



How can we tell a more positive story about migration?



European Migration Network – Youth Day

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Context

- **Divided public opinion:** attitudes towards migrants have been highly polarised



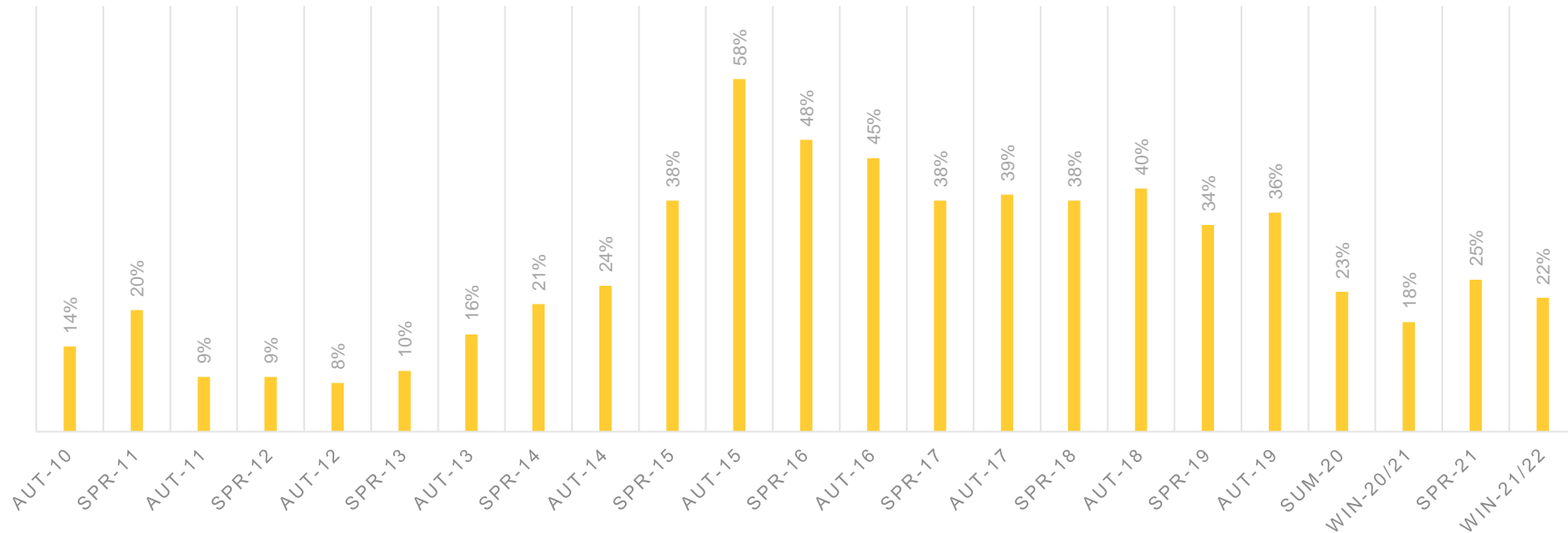
- **Low awareness of migration issues**

- 62% of respondents are not well informed about migration (Special Eurobarometer on Integration of immigrants in the EU 2022)

- High share of EU citizens mentioning immigration as a concern for their country (Standard Eurobarometer)
- Younger respondents and those with higher levels of education more likely to feel that integration has been a success and that immigrants have had a positive impact (Special Eurobarometer on Integration of immigrants in the EU 2022)

