



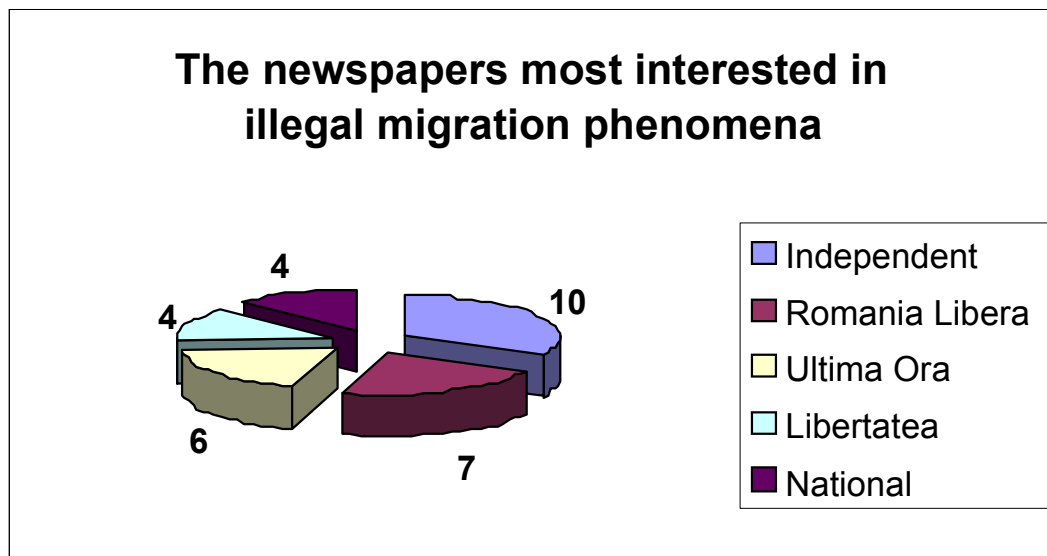
# **Romanian Media about Illegal emigration of Roma**

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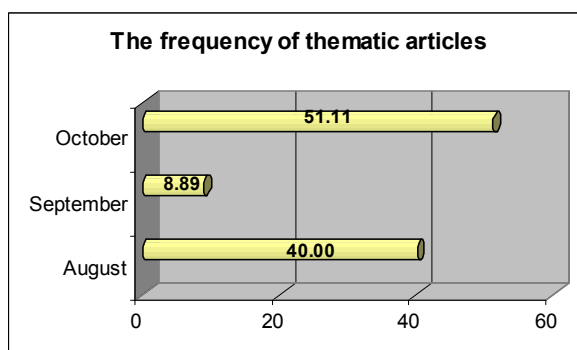
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The starting points for this analysis were the articles published in the media during August - October 2002, focusing on *illegal migration*. This study monitored the image of Roma people within Romanian media. First of all, we measured media attitude towards repatriated people, especially those repatriated from countries Romania concluded readmission agreements with. A new element within the methodology used for this study was the introduction of the parameter – *useless mention of the ethnicity*. This helped us to identify the cases when journalists mention the **ethnicity** of the repatriated people, given the fact that the ethnicity is not of interest within the bilateral readmission Agreement; only the citizenship is of interest in this respect.

The following 12 daily newspapers were monitored during August 1<sup>st</sup> – October 15, 2002: Adevarul, Cronica Romana, Curierul National, Evenimentul Zilei, Independent, Jurnalul National, Libertatea, Monitorul de Bucuresti, National, Romania Libera, Ultima Ora, Ziu. 45 articles relevant for the topic of this media analysis were identified.



Although illegal migration became a media topic from April 2002, the widest coverage in terms of number of articles was reached in the first half of October 2002.



Media interest upon this issue, implicitly the increase in editorial space, can be explained both by the high number of expulsions of Romanian citizens who emigrated illegally in European countries – bilateral

readmission agreements, and the position of French, Dutch and Spanish authorities towards Romanian citizens – reintroduction of visas.

Over 300 Romanian citizens who were found without legal forms on Swiss and Spanish territory were expelled starting from October 9<sup>th</sup>. Their repatriation is made based on the readmission agreements between Romania and the two above mentioned countries.

