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# What policy communication works for migration?

## Using values to depolarise



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The list of campaigns has been developed during the ICMPD EUROMED Migration Governance Traineeship by trainees Sophie Basso, Clara Du Bled, Ikram Mensi and Valentina Savazzi

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*The presented study includes active links to sources and references that are accessible online.*

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## Foreword

*The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted migration and mobility around the globe, and by extension the way how we think and speak about migration. In this time of crisis, trust and public security have become primary concerns and spiralled the increasingly polarised rhetoric around migration we have seen emerging in recent years. This recent trend exacerbates the need for a balanced narrative on migration as a necessary pre-condition to safeguard an enabling environment for sound migration policy making and governance.*

*Promoting a deeper awareness and understanding of perceptions of and attitudes towards migration is imperative to move scientific evidence back to the core of the migration discourse, which in turn will help rebalance the narrative and consequently regain the public's trust. This is particularly vital in the Euro-Mediterranean context, where migration can be considered part and parcel of the economic recovery if implemented in a conscientious and diligent way and on the basis of sound, effective migration policies.*

*The third chapter of ICMPD's "Impact of public attitudes to migration on the political environment in the Euro-Mediterranean region" makes a marked contribution to this critical matter by shedding light on different strategies and approaches to public communication on migration and how these can be rendered effective.*

*Drafted before the outbreak of the current pandemic, the study's recommendations ring even more true today where efforts to do away with the widespread disinformation, which was exacerbated by the pandemic, must be intensified. Now more than ever, we need to provide policy-makers with evidence-based, responsive policy options to affront disinformation and ill-informed public perceptions of migration - a major challenge in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond.*

**Lukas Gehrke**

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# Executive Summary

- This report starts by providing a summary of key recommendations from existing best-practice guides for migration communication
- The most common recommendation is to focus on values-based messaging.
- However, very little work has considered what values-based messaging is and what type of value-based messaging is likely to work regarding migration.
- This report then summarises the academic literature on values, focussing on Schwarz’s theory of basic human values: broad, stable motivational goals that individuals hold in life, which predict attitudes to specific issues and behaviour.
- The relationship between these ten values—universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, self-direction and stimulation—is graphically displayed.
- It is shown that universalism, benevolence, stimulation and self-direction are associated with pro-immigration attitudes, whereas conformity, security, tradition and power are associated with anti-immigration attitudes.
- Aligning one’s migration policy communication with the target audience’s values is likely to elicit sympathy for the message. However, values-based messages that do not align with those of the audience are less likely to elicit sympathy and may elicit antipathy.
- This report then analyses migration policy communication examples from an inventory of 135 campaigns from both sides of the Mediterranean provided by the ICMPD.
- It is then systematically considered how well these campaigns align with our expectations as derived from our theoretical framework.
- Few pro-migration campaigns contained value-based messaging, whereas all anti-migration campaigns did.
- Similarly, very few pro-migration campaigns included values besides ‘universalism’ and ‘benevolence’, whereas anti-migration campaigns included values associated with both pro- and anti-migration attitudes.

- Examples of each case are visually demonstrated.
- This report provides policymakers with an understanding of what values-based policy communication is and how, using robust data, they can communicate policies that are concordant with the values of their audiences in a way likely to elicit sympathy.
- Although this report uses the example of migration policy communication, the same approach can be taken for policies on any politically controversial issue.
- Future migration policy communication that seeks to incorporate values should use a systematic approach such as that found in this report and seek to incorporate the values of the target audience
- Future research should robustly test the effects of each of these kinds of communication using experimental methods, be they field, lab or survey experiments.
- Alternative values-scheme and forms, psychological predispositions, for example, personality types, should also be considered.
- Furthermore, values schema and their operationalisations, some of which are now somewhat dated, should continue to be refined.



## Introduction

Studies of communication regarding migration have overwhelmingly focused on negative or unrepresentative portrayals of migrants in media, which are argued to often be hyperbolic in order to garner additional readers or viewers, or by political actors using such frames for strategic electoral reasons (e.g. King and Wood, 2001; Blassnig et al., 2019). As such, academic research on migration communication has tended to be drawn from the fields of media studies or political science. Research considering when strategic communication for less, arguably, nefarious reasons is effective has been less developed. Despite that, or perhaps because of it, in recent years a number of advocacy groups and NGOs have produced guides to communicating on migration. Owing to their origin, either implicitly or explicitly these guides usually have had the aim of increasing the positivity to migrants or migration amongst the citizens and voters of host countries. For the same reason, they have typically been only partially rooted in robust or systematic scientific understandings of the relationship between types of communication and their effects on attitudes, though this does not necessarily reflect their credibility or usefulness.

This study places the most common recommendation from practitioners—that migration communication should be based on values—within the broader scientific literature by introducing Schwarz’s psychological theory of ‘basic human values’ and then using European Social Survey data to visualise the relationship between these values and attitudes to immigration, a relationship already well established in the political psychology literature. It is argued that messaging with a value-basis that is concordant with that of its audience is more likely to elicit sympathy, whereas that which is discordant with the values of its audience is more likely to elicit antipathy. Given the value-balanced orientations of those with moderate attitudes to immigration, persuasive migration messaging should also attempt to mobilise values of its opposition; i.e. pro-migration messaging should mobilise Schwarz’s values of conformity, tradition, security and power, whereas anti-migration messaging should mobilise values of universalism, benevolence, self-direction and stimulation.

The report then moves on to considering migration communication campaigns from both sides of the Mediterranean as produced by NGOs and public policy makers. This inventory of migration communication campaigns was provided by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), an international organisation of 17 member states from Europe devoted to research, projects and activities on migration-related issues and to provide policy recommendations to the governmental agencies of states, as well as to external governmental and intergovernmental agencies and international organisations. The inventory

of migration campaigns, however, contains cases from around Europe as well as the southern and eastern Mediterranean. It is then systematically considered how well these campaigns align with our expectations as derived from our theoretical framework and shown that few pro-migration campaigns contained value-based messaging, whereas all anti-migration campaigns did. Similarly, very few pro-migration campaigns included values besides 'universalism' and 'benevolence', whereas anti-migration campaigns included values associated with both pro- and anti-migration attitudes. Examples of each case are demonstrated before discussing ramifications for policy communication.

