



## Time for Needs Final Conference



Brussels, 28 September 2017



Thon Hotel EU  
RUE DE LA LOI 75, B-1040 Brussels

### Background

In 2015-2016, the number of people seeking protection in Europe greatly increased, generating specific challenges for States with external maritime borders, include providing specialised reception services and ensuring procedural safeguards for vulnerable asylum seekers.

Among the arrivals, there are victims of torture and other violence experienced not only in home countries, but also in transit. It is estimated that between 5 and 35 percent of asylum seekers are torture survivors, depending on the country of origin. Levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can range from 20-40 percent among the refugee population, while rates of depression range from 30-70 percent. <sup>1</sup>

The objective of the Time For Needs project was to contribute to the identification of the special needs of victims of torture and of serious violence, in particular women and children. This was carried out in relation to asylum procedures, reception conditions and to the development of harmonised protection standards and practices across the European Union for this vulnerable target group.

The project ends in October 2017 and has involved seven partners: the Italian Council for Refugees in Italy (the Leading Agency), Aditus in Malta, the Portuguese Council for Refugees in Portugal, the European Council for Refugees and Exiles in Belgium, France Terre d'Asile (FTDA) in France, the Greek Council for Refugees in Greece and the Zentrum Überleben GmbH in Germany.

This project has supported increased efficiency and fairness of asylum systems and to raising the standards of protection for victims of torture and serious violence, including enhancing the level of procedural guarantees and tailored reception services for the target group. Project partners have carried out research work, at national and international level and have developed a pilot initiative, aimed at developing and disseminating a tested practical tool for the assessment of needs of victims of torture and serious violence. A victim-centred and gender-sensitive approach was used, through the active involvement of the final beneficiaries throughout.

The project has identified ten best practices in the countries covered concerning legislative provisions on identification, procedural guarantees and reception facilities with respect to the target groups. It has also identified gaps between the asylum acquis (mainly the Reception Conditions Directive and the Asylum Procedures Directive) and domestic laws. Based on research and good practice, partners developed a list of common basic standards (CBS) for the assessment of vulnerability in terms of procedural and reception needs applicable throughout the EU.

1. Steel, Z., Chey, T., Silove, D. M., Marnane, C., Bryant, R. A., & Ommeren, M. van. (2009). Association of torture and other potentially traumatic events with mental health outcomes among populations exposed to mass conflict and displacement : a systematic review and meta-analysis. JAMA: 302(5), 537-49

The results can be used to support implementation of the acquis in the EU but also to inform the current revision of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

To disseminate the project findings, a conference will take place in Brussels on 28 September with the following objectives:

To advocate for the implementation of provisions related to torture victims in the current asylum acquis

- a. To assess the state of implementation of the acquis with regards to torture victims
- b. To promote the Time For Needs products as tools for the implementation of the acquis

To advocate for increased responsiveness of the future asylum systems to the needs of torture victims in the European Union:

- c. To call for a better identification of vulnerabilities and protection needs of victims of torture in the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)
- d. To identify opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

## Agenda

### 14.00-15.30 STATE OF PLAY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEAS WITH REGARDS TO TORTURE VICTIMS

- Main outcomes and challenges for the protection of survivors of torture or serious violence  
*Daniela Di Rado and Monica Luci, Italian Council for Refugees*
- State of play of the protection of torture victims in countries of first arrivals: a point of view from Greece  
*Spyros Koulocheris, Greek Refugee Council*
- Vulnerability assessment in the French asylum system  
*Radek Ficek, France Terre d'Asile*
- Care and rehabilitation of survivors of torture: the experience of MSF in Italy  
*Gianfranco De Maio, MSF, Italy*
- How EASO promotes the identification of victims of torture and other serious forms of violence  
*Riikka Peltonen, European Asylum Support Office*

#### OPEN DISCUSSION

Moderator: Julian Caruana, *Aditus Foundation, Malta*

### 15.30-16.00 COFFEE BREAK

#### SCREENING OF VIDEO (5-6 MINUTES)

### 16.00-17.30 THE WAY FORWARD: IMPROVING THE PROTECTION OF TORTURE VICTIMS IN LAW AND IN PRACTICE

- How can Member States better implement the acquis in relation to victims of torture?  
*Isabela Atanasiu, European Commission, DG Home Affairs*
- Ensuring the special needs of torture victims are taken into account in the reform of the CEAS: the perspective of torture rehabilitation centres  
*Melissa Paintoux, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims*
- Priority areas for cooperation among Member State: sharing the lessons learned from the Time For Needs project  
*Claudia Pedrosa and Diana Antunes, Portuguese Council for Refugees*
- The added value of the multidisciplinary approach in the support of torture survivors  
*Sven Veigel, Zentrum Überleben GmbH, Germany*
- How could the protection of victims of torture could be further improved beyond the “Time for Need” Project  
*François Fille, European Advocacy Coordinator, Médecins du monde*

#### OPEN DISCUSSION

Moderator: Daphné Bouteillet-Paquet, ECRE

### 17.30-18.00 CONCLUSIONS

- Brief summary of the interventions and main recommendations  
Speaker: *Christopher Hein, Italian Refugee Council*