

GRAMMAR FOCUS : Passive form and French equivalent for « On ( dit que) ... »

THE TOPIC : After over 180 African refugees died when their boat sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa last week, Europe is debating its asylum policy with renewed vigor. Could the EU distribute the burden more fairly?

And European politicians calling for changes to EU asylum regulations

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/oct/05/lampedusa-italy-boat-sinking-fishermen-prevented-rescuing-migrants-video>

Italian coastguards rescued migrants from water after boats sank but 300 migrants got drowned.

Lampedusa boat sinking: fishermen 'prevented' from rescuing migrants – video

A fisherman who rescued 47 people after a migrant boat sank off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy, says coastguards stopped him saving more people. He claims rescue workers refused to take people from his full boat so he rescue more, because it was against their protocol. More than 300 people are thought to have died in the disaster

Survivors bed down outdoors and in refrigerator truck as Italian PM calls for 'humanitarian corridors' to protect migrant boats

## Lampedusa rescuers describe struggle to save drowning migrants

Survivors bed down outdoors and in refrigerator truck as Italian PM calls for 'humanitarian corridors' to protect migrant boats

Tom Kington in Rome , The Guardian, Friday 4 October 2013

"They were all covered in fuel; they were slipping out of our hands," recalled Domenico Colapinto, a fisherman who was one of the first to reach the scene of the migrant vessel sinking off Lampedusa on Thursday.

"I grabbed a woman but I couldn't hold her. She fell back into the water as I called 'hold on, hold on'," he told the Corriere della Sera newspaper. "She was looking at me and didn't say anything; she was exhausted. She couldn't even float. I watched as she slid down, without a scream, with those eyes watching me."

Colapinto was among the dozens of rescuers who fought to save 155 African migrants, mainly Eritreans and Somalis, after their vessel caught fire, capsized and sank half a mile from Italian territory after sailing from Libya.

But with about 440 migrants on board, the death toll was presumed to be far higher than the 111 corpses recovered by Friday afternoon. As efforts to dive down to the sunken ship were

called off because of bad weather, a ferry arrived on the holiday island carrying 100 coffins and four hearses to collect the dead from a hangar at the airport. There they lay in rows, identified by numbers, many dressed in their best clothes as if waiting for a wedding.

Accompanying Colapinto as dawn rose on Thursday was his nephew Francesco Colapinto, who said he saw more than 20 migrants in the water sink out of sight, "their arms raised, like statues".

Close by, Vito Fiorino was asleep on his anchored yacht with friends when he was awoken by a noise like seagulls, before he realised the sea was awash with survivors and the sounds were cries for help.

Fiorino's group pulled 47 survivors from the sea, some of them repeating the word "child", as if asking them to search for their children, Corriere della Sera reported. "But I didn't manage to find one," said Alessandro Marino, who was with Fiorino.

As the light grew, five motor launches that had arrived to pick up floating corpses were seen returning to Lampedusa's port, their decks piled so high with bodies that some toppled back into the sea.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/mediterranean-migrant-deaths-avoidable-loss>

## **Mediterranean migrant deaths: a litany of largely avoidable loss**

There is a divide between those who prioritise the saving of lives and those who insist on border enforcement.

Jack Shenker , The Guardian, Thursday 3 October 2013

- These days, it takes a blockbuster tragedy for migrant boats to reach the front pages – the quiet, regular additions to the Mediterranean's death toll encountered on an almost-weekly basis by rescuers, human rights activists and migrant communities themselves are simply far too humdrum to make the mainstream news. "The reaction of a lot of us this morning was just 'yet again, yet again' ... except this time it's even worse," Judith Sunderland, a researcher with Human Rights Watch who specialises in migration, told the Guardian. "What's chilling is to think that this could have been prevented."
- In the past two decades, almost 20,000 people are recorded as having lost their lives in an effort to reach Europe's southern borders from Africa and the Middle East. In 2011, at the height of the Arab uprisings, more than 1,500 were killed in a single year. Thursday's horrific scenes are only the latest in a long line of similar, albeit less dramatic, boat disasters – a litany of largely avoidable loss which inspired Pope Francis, on a visit to Lampedusa earlier this year, to inveigh against the rich world's "globalisation of indifference".

- Activists and policymakers agree that a large portion of the blame for migrant deaths must lie with the unscrupulous criminal gangs who demand large payments for arranging people trafficking and often use dangerously overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels for the job. But on the question of how Europe should approach this problem, there is considerable discord, dividing those who believe far more needs to be done to prioritise the saving of lives, from those who fear any shift in emphasis away from border enforcement will only encourage people trafficking.
- "If traffickers think they can smuggle people in with impunity, that's an incentive for smuggling to increase," said Christopher Chope, a Conservative MP and rapporteur for the Council of Europe's committee on migration. But critics claim that the enforcement posture adopted by both European nations and the continent's supranational agencies such as the border control force Frontex only serve to deny migrants vital humanitarian assistance and increase the risk of boat deaths.
- "What we really don't see is a presumption of saving lives; what we get instead is every effort to shut down borders," said Sunderland, who pointed out that security crackdowns on land crossings such as the Greece-Turkey border only displaced migrant flows and often forced more boats into the sea. "The only hope is that this latest tragedy fundamentally shocks the conscience of Europeans and European decision-makers into adopting a real life-saving approach to migrants in the Mediterranean."
- But more often than not attempts to forge a co-ordinated, effective European response to irregular migration by boat have stumbled. Following the Guardian's exposé of the "left-to-die" boat in 2011, in which 61 migrants were left to perish slowly at sea despite distress calls being sounded and their vessel's position being made known to European authorities and Nato ships, an in-depth inquiry by the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly found that a "catalogue of failures" had caused the deaths and recommended a fundamental overhaul of European policy on migration; at the same time the UN declared that all migrant vessels in the Mediterranean should be considered by default as in distress, and thus in need of rescue.
- Yet although thousands of migrants have been rescued by the coastguards of southern European countries such as Italy and Malta, there still remains an absence of political will when it comes to ensuring that vulnerable migrants don't fall through the cracks of an intricate set of border and rescue policies and overlapping regions of legal jurisdiction. In August the Italian authorities ordered two commercial ships to rescue a migrant boat in the sea and then demanded the ship's captains transport the migrants back to Libya, a move that experts believe could discourage commercial captains from attempting rescues at all and may be in breach of international law.
- At the end of this year, Eurosur – a new Mediterranean surveillance and data-sharing system developed by the EU which, among other things, would use satellite imagery and drones to monitor the high seas and the north African coast – is due to go live. European policymakers claim the technology will make a serious contribution to saving migrant lives on the sea, but sceptics say that the project is still primarily focused on preventing migrants reaching Europe at all, and legislation needs to be redrafted to put humanitarian concerns at the forefront of Eurosur's operations.

- In the meantime, much more could be done to ensure that both national coastguards and commercial vessels have both the capability and incentives to be proactive when it comes to saving the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people.
- "A terrible human tragedy is taking place at the gates of Europe. And not for the first time," said Jean-Claude Mignon, head of the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly, in response to Thursday's grim death toll. "We must end this now. I hope that this will be the last time we see a tragedy of this kind, and I make a fervent appeal for specific, urgent action by member states to end this shame."
- Without a drastic increase in political will across the European continent, his wish is unlikely to be realised.

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/oct/03/migration-routes-migrants-boat-italian-lampedusa>

## World's deadliest migration routes

A boat of North African migrants has sunk off the Italian island of Lampedusa - but crossing the Mediterranean is not the only route where migrants risk their lives

- [Mona Chalabi](#)
- [theguardian.com](#), Thursday 3 October 2013
- Each year, thousands of hopeful migrants make the perilous journey to Europe via the Italian island of Lampedusa. The latest boat of them wasn't able to complete the journey and as a result, at least 94 Eritreans are dead and hundreds more are missing. How many people risk their lives to make it to Europe and which routes are the most dangerous?
- **Mediterranean the most deadly stretch of water**
- Whether it's an overcrowded leaking boat, a suffocating container or climbing over razor wire fences, UNHCR recognises that individuals are willing to take any risk that increases their chances of starting a new life abroad.



- Image by Norman Einstein
- That's particularly evident on the Italian island of Lampedusa. With a population of 6,000 and a surface area of 20.2 km<sup>2</sup>, Lampedusa would have always struggled to cope as an entry point for North Africans wanting to make their way to Europe. But the island has become so overwhelmed by the influx and the constant casualties that it has

become the paradigm for policy makers and international lawyers attempting to stop human trafficking and regulate a problem that shows no signs of slowing.

- Lampedusa has become so symbolic of the desperate attempts of some that when Pope Francis visited Italy in July this year, he met with a group of recently arrived migrants before boarding an Italian coastguard vessel to cast a floral wreath into the sea in memory of those who had died during the attempted crossing.
- And the island was at the centre of European leaders' concerns when they began to question the Schengen agreements and push for legal reforms. Do the numbers justify the focus on this one island?
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees attempts to collect numbers on 'irregular arrivals' (don't be misled by the term, it actually means the same thing as illegal/undocumented migrants) and although estimations, the numbers show that thousands are attempting to get to Europe each year via Italy as well as Spain and Malta.
- But they also have estimates on the number of migrants who die or are reported missing en route to their destinations. In Italy alone, almost 3,000 migrants died between 2006 and 2011 on their way to reach either the mainland or one of the islands. Events abroad have a deep impact on these figures - in 2011, "based on telephone calls from boats in distress and reports from survivors and family members" UNHCR estimates that 1,500 individuals travelling from Libya to Europe died on the way.
- It's unlikely things will change soon. In the first half of 2013 alone, 8,400 migrants and asylum-seekers arrived by sea on the coasts of Italy and Malta. Over the same period, the numbers were far higher in the Horn of Africa where UNHCR recorded the arrival of more than 46,000 refugees and migrants. Yemen struggles to cope with the vast majority of these, most of whom are Ethiopian (84% in 2012) or Somali (16%). In 2012, 43 migrants died crossing the Red Sea - so far this year 5 have died, but that number could rise as smugglers and traffickers use increasingly dangerous methods to sustain their revenues.
- Get the numbers and get involved
  - Download the full spreadsheet
  - Contact us at data@theguardian.com
  - Follow us on Twitter
  - Like us on Facebook
  - Get the A-Z of data
- *Mona Chalabi is teaching a Masterclass, Mastering spreadsheets: how to work with data, at the Guardian's London offices on 26-27 October*

## VOCABULARY

To be worth

To deserve

To head north

To push yourself

To upload many videos to You Tube or Facebook

To give 2,000 bucks to be taken to Italy by boat

Then migrants will have to wait for a European travel permit in a detention centre

They live in hope for it

### **From VIDEO**

This year around 25 000 migrants landed in Lampedusa, the tiny European island. Although it belongs to Italy, Lampedusa lies only 80 miles from North of Africa, making it a magnet for those who want to reach the EU

Although some of the new arrivals are refugees from Subsaharan Africa, the majority are economic migrants from Tunisia. (some were smugglers in their country before = they had a livelihood as smugglers and it dried up). "When they put their foot on the port, I felt like I was born again". The police gave us simple covers, food and cigarettes and told them they can relax there for the night. But It wasn't just one night, it was ten. They made a small camp from covers and plastic, and it was fine. We couldn't sleep , we talked until late at night. Cold and hungry, you can never sleep.

5,000 people live on Lampedusa. Most of the Island's income derives from tourism. The influx of migrants in the initial lack of facilities to process and the system, has stretched local infrastructure to the limit and shattered Lampedusa's image as a sun soaked holiday paradise.

An Italian speaking : "the situation with the Tunisians is a joke. They didn't come because of the war and needed assistance". Another Italian said "these people are dangerous, not in themselves but because there is nothing. (non ce' niente). They have nothing else to do. Another says : "we can catch illnesses because we don't know who they are". "Have they been seen by a doctor?", " they are just being dropped like this". "Such a small island can't absorb such an immigration". "We are happy to admit them but if there are over 20,000 in two or three months, then it is a bit difficult to assimilate." A migrant : "so we are just waiting, That's it, waiting". The journalist : "with the Island's two detention camps, full to bursting (=plein à craquer), thousands of migrants are left aside in Lampedusa. Gradually the Italian authorities began a transfert programme, placing migrants into larger boats and carrying them to purpose-built migrants centers in Sicily and in the Italian mainland.

