

Break-out Session 5: Communicating better by drawing on the evidence about migration - contributing to a new narrative for migration

Panelists:

Lacy Swing, Ambassador, Director-General International Organization for Migration

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, Co-founder African Foundation for Development

John D. Skentny, Centre for comparative immigration studies University of California at San Diego

Iryna Ulasiuk, European University Institute in Florence

Christian Strohal, Austrian ambassador in Geneva and former chair of the IOM Council

Dipu Moni, foreign minister of Bangladesh

Moderator:

Ali Aslan, Talk show host Deutsche Welle

Session Summary

Politicians as well as the media should guarantee a fair evidence-based representation of migrants. Therefore Lacy Swing suggested positive migration models should increasingly be shown on the media. People should come to the conclusion that migration has historically been overwhelmingly positive and will be necessary to fill job gaps in the future. The media should care more about the coverage on migration, but Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie does not want to leave the responsibility to the journalists alone. He recommended organizations to engage the media into writing in a neutral way by providing data as well as training diaspora groups to raise their voice.

Media shapes our societies and so we need to be aware of their responsibility. Iryna Ulasiuk explains that media's responsibility is built on two stacks: First of all, media groups should provide trainings for their journalists to enhance a fair coverage of migration issues. Secondly, media groups should itself act inclusively by employing journalists with a migration background and they should invest in investigative journalism to lower the amount of xenophobic sensational coverage.

The studies of John D. Skentny show that there are three different perceptions on migration in the public. The first group regards migration in a positive economic-growth-perspective, the second one considers migrants as individuals and cares about their human stories and the third perspective does not sympathize with immigrants even if they contribute positively to their community.

Dipu Moni pointed out that the media should help to create a discursive dialogue promoting social inclusion and exchange in order to change the paradigm into a positive one; One that respects the human dignity of migrants, that turns the image of migrants from cheap workers to catalyzer of economic development.

Quotations

John D. Skentny:

“The role of academics is to provide the facts and to emphasize the fact that we are living in a phase of demographic decline and we need to face and deal with that.”

“I think balance is important, but also very hard to do.”

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

“Decision-makers need data.”

Iryna Ulasiuk:

“One out of three people does not live where he was born. Today’s problems show that people still have to find ways how to deal with this situation. Media can help with that, especially mainstream media. The most important thing is to send a positive message to the public about migration.”