



# Peace Messengers Sessions

## MIGRATION

### *Background information and session plan*



**Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”  
- Article 14 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights**

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## **Peace Messenger - Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to promote peace and intercultural understanding to empower people to implement and promote pacifist values in their lives. Peace Messengers are using the non formal education methodology for sessions on work-camps to connect the camps with SCI's identity as a peace organization.



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***This session outline and session outlines on other topics are available in SCI Members Area (Peace Messengers section):  
<http://ma.sciint.org>***

## ***Brainstorming***

You can start the workshop with brainstorming by using the pictures of Patrick Chappatte<sup>1</sup>. Ask participants to relate these pictures with the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in their country. Do they find similarities or differences?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick\\_Chappatte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Chappatte)

# **Introduction**

**Please note that these sessions were developed in 2014 and that by the time you read this some background factual information might be outdated- take time to check the facts before sharing the information!**

Even when the prejudices against asylum seekers and refugees are increasing and it is not possible to impose acceptance and solidarity, it is possible to try to change individual behavior and to reduce prejudices. The meetings with refugees, foreigners and people of other cultures can make possible to change the opinion. That is why it is so important to have access to objective information on issues of forced migration, asylum and integration and their background, in order to reduce misconceptions about these problematics. (*Adapted from OSAR*<sup>1</sup>)

In this sense, we should try to understand:

- a) the movements of population,
- b) the reasons for flight/forced migration,
- c) the circumstances of arriving in a new and unknown country and
- d) the asylum seekers proceedings and to know the impact of the administration and bureaucracy on the migrant's life.

Millions of people are fleeing in the world, to escape persecution, oppression and threats that endanger their lives or physical integrity. Only a small minority of them manage to reach Europe.

Most refugees stay within the borders of their own country, or flee to a neighboring country. The most populated area with refugees is between Jordan and Pakistan. More than 80% of refugees live in development countries, very often in the poorest countries, like for example the Democratic Republic of Kongo has accepted about 1,7 million refugees and displaced people. ('Le Monde Diplomatique, Atlas der Globalisierung' 2009)

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<sup>1</sup> OSAR: Organisation Suisse d'aide aux réfugiés. <http://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/formation/nos-offres>

Even when the thematic is large, we aim here to provide some elements of discussion, on the base of bibliography and exercises, to promote a first step of reflection.

## What we talk about when we talk about refugees

There are refugees in virtually every country around the world and we hear about their plight on a daily basis through the media. People become refugees when one or more of their fundamental human rights are threatened or violated, and they are forced to flee. Nobody chooses to become a refugee.

The 1951 Geneva-Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a **refugee** as a person who is outside the country of his/her nationality and unable or unwilling to return to it, “owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of **race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.**” Under the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons, a person is “**stateless**” when “he/she is not regarded automatically a national (or citizen) from under the Laws of Any State. To be stateless is often to be unable to enjoy the array of rights that are granted to Citizens without issue, such as the rights to education, work, travel, and health care”. The term “**internally displaced person (IDP)**” is used for people who have been persecuted or forced to move to another part of their own country due to war, climatic catastrophes (ex: flood, earthquake) or humanitarian crisis (ex: hunger, disease).

Anyway, we should be cautious when using or hearing these terms. It always depends who uses them and for what purpose. The legal status refugee is always given by an authority, the state or an intergovernmental body (such as UNHCR). Once a person has been qualified refugee, he or she will have protection rights (that is mainly: no state has the right to send back the refugee to the country where he or she fled from. But also right to health, food, education). Within the public (and sometimes the media) there is a confusion of these terms.

There is a difference between a **foreigner** and a refugee. A refugee, initially, has to depend on the national authorities for basic necessities (clothing, shelter, food, etc.) and on acceptance of the new community, even when later they can contribute to their new societies in many ways.

There is a difference between refugees and **immigrants** also. The refugee cannot go back to his or her country. Otherwise his or her life is at risk. But if a refugee returns voluntarily to his or her country, he or she loses the refugee status. Refugees are a painful reminder of the difficulties of some States to provide: a safe life for their citizens, free from discrimination, violence and persecution, and respect of human rights. Immigrants or foreigners leave their countries not because they were forced to leave it, but because they wanted to change their country because of marriage, education, work, or other. We could say that in the case of refugees, the push-factors were determinative, and in the case of immigrants pull-factors. Other differences are: Refugees

must go through a asylum procedure, that is a long waiting period, uncertainty about the future, a refugee often is emotionally bound to his or her home-country, a refugee may be traumatized or have experienced very difficult things (loss of family members, prison, torture, etc.).

In this sense, when the very government persecutes its citizens, the safety of people is not granted at all. This is the case of refugees coming from countries with dictatorship systems, civil wars and political persecutions. Sometimes it is not the government who persecutes the people, but other groups (paramilitary, family members, other ethnic/religious group). If the government is not able to protect the person effectively, he or she can apply for refugee status in another country.

In case of **Immigrants**, poverty and lack of prospects are the main reasons for migration from southern countries to northern one. In the last years the trade of cheap labor and prostitution is growing worldwide. The migration streams are not only based on historical colonial connections but also on globalization and liberalization of world trade. For example hundred thousand farmers from Mexico had to leave their fields in the last years, because they could not compete with subsidized products from USA. Most of them moved to USA for work. Beside globalization there are around 200 million victims of compulsory change of residence: 10-15 million from projects like embankment dams, industrial centers or plantations; 150 million from natural disasters ('Le Monde Diplomatique, Atlas der Globalisierung' 2009).

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## **We are all responsible.**

We can think that we have nothing to do with this reality. However, we always can do something. **The first step is to become aware of the situation.**

On the other hand, we could think or discuss if we are, in some measure, responsible, of the conflicts that can lead to situations that force people to flee— also economical conflicts, even when this aspect is not considered as a legal factor to apply to the refugee status.

But even if we are not responsible for the causes of forced migration, we have a responsibility to treat refugees as human beings, to respect their dignity and their rights. This includes being aware of the refugee rights in the country we live in, react towards wrong ideas circulating in the media but maybe also among our friends which promote hatred and xenophobia.

## Tips for discussion of debriefing

For the evaluation it will be good to be good prepared. Again, let the people speak, but also be prepared to give input. Possible input could be: Ex-territorialisation of refugee camps, Information on the detention centers in Libya, the theory of the “Autonomy of Migration” (= can we actually stop people from entering countries? Do borders make any sense?), European Borders/ Fortress of Europe, EU Asylum Law (Dublin II Convention,etc.).

# Session outlines

**We can read and discuss materials about the refugee's problematic. However, it is difficult to discuss when we are not in the other's situation. We propose here some exercise to try to be on the other's place and to discuss the experience.**

## 1. Take a step forward<sup>1</sup>

∴ **Number of participants:** 10-30

🕒 **Time:** 60 min

**Overview:** We are all equal, but some are more equal than others. In this activity participants experience what it is like to be someone else in their society. The issues addressed include

→ Social inequality being often a source of discrimination and exclusion

→ Empathy and its limits.

**Aims** → To promote empathy with others who are different.  
→ To raise awareness about the inequality of opportunities in society

→ To foster an understanding of possible personal consequences of belonging to certain social minorities or cultural groups.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://eycb.coe.int/compass/> In Compass manual you can find also other activities

## ✂ **Material needed:**

- Role cards
- An open space (a corridor, large room or outdoors)
- Tape or CD player and soft/relaxing music

## **Description**

### **Preparation**

Read the activity carefully. Review the list of “situations and events” and adapt it to the group that you are working with.

Make the role cards, one per participant. Copy the (adapted) sheet either by hand or on a photocopier, cut out the strips and fold them over.

### **Main Activity:**

1. Create a calm atmosphere with some soft background music. Alternatively, ask the participants for silence.
2. Hand out the role cards at random, one to each participant. Tell them to keep it to themselves and not to show it to anyone else.
3. Invite them to sit down (preferably on the floor) and to read their role card.
4. Now ask them to begin to get into role. To help, read out some of the following questions, pausing after each one, to give people time to reflect and build up a picture of themselves and their lives:
  - What was your childhood like?
  - What sort of house did you live in? What kind of games did you play?
  - What sort of work did your parents do? What is your everyday life like now?
  - Where do you socialise? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?
  - What sort of lifestyle do you have? Where do you live?
  - How much money do you earn each month? What do you do in your leisure time? What do you do in your holidays?
  - What excites you and what are you afraid of?
5. Now ask people to remain absolutely silent as they line up beside each other (like on a starting line)



6. Tell the participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. Every time that they can answer “yes” to the statement, they should take a step forward. Otherwise, they should stay where they are and not move.
7. Read out the situations one at a time. Pause for a while between each statement to allow people time to step forward and to look around to take note of their positions relative to each other.
8. At the end invite everyone to take note of their final positions. Then give them a couple of minutes to come out of role before debriefing in plenary.

## **Debriefing and evaluation**

Start by asking participants about what happened and how they feel about the activity and then go on to talk about the issues raised and what they learnt.

1. How did people feel stepping forward - or not?
2. For those who stepped forward often, at what point did they begin to notice that others were not moving as fast as they were?
3. Did anyone feel that there were moments when their basic human rights were being ignored?
4. Can people guess each other’s roles? (Let people reveal their roles during this part of the discussion)
5. How easy or difficult was it to play the different roles? How did they imagine what the person they were playing was like?
6. Does the exercise mirror society in some way? How?
7. Which human rights are at stake for each of the roles? Could anyone say that their human rights were not being respected or that they did not have access to them?
8. What first steps could be taken to address the inequalities in society?
9. Compare the situation of the immigrants/refugees with the other social groups.
10. Compare the situation of legal/illegal immigrants/refugees between each other.

## **Tips for facilitators**

If you do this activity outdoors, make sure that the participants can hear you, especially if you are doing it with a large group! You may need to use your co-facilitators to relay the statements.

In the imagining phase at the beginning, it is possible that some participants may say that they know little about the life of the person they have to role-play. Tell them, this does not matter especially, and that they should use their imagination and to do it as best they can. The power of this activity lies in the impact of actually seeing the distance increasing between the participants, especially at

the end when there should be a big distance between those that stepped forward often and those who did not. To enhance the impact, it is important that you adjust the roles to reflect the realities of the participants' own lives. As you do so, be sure you adapt the roles so that only a minimum of people can take steps forward (i.e. can answer "yes"). This also applies if you have a large group and have to devise more roles.

During the debriefing and evaluation it is important to explore how participants knew about the character whose role they had to play. Was it through personal experience or through other sources of information (news, books, and jokes)? Are they sure the information and the images they have of the characters are reliable? In this way you can introduce how stereotypes and prejudice work.

This activity is particularly relevant to making links between the different generations of rights (civil/political and social/economic/cultural rights) and the access to them. The problems of poverty and social exclusion are not only a problem of formal rights – although the latter also exists for refugees and asylum-seekers for example. The problem is very often a matter of effective access to those rights.

## **Variations**

One way to get more ideas on the table and to deepen participants' understanding is to work first in small groups and then to get them to share their ideas in plenary. Having co-facilitators is almost essential if you do this. Try this method by taking the second part of the debriefing - after each role has been revealed - in smaller groups. Ask people to explore who in their society has fewer, and who has more, chances or opportunities, and what first steps can and should be taken to address the inequalities. Alternatively, ask people to take one of the characters and ask what could be done, i.e. what duties and responsibilities they themselves, the community and the government have towards this person.

## **Suggestions for follow-up**

Depending on the social context you work in, you may want to invite representatives from advocacy groups for certain cultural or social minorities to talk to the group. Find out from them what issues they are currently fighting for and how you and young people can help. Such a face-to-face meeting would also be an opportunity to address or review some of the prejudices or stereotyping that came out during the discussion.

## Materials

### Situations

**Read the following situations out aloud. Allow time after reading out each situation for participants to step forward and also to look how far they have moved relative to each other.**

- § You have never encountered any serious financial difficulty.
- § You have decent housing with a telephone line and television.
- § You feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live.
- § You feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters, and your views are listened to.
- § Other people consult you about different issues.
- § You are not afraid of being stopped by the police.
- § You know where to turn for advice and help if you need it.
- § You have never felt discriminated against because of your origin.
- § You have adequate social and medical protection for your needs.
- § You can go away on holiday once a year.
- § You can invite friends for dinner at home.
- § You have an interesting life and you are positive about your future.
- § You feel you can study and follow the profession of your choice.
- § You are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets, or in the media.
- § You can vote in national and local elections.
- § You can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends.
- § You can participate in an international seminar abroad.
- § You can go to the cinema or the theatre at least once a week.
- § You are not afraid for the future of your children.
- § You can buy new clothes at least once every three months.
- § You can fall in love with the person of your choice.
- § You feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live.
- § You can use and benefit from the Internet.

## Rolecards (adapted)

### CARD 1:

You are Lucia from Moldova. You are working as a caretaker of an elderly woman. Your situation is stable and you want to try to get your children to come to Switzerland.

### CARD 2:

You are an unemployed single mother.

### CARD 3:

You are the daughter of the local bank manager. You study economics at university.

### CARD 4:

You are an Arab Muslim girl living with your parents who are devoutly religious people.

### CARD 5:

You are a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair.

### CARD 6:

You are an illegal immigrant from Mali.

### CARD 7:

You are a 17-year-old Roma (Gypsy) girl who never finished primary school.

### CARD 8:

You are the son of a Chinese immigrant who runs a successful fast food business.

### CARD 9:

You are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living.

### CARD 10:

You are 22-year-old lesbian.

### CARD 11:

You are a young and well-integrated woman from Tunisia and are currently working as a French language teacher in an Asylum center. You arrived 25 years ago, to study English and Italian, and you became “naturalized”.

CARD 12:

You are a fashion model of African origin.

CARD 13:

You are the soldier in the army, doing compulsory military service.

CARD 14:

You are the owner of a successful import-export company.

CARD 15:

You are a well-educated person from Brazil. You have studied Technical Forest Engineering, but now you have problems to get equivalences for your degree. You understand that you will have to “start from scratch”, as if you even haven’t studied in your homeland.

CARD 16:

You are a retired worker from a factory that makes shoes.

CARD 17:

You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in remote village in the mountains.

CARD 18:

You are a 24-year-old refugee from Afghanistan.

CARD 19:

You are homeless young man 27-year-old.

CARD 20:

You are the president of a party-political youth organisation (whose ‘mother’ party is now in power).

## 2. Asylum

∴ **Number of participants:** any

### Preparation

#### Suggested materials for the this exercise:

A copy of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, prepared on an overhead transparency.

Copies of Chapter 2, “Safeguarding asylum<sup>2</sup>”, from *The State of the World’s Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium*.

### Instructions

1- Ask the participants to give their ideas on what is asylum. Do not reject their ideas, but use them to probe the deeper meaning of the notion – refugee, safety, protection from persecution.

2- Distribute a copy of the following paragraph, taken from *The State of the World’s Refugees: The Challenge of Protection*<sup>3</sup>(Geneva, UNHCR, 1993), page 5, paragraph 1:

The process of becoming a refugee is not instantaneous. It proceeds through the often slow growth of root causes to the sometimes quite sudden flash of an immediate catalyst that generates actual flight. Asylum follows when another state grants those in flight access to its territory and extends protection to them. Finally, for the more fortunate, a permanent resolution of their status is sought and found, and they cease to be refugees.

3- Ask the participants: What does the underlined sentence suggest that the right to asylum might mean?

