



The Migrants' Perspective on Communication

Results of focus groups and analysis in Romania, Italy, Latvia and Spain

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1. Introduction

In today's European Union, migration and immigrant integration are main issues that frequently make it to the news headlines. Because of the complex and sensitive nature of migration and integration however, these issues are often misunderstood or / and misrepresented in the media. Incorrect, misleading, or over-emotional news reporting is not uncommon in this field. On the other hand, a frequently using of stereotypes and prejudices are making the issue of integration harder to realize, especially for third country nationals.

It is a challenge for both non state actors and local authorities to work on migration and development issues to communicate on the work they do and on the issues at stake in a way that is understandable and convincing. Especially in times where migration is increasingly linked to security issues, there is a need to develop sound communication strategies that are able to re-frame the migration debate. Engaging with the media to make sure the right messages are communicated is a substantial part of such a communication strategy.

The aim of the present paper is to present at a glance the main migratory contexts in the analyzed countries (Italy, Spain, Latvia and Romania) with the main goal of better understanding the migrant communities' needs and constraints. The paper is both developed as guideline for a new media campaign focused on immigration but also for practitioners who could use it to move forward in the challenging world of communications and media. It aims to offer guidelines to improve the ability to think and communicate strategically on migration and integration issues. This is to have a better impact on policies in the analyzed countries and to contribute to a broader societal support for migration and immigrant integration in our societies.

The paper was developed under AMITIE project (Awareness on M^Igration, developmen^T and human r^Ights through local partnerships). The overall objective of the project was to mobilize greater public support and increase the EU citizens'



understanding and confidence about development processes. Taking into consideration those aspects, the present paper will share the interlinked findings between migration and communication as primary issues.

The structure of this article will first present the methodology used for collecting data, followed by a short presentation of each country involved and the analysis of those findings. Also, last but not least, the conclusion are meant to underline the migrants' perspective on communication and the way in which a migratory campaign should be prepared / managed in order to have great public impact.

As long as objectives are optimised and means are adapted, communication can be seen as the ideal instrument for the strengthening or creation of conditions, opportunities and tools for raising public awareness on development issues by involving immigrant communities as active participants in and not only as recipients of communication.

2. Methodology

The findings of the present paper are based on the eight Focus Groups conducted in the four analyzed countries (Spain, Italy, Latvia and Romania) in the period of June – November 2011. The organization of the above mentioned FGs (1 in Bologna - Italy, 1 in Umbria - Italy, 2 in Seville - Spain, 2 in Riga – Latvia and another 2 in Bucharest - Romania) was based on addressing to a maximum of 15 people for each group, including migrant citizens. Each focus group foreseen 6 meetings to be held for at least 2,5 – 3 hours each.

As a preparatory structure, the first meeting of each FG was established to have an introductory base and the last one to produce a joint contribution of the whole event. The steps of preparation were the followings:

- 1) identification of a facilitator (an expert in intercultural dialogue/communication) to lead focus groups



- 2) identification of venues that are familiar and easy to be reached by the citizens participating in focus groups (intercultural centres, associations and charities, schools, youth centre, public libraries)
- 3) translation of materials in the main languages of the communities
- 4) preparation of materials to simulate a communication campaign in order to collect feedbacks from focus group participants and to make them familiar with the basic rules of communication.

The main aim of the focus groups was to improve European citizens' awareness of migrations and of the ground gained by human rights. The starting point was the revision of current communication processes and the direction of a new strategy which would enable more effective communication with possibilities for social transformation and orientation, favouring coexistence and respect for human rights all over the planet.

The methodology applied in Focus Groups was based on participative dynamics where the participants played a central part in the debate and the proposals made.

Taking into consideration the difference in the migratory context of each country, the main methodology discussed as to be used was split in four, according to each country fields of interest and history in dealing with migration. This is why the methodological techniques and instruments used are quite different from one country to another. This can be seen as a positive aspect because a detailed comparison between Italy, Spain, Latvia and Romania cannot be done, firstly because of the migratory history each country has and secondly because of the main legislation regarding immigration and integration for third country nationals.

The selection of participants was the same for all countries involved and it was based on contacting the migrant local communities and inviting them to participate in the Focus Group interviews. Participants were selected also from national non state actors and local authorities working in the field of migration, development and human rights, in order to see both ways of relating to migration and communication



issues. Also, we based our selection regarding no discrimination of gender, race, age, sex orientation, nationality, ethnicity and so on. As we'll present in the Chapter 3, the selection of participants included both EU citizens and third country nationals.

For a better understanding of the migration term, we used a definition in which a migrant is the one moving from his country of origin to another country with the aim of working, studying, family reunion, or else¹. The definition was made to explain why some EU citizens in the analyzed countries are also called migrants (a good example being the Romanians in Spain or Italy).

The toolkits used for the evaluation of the Focus Groups were the same for all the countries involved and are enclosed to this report as Annex 1. The evaluation instruments are following information about participants (age / year of birth, sex, country of origin, occupation and education status), information about the selected facilitator, details about the FGs venue places / locations, statistic data concerning the number of participants at the first and last meeting for each of the eight FGs, final impressions of the participants and facilitator and conclusions.

