



**RefugeesReporting.EU**  
**Refugees and Communication Rights in Europe**

# **REFUGEES REPORTING MEDIA MONITORING**

## **ONLINE NEWS MONITORING GUIDE**

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This methodology guide is adapted with permission from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) for use in monitoring European migration news. The original version of the guide and accompanying research instruments are available at [www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org). Active since 1995, the GMMP is a worldwide research and advocacy initiative for gender equality in and through the news media.

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# PLANNING & PREPARATION

## 1. How to select internet news sources

**Select only national (and if necessary, local) websites.** We are concerned with your national and/or local news only. Select country-specific news websites. Do not code regional and international internet news websites such as the Asia News Network and Al Jazeera. Where international news networks also provide local or national news of the country in which they are based, do not code the international news webpages of such website. Restrict coding to the national and/or local news webpages.

Alexa [www.alexacom/topsites](http://www.alexacom/topsites) ranks the top websites in some countries including blogs, ecommerce sites, social media sites ,etc, that fall outside the media monitoring selection parameters. It is possible however to scroll through the results to find a news outlet. This may be helpful to give you an indication of which websites have the most traffic in your country.

**Select only major websites.** This means websites that you are reasonably sure are viewed on a regular (ideally, daily) basis by at least 50% of the internet subscribers in your country.

**Select only websites concerned with news.** This means that the main function of the website selected must be to deliver news and NOT celebrity gossip, “how-to” journalism, advertising, quizzes, puzzles or other interactive components, etc. Just as you would not code editorials or letters to the editor in a newspaper, do not code reader commentary from online articles.

**Select national news websites** first. Then select regional (in-country) or local daily news websites.

**Select websites that reflect diversity and balance.** You should aim for a range of websites that reflects the diversity of your media system. Consider factors such as:

Ownership: e.g. private, state-controlled. (usually determined by the amount of advertising.)

Political position: e.g. websites that support/oppose particular political parties, government.

Target audience: e.g. political/cultural élites, business community, mass market

Appeal: 'quality' and 'popular' websites. Choose sites considered to be well-known and consulted regularly by online news users.

Language: websites in different official languages of your country.

### **Do not code the following online sources:**

- Regional and international internet news websites such as the Asia News Network and Al Jazeera.
- Blogs (or any other personal sites, social networking content, commentary, “citizen-journalism,” etc.
- News aggregation sites such as Google News, Yahoo News, Huffington Post and Reddit.
- Wire services (e.g. AP, Reuters, etc.)
- Specialist websites that focus on a particular genre of news only (e.g. Business News Network, etc.)

**When a major online news site exists in a print version, for example The Guardian, should the website be included in the list of Internet news sites to be monitored?**

Absolutely. News posted online is designed to cater to an online audience. Online stories will tend to be shorter, have a different emphasis, carry catchier/more active headlines, contain audio/video clips and more/different photos, etc. An online news editor underlines the competition between online news platforms and the need to capture and retain a share of the online news audience. Some stories will appear online only and not in the print or broadcast channels. Some stories in print will not appear online. Some stories are posted as soon as the event

happens, long before they appear in any other news delivery channel of the media house. The monitoring will reveal what happens, from a refugees' voices perspective, when a story shifts to an online platform. In selecting the internet news sites, make sure to include online-only important news channels as well, and the coding sheet has a space to indicate whether this is an online-only publication.

**Note: If necessary, seek advice – for example, from experts in the media or communication studies – to help you select the most appropriate news websites.**

## 2. What to code

Select all news stories published on **May 30, June 7** and **June 12** on the topics of **refugees** and **migration**. Topics can include, for example: European and national asylum legislation, displacement, access to Europe, detention, smuggling, children on the move, etc. See the full list of topics in Section B of this guide.

Code **regular news items** only - not editorials, commentaries, readers' feedback.

For **video**, code only news video, not video pertaining to health/sports/entertainment news unless these are featured prominently.

If a story begins on one page and continues elsewhere, code the entire story.

Some news items consist of a photograph with a headline, caption or short text. Sometimes the main story is a video. Code these just like longer stories.

### **Do not code:**

Editorials, commentaries, readers' feedback.

Story listings. On some homepages you may find a listing of stories that appear in each of the various sections of the website. Do not code these listings.

Cartoons and jokes.

Weather reports (though you should code stories *about* the weather, for example if they refer to climate change related displacement).

Advertising.

YouTube videos. Sometimes stories will link to a video on YouTube. Do not code such videos.

**Note: If you don't know whether to code something or not, code it, and attach a note to the coding sheets to describe why you were unsure.**

## 3. Practicalities

**Work with a partner**, to ensure accurate coding

**Print all information** clearly on the coding sheets.

**Use a dark pencil (not a pen)** so that you can correct mistakes and make clear photocopies.

**Check each completed coding sheet** for errors and omissions.

**Keep photocopies** of the sheets in case the originals are lost.

#### **4. Before you start coding**

For each news story you will need to provide four types of information:

- (I) about the website
- (II) about the story. Multimedia features such as video or audio clips are considered 'stories' for this research.
- (III) about the journalist(s)/reporter(s)
- (IV) about the people in the story
- (V) analysis of the story

In the next section of this Guide, the Internet News Coding System details all the information required, as well as the range of possible answers. You are asked to choose a number or 'code' that corresponds to your answer, and to enter this code on the Internet News Coding Sheet.

We suggest that first you read through the Coding System to get a general idea of what is involved. You may find it useful to study the examples in the Newspaper Monitoring Guides.

After that you should be ready to start coding!

# INTERNET NEWS CODING SYSTEM

## A. BASIC INFORMATION

Enter this information **once** for each news story - in the top right-hand corner of the internet coding sheet.

**Monitor name:** Enter your full name, in legible letters.

**Country:** Enter the name of your country, in English.

**Website description and URL:** For example. 'The Gleaner' <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/> accessed 30 March, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.

**Whether the news source has an offline presence:** For example, Caledonian Mercury is an online-only publication in Scotland while Toronto Star in Canada is available in print as well as online. Code '1' for Yes, available offline or '2' for No, no offline presence, online only.

## B. STORY

Code this information **once** for each news story - on the first coding line for the story.

### 1. Topic

We have developed a list of possible topics, which are grouped into broad categories (Politics, Economy etc.). For each of the broad categories we suggest a number of topics to help you fit the news story into an appropriate topic area. For instance if the story is about dire living conditions in a refugee camp, you will code it 19, Living Conditions.

Within each broad category, we include a code for 'other stories'. Please use these codes **only as a last resort**.

Choose **one** topic that best describes how the story is reported. Remember that a single event can be reported in different ways. Sometimes several topics will be covered within the same story. Choose the one that is given most prominence - e.g. in terms of the amount of time or commentary devoted to it.

Politics & Governance	
1	European asylum legislation (debates, approvals, rejections, Common European Asylum System)
2	National legislation (asylum, immigration, visas, etc.)
3	Returns and deportations
4	Sanctuary
5	Integration
6	Externalisation of migration controls (partnerships with third countries, EU-Turkey deal, Valletta Summit)
7	Access to Europe (fences, closed borders, impossibility to enter, etc.)
8	Search and Rescue at sea
9	Family reunification
10	Relocation