### ***Existing guides for migration communication***

The theoretical starting point for this report comes not from the academic literature, for which there is a still relatively underdeveloped literature considering what types of migration communication are effective (however, for potentially relevant findings see Kalla and Broockman, 2020; Walter et al, 2019; Nelson and Garst, 2005; Bansak et al, 2017 ), but instead from the policymaker, or practitioner, literature. In recent years, migration advocacy groups have published a number of reports that outline recommendations for how to effectively communicate on migration issues in a way that might change attitudes. In this section, I overview the findings of six of these reports, five of which were published since 2017. In table 1, below, I synthesise these findings.

First, Hind Sharif (2019) of the Migration Policy Group offers a number of recommendations and policy options for 'progressive communicators ... to win the debate' in "Communicating effectively on migration". Overall, Sharif offers seven recommendations: (1) 'develop a communications strategy and leadership'; (2) 'choose credible messengers, including migrants, and embrace partnerships, including by producing lists for media of potential spokespeople'; (3) 'apply value-based and emotive approaches'; (4) 'lead with hope-based solutions'; (5) 'be visual', again from a value-based and emotive standpoint; (6) 'target a movable audience', i.e. those with more moderate and less entrenched attitudes; and, (7) 'support fair reporting.' As we can see, the (1) and (7) relate to the institutions behind the communication; (2), (5) and (6) relate to the delivery of the communication and, only (3) and (4) relate to the content of the communication.

The recommendations of each of the guides are therefore split into these three types—institutions, delivery and content—in Table 1, below.

Second, Banulescu-Bogdan's (2018) Migration Policy Institute report—"When Facts Don't Matter: How to Communicate More Effectively About Immigration's Costs and Benefits" argues that recent technological, political and media changes mean that an overabundance of 'facts' has undermined their social credibility. As such, the author proposes six lessons that communicators should keep in mind when communicating on migration: (1) 'cost-benefit analyses may miss the point' since economics is only one value under consideration; (2) 'avoid arguments that may be views as personal attacks' or that criticise beliefs outright in order to avoid trigger defensive mechanisms regarding self- or group-identity; (3) 'give people a way out instead of trying to prove them wrong'; (4) 'avoid repeating false ideas—even to debunk them'; (5) 'Engage credible messengers from across the aisle'; (6) 'start building a culture of critical thinking long before an election cycle or crisis'.

Third, Marthouz's (2006) 'How to communicate: Strategic communication on migration and integration' for the King Baudouin Foundation offers an exhaustive list of recommendations, with examples, including sections with recommendations regarding: the institutional arrangements that are likely to facilitate strategic

communication; for how to identify your target audience; how to frame messages; and later a range of recommendations for working with media and press and the different tools available to communicators. These are followed by seven 'guiding principles' regarding (1) the importance of values rather than facts alone; (2) be aware of and work around popular prejudices; (3) starting from a position of common ground; (4) neutralising the opposition by undermining their arguments and thus at least prevent those in the middle from moving over; (5) similarly, ignore or undermine the most hostile; (6) be solutions-oriented and (7) coordinate with other NGOs. Marthouz then offers a series of 'tips', some of which may seem obvious though are still worth repeating, to be 'confident', 'decent', 'clear, but without sloganeering', 'relevant to the audience', and 'consistent', to choose the right messenger and to multiply (i.e. repeat) core messages.

Fourth, Bamberg's (2019) 'Moving beyond the 'crisis': Recommendations for the European Commission's communication on migration' makes six recommendations aimed at the European Commission, though useful for migration communicators generally. These are: (1) avoid increasing the salience of migration by adjusting the tone and content; (2) use more diverse frames, particularly avoiding crisis management, and speaking to economic and value-based issues; (3) use storytelling rather than just facts; (4) target audience groups; (5) make messaging digestible and relatable; and (6) correctly contextualise migration matters rather than linking them to erroneous issues, e.g. labour market reforms.

Fifth, Welcoming America's (2018) report 'Stand Together: Messaging to Support Muslims and Refugees in Challenging Times' offer seven 'principles' to bear in mind for those 'developing stories and messages'. These are: (1) craft messages to confront and reshape perceptions rather than realities; (2) appeal to emotion; (3) prioritise brevity over precision; (4) ground messaging in core values; (5) use clear, concise language rather than jargon; (6) focus on actions; (7) craft messaging around your audience not yourself.

Sixth, Christiano (2017: 12) argued that effective 'public interest communications' provide five rules that the most effective campaigns follow: (1) they are visual or rely on metaphor; (2) they connect with the values of the target audience; (3) they use stories; (4) their calls-to-action are highly focussed; and (5) they make use of emotion. Aside from these studies there are numerous other reports and articles addressing relevant issues such as integration (e.g. Ahad and Banulescu-Bogdan, 2018), emigration (ARK, 2018) or mapping 'narrative tactics in the migration sector' (Field, 2020).

The recommendations of these studies, some of which overlap, are shown in Table 1, below. The only recommendation found in all six reports was to focus on values. However, each report offers fairly little practical information on what is meant by values, which values should be focused on and how should values be used.

