

**EuroMed project**  
Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives  
on Receiving Migrants  
with financial support from the European Union

## **SURVEY REPORT AND RESULTS**

# Receiving migrants: a public sector worker perspective in the EuroMed region

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**Sponsor and Participants:**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION:

The EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants in the Euro-Mediterranean region* was run by the federation INTERCO-CFDT, in conjunction with eight trade unions in six European countries, and funded by the European Commission under the budget heading for Training and Information Measures for Workers' Organisations of the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The project was designed to provide a tangible response to the need to invest in integrating migrants into EU countries, by guaranteeing and protecting their fundamental rights. This implies improving public services, which represent a bastion for protecting rights, and disseminating information at workplaces on immigration legislation and practices.

To achieve this aim, the EuroMed project carried out a survey, the initial results of which were presented at a training seminar in Bucharest in May 2012. The survey work underpinning the project was fundamental in establishing the link between the theoretical framework of immigration legislation and the role of trade union organisations in supporting and working with the European institutions to develop European policies on migration, as well as within the workplace.

### INITIAL SITUATION:

Based on the conclusions of the earlier project *Public Services Meeting Migrants*, carried out in 2010, this second phase of the EuroMed project aims to examine in more detail one of the most significant findings with regard to employees in the public sector, namely the working conditions of staff in the public services in direct contact with migrant users, which are often very difficult, not only from the point of view of infrastructure, but also in terms of the shortage of staff, including staff who are suitably qualified and trained for the type of service they need to provide. The conditions are all the more difficult, as we shall see, insofar as there is additional moral and psychological pressure because of the problems faced by users who contact the services and the lack of coordination between the various departments within the administration contacted by migrants.

### METHODOLOGY:

The selected methodology was based on a sample limited in geographical terms to the member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean group of the EPSU-PSI and in particular to countries generally seen as destinations for influxes of migrants, namely France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece.

In addition, it was decided to focus on just two types of services and an equivalent number of surveys for each service and each country, to allow a more direct comparison between the project's partner countries. It was therefore decided to divide the sample in terms of the type of services studied – health and reception – and to set the number of services by country at between two and six. In France, Spain and Italy, one trade union carried out the survey with reception services and another with health and social services. The same number of services of both kinds were surveyed in each country. It was decided to disseminate a questionnaire produced by the EuroMed project team. The number of questionnaires was between 30 and 50 per service. Contrary to the practice adopted for the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project, we opted for a single questionnaire aimed at both staff and supervisors in both reception and social services.

In addition, it was decided to set up "focus groups" with representatives from the departments where the questionnaires were disseminated on the basis of one to two groups per country, with each group comprising a maximum of eight people (clerical staff, supervisors and, if possible, linguistic and cultural mediators).

## **DATA ANALYSIS:**

The survey is based on the responses to the questionnaires of 326 people, and those of 20 people who responded via the focus groups. In most cases they are women aged between 36 and 45. These are people who were trained and started work at a time when – at least in Euro-Mediterranean countries – migration was a totally different phenomenon from the one we see today. As a result, it is highly unlikely that they would have been given training that might have helped them when they began work.

Portugal is the only country surveyed where the percentage of workers who have been given specific training for the service in which they work is very high. The number of questionnaires distributed in the country was, however, fairly low (15) and all the respondents worked in the same service.

Alongside the lack of general and specific training on migration is the question of the right to asylum and the duty incumbent on staff in the services that receive migrant citizens, to indicate their right to exercise it in the relevant circumstances.

Naturally, administrative authorities are more inclined to invest in training staff when they are permanently employed. As a consequence, even taking into consideration the relatively low number of workers who stated that they had taken part in specific training sessions/courses on migration, the majority of these workers were employed on a permanent contract. An interesting exception is the Municipality of Venice, where the manager of the department surveyed was committed to involving all categories of worker, regardless of their type of employment contract. An initial analysis of the results is striking with regard to the (almost) complete lack of questionnaires completed by professionals who are now seen as essential in providing a high-quality service to migrant users.

This prompts us to make two remarks: the first is related more to the contractual instability that characterises people in this type of occupation, and which can be an impediment to their participation in an international survey; the second is related more to the exclusion of people in these occupations from the life of their department, insofar as they are seen by public-sector employees not as colleagues but professionals “in transit”.

The vast majority of questionnaires and first-hand accounts show that the number of public-sector officials responsible for receiving and dealing with immigrants is extremely limited in all countries and that they face problematic working conditions that they find difficult to tolerate. In general terms, all the workers questioned were unhappy about their working conditions in terms of stress, work overload in relation to the number of employees in the various services, the very high number of users contacting the services each day, unsuitable premises and the complete or almost complete lack of essential professionals to work with migrant users. Another aspect raised by the vast majority of the workers questioned was the difficulty of working in contact with users who neither understand nor have adequate knowledge of the services offered by the departments and offices of the various administrative authorities, but also with users who are not familiar with the relationship with these services, for a wide variety of reasons. This makes communication, following up particular files and understanding each case considerably more complicated for the workers concerned.

A further aspect identified was the outsourcing of services to private-sector and in some cases denominational organisations, leading to a loss of quality control in relation to services that had historically fallen within the remit of the public sector; this has a decisive influence on the ability of the public services to guarantee the protection of not only workers’ rights, but the rights of service users. The declining role played by the public sector in areas where its presence used to provide a guarantee that rights would be protected may have severe consequences both for users (migrants, in this case) and for the workers themselves.

The workers questioned give the trade unions primary responsibility for defending/protecting the working conditions not only of employees in the public services, but also external professionals such as linguistic and cultural mediators, dispute resolution experts and those

who promote living alongside each other/coexisting in society and conflict prevention. The vast majority of workers surveyed believe that the trade unions should also take responsibility for training workers, in particular in areas related to migration, in the event that the public authorities do not take charge of it.

Finally, it also emerges from the survey that the trade unions should take greater responsibility for other, more practical aspects, such as sharing knowledge about legislation on migration and protecting working conditions, as well as on the rights of migrants, with both workers and migrant users themselves. The trade unions should also organise language courses for migrants. In general, the trade unions are most highly valued for their abilities in relation to protecting individuals, protecting rights and acting as a mediator with management.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

- 1.** We are increasingly seeing a climate of control by central administrative authorities on the productivity (control of time) of workers, creating a sense of mistrust and fear of expressing personal opinions. This undermines the opinions of workers, even on topics such as the quality of service they offer to users, which concern them directly.
- 2.** The majority of workers sampled have a negative image of immigrants / immigration departments, which are seen as a rite of passage in the early stage of one's career or as a punishment in the middle of their working lives for employees who have run into career progression problems.
- 3.** In these times of major crisis, one aspect of working conditions seen in all the countries involved concerns the inadequate number of employees compared with the users who contact the services, and the workload. In most cases, workers who retire are not replaced, which then places an additional burden on these services. The grave crisis Greece is suffering has reduced the number of employees in the immigration departments by half.
- 4.** A more general consideration, drawn from the questionnaires, the first-hand accounts gathered at the seminar in Bucharest and in the focus groups, concerns the dismantling of public services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.** Work to ensure that existing international agreements on the rights of migrant workers are applied and respected in all EU countries.
- 2.** Pay more attention to the working conditions of workers in the public services dealing with migrants: inadequate environmental conditions at work; disproportionate productivity requirements compared with workers' average capacity; lack of training (see below); lack of linguistic and intercultural support/mediation for workers on the front desks.
- 3.** Invest in training for workers in public services who are in direct contact with migrant users.
- 4.** Invest in raising awareness of the gender aspect of migration.
- 5.** Promote the involvement of skilled staff with specific training on topics related to migration and the inclusion of linguistic and cultural mediators.
- 6.** Promote the issue of including migrant workers on the social dialogue agenda at all levels: local, national and European;
- 7.** Facilitate communication between services to guarantee coordination between the various public administrative authorities;
- 8.** Continue to identify good practices by encouraging exchanges of information between trade unions in different Euro-Mediterranean countries and beyond.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants in the Euro-Mediterranean region* was run by INTERCO-CFDT, in conjunction with eight trade unions in six European countries, and funded by the European Commission under the budget heading of information and training measures for workers' organisations of the Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG.

**Table 1. Countries and organisations participating in the EuroMed project**

Country	Organisations
Spain	Unión General de Trabajadores - UGT Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras - CCOO
France	Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail - INTERCO/CFDT
Greece	Confederation of Civil Service Unions - ADEDY
Italy	Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori - CISL/FP Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro - CGIL/FP
Portugal	Sindicato dos trabalhadores da Administração Local - STAL
Romania	Federatia Sindicatelor din Administratia Publica si Asistenta Sociala - Publisind

The EuroMed project aims to inform workers in the public services who are in direct contact with migrant users about legislation and EU and international practices relating to immigration policies. The EuroMed project's partner organisations are convinced not only that an international legislative framework for protecting migrants' rights exists, but that it is a fundamental and sufficient tool for protecting and strengthening the position of migrants in EU countries, once its implementation is assured. We often see, however, that migrants are used as a pretext for cutting public spending, by criminalising them and driving them outside of the welfare state. Yet migrants have become a significant part of the European labour force and as a result, it is clear that they occupy a space of "non law" or, rather, a space in which the existing legislation and international conventions do not apply. The exclusion of migrants from the welfare state is part of a general process of restructuring in the world of work, in which more vulnerable workers can be expelled simply because of the fact that they are vulnerable, and in the case of migrants, simply because they have a different nationality from the one of the country in which they are working. It is interesting to note, in this regard, that the European Union Directive 78/2000 on equality of treatment in relationship to employment and occupation identifies six protected criteria: claimed race or ethnic origin, religion or philosophical convictions, disability, age and sexual orientation. It therefore makes no reference to nationality.

The trade unions are the only force in society capable of dealing with this deregularisation and desocialisation of society and the social aspects of the state. They need to strengthen (or create) strong alliances with civil society organisations as part of efforts to ensure decent work and respect for human rights. Given that trade unions and their international federations and confederations enshrine in their articles of association the task of taking part in discussions and drafting policies on work-related topics, as recalled by Mr Marco Cilento (European Trade Union Confederation) in his speech at the seminar in Bucharest,<sup>1</sup> they are called on to accept their responsibility for making an active contribution to the development of migration policies and discussing them with these institutions in order to restore a positive social dialogue for the purpose of reinstigating the rule of law in relation to migration/for migrants.

Against a background of increasingly precarious working conditions and the desocialisation of the state, migration is an increasingly central theme for trade unions. The subject needs to be

<sup>1</sup> The text of Mr Cilento's speech at the seminar on informing and training for workers in public services in direct contact with migrant users (Bucharest, 23 and 24 May 2012) is available on the website [www.migration-euomed.eu](http://www.migration-euomed.eu).

considered and dealt with on the basis of respect for fundamental human rights, which must be protected from a level of vulnerability that is synonymous with exploitation, but also from racism and discrimination. Achieving this means promoting policies on integration and protecting trade union rights for all migrants.

Trade unions must play an active role in ensuring that these rights are recognised for all migrants and must make sure that they are applied/protected, particularly when national and European institutions seem incapable of developing inclusive strategies or reluctant to do so. As we have emphasised, the EU is increasingly moving towards controlling migration through multi- and bilateral repatriation and return agreements. This is resulting in an intensification of FRONTEX activities and a tendency for governments to treat migration primarily as a security problem. Rather than countering the wave of racism and xenophobia, most countries have chosen to make the conditions for regularising the situation of migrants without papers more stringent.

The unions must oppose a utilitarian approach to migration and support one based on human rights, ensuring the rights of all migrants as enshrined in several international conventions, as well as in the most recent communications from the European Commission, such as COM(2011) 743 on a new Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM). Given that migration already constitutes a significant phenomenon in the European Union – net immigration reached 900,000 people in 2010, i.e. 62% of total demographic growth – and that certain specific, additional skills required in the future will necessarily have to be found outside the European Union, the AGMM<sup>2</sup> should be centred on migrants and protecting their rights. The communication also notes that, in essence, the management of migration is not so much a question of “flows” and “stocks” and “itineraries” as a matter of people and that, in order to be pertinent, effective and viable over the long term, migration policies should be designed to reflect the aspirations and respond to the problems of the people concerned.

This communication, along with COM (2011) “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean” and COM (2012) on a “New European Neighbourhood Policy” are the European Union’s responses to the migratory movements that resulted from the Arab revolutions in the spring of 2011, which provoked fear of an exodus of illegal migrants. As a result, EU countries have focused their efforts on strengthening border controls and signing readmission agreements with the migrants’ countries of origin. As Philippe Fargues,<sup>3</sup>head of the CARIM centre,<sup>4</sup>confirms, these communications have restated old positions designed to strengthen the control of external borders and accelerate the signature of readmission agreements, even though statistics show that migration to Europe did not accelerate as a result of the Arab revolutions, except for the influx of Tunisians into Italy and France in April, May and June 2011. In fact, the CARIM report on the migration situation in the Mediterranean in 2012 shows that Arab migration to OECD countries between 2001 and 2010 was mainly (91%) to Europe and in particular to Spain, France and Italy. In France, in particular, the recent increase in migrants of Arab origin has mainly been for the purpose of family reunion. The report tries to emphasise that the revolutions in Arab countries did not produce any change in the previous pattern of migration to Europe, which since 2001 has been mainly spurred by unemployment and underemployment, salary differentials, the desire to develop new skills and access high-quality training, and family reunion; and none of this has changed.

What is quite likely, with regard to the Arab revolutions in 2011, is that these events may have resulted in a re-routing of existing migration in 2011.

In a speech at Harvard University, the European Commissioner for Internal Affairs, Cecilia

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<sup>2</sup> European Migration Network (2011), Key EU Migratory Statistics; Eurostat (2011), Population and social conditions, 38/2011, 34/2011.

<sup>3</sup> Fargues, P., Fandrich, C., *Migration after the Arab spring*, MPC, research report 2012/09, available on the website of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, [www.eui.eu/RCAS/](http://www.eui.eu/RCAS/).