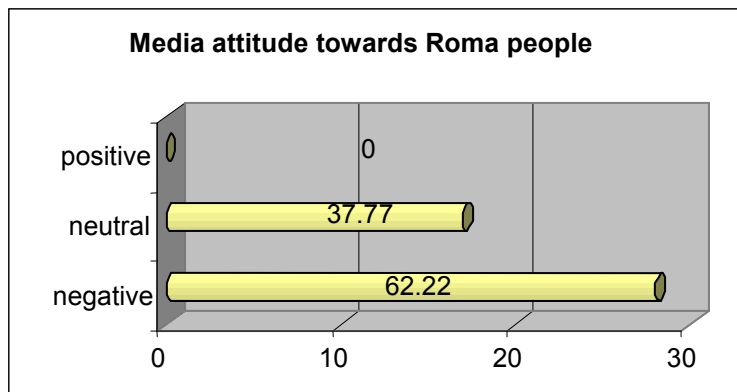
As for **Switzerland**, those making troubles are to be punished in accordance with their deeds. According to the readmission Agreement between Switzerland and Romania, the expelled people will lose their right to use their passport that will be suspended for 5 years utmost. The adults illegally crossing the Swiss frontier will confront criminal charges and a possible legal sentence for 3 months to 2 years imprisonment. If they are proven to having attracted other people for illegal trespassing, the punishment is 2 to 7 years imprisonment.

On the other hand, even if Romania and **Spain** have signed a readmission agreement, the Spanish transporters asked the Government in Madrid to ask the European bodies to reintroduce visas for Romanians, because the increasing number of illegal immigrants entering Spain with ghost-buses from Romania cause major financial damages to them.

In **France**, Le Monde says that French authorities undertook action in Brussels in order to reintroduce visas for Romanian citizens as they were scared by the increasing number of Roma beggars of Romanian citizenship. This newspaper publishes numerous articles upon the issue of Romanian illegal immigrants in France.

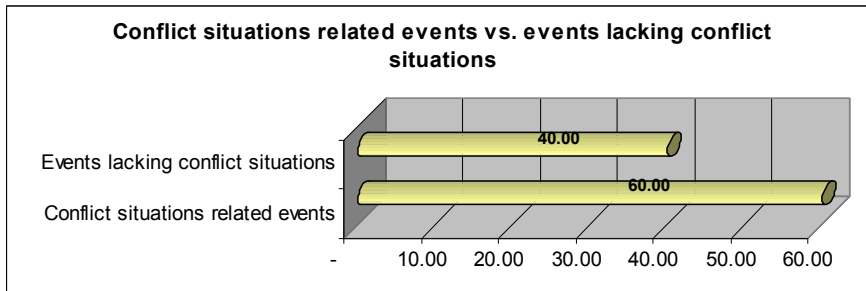
Illegal immigrants in France will be sanctioned with the confiscation of their possessions/goods from Romania. “France is determined to help Romania to effectively control its frontiers, and Romania is determined to take firm actions against the mafia, both in France and in Romania” – *Nicolas Sarkozy, Internal Affairs Minister of France.*

In **Netherlands**, an other country assaulted by Romanian immigrants, the Liberals leader will ask the Parliament to discuss the reintroduction of visas for Eastern Europeans, especially for Romanians and Bulgarians because the alarming increase of the number of prostitutes and criminals in Netherlands.

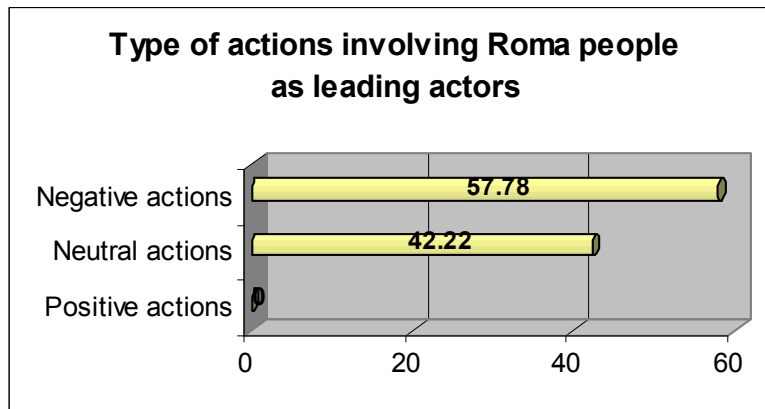


All these signals from the European authorities determined the Romanian media to take a stands towards the illegal migration phenomena. This can be translated by biased articles towards expelled citizens, mostly Roma ethnics.

Most of the events involving Roma people include conflict situations, these being the event whose actors don't react in accordance to our expectations.



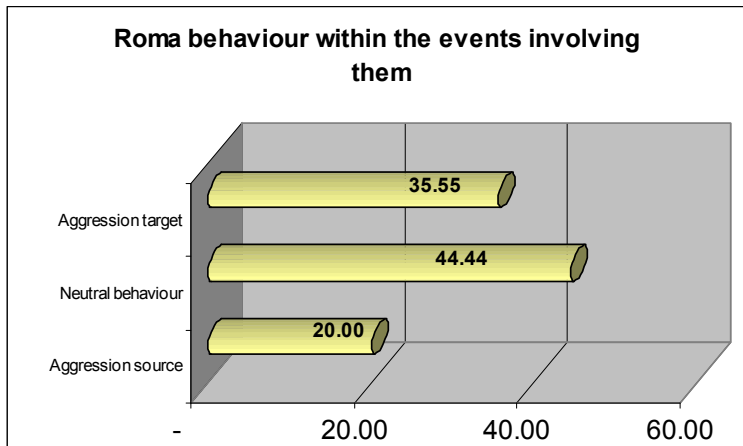
Though 60% from the reported events include conflict situations, some 70% out of them present Roma people either as the aggression targets of other actors involved (foreign authorities, Romanian authorities, Roma local leaders), either as having a neutral behavior.



The following are the opinions of the Roma leaders upon the illegal migration and its consequences: *Nicolae Gheorghe* believes that reintroduction of Schengen visa for Romanian citizens would hardly settle the problem of Roma beggars in France, moreover, it would amplify it; “some of those involved in human traffic are Roma ethnics”. However, *Nicolae Gheorghe* considers the Roma people are victims of the discrimination of French journalists.

*Nicolae Paun* believes that the articles in French media include clear racist messages against Roma people. “The people traffickers are the problem. They send Roma people to beg, either they want it or not, retain their documents and give them back only after they bring several thousands of euros.”

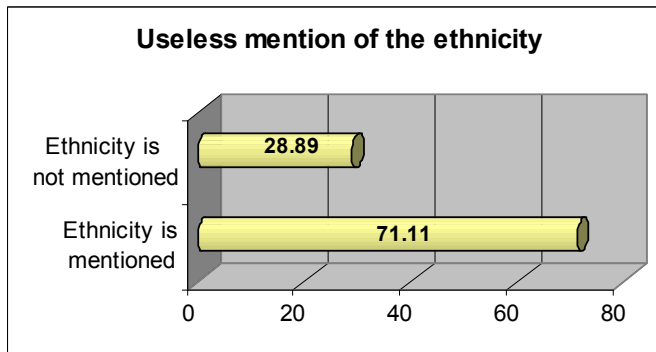
*Gheorghe Raducanu* says there are some 2000 – 3000 Roma people in France. They are mostly fiddlers, gypsies who don’t harm anybody, they only play music. There are also those washing cars and, indeed, women holding babies and begging. Most of them are to be found in Paris outskirts and on French Riviera.



Though Roma leaders believe that Roma ethnics are not to blame, that they are not to be held responsible for what is happening with these asylum seekers in the European countries, media tends to present negative actions with Roma as the leading actors.

President Iliescu seems to be the closest to reality. He considers the Romania has to deal with the consequences of the uncivilized behavior of some Romanian citizens. It is unfair and incorrect and that is why we must foster a frame of mind meant to make everybody understand such needs.

We monitored apart the way the Romanian media reports on Romanian citizens expelled from Switzerland and Spain as a follow-up to the readmission agreements.



Although the identification element for illegal migrants is their citizenship, both Romanian and international media tend to emphasize these people's ethnicity. More than 70% of the monitored articles mention that those expelled from various European countries are Roma ethnics.

During this period, the strong negative stereotypes promoted by the media were: begging gypsies, unemployed gypsies and nomad gypsies.



### Instead of conclusion

The first three daily newspapers from all those included in this study reporting upon illegal migration are:

| NAME           | NUMBER OF ARTICLES (RELATIVELY ) | NEUTRALITY (%) | BIAS TENDENCY (%) |
|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Independent    | 10                               | 60.00          | 40.00             |
| Romania Libera | 7                                | 14.28          | <b>85.71</b>      |
| Ultima Ora     | 6                                | 33.33          | 66.66             |

Even if they reported less upon illegal migration, the other newspapers still have a bias tendency as far their discourse upon Roma people is concerned

The same can be stated about the European states confronting troubles with illegal emigrants. Despite the readmission agreements and the numerous immigrants coming back to Romania, the measures taken by the European states are increasing in number and in efficiency. There is a Romanian saying about this “the fear guards better”. Thus:

A draft law upon internal security planning and orientation stipulates more severe sanctions for offences and crimes committed by nomads in *France*.

Asylum seekers who already live in *Great Britain* and want to submit their files must explain how they entered the country and why they didn't ask for asylum via the port or airport authorities. British Internal Affairs Minister admitted that “legal economic migration is good for Great Britain”, and announced several measures meant to simply external labor force recruitment.