



# Climate Security with Local Authorities

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## To fear or not to fear?

*Some reflections on the role of fear in debates on migration and climate change, with insights from CLISEL's participatory project with Sardinian local authorities.*

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CLISEL was conceived in 2015 to challenge 'securitizing' and 'racializing' narratives on migration and climate change. An objective that has anticipated the recent proliferation of fears of migration in media and political debates in Europe. CLISEL has aimed to problematize the figure of the climate refugee, often represented as the vehicle through which the expected 'climate chaos' in the global South will spill over onto the resilient and safe (in these narratives) Europe. Such a narrative obscures the wider economic, social and political inequalities at the roots of displacement and/or vulnerability. Quite dramatically, these narratives have been a defining trait of global politics in recent years, and a key device through which populist parties and alt-right movements have gained traction in many European countries – UK, Sweden, Italy, France, Germany, Austria – and beyond.

CLISEL's provocation has turned this securitizing notion inside out, emphasizing the role of local communities and authorities (rather than border agencies) in dealing with the implications of migration and climate change. In this regard, Sardinia represents a 'typical case study', illuminating on what happens when big discourses such as climate or migration land on earth in ordinary places that are not under the international media's spotlight. In other words, Sardinia is a region where climate and migration are important phenomena, without being particularly emblematic – no large-scale flows of migrants, no melting glaciers.

So three years later, following a participatory process with Sardinian local

authorities that entailed workshops, interviews, questionnaires and many focus groups, what findings can we share, and what insights can help us navigating the turbulent current political climates in Europe?

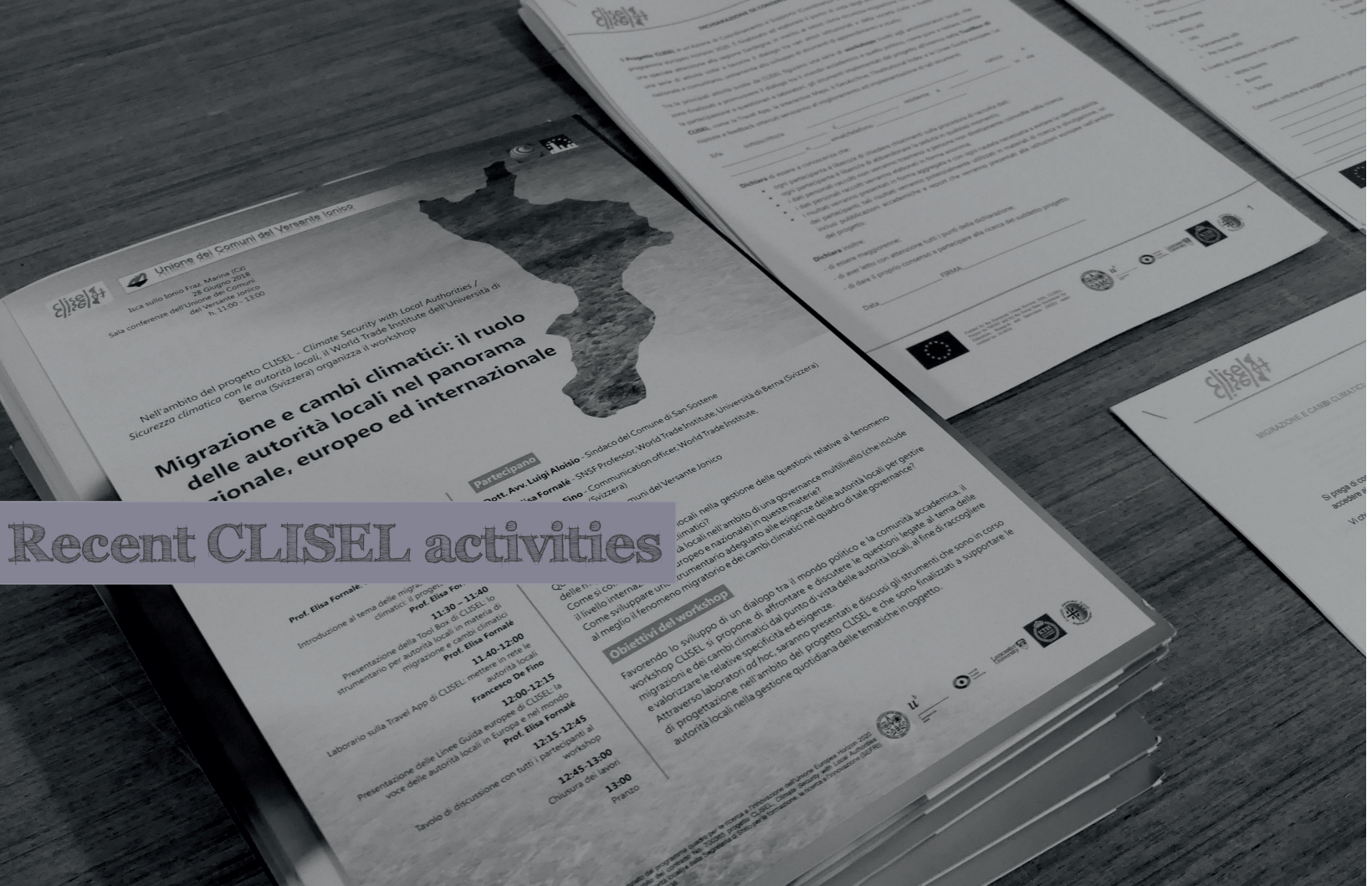


We discuss these themes in a brief intervention available on CLISEL's website, where we detail how both climate change and migration represent, for Sardinian local authorities, rather overwhelming macro-level processes that pose major ecological, social, economic and cultural challenges. Both are entangled

with issues such as austerity and budget cuts, 'spopolamento' (depopulation), economic decline and rural-urban dynamics. And yet, while mayors in Sardinia are called 'to the rescue' by their citizens in the face of both, these two 'fears' impact very differently on mayors' activities. In the case of migration, not unexpectedly, mayors feel compelled to react to a very strong pressure from citizens who transmit their fears surrounding migration to local administrators. Not 'acting' is not an option, or is a very brave action. On the contrary, elections are not won or lost on climate change. Although just as present as migration in many respects, climate seldom mobilizes fear, or, conversely, the fear of it is paralysing rather than mobilizing, leading to a sort of fatalism or deferral. It seems as if, in the case of migration, anti-migration rhetoric fuels an illusion that mayors can protect citizens from looming structural threats, something that does not happen in the case of climate change. How could this be reverted? And what does it mean for debates on climate migration? For our reflections on this, see the full post, available at: [http://www.clisel.eu/Climate\\_change](http://www.clisel.eu/Climate_change)



# Recent CLISEL activities



## Recent CLISEL activities

### Updates to the CLISEL website and expansion of the restricted access area

Work on improving the features of the CLISEL website and on additions to the CLISEL Toolbox is ongoing. The content of the restricted access area has also been expanded. For access to CLISEL's Global Climate Change Security Platform, please contact [Francesco.DeFino@wti.org](mailto:Francesco.DeFino@wti.org)



### The third phase of activities of CLISEL's pilot case-study

The face-to-face seminars held in Brussels, the speed-training session in Stockholm reported in our last newsletter, and the training conducted by the University of Cagliari on "territorial governance", "governance of education" and "governance of multiculturalism" constitute the third phase of activities of the CLISEL pilot case-study. Detailed information is available on the CLISEL website.

### User-testing phase for the CLISEL travel app

Workshops were held in several regions of Italy as part of the user-testing phase of the CLISEL travel app. The travel app is the key instrument for transmitting CLISEL's results and the tools devised by each of its Work Packages. As part of these activities, Elisa Fornalé and Francesco de Fino gave several press interviews and appeared on Italian television. The video is available on the CLISEL website.

### The RLI blog on refugee law and forced migration

The Refugee Law Initiative is the only academic initiative in the United Kingdom to concentrate specifically on international refugee law. CLISEL team members from the World Trade Institute were invited to contribute to the RLI blog, which is analysing the final version of the UN's Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.



## Participation in international events

### Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS)

The 2018 Annual Meeting on Human Rights, Migration, and Global Governance was held in Rome from 12–14 July.





Participation in international events

Prof. Ilenia Ruggiu (University of Cagliari) and Prof. Elisa Fornalé (WTI, University of Bern), attended the meeting, which was aimed at stimulating, supporting and disseminating research and analysis on the United Nations, multilateralism and international organization. This year the focus was on 'Human Rights, Migration and Global Governance'.

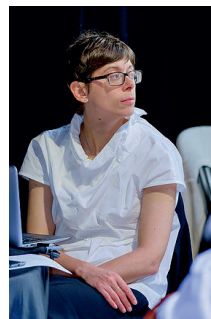
## **"Adaptation in Motion – Climate Change, Migration and Resilience" 5–7 September**

CLISEL's Pierre Vanhulst, who is in charge of data visualisation for the CLISEL project, attended the closing conference of the Translocal Resilience Project/TransRe: Environment, Migration, Resilience on 'Adaptation in Motion – Climate Change, Migration and Resilience' in Bonn. The conference, which took place from 5–7 September, brought together scholars from different fields of research. Through the CLISEL poster, Mr Vanhulst had the opportunity to present CLISEL's research on migration as adaptation through the lens of legal instruments and policy-making in general.

## **Meeting of the Community of Users (CoU) on Secure, Safe and Resilient Societies**

Professor Elisa Fornalé (WTI, University of Bern) presented the CLISEL activities and a poster at the 11th Meeting of the CoU on Secure, Safe and Resilient Societies, held in Brussels, Belgium, from 4–7 June. In a world facing

the growing risk of natural disasters resulting from increasingly frequent and severe natural, industrial and man-made hazards, the security of citizens, infrastructure and assets has become a high priority in the European Union and disaster management represents a key EU policy and research challenge.



This challenge is being taken up by CLISEL in its use of an innovative research approach (data visualisation) to create its Interactive Maps. They are the results of the first mapping exercise conducted to provide a comprehensive overview of legal instruments in the context of environmental migration. You can read more about this work on the CLISEL website.

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