<sup>4</sup> Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration, funded by the EU under the Robert Schuman Centre of the European University Institute. <http://www.carim.org/>



Malmström,<sup>5</sup> stated that in light of the events in North Africa, European countries had strengthened their security plans on their borders both inside and outside the European Union and had not put in place any significant initiatives for receiving migrants who needed international protection. She even emphasised that the revolutions in the Arab world had caused tension among the countries of the European Union, and that instead of the Member States showing solidarity, some of them had limited themselves to discussions on the possible risks for their internal security. Moreover, in her speech to the Global Hearing of The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration,<sup>6</sup> in June 2012, Ms Malmström referred, on a number of occasions, to the necessity for Europe taking account of its own need for migrant labour and the duty to guarantee protection for the rights of migrant workers when addressing the subject of migration in general.

Border controls, internal security and the readmission of Arab citizens through signing agreements with their countries of origin were the main concerns in European countries faced with a possible increase in the number of migrants, rather than investing in integration by facilitating admissions for work-related purposes.

The lack of investment in integration measures, combined with the desocialisation of the public sector, has significant consequences for migrants who see the public services as the leading and most important source of protection for their rights as human beings.

The importance of policies for receiving and integrating migrant populations is echoed in the findings of COM (2011) 743, which confirms the urgency of increasing the effectiveness of policies designed to ensure the integration of immigrants into the labour market and that it is also important to engage in dialogue with both private sector and public-sector employers.

It is within this complex context that public-sector unions are being asked to state their position, in the face of increasing desocialisation and declining provision of services to migrants in all 27 EU Member States in a way that is inversely proportionate to the number of migrants contacting the services. Against this background, the Euro-Mediterranean group of the EPSU-PSI presented a resolution to the EPSU Stockholm Conference in 2004, requesting that the question of migrant workers in the public services should be included in the Action Plan for 2004-2009 and that a policy on the role of the public services in the Euro-Mediterranean region should be drafted for migrants. Even though the conditions for such a position were not all satisfied at the time, workers in the public services in the Euro-Mediterranean region in direct contact with migrants arriving from Europe are enormously concerned by the impact of illegal migration on the human and Trade union rights of the migrant population itself. As a result, the group tabled a new motion at the EPSU conference in 2009, concerning the impact of migration in their countries on public-sector workers responsible for applying migration policies. From this point on, migration was firmly on the agenda of the group and both organisations.

The EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives* was designed precisely to provide a tangible response to the need to invest in integrating migrants into EU countries, by guaranteeing and protecting their fundamental rights. This implies improving public services, which represent a bastion for protecting rights, and circulating information at workplaces on immigration legislation and practices.

To achieve its aim, the EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives* carried out a survey, the initial results of which were presented at the training seminar in Bucharest in May 2012. The survey work underpinning the EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants* was fundamental in establishing the link between the theoretical framework of immigration legislation and the role of trade union organisations in supporting and working with the

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<sup>5</sup> Cecilia Malmström, Responding to the Arab Spring and rising populism: The challenges of building a European migration and asylum policy Lecture at Harvard University's Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Boston, 30 April 2012.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.thehagueprocess.org/global-hearing>

European institutions to develop European policies on migration, as well as within the workplace.

## 2. EUROMED PROJECT

### 2.1 Initial situation

The EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants*, funded by the European Commission, began at the point where the research project *Public Service Workers Meeting Migrants* left off; this was initiated in 2009/2010 thanks to the efforts of the Euro-Mediterranean group of the EPSU-PSI. *Public Service Workers Meeting Migrants* provided for a survey to be carried out on the quality of public services provided to migrants in six EU countries and a number of countries in the southern Mediterranean. The project was based on the participation of eight trade unions and 16 public, mixed and private-sector services in six countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

**Table 1b. Summary table: countries and organisations participating in the EuroMed project (2011/2012) and in the Public Services Meeting Migrants project (2010/2011)**

Public Services Meeting Migrants project 2010-2011	EuroMed project 2011-2012
Country/Organisations	Country/Organisations
<b>Italy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori – CISL/FP</li> <li>➤ Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro – CGIL/FP</li> </ul>	<b>Italy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori – CISL/FP</li> <li>➤ Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro – CGIL/FP</li> </ul>
<b>France</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail – INTERCO/CFDT</li> </ul>	<b>France</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail – INTERCO/CFDT</li> </ul>
<b>Spain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unión General de Trabajadores - UGT</li> <li>➤ Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras - CCOO</li> </ul>	<b>Spain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unión General de Trabajadores - UGT</li> <li>➤ Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras - CCOO</li> </ul>
<b>Portugal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sindicato dos trabalhadores da Administração Local – STAL</li> <li>➤ Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Administração Publica - SINTAP</li> </ul>	<b>Portugal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sindicato dos trabalhadores da Administração Local – STAL</li> </ul>
<b>Greece</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confederation of Civil Service Unions – ADEDY</li> </ul>	<b>Greece</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confederation of Civil Service Unions – ADEDY</li> </ul>
<b>Malta</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ General Workers' Union – GWU</li> </ul>	<b>Romania</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Federatia Sindicatelor din Administratia Publica si Asistenta Sociala - Publisind</li> </ul>
<b>Algeria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SNAPAP Women's Committee</li> </ul>	
<b>Tunisia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ UGTT</li> </ul>	

It is important to note at this stage the methodological differences between the first survey carried out as part of the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project and the one carried out for the *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants* project, highlighting both the progress made and areas for improvement.

The aim of the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project was to initiate a piece of work to explore, describe and analyse a number of variables associated with the quality of services offered to migrant users, such as understanding of migration and asylum legislation amongst workers in the public services and the need for training workers on the subject of migration. This was an important first step in starting to work on the topic and organise training and information sessions for workers in the public services, as was clear after the Malaga Conference (October 2010), which concluded the first part of the project.

Nonetheless, the survey had significant structural limitations. It consisted of distributing questionnaires across a wide variety of public services (hospitals, housing departments, language schools, border police stations, prefectures, municipalities and central services, job posting services, etc.) with no pretensions to statistical validity but trying to ensure that the number of different services represented in the sample was as large as possible. In addition, no provision was made for including a qualitative tool (no interviews or focus groups were organised in the services included in the sample).

The questionnaires were given to clerical and supervisory staff in 20 different public, mixed and private-sector services in six European countries where the workers are in direct contact with migrant users: health services, reception services, police services, employment services, schools, language schools, hospitals, Trade union services providing support to migrants, etc. In addition, in some countries (notably Spain, Italy and Portugal), specially produced questionnaires were distributed to migrant users. The major differences between the services included in the sample complicated the possibility of drawing effective comparisons from the results of the survey. The number of services and questionnaires distributed varied widely from one country to another, which made it impossible to compare the results obtained.

In spite of the difficulties and structural limitations, the results of this first piece of work attracted the attention of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which incorporated them in a recent report entitled "Developing a system of linkages, cooperation and coordination of service providers in Italy, France and the Philippines to improve delivery of services to distressed Filipino migrants, in particular victims of exploitation". Despite the problems, the results provided us with important information which, to a certain extent, served as a starting point for the current project. Data relating to the main services requested by migrants and the need for training for reception staff were particularly useful.

According to this data, the services most frequently used by migrant users are housing (20.4%), reception (18.3%) and health services (17.4%). Data on the relationship between the type of services offered and the number of migrant users who contact them on a daily basis confirm that reception services are those used most frequently by migrants.

45.4% of workers in the services included in the survey are unfamiliar with national and international legislation on migration and 70.4% have never taken part in or organised a training course or refresher training on migration and asylum in their workplace. However, 75% of workers consider that these issues are relevant to their day-to-day work.

All of this information was fed into discussions, which prompted the Euro-Mediterranean group of the EPSU-PSI to continue to work together to identify more clearly the problems faced by workers in the public services in direct contact with migrant users and the role that organisations can and should play in this situation. Apart from the information it provided, the most important added value from the first survey on migration and the public services was that it enabled us to establish a joint EPSU-PSI network on migration and to identify the tools (e.g. training) and resources (e.g. budget and timetable) required for implementing training and information activities.

In fact, following the results of the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project, Trade union partners in the Euro-Mediterranean region decided to continue with the work and coordinate their actions in order to build a common Trade union culture around this question. The project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants* is therefore a tangible expression of this desire.

## **2.2. EuroMed project: main characteristics**

Based on the conclusions of the *Public Services Meeting Migrants project*, the EuroMed project examines one of the most significant findings with regard to employees in the public sector, namely the working conditions of staff in the public services in direct contact with migrant users, which are often very difficult, not only from the point of view of infrastructure, but also in terms of the shortage of staff, including staff who are suitably qualified and trained for the type of service they need to provide. The conditions are all the more difficult, as we shall see, insofar as there is additional moral and psychological pressure because of the problems faced by users who contact the services and the lack of coordination between the various departments within the administration contacted by migrants.

The EuroMed project *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants* focuses on analysing the main difficulties encountered by workers in services in direct contact with migrant users, and their causes. It also aims to provide workers in this area with an initial framework for training and information on legislation and EU practices in relation to migration.

The project has four main objectives:

- Provide information and training on European and international legislation concerning migration, as well as on national and local legislation in each country and each region.
- Provide information and training for the representatives of cultural mediators employed in the public services and in outsourced services, on the operation of public services aimed at migrants and the services that migrants contact most frequently.
- Promote refresher training for the representatives of the leaders of public authorities and local communities on the shortcomings and problems of services frequently contacted by migrants, in order to promote the creation of networks of information centres for immigrants.
- Provide information and training about the working conditions and health of public-sector workers in order to improve services and feed into the European social dialogue.

In order to achieve its objectives, the project planned to conduct a survey on the role of the public services in protecting the migrants who contact them and on the working conditions of workers employed in these services; organise a training seminar for a selection of workers in the services included in the research sample; develop an educational tool on the rights of migrants and the relevant international conventions; create a website for sharing the information resources produced during the course of the project and other materials of common interest; and organise a final training conference, involving not only workers in the services included in the sample but also workers' representatives (Trade union activists) who play a very important role in guaranteeing decent working conditions for workers who are in direct contact with or who work on behalf of migrants.

Organising the survey provided an opportunity to examine in more detail the subject of working conditions for workers in services in direct contact with migrant users and their opportunity/capacity for guaranteeing the protection of the fundamental rights of the migrants themselves.

Organising a training and information seminar on migration for workers in the public services provided an opportunity to outline the general framework of European and international legislation on migration, work, non-discrimination and development; and on the same occasion, to present the positions of supranational Trade union organisations, such as the EPSU and ETUC. The seminar took place on 23 and 24 May 2012 in Bucharest and was attended by 22 representatives of the workplaces included in the survey sample, along with Trade union representatives from the project's various partner organisations. The seminar was an opportunity to present the preliminary data gathered through the distribution of questionnaires and a chance for discussion with international experts on European migration legislation.

The creation of the website ([www.migration-euromed.eu](http://www.migration-euromed.eu)) enabled us not only to share the most relevant documents on migration and the quality of public services from the various countries with the project's partner organisations but also to have access to a forum for exchanging information on European legislation and international conventions. The site also gives the wider public the opportunity to access the results of the survey.

The production of an educational tool (leaflet) on international legislation on migration (distributed at the final conference in Marseille and published on the project website, [www.migration-euromed.eu](http://www.migration-euromed.eu)) was designed to facilitate the dissemination of information on the existing legislative framework amongst workers in the public services, given that the lack of training and its importance for day-to-day work were emphasised both in the conclusion of the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project and in the interviews (focus groups) with workers in direct contact with migrant users conducted as part of the EuroMed project itself.

Working as a network of Trade union organisations, which had begun in 2009/2010 during the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project, helped not only to strengthen the relationship between the trade unions but above all contributed to creating an awareness of the role that these organisations need to play in protecting the rights of migrant workers, as well as through a comprehensive understanding of the problems faced by workers in the public services in direct contact with migrant users. The project therefore helped to strengthen understanding of the problems of workers and to establish the link with the national and European legislative framework, as well as with the trend towards desocialisation and "de-publicisation" of services that are fundamental to the protection of human rights. As a result of the project, the organisations themselves were able to develop their understanding of the connections between different phenomena (the economic crisis, reducing public spending, the worsening working conditions of workers in services in direct contact with migrant users, etc.) and therefore a greater comprehension of their role.

### **2.3. EuroMed project: research methodology**

The methodological choices underpinning the survey conducted as part of the *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants* project have benefited from the experience gained from the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project. Like its predecessor, the *Informing and Training Public Sector Union Representatives on Receiving Migrants* project does not propose to conduct a statistical survey, but to examine the working conditions for workers in services in direct contact with migrant users and their understanding of and familiarity with the legislation and practices relating to migration within the European Union, and to outline a comparative framework between the various partner countries. An analysis of the causes of difficulties encountered by workers in providing services produced on the basis of direct first-hand accounts in six different EU countries.

The first aspect to emphasise is the decision to survey only workers in the European member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean group of the EPSU-PSI and in particular to countries generally seen as destinations for influxes of migrants, namely France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. It was decided at this stage only to look at countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean in order to focus on working conditions.

The sole exception was Romania, which, although it is a member of the European Union, is still considered as a country of origin rather than a destination for migrants. The decision to include Romania was based on two fundamental reasons: first, precisely because Romania is a country that had long been a source of emigration to Euro-Mediterranean countries with significant consequences in terms of "brain drain" and "care drain", particularly in the health and personal care sectors; the second also relates to the country's status, insofar as there is persuasive evidence that it is changing and that Romania is beginning to be seen as an attractive destination for migrants.

It is particularly interesting that, given the economic crisis and the equally difficult situation of

the welfare state in Euro-Mediterranean countries, they are seeing their net rate of migration fall towards parity, i.e. that emigration towards areas that are less affected by the crisis are attracting an increasing number of European citizens, as was the case for Romanian citizens over the past few decades. The nature of the situation with regard to migration in Romania prompted us to include it in the research project in order to provide a more detailed comparison and prompt further reflection.

Once the sample had been restricted in terms of countries, it was decided, based on the lessons learned from the work carried out for the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project and in particular the difficulties encountered in comparing the results obtained from multiple different services, to focus on just two types of service and an equivalent number of surveys for each service and each country. This was done to enable a more consistent comparison of the results of the project's various partner countries. It was therefore decided to divide the sample in terms of the type of services studied – health and reception – and to limit the number of services per country to between two and six. In France, Spain and Italy, one trade union carried out the survey with reception services and another with health and social services. The same number of services of both kinds were surveyed in each country.