Even if the tools were established as a single research unit, in order to facilitate the further analysis, the main migratory context of each country involved gave a slight difference in filling-in the instruments. This is the reason why, even if we used the same selection criteria and identification of participants, the methodological instruments and the way in which those were applied to each Focus Group gave the final profile for each country analysis, as we will present in the next chapter.

¹ Oteanu (2007), pp: 324



3. Analysis and main findings

a) Countries profile / immigration context

Spain

Spain is a country that recently become a destination area. The number of immigrant in Spain grew up constantly and moderately in the last thirty years. Furthermore, over the last decade both national and local actors in Spain have picked up on international trends encouraging a policy framework of migration and development.

At the present moment, the number of migrants in Spain is estimated to a number of 5,730,667, representing 12.2% of the Spanish population², as follows:

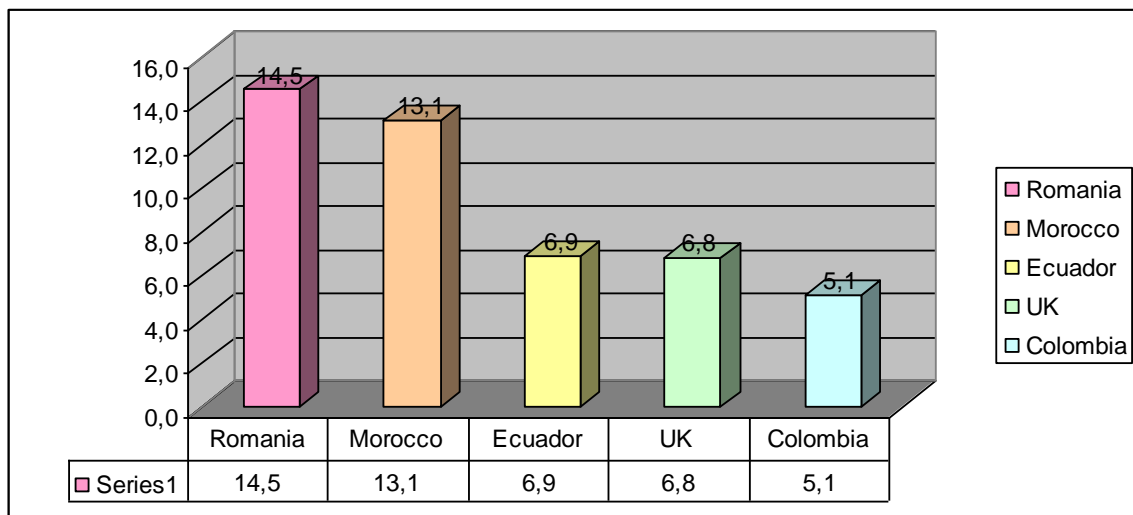


Chart 1: Estimated number of immigrants in Spain (percentages)

² State Secretary of Immigration of the Spanish Government (2011)



Most immigrants regularly resident in Andalusia³ (where the 2 FGs were conducted), come from non EU countries, 56.74 % of the total to be precise. On national level, this percentage is significantly greater, reaching 74.52%. This tendency which is highlighted across the country is reflected in practically all of Andalusia's provinces, with Almería and Seville being the two cities where the greatest number of immigrants from third countries is observed – 75.96% and 72.87% respectively. The only province which is an exception to this trend is Malaga, where immigrants from EU countries represent 63.87% of the total, almost double that of those which come from outside the EU⁴.

A closer look at the continents of origin reveals that the immigrant population regularly resident in Andalusia is formed of three groups: immigrants from the EU (43.25%), immigrants from Africa (26.03%) and immigrants from Latin America (18,18%). In relation to the territorial distribution in Andalusia, residents from EU countries are mainly based in Almería and Malaga provinces, with the latter being home to the greatest number of immigrants from the EU in the whole of the autonomous region. Immigrants from Africa are mostly concentrated in Almería and, to a lesser extent, in Malaga. The Latin American immigrant population is distributed more evenly across the provinces of Malaga, Almería, and Seville.

When analyzing the data for Andalusia by province we can see that on 2005, Malaga continues to have, as in previous years, the greatest number of regularly resident foreigners in the autonomous region - a total of 97.387 people. However, if we look at the ratio of immigrant population in relation to the total number of residents in the province, Malaga's foreign residents represent 9.78% of the total, coming second immediately after Almería.

The main characteristic of the province of Malaga is the high number of foreign residents coming from EU countries, particularly the United Kingdom, with a 28.27% of the total, thus outnumbering those from non EU countries.

³ Second Integral Immigration Plan of the Andalusian Autonomous Government 2006 – 2009 (II Plan Integral de la Inmigración de la Junta de Andalucía), 2007

⁴ Andalucía Acoge: <http://www.acoge.org>.



The weather and commercial features, as well as the great number of tourists related opportunities which the area offers, stand out amongst the factors which explain the large presence of immigrants from European countries.