A migrant : "Inside the camp, we can say, nothing is comfortable . But it's better than staying outside. Sometimes people play football at night, under the strip lights. All that makes you feel nervous. You

don't feel like you are human. But you have to accept it. The one sweet thing that you keep in your mind, is that it's a matter of days, nothing more. " "It's empty time, we have to fill the time".

The journalist : "The migrants have been told that they are eligible for 6 months' temporary visas which will allow them to legally remain in Italy and travel to any other country within Europe Schengen zone.

Some say "100% racist system".

The visa process . To issue visas

Not allowed to release interview.

"Italy has now reached an agreement with Tunisian government, which was for migrants arriving in Lampedusa after April 2013, to be deported back to their home country. The process which is already on the way". Some of them sit on Europe's margin waiting anything for their new life to begin. "When I get to Paris and I'm by myself and I start to think logically., especially when I remember the dangerous time at sea. I'm sure I will say it doesn't deserve or it wasn't worth all this risk. It wasn't worth it at all.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/lampedusa-tragedy-prompts-calls-for-eu-to-amend-asylum-agreement-a-926453.html>

## **Lampedusa Tragedy: Deaths Prompt Calls to Amend Asylum Rules**

*By Walter Mayr and Maximilian Popp*

**After over 180 African refugees died when their boat sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa last week, Europe is debating its asylum policy with renewed vigor. Politicians are calling for the EU to distribute the burden more fairly.**

She was already lying on the jetty on Lampedusa, seemingly lifeless among dozens of corpses. But then someone noticed she was still breathing. Instead of being placed in a zinc coffin like so many others, she was quickly airlifted by helicopter to a hospital in Palermo.

It is still unclear whether the unidentified woman from Eritrea, who is about 20, can be saved. If she is, she will be one of about 150 survivors of a tragedy that unfolded at approximately 4 a.m. last Thursday near Isola dei Conigli, or Rabbit Island, off the coast of Lampedusa when a ship that had sailed from the Libyan city of Misrata with about 500 refugees on board caught fire and sank. At least 181 lost their lives within sight of Italy, which they viewed as a promised land. More than 100 are still believed

missing, as divers and the Italian coast guard battle high seas and strong winds in their recovery efforts.

In tourism brochures, the tiny Mediterranean island, an EU outpost off the coast of Tunisia, highlights its "snow-white beaches, unspoiled nature and the crystal-clear sea filled with life." But its advertising campaigns are aimed primarily at visitors who arrive at the island's airport, spend a few days relaxing on the beach and then return home.

But since Lampedusa is easier to reach from Africa than the rest of Europe, refugees have become stranded -- or have drowned -- in the waters off the island for years. Even during last week's disastrous night, another boat landed on the island, this one carrying 463 mostly Syrian refugees. The human traffickers often destroy their ships' engines before reaching the coast. This makes them incapable of maneuvering the vessels, so that they are officially considered in distress and must be towed into port.

Authorities are questioning a 35-year-old Tunisian, who was arrested as the ship's presumed captain, over what actually happened on board on Thursday morning, why a fire broke out and why the ship sank. The man had landed illegally on Lampedusa once before, on April 11 of this year, but was then sent back to Tunisia.

### **Calls to Reform the Dublin Regulation**

Even before all the bodies had been recovered from the ship's hull late last week, mourners, admonishers and agitators were making their voices heard. Italian Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Angelino Alfano, who helped draft an Italian-Libyan treaty allowing for patrols and measures to repatriate refugees at sea, began expressing his demands while visiting Lampedusa.

Standing among the bodies of refugees, Alfano said he hoped that "divine providence has led to this tragedy so that Europe will open its eyes." He also called for urgent changes to the Dublin Regulation. According to Alfano, the convention demands "much too much" from those Mediterranean countries where refugees first set foot on European soil.

Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament, is also calling for a wider distribution of the burden, and characterized the refugee issue as a "problem for all EU member states." Schulz argued that Italy should not be left alone with the task of coping with the massive influx of people from Africa and Asia.

The undiminished rush on the old continent is "not a question that has to be discussed by committees in Brussels. It is a question of solidarity within the Member States of the EU," Schulz wrote in a press release published Thursday. He also characterized the way the EU is debating the issue as "horrifying."

The EU amended the controversial 2003 Dublin Regulation in June, making it so that any refugee who reaches Europe can only apply for asylum in the EU country he or she enters first. The rule benefits Germany most of all because it is almost completely surrounded by other EU countries, making legal entry all but impossible



for refugees. As a result, the world's fourth-largest economy ranks only 11th in Europe when it comes to the number of asylum seekers it accepts in proportion to its population.

People from the world's crisis areas are converging on the EU's external borders, with primarily Africans heading for Italy, Chechens for Poland, and Syrians, Iranians and Iraqis for Greece. In Germany, on the other hand, the prevailing view is that refugees are someone else's problem.

### **'Serious Human Rights Problems'**

The Dublin system was designed to force countries in Southern and Eastern Europe to effectively patrol their borders. In recent years, the EU has invested millions to prevent unwanted immigration. The measures have included deploying police units to the external borders, building fences and using satellite technology to monitor refugee routes.

But this hasn't deterred the refugees. Thousands die en route, while those who make it and seek asylum are imposing a growing burden on the increasingly overwhelmed countries along the EU's external borders. In Italy, more than one in three refugees is granted permission to stay, or more than in most other EU countries. But only a few of the immigrants find work and a place to stay, while many others live on the street or in parks, where they lack medical care.

The Italian protection program SPRAR offers asylum seekers and refugees accommodations, language courses and counseling. But SPRAR can only accommodate 3,000 people, compared with an estimated 75,000 potential applicants. Nils Muiznieks, the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner, has called the conditions "shocking" and notes that the "almost complete absence" of an asylum system in Italy has led to a "serious human rights problem."

Asylum systems in other countries along the EU external border are also failing -- if they exist at all. The Polish asylum process, for example, violates the guidelines of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Belgium Refugee Council wrote in a critical report. Families are sometimes separated and traumatized refugees left alone.

Refugees in Hungary have reportedly been locked into detention centers and in some cases even abused with clubs or irritant gases. Pregnant women have been kept in prison until their delivery dates. Such treatment has repeatedly led to hunger strikes in the past. In Greece, hundreds of refugees have been routinely abused in camps, in incidents the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has described as a human catastrophe.

Reports of such conditions have prompted many refugees to continue on to Central and Northern Europe. The German government, however, is invoking the Dublin Regulation and sending the refugees back to the countries where conditions are poor.


## **Calls for Change**

Charities and organizations, such as Frankfurt-based Pro Asyl, have developed a joint concept to reform the European asylum system. Attorney Reinhard Marx, one of the authors of the memorandum, explains that the goal is not to eliminate border controls. Refugees would continue to be stopped and registered upon entering Europe, but they would be allowed to choose the EU country in which to ultimately apply for asylum.

Experts believe that this system would reduce the burden on countries like Italy. Many refugees would be attracted to countries in which they could live under relatively decent conditions, such as Germany. It would also eliminate incentives for human trafficking within Europe.

It is clear, European Parliament President Schulz said in his statement last week, that "behind this tragedy lies organized criminality and conflicts in our neighborhood. We must aggressively increase efforts to stop criminals, inside and outside of the EU, exploiting this human misery for profit."

Most refugees today are dependent on traffickers if they aim to reach countries like Germany from the EU's periphery. "The Dublin system is a job-creation scheme for human traffickers," says Marx, the attorney. In the future, he adds, asylum seekers should be able to choose countries in which, for example, some of their compatriots are already living. Countries that accept larger numbers of refugees could also receive support from the EU's Asylum and Migration Fund.

 Could this idea appeal to German Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich? Italian Interior Minister Alfano has requested that the refugee problem be placed on the agenda of a meeting of EU interior ministers in Luxembourg on Tuesday. "We will make our voices clearly heard in Europe," says Alfano.

The Italian government is also under pressure. In a provisional report for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe released on Wednesday, Rome's policy is harshly criticized. Once again, the report reads, Italy is "ill prepared" for the surge of refugees and "irregular migrants may unofficially be encouraged to go up north and cross over the Italian border into other Schengen countries." In this manner, European countries continue to shift the responsibility for refugees to one another.

Meanwhile, for those Somalis and Eritreans who had left the Libyan coast in the direction of Fortress Europe, and who died at 4 a.m. last Thursday, the Mediterranean has become a graveyard of dreams.

*Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan*