

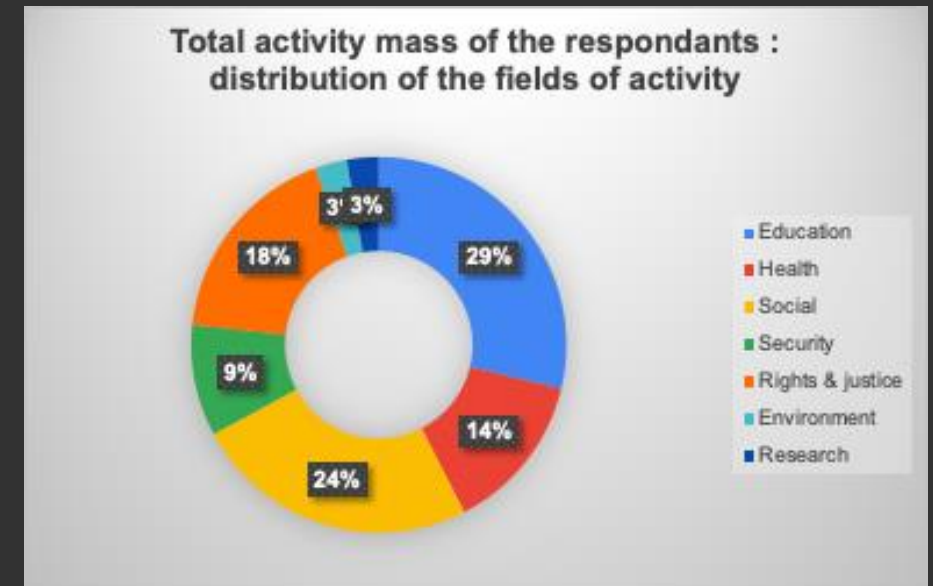
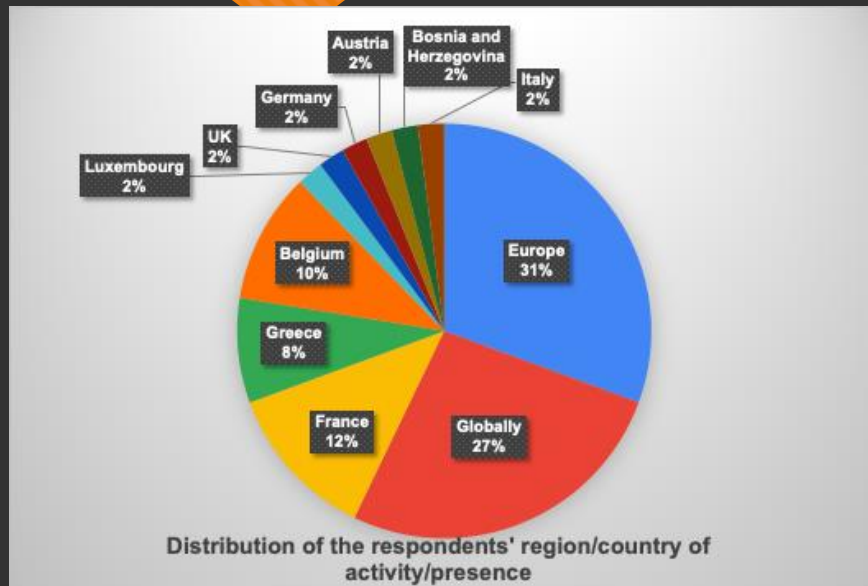
Questionnaire about Migration issues and NGOs access to migrant populations

Issued by the Migration Committee on the Rights of Migrants of the Conference of INGOs

Final synthesis and analysis - 50 respondents representing 46 NGOs

Elena Bortolin (member of the Migration Committee) - March 20, 2022

Respondents profile : geographical presence and fields of activity

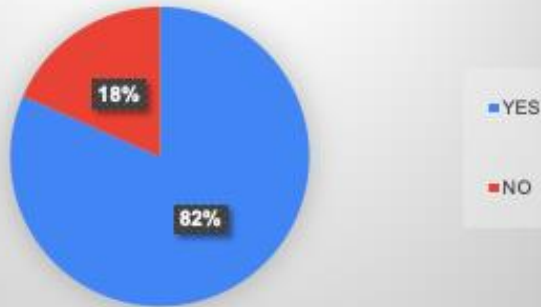


- 50 answers received to the questionnaire = **50 respondents** representing **46 NGOs**
- The majority of respondents (58%) are present/take action in several countries across Europe (31%) or globally (27%). The remaining 42% act in a single European country, France, Greece and Belgium being the most represented countries

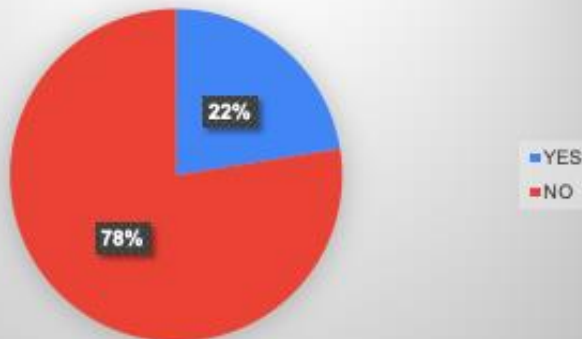
- If we consider the total activity mass of these 46 NGOs : 29% of these activities are dedicated to Education, followed by Social (24%), Rights & justice (18%), Health (14%), Security (9%), Environment (3%) and Research (3%)

Respondents and migration issues (1)

In your activities as an NGO are you concerned by migration?



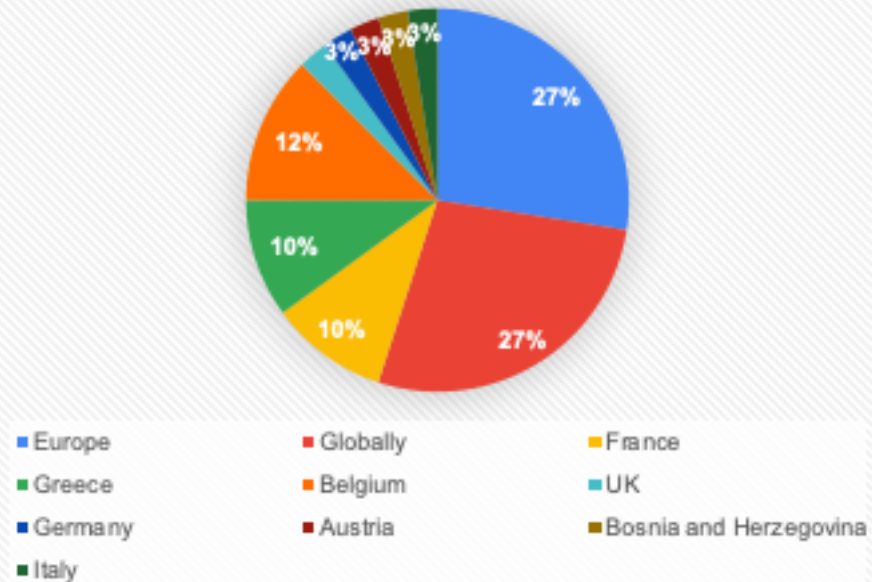
Has your NGO faced obstructions/restrictions in accessing places where migrants stay?



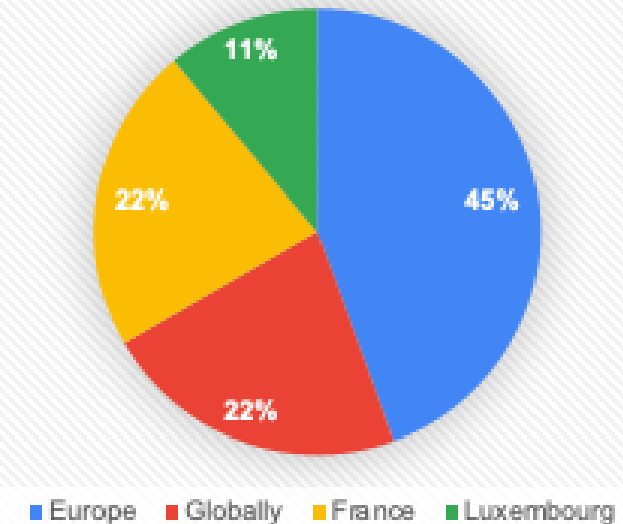
- Among the 50 respondents, **82% declared being concerned by migration** regarding the activities of their NGO
- But « only » **22% of them declared they faced obstructions** or restrictions in accessing places where migrants stay
- *It is important to note that among the respondents, not all NGOs acting in the area of migration have a field activity or direct contacts with migrant populations (e.g. NGOs acting in the research field, NGOs doing advocacy work without field missions)*

Respondents and migration issues (2)

Respondents concerned by migration in their activities :
distribution of their region/country of action



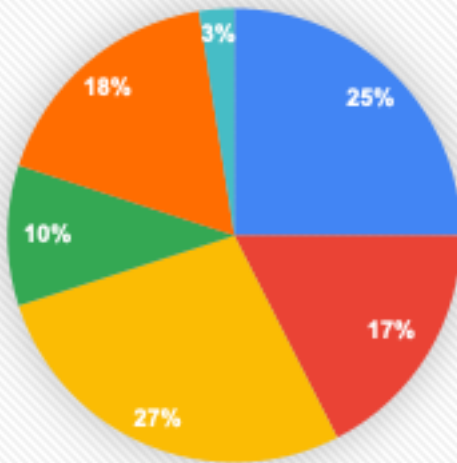
Respondents not concerned by migration in their
activities : distribution of their region/country of
action



- Respondents that are concerned by migration because of their NGO activities are more present in single european countries; maybe because migration issues can be very particular/specific/different from a region/country to another. Thus, some NGOs choose to focus their action in these particular areas to deliver a more specific response to local migration issues.

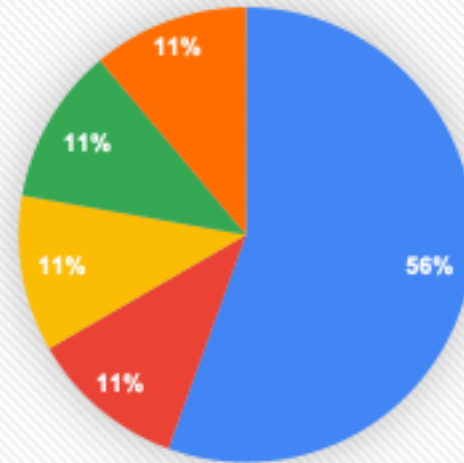
Respondents and migration issues (3)

Respondents concerned by migration in their activities :
distribution of the fields of activity



■ Education ■ Health ■ Social ■ Security ■ Rights & justice ■ Research

Respondents not concerned by migration in their activities
: distribution of the fields of activity

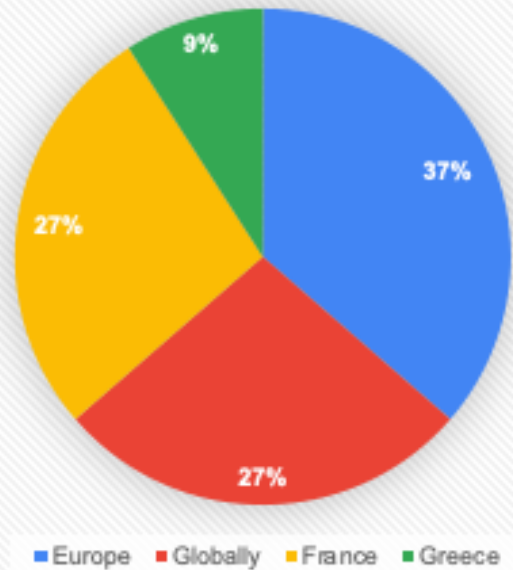


■ Education ■ Health ■ Social ■ Security ■ Rights & justice ■ Research

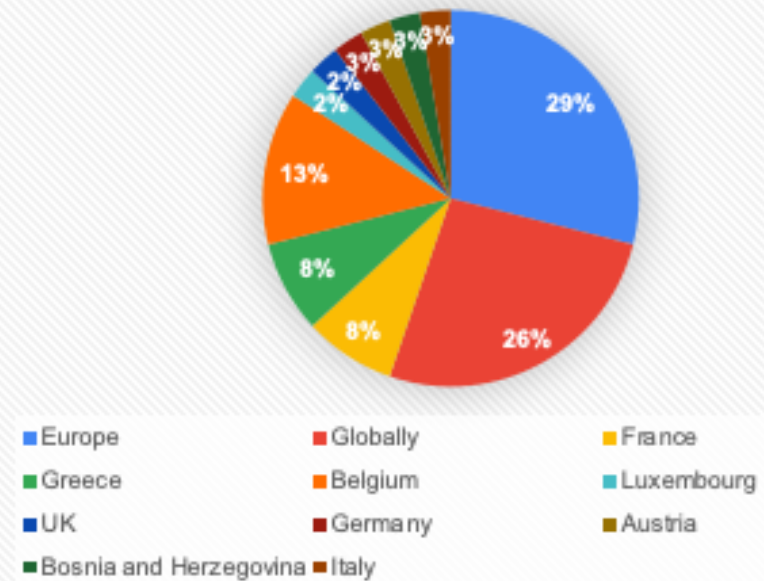
- A majority (56%) of respondents who are not concerned by migration in their activities act for Education
- The distribution of activity fields among respondents concerned by migration is more homogenous

Respondents and migration issues (4)

Respondents who faced difficulties to access to migrants :
distribution of the country/region of action

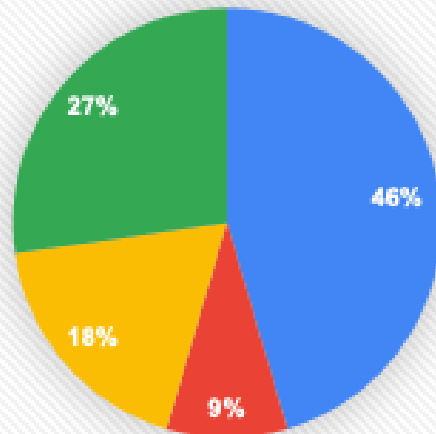


Respondents who didn't face difficulties to access to migrants :
distribution of the country/region of action



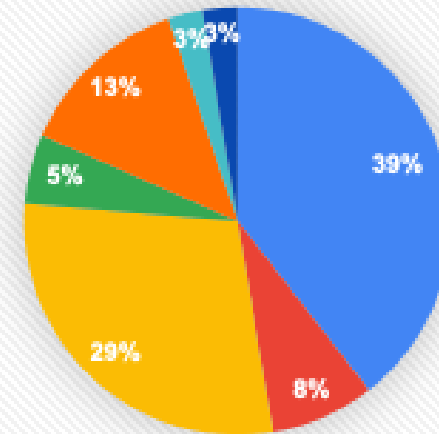
Respondents and migration issues (5)

Respondents who faced difficulties to access to migrants : distribution of the fields of activity



■ Health ■ Social ■ Security ■ Rights & justice

Respondents who didn't face difficulties with access to migrants : distribution of their fields of activity



■ Education ■ Health ■ Social ■ Security ■ Rights & justice ■ Environment ■ Research

- All activities that are essential to ensure migrants rights (mainly health, but also education, safety, rights & justice and security) face difficulties to reach migrant populations, and therefore to be effective

Obstructions or restrictions in accessing places where migrants are located

Examples from 10 NGOs on the field (1)

NGO
1

- Difficulty to reach migrants on the move and to **locate** those staying outside hosting centres
- **Bureaucratic** hurdle + **COVID-19** limitate access to hosting centres
- **Language** barriers ; interpreters not always available

NGO
2

The **COVID-19** pandemic limitates access to places where migrants stay

NGO
4

Limitation in the access to public services due to the **COVID-19** pandemic

NGO
3

- **Bureaucratic** hurdle (administrative and judicial)
- **Laws** restricting NGOs access to migrants
- Authorities **refuse to coordinate** with NGOs

NGO
5

- Access denied to NGOs to places where migrants are detained : migrants must name the people they want to see although they do not know anyone

Obstructions or restrictions in accessing places where migrants are located

Examples from 10 NGOs on the field (2)

NGO6

Legal and regulatory barriers (e.g. decrees)

Difficulties to access camps because of insecurity generated by local authorities or migrants themselves (examples in Morocco, Democratic Republic of Congo)

NGO
7

NGO
8

- Access denied to places where migrants stay because :
 - Workers of shelters/detention centres feel they are controlled by NGOs
 - Heavy bureaucracy
 - Economical reasons

Access denied to detention centres/places where migrants remain in Denmark and Poland

NGO
9

NGO
10

- Difficulty to reach migrants in need because of their deportation in their country of origin
- Difficulty to track migrants who are intergated in local systems

Obstructions or restrictions in accessing places where migrants are located

Synthesis

The 3 main aspects limiting NGOs access to migrants from our field examples :

1 – **COVID-19** : the pandemic enforces limitation of contacts between people and therefore isolate even more migrants who stay at detention/hosting centres

2 - **Bureaucracy** is too heavy in detention/hosting centres

3 –Public institutions implement a **restrictive regulatory environment** = deny or limitate NGO access to places where migrants stay

4 – Because of the chaotic/unexpected aspects of migrants path, it is difficult to track them and provide them the appropriate help from A to Z

NGOs activities and experiences on the field : a testimony of today's issues (1)

- NGOs were asked to describe situations they were involved in regarding migration issues
 - All responding NGOs are not in direct contact with migrants in their activities. NGOs not having direct contacts act for migrants rights, for raising awareness about these issues in the civil society, for research on migrant populations...
 - **Through the description of their daily activities and significant/difficult situations they faced on the field, NGOs give a testimony of today's issues with migration**
 - General observation : despite national authorities engagements to foster migrants rights, NGOs remain a key element in supporting these populations and providing them help throughout their whole journey

NGOs activities and experiences on the field : a testimony of today's issues (2)

- The main concern is **migration and education***
- Many education initiatives among responding NGOs
- Education for migrants : enhance their access to educative content, development of specific educative tools, foreign language lessons. **Language** is a very important factor for migrants to 1-communicate about their needs/to get the appropriate help when they are in difficult situations and 2-for their integration in their host countries. There is a lack of interpreters in the retention/host centers
- Education of people in direct contact with migrants (e.g. NGO volunteers, doctors...) to better understand their culture and their needs and bring the appropriate help
- Education of the civil society and representatives of local/national authorities : raising awareness about migration issues and discrimination to enhance migrants integration in host countries societies and respect of their rights

* As a reminder, 29% of the activities of the respondents concern education

NGOs activities and experiences on the field : a testimony of today's issues (3)

○ Social aspects and rights of migrants :

- The conditions in which migrants are staying in their host country (including countries that have the resources to welcome people in decent conditions) are catastrophic ; the few personal belongings they have are sometimes confiscated
- Necessity to foster migrant employment : companies are often reluctant to offering jobs to migrants although this would significantly improve their integration in their host country. Therefore, migrants are forced to do illegal activities (trafficking, prostitution....) or beg in the streets to earn money. They remain in a violent environment.
- Necessity to put a lot of effort to help migrants with administrative aspects, especially when their requests have been refused by national authorities
- Necessity to help migrants access their fundamental rights, and not excluding them in social crisis situations (e.g. Covid-19 crisis : lockdown and overcrowded medical centres)
- Necessity to fight for asylum, non-refoulement and retention procedures that are too restrictive and not adapted to the context of migrants
- Necessity to focus on migrant women needs and integration in the society, as they are more vulnerable

NGOs activities and experiences on the field : a testimony of today's issues (4)

○ Health of migrant populations :

- Migrant populations are more exposed to health issues (physical and psychological) because they are more vulnerable
- A special focus is needed on psychological trauma these populations face (care and prevention)
- Because of access restrictions, the COVID-19 pandemic has lowered the healthcare support to migrant populations although they are more vulnerable to health issues
- Some migrant populations have special health needs because the prevalence of some diseases is more important among them than in their host country; knowledge about these diseases in host countries is not developed, therefore the migrants concerned do not receive the healthcare they need

NGOs activities and experiences on the field : a testimony of today's issues (5)

- **Criminalization of NGOs in their mission to help migrants / ignorance of NGOs warnings :**
 - Penal procedures are opened against volunteers/NGOs helping or saving migrants from life-threatening situations
 - Authorities not cooperating with NGOs, leading to human disasters (e.g. country authorities that refuse to give NGOs informations about the localisation of boats transporting migrants)
 - Authorities not taking into account warnings raised by NGOs regarding migrants rights and needs
- **Security:**
 - Need to dedicate safe and controlled shelters for migrants along migration paths, because of the violence against them and against their camps from the local populations/local police
 - Need to focus on specific needs of the more vulnerable populations, especially migrant women (who are more vulnerable because of gender-based violence) and children. Women and children are more subject to human trafficking
 - Need to reflect on an alternative to systematic refoulement of migrants, because returning their country is often life-threatening

NGOs activities and experiences on the field : a testimony of today's issues (6)

○ **Positive situations highlighted by NGOs :**

- 2 respondents highlighted a good cooperation with institutions to foster migrants integration
- 1 respondent highlighted the fact that migrants in Belgium had access to education and jobs, resulting in success stories of people contributing to the society of their host country
- 1 respondent mentioned the engagement of the Belgian authorities to grant refugee status to 250 migrants

NGOs ideas and proposals for a more relevant and effective advocacy (1)

