WORDS ARE STONES

HATE SPEECH ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

AUSTRIA, CYPRUS, FRANCE, GREECE, ITALY AND SPAIN

2019

INTERNATIONAL **REPORT**

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Background

This report is one of the outcomes of the ˝**Words are stones**˝ project, promoted by **Lunaria** (IT) in collaboration with **Adice** (FR), **Antigone-Information and documentation center on racism, ecology, peace and non-violence** (EL), **Grenzenlos** (AT) , **Kisa** (CY) and **SOS Racisme** (ES), co-funded by the Europe For Citizens Programme of the European Union.

Nationalist, populist and xenophobic movements that mix Euroscepticism, intolerance, hatred and racism in a specious way to increase their consensus in public opinion, pose a serious danger to the building of a democratic, united, cohesive and peaceful European society. Public debate is filled with stereotypes and prejudices against immigrants and refugees that often degenerate into crimes and racist attacks.

In this context, **Words are stones** has the following goals:

- to analyze the political discourses that fuel xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination against migrants, refugees and other minorities;
- to improve the capacity of civil society, citizens and European institutions to prevent and respond to hate speech;
- to involve young Europeans in campaigns against hate speech;
- to make European politicians aware of the importance of promoting intercultural dialogue, the protection of human rights and peaceful coexistence between citizens and people arriving from other countries.

This report illustrates the main trends observed in the countries involved in the project.

When we write ˝hate speech˝ in this report we refer to those messages that stimulate, encourage and incite hostility, discrimination, hatred and violence against members of particular groups, especially on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, ˝race˝[1] or religion. These characteristics intersect with aspects of class, social status, gender, sexual orientation and other.

1 In this report the word "race" and its derivatives are used just because they are adopted in international law and official documents to define the protected groups and characteristics. To underline that this category does make part of our language, we use the quoted word when we are obliged to mention it.

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"Muslims are sent to Cyprus by Turkey as so-called refugees with the intention to alter our national and cultural identity" with the danger that "what is described in the book of Exodus will happen", Cyprus, December 2017.[2]

"There's an ongoing invasion and in January, new waves of migrants have been landing. The skin color has nothing to do with it, but we are living a real dangerous situation: centuries of history are about to disappear if this underestimated Islamization doesn't stop", Italy, January 2018.[3]

"More now than ever, "French first, #migrants out" in this #France of 2018 that abandons its people to take care of others", France, 7 August 2018.[4]

"The NGOs are criminal accomplices, doing like taxis", Spain, 17 august 2018.[5]

"Our money for our people", Austria, 2018.[6]

"They are not refugees. This is an influx of people who try to swell Europe. There is a plan to ruin us.", Greece, 2018.[7]

Introduction

SIX SENTENCES, six messages that have been pronounced and/or spread on social media by people who hold important public, political or religious positions in six European countries. Reasoning, logical schemes, linguistic registers and styles are very different, just as the level of hostility varies: more or less explicitly expressed violence against the groups chosen as target. These are just some of the many examples of political rhetoric highlighted in the six national reports and in this dossier which are the outcome of the study carried on by activists of six European associations.[7] The aim was to analyze the degeneration of the national discourse when it deals with migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, Roma from the civil society point of view.

An independent look and a common reflection by the European civil society seems essential to

2 Kisa, (edited by), WAS, *National Report Hate Speech in Public discourse Cyprus*, June 2019, p.13.
3 Lunaria, (edited by), WAS, *Words that hurt. Hate speech in Italy on 2018*, pp. 13-14.
4 Adice, (edited by), WAS, *National Report on hate speech*, p.13.

understand and better counter the forms of xenophobia, discrimination, racism, Romaphobia, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism that fill the public discourse. This cloud of hate speech gathers thanks also to an interpretation of the fundamental right to the freedom of expression that leaves open space to a political message that stimulates, encourages and incites hostility, discrimination, hatred and violence against social groups.

The most serious forms of such rhetoric are identified internationally as "hate speech". The definition of hate speech on a regulatory level, though, is not shared internationally and has found different declinations in different national contexts. Today's priority and challenge seems to be the prevention and contrast of those public discourses and rhetoric implemented by people who have the power to influence public opinion and who contribute to the cultural sedimentation of a widespread social hostility towards migrants, asylum seekers, refugees

and Roma. This sentiment is the fertile ground for the propagation of discrimination and racist violence. Politicians effects on public opinion can be challenged only through a wide and systemic strategy at the social, cultural and political level.

This dossier neither offers nor tries to offer definitive answers. We have collected the results of a study, a comparison and a shared discussion that involved dozens of activists, experts and citizens in six different European countries.

The organizations involved in this work share the belief that only cultural participation, active citizenship and transnational collective debate can create the cultural, social and political immunizers that are necessary to free the public debate from all forms of stigma, discrimination, xenophobia and racism and bring it back into the dialogue tracks (and conflict) in order to build stronger democratic societies in pursue of social justice and equality.

5 SOS Racisme, WAS, *Racist Hate Speech in Spain: a 2018 case analysis, towards possible 'alternative narratives'*, p. 19.
6 Grenzenlos (edited by), *Words Are Stones, National Report Austria*, p.25.
7 Antigone-Information and documentation center on racism, ecology, peace and non-violence, WAS, *Words that Lead to Hate. Hate Speech in Greece during 2018*, p.16.
8 The national reports have been drafted by Lunaria (I), Adice (F), Antigone-Information and documentation center on racism, ecology, peace and environment (EL), Grenzenlos (A), Kisa (CY) and SOS Racisme (E). The reports are available to this link:
http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/hate-speech-national-reports/

DEFINING HATE SPEECH IN A NON-HOMOGENEOUS LEGAL CONTEXT

Austria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Spain have adopted a legislation on hate crimes but share the lack of a normative definition of hate speech and specific legislation on the subject. In all countries, the fundamental right to freedom of expression is constitutionally granted and finds its limits in the right to equality and non-discrimination. Despite the absence of specific legislation, hate speech is punishable on the basis of a more or less complex set of rules that prohibits incitement or instigation to discrimination, hatred or violence perpetrated on the basis of a discriminatory motive against specific subjects or social groups defined by the law.

The rules that come into play are primarily those relating to **crimes** of **incitement** to ˝**racial**˝ **hatred** and **propaganda** of **ideas based** on ˝**racial**˝ **superiority** and **hatred**. These rules are supplemented by those that punish injury, defamation, threats and, of course, from those that prohibit the reconstitution of fascist or Nazi-fascist parties and crimes against humanity.
The need to standardize and coordinate the various existing rules and to arrive to a precise and specific definition of hate speech at national level is shared by the six countries.

Some legal divergences are found when we watch the target groups protected by different national laws, the number of people to which a message is addressed in order to define it as public speech and to the type of sanctions. In Austria the victims of ˝incitement to violence or hatred˝ are protected on a wide range of motives: ˝race˝, religion, language, skin color, nationality, ethnicity, sex gender, physical or mental disability, age or sexual orientation and instigation is considered public when it happens in front of at least 30 people. From 2016 onwards, foreigners, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are also considered vulnerable groups. In France there is an aggravating circumstance for the display of racism and anti-Semitism which include declarations, writings, images and

Syrians and Iraq refugees arrive at Skala Sykamias Lesvos Greece,
photo by Ggia
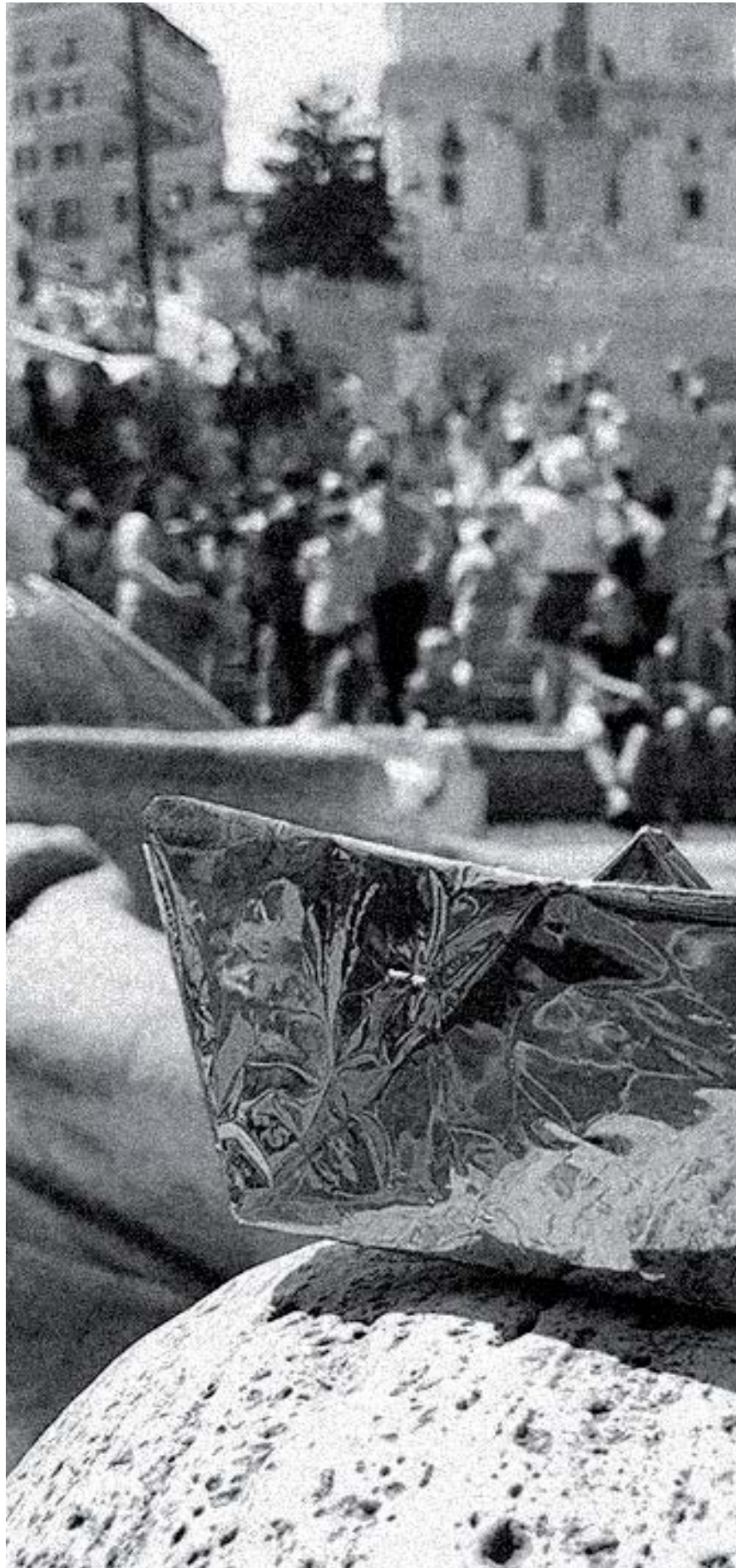*Womens**, photo by Lunaria***

symbols. In Italy the law explicitly cites "race", religion, nationality and ethnicity among the discriminatory reason and punishes the propaganda of ideas based on "racial" or ethnic superiority that incites acts of discrimination or violence for racial, ethnic, national or religious reasons. In a similar way, Spain punishes crimes committed on the basis of ethnicity, "race", national origin or sexual orientation. In Cyprus, incitement to violence or hatred (but not discrimination) is prohibited when it is addressed to a person or a group of people on the basis of ethnic origin, "race", skin color, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation.

All the countries considered in this report share the difficulty to apply the existing rules to effectively combat discriminatory political rhetoric, particularly online. The Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, relating to the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems, has been signed by all countries but not ratified by Italy and Austria. Even in the countries that have ratified it, its application is still scarce and inadequate. There is a considerable divergence in national regulatory contexts. The attempt to find a common definition brings us to search for the peculiar elements of hate speech in international documents and conventions.

A FIRST definition is contained in **the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights** (ICPRR), a treaty that arises from the experience of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1966 which came into force in 1976. Article 20 of the Convention reads:

"1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law; 2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

The **general comment n.34 of the Human Rights Commission** defines what kind of responses should come from states and what should be understood as "prohibited by law". The acts referred to in Article 20, paragraph 2, must (a) defend, (b) be aimed at national, racial or religious hatred and, (c) constitute an incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. "Appeal" means public forms of expression intended to elicit action or response. By "hatred" we mean intense emotions of disgrace, enmity and aversion towards a target group. The term "incitement" refers to the need for the appeal to trigger imminent acts of discrimination, hostility or violence.

A SECOND reference definition is offered by art. 4 of the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (CERD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 21 December 1965 and entered into force on 4 January 1969.

"States Parties condemn all **propaganda** and all **organizations** which are based on ideas or theories of **superiority** of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to **justify** or **promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form**, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all **incitement to**, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of this Convention, inter alia:

(a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;

(c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, **to promote or incite racial discrimination**."

It is important to note that the last paragraph prohibits not only incitement but also encouragement of "racial" discrimination by public authorities and national and local public institutions.

Child, **photo by Lunaria**
Rome, Piazza di Spagna, Flash mob #ioaccolgo, 13 June 2019.
Photo by Lunaria

At the European level, a first definition was offered in 1997 by the **Council of Europe**: "the term "hate speech" shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, **incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance**, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin".

A MORE precise definition can be found in the **European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General recommendation on combating hate speech (n.15, 206)**.

"The advocacy, **promotion or incitement**, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, **insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or threat** in respect of such a person or group of persons and the justification of all the preceding types of expression, on the ground of "race", colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, language, religion or belief, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and other personal characteristics or status".

This last definition significantly expands the types of groups considered most vulnerable, taking note of the worrying extension of the phenomenon recorded in recent years. ECRI also specifies that "forms of expression that offend, shock or disturb will not on that account alone amount to hate speech and that action against the use of hate speech should serve to protect individuals and groups of persons rather than particular beliefs, ideologies or religions".

According to the above definitions, hate speech acts have the following main features:

■ they are public and disparaging thought expressions that intend to provoke a reaction or an action of hostile, discriminatory or violent nature from those who listen to/read it;
■ incite discrimination, hostility or violence against a specific individual or social group, identified on the basis of negative stereotypes

and prejudices used as tools of subordination and denigration;
■ they violate some fundamental human rights: the right of equality, human dignity, freedom, participation in political and social life.

It is important to note that on the basis of these definitions to qualify a message as hate speech, its (even deeply) **offensive content is not enough**. To be classified as hate speech the message needs **to be public** and aimed at **arousing a hostile, discriminatory or disparaging action**. Here lies the difficulty in applying the rules where it is not easy to ascertain the intention, incitement or encouragement of the author of the message to hate, discriminate, denigrate, do violence.

The need to translate a shared definition still remains a crucial matter.

During the national and international meetings held as part of the work of the "Words are stones" project, the focus was on four relevant aspects related to the spreading of the hate speech.

FIRST the **effects** that violent rhetoric produces are highlighted not only on its targets, but also on the political, social and cultural climate of each country. An offensive, hostile, disparaging or violent discourse can cause psychological, physical, symbolic and material damage to those who suffer it and represents a threat for the whole society. This, to date, seem to be undervalued where national protection systems are not sufficiently developed. The spread of increasingly aggressive public rhetoric, especially online, has an impact that goes far beyond the direct effects on victims or target groups. On the one hand, it tends to legitimize the reiteration of disparaging, discriminatory and violent behavior online and offline. On the other hand, it contributes to progressively polarizing public opinion, undermining the democratic dialogue. In short, there is a **close connection** between the spread of the hate speech and the propagation of physical violence against people belonging to vulnerable groups.

SECONDLY the more or less explicit use of violent rhetoric by the **ruling class (political, institutional, media, religious) is particularly worrying**, because it influences the public discourse more than the words of a private citizen. As mentioned previously, the normalization of racist speech in public debates carried out by those actors has created a relative sense of legitimacy for their proposals - often defended on principle of freedom of speech - even when political claims have represented a direct attack to democratic values.
In individual countries and internationally,

the commitment and the instruments aimed at limiting the spread of political hate speech are **insufficient**.

THIRDLY it is important to include in national regulations a clear definition of **hate speech** and of the groups and characteristics that should be protected including that today remain mostly excluded from the protection (eg LGBT, women, people with disabilities, homeless people). It is also important to find alternatives to the Criminal Code to fight hate speech and sanction the authors.