Another important group of immigrants in the area comes from Morocco (which is only separated from Spain by the Gibraltar strait), representing 11.08%⁵ of the total. As with other foreign communities from non EU countries, the presence of immigrants from Morocco is clearly of work-related nature.

Immigration in Huelva is mainly characterised, as in Jaén, by a large number of foreigners during specific agricultural seasons. This peculiarity, observed in both provinces, is a point in case that shows the relative value of some statistical data, which while reflecting statistically the situation at a given point, fail to take into account the dynamic and changeable nature of migratory phenomena. Although most of the immigration to Huelva city and province at the present time is temporary, a marked tendency to stabilise residency has been observed.

As in the majority of Andalusian provinces, the largest immigrant community is Moroccan, with a 37.23%⁶ of the total. Nevertheless, and due to geographical proximity, the Portuguese community is also significant and accounts for 13.71%. Algerian, Colombian, Romanian, and Ecuadorian communities also have an important presence in Huelva.

Two cities with two very distinct realities were part of the debate and subject to proposals by the group, although common aspects were also highlighted. Also, the number of foreigners holding a residence permit or in the process of applying for one (March 2005) is Huelva – 7182, Malaga - 97 387, Andalusia - 240 475⁷.

⁵ FAMSÍ report on Focus Groups conducted in Malaga and Huelva

⁶ idem

⁷ ibidem

The Italian Regions involved in organizing Focus Groups in the period of June – November 2011, were Emilia – Romagna and Umbria Regions. At a glance the biggest number of foreign citizens, third country nationals on this territories were Romanians, followed by immigrants from Philippines, Morocco, Moldova or Bangladesh. Due to statistical data provided by the Municipality of Bologna and the Province of Bologna, the immigrants represented 12,7% of the total population of Bologna and 10,4%¹⁰ of the total population of the Province, data collected at 31.12.2010. Taking into consideration only the area of Bologna city, the following chart is presenting the immigrant status at the end of 2010:

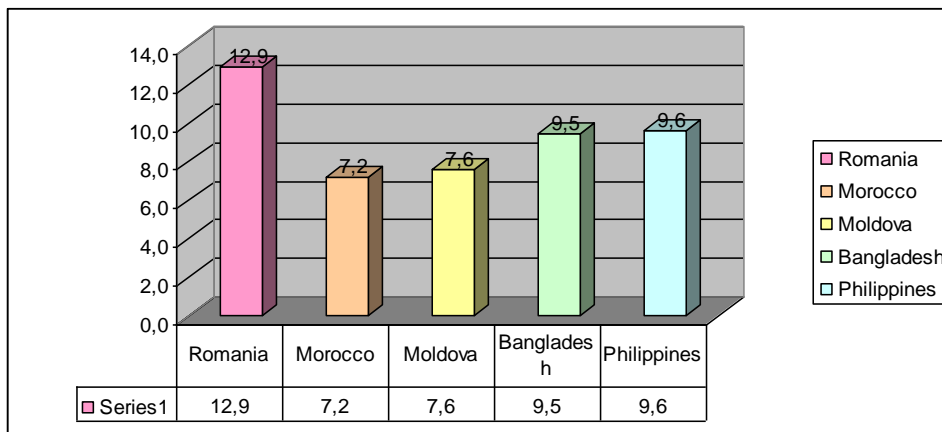


Chart 3 - Estimated number of immigrants in Bologna (percentages)

The main characteristic of the immigration in Italy is the circulatory trend, also associated with economic migration / labour force migration. Thus, the majority of the unqualified immigrants are working in the construction or agricultural field (for men) and in the domestic services and medical services (for women).

¹⁰ Municipality of Bologna Report on Focus Groups conducted in the city of Bologna



- 49% from EU Member States (incl. 677 citizens of Latvia; 176 citizens of Germany, 137 citizens of Lithuania, 63 citizens of Sweden, 63 citizens of France, 60 citizens of United Kingdom, 48 citizens of Estonia, 43 citizens of Poland, 40 citizens of Italy, 41 citizens of Spain, 39 citizens of Finland);
- 51% non - EU countries (incl. 868 citizens of Russia, 138 citizens of Ukraine; 113 citizens of Belarus; 65 citizens of USA; 28 citizens of Kazakhstan; 23 citizens of Uzbekistan; 20 citizens of Turkey; 14 citizens of Moldova)¹⁴.

The term “immigrant” is not defined in Latvian legal acts. According to the Immigration law, the following terms are used: Foreigner – a person who is not a Latvian citizen of Latvia; Union citizen – a foreigner who has the citizenship of any of the European Union Member States, Member State of the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation; Third country – any state, except of any of the European Union Member States, Member State of the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation¹⁵.

The main reasons for migrating to Latvia are family reunion, employment and studies. Top industries migrants work in are processing industry, transport/storage, hospitality/catering, construction, retail trade and other. The biggest number of third-country nationals is from CIS countries – Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Taking into account the historic past of Latvia (Latvia has never been a homogenous country, moreover being a part of the USSR also influenced its ethnic composition) and considering that there are quite big communities of Russian-speakers (Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and others), it is quite easy to make social and cultural contacts for newcomers who speak Russian. However, even Russian-speaking immigrants do not always have access to cultural events and they do not have enough information about minority NGOs representing their ethnic group.