**Table 1.** Summary of key recommendations from existing best-practice guides for migration communication

	Sharif (2019)	Banulescu-Bogdan (2018)	Marthouz (2006)	Bamberg (2018)	Welcoming America (2018)	Christiano (2017)
Strategic arrangements						
Develop a proactive communications strategy	×	×				
Set up partnerships for communications/support others	×		×			
Research and target moveable audience, know their perceptions and prejudices	×		×	×	×	
Communications content						
Focus on values	×	×	×	×	×	×
Appeals to emotion	×				×	×
Hope/positivity/solutions focus	×		×			
Avoid attacking audience		×				
Avoid repeating opposing ideas / increasing their salience		×		×		
Find common ground		×				
Neutralise opposition arguments			×			
Use storytelling				×		×
Communications delivery						
Choose credible messengers, including migrants or moderates	×	×				
Use succinct / digestible / focussed messaging	×			×	×	×
Be visual	×					×

Moreover, the above recommendations and studies by advocacy groups are so useful because their findings derive from application and real-world experiences. However, the specificity and complexity of each particular real-world experience can lead to findings that are only particular to certain situations or biases that are difficult to detect outside of controlled settings. As such, it is useful to combine and place these practitioner recommendations within the broader scientifically-produced, theoretically-backed literature. In the next section we consider the academic literature on values and what consequences this has for strategic messaging on migration.

### **What are values?**

Throughout the twentieth century, psychologists made numerous attempts to classify human 'values'. For each of these classifications, the constituent 'values' are identifiable, are drawn from a finite set, tend to relate to each other in some systematic manner, vary little in strength or relative prioritisation within individuals in the short term, vary more significantly in strength and relative prioritisation between individuals and can be successfully used as predictors for attitudes on more specific, temporal issues and human behaviour.

Indeed, the importance of values as predictors of human attitudes and activity was noted at least as early as 1961 by Allport, who stated 'personal values are the dominating force in life, and all of a person's activity is directed toward the realization of his values. And so the focus for understanding is the other's value-orientation—or, we might say, his philosophy of life (Allport, 1961: 543).' Some of the more prominent human value theories include those of Murray (1938), Rokeach (1973), Feather and Peay (1975), Maloney and Katz (1976), Hofstede (1980), Wicker et al. (1984), Cawley, Martin and Johnson (2000), Peterson and Seligman (2004), Schwartz (1992, 1994, 2012) and Talevich et al. (2017). Of note, besides the sheer breadth of these human value theories, is disconcerting observation of Jost et al. (2016: 351) that 'these theorists' conceptions bear little resemblance to one another.'

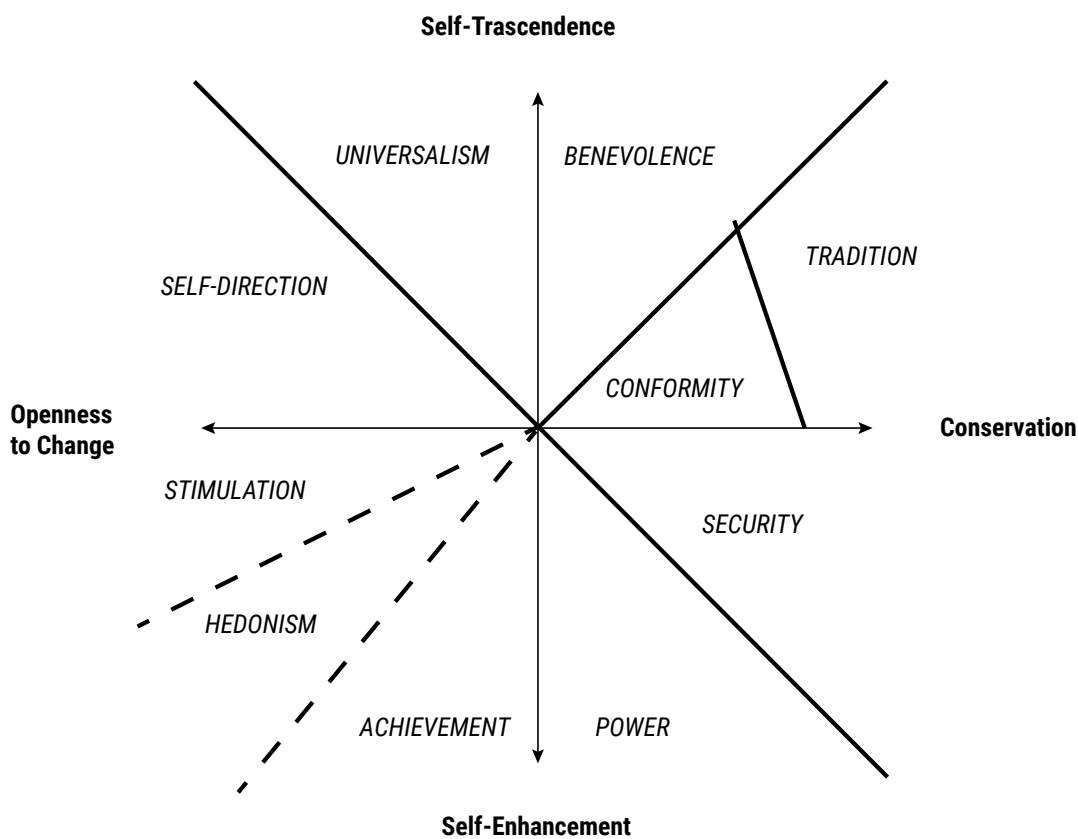
Perhaps the most eminent and broadly utilised of these values schema is Schwartz's theory of basic personal values (1992). Schwartz defines values as cognitive representations of broad motivational goals, rather than attitudes towards particular situations, and as stable metrics of the guiding principles in individuals' lives. This definition of values has been echoed in later works, such as Brosch and Sander (2013: 3) who define values as 'stable motivational constructs or beliefs about desirable end states that transcend specific situations and guide the selection or evaluation of behaviours and events.' Following empirical testing, Schwartz (1992) shows that there are ten essential values and within each of these are multiple 'motivational goals' with accompanying hypothesised evolutionary causal mechanisms. These values are shown to be consistent across cultures. An eleventh value – spirituality – was initially proposed but then discarded after it was shown to vary considerably by culture, in contrast to the fundamental nature of the other values. The ten values, the basic motivation goal of each and the constituent goals—used as the foundations for the codification of the resultant values—are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Schwartz's 10 basic personal values (1992: 6-12, 24)

Value	Basic motivational goal	Specific goal examples
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature	Social justice, inner harmony, equality, broadminded, unity with nature, protecting environment, a world at peace, world of beauty, wisdom
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact	True friendship, mature love, meaning in life, responsible, loyal, helpful, honest, forgiving, spiritual life
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion impose on the individual	Humble, respect for tradition, moderate, devout, detachment, accepting portion in life
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations and norms	Obedient, honour parents, self-discipline, politeness
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationship and of self	National security, social order, family security, cleanliness, reciprocation of favours, sense of belonging, healthy
Power	Attainment or preservation of a dominant position within the more general social system	Authority, wealth, social power, social recognition, preserving public image
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards	Successful, ambitious, influential, capable, intelligent
Hedonism	Pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself	Pleasure, enjoying life
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (a varied life, an exciting life, daring)	Exciting life, varied life, daring
Self-Direction	Independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring	Independent, freedom, curious, creativity, choosing own goals, self-respect

Schwartz (1992) shows that these values can be arranged in relation to each other on two dimensions (first, self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement and, second, conservation vs. openness to change) as shown in Figure 1. Furthermore, this arrangement shows how some values share commonalities with others, and are thus placed side-by-side, whereas others are highly dissimilar and thus placed in direct opposition to each other. The result is four higher-order value types and two resulting bipolar value dimensions. The accord between this theory and empirical testing of it is notable (e.g. Schwartz, 1994), partially accounting for its popularity.

**Figure 1.** Schwartz's (1992: 45) 'Revised theoretical model of relations among motivational types of values, higher order value types and bipolar value dimensions'



A handful of political scientists and psychologists have attempted to use human value-based conceptual frameworks to explain variation in political attitudes (Rokeach, 1973; Knutsen, 1995; Schwartz, 1994; Gunther and Kuan, 2007; Jost et al., 2003, 2016). The theorised causal mechanism underlying such an explanation relies on the assumption that 'individuals hold the beliefs, opinions, and values they do because they address one or more psychological need or interest, such as those related to self-esteem maintenance, group cohesion, or rationalisation of the social order (Jost et al., 2016: 352).' For example, conservative positions such as maintenance of hierarchy and social order have been shown to result from valuing certainty, order, safety

and control (Jost et al., 2003). In turn, variation in the value-based correlates of liberalism and conservatism have been shown to be the result of neurocognitive structure and function, ‘especially when it comes to the anterior cingulate cortex and the amygdala (Jost et al, 2016: 353; see also Amodio et al, 2007 and Kandler et al., 2012)’. Furthermore, Jost et al (2016: 353) argue that values mediate the relationship between personality and ideology.’ In short, there is a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for the supposed link between values and political attitudes.

However, according to Feldman (2003: 479), this value-based approach to explaining variation in political attitudes has ‘not received sufficient attention’. Schwartz et al. (2010) also lament the absence of such investigations. They explain this dearth as the result of ‘the different intellectual and disciplinary origins’ of political scientists and psychologists and the tendency of the former to see fundamental values in such political terms as egalitarianism, ethnocentrism etc., despite these plainly operating at more proximal position to more fundamental non-political, all-encompassing human values (Schwartz et al, 2010: 422). They (2010: 422) show that Schwartz’s ten comprehensive personal values act as effective predictors of ten core political values (e.g. law and order, civil liberties etc.) and, ultimately, party choice at the ballot box (see also Piurko et al, 2011; Schwartz et al 2014).

### ***How do values affect attitudes to immigration?***

Despite the vast literature seeking to explain variation in attitudes to immigration, psychological explanations, including those using personal values, remain relatively few. This dearth is only highlighted further when we consider the sizeable literature devoted to causal mechanisms such as ‘contact theory’ or ‘economic marginalisation’, both of which are likely to affect far fewer citizens than the universal existence of personal values and, intuitively, are likely to have weaker effects given their more superficial, short-term nature compared to deep-seated values.

The most developed and important attempts so far to test the relationship between values and attitudes to immigration are those of Sagiv and Schwartz (1995), Davidov and Meuleman (2012) and Davidov et al (2018; 2014). In these studies, the authors use pan-European data to show that Schwartz’s value system can successfully predict attitudes to immigration. The authors find that the two values of ‘universalism’ and ‘benevolence’ increase positivity to immigration, particularly the former, whereas the three values of ‘security’, ‘conformity’ and ‘tradition’—together making up the ‘conservation’ higher order value—decrease positivity to immigration.

### ***Demonstrating the relationship between values and attitudes to immigration***

I now briefly turn to demonstrating this relationship between values and attitudes to immigration by comparing the entire value-orientation of different groups of Europeans according to their attitudes to migration, rather than testing specific relationships. To do so, I use data from the ninth, most recent, wave of the European Social Survey (ESS). This is formed of data collected between 2018 and 2019 in 19 countries.<sup>1</sup> The ESS is a biannual cross-national survey based on face-to-face interviews in each participating country. The ESS is unique in that it provides high-quality data, covering an extremely broad range of political attitudes, amongst other variables, across every region of Europe, as well as Israel. Respondents are selected by

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia (excluded from this report’s analysis) and Slovenia.

probability sampling of residents who are aged 15 or over. The ESS allows for weighting by both country population size and according to stratification.

The ninth round of the ESS includes three questions measuring attitudes to the admission of immigrants<sup>2</sup>. These are:

- “Should your country allow (1) many, (2) some, (3) a few or (4) no immigrants from poorer countries out of Europe?”
- “Should your country allow (1) many, (2) some, (3) a few or (4) no immigrants of a different race/ethnic group from the majority?”
- “Should your country allow (1) many, (2) some, (3) a few or (4) no immigrants of the same race/ethnic group from the majority?”

