



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

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## CONCEPT NOTE

# Perceptions and realities: Towards a de-polarized debate on migration

Workshop  
METROPOLIS CONFERENCE  
Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 6.15 p.m - 7.45 p.m

WS room: A03  
Berlin Congress Center GmbH - Alexanderstraße 11, 10178 Berlin

Despite experts' reports and widespread economic evidence, the issue of migration continues to polarize opinions. Especially in recent years, concerns and fears about migrants' presence in hosting communities have been increasingly amplified in the public discourse, often resorting to oversimplified messages, while the socioeconomic benefits stemming from the same presence are often overlooked. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated further the debate.

As increasing numbers of persons move in other countries to live, study and work, it is vital to create a social and economic environment where everyone feels valued and welcome. Yet, the increasingly polarized discourse about migrants progressively undermines efforts towards effective policy-making that could better harness their economic potential.

Organized by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the workshop will discuss the main communication traps to avoid the black-and-white narrative about migration and prevent the stigmatization of migrants and refugees, based on the lessons learned from the E-MINDFUL project ([www.e-mindful.eu](http://www.e-mindful.eu)).

### Agenda

Moderator: **Ms. Teresa Albano**, Economic Affairs Officer, Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)

Introduction: **H. E. Ambassador Igli Hasani**, Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE

Speakers: **Ms. Tina Zournatzi**, Head of Unit in charge of communication, Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

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**Ms. Natalia Banulescu-Bodgan**, Associate Director, International Program, Migration Policy Institute, Washington DC, *“When facts do not matter: challenges and opportunities when communicating migration”*

**Ms. Lenka Dražanová**, Research Fellow to the Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM) project, European University Institute, *“In search of the movable middle: Expanding Migration Narratives Beyond Stereotypes”*

Debate



### **The E-MINDFUL project objectives and outcomes**

We are in search of a new language to tell the story of people on the move. We wish to understand how words, visual images and other symbols contribute to the construction of a balanced concept of migrants and refugees in hosting communities.

The objective is to provide governments and civil society with knowledge and tools to avoid the black-and-white trap when discussing migration and prevent the further stigmatization of migrants and refugees. By offering an alternative to the stereotyped debate, the intention is to expand the political space for suitable policies that can unlock their socioeconomic potential.

Analysing the complex factors that shape public attitudes towards migrants will help outlining messages that resonate with hosting communities, promoting a social and economic environment where everyone feels belonging.

Over a period of 24 months, the activities implemented in Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia and Serbia will provide:

- A set of lessons learned drawn from communication campaigns already carried out (I Phase: Stocktaking exercise);
- A package of pilot and innovative prototypes of communication campaigns tailored and tested on key audiences (II Phase: Co-creation process).
- A systematized assessment of effective communication strategies, resonating with key audiences (III Phase: Early-impact assessment).
- A comprehensive, evidence-based, action-oriented set of guidelines and tools to steer future communication strategies on migration and migrants (IV Phase: Capitalization).



**The E-MINDFUL project is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals**



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