¹³ Central Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia

¹⁴ AMITIE Context Report – Bernardo Venturi, University of Bologna, October 2011

¹⁵ Idem



Immigrants arriving to Latvia are likely to be included in one or the other community - ethnic Latvian or Russian speaking community. Immigrants acknowledge that these two language and cultural environments are different. This factor should be taken into account. Russian speaking immigrants supplement the Russian speaking part of the society and feel comfortably in it. Immigrants who are not proficient in Russian face bigger difficulties¹⁶.

Romania

The data available at the end of 2010 shows us that legal immigration (third country nationals) holds 0.3%¹⁷ of the total population of the country. According to the National Commission for Prognosis, between 2013 and 2015, the number of immigrants is likely to increase to 200,000 to 300,000 immigrants, which would mean 1% - 1.4% of the Romanian population¹⁸.

The countries of origin are as follows: Moldova (31%), Turkey (16%), China (12%), Syria (4%), Serbia (3%), Lebanon (3%)¹⁹.

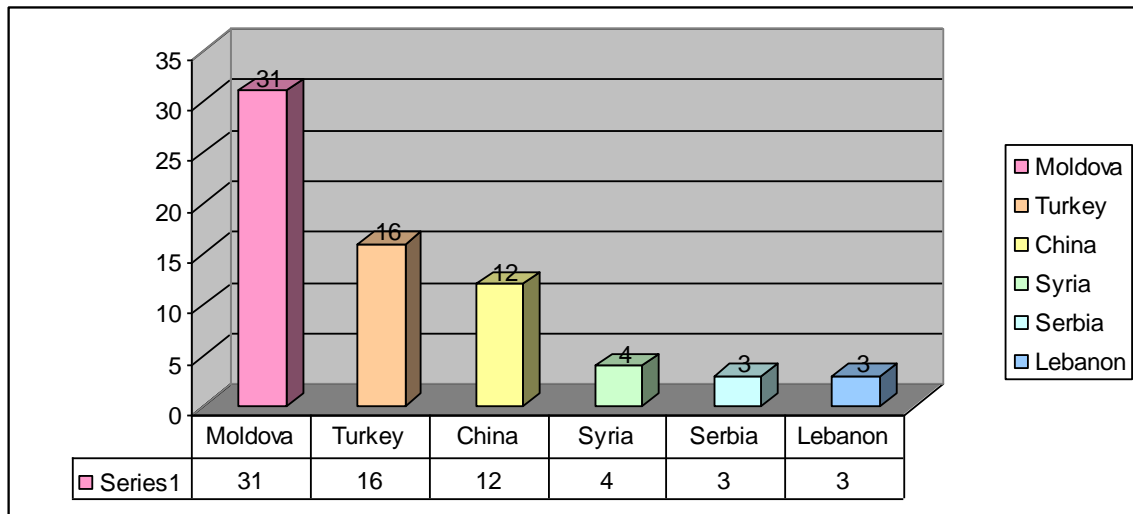


Chart 45 - Estimated number of immigrants in Romania (percentages)

¹⁶ Riga Council Report on the Focus Groups conducted in Riga, Latvia

¹⁷ Romanian Office for Immigration, 2010 Annual Report

¹⁸ Alexe, Paunescu, 2011

¹⁹ Romanian Office for Immigration, 2010 report.



Immigration is a new issue in Romania, the country being more characterized by emigration toward other countries, Italy and Spain being the main destination areas for Romanian citizens. Romania keeps its main feature of emigration country and becomes, in addition to a transit country, an increasingly attractive destination for immigrants. The main reasons for migrating to Romania are family reunion, employment and studies (in the fields of medicine, economics and IT, Romania having a lot tradition, since the Communist era in receiving students especially from the Middle East countries).

A third of immigrants in Romania are those who came to study in Romanian schools. There are also immigrants who chose Romania for a job, their percentage being below 15%, and a very small percentage, less than 5%, immigrants who own small businesses.²⁰ More than half of immigrants are family members of a Romanian citizens / UE and EEA citizen, and around 10% of them had come to Romania to be reunited with their family.

Almost 41%²¹ of the total number of immigrants is residing in Bucharest, the capital city of the country. The rest of the migrants are registered in other 4 industrial cities of Romania, as Constanta, Timisoara, Cluj and Iasi. The main immigration community in Romania is the one formed by the Republic of Moldova citizens, due to a historical closeness with the country based on language and proximity.

b) Participants' profile

In order to analyze the link between migration and communication, social-demographic data were collecting during the 8 Focus Group in Italy, Spain, Latvia and Romania. The data are based on highlighting the profiles of participants and the way in which a further communication campaign should be address taking into consideration those features.

²⁰ Alexe, Paunescu, 2011

²¹ Romanian Office for Immigration, 2010 Annual Report



The main characteristics collected are related to gender, age, nationality (country of origin), occupation and education status. Those data were gathered using a “participant questionnaire”, which was filled-in by at the end of each Focus Group.

