a human rights based approach focusing on rights violations.

NO DEHUMANISING LANGUAGE
When referring to migrants and migrations, avoid using metaphors of natural phenomena that compare people’s movements to physical or unexpected events, such as “floods”, “hordes of people”, “waves” etc. Migration movements are not natural disasters: they have specific causes which should be investigated and analyzed by the media in order to provide reliable information and increase public awareness.

MIGRANTS AS SUBJECTS OF COMMUNICATION
Avoid considering migrants and people in general as objects of communication, try to consider them as subjects of the communication process you are building. Give voice to protagonists, allow them to express their point of view, tell their experiences with their own words, and always include migrants’ voices when speaking about migrations. Moreover, try to include their opinion on relevant facts of societies and not only when dealing with specific issues. Every voice is important and counts on any societal matter that we all share.

1 “Ciak MigrACTION recommendations on how to report about migration issues” have been drafted according to the Charter of Rome Guidelines, the Charter of Idomeni and the “5 point guidelines” by Ethical Journalism Network (EJN). They have been further enriched by Ciak MigrACTIONS consortium.

This is an open document to be shared with journalists and reporters, media activists, young people, migrants’ associations and it aims at being further developed along Ciak MigrACTION project.
INCREASE FRUITFUL DEBATE
As stated by the Charter of Rome, “Whenever possible, consult experts and organizations with a specific expertise on the subject so as to provide the public with information which is clear, comprehensive and also analyses the underlying roots of phenomena”.
Debate should enrich the knowledge on the complexity of the phenomenon, rather than polarize positions and opinions: avoid depicting an oversimplified scenario sketching for example just pros and cons, and rather prefer the plurality of ideas and perspectives.

NEED FOR CONTEXTUALISATION
Communication strategies depend on the local context, a message might work in a local dimension and not in another, some communication tools are applicable in one context but not in others. Hence, it is crucial to make an effort to understand the broader context in which a communication happens.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
On how to approach the public discourse on migrants’ inclusion

BUILDING CLOSENESS & EMPHASIZE UNITY
Communication strategies and language choices should aim to get close to receivers and improve relationships and interaction between people. Make citizens feel involved with each other, underline common needs and expectations, avoid separation and isolation of citizens.

TALK ABOUT PEOPLE NOT CATEGORIES/LABELS
Call people by their names. Migrants are people and as human beings they have human rights. Their lives, needs, problems and feelings need to be understood going beyond restrictive labels.

FOSTER EMPATHY
Promote and share with the whole population important facts and events about the life of migrants at the local level, i.e. communicate and give visibility to citizenship ceremonies, community festivals, etc. and encourage common celebrations. Use universal events of people’s life to share positive feelings and to celebrate an enriched community.

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF DIASPORA COMMUNITIES
Create spaces for migrants and minority groups and communities to gather and reflect upon migration policies and narratives, share and promote good practices of inclusion. Encourage participation to decision-making processes by establishing spaces of dialogue with administrators where they can advance proposals and advocate for issues that matter most to them.

MIGRATION IS NOT A TABOO SUBJECT
Do not be afraid of the migration topic, be proud of migrants’ integration, of their contribution to the society and testify how this can be made possible. Communicate clearly your decisions as public authority concerning inclusion and integration. Take time to explain them and support them with facts and stories, thus raising awareness among citizens about the values of equality, solidarity, interculturality and non-discrimination.

INVOLVE ACTORS DEALING WITH MIGRATION
Try to involve as many different actors dealing with migrations as possible, especially NGOs and civil society organisations who are involved in migrants’ inclusion and integration, and carry out intercultural activities. Indeed, these actors are often experts in their topics and thus might be involved to contribute to the communication you aim to reach.

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