- Special Mediterranean TV debate show from Marseille.
- Co-produced by France 24, the Center for Mediterranean Integration, and the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (MuCEM)
- Format: 50 minutes, 4 panelists.
- 3 shows: Arabic, French and English.
- Recorded and broadcasted on September 18, 2015 on France 24’s Arabic, French and English channels.
FRENCH

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Watch part 2: [Link](#)

Panelists:
- **Michel Peraldi**, Sociologist and anthropologist, specialist of Migration
- **Ewa Moncure**, Frontex Spokesperson
- **Didem Danis**, Sociologist, University of Galatasaray (Turkey)
- **Olivier Weber**, Grand reporter, former UN ambassador Global Fight against Human Trafficking

**TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE EPISODE**

- Why now? The Syrian conflict entering its 5th year, and only now has it brought the largest influx of refugees and Mediterranean crossings to Europe reasons are: 1. Increasing lack of services like education, health and housing in overcrowded and stretched neighboring host communities (i.e. Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon). The UN annual call for funding and promises of funding from the international community are not being met, thus creating big gaps of resources for the host communities. 2. Despair of Syrians from the security and political situation inside Syria/Syrians have expressed loosing hope from a soon end to conflict. 3. Lack of integration policies in host countries/overstretched host communities did not set clear integration policies for refugees neither on the social nor economic levels.
- Migration routes, particularly by the sea, are not new. Refugees, migrants and mobility is not a new phenomenon it is only the nationalities of migrants that are changing.
- EU’s long standing position (via laws and regulations) consisted of a sceptic position that criminalized refugees and migrants. People crossing European countries for several reasons had to fit very narrow criteria as well as tests to earn the “legal” status which would also reflect on the public opinion considering any international comer “legal” or “illegal”. The position of Europe vis-à-vis refugees as well as economic migrants has been a police-oriented one rather than an international humanitarian one.
- Real policy changes would require changes in laws and regulations in order to move from police/security driven laws to ones that are in line with mobility (in all its forms), encouraging social integration, hospitality and solidarity (from a Human Rights perspective).
- A real efficient economic study showing the economic capacity to host refugees and their potential positive impact on host countries’ economies is needed.
- Distribution among EU countries/quota system is another urgent short term solution. Real numbers show that it will not affect Europe as much as the media is depicting it; some 120,000 refugees dispatched over 28 EU countries would only represent 4,000 refugee per country.
- The voluntary return of refugees to Syria depends on political and security considerations. For Syria, no solution is foreseen in the near future, and therefore a general feeling of despair among refugees.
- Frontex said that they were indeed able to predict big influx of refugees since Arab uprisings however they do not have a mandate that consists of warning Governments, but only to execute governments’ requests.
- The reflection of the tense EU/Turkey relations:
  1. The non-inclusion of Turkey in the EU is one of the main reason explaining insufficient European response to Turkey’s refugee crisis. If Turkey has been part of the EU, the response would’ve been different, like in European parliament’s decision to redistribute arrivals to Italy and Greece throughout several European countries.
  2. Creation of hotspots (registration centers) in alternative locations outside European countries i.e. Turkey, Morocco etc. will put additional burden on these third party countries who already face administrative and economic challenges. It is not a solution but only a temporary relief for European countries from registration processes.
- Discussants brought up good practices from Europe’s modern history. A good example of European hospitality is the one of Vietnamese “boat people”, where more than 500,000 war and economic refugees left their country, and 100,000 were hosted by France through a governmental decision. They were absorbed and integrated in the society and economy.
Panelists:
- Mohammad GHANNAM, Journalist and Syrian refugee
- Didem DANIS, Sociologist, Galatasaray University (Turkey)
- Martin XUEREB, Director, Migrant Offshore Aid Station
- Wafik MOUSTAFA, Chairman, British Arab Network

TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE EPISODE
- Restrictive visa procedures to Europe forcing many civilians in conflict zones to consider alternative roads.
- More open visa procedures would allow Europe to profile arrivals. Discussions about the interest of having more flexible visa procedures, which would allow Europe reduce sea crossings and have develop databases of immigrants in databases.
- Rescue operations in the Mediterranean show an increasing number of human trafficking. Arrivals are not only Syrian but also from the horn of Africa as well as Afghanistan and other countries.
- The crisis is not only human but political as well: On the level of Arab countries (where bad governance prevails and safer/more stable Arab countries are not opening doors for the refugees from Syria, Libya and Yemen) and in Europe (lack of effective response to the emergency, i.e. Germany opening borders then closing borders).
- The rules of immigration have changed and therefore require a review of responses and solutions between countries of origin, transit and destination. In other terms the distinction can no longer be made between someone fleeing misery and someone fleeing war (economic migrant, war refugee etc.). The European policy migration and laws need to scale up to what the new reality is.
- Saving lives is not a European responsibility solely, but a global one; even where Europe has to take the lead as the biggest crisis are happening in its neighborhood it is an international community concern to end the root of these conflict displacement and discuss long term solutions while managing effective and humanitarian emergency short term solutions.
- The main reasons pushing refugees to take risky sea routes: 1. insufficient services like education, health and housing in overcrowded and stretched neighboring host communities (i.e. Turkey and Lebanon); 2. Despair of Syrians from the security and political situation inside Syria; 3. Lack of integration policies in host countries.
- Arrival of refugees might accelerate economies of some countries (In the 90’s, Germany hosted Vietnamese “boat people” refugees, and has now a Vietnamese diaspora that contributes extensively to its economy).
- Possible way forward: short-term solutions in Europe (refugee quotas), medium-term solutions (creation of buffer zones/safe havens inside Syria) and extending support to neighboring host countries; long-term and most pressuring sustainable solution: ending conflict in Syria. Discussions revolved around 3 levels of solutions, focusing on the need to involve not only European countries but the international community, notably Gulf countries who should share the burden as well.
Topics Discussed During the Episode

- Why now? Syrian influx due mainly to lack of services like education, health and housing in overcrowded and stretched neighboring host communities (i.e. Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon)
- War displacement stands at an all-time high
- EU’s stand on international affairs (i.e. American invasion of Iraq, UN resolution for Libya etc.) needs to be reflected in the regional discussions/responsibility sharing when it comes to refugees resulting from these conflicts. Discussants debated how Europe cannot on one hand be supportive/an ally of international interventions in crisis zones and not preview/deal/treat correctly the refugee/displacement crisis erupting from the latter.
- Gulf countries’ responsibility in conflict cessation in Syria/correlation between extremist Islamist guerrillas and Gulf countries as well as the refugee crisis/opening doors and opportunities to refugees.
- Discussants also debated the situation of several Arab countries hosting refugees (Lebanon and Jordan overstretched with Syrian, Egypt hosting Sudanese, Tunisia hosting Libyan etc.)
- The depicting of 400,000 refugees crossing to Europe has a media propaganda dimension to it, and is exaggerated. Indeed several other states of the region with lesser resources and capacities are hosting numbers that are much higher (in absolute terms, and when compared to the population size and economies of these countries)
- Solutions discussed are: 1. Anti-Trafficking laws/law implementation 2. International law implementation (Geneva Convention) 3. Supporting neighboring host countries (financial solidarity) 4. Quotas and refugee distribution
- The need for political solution to the conflict in Syria.
- Discussants also confirmed that amidst rising numbers of non-European crossing to the continent, and media exaggeration, as well as police-oriented laws governing refugees/migrants, the rise of extreme right should be anticipated.