The right to seek asylum is found in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 14, which states that:

2 <http://www.unhcr.org/4444afc70.pdf>

3 <http://www.unhcr.org/3eccc0464.html>

- Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

4- Hand out copies of Chapter 2, “Safeguarding asylum”, from *The State of the World’s Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium* and ask the students to read it quietly by themselves and to write answers to the following questions:

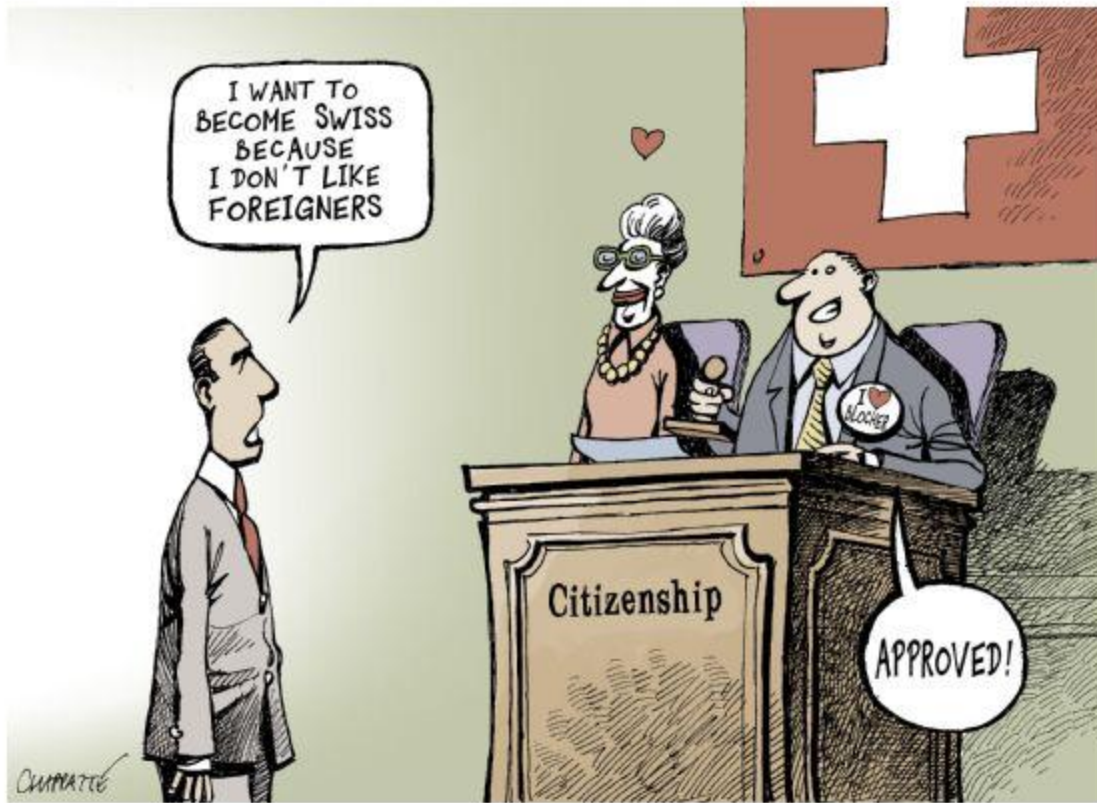
### **Comprehension and discussion questions**

- More than two thirds of the world’s refugees are to be found in developing countries. List the reasons why these states are concerned with the pressure placed upon them by the prolonged presence of large refugee populations.
- Why are asylum seekers in industrialised states perceived negatively?
- What is non-refoulement?
- What are the various methods applied to obstruct or deter the arrival of people seeking international protection?
- Describe possible situations which may cause asylum seekers to resort to the use of false or altered documents, and engage the services of professional smugglers in order to make their escape?
- People (what is the difference between the terms? I think you should try to use the same terms in the presentation. As they are used in Switzerland, an asylum seeker is a person who goes through a procedure to see if the government accepts them as refugees, that is gives them the status and the rights associated to that term. Asylum seekers are not refugees yet, at least from the legal, administrative point of view) who are able to leave their own country and enter another state often find themselves in a vulnerable situation. Why?
- How do registration and documentation help refugees and asylum seekers?
- List the obstacles that asylum seekers may face as they try to obtain refugee status.
- What restrictions to their human rights face displaced people in protracted refugee situations?

