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Country/Region: Europe



Ahead of the European Parliamentary elections, immigration has become the biggest hot button issue—even more so than the economy and climate change. Across the continent, [far right political parties are gathering momentum by blaming any and all of Europe's problems on immigrant communities and open borders](#)

In some cases, this has led to all-out hate speech. Far right movements with names like [Pegida](#)—which quite literally stands for Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident—are becoming increasingly common, as conservative parties like Alternatives for Deutschland (AfD) gain prominence.

Both the far right political parties and movements have led to widespread disinformation, particularly when it comes to migrants. A recent Eurobarometer survey showed that [respondents in nineteen of the twenty-eight Member States believe that the number of immigrants in their country is two to three times as high as the real figures.](#)

This is having disastrous consequences, for both migrants and their allies. Many countries have seen a rise in Islamophobic and xenophobic hate crimes, and hateful rhetoric from far right parties. Research from openDemocracy shows that [at least 250 European citizens have been criminalized for providing food, shelter and transportation to migrants thought to be moving illegally.](#)

Many voters are confused about what to feel. While 39 percent of Europeans believe that media representation of immigrants is objective, 36 percent say that it is too negative and 13 percent do not know what to think.

How can we provide factual information and real stories about immigrants in the European Union? One of our projects, [#NewNeighbours](#), aims to do this by providing factual information about migrants, and real stories about daily life in an intercultural European Union on its new website. We are also organizing trainings which aim to help journalists connect to civil society activists, to work together to create positive stories about migrants and integration.

Another one of our projects, [#SilenceHate](#) is specifically oriented around countering xenophobic hate speech towards migrants and refugees. We have trained journalists around Europe to create new stories about migrants and refugees which centres their voices, and challenges the stereotypes that are created when journalists speak about migrants, rather than to migrants.

Please share our resources for sharing stories, and [calling out hate](#).