



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Public health, country knowledge, crisis management  
**Crisis management and preparedness in health**

## **Health Security Committee information meeting on migrant health action: health needs, existing activities and future action at EU level**

**28 September 2016, 10.00 – 16:30 (CET)**

### **Flash report**

The Chair, Isabel de la Mata, Principal Advisor for Health and Crisis Management, welcomed the members of the Health Security Committee (HSC) and representatives from DG SANTE, DG ECHO, DG HOME, ECDC, WHO Euro, IOM and UNHCR. The Agenda of the meeting was approved.

#### **1. Overview of the health challenges and needs of migrants and refugees**

The Chair set the scene by outlining the current situation in Greece and Italy in terms of numbers of refugees, applications for asylum, countries of origin and EU funding to assist the affected member states.

ECDC underlined the conclusions of its risk assessment that newly arrived migrants and refugees do not represent a threat to Europe with respect to communicable diseases. However, the risk to refugees has increased due to overcrowding at reception facilities, resulting in poor hygiene and sanitation arrangements. Upon request from the Greek Ministry of Health ECDC supported the national health authorities on surveillance in points of care for refugees and migrants.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) corroborated ECDC 's conclusions and highlighted gaps in monitoring, systematic health assessments, continuity of care, data collection and transfer. These issues are being addressed with the Personal Health Record which IOM is implementing under a direct grant from the European Commission. There are mixed migration flows and as evidenced by the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), national integration policies are only halfway favourable on average.

The Chair informed about two legal proposals – a draft Directive laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection and a draft Regulation establishing a common procedure for international protection in the EU. Both legal proposals have articles on health.

Italy, Greece, Sweden and Germany presented the situation related to migrants in their countries.

#### **2. EU activities on migrant health**

DG SANTE informed that with the support of ECDC and IOM, a personal health record has been created - a single unified instrument for the assessment of the health status of refugees and migrants with an electronic database and e-platform. SANTE gave an overview of

projects funded by the Health programme 2003-2008 and 2008-2013 addressing migrant health. The Call for 2016 contains training modules for health professionals, law enforcement officers and trainers in migrants' and refugees' health, specifically addressing mental health problems and communicable diseases; training programme for first-line health professionals, border officers and trainers working at local level with migrants and refugees, a grant to WHO to support Member States efforts to integrate migrant population in national health care systems. A Joint Action on health inequalities with a work package on migration and health is currently under preparation.

DG ECHO initial mandate is outside the EU, in addition to the Civil Protection Mechanism, which has been triggered to provide support in Greece. Due to the extent of the support needed a new instrument has been set up. Through the new Emergency Support Instrument EUR 83 million has been made available to respond to urgent needs in Greece, including basic healthcare services and psychosocial support. EUR 15,6 million have been attributed to fund primary health care, referral to hospital, psycho-social support. Among the identified health challenges are coordination, access to medicines, transportation to/from hospitals and chronic diseases.

DG HOME informed that the Commission has also provided substantial funding to Greece to reinforce its capacities to manage migratory flows through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund, and emergency assistance, including a EUR 3 million grant awarded to Greece's Ministry of Public Health to enhance the response to public-health challenges presented by the refugee/migrant crisis in the islands in the Eastern Aegean Sea and a second EUR 24 million grant for a nine month project called "Comprehensive Emergency Health Response to Refugee Crisis in Greece" for increasing the capacity to provide primary health care to migrants and refugees.