



Migration

Purpose of brief:

- Provide EB-148 with an overview of the current global humanitarian crisis.

Relates to:

- ✓ On-going PSI migration work.

Background:

The situation of migrants and refugees in crisis is not a new issue for PSI. Since 2010, PSI and EPSU have been working on a project with the Mediterranean affiliates in addressing the desperate situation of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea. In April 2015, PSI and EPSU already warned European governments of an escalating humanitarian crisis, as hundreds of migrants, many of them children, were drowning in the Mediterranean in their attempt to reach Europe. Now, we are witnessing a humanitarian crisis of global proportion. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2014, almost 60 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. Based on official data, half of the 19.5 million refugees in 2015 are children. The figures are expected to increase, as conflicts and violence continue in many parts of the world. Of most pressing concern is the situation in Syria, which now has 7.6 million internally displaced persons and 4 million refugees. This is followed by Afghanistan (2.59 million) and Somalia (1.1 million). The continued instability in Libya is of serious concern and will further exacerbate the refugee flows. Extreme poverty, repressive regimes, climate disasters and conflicts arising from the struggle for resources are serious factors that will lead to more human displacement in the next years.

Discussion:

As PSI continues to implement project activities addressing labour migration in the public services, we are also embarking on initiatives to address the humanitarian crisis from the perspective of public services and public service workers. Under the banner “Public Services Welcoming Migrants”, PSI and EPSU held a seminar on 14-16 March 2016 in Brussels, bringing together more than 50 participants representing affiliates, experts, international and European organisations and civil society from 15 countries in Europe and Africa. The objective of the seminar was to initiate a collective discussion on how to strengthen cooperation and to enhance the role of public service trade unions in dealing with migration and refugee flows. In the seminar, we raised the question on how we can succeed in welcoming migrants, ensuring their access to public services, and on how we can better protect and organise them. Other issues that were raised were: the effects of austerity and reduction of public services that have now led to this refugee reception crisis in Europe, the alarming rise of racism, nationalism and xenophobia against migrants and refugees, continued acts of terrorism and violence, underfunding of public services, the challenges faced by public service workers in delivering the services to migrants and refugees and addressing the root causes of migration.

Budget implications: within 2016 budget.

Next steps:

A number of actions were proposed as a way forward in this area of work:

1. Continue to work on the issue of labour migration and refugees within the trade union movement, in collaboration with the ETUC and the Global Unions; engagement with global intuitions such as the ILO, UNHCR and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and strengthening alliances with civil society;
2. PSI engagement in the forthcoming UN High Level Summit on Large Flows of Migrants and Refugees at the UN General Assembly in New York on 19 September 2016;
3. Building the evidence-base by encouraging affiliate-led research on the impact of refugee flows on public services. PSI recently published a report on Turkey (link below). Another research is being carried out in Greece and plans to do the same in Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia;
4. A follow up seminar on “Public Services Welcoming Migrants” in the MENA region at the end-2016;
5. Continuing the PSI campaign against racism (link below);
6. Continued engagement at the ILO on the agenda on migration (ILC 2017) and the review of ILO Recommendation #71, Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944;
7. PSI’s Global Right to Health Campaign.

It is recommended that EB-148: 1. NOTE this report.	YES / NO
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Related documents:

- <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/migration>
- <http://www.world-psi.org/en/report-syrian-refugee-crisis-and-its-effect-public-services-turkey>
- <http://www.world-psi.org/en/hope-has-no-borders-public-services-welcome-migrants-and-refugees>