The **total number of participants is 135 persons**, and according to each country is the following: Romania – 23, Italy (Umbria and Bologna) – 46, Spain – 26, Latvia – 40.

We can see an **even gender distribution**, for all the countries involved, for example in Spain, for both FGs organized in Malaga and Huelva there were 26 persons participating, from which 13 were males and 13 females.

The migrants are coming from **countries of origin** situated in North Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe (if we consider EU citizens residing in another Eu country as immigrants) and last but not least Eastern Asia. For Spain, immigrants from South America are also forming a strong community, especially in the Southern part of the country (Andalusia).

Participants were willing to provide general ideas, but preferred to keep their personal information (status, the duration of stay, etc.) not mentioned to the other participants of the focus group.

A detailed analyze for each country regarding the main immigration destinations is presented below:

- ❖ Romania – participants from Turkey, Moldova, Italy, Tunisia, Ghana, Cameroon, Afghanistan;
- Italy (both Umbria and Bologna) - Romania , Albania , Ukraine , Marocco, Spain, Philippines, Eritreea, China., Camerron, Sierra Leone.;
- ❖ Spain – Morocco, Ecuador. Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Togo;
- ❖ Latvia – Russia, Ukraine, India, Brazil, USA, Turkey

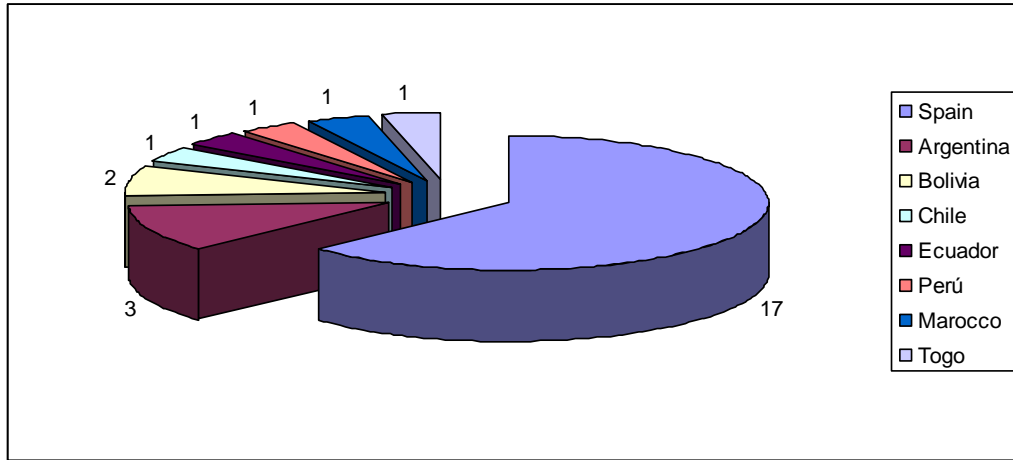


Chart 6 – Origin countries for FGs in Spain (Malaga and Huleva)

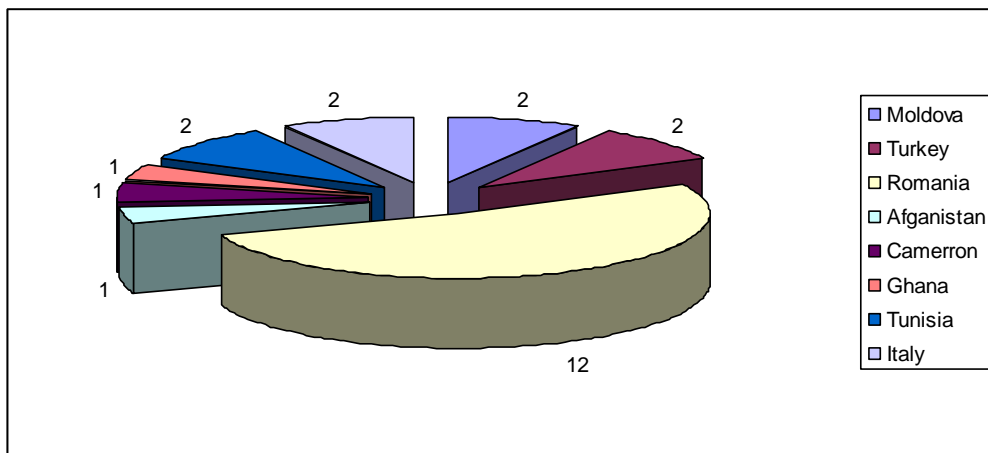


Chart 7 – Origin countries for FGs in Romania (Bucharest)

Immigrants have **high professional potential**. But as the migration policies are quite restrictive in all the analyzed countries, it is more likely that highly qualified immigrants to work on the black market. For example in Latvia it is more probably for the migrants to leave Latvia to the countries which have more favourable conditions.

The **occupation status** of the interviewed migrants is presenting a highly employed community in Spain (more than 80% were having a long term job). In Umbria, for



example, immigrants were working both in the not for profit system but also in the private sector, both occupations being related with university studies.