11	Detention
12	Other stories on politics and governance (specify the topic in the 'Comments' section of coding sheet)
<b>Economy</b>	
13	Economic impact of refugees
14	Poverty, social welfare
15	Employment
16	Other stories on economy (specify the topic in the 'Comments' section of coding sheet)
<b>Social and health</b>	
17	Health
18	Education
19	Living conditions
20	Children
21	Religion
22	Popular opinion
23	Other stories on social and health (specify the topic in the 'Comments' section of coding sheet)
<b>Displacement</b>	
24	Displacement from wars, conflicts
25	Displacement due to persecution/discrimination
26	Displacement due to economic factors
27	Displacement due to climate change, disaster
28	Other stories on displacement (specify the topic in the 'Comments' section of coding sheet)
<b>Crime</b>	
29	Crime, terrorism by refugees
30	Smuggling, trafficking, danger of passage
31	Attacks, crime, discrimination against refugees
32	Child abuse, violence against children
33	Other stories on crime (specify the topic in the 'Comments' section of coding sheet)
<b>Other</b>	
34	Other (use only if no other option available – try to avoid using this code)

## 2. Scope of story

Code the widest geographical scope that applies: if the event has both local and national importance, code national.

Code scope from your own perspective in the country where you live. Example: A story on national elections in France is 2 - National to anyone living in France, and 4 - Foreign to people in any other country.

- 1 **Local:** Has importance within your city, community, area
- 2 **National:** Has importance across your country
- 3 **Sub-Regional and Regional:** Involves your sub-region and other regions

- 4 **Foreign, international:** Involves other countries or the world in general (e.g., global warming)

**3. Reference to refugee law / human rights legislation/ policy:**

Various international, regional and national instruments are in place to promote refugees' and human rights. This could be local or international legislation or policies, including the 1951 Refugee Convention (sometimes called Geneva Convention), the 1967 Protocol, EU Directives and the Common European Asylum System, etc.

Scan the full news story and code '1' if it quotes or makes reference to any piece of legislation or policy that promotes refugees' rights or human rights.

1 **Yes**

2 **No**

**IF YOU REPLIED NO TO QUESTION 4), SKIP THE FOLLOWING QUESTION AND PROCEED TO THE NEXT.**

**4. Specify the level of legislation mentioned:**

If you replied yes to question 4), please indicate the level of the legislation mentioned:

1 International (Refugee Convention, etc.)

2 Regional (EU Directives, Dublin Regulation, etc.)

3 National (national asylum laws, etc.)

## C. JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

For each online news story, you should code **each journalist/reporter** who wrote the story and whose name appears.

**Do not** code:

Unnamed journalists (e.g. 'Staff reporter', 'Our correspondent')

News agencies

**5. Gender**

0 Do not know

1 Female

2 Male

3 Other: transgender, transsexual

## D. PEOPLE IN THE STORY

For each online news story, you should code:

**Any person whom the story is about**, even if they are not interviewed or quoted.

**Each person in the story who is interviewed**

**Each person in the story who is quoted**, either directly or indirectly\*

\* A person is **quoted directly** if their own words are printed in the story - e.g. 'I am disappointed and angry about the continued use of drugs in sport' said the President of the Olympic Committee.

A person is **quoted indirectly** if their words are paraphrased or summarised in the story - e.g. The President of the Olympic Committee today expressed anger at the incidence of drug use.

**Code individual people ONLY**

**DO NOT** code:

Groups (e.g. a group of nurses, a group of soldiers)

Organisations, companies, collectives (e.g. political parties)

Characters in novels or movies (**unless** the story is *about* them)

Deceased historical figures (**unless** the story is *about* them)

People who are simply mentioned or listed in the story (**unless** the story is *about* them)

**6. Gender**

- 0 Do not know
- 1 Female
- 2 Male
- 3 Other (transgender, transsexual)

**7. Age**

Code the age of the person **only if it is specifically mentioned in the online news story**. A person's age is not always relevant to the news. We want to find out whether refugees and non-refugees are equally likely to be described in terms of their age.

Even if you know the age of the person concerned, you must code 0 if this person's age is not explicitly stated in the story. Similarly, although you might be able to guess the age of the person - e.g. because there is a photograph - you must code 0 unless their age is actually mentioned in print.