Proposals/ideas « big topics »	Number of proposals	Highlights
<p>Implementing better policies to protect migrants rights</p>	<p>29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a Single Immigration Policy in Europe to ensure democratic oversight, including e.g. joint rescue operations, safe and legal channels along migrants path, balanced return policy - Making european policies about migration more transparent - Include the civil society in the elaboration and evaluation of these policies - Acknowledge migrants professional competencies - Implement migration policies with the gender lens - Set up mandatory foreign language lessons to people working in contact with migrants - Having a more ambitious approach to climate action, e.g. include the right to live in a healthy environment as a fundamental human right - Impose sanctions to the UE's neighbourhood in case of grave human rights violations - Improve residency permits policies to accelerate migrants integration
<p>Increasing NGOs effectiveness and power</p>	<p>9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase NGOs role in the humanitarian corridors - Develop synergies between Comitees of the NGO conference - Develop a toolbox for effective communication between NGOs & authorities - Develop a detailed NGO database to foster cooperation between NGOs

NGOs ideas and proposals for a more relevant and effective advocacy (2)

Proposals/ideas « big topics »	Number of proposals	Highlights
Fostering cooperation between institutions and NGOs	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance the communication of NGOs field observations to higher levels - Develop the cooperation between NGOs and the other bodies of the CoE
Increasing knowledge of migration contexts and migrants needs	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying the different « types » of migrants (asylum seekers, refugees...) and their specific needs - Understanding migrants needs in terms of education to enhance their integration - Setting up a monitoring centre on human rights violation - Understanding the interrelations between economic, cultural and ecological aspects of migration
Increasing public attention on migration issues	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise public awareness about political manipulation of migrants by some governments - Educate the public on migration issues e.g. via social media public campaigns or educational programmes on migration causes and consequences

Conclusions (1)

- Political instability, armed conflicts, poverty and climate change cause the movement of asylum seekers and migrants
- This questionnaire shows an unanimous agreement : the situation of migrants and asylum seekers is dramatic. They face multiple difficulties during their journey, during their integration in their host countries or when they are forced to go back to their home country.
- Most of the time, human rights are violated : migrants do not have access to decent healthcare or psychological support, to education, their professional competencies are not recognized, their safety is compromised due to human trafficking, gender-based violence...
- Indeed, these issues are highlighted in the respondent NGOs activities which reflect their main concerns about migrant populations : Education, followed by Social aspects, Rights & justice, Health, Security.
- When migrant populations would need the most attention, the violent and difficult situations they face lead to an environment always more violent and difficult (« vicious spiral »). Sometimes, migrants are forced to integrate illegal ways to survive, or can't find a job, which are situations that aggravate their condition and highly compromise their integration in a new country.

Conclusions (2)

- In the answers to the questionnaire, a recurring topic is migrants integration via education and work. Getting adapted education in their host countries or being recognised as a professional and being offered a job are very powerful drivers of integration, safety and fulfilment for migrants as citizens. The main barriers to the integration of migrants via education and work are – the absence of recognition of their status as asylum seekers/migrants/refugees - and the difficulty to access regularisation processes
- Climate change is also a concern among NGOs, as migration and natural/climate crisis are linked. A research effort is still needed to understand this link better and be able to prevent it with the right actions. This subject is getting bigger and it is urgent to reflect on it now

Conclusions (3)

- Few positive examples are highlighted by NGOs about institutions implication in migration issues.
- However, host countries and the EU have proved unprepared to deal with this challenge. The Union's migration policy is disjointed, with limited solidarity between the member states, and dominated by short-term solutions, including externalization agreements that lack transparency and respect for human rights
- NGOs play a key role in migrant populations journey from their home to their host country, and to their integration in their new life. They make tremendous efforts in a broad range of fields to provide primary care and help, to inform migrants about their rights and try to claim their rights. Still, NGOs alone can't answer all situations and help every migrant at the appropriate level; synergies with the institutions must be reinforced to strengthen migrants care and punish the responsables of human rights violations.
- But the questionnaire shows that for NGOs, the implementation of better policies to protect migrants rights is a priority. These policies should be written with in collaboration with the civil society, should be transparent and should approach all aspects of migration issues and migrants rights. Lots of very relevant ideas have been raised by responding NGOs, showing that a lot of work still needs to be done on the migration topic, including improving our knowledge on migration causes and consequences to be able to tackle the issues with the most effective actions.