In Romania, the majority of the interviewed migrants were students (75%) residing in the country with a student short term visa, renewable every single year. Some of them (35%) were also working both in the private and third sector. In Spain, the **education status** is showing a percent of 80% were having a university degree or were in the process of obtaining it. Also, Latvia is showing a 100% percent interviewed immigrants with university studies.

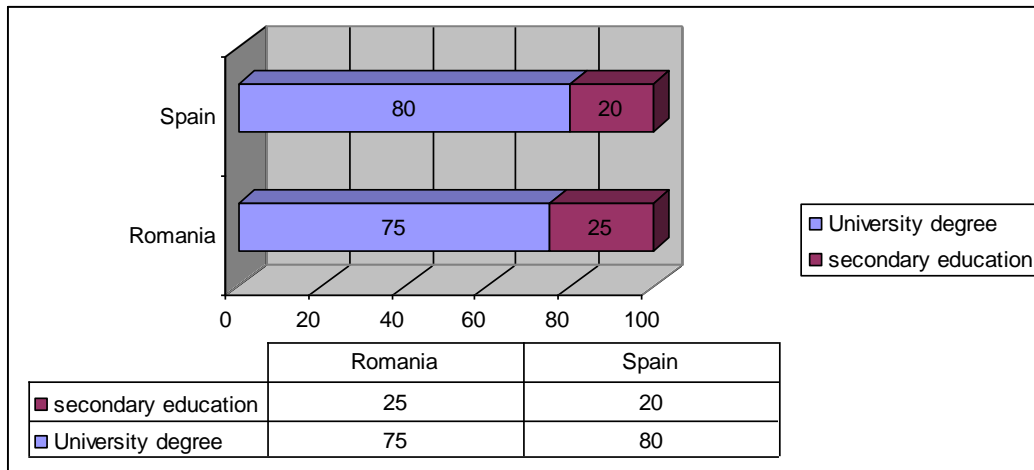


Chart 7 – Education status in Spain and Romania (FGs participants)

The age status according to the analyzed countries is presenting adult migrants in all FGs conducted. In Spain, the age limit was between 31-40 for the majority of the immigrants (80%) and over 41 but less than 45 for another 20%. In Romania, the age limit was between 21-30 for 90% of the interviews and over 35 years old for another 10%.

Italy is showing a greater age limit for Umbria Focus Group, with both men and women between 35-44 years old, while Bologna Focus Group was working with immigrants with ages between 25-45 years old.



The meetings focused on the “meaning of communication” and the question of “What does it mean communication for you?” The ideas coming out from those initiatives were the same for all the countries involved and are best presented in short sentences by the Italian team in Bologna: a) “communication is timeless” (in the sense that the need of communication is timeless), b) “communication is a two way traffic in which information is transmitted”, c) “communication to be effective should make a sense to whom is directed”, d) “communication is exchange because can create interaction”, e) “communication is imagination. It is made of images”.

Due to the fact that both Spain and Italy are countries with a longer history regarding immigration, the majority of the communication campaigns presented while Focus Groups were in those areas. Romania and Latvia, with a lower immigration percentage, focused their meetings more on how to build such campaigns regarding the national context and less on analyzing an already existing one. Even so, Romania used some immigration campaigns already presented in Italy (Bologna) but also some example of anti – racism and human rights awareness spots.

Analyzing the sub-themes of discussions for each country, we’ve seen that those are strongly connected with the national migratory profile. For example, Italy and Spain used as main subjects the meaning of communication, stereotypes regarding immigrants, development, media, and ways of communicating. On the other hand, Latvia with a lower number of immigrants and a more restrictive legislation related to third country nationals focused the meetings more on social inclusion and economic development, security, cultural exchange, political institutions and development and cooperation.

The same characteristics are also available for the Romanian Focus Groups. In the previous 12 meetings attended by immigrants, were developed fields of interest such as labour force market, social and professional integration, social assistance, cultural heritage and last but not least, further communication campaigns for the above mentioned subjects.

