

Are the migrants really so desperate?

The most desperate Syrians, Afghans, Eritreans, Nigerians, Somalis etc. have not come to Europe. They are too poor, traumatised, oppressed, old or ill to travel. Some have reached relative safety in refugee camps in the region but often do not have adequate supplies to maintain life. However, this does not mean that those coming to Europe are OK and simply coming in order to find more comfortable, prosperous lives.

Our media and politicians tend to categorise the migrants as all the same. However, this is foolish. Are all migrants escaping appalling lives? No. That is naïve. Are they all economic migrants? No. That is the attitude of those who do not want to look closely at reality.

How do we work out who is who? There is no simple, fool-proof system but doing our best to check where people have come from and the circumstances in which they lived is the only thing our governments can do. There are then international legal requirements which will dictate who should be allowed to stay.

Yes, most migrants have spent a lot of money to reach Europe. That does not necessarily mean they have any money left. Most have mobile telephones. Of course they do. They would never have been able to travel without them. Many of the migrants, especially the Syrians, are well-educated and had good jobs in the past. That underlines quite how awful life back home must have been that they would choose to give it all up and risk everything to come to Europe.