

CONTEXT ANALYSIS – CALAIS, FRANCE

Political, economic and social background of the local area and general current challenges

1- The “border situation”

Calais is the first national site of transit of travelers of France and its harbor is also one of the biggest national harbors. The first employing organization is EuroTunnel.

The migratory context in Calais, and more generally in the northern French coast, is marked by the problematic crossing of the frontier with Great Britain. The migration there is mainly a transitory migration, with migrants in transition to Great Britain.

Calais’ migration cannot be understood without taking account of this *border situation*. This border is specific, its shape results of its physic geography: the channel, the local economy of transit via the Channel Tunnel and the harbor, which generate a high traffic of trucks, the local policy- the right-wing mayor, Natacha Bouchard, tries to prevent migrants in transit from settling in Calais and is struggling with the local charities and human rights defenders. But this border has also become a global border taken in a landscape of the borders made by walls, technologies of surveillance, barbed wire, especially since 2016¹ with the intensification of the presence of migrants in transit in the city and the creation, in 2015, of the camp/slum of La Lande around a humanitarian day center: the Jules Ferry Center. These two elements - the camps, both formal and informal and the global borders - are related.²

The international level is also important: in 2003, a special agreement between France and Great Britain named “Les accords du Touquet”, organized a legal frame for British immigration police to make the control from French territory to prevent illegal immigration. It included a financial compensation for French government in order to cover the reinforcement of the

¹<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/cartes/territoires-et-amenagement/c001839-calais-construction-d-une-frontiere-situation-en-mars-2016>.

² See Camille Guenebeaud, «Dans la frontière, migrants et lutte des places dans la ville de Calais», thèse soutenue le 04/04/2017 à l’Université de Lille 1 sous la direction de Patrick Picouet.

border. This agreement is often presented as a cause of the increasing number of migrants blocked in Calais or nearby³.

The Calais situation is specific regarding the French context because of this border situation but it has consequences on the general French policies of asylum and immigration. In order to erase the slum of Calais, the government created special centers (CAO) all over the country⁴. Regularly, the Calais situation is discussed and mediatized and it shapes the French public debate on immigration.

2 - Historical context of migration in transition in Calais

The presence of transitory migration is a long going story in Calais, it emerges at the end of the 90's and the Kosovo war, when other migrants in transition to UK, fleeing conflicts, arrived and found a difficult frontier to cross. Great Britain had negotiated a "opt out" at the integration of the Schengen rules in the European Union rulings and proceeded to identity control at the border. The Kosovars were joined by Kurdish from Iraq, Sri Lankan and Somalian.

In September 1999 the French government, alerted on the humanitarian conditions of "migrants in transition" in the Calais area opened a reception center in the city of Sangatte, run by the Red Cross. In three years, it hosted 67.000 persons willing to cross the channel and gave some visibility to the problem of transitory migration in Europe.

The Sangatte center, offered very basic needs and was over crowded - an ethnographic work showed the lack of access to information on asylum procedure in France⁵. Three years later, still over crowded, the center was closed by the government in cooperation with the British government: this gave birth to the "Touquet agreement".

³ See for example the positions of the CNDH -National commission for Human Rights.

⁴ Form of accommodation created in October 2015 to host migrants willing to leave the camp of la Lande (the jungle) in Calais. The CAO are disseminated through french territory except of l'Île-de-France, Corse and Alpes-maritimes. At the start the capacities were of 2 000 places, it grows to 10 000 places to insure the destruction of the camp in 2016. The CAO integrated the National Asylum System managed by the OFII.

⁵ Carrère, Violaine. « Sangatte, un symbole d'impuissance », *Plein droit*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2003, pp. 4-8.

After 2003 and the closing of Sangatte, the migrants tried to organize themselves in informal camps and slums in the wood, rapidly named “jungle” by a Pashto word signifying “woods” and mis translated. These places had to remain unseen, when they become to conspicuous, they risked to be destroyed by the police. These destructions are analysed by Sara Prestani (2014) and other researchers as strategies of “invisibilisation”

In 2009, a first big destruction of the so called “Afghanis jungle” took place: this informal camp was turning in a visible slum. Other camps, smaller and disseminated on the territory, often near truck parks or near the harbor began to emerge. The camps were mostly communitarian: Kurdish in Grande Synthe, Somalian and Erythrean in Calais or Norrent Fontes for example. The migrants also lived in some industrial wasteland or unoccupied buildings in the city of Calais. A strong network of local personalities and organizations of the civil society engaged themselves in providing basic humanitarian support. The constant destructions of the camps and the absence of long term institutional responses obliged to use a lot of energy in humanitarian support, in this configuration, legal as psychologic and cultural support were complicated to organize.