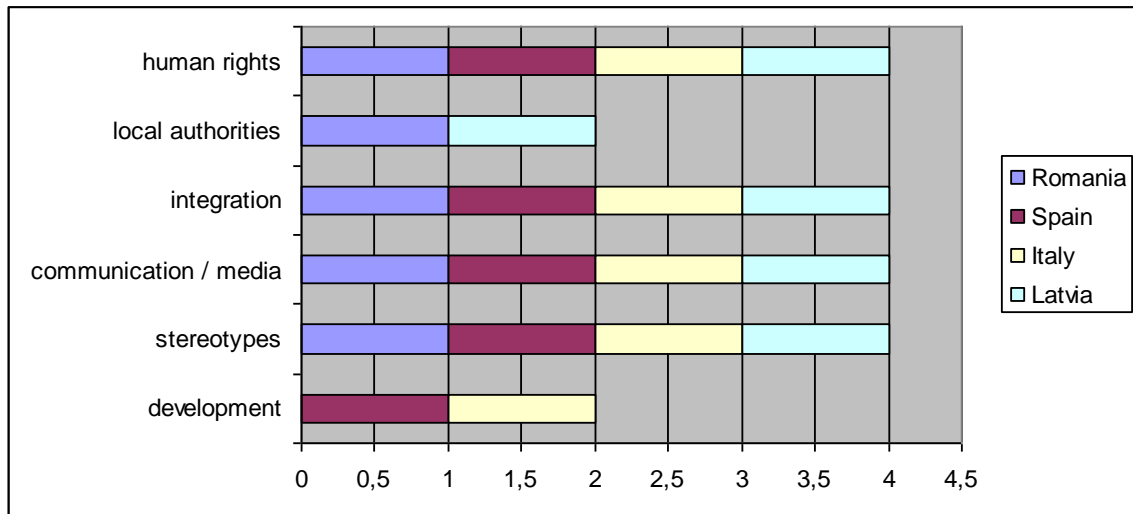


Chart 9 – Main themes of discussion (FGs in Spain, Italy, Latvia and Romania)

d) Communication campaigns

It is important to highlight **the role of the media** as mediators, in other words the media capture, interpret and disseminate events which occur in society’s diverse sectors and they project them onto other sectors, in part so that they can gain knowledge about those events, and in part so they can respond to them. One of the media’s social functions is to act as mediators between reality and what is transmitted. The news-creating process comes to life within them.

In **Latvia**, participants were positively surprised that Riga City Council is interested in such issues as immigration and that it would be possible for them to get involved in the activities organized by this local authority and the Latvian Center for Human Rights related to migration. Participants also highly evaluated the informative support provided by both project partners in Latvia to the immigrant community and also appreciated the new contacts among immigrants. The Russian language environment in Latvia sufficiently eases adaptation. Latvians have good attitude towards Russian -speakers, respect them, but they are also afraid of them. The main communication barrier is the lack of knowledge of Latvian language. Even if



immigrants want to learn Latvian, there is lack of information about opportunities to learn it²².

The Latvian **communication campaign** starts from the fact that there is negative attitude towards immigrants in general. The poor economic situation in the country, feelings of insecurity about the future of local inhabitants and historic experience with immigration create hostile attitude towards immigrants. The society is not ready yet to accept immigrants, therefore, immigrants are perceived as the threat for local community, its culture and economy, rather than as the benefit and the source of development. Locals do not want to communicate with the newcomers, in particular with visually different immigrants. Locals do not have information about immigrants due to the lack of contact with them.

There are two media spaces in Latvia²³ – Russian-speaking and Latvian-speaking media spaces. Both of them portray immigrants in the negative light, using two languages of communication, but showing only negative aspects of immigration. Negative visual images are used from other countries, which create more stereotypes in the local society. Information about immigrants is portrayed as about the aliens, the opinions of immigrants do not appear in public space and media.

Non-governmental organisations have an important role in communicating about migrant issues. NGOs could serve as the intermediary between local society and immigrants, helping to educate the society and promoting communication among immigrants. However, NGOs in Latvia are quite passive, do not cooperate with each other and therefore, immigrants do not know where to apply to in order to get information. Lack of social network and personal connections creates the feeling of isolation among migrants.

There are quite many informative materials created by Latvian NGOs with the support of the EU Fund for the integration of third-country nationals. However, these

²² Riga Council Report on Focus Groups conducted in Riga, Latvia

²³ idem



materials do not often reach the target group. One webpage with all these materials combined would be one of the solutions of this problem.

Spain, on the other hand, has a different attitude about immigration, also because of more than 30 years of experience in the field.

During the sessions organized in Malaga and Huelva, the participants carried out a SWOT analysis of the migratory phenomenon on a national level, with reference to the reality of their areas and always from a communication perspective. In particular, the following aspects were treated: the representation of immigration and immigrants in the media, the links between immigration and work, immigration and legality/illegality, and immigration and the public.

These are some of the definitions given to communication from the migration perspective²⁴: a) communication is a way of sharing, transmitting, and relating a message through a channel and between a given source and various recipients; b) within a social scope, to communicate means to bring closer together; c) to communicate means: to listen, speak, reason, inform, transmit, involve, and connect; d) communicating is a way of transferring information. A process. It forms part of education and must inform. In conclusion, the group maintains that the common element is that **"communicate means to make common"**²⁵.

A discussion about myths and clichés associated with immigration and immigrants was generated in connection with the debate surrounding the image of the immigrant and its relation to the right to exist as an ordinary citizen (They take away our jobs, They use up all the social resources, They have priority in child and in health care, They are illegal, They are criminals)

In respect of the above, participants from social movements felt that the media should be held responsible for this reality. In turn they were also asked to consider exactly what their own messages have been. What responsibility, as organisations,

²⁴ FAMSI Report on Focus Groups conducted in Malaga, Huelva

²⁵ idem



have they had in this? The conclusion revolves around the fact that ultimately there has been little vision, and that there has been scarce or no work to ensure that immigrants form an active part of society, as ordinary citizens.

Some of the participants showed their unease with the current situation of crisis and the way in which the latter is having repercussions in xenophobic attitudes and racist messages which, on occasions, are finding support by political parties. In regards to Huelva, the general feeling was that on the whole the atmosphere is tolerant, without being related to integration.

Both problems are generated from within the education system, family, and mass media. This stigmatization is perfectly embodied in the story of a Bolivian girl, who made the following interjection: "(...) what I least like about Spain is that I am treated like a Bolivian". The use of a clearly politicised language by important media sources has not paid any favours to the immigration community (for example, "the problem with immigration" or "an avalanche of immigrants"). Politicians also use a potentially xenophobic language that is subsequently magnified by the media (example: Alicia Sánchez Camacho, of the People's Party of Catalonia, refers to the Romanian immigrant community in the following way: "we must demand integration from them").

Almost a similar strategy was used in **Italy**, with the same migration issues as Spain, oriented on the same migrant nationalities. From the discussions emerged a limited vision at the base of communication, a simplification of a complex process, without any analysis of the causes of migration. Many participants consider knowledge as important to deconstruct stereotypes²⁶. Some participants said that often the image of immigrants often reminds the idea of invasion, danger, insecurity, and criminality. Some participant felt that the media did not portray foreign countries accurately, i.e., often showed the poorest and least advanced aspects. Most of them agreed about the fact that campaigns they don't face the problem of

²⁶ Municipality of Bologna and FELCOS Reports on Focus Groups conducted in Bologna / Perugia



the responsibility. Regarding campaigns promoting social inclusion, each image has a positive side and a negative side, but normally people are unable to see them both.

As far as the contents of the AMITIE' campaign the participants asked for messages capable to promote tolerance and attention for diversity as an enriching factor for host communities. It was clear as the urgent message to communicate to the city was the one linked to the acceptance of migrants in countries of destination. The impression is that the co-development attention to bilateral aspects of migration phenomenon was lower among migrants and higher among professionals.

The main discussion points developed during the meetings in Italy, both Umbria and Bologna are concerning the following issues:

- a) even if the communication message is negative or positive, campaigns are not able to explain the complexity of the migration, they often give an unilateral vision of migration based only on welcoming without looking outside our borders and towards global process.
- b) each message has a positive side and a negative side, but normally people are unable to see them both because they don't have awareness
- c) campaigns normally don't face the problem of the responsibility
- d) stereotypes are easy to communicate. More difficult is to communicate the reality
- e) migration can contribute to significant human development benefits for those who move, as well as the communities of destination. But as the same time is a lack for origin countries
- f) communication to be effective should be able to express different reasons
- g) De-placement is very important to start to think about responsibility
- h) Development can create awareness on the issue of the causes of migration and human rights and can also make people better understand the interaction between our life and the rest of the world

As a conclusion for the Italian meetings, we can assess that migration can contribute to significant human development benefits for those who move, those who stay behind, as well as the communities of destination. These benefits can include higher rates of education and more freedom. On the other hand, the communication issues



should be related directly with the migrant communities seen as a direct target group and not as a secondary one.

Due to the fact that in **Romania**, the immigration phenomenon is new, there aren't communication campaigns that really reflect the situation of these persons here. Also the campaigns don't promote the rights and the opportunities of the communities.

During the meetings, the discussions were based on communication and campaigns of communication, and the participants discussed about: types of communications (TV, newspapers and online), types of campaigns, definition of communication and vision of participants regarding communication, how to communicate with society about the migration issues and the human rights.

Discussions were based also on the labour market, cultural orientation, education and health care system campaigns for immigrants. Due to the fact that those are the main reasons of which migrants are choosing Romania as a destination country, we focused the meetings especially on those issues as a market for a future social – integration campaign²⁷.

The majority of the participants pointed out that the campaigns have to be concentrated on the employers changing their points of view and opinions about hiring a foreigner. They motivated that the most employers are suspicious about accepting someone from out of the country. The general conclusion of the meetings was that there is a lack of information about the labour market not only for immigrants, but also for the Romanian people.

Regarding the cultural orientation meetings, the main problems were focusing on stereotypes, prejudices and clichés regarding immigrants from outside the European Union. The biggest problem was related, also as in Latvia, with the lack of Romanian language courses and the difficulty of being integrated without knowing the national language.

²⁷ APEL Report on Focus Groups conducted in Bucharest, Romania



4. Conclusions

Throughout the eight Focus Groups organized in the involved countries, Italy, Spain, Latvia and Romania, during a number of 48 meetings between immigrants, local authorities and non state actors, the following points were suggested as having a direct impact on building a European communication campaign on immigration:

- To first carry out national campaigns with the participation of the immigrant associations;
- To identify the main needs of migrants / migrant communities in each country involved;
- To improve social education on awareness-raising;
- To create the figure of qualified professional staff for implementing a campaign, with a working history related to migration;
- Generate the information necessary and guarantee credibility.
- Dispel myths and explain stereotypes in order to cancel them;
- Get to know the media in order to guarantee the information.
- Strengthen new media and channels.

As a main characteristic, immigration is only tolerated, migrants still being seen as criminals, thieves, the ones who will steal our jobs, unqualified workers, having a low education status. More or less, we do not perceive immigrants as having the same status as we do, as citizens of the European Union. This is why, a communication campaign should, in the first place, as stated above, explain and cancel the stereotypes to which migrants are confronting, even the second and third generation ones.



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