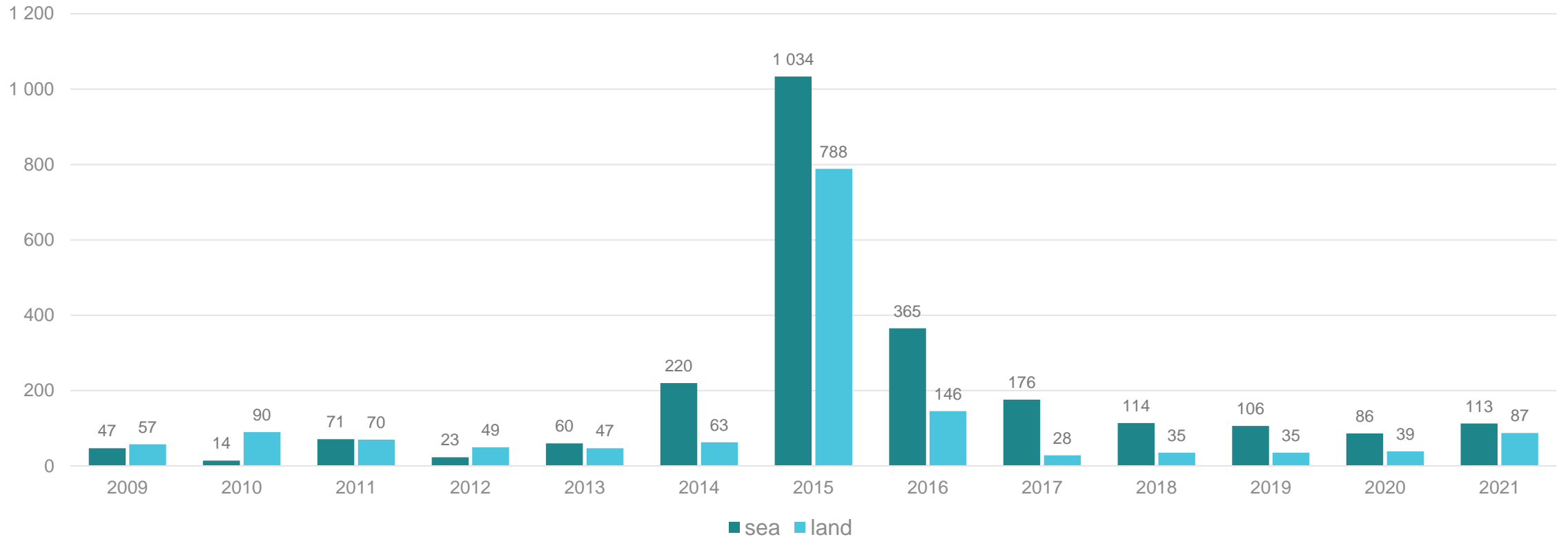
The general trend over time

IMMIGRATION IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE EU AT THE MOMENT (% OF RESPONDENTS)



Source: [Eurobarometer – Public opinion in the European Union](#)

Irregular Migrant Arrivals in the EU (1000s)



Knowledge of the share of migrants in the EU population

In the EU, on average...

... close to **seven in ten** (68%) **overestimate the real share of immigrants** in the population



Don't know (13%)

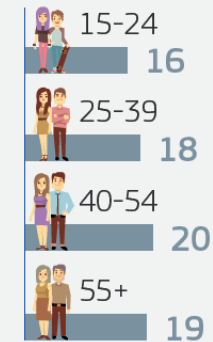
... close to **one in five** (19%) **correctly guess the range** (between 0% and 6%) of the proportion of immigrants in their countries

EUROSTAT DATA
Share of immigrants population in the EU: **5%**

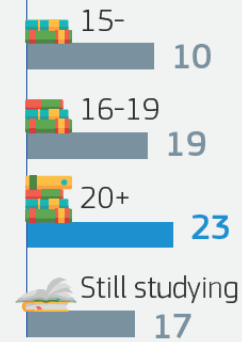
% Estimate correctly (between 0% and 6%)

EU27

Age



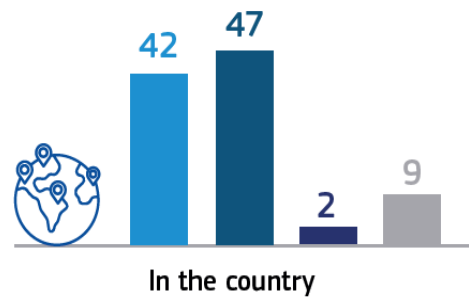
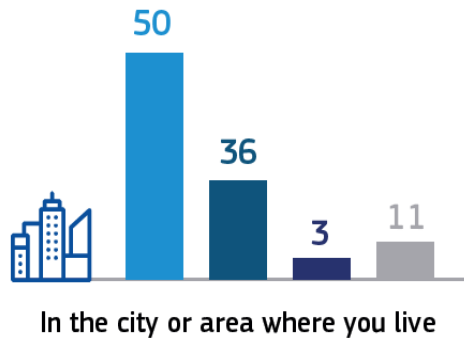
Education (End of)



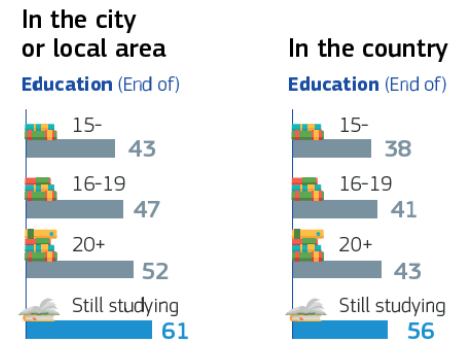
(Special Eurobarometer on Integration of immigrants in the EU 2022)

Europeans' perception of the successful integration of migrants

■ Total 'Successful'
 ■ Total 'Unsuccessful'
 ■ There are no or almost no immigrants in...
 ■ Don't know



How successful is integration of immigrants living...
(% Total 'Successful')



(Special Eurobarometer on Integration of immigrants in the EU 2022)

Polarising Migration Narratives



- Migrants represent:
 - burden to the state budget
 - **security** threat and increased criminality
 - **health** risk
 - Threat to **cultural identity**

On the other hand

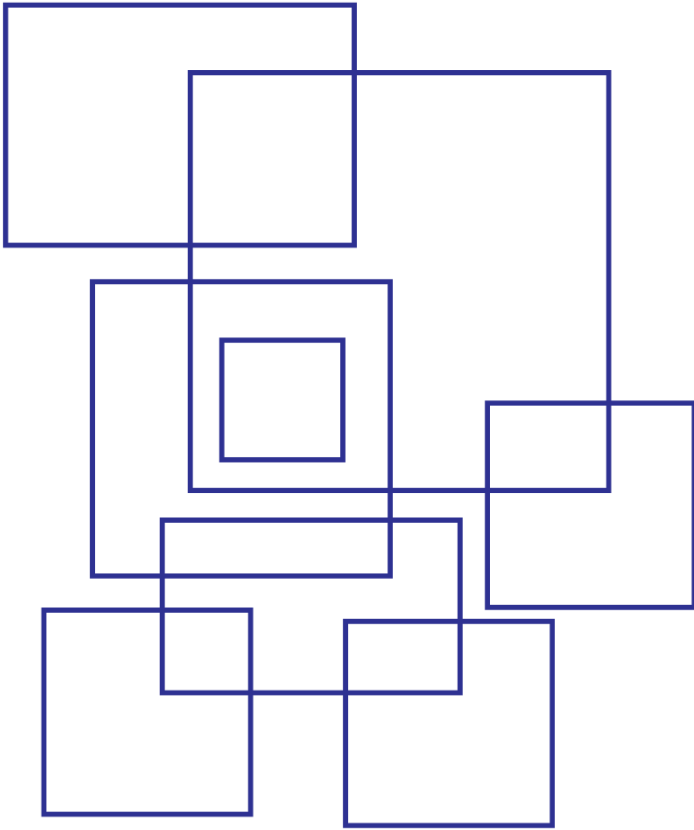
- “Europe doesn't care about refugees and wants to keep them from coming to Fortress Europe”

Polarising Narratives on Ukraine



- Ukrainians are not wanted in Europe.
- Ukrainian refugees are invading the EU, abusing our welfare system.
- EU migration policy is racist for giving preferential treatment to Ukrainians over migrants and refugees from other countries.
- Ukrainians receive preferential access to services and misuse the welfare systems in certain Member States.
- There is no solidarity in the distribution of Ukrainians refugees across the EU.

How do we reframe narratives on migration



- **Storytelling** around positive frames
- Focus on **hope**
- Talk about **people**, not numbers
- Use **emotions** to make stories real and relatable
- Pay attention to the **language** we use
- Appeal to diverse **values**, not only solidarity and care



Communicating positive policy examples

- **Balance between solidarity and responsibility:** the Pact on Migration and Asylum
- **Skills and Talent package:** new approach to legal migration to strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries
- **EU-funded project 'New Neighbours':** mobilising media and civil society actors to foster greater intercultural understanding between migrants and host communities in Europe

Example: Migration Works



- Coming from Sierra Leone, Omar Barrie found work as a welder in Italy



[Urbagri4Women - educational & social inclusion - YouTube](#)

Paying attention to the language

WORDS TO AVOID	WORDS WE USE
Migration flows/waves/pressure	Migratory arrivals / large number of arrivals
Floods of migrants	Increased arrivals of migrants
Frontline Member State	Bordering Member State
Camps/detention centre	Reception centre/Reception and Identification Centre
Illegal migrants	Irregular migrants
Migratory crisis	Increased arrivals of Migrants
Surge	Increase
To channel	To invite
A channel	A route
Unaccompanied minors	Children/unaccompanied migrant children

Targeting youth and increasing youth engagement in the EU



- Youth engagement: a **majority (58%) of young people are active in the societies** they live in and have participated in one or more youth organisations over the last 12 months.
- Young people's most common expectation for the 2022 European Year of Youth is for decision-makers to **listen more to their demands and act on them**, and to support their personal, social and professional development
- how we include young people in policy and decision-making.

(Flash Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy, conducted between 22 February and 4 March 2022)

Awareness-raising campaign on migration



- **Objective:** to raise awareness and help shift the current narrative on migration to a **more positive, hope-based** communication moving away from the crisis narrative
- 3 campaign's pillars:
 - 1) Increase 'migration literacy'
 - 2) Raise awareness and address 'Myths about migration'
 - 3) Human stories 'Real impact on real people'
- Balance facts and emotions
- **Target audience:** youth and 'the movable middle'

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