



One Hour for Europe Italy

Summary of the Webinar „Humanising Migration: Addressing Policy and Media Perspectives on Migration towards Europe”

Time: 17th September, 2023; 04:00 PM Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna

Moderation: Mimi Amaichigh, Youth Intra-Dialogue on Europe and Africa (Y-IDEA)

The Webinar was divided in two parts. The first was focused on a more personal approach to humanise migration, while the second included policy making institutions to confront perspectives on migration.

Session 1 focused on personal feelings and experiences of young people from Africa and the diaspora and was carried by the speakers Mr. Desmond Situma, Mrs. Benedicta Frema-Schmitz and Mrs. Gladys. In particular, it was shared that it is almost impossible to get a Visa to travel to Europe in a reasonable time and the burden of costs is high. The bureaucracy demands a disproportionate amount of documentation that not everyone can meet and the delays from Embassies pushes people to seek secondary means to travel to Europe, such as illegal migration paths. The consequence is to enter in a conundrum of not paid jobs, social insecurity and explosion to abuse.

In particular, the Webinar explained how the vision from young people of Africa and diaspora differ when it comes to the topic of belonging. Africans are often presented with a distorted view of Europe leading to a false vision or little knowledge of the country they are going to and vice versa.

The young people that identify themselves as diaspora feel the dualism of two cultures that is not accepted in the societies of origins. To say it straightforwardly, for Europeans the people from diaspora will never be European “enough”, and for Africans the people born and raised in Europe will not be African “enough”. This dualism has an impact while growing up. For example, experiencing the African culture in Europe as a child could be felt as a shame that can only change with an adult mindset. Indeed, going out from school means more freedom to experience African culture and enjoy its richness.

Both the guest speakers experienced more racism outside of a university environment. They felt into the position of an educator even, because when you are hit by racism it is really frustrating, and it takes effort and courage to stand up to that person. Even if, for example, under Belgian law it is illegal to be racist, following up such cases is very difficult and racism is often left unpunished.

There should be channels to report discrimination and the people should be reminded there are consequences. Even give posters at train stations, remind them that one world is for all.

Integration is difficult because of language barriers. In the experience of a speaker living in Belgium, French was too complicated so he preferred to study Dutch. There was a time when he was going to give up Dutch, as he did not know if he was going to stay in Europe, but then he got a girlfriend that incentivized him to learn the language. This helped him to be more strongly socially included.



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Session 2 focused on discussions towards the EU's Approach to migration and was carried by the speakers Mr. Rok Kozelj (Board Member of One Hour for Europe & long-time work experience in various EU institutions), Mr. Marc Fawe (UNHCR), Mr. Roberto Perugi (il Rastrello).

Migration is a topic that is mainly not an EU competence, it is a national competence. The EU has a procedure of co-legislation with the member states in a lot of regions. The states do not vote in unanimity, it is enough to vote by qualified majority 66%. So, it is not the system for migration management. In order to have a common decision on topics such as migration, we need a unanimous agreement of the member states, which is very difficult to obtain. We also have other countries that are not ready for a number of reasons, e. g. historical or socio-economic reasons to accept migrants to their autochthonous societies.

Then, the EU is made up of institutions, the EU Commission, EU Parliament, European Council of Ministers and others like the European External Action Service (EEAS). Except the Council of ministers, which represents the interest of member states, the others instead have a supranational interest. The EU has never been a monolithic block concerning migration management. There is the need for unanimity, and then a plethora of positions with the need for unanimity and there is no such possibility.

Unfortunately, the term "Fortress Europe" is proven true day by day, as Europe has strict migration management dissimilar to ordinary situations from other parts of the world.

In Europe it is very hard to enter and then it has legislation (that is just recommendation) stating that, for example:

On 23rd September, 2020 the EU commission adopted the "Dublin Regulation", a new pact on migration and asylum stating that "All members should participate in the effort of international protection enhancing protection of migrants outside the Union."

There are also the Rabat, Khartoum, Valletta processes and the migration and mobility dialogue. The real challenge lies in translating the recommendations into practice.

Education partnerships like Erasmus can guarantee a certain amount of mobility for students. In this framework the EU is active on the qualification framework for mutual recognition of diplomas. Another important program is called youth mobility for Africa, dealing with the promotion of an intra-African academy scheme to exchange know-how in the framework of the AfCFTA.

Mr. Fawe stressed that nowadays migration is presented as toxic and there is a bad impression of it, but in the 1950-60s it was regarded positively. Looking back at the founding of the USA, migration was seen as positive and a necessity by the settlers.

Also, if a "western person" goes abroad it is not seen as negative, and Westerners are not stopped at the border. Migration in one direction is less problematic than migration in the other direction.

Mr. Perugi presented his social cooperative "Il Rastrello", a non-profit enterprise recognized by state law, with the aim of inclusion of disadvantaged people and their integration into society.

These include refugees, ex-convicts, people struggling with mental health and addiction. In their cooperative they have different types of people and then others who don't have problems but come from difficult situations. They are linked to many associations where they can give support to people who are victims of trafficking and are welcomed by the associations.



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With the help of “Il Rastrello”, people have developed careers and have been integrated back into society. In other cases, they have been with them for a long time and help welcome those who arrive later. They have people who have been illegal for a period of time and want to get themselves out of difficult situations, with the biggest aim of the organisation being integration into the Italian job market.

The cooperative has grown from a mostly volunteer-led organisation to one that now employs approximately 400 workers, with 36% of them belonging to vulnerable groups.

He would like this type of business to be exported to other European or African countries for sure.

Questions from the Audience:

Q:

Mandilulame: Is the introduction of an African Union passports to counter migration problems a solution?

A:

Rok: No, it is a process of continental integration, the AU is following the path of EU integration. Passports will be consequential to political unification that will arrive not so soon but arrive through putting together some sectors that make more sense to put together such as creating a common market.

A:

Marc: I am not aware of AU passports but consider that the EU started to integrate 70 years ago and we do not have a common passport yet. It is a consequence, it is part of population management and part of sovereignty.

Q:

Mahamadou: Marc, I am a specialist in partnership and negotiation in Niger. Tell me about internal displacement, what is the problem with sustainable management. We want a sustainable solution to help the internally displaced and those who are out of Niger and understand their needs.

A:

Marc: The national authority must do something, as an external actor the UNCHR can contribute, in Niger they implement urbanisation, access to water, housing. Local dynamics create a momentum, which allows the UNHCR manage to bring sustainable solutions to a number of people. But if you link this to the EU that is different, if we talk access to the EU this is external and there are projects on resettlements but for refugees. It is complex to act because of the political situation. Some integration pathway could also come from infrastructure: check the [Strait of Gibraltar crossing](#).

Test your knowledge and assumptions on migration with these short questions:

- What percentage of the African population lives outside of their home country?
- How high is the percentage of African migrants living in Europe?
- How many African migrants live within the continent?
- How many African migrants in EU countries are refugees?



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- Health care: How many doctors in Germany are from Africa?

Find the answers to these questions [here](#)