The table below shows the number and exact type of the services included in the sample. Services were selected on the basis of a number of characteristics common to all bodies in the five countries involved. These are services that employ a minimum of 50 people and receive a minimum of 80/100 (migrant and non-migrant) users a day. The workers consulted were drawn from those staff employed in the target services, which have the most possible direct contact with migrant users. This was due to the need to be able to compare situations in different countries under similar conditions. It was decided to survey a minimum of one reception and one health service and a maximum of three reception and three health services in each country.

**Table 2. Type of services by country**

Country	Service	Types
Italy	1. Ufficio Immigrazione - Comune Venezia	Reception
	2. Centro per L'Impiego - Biella (Piemonte)	Social services
	3. SUI - Sportello Unico Informazione (Padua)	Social services
	4. Azienda Ospedaliera (Padua)	Health
	5. ULSS 16 (Padua)	Health
	6. Ufficio Immigrazione - Questura (Rome)	Reception
	7. OGE - Ospedale Georg Eastman (Rome)	Health
	8. Policlinico Umberto I (Rome)	Health
	9. Distretto sanitario di Modena	Health
France	10. DCII	Reception
	11. RDC	Reception
	12. Immigration Department	Reception
	13. Immigration Department	Reception
	14. DIMIN	Reception
	15. Residency admissions office	Reception
	16. Immigration department	Reception
	17. CNI	Reception
	18. Immigration Department	Reception
	19. BRPAL – Office for Preventive Regulation and Tenancy Affairs	Social services
20. Asylum Department	Social services	
Spain	21. Centro de Salud/Casa de Salud/SNU Los Gladiolos	Health
	22. CS Barrio Salud	Health
	23. Hospital Universitario de Canarias	Health
	24. USM	Health
	25. Hospital N.S. Candelaria	Health
	26. Immigration Department	Reception

	27. Com. Madrid – Dirección General de Inmigración	Reception
	28. CS Taco	Health
	29. CS Tincer	Health
	30. CS Barranco Grande	Health
	31. SUP Jaime Chaves	Health
	32. Ayto. Monesterio - Hospital Zafra	Health
	33. EAP – CEDEX	Reception
	34. Agrupación de Municipios SSB 049	Reception
	35. Universidad Popular - Atención al inmigrante	Social
	36. Servicio Murciano de Salud	Health
Portugal	37. Câmara Municipal do Seixal	Reception
	38. Junta Freguesia Vale da Amoreira	Reception
	39. Câmara Municipal Barreiro	Reception
	40. Câmara Municipal Moita	Reception
	41. CLAI - CM Odivelas	Migrant support service
	42. DHASS -Espaço Cidadania CM Sesimbra	Social services
	43. Centro Apoio Imigrantes CM Odivelas	Reception
Greece	44. Migration Department Municipality of Athens	Reception
	45. Municipality of Athens/Urban planning department/Administrative department for citizens from third countries	Reception
	46. Municipality of Athens Centre for Foreign Nationals	Reception
	47. Municipality of Epetsinas	Reception
	48. Municipality of Elliniko-Argiroupoli	Reception
	49. Environment department of the municipality of Agios Dimitrios Attica	Social services
	50. Municipality of Kallithéa	Reception
	51. Municipality of Alimou	Reception
	52. Municipality of Nikaia-Revtis	Reception
	53. Admin. Depart. For Migrants - residency permit department	Social services
<b>Number of services included</b>		<b>52</b>

Similarly, it is important to emphasise that, in spite of all the efforts taken to make the sample as consistent as possible, it was impossible to carry out the survey in prefectures or sub-prefectures in a number of countries (Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal). In practice, it was only possible to question workers in prefectures in France. This is why, given the specific organisational and managerial characteristics in the control (reception) services compared with social services and health, significant differences emerge when we compare the data gathered in France with the information collected in other countries.

Once the sample had been established, it was important to determine an adequate methodology for questioning workers about their working conditions and their ability/capacity to protect the rights of migrant users who contact their services. It was therefore decided to distribute a questionnaire produced on an *ad hoc* basis by the EuroMed project team.

The number of questionnaires distributed was between 30 and 50 per service. Contrary to the practice adopted for the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project, we opted for a single questionnaire aimed at both staff and supervisors in both reception and social services. In total, 326 questionnaires were distributed to 52 services – split between reception and health – in the five countries included in the sample: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

**Table 3. Number of questionnaires collected by country**

Country	No. of questionnaires
Italy	123
France	48
Spain	96
Portugal	15
Greece	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>

Choice of subjects:

The main aim of the survey was to assess the working conditions and training needs of workers in the public services in direct, daily contact with migrant users and – as a consequence – for the workers themselves to self-assess the quality of services offered to migrant users. Questionnaires were distributed solely to workers and not to users. Conversely, it was decided to set up discussion forums (focus groups) in order to gain a deeper understanding and qualitative insights into the different situations involved in the project<sup>7</sup> in one reception and one health service in each country. The qualitative work done through the focus groups is intended to gain a more detailed understanding of the critical points that emerged from the questionnaires.

Structure of questionnaire:

The questionnaire is effectively split into five sections, addressing:

1. identification and description of services (10 questions)
2. workers' training in relation to their role in the workplace (11 questions)
3. working conditions (6 questions)
4. the quality of service offered (6 questions)
5. understanding of legislation on migration (7 questions).

The more qualitative aspects were assessed by setting up focus groups involving the representatives of the services to which the questionnaires were distributed. It was decided to set up a minimum of one and a maximum of two focus groups per country, with each group comprising a maximum of eight people (clerical and supervisory staff and, if possible, linguistic and cultural mediators). Focus group participants could all be employed in the same service or in several services out of the ones to which the survey questionnaires were distributed, regardless of whether they were part of the sample surveyed using the questionnaire or not. The only essential condition was that workers could decide for themselves whether to take part in the group or not, in order to guarantee free, open and insightful participation in the discussion. The focus group method is generally very productive and provides useful insights into the information gathered by distributing the questionnaires. Participants' anonymity is guaranteed insofar as they are only asked for their job titles.

The subjects addressed reflect the main questions asked in the questionnaire in order to explore certain aspects in more detail. These are:

- 1) The relationship with migrant users
- 2) What should be/could be done to improve working conditions in these services
- 3) What should be/could be done to improve the quality of services offered to migrant users.

The following tables sets out the list of focus groups carried out, where they took place and the number and type of participants.

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<sup>7</sup> A focus group was defined as a small meeting lasting two or three hours and involving five or six participants, with one person asking the questions and allowing the various participants (clerical and supervisory staff and trade-union representatives) to express their views without influencing, prejudicing or guiding the discussion. Five or six questions were asked during each focus group.



**Table 4. Focus groups**

<b>Focus Group I – Spain</b>	
<b>Madrid</b>	Organising trade union: <b>CCOO</b>
No. and type of services	No. of participants <b>6</b> Date: <b>29/06/2012</b> <b>1. Oficina extranjería de Madrid (Reception)</b> <b>2. Ministerio y consejería de migraciones de Madrid (Reception)</b>
<b>Focus Group II – France</b>	
<b>Bobigny</b>	Organising trade union: <b>INTERCO – CFDT</b>
No. and type of services	No. of participants <b>7</b> Date: <b>03/07/2012</b> <b>1. Bobigny prefecture (reception)</b> <b>2. Le Raincy sub-prefecture (reception)</b>
<b>Focus Group III – Italy</b>	
<b>Venice</b>	Organising trade union: <b>CGIL – FP</b>
No. and type of services	No. of participants <b>6</b> Date: <b>30/07/2012</b> <b>1. Ufficio Immigrazione – Comune di Venezia (reception)</b>

Unfortunately, because of certain difficulties faced by the participating organisations,<sup>8</sup> it was not possible to conduct focus groups in all countries.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

We will now examine in detail the data gathered as a result of the survey, which provide some important areas to consider. Before looking at the tables in detail, however, it is important to specify the narrative context in which the analysis has been carried out. In fact, several European countries which had been considered as host countries in 2010 are in the process of moving quickly to a position we might describe as mixed, i.e. countries to which some people are migrating as others migrate out of them. This is the case in Hungary, Spain, Greece and Portugal. Romania, which we had included in our survey as a case study of a country of origin, is no longer an isolated example: on the contrary, it represents the situation to which several European countries, particularly those in the Euro-Mediterranean region, are now moving.

In the case of health services, there are no specific structures for migrant users; whilst in the case of reception services, these are primarily services aimed at migrant users in the context of prefectures (e.g. in France), municipal services (e.g. in Greece), local authorities (e.g. in Spain and Portugal) and in employment services (e.g. in Italy).

#### Detailed presentation of the sample and discussion of survey results.

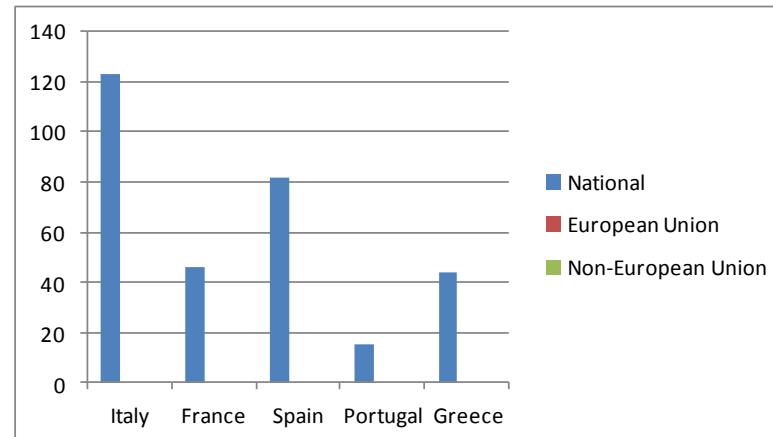
1. The survey is based on the responses to the questionnaires by 326 people, and those of 20 people who responded via the focus groups. In general, the workers surveyed are natives of the country in which they live and work (Table 6). There seem to be two main reasons for this:
  - 1) all the questionnaires were distributed to public services in countries where access to these services as an employee is limited to workers of the nationality in question;

<sup>8</sup> It is important to remember that the EuroMed project was conducted during the course of 2012, when several trade-union organisations were facing difficulties in the sector due to the cuts in public spending that occurred in the majority of European Union countries. As a result a number of activities related to the EuroMed project were not able to be carried out.

- 2) except for one case in Italy, the workers who responded did not make reference to sectors seen as external companies (cooperatives, associations, private companies, etc.) for the provision of certain services (e.g. mediation, cleaning, care and assistance, etc.).

**Table 5. Nationality sample**

Nationality	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. National	123	100.00	46	100.00	82	100.00	15	100.00	44	100.00	<b>310</b>	<b>100.00</b>
b. European Union		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	0	0.00	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>
c. Non-European Union		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	0	0.00	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Other			2		14				0		3	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100.00</b>



As we will see, there is only one case (the Municipality of Venice) where some of the workers surveyed come from immigrant backgrounds and therefore have dual nationality: Italian and their nationality of origin. This naturally, adds a great deal in terms of competence to services where knowledge of the language and culture of the countries of origin of migrants may represent a significant asset when examining and/or preparing a file.

2. In most cases they are women aged between 36 and 45 (Table 6).  
The data is shown below, separated by country.

Table 7 shows the composition of the sample by age (covering the five countries surveyed); table 7b shows the same data broken down by country.

The data on the age of the workers surveyed strikes us as important: these are people who were trained and started work at a time when – at least in Euro-Mediterranean countries – migration was a totally different phenomenon compared with the one we see today. This is why it is highly unlikely that they would have been given training that could have helped them when they began work in the services concerned.

As table 7b shows, most workers are over the age of 45: there has been very little rotation of staff (by generation), which also suggests that very often, workers who retire are not replaced by younger staff at the beginning of their career and who – probably – have more relevant and up-to-date training reflecting the changes that have taken place in reality. In fact, France is the only country in the survey sample where the percentage of younger staff aged between 25 and 35 in the services is fairly significant (around 37.5%). In other countries, the highest figure is 18% and in Spain, younger staff represent just 12% of the workers surveyed.

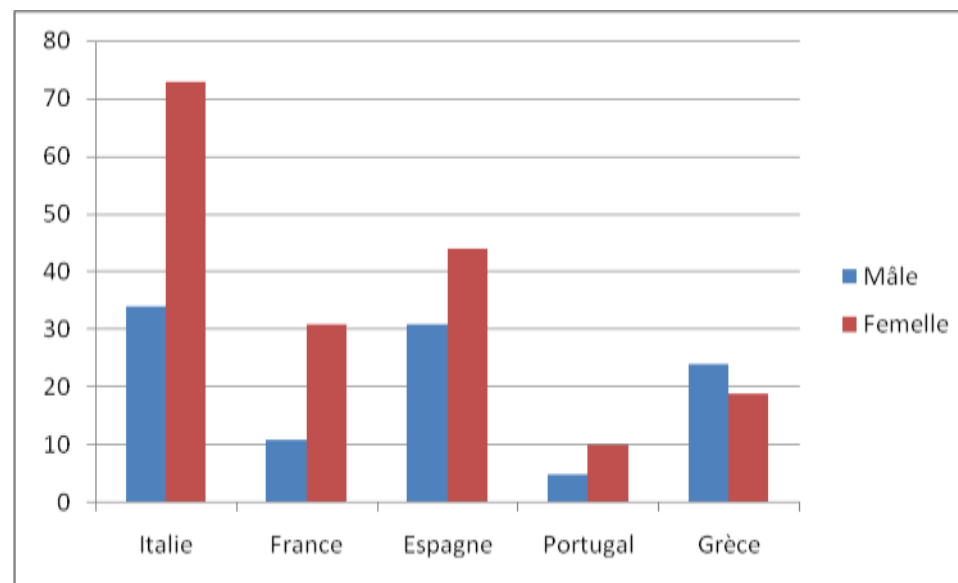
*In these services you need people with different professional profiles, from different backgrounds. Lots of us were trained in the department – not all of us, but the vast majority. The training in the department was high quality. (...) The department gave us the opportunity to develop our skills and build on them. (...) Today there are courses, universities, master's etc. but until five, six, seven years ago there was nothing like that. And we were faced with a phenomenon that you needed to study... It's a very important aspect: the complexity of all this side of things (the management of the department: Ed.) compared with the training staff get when they start out... (Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)*

This quotation introduces the theme of the training needed for working in contact with migrant users.

3. In the majority of cases the workers surveyed had been educated to secondary level – not university and not specifically associated with their role or to working in direct contact with migrant users.

**Table 6. Gender sample**

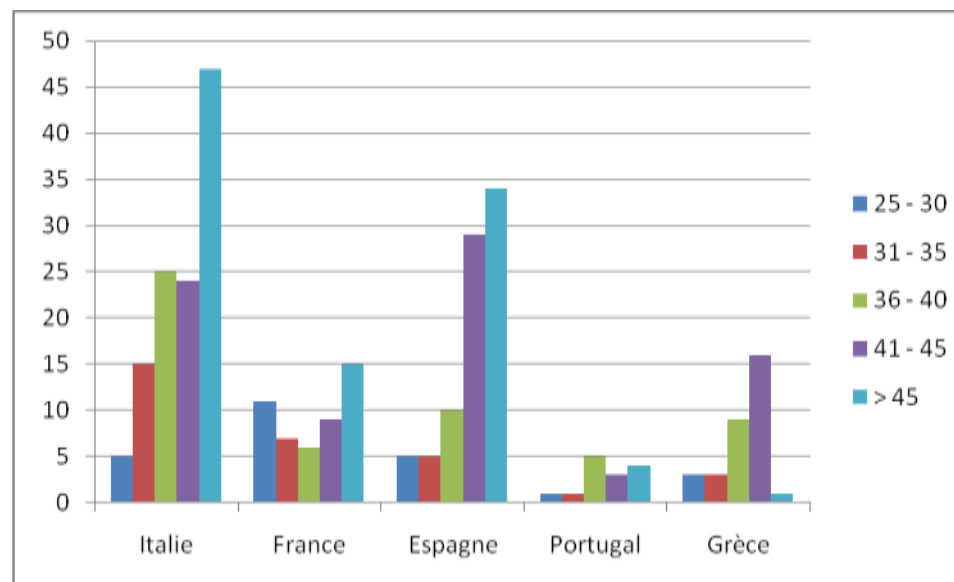
Gender	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. Men	34	31.78	11	26.19	31	41.33	5	33.33	24	55.81	<b>105</b>	<b>37.23</b>
b. Women	73	68.22	31	73.81	44	58.67	10	66.67	19	44.19	<b>177</b>	<b>62.77</b>
Other	16		6		21				1		31	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>100.00</b>



**Table 7. Age sample**

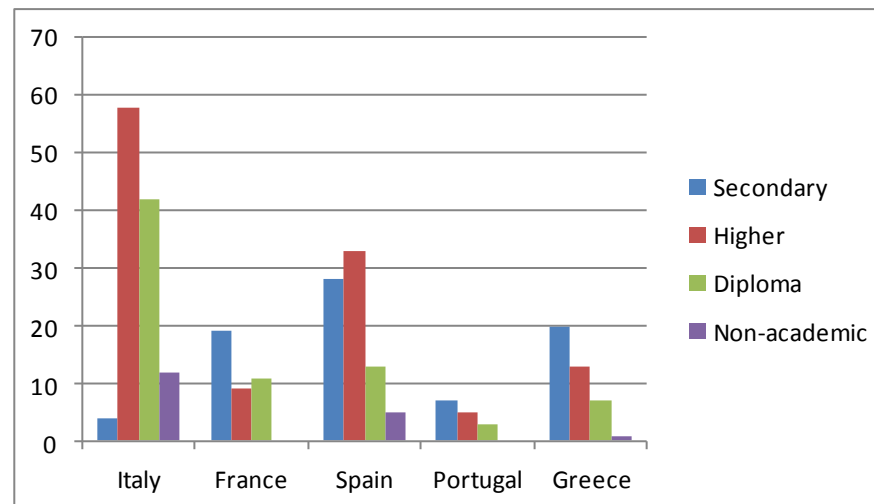
Age	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. 25-30	5	4.31	11	22.92	5	6.02	1	7.14	3	9.38	<b>25</b>	<b>8.53</b>
b. 31-35	15	12.93	7	14.58	5	6.02	1	7.14	3	9.38	<b>31</b>	<b>10.58</b>
c. 36-40	25	21.55	6	12.50	10	12.05	5	35.71	9	28.13	<b>55</b>	<b>18.77</b>
d. 41-45	24	20.69	9	18.75	29	34.94	3	21.43	16	50.00	<b>81</b>	<b>27.65</b>
e. > 45	47	40.52	15	31.25	34	40.96	4	28.57	1	3.13	<b>101</b>	<b>34.47</b>
Other	7				13		1		12		20	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 7b Age sample by country**



**Table 8. Education sample**

Training	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. Secondary	4	3.45	19	48.72	28	35.44	7	46.67	20	48.78	<b>78</b>	<b>26.90</b>
b. Higher	58	50.00	9	23.08	33	41.77	5	33.33	13	31.71	<b>118</b>	<b>40.69</b>
c. Diploma	42	36.21	11	28.21	13	16.46	3	20.00	7	17.07	<b>76</b>	<b>26.21</b>
d. Non-academic	12	10.34		0.00	5	6.33		0.00	1	2.44	<b>18</b>	<b>6.21</b>
Other	7		9		17				3		23	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.00</b>



4. There are two specific aspects to the theme of specific competences for working in direct contact with migrant users: the training undertaken before entering the service, and training taken at work whilst employed by the service. As we have said, in countries where the phenomenon of migration is fairly recent and changing constantly, it is often difficult to find public-sector workers who have undertaken specific training prior to starting work. Workplace training therefore emerges as being fundamentally important. Nevertheless, as we can see in table 10, it is extremely rare for public administrative authorities to plan and provide training and refresher training for public-sector workers.

*...training within the department is clearly linked to some extent to how the department is planned... nonetheless, it is also linked to the economic situation of the services... Take my case: when I started out, I used to attend very high-level training courses, but more recently, unfortunately, it is complicated even to go to things that are right nearby and don't cost much at all (...) We try to keep ourselves up to date on the things that have an impact on our work, even on an individual basis, because it's through training and information that you work out your ideas, concentrate on one thing rather than another, think about a law that's changing, etc. (Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)*

*...we need to be trained and informed on an ongoing basis and the administrative authorities should be responsible for providing us with training tools... so people can develop professionally... But what's happened lately is that people have said: this has changed, you need to study it, learn it and apply it. No-one takes responsibility for providing training on what's new. (Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

5. The lack of updated and specific training for workers in contact with migrant users was at the centre of the report *Public Services Meeting Migrants* and one of the conclusions drawn with regard to the training schemes that should be planned and organised by the public authorities. Online courses and work-based training (which is less expensive for the authorities and more feasible from the point of view of timetabling) were the forms of training most commonly requested by the workers surveyed. It seems to us that this situation also responds to the problems and needs expressed by the workers questioned as part of the survey.

*...the problem, recently, has been that there aren't enough of us and that we're very busy. The queues of users at our offices are getting longer all the time... and as for us... we can't simply not be there with no-one doing the work... it's a problem... And at the same time we need training, but we can't... And sometimes there are courses, but we can't go on them, we don't get authorisation for them... (Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

*... and even if the bosses wanted us to, we can't... or sometimes they send two staff out of ten and they say to you: you go, and afterwards you can tell the others what you learned... but when am I supposed to do that? In the coffee break? At the very least there ought to be formal feedback sessions, so that everyone would be entitled to have the information... (Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

*...yes, and when two people are authorised to go on a course, the others have to pick up the work of the people who are away... It's getting harder to deal with every day... (Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

The result is that workers in these services – which are, by definition, services in a constant state of flux, which change all the time – find it very difficult to access training courses and get up-to-date information on the topics they need to deal with in their working lives.

