

Migrant access to healthcare: From emergency to sustainable solutions

Date and time: 18 October 2022, 14:30–17:00; 19 October 2022, 10:00–13:00

Location and attendance: European Committee of Regions, Room JDE 51, Brussels; in-person and online

Background

As highlighted in the 2021-2027 EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, migrants face diverse and persistent barriers to accessing healthcare services (e.g. formal healthcare rights lacking in the case of certain migrant statuses; low literacy/education; weak social networks and spatial exclusion; administrative and social "invisibility", etc.)¹. In particular, migrants may be at risk of developing mental health conditions because they have often experienced trauma or severe stress, before, during and after the migration process. For instance, they may have a higher prevalence of mental health disorders than native populations—such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder². Despite the pressing need for support, migrants often face multiple obstacles when accessing mental health services—such as linguistic, financial, administrative, cultural and other barriers. All such barriers and obstacles to healthcare access undermine migrants' integration and inclusion in all spheres of life and hence pose risks to Europe's social cohesion³.

Recently, in particular in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic, local and national governments across Europe have launched new measures and tools to improve health literacy among migrant populations, sometimes coupled with interventions to expand formal rights to access healthcare services.

Objective and key topics

While integration policy is largely a national responsibility in the EU, the local level's role in promoting the inclusion of diverse residents, as well as in fostering community trust and social cohesion, has been widely recognised in recent years. Similarly, the role of civil society and migrant organisations has grown in importance. Against this background, the European Commission – DG HOME, European Committee of Regions, and the Council of Europe Development Bank under the umbrella of the Urban Agenda Partnership for Inclusion, are organizing this event to:

- Explore existing, evidence-based innovative approaches to minimising barriers to health care, with a focus on those applied in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of many displaced people from Ukraine. In particular, the event will look at ways of improving healthcare rights,

1 Cf. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/pdf/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf

2 Actual risk exposure may vary greatly depending on individual characteristics, the healthcare system of the host country, and the specific experiences migrants and refugees may have endured, such as trafficking, detention and torture.

3 In December 2021, the European Commission launched the Healthier together – EU non-communicable diseases (NCD) initiative to support EU countries in identifying and implementing effective policies and actions to reduce the burden of major NCDs and improve citizens' health and well-being. The initiative includes mental health and neurological disorders as one major strand of activities and aims in particular at vulnerable groups, such as migrants.

creating culturally sensitive, patient-centred health care systems, and improving migrant health literacy.

- Identify best practice and potential solutions applicable in Europe, in the context of communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- Develop recommendations on how these challenges can be addressed through multilevel governance, including through better knowledge-sharing, funding, and regulatory changes at EU level.

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Draft Agenda

Location: **European Committee of Regions**, Room JDE 51, Brussels; in-person and online via Interactio

Registration link: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/workshop_registration

18 October 2022, 14:30 – 17:30

IMPROVING MIGRANTS' AND REFUGEES' ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

14:30-14:40 Welcome - opening by the European Committee of the Regions

14:40-15:10 ACCESS

Migrant access to healthcare: A view from the regions

Moderator: European Committee of Regions



- ❖ **Pietro Bartolo** (IT/S&D), Member of the European Parliament (tbc)
- ❖ **Władysław ORTYL** (PL/ECR), President of the Podkarpackie Region, member of the European Committee of the Regions
- ❖ **Birgitta Sacrédeus** (SE/EPP), Member of a Regional Assembly: Dalarna Regional Council, member of the European Committee of the Regions
- ❖ **Giuseppe Varacalli** (IT/Renew), member of Gerace Municipal Council, member of the European Committee of the Regions

Q&A

15:10–16:10

INFORMATION & DIAGNOSIS



Innovative practices to ensure effective access to healthcare for all

Information and communication practices, linguistic and cultural interpretation models and systems, governance and service delivery arrangements

Moderator: *Emilia Postolache (CEB)*

- ❖ **Marlene Jordao**, High Commissioner for Refugees, Portugal (tbc)
- ❖ **Lyuba Karpachova**, Refugees Department Lead at Promote Ukraine
- ❖ NHS Wales/Emilia Romagna Region – speaker TBC
- ❖ Carlzen Katarina/Jomaa Ziad, Skåne region, Sweden: Mobile, multi-language healthcare services for all (tbc)

Q&A

16:10–16:30

Coffee break

16:30–17:30

PREVENTION and TREATMENT

Addressing the gaps in access to services and infrastructures for vulnerable groups



Moderator: *Florian Meyerhoefer (CEB)*

- ❖ Medical professional association representative (tbd)
- ❖ **Luigi Cuna**, Council of Europe Development Bank
- ❖ **Dr Marie Jelinkova**, Department of Public and Social Policy at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague, Czech Republic

Q&A

19 October 2022, 10:00–13:00

CHALLENGES IN UPHOLDING MIGRANTS' AND REFUGEES' MENTAL HEALTH

10:00–10:10

Welcome

10:10–10:30

Mental health: Recent Challenges and Initiatives by the European Commission



- ❖ **Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs and Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety**, European Commission (tbd)
- ❖ **International Federation of Red Cross** (tbd)

Q&A

10:30 – 11:00

INFORMATION and DIAGNOSIS



Innovative practices to ensure effective access to early diagnosis of mental health concerns

Moderator: *Jasmijn Slotjes (MPI-Europe)*

- ❖ EWSI analysis - **Migration Policy Group** representative (TBC)
- ❖ **Barbara Schouten**, representative from **Mental Health for All** (a multi-lingual platform for mental health practitioners)

11:00–11:30 ACCESS

Access to healthcare support for mental health concerns for migrants and refugees: a view from the regions

Moderator: *Luca Barani* (DG HOME)



- ❖ **Francois Decoster** (FR/Renew), Vice-President of the Hauts-de-France region for culture, heritage, regional languages and international relations, mayor of Saint-Omer, President of the Renew Group at the European Committee of the Regions
- ❖ **Antje Grotheer** (DE/PES), Vice-President of Bremen State Parliament, CoR rapporteur on the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (tbc)
- ❖ **Maria Chivite** (ES/PES), President of the Autonomous Community of Navarre, member of the European Committee of the Regions (TBC)
- ❖ **Niina Ratilainen** (FI/Greens), Member of a Local Assembly: Turku City Council, member of the European Committee of the Regions

Q&A

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break

12:00 – 12:50 TREATMENT and PREVENTION

Improving the system – sustainability and funding

Moderator: TBD



- ❖ City of Torino representative (tbc) on partnership arrangements for resilience with civil society organisations (long-term budgeting with annual contracting based on needs and performance)
- ❖ City of Amsterdam representative (TBC) – Eritrea refugee scheme

Q&A

12:50 – 13:00 Conclusions
