Resilience in health service provisions for migrants at the external EU border

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Introduction

How can we carry out an in–depth assessment of the health status of migrants in order to identify unmet needs and adapt healthcare systems to the specific health conditions of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe ?

Outline

I. EU action plan to help migrants in Europe

II. Study of the overall health of migrants arriving in the EU

III. The need to adapt healthcare systems to the specifics need of migrants

1. EU action plan to help migrants in Europe

I. A. Policy in response to the migration crisis

Mig-HealthCare aims to **reduce health inequalities** and improve the health care services for migrants and refugees.

HOW?

Developed a roadmap and toolbox for the implementation of community based care models for refugees and migrants, following an assessment of existing health services and best practices.

A NEW PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

STATE OF PLAY

APRIL 2023

European Commission

2016
- Revised EU Blue Card to Attract Non-EU Highly-Skilled Workers
- Regulation establishing a Union Resettlement Framework
- Revised Reception Conditions Directive, Qualification Regulation

2018
- Return directive

September 2020
- Asylum and Migration Management Regulation
- Screening procedure at the external border
- A new Asylum Procedures Regulation
- Revised EURODAC database
- Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint
- Regulation to address situations of crisis and force majeure
- Recommendation on cooperation on search and rescue
- Guidance on non-criminalisation of search and rescue

November 2020
- Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027

March 2021
- European Contact Group on Search and Rescue

April 2021
- EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings
- EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration

May 2021
- A new Strategy on Schengen

June 2021
- Launch of the Talent Partnership concept

September 2021
- A renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling 2021-2025

October 2021
- Frontex appoints a Deputy Executive Director for Return

December 2021
- Revision of the Schengen Borders Code
- Regulation addressing the instrumentalisation of people

January 2022
- The EU Agency for Asylum replaces the EU Asylum Support Office

March 2022
- Triggering of the Temporary Protection Directive
- A new EU Return Coordinator appointed
- Skills and Talent package

June 2022
- Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism

November 2022
- EU Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean Route

December 2022
- EU Action Plan on the Western Balkan Route
- A revision of the Anti-trafficking directive

January 2023
- Labour migration platform launched
- Operational Strategy for more effective returns

March 2023
- Recommendation for mutual recognition of return decisions

Key:
- Adopted
- Ready to be adopted
- Not yet adopted

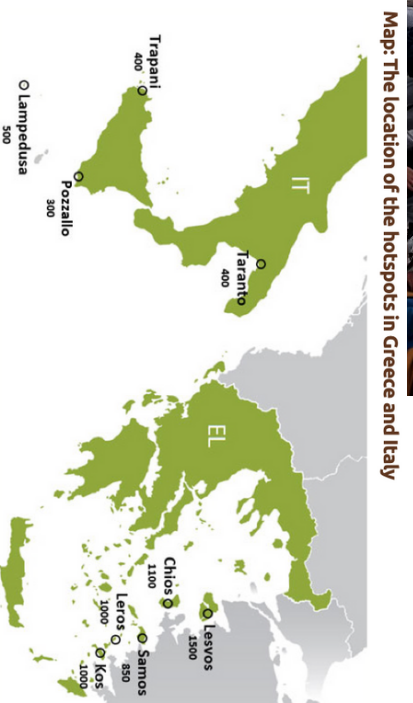# New Pact on Migration and Asylum

II. Study of the overall health of migrants arriving in the EU

1. The notion of "hotspots"

Hotspot located in Lesbos, Greece

Map: The location of the hotspots in Greece and Italy

Trapani
400

○ Lampedusa
500

Pozzallo
300

Taranto
400

IT

EL

Chios
1100

Leros ○
1000

Lesvos ○
1500

Samos
850

Kos
1000

Source: EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) 2016

- **Initiation of Hotspot Approach :**
Introduced in 2015 by the European Commission to aid Member States facing exceptional migrant flows, with a focus on Italy and Greece.

- **Geographical Implementation :**
Led to the creation of Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) on islands like Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros, and Kos.

- **Transformation into CCAC :**
Some centres, including those on Samos, Leros, and Kos, evolved into Closed Controlled Access Centres of Islands (CCAC).

- **European Agency Collaboration :**
Involves support from European agencies like Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, and EASO : assisting national authorities in these hotspots.

- **Hotspot Composition :**
Collective effort involving national authorities and European agencies to address migration challenges.

2. Study of the overall health of migrants in the hot spots

- **Registration and Sorting of Migrants :**

Hotspots conduct vital registration, utilizing evolving mechanisms like digital records and biometric identification to ensure accurate demographic and medical data for effective healthcare.

- **Detection of Health Needs :**

Hotspots identify health needs through medical examinations, vaccinations, and mental health assessments, revealing evolving protocols to address unique challenges faced by migrants.

- **Coordination of Healthcare :**

Effective coordination among local authorities, humanitarian organizations, and health agencies in hot spots is critical, with ongoing analysis needed to assess progress and identify areas for improvement in managing migrant healthcare.

Arrival center for asylum seekers

EUNAVFOR Med

GREECE

Thessaloniki ●

Athens ○

Moria refugee camp

LESBOS

Aegean Sea

TURKEY

DW

Moria camp on Lesbos island in Greece has been described by humanitarian actors as **"the worst refugee camp on earth"** and a **"living hell"**

Water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, too, are appalling, with approximately 1 toilet to 80 people and very poor access to showers and clothes-washing facilities. On average, people queue to get their food for around 4 h, three times a day, and what they get is nutritionally poor. Unsurprisingly, violence often breaks out in the queue for food, where tensions run high, and the highly militarised environment often reminds people of the traumas from which they fled [...]

Alessandro Barbiero – Médecins Sans Frontières Psychiatrist

III. The need to adapt healthcare systems to the specific needs of migrants

II. A. Criticism of the current system

- **Accessibility and Equity :** Migrants often encounter barriers such as language issues and lack of information, leading to delayed or inadequate healthcare and worsened health outcomes.

- **Preventive and Primary Care :** Insufficient emphasis on preventive and primary care for migrants can limit timely access to vaccinations and screenings, impacting individual and public health outcomes, potentially increasing healthcare costs.

- **Legal and Administrative Barriers :** Legal and administrative obstacles, including uncertain statuses and fear of repercussions, deter migrants from seeking necessary medical care, compromising individual health and contributing to the spread of infectious diseases.

- **Neglect of Mental Health :** The mental well-being of migrants is overlooked despite the significant challenges they face during migration, leading to traumas that extend beyond the physical journey. The primary focus tends to be on physical health, overlooking mental health considerations.

- **Critics of Data Privacy :** Concerns arise over migrants' data privacy rights compared to European citizens, despite protection by various texts. Challenges persist, notably with operations like "Sophia" allowing extensive data collection, raising issues around sensitive health data and its insufficient protection.

- **Treatment of migrants during COVID-19 ?**

III. B. Is there room for improvement ?

- Asylum policy reform
- Strengthening border security
- Intensify cooperation with migrant-sending and transit countries
- Setting up integration programs
- Intensify humanitarian support
- Creating legal channels for migration