Using these three variables, I create a variable that is the mean response to the above three questions, which, therefore, exists on the same 1-4 scale, with 1 indicating that the respondent was in favour of the admission of ‘many’ of each of the three groups and 4 indicating that the respondent was in favour of the admission of ‘none’ of each of the three groups. For the purposes of visualisation below, I then place each respondent into one of four groups: strongly anti-immigration (scoring 3 or above; weighted 26.3% of Europeans); leaning anti-immigration (scoring between 2 and 3; weighted 20.0% of Europeans); leaning pro-immigration (scoring exactly 2; 30.5% of Europeans); and strongly pro-immigration (scoring less than 2; 23.2% of Europeans).

The ESS includes 21 variables that seek to measure Schwartz’s 10 basic human values, as described above. These are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Schwartz’s (1992) ten values and their ESS 2014 operationalisation

	Value	ESS operationalisation (underlining by author)
		Question: “Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you.”
		Responses: (1) Very much like me (2) Like me (3) Somewhat like me (4) A little like me (5) Not like me (6) Not like me at all
1	Universalism	She <sup>3</sup> thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.
		It is important to her to listen to people who are different <sup>4</sup> from her. Even when she disagrees with them, she still wants to understand them.
		She strongly believes that people should care for <sup>5</sup> nature. Looking after the environment is important to her.
2	Benevolence	It’s very important to her to help the people around her. She wants to care for <sup>6</sup> their well-being.
		It is important to her to be loyal to her friends. She wants to devote <sup>7</sup> herself to people close to her.
3	Tradition	Tradition is important to her. She tries to follow the customs handed down by her religion or his family.
		It is important to her to be humble and modest. She tries not to draw attention to herself.

2 The ESS also includes three questions on the perceived economic, quality of life and cultural effects of immigration, which I do not explore here.

3 Feminine pronouns and possessives are used when the respondent is female. Masculine pronouns and possessives are used when the respondent is male.

4 “Different” in almost any way. The key idea is that he sees difference/diversity positively and as something worth learning about.

5 “care for”: look after, basically synonymous with ‘looking after’ in the second sentence

6 “care for”: here in the sense of actively promote their well-being.

7 “Devote”: is intended to convey deep concern for these people and readiness to invest his time, resources and energy in their welfare.



4	Conformity	It is important to her always to behave properly. She wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.
		She believes that people should do what they're told <sup>8</sup> . She thinks people should follow rules <sup>9</sup> at all times, even when no-one is watching.
5	Security	It is important to her to live in secure <sup>10</sup> surroundings. She avoids anything that might endanger her safety.
		It is important to her that the government ensures <sup>11</sup> her safety against all threats. She wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.
6	Power	It is important to her to get <sup>12</sup> respect from others. She wants people to do what she says.
		It is important to her to be rich. She wants to have a lot of money and expensive <sup>13</sup> things.
7	Achievement	Being very successful is important to her. She hopes people will recognise her achievements.
		It's important to her to show <sup>14</sup> her abilities. She wants people to admire <sup>15</sup> what she does.
8	Hedonism	Having a good time is important to her. She likes to "spoil" <sup>16</sup> herself.
		she seeks every chance <sup>17</sup> She can to have fun. It is important to her to do things that give her pleasure.
9	Stimulation	She likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life <sup>18</sup> .
		She looks for adventures and likes to take risks. She wants to have an exciting <sup>19</sup> life.
10	Self-Direction	It is important to her to make her own decisions about what she does. She likes to be free and not depend <sup>20</sup> on others.
		Thinking up new ideas <sup>21</sup> and being creative is important to her. She likes to do things in her own original way.

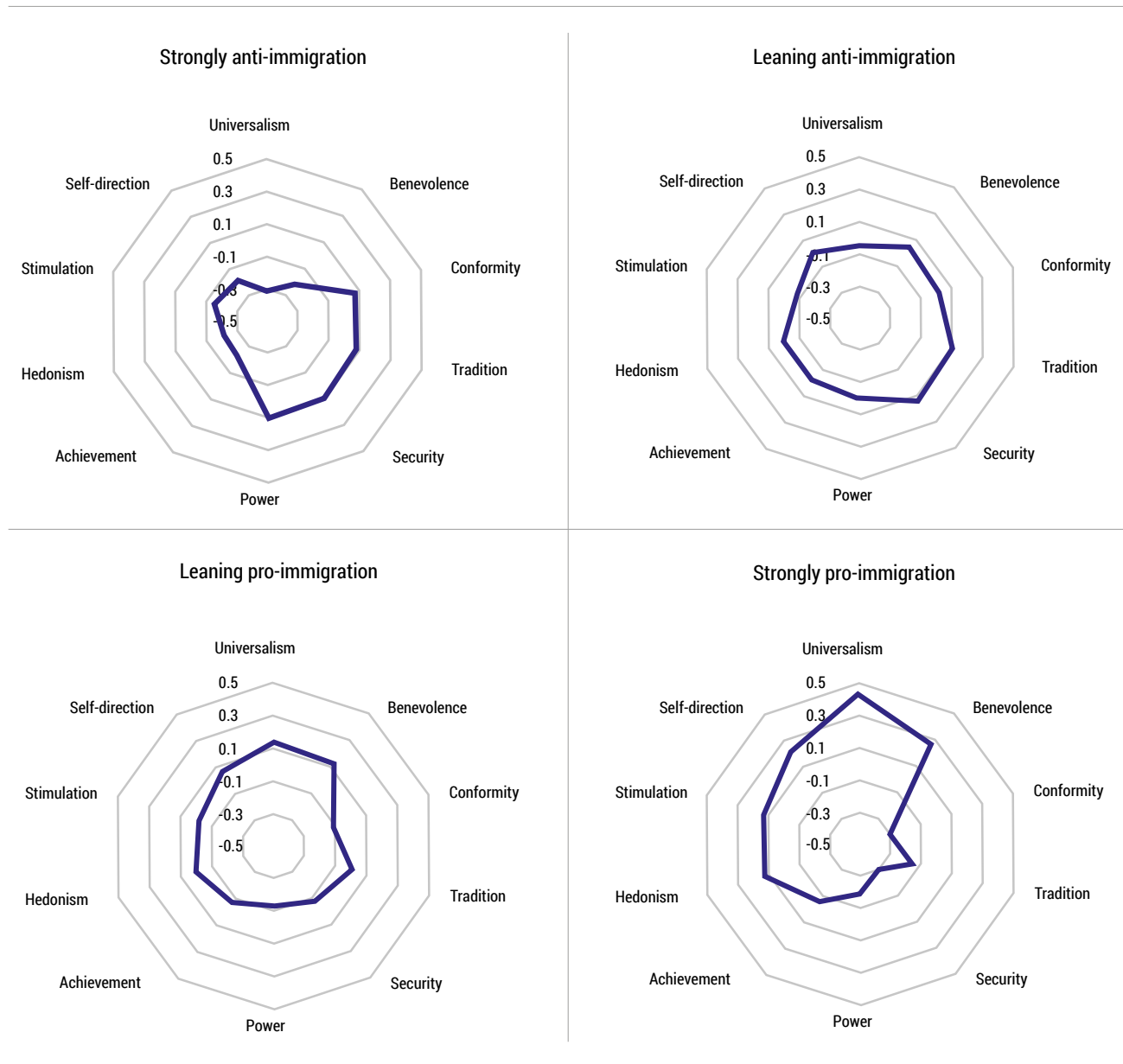
In Figure 2, the distribution of values across each of the four groups is outlined, measured as z-scores (i.e. standard deviations from the mean, which is 0). A higher score indicates that the value is more common in that group than in the general population, with a negative scoring indicating the opposite. As we can see, there is a clear pattern whereby:

- Strongly anti-immigration Europeans tend to value conformity, security, tradition and power above the European average. Conversely, they are far less likely to value universalism, benevolence, self-direction, stimulation or hedonism.
- Europeans strongly pro-immigration tend to have the opposite value orientation, but far more magnified. They have the most skewed value orientation of any group and, above all, value universalism highly and undervalue security and conformity.
- The two more moderate groups have, by contrast, balanced value orientations.

**Figure 2.** Value orientations of four groups of Europeans

8	The idea here is that when someone else tells you what to do in actual interpersonal interaction,(implying also that the person has some authority), you should do it.
9	"Rules" in the sense of 'rules and regulations'.
10	In the sense of the surroundings actually being secure, and not that he feels secure.
11	"Ensures" in the sense of 'guarantees'.
12	Get/have this respect, not deserve respect
13	"Expensive": in the sense of costing a lot rather than being 'luxury' items.
14	The idea is to show whatever abilities he has, with no assumption that he actually has great abilities. It is important to him to be perceived as being able.
15	He wants his actions to be admired, not his person.
16	"Spoil herself": "treat herself" is another idiom. Strongly negative 'self-indulgence' is not intended.
17	Seeks: active pursuit rather than 'taking every' chance.
18	Important for himself (his life) is the focus.
19	"Exciting" more in the sense of 'exhilarating' than 'dangerous'.
20	In the sense of not to have to depend on people
21	Having new ideas, with an emphasis on the creative side of having them through generating them himself.

## Value orientations of four groups of European

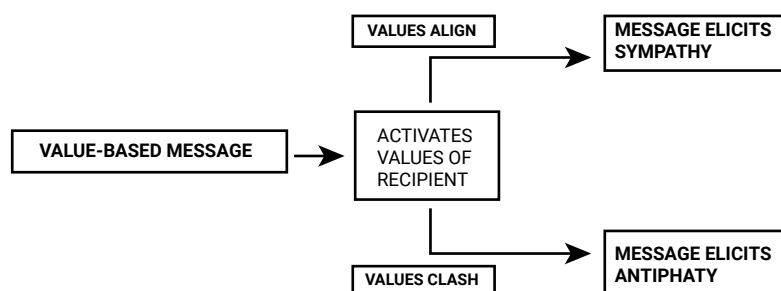


### How to communicate on migration using values

Having defined values and demonstrated their relationship with attitudes to immigration, we now turn to considering how to use this information to persuasively communicate on immigration using values. Overall, based on the above literature, we can deduce that messaging is most likely to elicit sympathy when the values it contains are concordant with those of recipient, this relationship is shown in Figure 3. In other words:

*Recipients will be sympathetic to a message when its values align with their own and they will be antipathetic to a message when its values diverge from their own.*

**Figure 3.** A model of the effect of value-based messaging on the effectiveness of the message



Specifically to the case of migration, and following on from the review on the relationship between values and attitudes to immigration, when migration messaging is framed in values of self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) or openness to change (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism) it is more likely to be supported by those already favouring immigration. When migration messaging is framed in values of conservation (security, tradition or conformity) or self-enhancement (power and to a lesser extent achievement) it is more likely to be supported by those already opposing immigration. To be most effective, messaging should use the opposite values of those already associated with its argument. For pro-immigration messaging, this means, conformity, tradition, security and power. For anti-immigration messaging this means universalism, benevolence and self-direction. These relationships are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The effect of the values-basis of pro- and anti-immigration messaging on attitudes to immigration

Argument type	Appeal to values of ...	Result
Pro-immigration	Universalism, benevolence, self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissuade moderates</li> <li>• Energise supporters</li> <li>• Increase polarisation / salience</li> </ul>
	Conformity, tradition, security, power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convince moderates</li> <li>• Supporters indifferent</li> <li>• Decrease polarisation / salience</li> </ul>
Anti-immigration	Universalism, benevolence, self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissuade moderates</li> <li>• Energise supporters</li> <li>• Increase polarisation / salience</li> </ul>
	Conformity, tradition, security, power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energise existing supporters</li> <li>• Supporters indifferent</li> <li>• Increase polarisation / salience</li> </ul>

### ***Examples of existing value-based communication on migration***

We now move to applying the above theoretical expectations to classifying real-world examples of migration communication. I use an inventory of 135 migration campaigns as collected by the ICMPD as the source of the campaigns. Because this inventory was not collected for this report, it can be considered as having the advantages of incidental data.

The contents of the inventory are attached to the appendix of this report. The campaigns include those from the period 2009-2019 in EU member states and states in the southern and eastern Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia). Campaigns come from national governments, international organisations, NGOs and the private sector and some political parties that held campaigns specific to migration policy. Campaigns are defined to not include media coverage but instead be planned activities with a goal of social or political change.

The vast majority of the campaigns within the inventory have the aim of changing attitudes towards immigration, often amongst other aims. However, a number are specifically related to emigration, smuggling and trafficking prevention or advertising services. I remove these campaigns for the sake of this analysis, leaving 106 campaigns. I then divide these into two groups, those with a pro-immigration message (98 campaigns) and those with an anti-immigration message (eight campaigns). Clearly, the inventory is by no means balanced, owing in large part to the sources of the campaigns (see above). It is neither by any means exhaustive, given that anti-immigration policy campaigns in the last ten years by radical right parties across Europe would likely number in the hundreds; though it does provide indicative and illustrative examples, as we shall see.

### The ubiquity of 'migrant's journey' videos

Of these 98 campaigns, 35 held focussed on the 'migrant's journey' narrative, essentially a retrospective narrative that typically details the trials and tribulations migrants faced leading to their decision to emigration, while on the journey and again once resident in the host country. These almost always held the overarching narrative point that migrants were victims, with the focus on refugees. Notably, 27 of these 35 campaigns were made in video format. They are summarised in Appendix 1. In Figure 4, below, I show four stills from a fairly typical graphical video of the journey undertaken by a refugee from the moment of fleeing her country to receiving refugee status in Estonia. A billboards campaign was launched in five Estonian cities to introduce the webpage. The third part of the campaign was a direct mailing to reach target groups in cities and rural areas. The delivered postcards told the stories of three different refugees who were forced to flee their countries.



**Figure 4.** Example of a 'migrant's journey' prototype of migrant communication. Source: Estonian Human Rights Centre. Available at <https://humanrights.ee/pagulane/eng/>

These campaigns, arguably, focus on the value of *benevolence*, as well as *universalism*. These campaigns are therefore likely to be most effective at mobilising those who are already sympathetic to the message—



for example, by encouraging fundraising or political mobilisation. However, these campaigns as attempts to move public opinion are somewhat limited, regardless of their values-basis, because they are retrospective and therefore unable to fulfil the strategic forward-looking motivational goals that values underpin. Moreover, they are unlikely to be effective at convincing moderate citizens given their focus on a single value that is typically already associated with refugees.

### Remaining pro-migration campaigns



The remaining 63 campaigns represent a very broad spectrum in terms of format and approach. Of these 63 campaigns, 18 focus on migrants' lives once living in the host country (some others partially have this focus). The majority of these, around 15 of the 18 here, have no obvious, particular value-basis, instead focussing purely on attempting to humanise migrants. In a sense, the value-basis of these could be classified as universalism. Four examples of these are shown in Figure 5, below.



**Figure 5.** Four examples of 'humanising migrants' campaigns. Clockwise, from the top: AMITIE campaign (2012)<sup>22</sup>; Living Together campaign (#شارك الصداقة, #sharethefriendship 2018)<sup>23</sup>; Vota per me (Vote for me) campaign; Gegen (2013)<sup>24</sup> Vorurteile (Against prejudice) campaign (2015)<sup>25</sup>

However, three of these had more explicit values-bases beyond universalism and benevolence. These clearly pointed to the ability of migrants to support other broad motivation goals. Three social media posts from one of these campaigns—'We are Upper Austria' (*Wir Sind Oberösterreich*)—and one from a series entitled 'I am a stranger until you get to

know me' (*sunt un străin, până mă cunoști*) are shown below in Figure 6.

22 [https://www.clarinetproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Presentation-AMITIE-campaign\\_ENG\\_low.pdf](https://www.clarinetproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Presentation-AMITIE-campaign_ENG_low.pdf)  
 23 <https://www.iom.int/news/un-migration-agency-egypt-launches-campaign-foster-community-cohesion>  
 24 [https://www.corriere.it/cronache/18\\_febbraio\\_13/vota-me-campagna-provocatoria-volti-migranti-aed645de-10de-11e8-ae74-6fc70a32f18b.shtml](https://www.corriere.it/cronache/18_febbraio_13/vota-me-campagna-provocatoria-volti-migranti-aed645de-10de-11e8-ae74-6fc70a32f18b.shtml)  
 25 <http://www.interface-wien.at/>



**Figure 6.** Values-based pro-migration messaging. "We are Upper Austria<sup>26</sup>"; "Yesterday refugee, today medic. I am a stranger until you get to know me"<sup>27</sup>

These four examples below express migration in value-terms. Most obviously this is in terms of the economic or labour contribution of each of the migrants pictured. In Schwarz's values-scheme, this would fall under the value category of 'power'. However, more subtly, each of the pieces of communication speak to other values that fall under the 'conservation' higher order value type. The three Austrian examples each show migrants collaborating with native Austrians, in two cases wearing uniforms: this is an allusion to 'conformity'. The examples of the firefighter, medic and nurse, each concerned with health and safety, point to the value of 'security'. Finally, the implied apprenticeship (or similar) relationships in the top two examples may also allude to the value of 'tradition'. Overall, each of these messaging examples has a value-basis that includes at least one of the values regularly associated with anti-immigration sentiment. According to this report's theoretical model, we should therefore expect these to be more effective examples of persuasive messaging. The remaining 45 pro-immigration campaigns came in a remarkable variety of formats. However, few contained an obvious values-basis. This is not to suggest that they were ineffective. Many indeed fulfilled other recommendations as laid out earlier in this report.

### Values-based anti-immigration messaging

The inventory of migration messaging campaigns that this study is based on included just eight anti-immigration campaigns. However, all of them had a value-basis. Furthermore, the majority spoke to values associated with pro-immigration sentiment and so potentially appealing to moderates. In Figure 7, below, I outline examples of those based on the values of 'security', 'tradition', 'conformity' and 'power'.



**Figure 7.** Values-based ('security', 'tradition', 'conformity' and 'power') anti-immigration messaging. Top left: 'The forcible relocation endangers our culture and traditions.' Top right: 'Migration pact = focus on maintaining the culture of origin of migrant'. Bottom left: (2018) 'So that Europe does not become Eurabia!'. Bottom right: 2018 'Migration pact = difficulty in organizing returns'

26 <https://wirsindooe.at/>

27 <https://www.straininromania.ro/descriere-proiect/>

The top left is a page from an anti-migrant booklet passed out by the Hungarian government. The title reads 'The forcible relocation endangers our culture and traditions' and then says 'Several hundred 'no-go' areas in Europe's big cities' itself pointing to the value of security. The top right example is from the Flemish far-right party 'Flemish Block'. It reads 'Migration pact = focus on maintaining the culture of origin of migrant'. The bottom right is also from the same series and reads 'Migration pact = difficulty in organizing returns'. These respectively are based on the values of 'conformity' and 'tradition' and 'security' and 'power'. Finally, the bottom left campaign comes from the German far right party 'Alternative for Germany' and reads 'So that Europe does not become Eurabia!' while showing an Orientalist painting of a white woman at an Arab slave auction, speaking to the values of 'security' and 'power'.

Below, in Figure 8, we see four examples of anti-immigration messaging based on the values of 'universalism', 'benevolence', 'self-direction' and 'stimulation'. The top left comes from a campaign against the Global Compact for Migration and implies that the 'migration pact' and, presumably, migration moreover are threats to tolerance rather than a form of tolerance, a 'universalist' value. In doing so, it speaks to an argument often used by the radical right in Europe regarding the social conservatism, particularly on issues of LGBT and women's rights, of some migrants. The second, from the youth organisation of the French far right party 'Front National' states that 'Sandra has been sleeping in her car with her son for three months. Unfortunately for her, she is not a migrant', making an argument based on the value of 'benevolence'. The bottom two, both from the Identitarian Generation anti-immigration social movement state, on the left, 'I live an experience out of the ordinary. I defend my country' and, on the right, 'I want to be the new breath that is going to change our country'. These speak to 'stimulation' and 'self-direction', respectively.



**Figure 8.** Values-based ('universalism', 'benevolence', 'self-direction', 'stimulation') anti-immigration messaging .

Top right: 'Sandra has been sleeping in her car with her son for three months. Unfortunately for her she is not a migrant' (2018); Bottom left: 'I live an experience out of the ordinary (2019). I defend my country.' Bottom right: "I want to be the new breath that is going to change our country' (2019).

## **Discussion**

This report started by providing a summary of key recommendations from existing best-practice guides for migration communication. Though the most common recommendation is to focus on values-based messaging, very little work has considered what values-based messaging is and what type of value-based messaging is likely to work regarding migration. I then summarised the academic literature on values, focussing on Schwarz's theory of basic human values: broad, stable motivational goals that individuals hold in life, which predict attitudes to specific issues and behaviour. The relationship between these ten values are graphically displayed: universalism, benevolence, stimulation and self-direction are associated with pro-immigration attitudes, whereas conformity, security, tradition and power are associated with anti-immigration attitudes.

Theoretically, I argue that aligning migration policy communication with the values of the target audience values is likely to elicit greater sympathy for the message. Values-based messages that do not align with those of the audience are less likely to elicit sympathy and may elicit antipathy. This report then analysed migration policy communication examples from an inventory of 135 campaigns from both sides of the Mediterranean provided by the ICMPD. It is then systematically considered how well these campaigns align with expectations as derived from the theoretical framework. Few pro-migration campaigns contained value-based messaging, whereas all anti-migration campaigns did. Similarly, very few pro-migration campaigns included values besides 'universalism' and 'benevolence', whereas anti-migration campaigns included values associated with both pro- and anti-migration attitudes. Examples of each case were visually demonstrated.

This report provides policymakers with an understanding of what values-based policy communication is and how, using robust data, they can communicate policies that are concordant with the values of their audiences in a way likely to elicit sympathy. Although this report uses the example of migration policy communication, the same approach can be taken for policies on any politically controversial issue. Future migration policy communication that seeks to incorporate values should use a systematic approach such as that found in this study and seek to incorporate the values of the target audience. Future research should robustly test the effects of each of these kinds of communication using experimental methods, be they field, lab or survey experiments. Alternative values-scheme and forms psychological predispositions, for example, personality types, should also be considered.



# Afterword

Communication, as all human activities, must be value-based. No single art is able to stand-alone, be credible, justified and productive unless it fits into a mechanism (a plan, a policy development, a socio-cultural project, a full-fledged strategy) where it provides an added value for a collective benefice.

Migration has always been an intrinsic inclination of human beings. It has always historically had a dual main objective: to escape from uncomfortable living conditions and to try to seek a friendlier environment where to build a better future.

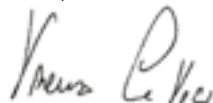
Investigating human attitudes in this context cannot be considered a “mission impossible”. On the contrary, this is a crucial step for political leaders, scientists and academics to be fully aware of the risks of geo-socio-political instabilities in our society.

Likewise, communicators must honour their key obligations. They have to witness the phenomenology and share communalities, to facilitate comprehension and governance. They also have to duly inform citizens and help understand how societies can draw lessons from trends, opportunities and threats, in order to become more resilient, interactive and cooperative. This is even more relevant in times of crisis, as the global pandemic has made dramatically evident.

This report, which focuses on value-based communication in the field of migration, aims to better interpret figures and methodologies and thoroughly explore relations between values and attitudes. To this end, it suggests a more constructive way to handle controversial issues through a reasonably balanced approach, without indulging in prejudices, stereotypes or slogans, but using communication as a real science at the service of the citizens.

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