- What is the image of asylum seekers and refugees within your group of friends and your family?
- Do you know any refugees or asylum seekers?



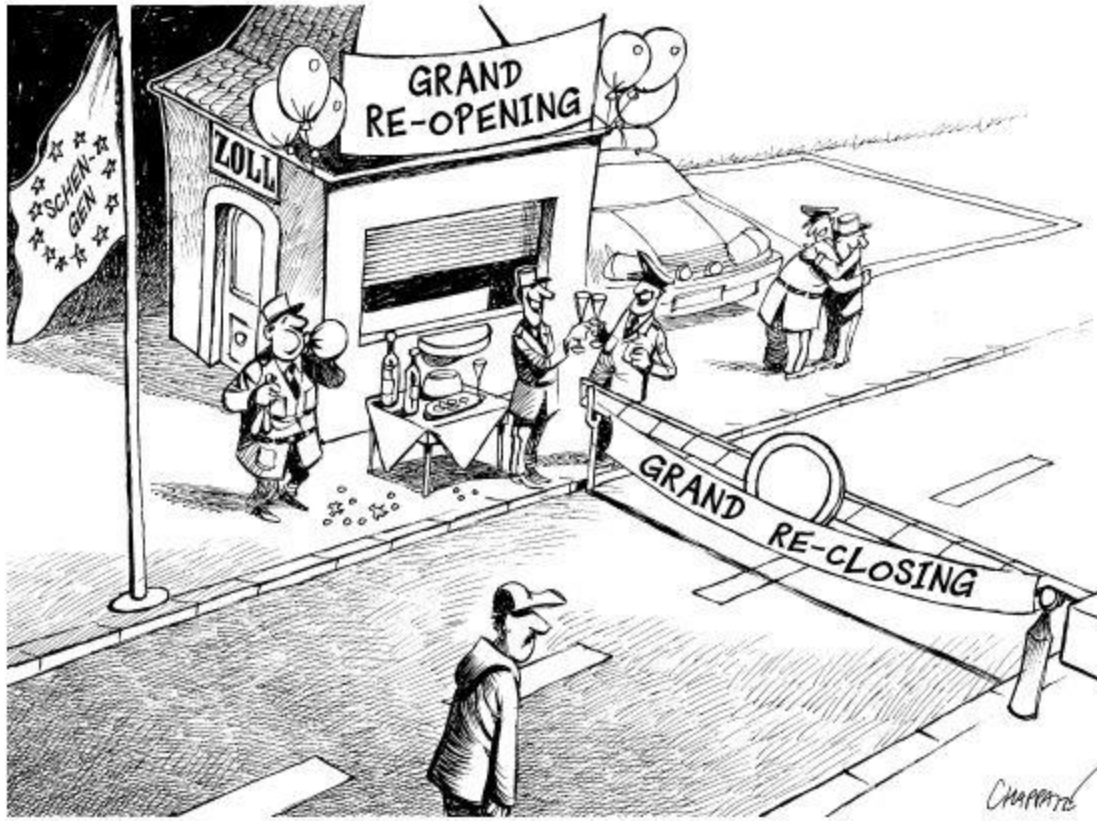
# **Annexe**



Anti-foreigners



Arab Spring



Border Controls



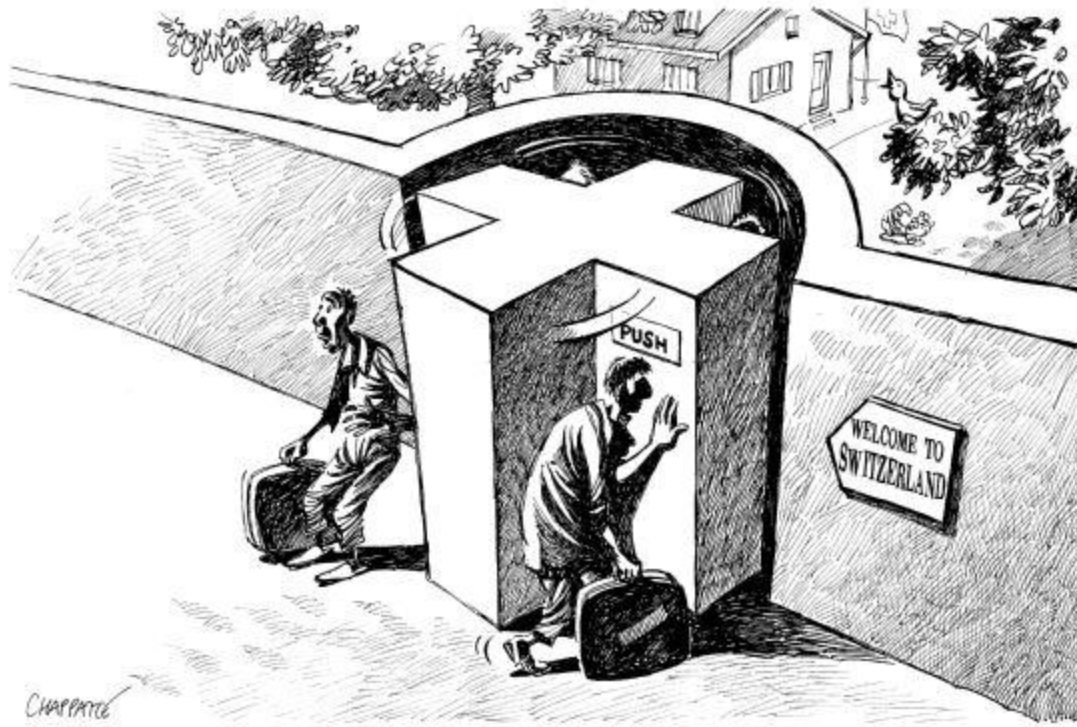
CH Asylum rules



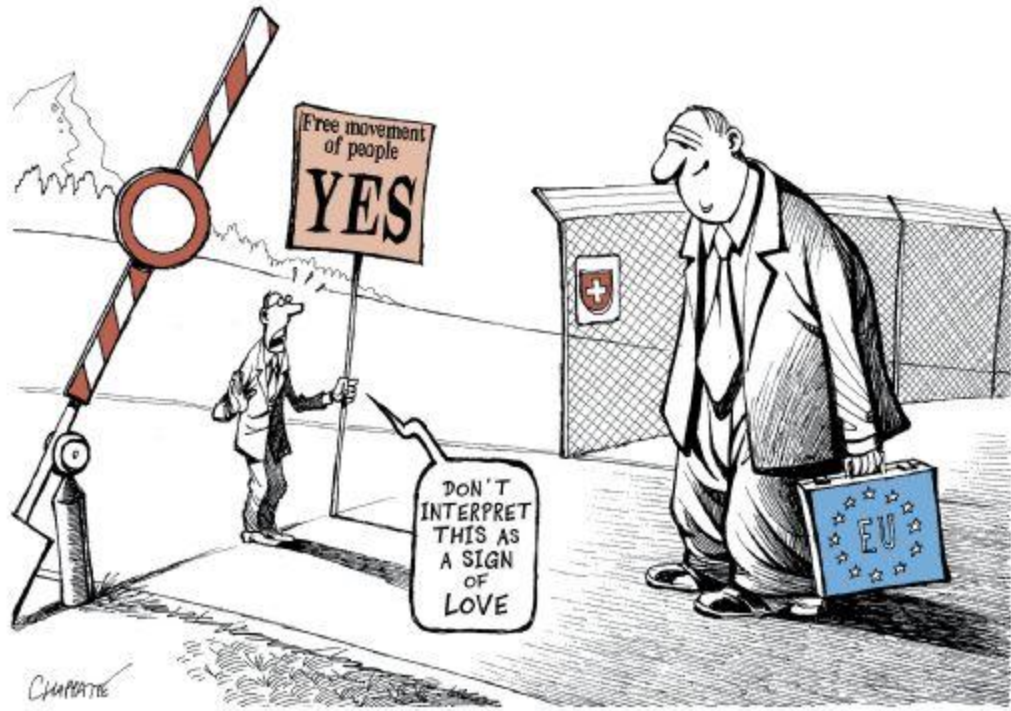
Exodus



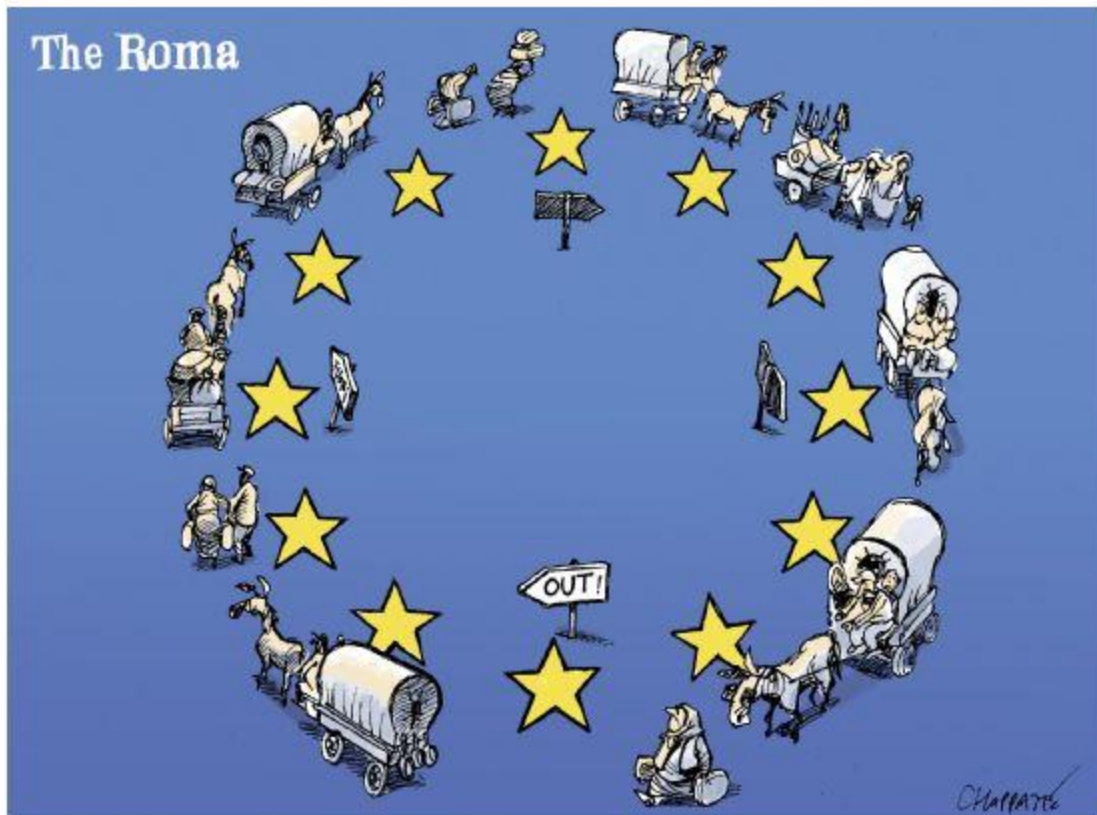
France's Crackdown



Welcome



Swiss drop



The Roma



Refugees Flock



Spanisch Spring



Minarets



Pro Immigration





Islamophobia in America



Migrants