

Loaded Exclusionary Questions

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Selection and exclusion of refugees from the **Balkan corridor**, i.e. the **profiling in the corridor**, which at first was nominally carried out according to the country of origin, quickly started to include other seemingly fixed and objective, but in reality provisional criteria such as the region of origin, refugee itinerary, etc. In this system of ad hoc “checks” which was primarily aimed at reducing the number of people in the corridor, an important role – in addition to racial profiling and quick, improvised language and cultural selection tests – was played by misleading, loaded questions about the conditions and reasons for coming to Europe, especially used by the police of the countries along the corridor during the last months of the corridor. For instance, in January 2016, in response to questions from the Slovenian police about the reasons for leaving their home country (which had to be Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, cf. **SIA**) and their expectations from the receiving country (which, as agreed among the countries along the corridor, had to be Austria or Germany), migrants had to mention that they were fleeing the war and seeking international protection and nothing else, while the questions that followed, about plans to reunite with other family members, continuing their studies, or getting a job, had to be answered in the negative. Otherwise, their answers related to the war and the destination were evaluated as irrelevant or untrue, and they were excluded from the corridor. Twenty-two-year-old Eman from Syria described the translator and the interrogation in the camp in Dobova in February 2016, after which she was returned (cf. **pushback**) to Croatia:

He also wanted to know the reason why I was going to Germany, apart from the war in Syria. I replied that my husband has a residence permit there. Then, he divided us into two groups. One went on, and the other was returned to Slavonski Brod. I was in the second group.

This kind of questions, like loaded questions which Croatian law expressly prohibits, were intended to “confuse the interviewee” and call into question their credibility (*Pravni leksikon* [Legal Lexicon] 2007). Given that their loaded nature was based on the fact that practices and responses that are not otherwise mutually exclusive (seeking international protection and family reunification, continuing education, employment, etc.) were defined as exclusionary, they can be more precisely referred to as loaded exclusionary questions.

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Literature

Pezo, Vladimir gl. ur. 2007. *Pravni leksikon*. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža.