



Network for Psychotherapeutic Care in Europe (NPCE)

## Key priorities in securing mental health of refugees and migrants in Europe

Health is a human right - including mental health. Yet care for refugees and migrants with mental illness is not sufficiently assured across Europe. Access to appropriate levels of care must be secured for refugees and migrants with mental illness in Europe, early on, even from the very first day of their arrival. Any mental health care provision should consider individuals' specific needs.

Humanitarian crises, such as war and terror, can endanger mental health. Experiencing war and fleeing trigger psychological stress that can lead to negative consequences in individual's mental illness. Refugees and migrants have a higher risk of developing mental illness than the host community (WHO, 2021). Among refugees and migrants, there are also people with existing mental illnesses whose treatment needs to be continued.

Securing the provision of care for refugees and migrants with psychological distress and mental illness is central, since without good mental health and well-being, an appropriate integration, ability to go to school and work, and social participation are limited. The investment in provision of mental health care and respective interventions have shown to be cost-effective (WHO, 2022).

### The NPCE calls on the EU and Member States to:

- Acknowledge that mental health is a basic human right and that there is no well-being without mental health;
- Acknowledge the return of invest in mental health and the importance of treating mental disorders as a basic parameter to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees;
- Finance and ensure access to mental health care for refugees and migrants regardless of their origin and legal status. Mental health services should include prevention, psychological first aid, psychological and psychotherapeutic treatment, as well as language mediation;
- Assure quality standards, quality of care and training of professionals in all Member States;
- Promote interdisciplinary approaches in treatment for refugees and facilitate the development of guidelines among professionals involved in mental healthcare services for refugees to ensure coordination and common standards;
- Foster the identification and implementation of best practices in mental health care for refugees and migrants across Europe;
- Facilitate the development and implementation of digital solutions in mental health care for refugees and migrants, e.g. digital applications such as phone/web-based, which make it possible to ensure psychological support even in the event of a high influx of refugees;
- Establish public reporting to benchmark mental health services for refugees across Europe;
- Make finances available to react to crises
- Set up mental health crisis plans and involve mental health professionals like clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists, in the development of crisis plans to address mental health issues.

Berlin, 5 July 2022

WHO (2021): Mental health and forced displacement. Online: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-and-forced-displacement> [21.07.2022]

WHO (2022): World mental health report. Online: <https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/world-mental-health-report> [21.07.2022]