

If you expose a vampire to the light, it dies. Starting from this legend, made famous by the Irish writer Abraham (known as Bram) Stoker, the world-renowned author of *Count Dracula*, a cornerstone of Gothic literature, the American activist Lori Wallach, director of the NGO Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (2), offered an original way of expressing civil society's demand for transparency in international negotiations. She called it the Dracula strategy. For advocates of NGOs, it consists of "exposing negotiations to the light of day, for all to see," in order to put an end to decisions whose legitimacy is questionable.

According to Aurélien Colson (3), director of the Institute for Research and Teaching on Negotiation (IRENÉ), this transparency is not fully respected by civil society actors (4). We are witnessing a "clash between the tradition of secrecy and the imperative of transparency." Secrecy is practiced in the "green rooms," those rooms where the main debates take place behind closed doors. It is legitimate for public decisions to respect "a minimum of transparency." Aurélien Colson cites the siting of major public infrastructure (highways, nuclear power plants, or railways). He mentions the consultation procedures put in place, such as the National Commission for Public Debate in France. The objective is to allow for "better democratic control" by ensuring "that all stakeholders in the project (local residents, environmental protection associations, elected officials, etc.) are informed." The term "stakeholders" is often used. He quotes a former president of the European Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, who stated that "cultivating secrecy and enigma is a thing of the past. Today's watchwords are transparency and credibility."

However, according to Aurélien Colson, increased transparency has its limits and does not eliminate the usefulness of secrecy. He suggests creating a constructive tension between transparency and secrecy. One cannot say everything; transparency can be a deception (too much information, or biased information, kills the information). This weapon can backfire on transparent negotiators when their counterparts do not respect the principle of reciprocity. The classic and eternal prisoner's dilemma. Aurélien Colson rightly evokes a paradox whereby "in a market where information circulates more transparently, secrecy acquires an even greater value than before." The value of secrecy persists in highly sensitive negotiations. He quotes former French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, who classified information into four categories: points of agreement to be published, those to be kept secret, points of disagreement to be made public, and those to be kept secret. He cites the 1993 Oslo Accords, negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians. "Secrecy allows one to circumvent an impossibility—legal or political—of negotiating officially."

Immigration policy is a striking example of this tension between transparency and secrecy on a highly sensitive subject in Europe. Public discourse is increasingly repressive and aggressive toward migrants. The European Pact on Asylum and Immigration (PAM) was negotiated before the 2019 European elections, in response to the rise of anti-immigration and anti-European parties. The PAM appeals to public opinion that has been manipulated and destabilized by an explosive international geopolitical situation (numerous conflicts and economic uncertainty). Yet European countries need foreigners' labor, but they mask this reality with a double standard, depending on the audience they address- the general public or the employers.

In Germany, Chancellor Friedrich Merz (CDU-CSU), elected in May 2025, promised to break with Angela Merkel's policy (5) who had allowed the acceptance of 2.5 million refugees in 2015. However, the opening of borders was short-lived, according to Victoria Rietig, a German migration expert (6): "The first border controls were put in place with Austria in 2015, and were extended to Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Poland in the fall of 2023, then to all borders a year later." The Social Democratic Party (SPD), which won the elections against the conservative CDU-CSU in 2021, was the first to reduce the number of asylum seekers, before the 2025 elections. The CDU-CSU's anti-immigration rhetoric has already seen a retreat in 2026—asylum seekers are allowed to work earlier in response to labor shortages and to reduce social welfare costs. The labor of foreign workers enriches social security accounts.

In Italy, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, elected in 2022, whose Fratelli d'Italia party promotes a security-focused rhetoric that associates petty crime with the figure of the young Arab Italian from northern cities, advocates planning the expulsion of foreigners and even some Italians deemed "unassimilable" (8). Despite an openly xenophobic discourse, since Giorgia Meloni came to power in the fall of 2022, immigration has increased by 10%, according to the French review "Grand Continent" (9). The figures for 2025 are expected to follow the same trend as 2024 (322,000 arrivals in 2025, compared to 334,000 in 2026). The structure of immigration has changed considerably in favor of non-EU citizens: Europeans now represent only 33% of immigrants arriving in Italy in 2024 (compared to 76% in 2007). The trend is clearly towards an increase in emigration, which Giorgia Meloni did not halt at all; on the contrary, it has intensified. The Italian government is preparing to regularize 500,000 foreigners in 2026, all non-European migrants. (9)

In France, the Ministry of the Interior published figures in January 2026 for the years 2024 and 2025. These figures indicate an increase in apprehensions of undocumented migrants, 147,000 in 2024 (+18.9%) and 192,000 in 2025 (+30.6%). However, the figures are misleading (10). These apprehensions did not result in deportations – there were only 15,500 forced removals in 2025. The main reason for the increase is a change in border procedures decided by the Conseil d'Etat. According to the director of French NGO France Terre d'Asile, "massively mobilizing the police, generating anxiety and even more precariousness for undocumented migrants, and spending public money to inflate the numbers seems pointless when deportations to non-EU countries are not increasing." The arrests (mainly of Eritreans, Ethiopians, and Sudanese) at the Italian border are problematic – they are fueling tensions between our two countries, and France also drastically needs foreign labor (11).

For English author Clive Leatherdale, "The concept of the vampire is based on two precepts: the belief in life after death, and the magical power of blood" (12). For American researcher Jack D. Maser, "Neither the belief in vampires nor the belief in an afterlife has been objectively observed, yet the belief in an afterlife is universal in human society and the belief in vampires is well established in the folklore of many cultures." Vampires suck the blood of their victims to kill them. On the contrary, migrants bring fresh blood that Europe highly needs to regenerate itself. We must learn to deconstruct our primal fears.

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- (1) Bram Stoker , écrivain auteur de “Dracula-
<https://www.radiofrance.fr/personnes/bram-stoker>
- (2) Lori Wallach, directrice de Public Citizens’ Global Trade depuis 1995
<https://rethinktrade.org/lori-wallach-bio/>
- (3) Aurelien Colson, Professeur de science politique à l'ESSEC Business School où il dirige depuis 2008 l'Institut de recherche et d'enseignement sur la négociation (IRENÉ Paris, Singapour, Bruxelles).
- (4) Colson, A. (2004). Gérer la tension entre secret et transparence Les cas analogues de la négociation et de l'entreprise. Revue française de gestion, no 153(6), 87-99.
<https://doi.org/10.3166/rfg.153.87-99>.
- (5) « Wir schaffen das » dans son discours resté célèbre d’août 2015
- (6) Victoria Rietig, spécialiste des questions migratoires à la DGAP, un cercle de réflexion berlinois sur les relations internationales <https://dgap.org/en>
- (7) contrairement au MSI de GianFranco Fini « Giorgia Meloni et le Clan des goélands », Arte, mardi 24 février 2026- <https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/RC-027528/giorgia-meloni-et-le-clan-des-goelands/>
- (8) Allan Kaval « Les bons sondages pour Giorgia Meloni, un succès en trompe-l’œil », Le Monde, 24 février 2026
- (9) Article du 9 janvier 2026 du Grand Continent
<https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2026/01/09/meloni-va-t-elle-vraiment-admettre-500-000-migrants-non-europeens-en-trois-ans-pour-travailler-en-italie/>
- (10) Julia Pascual « La hausse en trompe l’œil des interpellations de sans-papiers », Le Monde, 27 février 2026
- (11) Hakim El Karoui et Juba Ihaddaden, rapport publié par la Fondation Terra Nova, Paris, 12 mai 2025-
https://tnova.fr/site/assets/files/70453/terra_nova_-_travailleurs_immigres_-_12_05_25.pdf?1wgwz3
- (12) Jack D. Maser, University of California, San Diego, Dracula and the Afterlife: A Psychological Explanation, Journal of Dracula Studies , n°1, 2005 - DOI- 10.70013/57w3x4y5- <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies/vol7/iss1/4/>