In April 2015, the government and the city of Calais decided to open a day center, open by night for women and children, in the dunes of Calais, 7 km from the city center - The Jules Ferry center, managed by “La vie active”, a local association with experience in the care of unaccompanied minors. In May 2015, the local authorities asked the migrants to move around the center and closed the squats. Under pressure⁶, the associations agreed to help migrants to install themselves in the dunes. Rapidly a slum began to emerge and the so called New Jungle of Calais began to grow.

The “La Lande” camp became one of the main migrant camps in Europe. It marked the migratory context in Calais even though it was rapidly destroyed. The mediatization of the “Jungle”, the European volunteering and the many research and artistic projects contributed to shape how, in the French and European public spheres, the “migration crisis” was discussed⁷.

⁶ Information obtained by Emmaus Grande Synthe and The Auberge des migrants.

⁷ See Lequette, S., Levergos D., « *Décamper !* », Paris, La Découverte, 2016.

Agier, M., Yasmine Bouagga, Maël Galisson, Cyrille Hanappe, Mathilde Pette, Philippe Wannesson, « *La Jungle de Calais* », Paris, PUF, 2018.

This slum/camp was for example described as a “Hyper-place” by the French geographer Michel Lussault⁸. The camp/slum was destroyed in October 2016. The period of the “La Lande” camp saw a lot of volunteers from all over Europe coming to help migrants and share the experience of this special place. A lot of artists and cultural workers engaged themselves in the camp.

Migration and refugee situation and measures taken by the government, NGOs and other organizations

Basic facts on migration, asylum seekers and refugees

⁸ Michel Lussault, « *Hyper-lieux. Les nouvelles géographies politiques de la mondialisation* », Paris, Seuil, coll. « La couleur des idées », 2017.



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 provisoire	2017/ 2016
Premières demandes	41 254	45 925	45 454	59 335	63 935	73 689 19	+15,3%
Demandes mineurs accompagnants	14 001	14 536	13 859	15 133	14 436	141	+32,6%
Total des premières demandes	55 255	60 461	59 313	74 468	78 371	92 830	+18,4%
Réexamens*	6 213	5 790	5 498	5 607	7 355	7 582	+3,5%
Total des demandes	61 468	66 251	64 811	80 075	85 726	100 412	+17,1%
Décisions OFPRA	46 267	46 987	52 053	62 057	70 319	89 307	+27,0%
dont attribution de l'asile (A)	4 348	5 978	8 763	14 119	19 982	24 005 10 985	+20,1%
dont protection subsidaire	1 185	1 106	1 940	2 822	7 661		+43,4%
Recours reçus par la CNDA	36 362	34 752	37 356	38 674	39 986	53 581	+34,0%
Décisions CNDA	37 350	38 540	39 162	35 979	42 968	47 814	+11,3%
dont annulations (B)	5 680	5 450	5 826	5 387 1 554	6 517 2 006	8 006 2 607	+22,8% +30,0%

Source: OFPRA; CNDA.

Publication of the Ministry of the Interior, January 16- 2018⁹.

In 2017, 100.412 demands were registered to the l'OFPRA: 92.830 first demands (included minors) and 7.582 reconsideration.

The Ministry underlines in its public communication that the number of decisions are increasing: 89.307 decisions, without considering accompanied minors, were taken - an increasing of 27,0 % in comparison with 2016. L'OFPRA took 24.005 decisions of agreement against 19.982 in 2016. In 2017, the CNDA took 47.814 decisions, an increase of 11,3 % of the number of decisions.

In addition, the number of decisions of agreement of a status of protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection, minus accompanied minors) taken by OFPRA and CNDA is of 32.011 in 2017, an increased of 20,8 % regarding the total positive decisions of 2016.