- 0 Do not know
- 1 12 years or under
- 2 13-18
- 3 19-34
- 4 35-49
- 5 50-64
- 6 65 years or more

**IF THE PERSON IS NOT A REFUGEE, MIGRANT OR ASYLUM SEEKER, SKIP TO QUESTION 13.**

**8. If below 18:**

If you replied 1 or 2 to the previous question, please specify if the underage person is referred to in the story as

- 0 Do not know/Not specified

- 1 Unaccompanied minor
- 2 Accompanied minor

A minor is unaccompanied if s/he is without any family members (if someone is within a group of friends or people they know, but without any family members, they are still considered unaccompanied). An accompanied minor is someone who is with a member of her/his family (even if only a distant relative). If a minor is with a brother/sister, who are also under 18 years, code 1, Unaccompanied minor.

**9. The person is identified as:**

This question help us identify how many times people in the news are referred to as refugees, migrants, both or neither. It is useful to understand if the media you are analysing has a proper understanding of the difference of the terms implied. If the person is referred to as ‘economic migrant’, code 2, Migrant.

- 1 Refugee
- 2 Migrant
- 3 Asylum seeker
- 4 Illegal migrant
- 5 Two or more terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same person
- 6 None of the terms are used

**10. Region of origin**

Please specify the region where the person is identified as coming from. **If the specific country is named, please write it down (in English) in the comments section of the sheet.** If you are uncertain about the region of origin, please consult with your National Coordinator.

0 Do not know / Not specified	7 Rest of Asia (Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, China, etc.)
1 Middle East (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Yemen, etc.)	8 Eastern Europe (Turkey, Russia, Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Ukraine, etc.)
2 North Africa (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, etc.)	9 Central or South America
3 Eastern Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, etc.)	10 North America
4 Western Africa (Gambia, Mali, Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal, Ghana, Niger, Ivory Coast, etc.)	11 Oceania
5 Central and Southern Africa (DR Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, etc.)	12 Central, Southern and Western Europe (Germany, UK, Italy, etc.)
6 Central Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Georgia, etc.)	

**11. Is the person mentioned alive or dead?**

- 0 Do not know/Unclear

- 1 Alive
- 2 Dead

## **12. Religion**

Code this if the religion is explicitly mentioned or clearly implied in the article. Do not make guesses based on someone's country of origin. If the person comes from a Middle Eastern Muslim majority country but is not explicitly identified as being Muslim, code 0, not mentioned. However, if the person is said to observe a well-known religious festivity, eg. Ramadan, code 6, Muslim.

- 0 Not mentioned
- 1 Atheist or no religious affiliation
- 2 Buddhist
- 3 Christian
- 4 Hindu
- 5 Jewish
- 6 Muslim
- 7 Other

## **13. Family relationship**

People are often defined in the news in terms of their familial relationships. Is this person described, at any point within the story, in terms of a family relationship (e.g. wife, husband, daughter, son, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather etc)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

## **14. Occupation or position**

Code **one** occupation or position for each person in the news. If the person is described as having two occupations, you will have to make a choice - e.g. choose the occupation that seems most relevant in the context of the news item.

People who are self-employed should be coded in the category that corresponds to their area of work. In the case of persons who are well-known to the general public - e.g. Barack Obama, Malala Yousafzai, your country's president - code the occupation even if it is not apparent from the content of the news item.

In the case of persons who are not well-known to the general public, but who are known to you personally, code 0 if the occupation is not apparent from the content of the news item.

- 0 Not stated. Story does not describe the person's occupation or position.

- 1 Government, politician, minister, spokesperson...
- 2 Government employee, public servant, diplomat, etc.
- 3 Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer
- 4 Academic expert, lecturer, teacher
- 5 Health professional, social worker, childcare worker
- 6 Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun
- 7 Worker in an inter-governmental / international organisation (UN, EU, etc.)
- 8 Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union
- 9 Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.
- 10 Unskilled labourer
- 11 Student
- 12 Person identified only as a 'migrant', 'refugee', 'asylum seeker', etc.
- 13 Unemployed
- 14 Other (only as last resort & explain)

**15. Function in the news story** In what function or capacity is this person included in the story?

Choose **one** code only for each person in the story. If there are several people in the story, some of them may have the same function. E.g. the story might be about two people, in which case both of these people would be given code 1; the story might include three eye witnesses, in which case all three would be given code 5.

Code 1 takes precedence over other codes. E.g. if the person is both a subject and a spokesperson, choose code 1 = Subject.

- 0 **Do not know:** the person's function is not clear.
- 1 **Subject:** the story is *about* this person, or about something the person has done, said etc.
- 2 **Spokesperson:** the person represents, or speaks on behalf of another person, a group or an organization
- 3 **Expert or commentator:** the person provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on specialist knowledge or expertise
- 4 **Personal experience:** the person provides opinion or comment, based on individual personal experience; the opinion is not necessarily meant to reflect the views of a wider group
- 5 **Eye witness:** the person gives testimony or comment, based on direct observation (e.g. being present at an event)
- 6 **Popular opinion:** the person's opinion is assumed to reflect that of the 'ordinary citizen' (e.g., in a street interview, vox populi etc); it is implied that the person's point of view is shared by a wider group of people.
- 7 **Other. Use only as a last resort** (describe the function in 'Comments' section of coding sheet).

**16. Does the story identify the person as someone who has experienced...?**

Choose **one** of the codes below for each person in the news. If someone is identified as having experienced more than one event or circumstance you will have to make a choice - e.g. choose the event or circumstance that is given most prominent in the news story.

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 An accident or natural disaster
- 2 Human-induced disaster, war, state violence
- 3 Terrorism
- 4 Domestic violence, rape, murder, etc.
- 5 Non-domestic sexual violence, rape, assault, etc
- 6 Other non-domestic violence, crime, robbery, etc .
- 7 Violence or discrimination based on religion (eg. FGM, Islamophobia, etc.)
- 8 Violence or discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity
- 9 Violence or discrimination based on gender, age, ability, etc.
- 10 Difficult economic situation, poverty
- 11 Other (specify in 'comments')

**17. Does the story identify the person as a perpetrator of...?**

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 Perpetrator of acts of war, crimes against humanity, state violence, etc.
- 2 Perpetrator of acts of terrorism
- 3 Perpetrator of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, etc.
- 4 Perpetrator of non-domestic sexual violence, rape, assault, etc.
- 5 Perpetrator of non-domestic violence, crime, robbery, etc.
- 6 Perpetrator of violence or discrimination based on religion (FGM, Islamophobia, etc.)
- 7 Perpetrator of violence or discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity
- 8 Perpetrator of discrimination based on gender, age, ability, etc
- 9 Other Perpetrator (specify in 'comments')

**18. Is this person directly quoted in the story?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

A person is **directly quoted** if their own words are printed, e.g. "**The war against terror is our first priority**" said **President Bush**. In this case, you would code 1 in column 19.

If the story paraphrases what the person said, that is **not a direct quote**, e.g. **President Bush said that top priority would be given to fighting the war against terror**. In this case, you would code 2 in column 19.

**19. Is there a photograph of this person in the story?**

- 0 Don't know (There is a photo in the story but you do not know whether the person you are coding is in it)
- 1 Yes
- 2 No

## E. ANALYSIS

When and how do refugees become newsmakers? To what extent does the news increase public understanding of displacement issues and reasons for fleeing one's country? Are refugees negatively stereotyped or portrayed in an egalitarian light? These are the questions addressed in the final part of the coding.

Code this information **once** for each news story - on the first coding line for the story - in columns 21 to 26.

### **20. In the notes section of the coding sheet describe any photographs, images, other multimedia included in the story and the conclusions you draw from them.**

In the notes section of the coding sheet, enter the exact URL of the story and **write down what you conclude from what you see and/or hear** – What does the photo say to you about refugees' aspirations, roles, responsibilities and position in society? What is your reaction to the photo? Different people will come to different conclusions based on their understanding of who are refugees in their specific cultural contexts. Write down your own conclusion from your own perspective.

