EDITORIAL

Working together to make migration a healthier process

Piroska Ostlin, Santino Severoni
Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being, World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark

Health professionals are playing a key role in the response to the refugee and migrant crisis across Europe. The WHO Regional Office for Europe supports countries in addressing the complex public health challenges that migration entails through implementation of the first European strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health.

The overall number of refugees and migrants to Europe in 2016 has greatly decreased in comparison with the previous year’s figures: arrivals by sea to Europe in 2016 accounted for 363 348, compared with 1 015 078 in 2015. However, 2016 has become the deadliest year in the Mediterranean: at least 5 079 people were missing or found dead at sea in 2016, compared with 3771 in 2015 (1). In addition, the increasing number of conflicts and instability in various countries suggest that people will continue to undertake perilous journeys in search of a better life. What are the public health implications of these numbers of people?

Large-scale migration as a result of either conflict and war or profound global inequalities may expose those who migrate to dangerous and stressful journeys.
leaving them in a vulnerable situation. In addition, large migration flows occurring within a short period may pose significant challenges for both transit and destination countries. This situation requires a comprehensive response across sectors, including health, and may indeed contribute to widening socioeconomic and health inequalities if not managed properly. Migration is therefore one of the greatest challenges we are facing in the 21st century, and calls for comprehensive horizontal action across sectors, as well as cooperation across local, national, regional and global levels.

With this rationale in mind and the aim of addressing health and migration within its complexity, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe has established the Migration and Health programme in the Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being (PCR). The Division leads the implementation of the European health policy framework, Health 2020, for attaining its two strategic objectives: reducing health inequalities and improving governance for health (2). These two objectives cannot be met by the health sector alone. While it is essential to continue strengthening health system and public health capacities in Europe, the health of our populations, especially of vulnerable individuals such as refugees and migrants, will not improve unless we ensure clean, safe and healthy living, learning and working environments for all. In other words, there is a limit to what the health sector can do alone, but there is enormous potential for what it can achieve together with other sectors in addressing the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Migration is a multisectoral area per se and, as such, the current refugee and migrant situation in Europe represents an opportunity to improve multisectoral action for health with a special emphasis on reducing inequalities. Indeed, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches have been the guiding principles for development of the Strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region (3). This document, the first of its kind in WHO, was adopted along with a resolution (4) at the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September 2016. European countries requested the WHO Regional Office for Europe to come up with these policy documents after discussions at the High-level Meeting on Refugee and Migrant Health held in November 2015 for governmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as to address the refugee and migrant health issue in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region (3) is a comprehensive document that sets out the vision, goals, and strategies for improving health and well-being for refugees and migrants in the WHO European Region. The strategy is based on the principle of health equity and aims to ensure that all refugees and migrants have access to health services and that these services are of high quality. The strategy also seeks to address the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health, recognizing that these factors can have a significant impact on the health of refugees and migrants.

In summary, the strategy for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region is a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to improving health and well-being for refugees and migrants. The strategy recognizes the importance of addressing the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health and aims to ensure that refugees and migrants have access to high-quality health services. The strategy is based on the principle of health equity and seeks to ensure that all refugees and migrants have the opportunity to live healthy and productive lives.
Mиграция по определению является многосекторальной областью, следовательно, сложившаяся сегодня в Европе ситуация, представляет собой возможность улучшить многосекторальное взаимодействие в интересах здоровья с особым акцентом на сокращение неравенств. Поэтому неудивительно, что общегосударственный подход и принцип участия всего общества стали руководящими принципами при разработке Стратегии и плана действий в отношении здоровья беженцев и мигрантов в Европейском регионе ВОЗ (3). Этот документ, первый в своем роде принятый ВОЗ, был одобрен вместе с резолюцией (4) на сессии Европейского регионального комитета ВОЗ в сентябре 2016 г. Европейские государства-члены поручили Региональному бюро разработать эти программные документы после обсуждений, состоявшихся в рамках Совещания высокого уровня по вопросам здоровья беженцев и мигрантов в ноябре 2015 г., в самый разгар миграционного кризиса в Европе. В согласованном итоговом документе совещания «Активизация мер по защите здоровья беженцев и мигрантов» (5) отмечается срочная необходимость в организации согласованных совместных действий в этой области во всем Европейском регионе ВОЗ. После этого совещания был организован ряд онлайновых и очных консультаций со всеми 53 государствами-членами Европейского региона ВОЗ. Кроме того, в апреле 2015 г. состоялась очная консультация с участием учреждений ООН и международных организаций, работающих в области миграции и здоровья. Эта консультация была организована с целью согласования приоритетов и объединения усилий для реализации предлагаемых мероприятий. Как результат этой подготовительной работы, в документе были определены следующие девять стратегических приоритетных областей, которые находятся в соответствии с принципами и задачами Целей устойчивого развития и основ политики Здоровье-2020. В рамках этих стратегических приоритетных областей были сформулированы конкретные действия, которые необходимо предпринять европейским государствам-членам и Европейскому региональному бюро ВОЗ с целью:

1. создавая рамочную основу для совместных действий;
2. защиты права на здоровье беженцев, лиц, ищущих убежища, и мигрантов;

Besides the previously mentioned policy frameworks, the European strategy and action plan is informed by experience gained and information collected from the field, as well as from evidence gathered through synthesis reviews since the start of the Public Health Aspects of Migration in Europe (PHAME) project in 2012, with the financial support of the Ministry of...
Health of Italy. In the context of the increase in arrivals to Europe as a result of the Arab Spring in 2012, the PHAME project scaled up WHO’s action on migration and health. Besides the normative developments that led to adoption of the European strategy and action plan, the PHAME project focused on three additional areas: (i) providing technical assistance and policy advice; (ii) collecting evidence and health information; and (iii) advocacy and communication.

Since 2012, the WHO Regional Office for Europe has conducted joint public health and health system assessment missions with ministries of health in Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Serbia, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In order to analyse health sector capacity to respond to the scenario of large-scale migration, the WHO Regional Office for Europe developed and piloted during these assessment missions the first WHO Toolkit for assessing health system capacity to manage large influxes of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants (6). After these joint exercises, support was provided to countries in the form of technical advice on contingency planning, training on public health and migration, or in the development (jointly with other stakeholders) of technical guidance on urgent emerging issues.

Along these lines, WHO, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration published in November 2015 a joint technical guidance note on immunization for refugees and migrants (7).

Robust evidence and health information is of paramount importance for developing technical guidance, policies and interventions, and even more so in the area of migration and health, given the need to dispel fears and myths. With the aim of building a solid scientific base to inform public policy, the PCR Division and the Division of Information, Evidence, Research and Innovation in collaboration with leading European universities embarked on the production of Health Evidence Network reports on migration and health, synthesizing the evidence available in this area across the 53 countries of the WHO European Region. A total of six Health Evidence Network reports have already been published, which look at: the health status and health-care access of undocumented migrants (8), labour migrants (9), refugees and asylum seekers (10); maternal health among migrants (11); mental health

3 воздействия на социальные детерминанты здоровья;
4 обеспечения готовности и осуществления эффективных ответных мер общественного здравоохранения;
5 укрепления и повышения устойчивости систем здравоохранения;
6 профилактики инфекционных болезней;
7 профилактики и снижения рисков неинфекционных заболеваний;
8 обеспечения этичного и эффективного проведения скрининга и оценки состояния здоровья;
9 улучшения информации здравоохранения и коммуникации.

Наряду с упомянутыми политическими механизмами в основу Европейской стратегии и плана действий легли опыт и информация, полученные на местах, а также фактические данные, собранные в рамках сводных обзоров, которые проводятся с 2012 г., когда при финансовой поддержке Министерства здравоохранения Италии был учрежден проект «Связанные с миграцией аспекты общественного здравоохранения в Европе (PHAME)». Проект PHAME был учрежден для расширения масштабов действий ВОЗ в области миграции и здоровья, когда в результате Арабской весны в 2012 г. увеличился поток мигрантов и беженцев, прибывших в Европу. Кроме работы в нормативной сфере, благодаря которой были одобрены Европейская стратегия и план действий, проекта PHAME сосредотачивался еще на трех областях: (i) предоставление технической помощи и рекомендаций в области политики; (ii) сбор фактических данных и информация здравоохранения; (iii) адвокация и коммуникация.

Начиная с 2012 г. Европейское региональное бюро ВОЗ провело совместные миссии по оценке ситуации в области общественного здравоохранения и систем здравоохранения с министерствами здравоохранения Албании, Болгарии, бывшей югославской Республики Македония, Венгрии, Греции, Италии, Испании, Кипра, Мальты, Португалии и Сербии. Во время этих миссий Европейское регио-
among refugees and migrants (12); and the implications of variations in the definition of “migrant” for access of these groups to health-care services (13).

In response to the growing need for an educational institute devoted to international migration and public health, the WHO Regional Office for Europe launched in November 2015 the first Knowledge Hub on Health and Migration, established with the financial support of the Regional Health Council of Sicily. The Hub aims to bring science and practice closer together, strengthen the production of evidence in this area and provide theoretical and practical training to health-care and non-health-care workers involved in the response to migration. In collaboration with leading universities in the field of migration and health, the WHO Regional Office for Europe will organize online webinars and a summer school to advance knowledge and training on this area.

One of the first tools used by the WHO Regional Office for Europe to advocate for migration and health, improve understanding of the issue and encourage cross-national dialogue is the quarterly newsletter, Public Health Aspects of Migration in Europe (14). Produced in collaboration with the University of Pécs in Hungary, this information tool has since 2014 published and widely disseminated original content from experts across Europe on emerging issues, including the mental health of refugees and migrants, the health of unaccompanied minors and the role of nongovernmental actors in the response to the European migrant crisis.

Adoption of the Strategy and action plan on refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region now provides a solid mandate and direction for the WHO Regional Office for Europe in collaboration with all partners to progress and provide a solid and sustainable public health response to one of the greatest challenges of our present and future.

REFERENCES
Одним из важных инструментов, который Европейское региональное бюро ВОЗ использует для адекватных действий в интересах миграции и здоровья, укрепления понимания этого вопроса и стимулирования соответствующего диалога между странами, является ежеквартальный бюллетень «Связанные с миграцией аспекты общественного здравоохранения в Европе»(14). В этом бюллетене, выпускаемом с 2014 г. в сотрудничестве с Университетом г. Печ (Венгрия), публикуются авторские статьи экспертов из многих стран Европы по таким важным вопросам, как психическое здоровье беженцев и мигрантов, здоровье путешествующих без сопровождения и негосударственных субъектов в осуществлении ответных действий в связи с европейским миграционным кризисом.

Стратегия и план действий в отношении здоровья беженцев и мигрантов в Европейском регионе ВОЗ – это мандат и руководство к действию, благодаря которому Европейское региональное бюро ВОЗ в сотрудничестве со всеми партнерами сможет достичь прогресса в обеспечении устойчивых мер общественного здравоохранения в ответ на одну из наиболее серьезных проблем современности и завтрашнего дня.

БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ