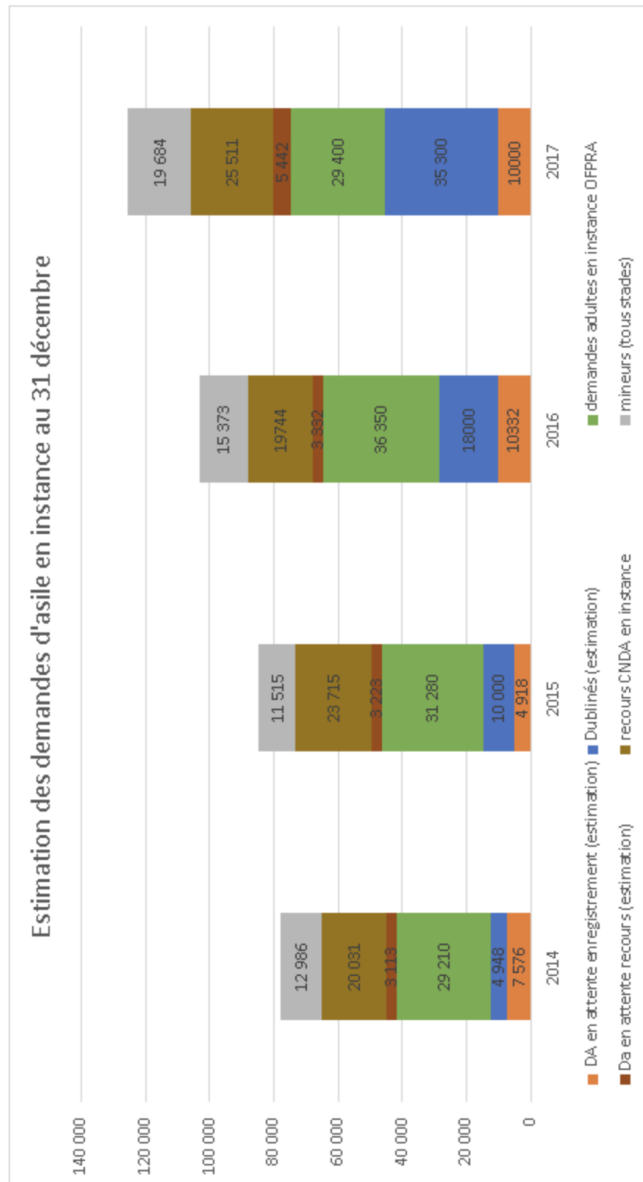
These figures have to be taken with caution. La CIMADE highlighted that there is an important difference between the number of demands recorded by the GUDA – the French prefectures- (121.200) and the number of demand recorded by the OFPRA (100.412). The gap may be explained by the way the figures are established and by the way of counting the asylum seekers in the Dublin procedure - some of them being requalified in the normal procedure¹⁰.

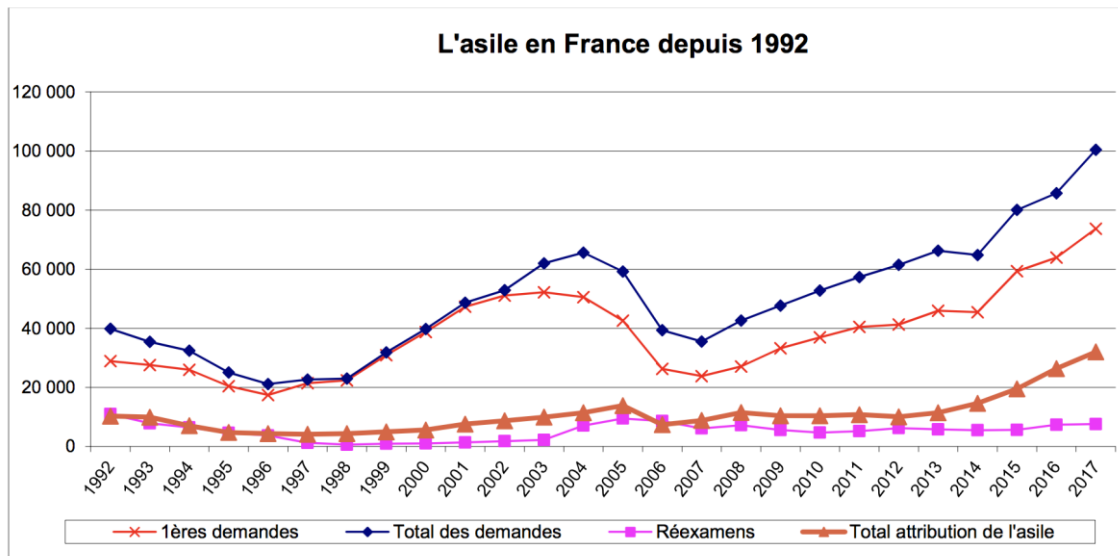
According to Eurostat a third of the asylum seekers in France are concerned by the Dublin's regulation.

Pending Asylum Seekers:

⁹Available here :<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Info-ressources/Etudes-et-statistiques/Statistiques/Essentiel-de-l-immigration/Chiffres-clefs/LES-DEMANDES-D-ASILE-STATISTIQUES>.

¹⁰ <https://www.lacimade.org/demandes-dasile-france-2017-expliquer-limportant-hiatus-entre-chiffres-de-lofpra-ministere-de-linterieur/>.





Source : OFPRA

In Calais, the different studies led by Non-Governmental Organizations showed that more than 90%¹¹ of the migrants in Calais in 2017 - one year after the destruction of the camp de La Lande¹² - are willing to cross the border. There are no official surveys, but the estimation of the associations, charities and human rights observers estimate at 700 people living “in the limbos” in Calais and 400 in another city of transitory migration through UK Grande-Synthe. They were around 8.000 in Calais and 850 in Grande Synthe (MSF figures) in 2016 before the destruction of the camp in Calais.

Policies and actions on the national and local level

The local political context is particularly tensed as well as the national. For the national political context, the formal government is discussing a new immigration law named “Asylum and

¹¹<http://refugeerights.org.uk/reports/>. This project of asking asylum in Great Britain is often not a definitive one. One year after the destruction of the camp de La Lande (the jungle) 42% of the migrants « evacuated » from Calais had gained asylum in France, 7 % were rejected and 46 % are waiting for the decision of OFPRA or CNDA. Only 5 % choose not to ask for asylum in France (OFII figures).

¹² We will prefer to use camp or slum de La Lande, than “Jungle”, a term risking to connote a form of animality of the people who had to live there.

Immigration” which concentrate a lot of criticism from the human right movement, as well as by “the rights defender” a French Republican independent institution created in 2011 and who’s missions are inscribed in the Constitution.

The law intends to harden the conditions of retention and to facilitate the expulsions. It also intends to improve the conditions of integration of refugees. The mobilization against the new law takes different forms. The associations organize the mobilization locally and nationally through the organization of “Etats Généraux des migrations”. National and international associations are leading communication campaigns to inform the public opinion - see for example La Cimade: <https://www.lacimade.org/comprendre-projet-de-loi-asile-immigration-videos/>.

Locally, the municipality of Calais tries to invisibilise the presence of migrants, who are described as a danger for the local economy. This policy had been condemned numerous times even during the existence of the “New Jungle” - see for example the report of 2015 of the “defenseur des droits”¹³.




Since the destruction of the slum, the conditions of life are made harder to prevent what is called “point de fixation” and a new slum. The local policy led by the municipality and the government, has been judged by the CEDH (European Court of Human Rights) as contrary to the international laws and principle of human rights. The municipality of Calais has also been condemned by the administrative court to install the minimum humanitarian support such as water access and showers. The situation is very precarious for the migrants who are still in the area. The associations are condemning this policy and try to distribute tents, meals, clothes to help the exiles to survive. They also try to be nearby when the police destroy the little camps which pop up around the city to make sure the rights are respected - no destruction of personal effects for example. Many cases of police violence are reported by the associations. In January 2018, Emmanuel Macron made a visit in Calais and promised that the state will take at its charge the distribution of lunches and breakfasts. But the local associations continue to take in charge the basic humanitarian need, as well as camping material. The migrants are reluctant to attend the food distributions because they fear the control and the police operations.




¹³ https://juridique.defenseurdesdroits.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=16846.

The relations between the police, the migrants and the associations are very bad. Some of the volunteers are regularly harassed by the police, and at risk to be charge for what is qualified of “solidarity offense”. This situation contrasts with the nearby city of Grande Synthe where the mayor Damien Carème, tries to invent humanitarian and local political solutions to improve the hospitality of the city and work hand to hand with the local associations.



Main actors / stakeholders dealing with migration

4 a- Associations – humanitarian, human rights and legal support.

<p>Auberge des migrants</p> <p>Help Refugees</p> 	<p>Clothes and sleeping bags distribution Meals preparation and distribution- Wifi bus – information on asylum=> everyday at 12am and 6pm rue des Verrotières, Calais</p>	<p>Rue Clément Ader, Calais</p>
<p>Cabane juridique Legal Shelter</p> 	<p>Information of refugees on their rights (asylum, residence permit) and support for victims of violence.</p>	<p>Permanence le mercredi de 14h à 17h rue Lafayette, Calais</p> <p>Permanence on Wednesdays from 2pm to 5pm at Lafayette street, Calais</p>
 <p>Citizens UK</p>	<p>Safe Passage Project: training, registration for family reunification for minors and</p>	<p>http://www.citizensuk.org/</p>

	adults with family	
<p>France Terre d'Asile</p> 	<p>Emergency accommodation centers (outreach, shelters) and longterm accommodation for unaccompanied minors- Detention centre at Coquelles: legal support</p>	<p>Emergency accommodation for minors 8, rue des Bleuets 62500 Saint Omer. Active in all the Pas-de-Calais department</p>
<p>Gynécologies Sans Frontières Gynecology without Borders</p> 	<p>Medical consultations: gynecology and obstetrics - Medico-psycho-social care of women and under 6 years-old children</p>	
<p>Médecins du Monde</p> 	<p>Medical consultations with mobile clinic - Material medical help</p>	
<p>Planning familial 62</p> 	<p>Information on women and LGBTI- Prevention and listening of violence and</p>	

	sexual health - Identification of vulnerable persons	
Plateforme de Services aux Migrants 	Helping associations working together- Legal assistance for organizations and their volunteers/activists - Setting up communication tools	
Refugee Community Kitchen 	Preparation of meals	Rue Clément Ader, Calais.
 Refugee Youth Service	Legal help for minors (outreach on Thursday nights) Activities for minors with educator (going out on Wednesdays) - Signaling / alarming information concerning minors	
Salam 	Breakfast distributions- Material Help=> everyday between 9am and 11:30am rue des Verrotières, hospital and canal in Calais- Tea distribution every nights, rue des Verrotières - Lift to the hospital (PASS)	

<p>Secours Catholique</p> 	<p>Outreach activities and identification of vulnerable people- Day Hosting center and French classes from Monday to Friday from 2pm to 5pm - Information for asylum seekers - domiciliation service- Clothes distribution on Monday morning + some Saturdays- Solidarity housing</p>	<p>Accueil de jour / Day hosting center: 1691 route de Saint-Omer 62100 Calais 14H – 17h Vestiaire / Clothes distribution 47 Rue de Moscou, 62100 Calais</p>
<p>Utopia 56</p> 	<p>Clothes distribution - Meals distribution=> everyday at 12am and 6pm in the center of Calais and later on near the hospital- Emergency housing for minors</p>	

Attitudes and behaviors towards migrants and refugees

Locally, the attitudes and behaviors towards migrants and refugees are contrasted. The different phases of the institutionalization of the presence of migrants in transit and in very precarious conditions generated a very strong solidarity and a network of associations; at the same time the right-wing extremists also put the Calais situation in their agenda.

The organization of defense of the migrants and the No Border Group present in Calais since 2009 observed the violence and the discriminations faced by the migrants in transit in the city of Calais from right wing extremists or by some retailers or bar owners. But the inhabitants of the city seemed in their majority indifferent to the presence of migrants.

The situation changed in 2013, when the mayor of Calais Natacha Bouchart took publicly anti migrants positions saying that the city of Calais was “taken in hostage”.¹⁴ Meanwhile a group of inhabitants of Calais opened a Facebook group “Sauvons Calais” (save Calais) in order to, according to their Facebook profile, fight against immigration, the “foreigner preference policy” and the pro migrants organizations. They demand the expulsions of migrants from Calais and around, the interdiction of No Border and Salam, and the arrest of the people who host migrants. During the following years, other movements reclaiming the end of the migrant presence emerged, organized public protests and some groups of people tried to “help the police” to secure the tunnel and the highway or “to protect” the inhabitants living nearby the new Jungle. The violence raised. In this context the extremists of the right wing reinforced their European link with other extremists and radical movements, such as Pegida in Germany or Aube dorée in Greece. One main conclusion is the way the migratory presence in Calais shaped the way it became a European city, welcoming volunteers from all Europe, but also reinforcing the role the “migrant crisis” have been framed by the populists and extremist movements in many European countries.

Role of cultural organizations and Ngos in the context of migration

Even if the presence of the migrants in Calais had already been treated in movies or play (See for example the movies *Le Havre*, Aki Kaurismaki, *Welcome Philippe Lioret*), the art world was engaged more strongly during the existence of the slum. Although the actions can be categorized, the list of actions and organization is not exhaustive.

Reporting/testifying of the life in the slum

Lots of these initiatives aimed at building new images of the life of migrants and “change the representations”. Plays (HVDZ), performances (Veronika Boutinova), video installations (Lou Blaster), drawings novels, were created after the slum of Calais and the situation of the migrants in the city.

¹⁴ « Calais Natacha Bouchart comprend le maire de Croix et établit un parallèle entre Roms et migrants », La Voix du Nord, 17 Septembre 2013.

Acting on the place itself, imagining new architectures

- *Actes et Cités*, run by Cyrille Hannape - an architect specialist in “emergency and light architecture”. *Actes et Cités* tried to imagine solutions to support and make the life safer and easier in the slum.
- *Le PEROU*, <http://www.perou-paris.org/> Le Perou is a collective of urbanists, photographers, sociologists, anthropologists. They mainly tried to make architectural “relevés” in the slum, and document “the arts of dwelling in transition” and the creativity of the inhabitant of the slums. They worked with the school of architecture and landscape of Lille. They also imagined a fake municipal newspaper distributed in all the mailboxes of the inhabitants of Calais, the purpose of the newspaper was to open the imagination of what could be Calais if it took the presence of the migrants as a chance instead of a problem. It also demonstrated the inefficacy and the cost of the repressive measures. They initiated a movement of thinking about hospitality (<https://reinventercalais.org/a-propos/>).

Organizing art practices with migrants. A frame of Cultural Rights mixed with Art Therapy

- *Good Chance Theatre*: <https://www.goodchance.org.uk>. The example of the Good Chance is interesting because they continued their action by intervening in the Paris “la Chapelle Center”, in a different context: they collaborate with the municipality of Paris. The La chapelle center is a controversial place. Opened to give a shelter and to orient the migrants in the legal procedures, it is overcrowded, and some associations decided to stop their collaboration with the center. The center should be closed by March 2018.
- *Art in the jungle*. Art in the jungle is a collective of artists who decided to work in the Jungle with migrants. They built an exhibition with the work they did in the jungle and tried to give visibility to migrant artists they met in the Jungle.

- *L'école du chemin des dunes*. This school, run by a migrant of the Jungle, Zimako Jones, hosted numerous art activities, from slam poetry, writing workshops, music workshops, etc...

Revealing the “talents”, collecting the practices

- *The Calais Sessions*: an English music group organized recording session in the slum and released an album. They also organized musical practices in the camp and concerts. <https://www.facebook.com/TheCalaisSessions/>, <https://vimeo.com/user47365195>.
- *SOAS University of London*: the students and teachers of this ethnomusicology university organized musical collect of traditional songs in the slum. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vs4_L3kLGmA.

Financing humanitarian and legal support

- *La cabanne Juridique*: a legal information center, financed by l'appel des 800 and the cinema world.
- *Utopia 56*: humanitarian association created by some of the professional of the festival camp of Les Vieilles Charrues.
- *Aid Box Convoy*: a Bristol collective with a lot of members in the free party movement.

Petitionning

- *Appel des 800*: In March 2015, it involved 800 people http://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/10/20/jungle-de-calais-l-appel-des-800_1407520.

Happening and drawing attention

- *Banksy*. Banksy draw a graffiti at the entrance of the camp picturing Steve Jobs under “London Calling” The father of Steve job was a Syrian who immigrate to the United States.
- *Le projet Racines*. A young photographer organized a projection of the portrait of migrants in the cliffs of le cap Blanc Nez.

The Channel- Scène Nationale situation

During this period, Le channel- Scène Nationale hosted numerous artists willing to work with migrants from the jungle, or on the migrant theme and was a place of encounter between artists, researchers and humanitarian workers. It had to develop a philosophy over the hospitality of a theater in a Border situation.

One year after the destruction of the slum, and in a political and humanitarian crisis, the Channel theater continues to be a place of thinking and of creation on the situation.

Other places are organizing cultural activities with and for migrants, mainly the “Secours populaire”. A new place run by artists and activists in the city, for example Loup Blaster, is in prefiguration in an ancient factory nearby the Channel. The research project will be an opportunity to observe and describe the dynamics between these initiatives and to precise the role of The Channel in enhancing a policy of hospitality in an in-hospitality context.