FINALLY and this is possibly the most important challenge, the analysis of the political discourse carried out in the six countries highlights the limits of the contrast to hate speech entrusted solely to the law, not only because none of the six countries has specific legislation on the issue. In fact, **"haters" tend to refine their communication**, avoiding an explicitly denigrating lexicon or by not directly citing in their messages the group they intend to strike, **precisely to circumvent the meshes of the legislation**. At this respect, supporting and encouraging the pro-active participation of racialized and immigrant people in fighting against racist hate speech and spreading transformative narratives is an essential step for European civil society in order to organize an effective response to the current 'organization' of hate. On the other hand, the success of anti-racist action may require that different narratives are emitted from different experiences and positions in the fight against oppression – be it gender, class, "race"/ethnicity, or other oppressions- somehow meet or converge, finding strategic unity within diversity.

This is confirmed by the analysis of the themes and target groups most affected by the stigmatizing public rhetoric in the six countries considered. The connection between the new forms of nationalism and populism that have spread in recent times and the propagation of offensive and violent political propaganda based on hate speech is increasingly evident and seems to recall a cultural, political and social problem that goes far beyond the mere "technical" dimension of the fight against this phenomenon. Effectively countering the spread of discriminatory and offensive rhetoric cannot

be limited to improving and strengthening monitoring, legal protection or the development of alternative narratives.

With different declinations and accentuations, the use of violent, stigmatizing and polarizing political propaganda seems common to the six countries considered, offering the audience the hope of an **illusory reconstitution of national identities** based from the distinction between "we" (that is, the in-group, imagined or portrayed as "authentic" and to some extent homogenous) and "them" (the groups from time to time chosen as target).

The xenophobic and racist propaganda seems to be successful in offering a response to the disorientation of the so called "Western societies" that are experiencing the crisis of their model of development and democracy incapable to tackle raising inequality and the exclusion of an increasing portion of its people from the enjoyment of some fundamental social and economic rights. Racist hate speech is designed to activate in the audience the racist and discriminatory «framing»[9] deeply rooted in European colonial history and philosophical/political tradition.

For all these reasons the direct involvement of the different social actors and the strengthening of structural public social inclusion policies are, as we shall see, crucial for undertaking an effective struggle not only against hate speech, but against the spread of xenophobia and racism.

9 Frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning. According to cognitive psychology, framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience deeply influences the choices people make about how to process that information.

Refugees in Munich, **photo by Kaundl**
Eating together, **photo by Lunaria**

A PHENOMENON DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY

> Among the critical issues related to the analysis of reported hate speech – and in particular that of political nature - is related to the lack of an official and standardized data collection system. This is a direct consequence of the absence of a shared normative definition at the international level. Each country adopts different methodologies for collecting data on **hate crimes**, and no country, among those considered, has an official data collection system dedicated to **hate speech**.
> In Austria official data are available broken down on the basis of the reference standards that are applicable to hate speech, but the typology of the discriminatory motive is not detectable. For Italy, different data sets are available on the reporting/charges of discrimination and discriminatory crimes, but they are not coordinated with each other and do not all offer a breakdown based on the discriminatory motive or based on the type of crime. Moreover, recent official statistics on the investigations initiated and the verdicts pronounced are not available.

The data on hate crimes collected at international level by **OSCE/Odihr** Observatory which publishes every year an international report fed by official data provided by the Forces of the Order and supplemented by information provided by civil society organizations every year is affected by this discrepancy: the data authorities communicate for each country are not comparable with each other. As a consequence, classification criteria of the data provided are not homogeneous. The categories of motives are aggregated differently; not all countries offer a disaggregation of data that crosses the motive with the type of crime committed or provide detailed data distinguishing the number of complaints, of open investigations and of sentences passed. Only in Italy the data on incidents of incitement to violence or hatred on a xenophobic and racist basis were made available in 2017, **a category of crime that more closely identifies hate speech**.

It is therefore not possible to compare individual countries with the available data. Below we summarize the most significant information collected in the national contexts, referring to the national reports for further details.

AUSTRIA

The data published by the **Federal Criminal Police and the Ministry of Justice** show that between 2015 and 2017 there has been an increase in both complaints and convictions relating **to crimes of incitement to violence or hatred**. **Complaints increased** from 516 in 2015 to 827 in 2017. The **convictions** followed a similar trend going from 44 in 2015 to 135 in 2017. This spike could be explained by the tightening of legislation on the one hand and by a greater awareness of the public opinion on the other. It is also possible that this trend reflects an actual increase of incitement to violence related to changes in the political climate. Austria does not offer for hate crimes a break-down of different bias motives.

In 2018 the number of convictions (72) has decreased. The decrease can be partly explained by the cases that have connections with foreign countries. According to the **Ministry of Justice**, **90%** of convictions under Article 283 StGB (prohibition of incitement to violence or hatred) **take place on the Internet**. The available data are not disaggregated according to the discriminatory motive, they do not allow to identify the most affected social groups and the types of perpetrators. Among the non-institutional sources, it is useful to remember that among the 1,920 cases of racism documented by the Zara NGO in 2018, **1,164 happened online and 89 in real life politics and other media.**

2
FRANCE

According to data provided by the **Central Service for Territorial Intelligence** (SCRT) of the Central Directorate of Public Security (DCSP), **hate speech has registered a decline between** 2016 and 2017. In this case the published data refer to **racist threats of an anti-Semitic and Islamophobic nature**. Racist threats decreased by 17.36%, from 524 in 2016, to 433 in 2017; those of an anti-Semitic nature decreased by 17.1%, going from 258 in 2016 to 214 in 2017; those of an Islamophobic nature decreased by 58.5%, going from 118 in 2016 to 49 in 2017. The number of physical racist and Islamophobic violence vases is substantially stable (152 cases in 2017 compared to 156 in 2017), while those of anti-semitic matrix increase (97 cases in 2017 compared to 77 in 2016). **Violent acts against places of worship show** a decline for Muslim sites (72 cases compared to 85 in 2016), while there was a slight increase in the case of Jewish sites (28 cases in 2017 compared to 23 in 2016).
It should be pointed out that these data are very different from those transmitted by the French Order Forces to **Odihr** concerning the hate crimes of 2017: **1.505** cases considered relevant, of which **882** are xenophobic and racist. The documented physical violence is of xenophobic and racist matrix in 210 cases, of anti-Semitic matrix in 29 cases and of Islamophobic matrix in 6 cases. 560 cases of xenophobic and racist threats, 214 cases of anti-Semitic threats and 23 cases of Islamophobic threats are also documented.

3
GREECE

In Greece, 68 local offices of law enforcement agencies are in charge of monitoring the hate crimes data that are communicated to **Odihr**. Unfortunately, as noted by Odihr for the year 2017, "the police data include an unspecified number of hate speech acts that do not fall under the OSCE definition of hate-motivated crimes". However, data on hate crimes provide a clear picture of the situation in the country. Between 2013 and 2017, the **Greek authorities** registered **408 cases of crimes** motivated by hatred. In 2017 the highest figure was recorded with **128 cases reported** (of these 4 cases are referred to hate speech). As in the Austrian case, there is a large discrepancy between the number of complaints, the crimes prosecuted (46) and the sentences (6). In 2018 the Greek police recorded **226 episodes of racist violence, 63 of which referred to hate speech acts**.

10 Ecri *Report on Italy,* fifth cycle, Adopted on 18 March 2016, Published on 7 June 2016, pag.17.
11 Source: Ministero degli Interni, OSCAD, *Osservatorio per la Sicurezza Contro gli Atti Discriminatori,* 2019, here: *http://www.interno. gov.it/sites/default/files/segnalazioni_oscad_ dal_10.9.2010_al_31.12.2018_mi-123-u-d- 1-oscad-2019-206_1.pdf*
12 The data published by Oscad refers to all the reports received by the office by e-mail and includes both cases of discrimination that have no criminal relevance and hate crimes. The reports received by the office do not replace the action of pressing charges that have to be filed at local police stations.

4 ITALY

The national official statistics does not offer data specifically referring to **hate speech**. [10] The most reliable official reference source is that offered by the **Odihr**. The latest published data refer to 2017. Considering only those provided by law enforcement, a worrying trend can be detected: documented hate crimes were 555 in 2015, 736 in 2016 and **1048 in 2017**.

The distribution of hate crimes documented according to the **motive shows** a clear prevalence of **racist and xenophobic crimes** that include all the crimes recorded in the SDI database (Inter-agency Investigation System) with a motive related to prejudice against the ¨race¨/skin color, Roma and Sinti ethnicity, nationality, language, anti-Semitism, Muslims and members of other religions. In **2017** the crimes of racist and xenophobic matrix were 828, 79% of the total.

The **breakdown of data by type of crimes committed** includes for the first time offenses of **incitement to racist violence**: these are **337** cases, which represent 40.7% of the crimes reported on the basis of a xenophobic or racist motive.

It is also appropriate to mention the data gathered by **Oscad** which, unfortunately, are not disaggregated on an annual basis [11]. Between 10 September 2010 and 31 December 2018 Oscad received **2.532 reports**. [12] The crimes of discriminatory matrix were **1.164**, plus **368 discriminatory crimes on the Web**. **59.3%** of the total of the **1.564** crimes are **related to an ethnic or racist motive**.

5 SPAIN

In 2018, the **Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia** presented a report that analyzes judicial sentences concerning **hate speech**, in order to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the legal system. The results deriving from the **83 cases analyzed in 2014, 2015 and 2016** show important structural trends. First, hate crimes and hate speech acts usually occur in the **public sphere or on the Internet**. Secondly, they are mainly detected in the administrative regions of Catalonia, Madrid, Castilla-León and Valencia. Thirdly, these are **mainly of the racist, xenophobic and homophobic type**. Racism and xenophobia in Spain are not occasional: they are institutional, structural and systematic. The data published by **Ecri** for 2016 and 2017 relating to the cases of discrimination are there to confirm this: 416 acts and behaviors of xenophobic and racist origin constitute 32% of the total of the 1,272 cases of discrimination recorded in 2016. Among the 1419 cases of **hate crimes** reported to **Odihr** for 2017, 524 were racist or xenophobic, 6 anti-Semitic and 103 have hit ¨members of other religions¨ that is the 45% of the cases reported that year. The data are unfortunately not disaggregated according to the type of crime and therefore do not allow the specific identification of cases of threats or incitement to hatred.

6 CYPRUS

The country does not offer official statistics on hate speech and does not send data and information on hate crimes to **Odihr**/OSCE since 2012. The **OCD** (Police Office against Discrimination) is the only competent authority that publishes case data of racism. There are only 30 documented cases in 2018 reported by 35 victims against 42 perpetrators. According to KISA, this numbers strongly underestimate the phenomenon with particular reference to the victims belonging to the Turkish-Cypriot minority, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

In summary, the official data collection systems available both internationally and nationally do not provide a representative picture of the spread of hate speech. This is due to the lack of standardization of national records and to the reticence to report by the most vulnerable victims. The monitoring of online hate speech presents further problems, given the great propagation of the phenomenon. Monitoring millions of official pages and personal profiles is a huge task and there is still insufficient cooperation from the main social networks.

As we will see, various monitoring initiatives by civil society have been promoted in the different countries. **These initiatives are commendable but cannot replace the official data collection that should be systematic and publicly available, as recommended by international organizations.**

AN OVERALL PICTURE:
THEMES, TARGET GROUPS
AND ACTORS OF HATE SPEECH
IN THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE

1 METHODOLOGY

In this section we present a summary of the evolution of political hate speech related to the presence of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, Roma and other minorities in 2018 in Austria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Spain. A more detailed analysis on each country can be found in the national reports.

Our work does not claim to be a full picture: it is a analysis conducted by civil society organizations with the priority goal of providing useful elements to the public discussions conducted within national and international meetings dedicated to the topic during the course of the project.

The differences among national contexts and of the partners involved in the project, heterogeneous as regards to the mission and previous experience in the field of promoting contrast activity of hate speech, suggested to adopt a sufficiently flexible working methodology that would allow to draw the attention on the aspects considered most relevant in each national context and to use a plurality of sources, including unofficial ones.

It was therefore agreed to carry out a qualitative analysis which, through the examination of some exemplary cases of political hate speech, would allow identifying the themes, the groups most affected and the most aggressive political actors with the aim of identifying the analogies and the differences existing in the public debate of each country.

*Portrait of a Refugee**, photo by babasteve*

The type of "hate speech" taken into consideration ranges from statements made to the press or disseminated through social media by public figures (political, institutional, administrative or religious), to offensive or threatening speeches addressed directly to the victims in some public form, to electoral rallies and public demonstrations, to the diffusion of propaganda materials (posters, flyers, banners, online images), to the racist writings in public places.

As to the perpetrators, particular attention was paid to the role played by the representatives of political parties and institutional actors. Initiatives promoted by social movements, the police, informal groups of citizens and the press, were also monitored.
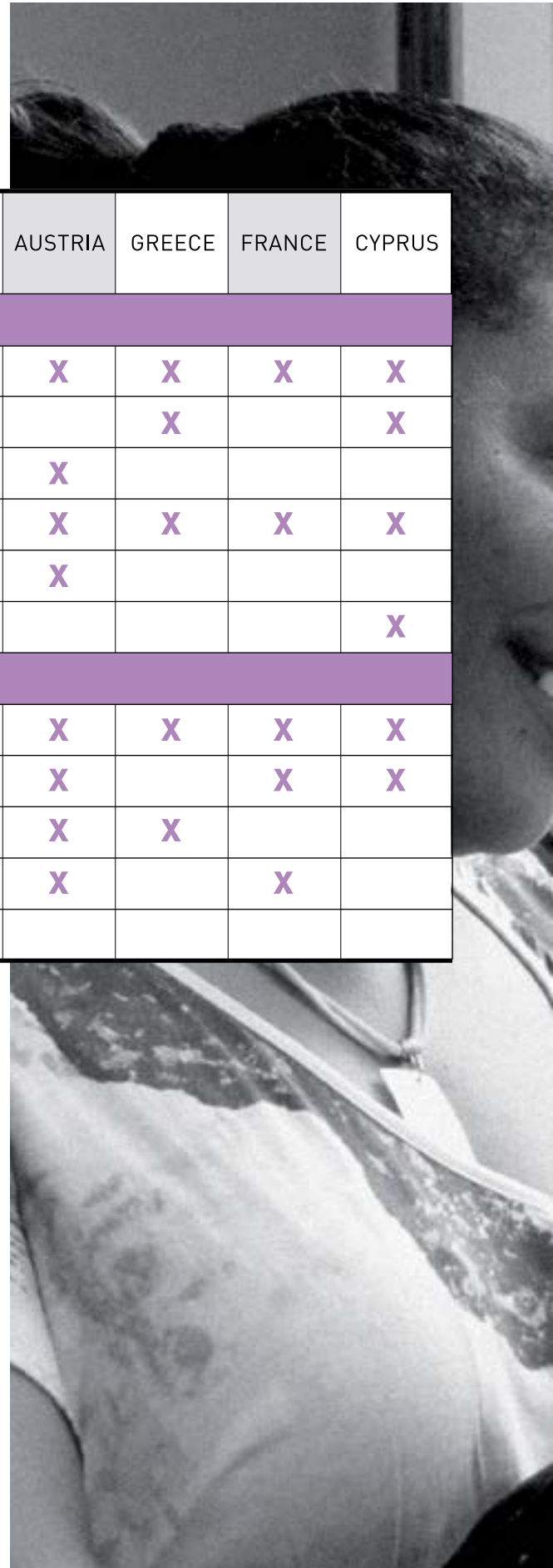
2 THE OVERALL PICTURE

2.1. The most vulnerable groups

Table 1 below shows how, in all the examined countries, **migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, people of Muslim faith and Roma** represent the main target groups for discriminatory and violent political rhetoric. **Hostility against black people is particularly recurrent** in **Italy and Spain**, with messages and speeches that evoke expressions and vocabulary taken from biological racists theories. In Italy this trend was accompanied in 2018 by an anomalous recurrence of numerous cases of physical aggression against black citizens.
The anti-Semitic discourses cross the public debate in **Italy, Austria and France**. In **Spain** Muslim men are the group most affected by violent public rhetoric.

Portrait of woman, Capoverde, 13 March 2011,
photo by Lunaria

Table 1. Main topics and targets of hate speech in public discourse	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	GREECE	FRANCE	CYPRUS
MAIN TOPICS						
(In)Security/Criminalyzation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Invasion/ethnic substitution	X	X		X		X
Competiton in welfare/work	X		X			
Cultural Incompatibility/identity	X	X	X	X	X	X
Costs/Allocation of resources	X	X	X			
Islamist terrorism		X				X
MAIN TARGETS						
Immigrants/refugees	X	X	X	X	X	X
Muslims	X	X	X		X	X
Roma	X	X	X	X		
Jews	X		X		X	
Black people	X	X				

If those indicated above are the target groups most affected by the violent political rhetoric in 2018, as has been highlighted by international literature, **the hierarchy of discrimination, dehumanization and racialization** of groups chosen as the preferred target by ¨political entrepreneurs of racism¨[13], varies from country to country and, in each country, may change over time.[14] The structuring of this ¨hierarchy¨ in fact changes in relation to the history of individual countries, to changes in migration routes and to the degree of social prejudices and perceptions of ¨cultural and religious incompatibility ¨

13 This definition is used by Annamaria Rivera to indicate the intentional use of discriminatory rhetoric by political actors aimed to increase their public consensus. Source: Rivera A., *Estranei e nemici. Discriminazione e violenza razzista in Italia*, DeriveApprodi, 2003.
14 Joseph F. Healy, 2003, *Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class. The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change*, Pine Forge Press; Rivera A., *Regole e roghi*, Edizioni Dedalus, 2009.

attributed to different minority groups.

In **Italy** migrants coming by sea from Africa, the most recent arrivals of migrants, are among the most stigmatized groups in the political debate, together with Roma and Muslim believers, while Albanian citizens had been the target in the 1990s and Romanian citizens at the turn of the millennium.

In **Spain and Austria**, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have deep historical roots and even today Muslim communities are among the most vulnerable groups. In **France** the xenophobic and racist discourse seems to target asylum seekers and refugees (the recently arrived ones) compared to the historic immigrant communities and the so-called second generations, and it is accompanied by a worrying resurgence of anti-Semitism. In **Greece**, the hostility expressed towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees goes hand in hand with the one that affects Albanian communities that have long been resident in the country. In **Cyprus** the anti-Muslim rhetoric overlaps with the revolt against the new arrivals of migrants from Turkey and the unresolved conflict between the Republic of Cyprus and the areas not effectively controlled by it (the "North", the Turkish-Cypriot areas controlled by Turkey).

Finally, in **Italy, in France, in Spain and in Cyprus** the disparaging, violent, xenophobic and racist political discourse has also targeted those civil society groups that work with migrants as a target. It is what has been called the criminalization of solidarity. It is interesting in this case to note that the attack on NGOs carrying out search and rescue operations of migrants was stigmatized as "Taxi" in two very similar declarations, pronounced at different times and in different places by an Italian and a Spanish politician.[15]

15 We refer to the post published on Facebook on April 21, 2017 by Luigi Di Maio, leader of the 5-star Movement: "Who pays for these Mediterranean taxis? And why does he do it? We will present a Parliamentary interrogation, we will go all the way through this and we hope that Minister Minniti will tell us everything he knows" and to the statement released by José Luis Roberto, leader of the far-right party Espana 2000, during a event organized in Valencia on August 17, 2018: "the NGOs are complicit criminals, they act as taxis".

2.2. The most common "topics"

The political rhetoric hostile to migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, Roma and other minorities uses recurrent topics in the countries taken into consideration. These topics have aggregated into the six main interconnected thematic areas highlighted in table 1.

There are **two main thematic spheres that link violent public rhetoric in all the countries**.

The first is related to the issue of insecurity associated with the arrival and presence of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Roma in Europe which entails their **generalized criminalization**.

In **Greece** there are narratives represent that refugees and migrants arriving after 2015 as threat to national, international and personal security. These narratives are often intertwined with those on the alleged "invasion" of migrants and the theme of "lawfulness" (defining newly arrived migrants as "illegal"), or evoking health and contamination risks.
In **Spain** the issue of insecurity is mainly used to stigmatize black migrants, Roma, street vendors and unaccompanied foreign minors (who come mainly from the Maghreb, particularly from Morocco). Each of these racialized groups is criminalized - thanks to the association with various types of crimes (burglary, theft, falsification or other forms of delinquency) - in an attempt to generate a general social climate of insecurity, fear and other negative feelings which ultimately lead to the "rejection" of these groups. Insecurity and fear are also frequently used to "protect (white) women" from sexual assaults, violence and aggression from certain (non-white) groups, identified as those likely to perform sexual violence.
In **Italy** the most common terms used refer to the semantic sphere of delinquency and violence (in particular against women), of "degradation" and social dangerousness. But the concept of security is often also associated with defending borders against the spread of diseases or alleged Islamic terrorists.
As Grenzenlos helpfully observes in its report on **Austria**, the way in which crime data is

disseminated can also help feeding into the criminalization process of immigrant and refugee citizens. This happens in Austria and in Italy where the main data unbundling of offenders distinguishes between "national" and "non-national".

The second recurrent thematic area concerns the alleged cultural/religious incompatibility between the hosting society and minorities, presented and represented as a **"threat"** to the national identity. The narratives centered on this theme are explicitly based on the origin, language, religion, "culture and visions of the world" of people, but can also refer to "race", ethnicity, sex and social class or position. The examples documented in the national reports are many: to evoke the cultural distance between the majority group and the target groups the ancient forms of biological racism (in Italy as in Greece) are often resurrected, particular national groups are stigmatized (the Albanian immigrants in Greece, the Roma in Italy and Spain) or are linked to anti-Muslim narratives (in Cyprus, Spain, Italy and Austria). This type of rhetoric refers on the one hand to religious diversity and on the other hand to the different treatment of women, which would characterize some countries of origin of immigrants. In particular, Islam is considered a "threat" to the preservation of the European, Christian and White identity. The terrorist attacks in Europe in recent years and some cases of sexual violence committed by foreign citizens are used to demonstrate the need to stop the "dangerous" contamination that would derive from Asian, Maghreb and African migrants.
Hate speech narratives on the threat of Islamist terrorism are based on profound distortions that reduce Islam to Islamism, and equate Islamism to Islamist terrorism, successfully generating feelings of threat and insecurity. According to these hate speech narratives, violence and aggressiveness coming from certain (non-white) groups who may even, individually or in group, rape (white) women, brings the apparent need to protect them from sexual assaults.

The invasion rhetoric is very common in the political debate of those countries most exposed to migrations (Italy, Spain, Greece and Cyprus) which are often presented with an alarmist tone. This rhetoric is less recurrent in Austria and France, the two countries in the project that share a longer history of immigration.
In Italy this theme has been used in an obsessive way spreading alarmistic data on arrivals by sea. This was particularly true during the electoral campaign for the 2018 general elections, and it has continued to be incredibly present even in the following months, despite the sharp decline in migrations directed to Europe. It is important to remember the many political statements released online and offline containing the hashtag #portichiusi (#closedharbours) or the recurrent phrases such as "go home" and "the party is over" referring to asylum seekers and refugees. The rhetoric of the invasion uses many dramatic metaphors to convey the urgency of stopping something massive, uncontrolled and even uncontrollable, the so-called "migration crisis". Expressions such as waves, tides, avalanches or tsunamis are used, as well as "mass arrivals" to evoke the risk of an "out of control" immigration. These narratives often accompany the criminalization of solidarity such as the humanitarian search and rescue missions carried by the NGOs in Spain as in Italy.
The idea of an invasion is also the basis of some conspiracy theories about the "re-Islamization" of society or the "ethnic substitution" exhumed by extreme right-wing movements in Cyprus, Italy and Spain.
In Italy, Spain, Austria and France **the subject of the allocation of public funding** in the discourses is also recurrent. The main idea is linking **the costs for the reception of migrants and asylum seekers to the scarcity of resources**. "Why are some rights guaranteed to those who come by sea or to minorities and not to the nationals?" The costs of this reception and hospitality are often exaggerated. In Austria, France and Italy this issue is often translated in the assertion of a form of **competition** between foreign and non-foreign citizens in **access to welfare services and the labor market**. In Austria the term allocation is understood to discuss the distribution of scarcer resources such as those like labor, capital, soil, land and raw material needed for the production of goods and services. It is a central question of social interaction and a common cause of conflict. This type of narration in Spain and Italy also emerges with reference to the Roma populations, especially when it comes to the

access to welfare services and public housing. Finally, Spain and Cyprus are characterized in particular by **the evocation of the "specter of Islamist terrorism"**. In Spain this is linked to the memory of the terrorist attacks suffered by the country, while in Cyprus it is connected to the ongoing conflict and division of the island since 1974 events.

In Spain the narratives on the threat of "Islamist terrorism" are based on profound distortions that seem to reduce the Muslim religion to Islamism and the latter to Islamist terrorism, helping to generate feelings of threat and danger. Mosques have become clear targets of anti-Muslim action as they are preposterously linked to "radical Islamist terrorism".

The thematic spheres we have listed above draw on a **dramatizing and alarmist lexical universe when not explicitly dehumanizing, denigrating and violent**. Invasion, emergency, urgency, crisis, "ethnic" substitution, mass/ irregular/illegal immigration, lack of control, health/safety/crime/terrorism alarm, fear, threat, national/ethnic/cultural identity, we vs. them, Italians, Spaniards, Austrians, etc. first: these are all recurrent expressions in stigmatizing political speeches in all the countries considered.

A **divisive lexicon** that seems intending to generate and **nurture fear**, hostility, polarization between the "us" and "them": foreigners, Roma, migrants, refugees, blacks. In short, all those who are identified as "the others".
The overall picture of the topics and words thrown as stones in the political debate against the groups chosen as targets points to what we might call a kind of **"internationalization" of xenophobic, discriminatory and racist malice, hatred and violence**.

Photo by udeyismail
Workcamps volunteers with the symbol of #ioaccolgo campaign, Tularù (RI), August, 2019

2.3 The protagonists of the hostile, disparaging, discriminatory or violent political discourse

When we **look at who are the main mouthpieces** of the offensive and violent rhetoric in each country, the situation is more differentiated. One of the reasons is also the total absence of data (official and otherwise) on the "haters".
Generally speaking, the central role in the propagation of these messages is played by parties and movements that belong to the extreme right and a political culture impregnated with nationalism and populist impulses more than other political cultures.

However, the national reports highlight the problem of **cultural and political hegemony** that these political forces seem to exert in the current historical phase in the public debate concerning migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and the Roma. This hegemony **has the effect of also orienting the political communication of the other parties** towards forms of stigmatization and towards arguments that, even when they do not take on the explicit characteristics of hate speech, can feed the public opinion feelings with hostility towards the target groups. The accentuation of the concerns for migrations and for the "economic and social costs" linked to migration together with the timidity of the defense of sea rescue operations, seem for example to characterize transversally the political discourse of

16 *Ecri, National Report on Cyprus,* (fifth monitoring cycle), Adopted on 17 March 2016, Published on 7 June 2016, pag.14.
17 Ecri, Ibidem.
18 *ECRI, Report on France,* (fifth monitoring cycle), Adopted on 8 December 2015, Published on 1 March 2016, pag.15.
19 In 2017 the same group opened a crowd funding to finance the cost of a ship named C-Star in order to disturb the Search&Rescue operations carried by NGOs
20 Cfr. *Words that Lead to Hate. Hate Speech in Greece during 2018,* pag.28.

the democratic political parties and their constituencies in all the countries examined, highlighting their subordination to the political agenda proposed by the right wing. However, there are specificities linked to the political situation of each individual country.

Among the most active protagonists of the discriminatory and violent **Cypriot** political communication reported by **KISA** stands the extreme political movement, the National Popular Front (ELAM), founded in 2008 and turned into a political party in May 2011. ELAM enjoys a limited electoral consensus, but promotes Greek nationalism and is openly connected to the far-right Greek political party Golden Dawn. ELAM promotes an anti-Semitic, anti-Turkish-Cypriot, racist and xenophobic program and according to ECRI has been responsible for attacks against Turkish Cypriots and migrants.[16]

Also ECRI has emphasized that among the authors of stigmatizing speeches, aimed in particular at the LGBT community and against Muslims, there are some members of the Orthodox church, among them the archbishop who in the past publicly declared to support the cause of ELAM.[17]

In **France** the anti-immigrant propaganda has contributed to the electoral success of the Front National in recent years. In its latest monitoring report, ECRI documented several controversial cases involving some members of this party, starting with its leader.[18] The French report, edited by **Adice**, reminds us of the outcome of a court case involving the former vice president of the party a few years ago, who was accused of "crime against humanity" following his comment on the Holocaust and then acquitted by the Court of Cassation. The case against Critine Bothin, vice president of the Christian Democratic party, accused of inciting hatred and violence against homosexuals ended the same way in 2016. Particularly disturbing is the case of La Citadelle, an "identity" bar opened in Lille in 2015 by **Generation Identity**, an extreme right movement which has attempted to build an international network.[19]

The bar, open only to people "of French origin" and of "white race" was a place of aggregation of the movement until, following

a journalistic report made by Al Jazeera, racist and Islamophobic declarations and Nazi greetings were documented with a shocking documentary. Consequently, its closure was ordered.

In **Greece** the examples of hate speech documented by **Antigone** highlight a specific role played by the extreme right-wing movement **Golden Dawn** and its supporters, but the association tends to emphasize that hate speech "can come from anyone with any kind of power and can be directed to anyone who can be considered as "the other".[20]
The Greek report also documents cases of verbal violence against migrants, refugees and Roma (some of which are very serious) committed by law enforcement officers, local administrators, media and trade unions.

2018 turned upside down the **Italian political landscape**. The general elections of March 4 brought the country the government formed by the League (previously Northern League), a right-wing political party born at the turn of the 80s and 90s, and part of three coalition governments between 1994 and 2012, and the 5 Star Movement (M5S), born as an anti-system force in 2006 and turned into a political association in 2009. M5S refuses to be defined as a party and to be led back to one of the traditional political camps (right-left) and perhaps also for this reason it was able to benefit, together with the League, from the crisis of the two main parties that were main characters of the political scenario of the previous years: the Democratic Party (center - left) and Forza Italia (center-right).
The electoral result of 4 March 2018 was actually widely announced, even if not in the

*Portrait of a child, Demonstration in Rome, 17 October 2009
Antiracist demonstration,* **photo by Lunaria**

dimensions that it had.

The Northern League, which experienced a deep political crisis following the scandals involving some of its executives (including the former secretary) in 2012, began to reacquire consent since the new leader Matteo Salvini took the stand in 2014 with the declared objective to transform it into a national party, thanks to the alliance with some far-right extra-parliamentary movements, such as Casa Pound and ForzaNuova, and to an unscrupulous, aggressive communication strategy, capable of using hostile arguments and messages against migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Roma to transform dissatisfaction and anger rooted in broad swathes of public opinion with electoral support. The Northern League, together with Casa Pound and ForzaNuova, are the main protagonists of the discriminatory, xenophobic and racist political discourse documented by **Lunaria** in the Italian report.

These actors are joined by some members of another right-wing party who also elected Mps in 2018, Fratelli d'Italia, and groups of self-organized citizens active on social networks and on the ground. Most of the 180 cases of statements, online messages and public demonstrations considered offensive, disparaging, discriminatory or violent, however, were attributable to local and national members of the League, who in many cases hold public office. Its leader used his aggressive communication strategy even after the electoral deadline and after he became a minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic. The best known messages are those statements made by the minister in 2019 against the captain of SeaWatch3, the German citizen Carola Rackete, whose ship had rescued 60 migrants at sea, and who has lodged a complaint against the minister for the offensive, defamatory and sexist comments. Matteo Salvini had used his twitter account and many public rallies to call her "German tick", a "mercenary", a "delinquent". Less "popular" messages and declarations have targeted migrants and Roma, against which, the victims have filed charges. As an example we recall the contents of a declaration made on Radio Padania in August 2018: "At the ministry I am having a dossier prepared on the Roma issue in Italy. After Maroni (another League minister, until 2012) nothing was done and it is chaos.

A reconnaissance is needed to see who, how, how many are there. We will make a registry office, picture the situation. While we can expel irregular foreigners, unfortunately we have to keep Italian Roma in our home".

It is interesting to point out that the particular "fortune" of the aggressive rhetoric of the League is certainly due to the strong personalization of political propaganda, centered on its leader, on its daily presence on radio and television media (since he became secretary). The professional communication machine of the Lega has invested plenty of resources on social media in the last three years, managing to monopolize the political public debate thanks to a strategy that has used **obsessively some keywords** and some slogans against migrants and Roma. This was a key to the electoral success. The political context has changed in September 2019, after the publication of the national report, and it could influence the orientation of public debate on migrations.

Before 2018, **Spain** was one of the very few EU countries where no far-right party was present in regional or national parliaments. In December 2018, the situation changed with the emergence of VOX - a relatively new extreme right-wing party. The party entered the regional parliament of Andalusia (southern Spain region) after obtaining over 400,000 votes, which resulted in 12 elected members in the regional parliament. The extremist speech by VOX fits perfectly into the rise of far-right transnational populism in Europe, North America and Latin America. **Sos Racisme** talks in its report of a "**VOX effect**" on the public debate: the normalization and legitimization of VOX extremist discourses, even in cases in which democratic values are directly attacked, have contributed to qualitatively changing the whole scenario of the public debate, moving the political discourses of the traditional right, center-right and even center-left in the same direction.

VOX actually started to gather a broader electoral consensus, based on a clear anti-immigration speech, starting from the 2014 European elections. After that, the extreme right-wing National Democracy party ("Democracia Nacional") received media attention in 2016 when it decided to join the historic extreme right political organizations (Plataforma por Cataluña, España 2000 and

Partido por la Libertad) in 2016 to create a Spanish National Front called "Respeto", whose development is not yet clear. Another group is 'Social Home Madrid' (Hogar Social Madrid) which is inspired by the far-right Greek party Golden Dawn. It is known for its strong anti-Muslim, anti-immigration and ultra-nationalist propaganda claims.

Racism in the public discourse is not a monopoly of far-right organizations. The main right-wing party, the Popular Party (Partido Popular), has been at the centre of major controversies. Javier Maroto, a member of the Basque Country, has publicly stated that immigrants do not want to work or integrate but live on social benefits; in Catalonia, Xavier Garcia-Albiol has pronounced on various occasions racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic sentences. Populist and nationalist movements are producing and disseminating exclusionary narratives effectively. Based on a structured and organized communication strategy, their contents can have a great impact on the public opinion, managing to influence the elections in many countries.

Austria is no exception. **Grenzenlos** documents in its report several offensive statements made by local and national representatives of the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs- FPÖ), known for its nationalism and its populism.

*New Arrivals - Refugees in Greece. **Photo by babasteve***
Syrian and Iraqi migrants sleep on railroad tracks waiting to be processed across the Macedonian border Sept. 2 in Idomeni, Greece.

CIVIL SOCIETY'S ACTIONS AGAINST HATE SPEECH

As we have seen, discriminatory, offensive and violent public rhetoric is common in the public political debate in all six examined countries. The different paths this rhetoric takes are to be found in the different national historical, political and social contexts. The urgency of implementing interventions aimed at limiting the spread of hate speech of political nature is therefore self-evident. In none of the examined countries a dedicated national strategy defined at institutional level is in place, although in some countries important institutional initiatives have been promoted.

How has civil society reacted so far? The awareness of the close relationship existing between the diffusion of hate speech and the propagation of aggressive and violent acts and behaviors of xenophobic and racist origin is deeply rooted in all the countries considered, what seems to be missing is a coordinated approach. The initiatives specifically dedicated to combating hate speech are still relatively few, fragmented and with a limited capacity to have a strong impact on the public debate. The mission is even more complicated when we focus on violent rhetoric and political communication by actors in positions of power.

For a detailed description of national initiatives[21] we refer to the national reports, while here we try to illustrate the main areas of intervention by citing some examples.

Children in Barcelona,
24 April 2019,
photo by Lunaria
Portrait of a Refugee.
Photo by babasteve

21 We remember that all national reports are available here: http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/hate-speech-national-reports/

1 REPORTING AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

The denouncing and reporting of hate speech are still poorly widespread in the countries part of this report. The main reason is probably the lack of a normative definition of hate speech shared internationally and the consequent absence of national regulations that guarantees specific protection for the victims. The delicate balance between freedom of expression and the right to equality and protection against discrimination that should qualify democratic systems.

Other important factors also come into play. First, the still deeply rooted reticence between ordinary citizens and between protection and anti-racist associations to promote or support complaints/court cases against personalities who are in a position of power plays a role. Secondly, the level of knowledge and preparation necessary to promote effective actions of a strategic nature on a legal level still seems to be lacking. Finally, the awareness of the fact that such a complex phenomenon cannot be opposed exclusively on the legal and judicial level needs to be acknowleged.
The cases of hate speech that have been the subject of a judicial ruling are still very few in all the countries considered. The legal protection system still seems particularly weak (in the specific context of crimes and hate speech) in Italy, while it appears more solid in Austria and France.
The many NGOs active in the field of guidance and legal assistance in Italy operate mainly in the field of immigration and asylum. Among the few Italian exceptions, **ASGI** (National Association for Legal Studies on Immigration) is active in the promotion of anti-discrimination appeals, but still has limited experience in protecting against crimes and hate speech.

In **Austria**, the **ZARA** association provides, for example, legal assistance to victims of discrimination and racism and has been mandated by the Government to carry out a reporting office of online hate speech. In

2 MONITORING, MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

France, the **LICRA** association (International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism) offers a free legal assistance service for victims and witnesses of acts of racism, anti-Semitism or xenophobia. To combat hatred on the Internet, LICRA provides users with a form to report hate content online.

In **Spain**, **SOS Racisme** has managed the **Said** since 1992 (Servei d´Atenció i Denúncia per a les Víctimes de racisme i xenofòbia), offering a free legal and psychological service to victims of racist discrimination. More specifically, regarding hate speech, SOS Racisme and Catalan Institute of Human Rights (IDHC) edited manuals and studies (including definitions, legal provisions and guideline for illegal hate speech reporting) as a tool to fight against it.

SindiHogar/SindiLlar Union was created in November 2011 in Barcelona and it has national reach in Spain. It unites women working as cleaners or doing care work, being the first union on the matter in the Spanish state. Besides offering mutual support, and offering catering services, the union provides legal assessment (on labour and immigration issues, amongst other), in collaboration with the University of Barcelona.

In **Greece**, the **Racist Violence Recording Network**, established in 2011 on the initiative of the National Commission for Human Rights and the Greek department of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), today brings together 42 organizations that offer legal support services, social and medical aid to victims of hate crimes.

In **Cyprus**, **KISA**, has repeatedly reported cases of hate speech, but highlighted the inefficiency of the competent authorities to respond and properly investigate them.

As we have seen, the lack or (incompleteness) of publicly available official data characterizes all the countries examined. Hence numerous initiatives promoted by civil society were set up to fill this gap in all the countries considered, which can be divided into three main types.

a. PERMANENT OBSERVERS

In Austria, the association **ZARA** collects reports of online and offline discrimination and racism and publishes the gathered data annually in a report. In 2017 it was commissioned by the Austrian government to set up an office to report online hate speech acts. **Dokustelle**, collects reports on Islamophobic discrimination cases. A similar work is carried out by the Romano **Center for Roma**, and by the **Anti-Semitism Forum.**
In Greece, the aforementioned **Racist Violence Recording Network** annually publishes its data on hate crimes. Monitoring activities are also carried out by the **Racist Crimes Watch** promoted by the Greek Helsinki Monitor.
In Italy, the **Carta di Roma** association, established in 2011, monitors and analyzes information on migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Roma and publishes an annual report.
The website **Cronache di ordinario razzismo**, opened by Lunaria in 2011, documents the everyday racism in society, institutions, media and public debate in an online database and periodically publishes white books on racism. A map of intolerance on Twitter is offered by **Vox Diritti.**
The **21 luglio Association** Watchdog specifically monitors hate speech cases against Roma.
In Spain different groups monitor the media: **Media Discriminatory Watchdog**, the Watchdog on **Islamophobia in the media**, and the **Observatory of diversity in the**

media. Also the cases of hate crimes and hate speech attended by **Sos Racisme** are gathered in an annual report.

b. SPECIFIC MONITORING PROJECTS

The European **eMORE** project, which involves multiple institutional and non-governmental actors in all European countries, including Kisa in Cyprus and Idos in Italy, has devised an online reporting system that allows victims to report crimes and hate speech acts.

The **European Prism** project, promoted by the Italian association Arci, involved 12 partners from five different countries (Italy, France, Spain, Romania, Great Britain) in a research coordinated by the University of Barcelona, mapping the hate speech of the parties, of xenophobic organizations and movements on social media.[22]
In Spain, the **CibeRespect** project run by "Ecos do Sur" and the Institute for Human Rights of Catalonia (IDHC) monitored online hate speech acts against immigrants and ethnic minorities, providing cyber-activists with tools to combat it.

c. PERIODIC MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Amnesty International Italy, on the occasion of the 2018 political elections, monitored the electoral campaign with the **Hate Barometer**, archiving posts containing insults, racist or other hate messages and publishing a report.[23] The same initiative, refined on methodological plan, was repeated during the election campaign for the 2019.3 European elections.[24]

22 Here the report on "Hate speech and social media, problems, strategies and practical actions, (Arci, 2016) https://www.arci.it/app/uploads/2018/05/progetto_PRISM_-_bassa.pdf
23 Here the results: https://www.amnesty.it/barometro-odio/
24 Here the results: https://d21zrvtkxtd6ae.cloudfront.net/public/uploads/2019/05/29202706/Amnesty-barometro-odio-2019.pdf

3 EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND MEDIA LITERACY

A third area of intervention is represented by training initiatives, education in schools and media literacy. The initiatives documented in Austria, Italy and Spain are multiple, they are mostly not coordinated with each other because they are often promoted at the local level and carried as projects of defined duration. Original initiatives in this area have been documented in Spain. Promoted by the Municipality of Barcelona, the **"Internet Without Trolls Mission" (MIST)** project involved students in the creation of some digital games in an app. An anti-rumors strategy involved young people from different cities with the aim of showing the functioning of myths, prejudices and stereotypes and encouraging their deconstruction. A **"Practical Guide to online intervention for cyber activists**" was also published in 2017, developed by IDHC, SOS-Racisme and United Explanations.

In Italy, the NGO **Cospe** is very active in this field. As part of the **BRICkS project - Building Respect on the Internet by Combating Hate Speech** -, it created four media education modules tested in schools and youth centeres. A report collects the results of the trial. Cospe also published in collaboration with Zaffiria the updated edition of a **manual** for teachers/educators interested in addressing the issue of hate speech with their students.
The **REACT** project promoted by Arci also intervened in the field of media literacy for educators with capacity building and training activities aimed at both teachers and students in some high schools.

Syrian Refugees
Words are stones, National seminar in Rome, 18 April 2019,
photo by Lunaria

25 https://www.agcom.it/documents/10179/13511391/
Delibera+157-19-CONS/568d8b16-6cb6-4ea1-b58c-
c171c2e24367?version=1.0

4 PROMOTION OF CORRECT INFORMATION/FACT CHECKING

Traditional and online media have a crucial role in contrasting hate speech. Civil society movements and organizations have little means and resources to devote to communication. Therefore, trying to promote truthful information is one of the most difficult challenges to face. However, also in this area, several useful activities have been reported.

There are initiatives aimed at encouraging journalists to respect the ethical rules. In **Cyprus**, a joint agreement between the **Cypriot journalists' union, the Association of Cypriot publishers and the owners of electronic mass media** led to the adoption of a code of conduct for journalists, together with the launching of the activity of a journalistic ethics commission (the Cyprus Media Complaints Commission, CMCC). Article 7 of the Code provides specific guidelines for presenting topics concerning migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking as human beings.

A similar initiative was promoted in **Italy**. In 2008 the **National Press Federation** (FNSI) and the **National Council of Journalists** signed a deontological protocol to promote a fair information on migration issues. In 2011 the **Carta di Roma** association was founded with the aim of implementing the code through monitoring, research and training activities aimed at journalists and journalism students. With a resolution dated May 15, 2019, the **AGCOM** (the Italian Communications Guarantee Authority) passed a regulation containing provisions on the respect of human dignity and the principle of non-discrimination and contrast to hate speech in Tv and radio. [25]
In **Spain**, the **Spanish Press Federation** has established a code of ethics for journalists which explicitly recommends not to report discriminatory contents and "refraining from referring to a person's race, color, religion or social origin in a derogatory or non-public

manner and not to publish such data, unless they have a direct connection to the information published".

In **Austria**, the **Press Council** has the role of ensuring compliance with the code of ethics by journalists, acts as an arbitral tribunal and can rule on the articles reported.

In Spain and Italy various experiments have been promoted with the aim of producing fact-checking, counter-narratives or alternative narratives on the stories and living conditions of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Roma. Among the most original Spanish initiatives, we recall **Maldita.es**, which uses data journalism techniques to monitor and analyze the political discourse and information circulating in social networks, including an area dedicated to migration (called "MalditaMigration"). It started on TV ('La Sexta' channel), has an online platform and is part of the International Fact Checking Network. **Gitanas Feministas por la Diversidad** is a collective of Roma women and Roma activists born in 2013 that works to eradicate anti-Romaism with a feminist approach.

An interesting project launched in Austria is that of **Mimikama** which collects, examines and verifies news and information that is reported as false. If the reported content is verified as facke-news, Mimikama publishes the correct information on its homepage.
In Italy various sites have been opened by civil society organizations to produce alternative narratives and fact-check media outlets. Among the many we remember, there are the websites of **Carta di Roma**, **Cronache di Ordinariorazzismo**, **OpenMigration**, **Occhio ai media** and **Valigia Blu**. The Italian group **Racism out of Facebook**, born in 2014, is active in reporting to the social network those pages, posts and groups that carry messages of hatred. Today there it has over 49,000 friends.

5 ONLINE CAMPAIGNS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The best known international campaign is the one linked to the **No hate speech movement** promoted in 2013 by the Department of Youth of the Council of Europe, articulated in subsequent years in national campaigns with the aim of combating online hatred.

There are many awareness campaigns aimed especially at young people in all the examined countries. The limit remains once again that of fragmentation which tends to reduce the impact of each single initiative.
In 2018, an effective communication campaign was carried out in Italy by **Save the Children**. **#oltrelodio** involved 2 thousand children from more than 30 Italian cities in thematic workshops, in radio broadcasts against the speech and in the creation of an online campaign that went viral on social networks - an invitation to take a selfie with the hashtag #oltrelodio written on one's arm. The schools that still use the platform are 36. Other communication campaigns aimed at young people were carried out in the context of specific projects from **Arci**, **Lunaria** and **Occhio to the media.**
In Spain, activists of SOS-Racisme in Barcelona and Madrid have carried out some projects to combat racism through the participation and direct involvement of migrants using social networks in a creative way. **Sos Racisme** has also published online infographics to compare the political programs of the various parties on migration issues by promoting the **#MistosElectorals #NoVotisRacisme** campaign.

An interesting Spanish experiment is that of the popular Union of street vendors, **Manteros**, born in 2015 from the self-organization of immigrant street vendors. Thanks to the publication of videos this group recounted the daily living conditions of street vendors and the daily discrimination they suffer. In 2017 it launched "Top manta", a real clothing brand that produces ethical clothes with provocative

slogans and, in 2018, an anti-racist school. Worth of notice is the commitment of young influencers online such as Fatima Aatar, Mohammed El Amrani, Desirée Bela Lobedde, and Roma Ari (@femitana).

Creators for change is a platform that supports young "youtubers" and active influencers against hate speech in video production, on social networks, but also in schools. It operates on Google's initiative. The slogan chosen is "We are more" (people against hatred) accompanied by hashtag like #YoMeSumo # SomosMás #WeAreMore. The initiative amplifies the message of young critical influencers and supports a network of cyber-activists aware and active against messages and hostile content.

6 OUT OF THE WEB

All the initiatives mentioned up to this point focus on contrasting the online hate speech. Some projects promoted by **Grenzenlos** in Austria and by **Adice** in France have a different nature. In these cases, the development of individual and group relationships offline is core. The **Shades Tours** project proposes guided tours of Vienna managed by refugees to encourage the weaving of relationships and the exchange of experiences between refugees and native citizens thanks to the direct narration of the protagonists of their migration path. A similar program run by **Grenzenlos** is **"Zusammen Leben"** which offers meetings between refugees and national citizens to spend their free time together. The idea behind the program is that people meet as such, regardless of their nationality or legal status, they have the opportunity to get to know their families, their daily habits, working life, friends, etc. The voluntary and international mobility initiatives promoted by **Lunaria** in Italy and by **Adice** in France also play a significant role in promoting intercultural dialogue, enabling hundreds of young people to experience collective experiences of social utility with young peers from many different countries.

Beyond those activities specifically aimed at countering hate speech, during the international meetings held within the project, it was emphasized that its prevention and contrast must intertwine with the activities aimed at contrasting xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism and anti-Semitism and those aimed at protecting the rights of citizenship of migrants, refugees and Roma. From this point of view all the countries examined highlight a very active civil society and a wide range of experiences. In its report on Spain, **SOS Racism**, has devoted ample space to the description of initiatives and campaigns that are not specifically and directly aimed at combating hate speech and operate more generally in the fight against discrimination and racism and to ensure the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and minorities. It is impossible to remember them all here and we refer you for a detailed reading to the national report. On one hand it is useful to point out that, on the basis of what has been illustrated, the Spanish context seems to show a greater dynamism of civil society and a prominence of migrants and minorities compared to what emerged in the other countries considered. On the other hand, it's useful to specify that in the other national reports the attention has been more focused on specific actions countering hate speech: then the picture of civil society organizations initiatives does pretend to be exhaustive of the overall civil society actions promoted in each country.

The main limitations of this rich and varied anti-racist mosaic come from its fragmentation and the consequent difficulty in promoting awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives capable of having a significant impact on the public opinion and the political world. The need to coordinate the various activities as much as possible emerged with great emphasis in all the meetings organized during the project. A partial exception seems to be constituted by Austria where a National Commission against hate speech, linked to the No hate movement campaign promoted by ECRI, has been set up and seems to facilitate the definition of a shared strategy.

What is striking in this whole context is **the absence of any specific self-regulatory initiative promoted by political parties and movements to promote a more correct**, decent debate, free from all forms of discrimination and stigmatization.

Portrait of a Refugee. **Photo by babasteve**
Morocco Fenced Border.
An Afghan mother comforts her crying child moments after a dinghy carrying Afghan migrants arrived on the island of Lesbos, Greece.

TOWARDS COORDINATED STRATEGIES AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY, XENOPHOBIC AND RACIST HATE SPEECH

1 A "SYSTEMIC" APPROACH

Up to this point we have documented a worrying growth in discriminatory, xenophobic and racist public discourses in the all the countries taken into consideration. The reversal of this trend requires a specific, transversal and coordinated commitment of all the actors involved: migrants, minorities and their representative organizations, anti-racist organizations, the media system, national and local institutions, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, police and security forces, the world of education, culture, research, entertainment, cinema and sport.

The widespread propagation of these serious forms of incitement, promotion, justification of hostility, **discrimination and violence would require a coordinated and multidimensional strategy capable of acting in some priority areas**. The transversality and coordination of law enforcement strategies against racist discourses are in fact indispensable conditions for **guaranteeing their effectiveness and impact, as well as the leading role of migrants, refugees, Roma and religious minorities** in their definition and implementation.

Below we highlight the areas of intervention reported as priorities in the national reports.

Reforming the legislation on crimes and hate speech

All the countries examined, even though they do not have specific legislation on hate speech, have a normative basis for combating crimes and racist discourses. The partners of "Words are stones" all agree in stressing that legal action is only one of the possible strategies to be implemented to protect victims. However, a reform and a reorganization of **the current legislation** would be desirable in order to:

Portrait of a Refugee.
Photo by babasteve

- to introduce a precise legal definition, compliant with what has been elaborated to date at international level, of hate crimes and hate speech acts;

- expand the type of discriminatory speeches punishable to those given on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age where these motives are not already considered;

- effectively combat online racist crimes and discourses starting with the completion of the ratification process of the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime concerning the criminalization of acts of racism or xenophobia committed through computer systems in countries where this has not already been done.

A more effective and timely application of the legislation is also desirable in order to counter the existence and activity of organizations that have among their purposes the incitement to discrimination or violence and/or the perpetration of these crimes.

Official monitoring and data collection systems on hate speech with the aim of ensuring their visibility and distinguish it from other forms of racism.

Monitoring activities, the availability and transparency of official data on hate speech are essential to be able to better understand their diffusion and their main characteristics and be able to adopt adequate contrast strategies. From this point of view, the priorities considered most urgent are:

- to create systems for the official detection of data on hate speech with the adoption of a classification system consistent with those available internationally that would allow a breakdown by type of crime, target group, gender and age of the victim and the perpetrator, discriminatory motive;

- to promote the use of the official classification system also among civil society organizations engaged in monitoring, complaint and protection against racist discourses;

- to identify and wide public availability of

Syrian refugees
Syrian refugees arrive on a dinghy after crossing from Turkey to Lesbos island, Greece, Sept 9, 2015.
*Demonstration in Florence, 17 December 2011, **photo by Lunaria***

the information about which is/are the institution(s) in charge of the collection of the data;

- to wide public availability of information on the reporting procedures;

- the periodic publication of national and international case law collections on the subject.

Allocation of public resources for victims support

An financial plan should accompany national strategies against hate speech. The establishment of a dedicated fund could guarantee the non-episodic availability of the necessary public resources. European institutions and national governments should increase their commitment against discrimination of all persons and to ensure the dignity and the integrity of all. Specific funding should be dedicated for implementing effective actions to pursue these objectives, from the mitigation of the consequences of racist hate, to the active prevention of the spread of hate and violence.

Among the priorities that this fund could have:

- the guarantee of a concrete and independent legal, psychological and social support for victims;

- the organization of training activities aimed at representatives of the police, civil society organizations, the judiciary and the professionals information;

- the promotion of digital education, human rights interventions, information and awareness campaigns against racist violence and hate speech in schools.

Information, awareness and cultural activities aimed at stopping the process of cultural, political and social legitimacy of discriminatory and racist discourses

Numerous reports edited by civil society have highlighted the importance of information, communication and awareness-raising activities for an effective fight against racism. In particular, they name these priorities:

- information and awareness-raising activities aimed at young people and within in schools;

- the organization of information and training initiatives involving media operators and their representative bodies in the promotion of correct information on migrants, refugees and Roma;

- the solicitation of a greater public commitment against racism on the part of politicians and public officers, also through the approval of self-regulation codes and the regulatory provision of an aggravating circumstance in the event that they use racist language;

a more direct and responsible commitment of media operators in preventing and countering hate speech considering their central role in influencing public opinion through inclusion/exclusion narratives and practices.

26 Ipsos, Social Change Initiative, *More in Common,* "Un'Italia frammentata: atteggiamenti verso identità nazionale, immigrazione e rifugiati in Italia, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a70a7c3010027736a22740f/t/5b5ecb23352f53124f920dc5/1532939059607/Italy+IT+Final_Digital.pdf

2 INFORM, RAISE AWARENESS, EDUCATE

The national reports and public meetings promoted in the context of "**Words are stones**" have paid particular attention to the definition of strategies aimed at promoting a more correct **information, effective awareness campaigns and education interventions in schools**.

The progressive normalization and legitimization of xenophobia and racism and their acceptance at a cultural and social level make it difficult to promote alternative information initiatives, awareness-raising and successful fact-checking for two main reasons: a) those who spread fake news used by haters tend to copy the formats used by fact checkers, e.g. Making use of true data but in a partial, distorted, decontextualized way; b) the messages that spread hatred do not rely on the rationality of the listener/reader/viewer, but on his/her emotions.

Furthermore, hate speech is not limited to the internet, therefore the tools and languages used to fight against it should be customized to fit the kind of public space where it happens. One of the biggest challenges for fighting hatred is to expand the public of information campaigns, media education, human rights and awareness.

There are spaces to promote fruitful action in this direction.

A large part of public opinion (its majority according to some studies),[26] has feelings that put it in an intermediate situation between the "haters" and the "friends": this is the portion of people more ready to change their opinions. In this wide "centre" there is also a majority of young people who seem to be active on social media and both ready to be influenced and to be a possible spreader of a positive message. Those civil society organizations that are active in the prevention and contrast of hate speech should focus on bringing their message to this people.

Secondly, targeted actions on media workers can significantly contribute to limit the propagation of violent and stigmatizing political speeches.

Thirdly, great importance is given in all the countries examined to media education and human rights activities aimed at young people inside and outside the school.

2.1 From counter-narratives to alternative narratives

The limits of the ways civil society has tried to reorient the public debate on migrations and hate speech were highlighted both in the national reports and during the "Word are Stones" public meetings.

During the last few years, haters have controlled the public agenda and have orientated the public debate. This is one of the main limits to overcome.

The punctual debunking and fact-checking are important and useful because they provide data and information to those who are struggling to counter the political hatred in the public sphere and in the media. But we have seen several election campaigns in which rational arguments succumbed when confronted by racist and xenophobic discourse[27].

They are not enough to weaken the effects on an audience that appears less equipped to discern **between true and false**. Young people have always coexisted with a sphere of public discourse where authoritative and non-authoritative voices are not necessarily distinguishable, while adults lack education on the social media sphere.

This should lead us to favour the development of our own **communication strategies** proposing a

convincing alternative vision on the main issues that are at the centre of the public debate with reference to migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, Roma and religious minorities. This alternative vision should also address more general issues that probably are one of the reasons behind the success of hate speech.

The production of **alternative narratives** with respect to counter-narratives is therefore the preferable option. Where "**counter-narratives**" aim at deconstructing the hegemonic narrative they risk to reinforce its vision, while alternative narratives are not a reaction to something, **but have the aim to build and present a different way of looking at things**.

Another limit highlighted is the still **insufficient role played by migrant and minority groups that are targets of hate speech in the movements, projects and initiatives promoted against it**. The roots of this kind of invisibility are multiple and can change by country. Civil society organizations and campaigns, but also mass media operatives, should have to increase their efforts in designing and developing their activities against hate speech and racism together with the people affected by it. This could to contribute to understand better the needs, ideas and claims

27 Hunt Allcott, Matthew Gentzkow, *Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election*, Journal of Economic Perspectives—Volume 31, Number 2—Spring 2017—Pages 211–236; Richard Gunther, Paul A. Beck and Erik C. Nisbet, Fake News May Have Contributed to Trump's 2016 Victory, A study on fake news and its influence on the 2016 election, Ohio State University, 2018.

of migrants, refugees and minorities. On the other hand, in some countries like Italy, the recent changes of migrations and the arrival of many asylum seekers have complicated the birth of new self-organization experiences: asylum seekers are hosted for a long time (until 2 years) in reception centers and their collective, independent and active participation is more difficult.

From this point of view, Spain seems to stand out for greater dynamism and a broader capacity for self-organization. As emphasized by SOS Racisme in its report:

"The **pro-active participation** of racialized and immigrant peoples can be seen as an active **exercise of citizenship** –as opposed to passivity, conformity, compliance or resignation. Active participation is an everyday exercise of dignity and self-affirmation, which brings horizons of hope in front of the current 'organization' of hate. As a result, these initiatives form an **ecosystem of resistance(s)** which, rather than being tolerated, it calls to be recognised".

The third limitation, which is highlighted in the Italian and Spanish report, is the great fragmentation of those who work on the issue: the need for coordination and convergence between the movements and organizations that fight the different forms of stigmatizing, disparaging and violent rhetoric, is crucial.

2.2 What approaches for the creation of alternative narratives?

What strategies should we adopt then? First, bearing **in mind audiences are different one from the other: not everyone perceives** (or even detects) hate speech in the same way and knowledge about media, the spreading of fake news, etc. can change according to generations and social context. Any initiative that aims to counter hate speech must take into consideration the kind of audience, the place and the goal to be achieved.

There is, no doubts about it, a **media literacy** issue: deconstructing the xenophobic and racist rhetoric also means providing tools that help people navigate the sea of solicitations coming from the media and social media. How does a news story occur? Why is not all the media the same? How to recognize an authoritative source? Linked to this is another general theme that concerns the role played by social network companies: if information is managed and there are channels for the dissemination of news with a huge potential audience, they have got responsibilities. Information is a special commodity. **Soliciting social networks, reporting hate speech episodes conveyed in their networks** and requesting their deletion is one of the possible strategies. A legal framework that makes social media legally responsible for the content published on the platform they own is also a vital issue.

Contrasting the idea that hate speech is something acceptable is another task. Believing that immigrants in a particular country are in a higher number than the country is able to take is an opinion that may or may not be shared. Arguing this idea with fake data, feeding prejudices on the target groups is something different. A way to counter hate speech is therefore working to make it unacceptable, something to be ashamed of.

In an online and face to face consultation on racism involving young Italians, **Lunaria** found that a few view racism as cool.[28] This idea can be deconstructed through irony or using strong messages: can a slave ship be cool? Is a racist murder cool? Can lynching be cool? What can be cool and what cannot' be cool?
A narrative that favors **greater reflection on the communication that each one makes online and on the importance of words is another possible strategy**.
Showing the fruits and benefits of intercultural dialogue is another option.

28 Ther results are here: Lunaria (edited by), *Giovani e razzismo,* 2018,http://www. cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/1_ GIOVANIERAZZISMOINITALIADEF_11marzo2019.pdf
29 Jacomella G., *Il falso e il vero. Fake news: che cosa sono, chi ci guadagna, come evitarle* (The false and the true. Fake news: what they are, who benefits from them, how to avoid them), Feltrinelli, 2017.

The direct testimony of people and famous testimonials (storytelling) can be of support to this end, also thanks to the story of lifestyles and consumption.

Finally, those who work to spread hate speech acts are organized, equipped with tools, work in international networks. There are numerous case studies and examples. Equipping oneself, as far as possible, **with the necessary technical and creative skills and developing the ability to network is another crucial task**.[29]

In summary, alternative storytelling strategies should attempt to pursue the following objectives.

- **Abandon a defensive strategy** and cease to be subjected to the agenda dictated by the main-stream public debate, producing a proactive alternative narrative, cured, original, engaging and centered on people's stories.

- **Use different communication methods and tools** depending on the target audience and communication environment.

- **Involve communication professionals and third parties**, outside the world of anti-racist activists, is an essential condition for reaching the public opinion

furthest from the anti-racist world. One of the strategies considered most effective for expanding the target audience is to **involve testimonials and influencers.**

Strengthen civil society coordination and networking by supporting, sharing and enhancing campaigns promoted by individual organizations.
Share common strategies and coordinate social media management.

Create collaborative networks between social managers.

To raise awareness in the news media world it may be useful to give priority to the following tasks.

Consolidate and **multiply the experiences of monitoring the local press to support, when necessary, to press charges to the journalist's guilds and/or the competent authorities.**

Avoid giving visibility to newspapers that use a stigmatizing and hostile editorial line towards migrants, avoiding to contribute to spreading the contents.

Promote, through training **activities of journalists, an information that focuses on the life of migrants and minorities and not only reporting discrimination episodes**.

Make sure that the language used in communication is less institutional and more understandable to everyone; pointing **to the ambiguous and incorrect lexicon.**

Urge journalists describe in full the concrete consequences that institutional **policies on migration,** asylum and security have on all citizens.

If involved in television programs, choose, when appropriate, not to answer questions asked by journalists, trying **to reorient the agenda of the debate**.

2.3 What contents for alternative narratives?

The hostile rhetoric of a discriminatory, xenophobic and racist matrix is based on the dissemination of messages and information **centered on the themes of security/insecurity/criminality**, **invasion** (referring to migrants), of **cultural/religious incompatibility, economic and social costs of migrants, competition between nationals and non-nationals/minorities** for welfare and jobs, the danger of **Islamist terrorism**. These are the topics that contribute to representing migrants and minorities as a **threat** to the social, cultural and economic cohesion of European society.
The alternative narratives that should pass through communication activities, awareness-raising and human rights education in schools should therefore seek first and foremost to confront these issues without remaining subordinate to the dominant narrative.
To this end those groups in civil society that want to work in this direction should engage in a participated discussion aimed at finding alternative ideas on some key concepts: **identity, culture, citizenship, inequality, human rights and citizenship, security, legality, perception, fear**. A new political and social debate on these concepts would in fact allow to significantly weaken the conceptual pillars of xenophobia, nationalism and populism, revealing their demagogic, instrumental, undemocratic, polarizing and divisive character.
The academic literature on these issues is rich, what would be needed today is to recover its **memory** within social movements, **also thanks to a positive interaction between the academy and civil society.**
A specific reflection should also be carried out on the very definition of "hate speech" where it seems insufficient to limit the alternative narrative strategies to the contrast of offensive rhetoric as formally identified by international and national legislation. On the other hand, it seems useful to deepen the knowledge of the latter to create the conditions for more effective legal, social and psychological support for groups affected by hate speech.

3 EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE MEDIA

Human rights and digital education are the key topics identified to discourage discriminatory and racist practices and the spread of hate speech among young people. Hate speech acts should be at the center of formal and **non-formal education programs aimed at young people inside and outside the school.** The promotion of participatory actions together with the creation of **common socialization spaces and meeting opportunities could favor the interaction between nationals, migrants and minorities**. In the development of mixed relations and intercultural dialogue, educational institutions have a **specific responsibility**, but their direct collaboration with migrants, with civil society and with the social subjects present in the territory seems crucial.
The **direct testimony** of those who live the experience of migration or of those who suffer discrimination should be considered a priority in any initiative.

*Children**, photo by Lunaria*
Demonstration in Florence, 17 December 2011,
photo by Lunaria

CONCLUSION

> This report proposes an independent analysis of the evolution of the discriminatory, racist and xenophobic political discourse that characterized the public debate in 2018 in Austria, Cyprus, France, Greece, in Italy and Spain. The report summarizes the contents of the six national reports prepared within the project ¨**Words are stones**¨ by six civil society organizations: Adice (FR), Antigone (GR), KISA (CY), Grenzenlos (AT), Lunaria (IT) and SOS Racisme (ES).
> The report consists in six chapters.

THE FIRST CHAPTER offers a recognition of the **definitions of "hate speech" highlighting** the difficulties that derive from the lack of a shared definition both internationally and in the individual countries. **The focus is the racist hate speech of political nature** identified with public and disparaging concepts expressed by people in power (politicians, public servants, religious leaders, media professionals) meant to provoke a negative reaction against a specific individual or social group. These individuals and groups are identified incite discrimination, hostility or violence against a specific individual or social group, identified on the basis of negative stereotypes and prejudices used as tools of inferiorization and denigration; hate speech violates some fundamental human rights: the right of equality, human dignity, freedom, participation in political and social life.

THE SECOND CHAPTER illustrates the critical issues related to the lack of an official and standardized system of data collection at international and national level, a direct consequence of the absence of a shared regulatory definition. An overview of the official data available in the six examined countries highlights the difference in the detection methods. This makes a quantitative comparison between the data available in the individual countries impossible.
Each country adopts different methodologies for collecting data on hate crimes, but no country, among those considered, has an official data collection system dedicated to hate speech. At the present, none of the six countries collects and/or publishes all the necessary information to document hate speech in a systemic way recording cases

by typology of the act, of the target, of the bias motivation, of the offenders, of the law references. Only some countries publish data on prosecutions of hate speech cases.

In Austria official data are available broken down on the basis of the reference standards that are applicable to hate speech, but the typology of the discriminatory motive is not detectable. For Italy, different data sets are available on the reporting/charges of discrimination and discriminatory crimes, but they are not coordinated with each other and not all offer a breakdown based on the discriminatory motive or based on the type of crime. Moreover, recent official statistics on the investigations initiated and the verdicts pronounced are not available.

THE THIRD CHAPTER analyzes the target

groups, the most recurrent topics and the most aggressive public actors of hate political speech on the basis of a qualitative analysis of some exemplary cases collected and analyzed in the individual national reports, highlighting a sort of **internationalization** of the wickedness, hatred and discriminatory, xenophobic and racist violence.
Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, Muslims and Roma are the **target groups** most affected by discriminatory and violent political rhetoric. Hostility against black people is particularly evident in Italy and Spain, with messages and speeches that come to evoke biological racism. The anti-Semitic discourses go through the public debate in Italy, Austria, France and Spain. In the last country, however, Muslim men are the group most affected by violent public rhetoric. In Greece, the hostility expressed towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees goes hand in hand with the one that affects Albanian communities that have long been resident in the country. In Cyprus the anti-Muslim rhetoric overlaps with the revolt against the new arrivals of migrants from third countries and the unresolved conflict between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey. In Italy and in Spain attempts are also made to criminalize

Portrait of a Refugee.
Photo by babasteve

NGOs that work with migrants and minorities.

The thematic spheres around which the hostile public rhetoric of discriminatory, xenophobic and racist matrix tend to concentrate are six:
● security/insecurity/illegality;
● invasion (referring to migrants);
● cultural/religious incompatibility;
● economic and social costs of migration;
● competition for welfare services and jobs between nationals and non-nationals/minorities;
● danger of spreading Islamist terrorism.

These arguments are used to represent migrants and minorities as a **threat** to the social, cultural and economic stability of European society.
While the targets and issues on which hate speech in the six examined countries tend to converge, there are more differences when it comes to **the main political protagonists of the offensive and violent rhetoric**. This is also due to the total absence of data on "haters". However, we can certainly point out the central role played in the propagation of hate speech by parties and movements belonging to the far right history and political culture and impregnated with nationalism and populist impulses. The reports highlight how these forces have been essential in the construction of a cultural and political hegemony in the current historical phase in the public debate concerning migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and minorities. This hegemony has the effect of also orienting the political communication of other parties towards forms of stigmatization and towards arguments that, even when they do not take on the explicit characteristics of hate speech, can contribute to nourish public feelings of hostility towards these groups.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER offers a reasoned

overview of the main areas of **intervention in which the commitment of civil society** in the fight against hate speech has been concentrated so far. Reporting and legal assistance activities; monitoring, mapping and analysis of hate speech; human rights education in schools and media literacy; promotion of correct information; campaigns

and online awareness-raising activities and the development of initiatives and spaces for intercultural dialogue offline are the main areas of intervention tested to date.

The overall picture shows an active and experienced civil society. The main limitations of this rich and varied anti-racist mosaic is its **fragmentation** and the consequent difficulty in promoting information, awareness and advocacy initiatives capable of having a significant impact on public opinion and on the political sphere.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER is devoted to the possible strategies to be put in place to promote a fight against the most effective, strategic and wide-ranging hate speech.

First of all, there is the need for a specific, transversal, coordinated and multidimensional commitment capable of involving all the relevant actors in a common goal: migrants, minorities and their representative organizations, anti-racist organizations, media, national and local institutions, law enforcement and the judiciary, police and security forces, education, culture, research, entertainment, cinema and sport. The **transversality** and **coordination** of law enforcement strategies against racist discourses are in fact indispensable conditions for guaranteeing their effectiveness and impact, as well as the leading role of migrants, refugees, Roma and religious minorities in their definition and implementation.

Specific attention is devoted to the promotion of a more **correct information**, **awareness campaigns** and **educational moments in schools**. The need to change and reorient the agenda of the public debate is emphasized, favoring the production of **alternative narratives** with respect to **counter-narratives**. Where the latter aim to deconstruct the dominant existing discourse risking to reinforce its core vision, alternative narratives, are proactive and seek to construct a different point of view. Alternative narratives should take into account the main themes that are at the centre of violent political rhetoric without remaining subordinate to the narration of this proposal, **especially regarding the causes of the persistent economic and social inequalities** that characterize European societies and the political and institutional responses that could be fielded. Indeed, the over-representation in negative terms of the issue of migration in the political agenda of many European countries indicates a deficit of convincing alternative political proposals on structural economic and social policies, which should instead return to the centre of the public and political debate. Crucial to this end seems **the relaunch of a public debate to discuss and advance alternative ideas on some key themes and concepts**: identity, culture, citizenship, community, equality, human rights, security, perception, wellbeing. A new debate on these issues would in fact significantly weaken all the pillars that sustain the new forms of xenophobia, nationalism and populism, revealing their demagogic, instrumental, undemocratic, polarizing and therefore divisive character.

A specific reflection should also be carried out on the very **definition of "hate speech"**, whereas on the one hand, it seems insufficient to focus only on contrasting explicitly offensive rhetoric as formally defined by international and national legislation. The analysis of laws defining and addressing hate speech should be deepened in order to offer a more effective legal, social and psychological support to the groups hit by hate speech and its consequences.

This would also be useful in order to better qualify the activities of media education and awareness of human rights and against the different forms of racism aimed at young people and to create new opportunities and new spaces for discussion and intercultural dialogue.

In summary, this report neither offers nor could offer a resolutive recipe that would allow the river of communication and violent political propaganda against migrants and cross-border Europe to stop. What we do is documenting how the target groups, the topics used and the political culture of its protagonist present **common characteristics** in all the countries examined. Faced with what **we might call the internationalization of malice, hatred and discriminatory, xenophobic and racist violence, civil society and democratic political forces are called to respond with proactive, autonomous and independent narratives, but above all with social practices and convincing proposals on structural, economic and social policies**.

DEBUNKING HATE SPEECH NARRATIVES

THREE EXAMPLES

IT'S AN INVASION

THEY'RE ALL CRIMINAL (OR TERRORISTS)

EUROPEANS FIRST

IT'S AN **INVASION**

For some years now, European citizens have been listening to a political rhetoric that points out at the danger of the increase in the arrival of asylum seekers and other migrants entering Europe via the main routes (the so-called Balkan route, the central, eastern and western Mediterranean, towards Italy, Greece and Spain).

THE SO-CALLED "humanitarian crisis" peaked in 2015, when more than 1 million people arrived in Europe, four times as many as in the previous year. The growth in the number of arrivals, associated with the lack of a coordinated European policy on the issue, has been artfully exploited by populist and Eurosceptic movements and parties to push what we can call the "syndrome of invasion", which takes the shape of a widespread concern for the "competitive occupation of their territory". ("the space is not unlimited") and the risk of ethnic substitution through demographics.
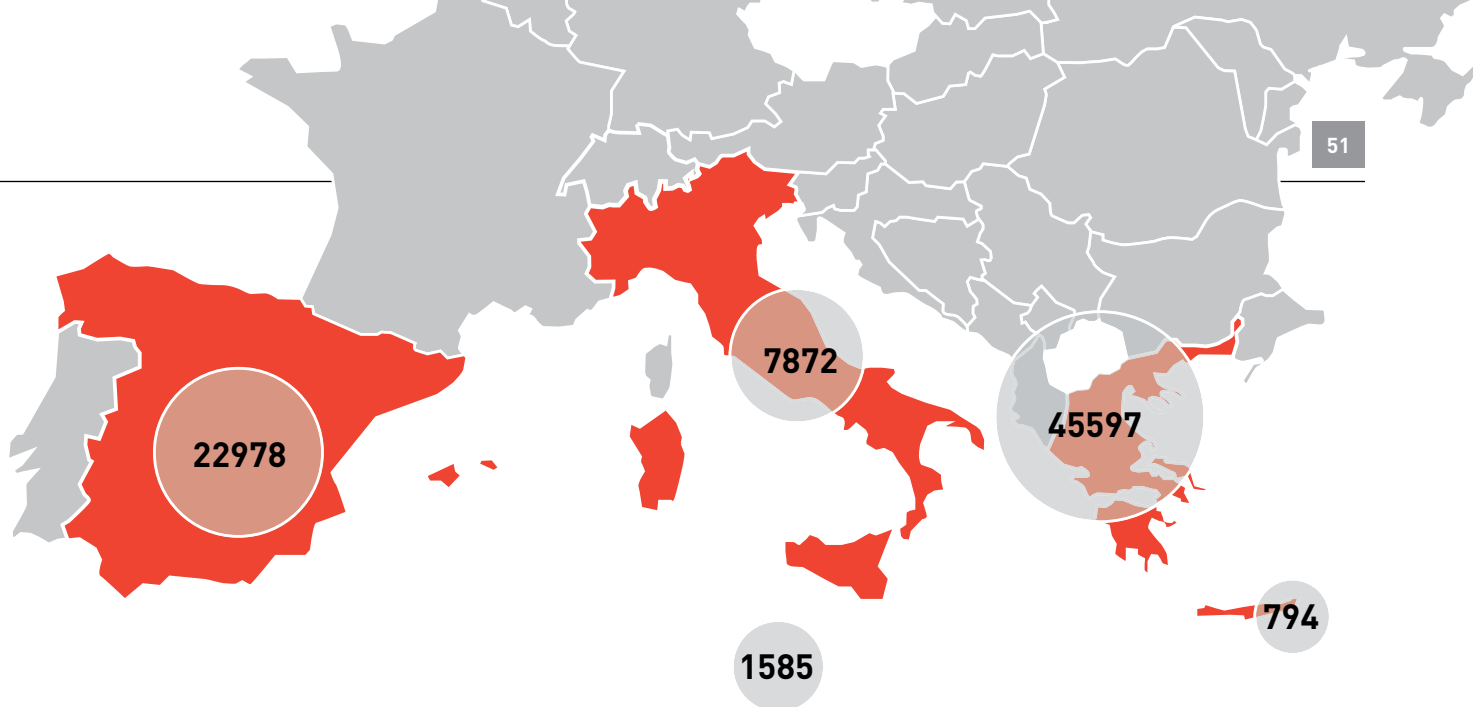
THIS TYPE of narrative has fed the perception of an unmanageable and perennial immigrant crisis. "Stopping the Invasion" has been therefore assumed as a categorical imperative by these political subjects who have used the "crisis" to increase their consensus. A notable role was also played by mainstream media, who were often responsible for an incorrect representation of immigration and immigrants, for a selection of topics to be dealt with and the use of a dramatic and alarming language, with a strongly symbolic character.

IN THE MEDIA, the relevance attributed to the topic is reflected in the emphatic use of numbers of arrivals and statistics or worse in the instrumental use of data, which are often published in a superficial way or, in some cases even manipulated or falsified. The same language used news media borrows many terms from the vocabulary of war and natural disasters (in addition to invasion, siege, repulsion, human tsunami, flow, wave, exodus) and gives us a dramatized and alarmist narrative of the migratory phenomenon. This language has fed the normalization of the intolerant discourse - when not directly discriminatory or inciting hatred.

SLOGANS such as #portichiusi, "go back to where you come from" and other disparaging expressions taken from statements by political and institutional figures, are increasingly found in comments to articles and on social media, are repeated as mantras in the most diverse circumstances of everyday life, and often go together with offensive and violent acts and behavior by individuals or groups. These events are often not even visible in the media.

THE ISSUE of the invasion is often related to that of the Islamization of society ("muslim invasion"), to the privileges tied to the undeserved reception, to its costs, which are also said to be unsustainable. More rarely, it is connected to the question of competition in the access to the public social security system or even to the disparity of treatment by courts. All these themes are interconnected among them with the aim of increasing the perception of immigration as a serious threat.

EVERY DATA suggests that the situation is very different from the one right wing movements and parties describe. Several European and international agencies provide data on migrations and on the number of arrivals of migrants (EASO, UNHCR, IOM, UNDESA). Eurostat publishes several datasets providing information about the distribution of population by place of birth and the incidence of the population of foreign origin, as well as other indicators measuring the different aspects of immigration to Europe and the level of inclusion of migrants. The data

7872

22978

45597

794

1585

Tab.1.1

MIGRANTS ARRIVED BY SEA AND BY LAND TO EUROPE, YEARS 2014-2019

Year	Arrivals	Dead and missing
2019	78826	1,041
2018	141,472	2,277
2017	185,139	3,139
2016	373,652	5,096
2015	1.032,41	3,771

Source: UNHCR, Last updated 3 Ocotber 2019

provided by the national statistical institutes of the EU countries thus become comparable at European level.

A JOINT ANALYSIS of the latest available data from UNHCR and EUROSTAT shows that, if by "invasion" we mean the sudden arrival of thousands of foreign citizens, we cannot really speak of an emergency. While on the one hand there is a decrease in arrivals, on the other hand there are important signs of stabilization of the migration phenomenon, which has resulted in a general increase in entries for family reasons, long-term residence permits and acquisitions of citizenship.
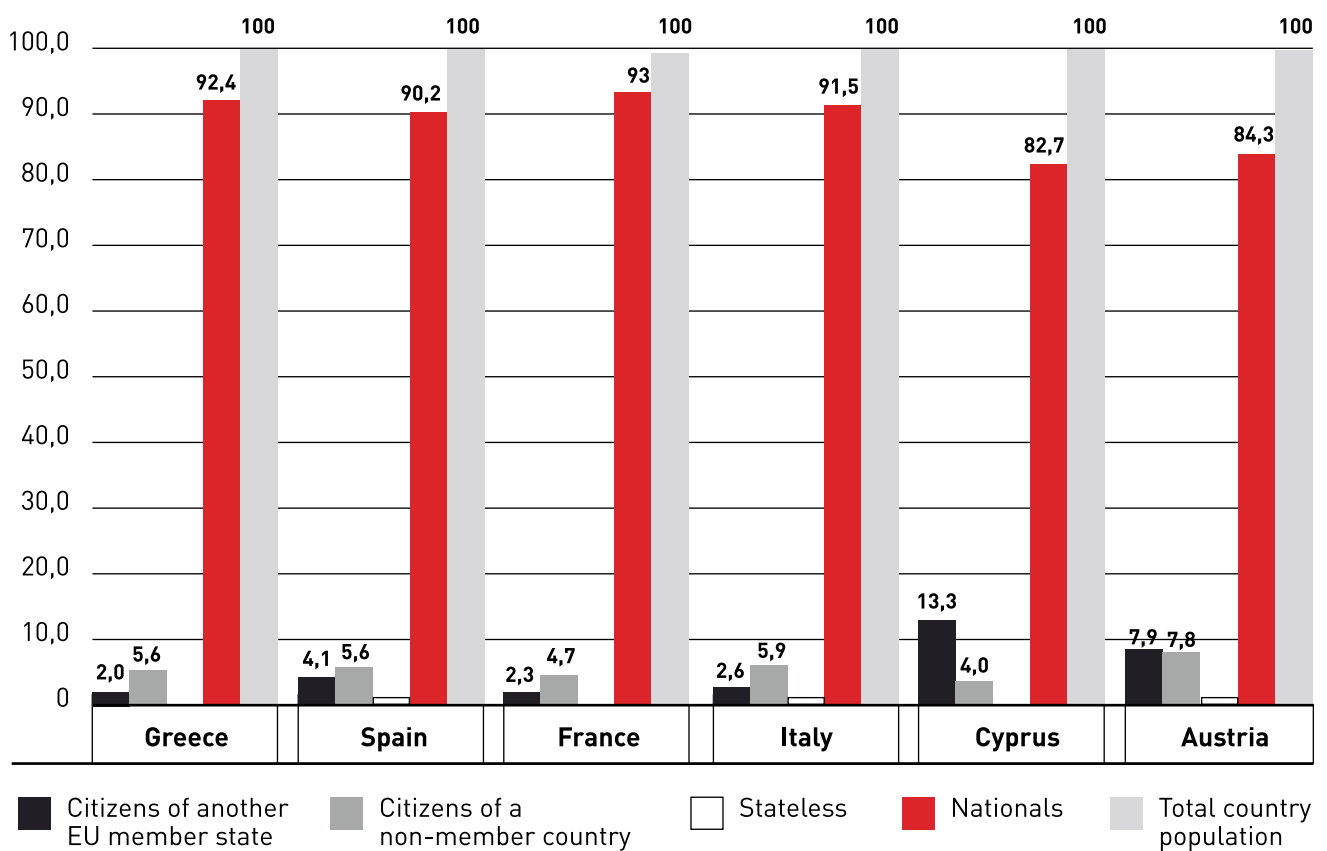
EVEN DURING the years in which there is a dynamic of growth and a peak of arrivals, it can be said with certainty that the available data do not justify the term 'invasion'. The number of arrivals has always been manageable, especially when supported by a coordinated and widespread system on the territory, able to offer a dignified reception.

The number of foreign citizens residing in Europe has also been almost stable for many years.

ACCORDING to the latest Eurostat data, as of 1 January 2018, 22.3 million people with third-country nationality reside in an EU Member State, i.e. 4.4% of the total EU population, while 17.6 million are European citizens living abroad. The highest number of foreigners residing in EU Member States is found in Germany (9.7 million people). In Italy these are 5.1 million (8.5%), in France 4.7 (7%), in Spain 4.6 million (9.8%), in Austria 1.3 (15.7%), in Cyprus 149 thousand (17.3%).

THE NUMBER of people who instead acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017, are 825.4 thousand, with a reduction of 17% compared to 2016. Italy recorded the highest number of people who acquired citizenship in 2017, with 146.6 thousand (18% of the EU total), but recorded the second largest reduction in Europe (55,000 fewer people than in 2016) after that of Spain (84,400 fewer people than the previous year).

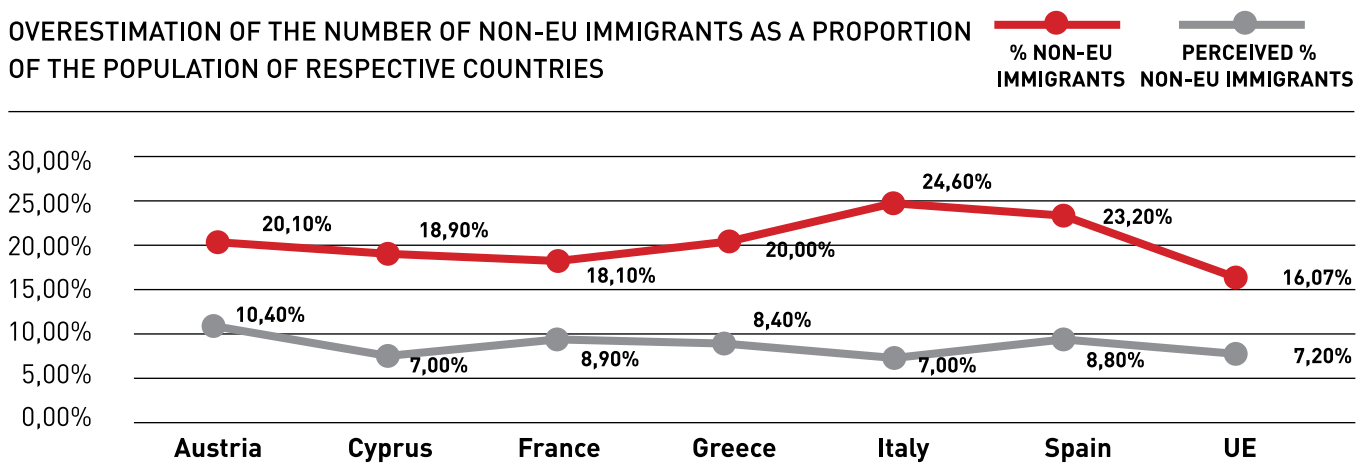## NATIONALS AND NON NATIONALS IN 6 EU COUNTRIES IN 2018

Legend:
- ■ Citizens of another EU member state
- ■ Citizens of a non-member country
- □ Stateless
- ■ Nationals
- ■ Total country population

Tab.1.2

NON-NATIONAL POPULATION BY GROUP OF CITIZENSHIP, 1 JANUARY 2018

	Citizens of another EU Member State		Citizens of a non-member country		Stateless		Total Non Nationals	
	(thousand)	(% of the population)	(thousand)	(% of the population)	(thousand)	(% of the population)	(thousand)	(% of the population)
Greece	211,2	2,0	604,9	5,6	0.0	0.0	816,1	7,6
Spain	1.930,9	4,1	2.630,8	5,6	1,3	0,0	4.563,0	9,8
France [1]	1.542,7	2,3	3.144,8	4,7	0.0	0.0	4.687,4	7,0
Italy	1.562,1	2,6	3.581,6	5,9	0,7	0,0	5.144,4	8,5
Cyprus	114,5	13,3	34,6	4,0	0.0	0.0	149,2	17,3
Austria	693,9	7,9	687,5	7,8	4,5	0,1	1.385,8	15,7

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop1ctz)

OVERESTIMATION OF THE NUMBER OF NON-EU IMMIGRANTS AS A PROPORTION
OF THE POPULATION OF RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES

●——— % NON-EU IMMIGRANTS   ●——— PERCEIVED % NON-EU IMMIGRANTS

	Austria	Cyprus	France	Greece	Italy	Spain	UE
% NON-EU IMMIGRANTS	20,10%	18,90%	18,10%	20,00%	24,60%	23,20%	16,07%
PERCEIVED % NON-EU IMMIGRANTS	10,40%	7,00%	8,90%	8,40%	7,00%	8,80%	7,20%

Source: Our own elaboration on data of Special Eurobarometer 469 Integration of immigrants in the European Union (Fieldwork October 2017, Publication April 2018)
http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2169

ANOTHER INTERESTING indicator is the "naturalization rate", i.e. the ratio between the total number of citizenships granted and that of foreign residents at the beginning of the same year. The EU Member State with the highest rate of naturalization in 2017 was Sweden (8.2 acquisitions per 100 non-national residents), while among the WAS countries we are between 4.2 (Greece) and 0.7 (Austria).

ALTHOUGH the clarity of the data is undeniable, the discrepancy between reality and representation when it comes to immigration is very strong. The attitude of some politicians, together with the increase of factious news from the media, have generated beliefs and feelings that do not correspond to the truth, starting from the overestimation of the number of foreign citizens living in different European countries.

WHAT TO DO?

For this reason, the need to implement fact-checking and monitoring strategies on the truthfulness of the data and facts that highlight emerges first and foremost:

1 the actual number of arrivals, by sea and by land, better if they can be compared with each other in different time intervals and if they are contextualized in the historical period to which they refer and related to

Data sets in the issue: *https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/china/r5_world_migration_report_2018_en.pdf*
https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography-migration-projections/data/database
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population/overview
https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017

current migration policies;
2 the number of people who died in the attempt to reach European shores, bearing in mind that the fall in arrivals does not necessarily correspond to an equivalent fall in deaths;
3 asylum applications submitted;
4 the number of outplacements.

SYSTEMATIC AND CRITICAL reading of the authenticity of media news and official data is necessary to develop counter-narrative and alternative narrative arguments. Factual-checking strategies cannot ignore the contextual promotion of a correct information by information actors. For this reason, some of the countries have implemented tools aimed at identifying shared ethical lines and at sanctioning behaviour that does not conform to the professional ethics of journalists, especially referred to the language used.
Adopting regulations that will lead to the reporting and immediate removal of contributions conveying hatred on social media. These strategies alone, however, would not be enough.

IT IS THEN necessary to focus on education. This should be aimed at enhancing media literacy, providing useful analysis and evaluation tools that help people to deal with the most disparate news on the subject, and to sensitize the public, especially younger generations, to the recognition and active contrast of violent and discriminatory messages on the Web. It would be also appropriate to put in place educational and training strategies that highlight the fruits and benefits of cultural contamination, rather than its "costs".

THEY'RE ALL CRIMINALS

(OR TERRORISTS)

THE STIGMA OF THE BAD GUY

The link foreign/criminal (or foreign/ muslim/terrorist) is one of the most frequent in the hostile public discourse on migrations, together with the theory of cultural incompatibility, the cries for the danger of an invasion and the identification of immigrants as competitors for the labour market and as a burden for the welfare state.

THIS TYPE of association is one of the least ambiguous and subtle forms of hate speech: you identify a negative character and associate him with something that represents evil in absolute terms, attaching a negative label a priori and regardless of the data available and/or direct experience. When the character is the villain of a horror movie, then hate speech towards him is somehow "justified".

WE HAVE RECALLED more than once in our report that fact-checking is not the ideal tool to demolish the story of those who use hate speech to spread beliefs about the impact of foreign population and/or minorities in each country. Hate speech is addressed to people's instincts, the control of the veracity of the statements, however, requires that the interlocutor uses reasoning. Yet, using some element of reality will be useful also with regard to the incidence of immigration and the presence of foreign populations in each country on the crime rate.

THE DATA

Table 1 shows data on the presence of people born in countries other than those where they reside (Austria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Spain, the contexts in which Word are Stones investigated hate speech) and on the incidence of the foreign born on prison population in these countries in 2005 and 2018, the last year for which comparable data exist. These numbers help us to photograph the context.

AS STATED in the report of Space (Council of Europe, Annual Penal Statistics[1]) "The distribution of foreign inmates in 2015 is similar to that of 2005. In Central and Eastern European countries, foreign inmates accounted for less than 5% of the detained population rate; while in Western Europe, foreigners in prison continued to be over-represented. Moreover, the percentage of foreign inmates in Western European criminal institutions is higher in 2015 than in 2005.

THE 2018 data published by the same institution confirm this trend, with slight increases or decreases. The great leap forward in Greece can perhaps be explained by the increase in foreign population numbers and the crisis. It must be also said that the number of foreign prisoners in Greece fell sharply between 2015 and 2018. In Italy, on the other hand, the number of foreign prisoners increases and decreases from year to year in minimum percentages.

THE PERCENTAGE of foreigners deitanees in the countries considered is higher than that of the citizens, foreigners are over-represented in relation to their incidence on the total population. This can be explained in many ways: the social exclusion of relatively large portions of the foreign population, the absence

of networks and safeguards that determine a lower capacity of defense in court, the tendency to commit "street" crimes such as small drug dealing or small thefts and pickpockets for which it is easier and more frequent to be identified and arrested.

IN SOME CASES, as in Italy, the criminalisation of "illegal" entry and residence and their aiding and abetting is a further factor.

THE SUBSTANTIAL stability of the incidence of foreign prisoners on the total prison population is, however, a data that deserves to be stressed. In some countries it falls, in others it increases slightly and only in two, Austria and Greece, it increases substantially. In short, in recent years, those in which propaganda and hostile political communication have propagated on the Web, the only thing that has really changed is the intensity and aggressiveness of the rhetoric of the haters on this particular matter.

LET'S ADD a second element: in Table 1 we can observe that the presence of foreign population is at least equal to 10% in each country among those involved in the project. Now, calculating that the average number of

prisoners in the countries considered is around 0.1% of the total population, the number of people who commit crimes among foreigners will also be slightly higher, but cannot be used to claim a propensity to delinquency of migrants.

THE "DANGER" OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM

The debate on the much-quoted danger of Islamic terrorism is a different one. Let's watch at the numbers. Between 2000 and 2013 Europe has experienced three terrorist attacks with many victims: Madrid in 2004, London in 2005 and Toulouse in 2012. What has fueled Islamophobia has been the post-9/11 narrative and, with greater intensity, the contiguity of episodes that occurred in the years in which the war was fought in Syria and from that tormented country hundreds of thousands of people flew towards Europe. Among them were several hundred foreign fighters. Between 2015 and 2017 Europe has witnessed 15 attacks where at least 4 people died (excluding terrorists). 33 radical Islamic attacks took place in eight countries. Among these, the

Tab.2.1
FOREIGN BORN RESIDENTS AND FOREIGN INMATES IN 6 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

	Foreign born population 2017 (%)	Foreign Eu nationals 2017(%)	Foreign non-Eu nationals 2017 (%)	% foreign inmates 2005	% foreign inmates 2018	% change
Austria	18,8	8,4	10,4	45,4	54,7	9,3
Cyprus	20,3	13,3	7	45,6	39,7	-5,9
France	12,2	3,3	8,9	20,4	22,1	-1,7
Greece	11,6	3,2	8,4	42,5	52,7	10,2
Italy	10	3	7	33	34,1	1,1
Spain	12,9	4,2	8,8	30,1	28	-2,1

Eurostat 2019; Council of Europe & Université de Lausanne, 2018

one in Paris in the editorial staff of Charlie Hebdo, the one at Bataclan and that one in Nice undeniably had a very strong emotional impact on European public opinion. It is not surprising that those who spread hate speech have used those attacks as propaganda tool.

AND YET, later on, the number of attacks has decreased, while the violence perpetrated by terrorists of a racist, white supremacist or radical right-wing matrix has increased together with the intensity of hate speech. In 2018, 50 people died in the US as a result of racist terrorist attacks[2] and we all observed what happened in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019. The El Paso bomber chose to take up the words of the Chistchurch bomber. An imitation very similar to that of the Islamic lone wolves who choose to follow the online propaganda and imitate other attackers. Both the FBI and several European security agencies have also pointed out the links and the willingness of radical organizations of the extreme right to network in ways that are close to those used by Islamic extremist organizations.

AS ANTHROPOLOGIST Scott Atran has written on many occasions, the two ideologies feed on each other and "Maintaining a tolerant and less violent world requires addressing the underlying causes of these emerging forces. Among these, the main one is the failure of the global market economy to sustain cultures and communities that provide identity, meaning and purpose in life even when people's material conditions are difficult. Terrorism is a response to this failure; the rise of authoritarian regimes that give a sense of community is another kind of response. The complex and onerous task of liberal societies is to create space for a third, different, response"[3].

PROBLEM: the Islamic terrorist attacks between 2006 and 2015 have seen in the United States, on average, a media coverage equal to 357% to that offered on the attacks by extreme right terrorists[4]. The American case is special for various reasons, but also in Europe the responsibility of the media in avoiding to cover the current situation in misleading ways, remains.

WHAT TO DO?

In this particular case fact-checking does not apply to numbers, but to the analysis. In most cases, returning foreign fighters are not immigrants, but people of foreign origin, children or grandchildren of immigrants and, therefore, any restrictive immigration policy would not have had any effect on them. Unless we want to deprive hundreds of thousands (millions) of people of citizenship who do not have another one.

The propaganda on terrorism has similar basis to that on the alleged incompatibility of Islam with European culture. Both misrepresent reality and history. As if in many European countries there had been no immigration from Maghreb, the Indian Subcontinent, the Muslim countries of sub-Saharan Africa or Turkey since the 1960s.

The idea of incompatibility sounds out of tune when it refers to the behaviour of a marginal part of the second and third generations, whose approach to radical Islam is often in prison, after a past of petty crime.

In order to change this specific form of discomfort in the suburbs of European cities, we therefore need more inclusion in society, more on the ground presence of institutions in those suburbs, targeted work and also a fight against propaganda. In some suburbs of a few Southern Italian cities it is easier for young people to be recruited by organised crime than to find a good job. These phenomena are somehow similar and require the ability of the State to be there and of societies to give opportunities and tools.

In short, we feel we can say that civil society, individual citizens and politics that do not feed on hate speech must be able to recognize and dismantle with facts and numbers the falsehoods when they are spread, but also and above all, have the ability to change the general discourse. Whether it is the one relating to the delinquent attitude of immigrants or the presumed tendency of some of them to terrorism.

EUROPEANS FIRST

Slogans, posters, speeches and posts on social networks by European politicians who wave the spectre of growing competition between national and foreign citizens on the labour market and in access to welfare have become the new normal.

The allocation of social housing, access to health and social services, kindergartens and schools are evoked to launch the slogan "First the Italians, the French, the Spanish, the Austrians etc.". These messages are mainly conveyed by exponents of the European right, but echo in milder and less explicit forms also in the political communication of moderate political forces. Until a few years ago they were messages conveyed by noisy and extreme minorities who were on the fringe of public opinion. Today they are shared by a large part of European public opinion, who seems convinced of the existence of an irreconcilable contrast between its own rights and those of the people who come from elsewhere.

Table 3.1 European Funds for immigration and asylum policies to Italy 2014-2020 (mln €)	INITIAL APPROPRIATIONS	CURRENT APPROPRIATIONS
AMIF Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund	3.137	6.654
Internal Security Fund Borders	2.764	2.882
Internal Security Fund Police	1.000	1.000
Emergency support	0	647
Schengen Information System (SIS)	69	91
Visa Information System (VIS)	69	81
EURODAC (EU asylum fingerprint database)	1	1
FRONTEX (EU Border and Coast Guard Agency	628	1.638
EASO (European Asylum Support Office)	109	456
EUROPOL (EU Law Enforcement Agency)	654	753
TOTAL	**8.431**	**14.203**

5 Pew Research Center, Around the World, More Say Immigrants Are a Strength Than a Burden, 14 Marzo 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/03/14/around-the-world-more-say-immigrants-are-a-strength-than-a-burden/

SIGNS EMERGING from international surveys on "perceptions" of the impact of migration on the hosting societies confirm this trend. According to a survey conducted in spring 2018 on 18 countries by the Pew Research Center[5], migrants are considered a "burden" because they "steal work and social benefits" by 74% of Greeks and 54% of Italians, but also by 39% of French and 37% of Spaniards.

THE PURELY ECONOMIC approach that inspires the choices of political decision-makers and induces them to design migration policies on the basis of a cold and hasty measurement of the "costs/benefits" of the migration phenomenon contrasts with the culture of universal human and social rights that has been established since the end of the Second World War and has found its declination in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But fighting xenophobia, discrimination and racism also means confronting the need to reorient a public debate manipulated by propaganda, offering sufficiently solid arguments to change its direction.
Are the migration and asylum policies so far adopted at national and European level the fairest and most "sustainable" from the point of view of the balance of public finances?
Do migrations really represent a risk for the sustainability of the economic and welfare system of European countries?
Giving an answer to these questions will be a first step in deconstructing the rhetoric based on the opposition between the rights of European citizens and those of citizens from third countries.

THE EU SPENDS MONEY, BUT NOT ENOUGHT GOES TO RECEPTION AND INCLUSION

Firstly, the myth of an imbalance in public resources in favour of the reception and inclusion of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees needs to be dispelled. The political and financial attention of public decision-makers has, in fact, paid a great deal of attention to the policies of rejection. Closure of legal entry channels to economic migration, major investments in sea and border control, arbitrary detention in detention centres, cooperation agreements with third countries aimed at "combating illegal migration" were the objectives on which national and European legislation was exercised and on which many national and Community public resources were invested. Official data on the European funds mobilized in the years 2014-2020 speak for themselves.

THE RESOURCES institutionally devoted to reception and inclusion (AMIF) are equivalent to those devoted to border control, police forces and systems for the surveillance, control and identification of migrants.
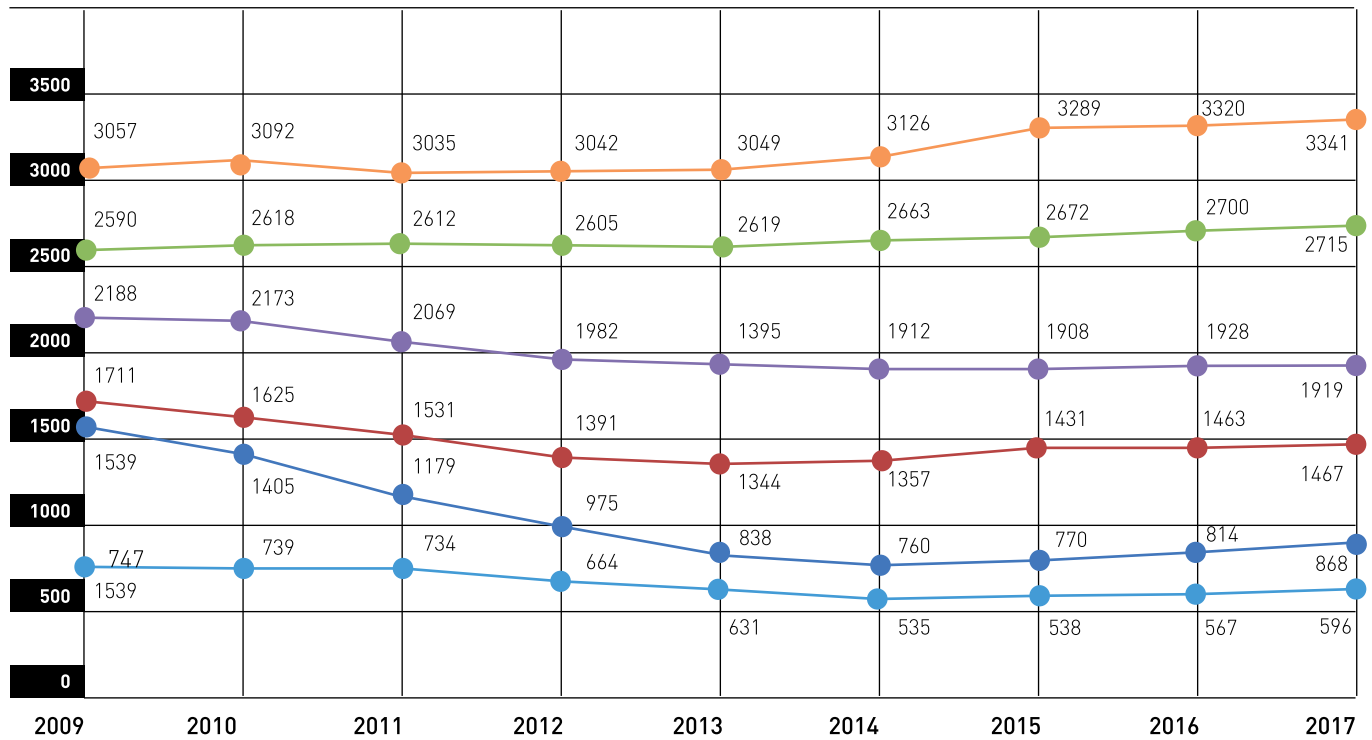From 2015 onwards, the European Union has mobilised significant financial support for Member States most exposed to migration flows, such as Greece (€ 2.07 billion)[6], Italy (€950.8 million)[7], Spain (€773.4 million)[8], and France (€785 million)[9] by modifying the initial resource allocation plan for the 2014-2020 period. Austria[10] received less support (€150.5 million). No updated official data are available for Cyprus.

THE COMMISSION has proposed to triple funding for migration management and border security to Ð34.9 billion under the next EU budget 2021-27.
We could ask ourselves: what if all these

6 European Commission, MANAGING MIGRATION, EU Financial Support to Greece, July 2019.
7 European Commission, MANAGING MIGRATION, EU Financial Support to Italy, May 2019.
8 European Commission, MANAGING MIGRATION, EU Financial Support to Spain, April 2019.
9 European Commission, MANAGING MIGRATION, EU Financial Support to France, May 2019.
10 European Commission, MANAGING MIGRATION, EU Financial Support to Austria, May 2019.

11 Source: Eurostat, Press Release, 159/2018, Downward trend in the share of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, - 16 October 2018.
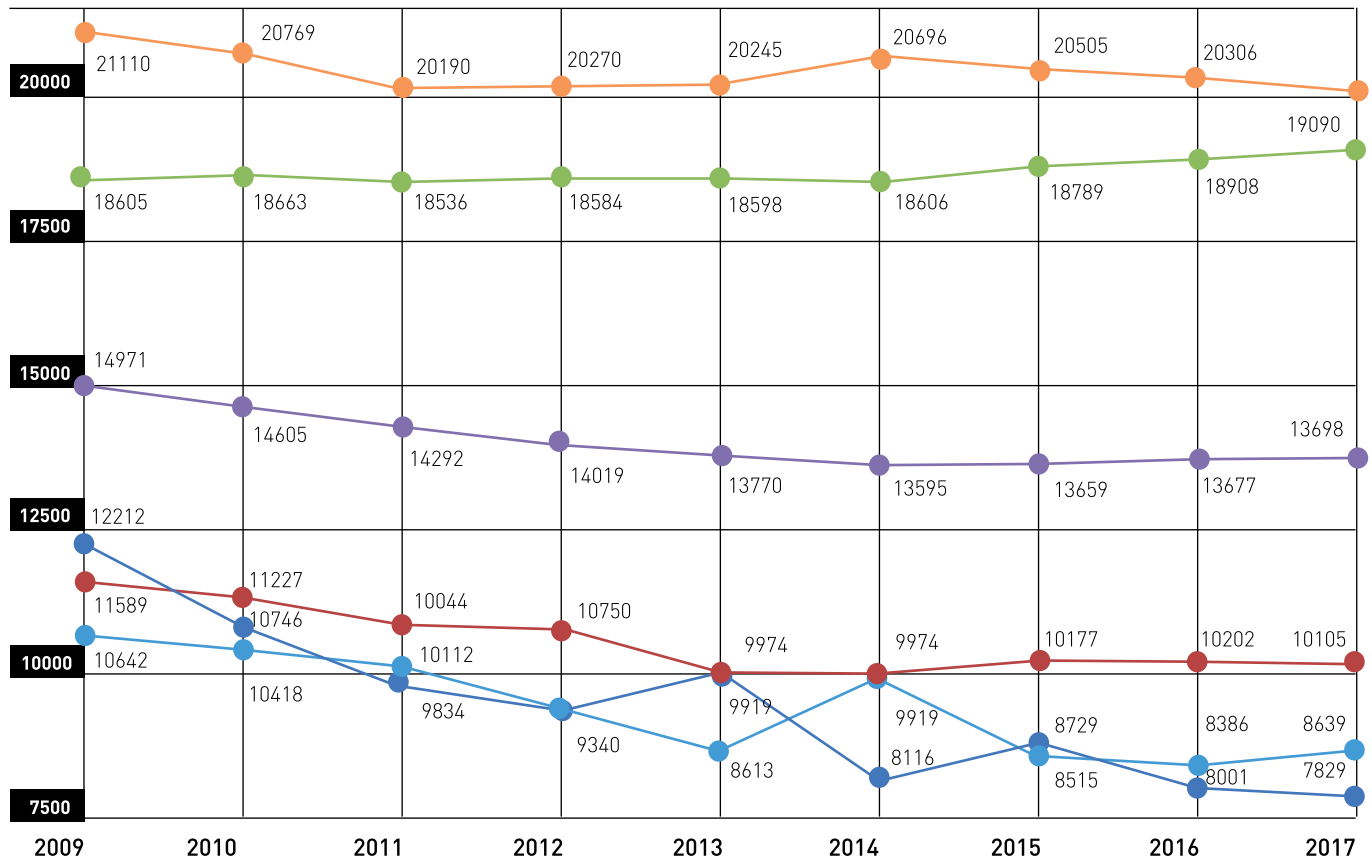
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA IN 6 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. YEAR 2009-2017. CONSTANT EURO YEAR 2015.

● Greece ● Spain ● France ● Italy ● Cyprus ● Austria

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Austria	3057	3092	3035	3042	3049	3126	3289	3320	3341
France	2590	2618	2612	2605	2619	2663	2672	2700	2715
Italy	2188	2173	2069	1982	1395	1912	1908	1928	1919
Spain	1711	1625	1531	1391	1344	1357	1431	1463	1467
Greece	1539	1405	1179	975	838	760	770	814	868
Cyprus	747	739	734	664	631	535	538	567	596
	1539								

TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA IN 6 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. YEAR 2009-2017. CONSTANT EURO YEAR 2015.

● Greece ● Spain ● France ● Italy ● Cyprus ● Austria

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Austria	21110	20769	20190	20270	20245	20696	20505	20306	19090
France	18605	18663	18536	18584	18598	18606	18789	18908	19090
Italy	14971	14605	14292	14019	13770	13595	13659	13677	13698
Greece	12212	10746	9834	9340	9919	9974	8729	8001	7829
Spain	11589	11227	10044	10750	9974	9919	10177	10202	10105
Cyprus	10642	10418	10112		8613	8116	8515	8386	8639

resources were invested in public search and rescue operations at sea, in a public, decentralised and dignified reception system, in policies for the inclusion of migrants and refugees (linguistic, social, housing, educational and housing), would we not avoid fuelling alarms, fears, conflicts and aggressive behaviour, as well as fostering consensus on the many hateful messages that pervade the Web? Do we really need 10 000 police officers deployed at our borders the Commission has promised?

LOOKING AT THE GAP between the objectives pursued (blocking migrations) and the outcome of those policies (increasingly "illegal" migration managed in an emergency), doubts are more than justified.

ARE WE SURE THAT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC UNEASE AND INJUSTICE ARE THE RESULTS OF MIGRATIONS?

The alleged competition between Europeans and third-country nationals in the field of welfare and the labour market, an "alarm" launched in Europe since the mid-1970s, has been able to make a breakthrough in public opinion in the last decade, especially because the European national institutions have not been able to provide the economic and social responses necessary to correct the inefficiencies of a development model that has impoverished large sections of the European population and widened the range of inequalities.

IN 2017, 112.9 million people - 22.5% of the European population - were still at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Between 2008 and 2017, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate increased in ten Member States. Among the countries that experienced the most significant increase were Greece (from 28.1% in 2008 to 34.8% in 2017, +6.7%), Italy (+3.4%), Spain (+2.8%) and Cyprus (+1.9%)[11]. The dogma of containing public expenditure and austerity policies imposed by the European Union have profoundly altered the balance of national economic and social systems with serious consequences for citizens.

PER CAPITA PUBLIC expenditure in constant euros fell between 2009 and 2017 in Italy (from €14,971 to €13,698), Greece (from €12,212 to €8639) and, to a lesser extent, Spain (from €115889 to €10,105). The obligation to keep a balanced budget and to contain public debt has led the most

economic systems of European countries tends to be positive (the lower average age of the foreign population tends to reduce the impact on health care and pension expenditure). The comparison between the different costs incurred by states to guarantee fundamental social rights to foreign citizens and what they pay in the form of taxes and social security contributions, tends to highlight a positive result for the benefit of public finance, especially in countries of recent immigration. This comparison is all the more positive the better the quality of employment and social integration of migrants and refugees: better placements on the labour market, stable and regular employment relationships, salaries in line with national ones, in fact, guarantee greater income (in the form of taxes and contributions) for the State. It is therefore wrong to believe that migration only has negative effects on public finances. Equality and social and economic justice to redirect public opinion

THE ISSUE to be addressed does not seem to be the unsustainability of migration flows, but the need to define national and European strategies that choose the fight against poverty and economic and social inequalities and the adoption of a European asylum system characterized by shared standards of reception and inclusion as crucial targets. With no essential change in general structural policies (welfare, work, tax), migration and asylum, the nationalist, xenophobic and racist rhetoric will continue to proliferate.
In the meantime, media and civil society have a responsibility to produce correct information, to intensify and qualify the debunking and deconstruction of fake news, to carefully monitor the social and economic effects of public policies, demanding greater transparency of public finance decisions and documents. This could help to reduce the distance between reality, representations and perceptions that lies at the root of the rhetoric that stigmatizes migrants and minorities as an unsustainable "burden" that needs to be rid of as soon as possible.

fragile European economies to reduce public investment aimed at supporting the recovery and to cut or contain welfare policies. Health, education, research, pensions, housing policies and social services have been the most affected. Public health expenditure per capita between 2009 and 2017 fell from 1539 to 868 euros in Greece, from 2188 to 1919 euros in Italy and from 1711 to 1467 euros in Spain[12].

CHOICES LIKE these have fuelled the popular unease and dissatisfaction that has found in the scapegoats offered by nationalist, xenophobic and racist political propaganda an easy, random and deceptive answer.

AVAILABLE STUDIES and data show that the impact of migration on the welfare and

12 Sbilanciamoci!, Le politiche di welfare. Come sono e come potrebbero essere, January 2018.

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