### **21. Is the story about an individual refugee/migrant of a group of refugees/migrants?**

- 0 Do not know/Not specified
- 1 Individual
- 2 Group

### **22. What is the tone of the story?**

Is the story sympathetic to refugees? Does it portray refugees in negative light? Is it a balanced reporting of the issue at stake? Reply based on your opinion of the news story. Put any comments in the comments section if needed.

- 0 Do not know / Cannot decide
- 1 Sympathetic
- 2 Unsympathetic
- 3 Neutral

### **23. This story clearly challenges negative stereotypes about migrants/refugees:**

Stories that challenge stereotypes include those that overturn common assumptions about refugees in relation to their host societies, their expertise or competence, their interests, their contributions, etc. For example, a story which portrays refugees as proper agents of their future and not passive recipients of aid can challenge a negative stereotype. While some stereotypes are common across countries, you will know your national and local context best, so you will be best placed to identify which stories are challenging a commonly held stereotype.

It is important to note that stories that focus centrally on refugees **do not** necessarily challenge negative stereotypes. For example, a story about a refugee could highlight her/his dependency on state-funded social benefits, unwillingness to find a job, etc. This type of story may actually be promoting a negative stereotype.

Similarly, it is important to note that some stories that **do not** focus centrally on refugees **may** in fact promote stereotyping. For instance, a story about the number of low-skilled jobs being held by non-nationals in a given country may perpetuate the negative stereotype of the low-skilled migrant, even if it does not focus on migration.

If you are unsure, or cannot decide whether or not the story clearly challenges stereotypes, code 0.

### **This story clearly challenges negative stereotypes about migrants/refugees**

- 0 Do not know, cannot decide
- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree

### **24. This story clearly promotes negative stereotypes about refugees/migrants**

Stories that promote negative stereotypes include, for example, those that portray refugees and migrants as a burden to host countries, as dependent on aid and benefits, as passive recipients of kind actions from good-natured residents. While some stereotypes are common across countries, you will know your national and local context best, so you will be best placed to identify which stories are challenging a commonly held stereotype.

### **This story clearly promotes negative stereotypes.**

- 0 Do not know, cannot decide
- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree.
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree.

### **25. Does this story warrant further analysis?**

We intend to make a detailed analysis of some of the news stories. The national coordinator will be responsible for this analysis. But we need *your* help in identifying suitable stories. We want to draw attention to certain tendencies or patterns in news coverage – from the worst to the best.

For example:

- (i) a story which illustrates journalism that CLEARLY CHALLENGES negative stereotypes about refugees/migrants
- (ii) a story which illustrates journalism that CLEARLY REINFORCES negative stereotypes about refugees/migrants
- (iii) a story that illustrates a missed opportunity to create better understanding about and/or response to refugees/migrants

What words, descriptors or terminology are used to describe refugees/migrants in the story? How would you describe the tone of the story with regard to refugees/migrants? Is the reporting sensitive, fair, accurate, objective and balanced? Does the reporting style encourage real and nuanced understanding of refugee/migrant lives, their stories, hopes and aspirations? Does the story contain the voices of refugees/migrants in their own words? Does

it include statistical facts and figures of the issue being reported? Or do the journalistic choices of vocabulary, style or story angle fuel stigma, discrimination or hostility towards refugees/migrants? Would you say the journalist's choices uphold media professional ethics such as prescriptions for non-racist, non-sexist, non-discriminatory and non-stereotyped coverage? Do the images used identify vulnerable individuals such as children or put at risk people fearing persecution?

Considering this list of sample questions, do you think that this particular story would be a useful example to analyse in more detail?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Remember: When you find a story that you think would be useful for further analysis, you will need to send a print-out of the webpage and if the website enables it, a recording of the multimedia feature (such as video or audio clip) in it to your national coordinator.**