*You don't get any training. You train yourself by learning from your colleagues when you start. You learn by doing. If older colleagues are all away, we're in a bit of a mess!*



*(laughter) Not so much at the front desk, but for following up case files... (Residency permit section of the Immigration Service at Bobigny prefecture, France)*

*I didn't get any training when I arrived (...) ... they said it was fine! You'll be OK in a month. After that I would ask questions: I'd ask one person, she'd say one thing, I'd ask another, she'd say something else, so I'd go and see the manager and ask what to do. So all of a sudden I'm the one messing up the whole department because I go to talk to the manager and ask whether you do it this way, or that way. (Front desk and user reception, Immigration Department, Le Raincy sub-prefecture, France)*

Portugal is the only country surveyed where the percentage of workers who have been given specific training for the service in which they work is very high. In fact, the report from the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project highlighted the efficient organisation of local services (local administrative authorities) aimed at migrants, with guidance centres (info points) and qualified staff.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, in our case, it is important to take account of the fact that the number of questionnaires distributed was fairly low (15) and that all the respondents worked in the same service.

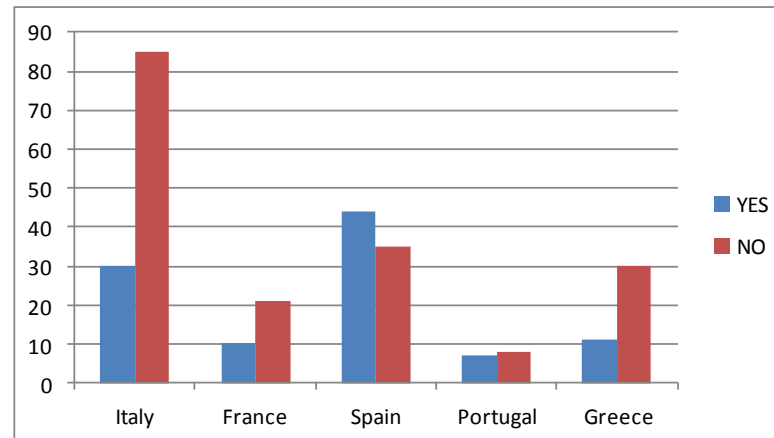
Conversely, the lack of a project to improve services and the absence of a long-term vision to ensure that services function effectively, which also requires workers to be trained and a reduction in the number of disputes to provide a high-quality service – see the quotation from the Le Raincy sub-prefecture – supports the notion that there is a growing trend towards abolishing services to reduce state involvement in social and societal issues.

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<sup>9</sup> The case of Portugal was identified in the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* report as an example of good practice to share with other immigration departments in Euro-Mediterranean countries.

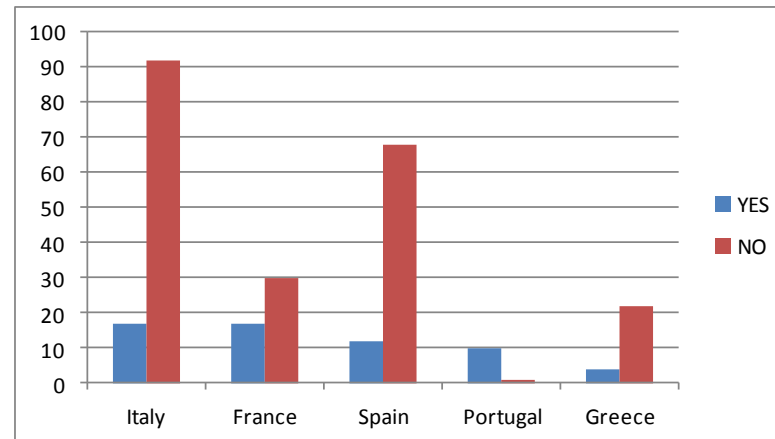
**Table 9. Understanding of legislation on immigration and asylum**

Understanding of legislation	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. YES	30	26.09	10	32.26	44	55.70	7	46.67	11	26.83	<b>102</b>	<b>36.30</b>
b. NO	85	73.91	21	67.74	35	44.30	8	53.33	30	73.17	<b>179</b>	<b>63.70</b>
Other	8		17		17				3		32	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100.00</b>



**Table 10. Specific training for working in contact with migrant users**

Specific training	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. YES	17	15.60	17	36.17	12	15.00	10	90.91	4	15.38	<b>60</b>	<b>21.98</b>
b. NO	92	84.40	30	63.83	68	85.00	1	9.09	22	84.62	<b>213</b>	<b>78.02</b>
Other	14		1		16		4		18		40	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100.00</b>



6. Naturally, the theme of training and *ad hoc* training on migration is the more significant when the services are specifically aimed at migrant users, or when their functions attract a large number of migrants (e.g. health services, social services, etc.). Table 10 shows the situation as it exists in the services surveyed.

*...we, the people who work in immigration departments or social services, don't really know what the legislation on migration says, so we don't know how to help the migrants who contact our offices. It's one of the things that makes our work enormously complicated: someone arrives and asks you for information, and you don't have what they're looking for and so you can't give them the correct information... Or else you say something that isn't right or that they don't really understand... It's a real problem, and we think the authorities should give us the appropriate tools we need to do our job as effectively as possible. At least people working in direct contact with migrant users could be told about the legislation, which changes all the time (staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

Linked to the theme of training on migration is the question of the right to asylum and the duty incumbent on staff in the services to indicate to migrant citizens the possibility of exercising it in the relevant circumstances.

*...we work in an administrative authority in contact with migrants and we have practically no idea about the legislation on asylum nor on the conditions in the countries in which people – or certain categories of people, like women, homosexuals or Trade union members – are particularly likely to suffer discrimination and violence. The problem, it seems to me, is that because we don't know we don't send users who would be entitled to seek asylum to the right places. We have a problem either of training or of getting up-to-date information.... (CCOO representative, Madrid, Spain)*

And again:

*For the type of work we do, it's essential that we are well trained and informed on a continual basis about changes in the sector (and in particular on national and European Union legislation), and that's the responsibility of the administrative authorities. It needs to take responsibility for continuing training to help people develop in the workplace... (Staff member at the Ministerio y consejería de migraciones in Madrid)*

7. Naturally, administrative authorities are more inclined to invest in training staff if their situation in the service is stable. Certainly, the majority of the (very few) workers who have attended specific training sessions/courses on migration were employed on a permanent contract. More generally, as far as the type of contract of the workers surveyed is concerned, table 11 confirms that, in the majority of cases, workers who are employed on a permanent contract are more likely to agree to take part in studies and surveys.

This is confirmed in all countries (see table 11) but does not prevent the fact that even the most protected workers expressed their fear of the administrative authorities checking up on what they said, as was clear from the accounts of workers' representatives taking part in the seminar in Bucharest and in the focus groups. Furthermore, some representatives of the CFDT in France commented that the workers surveyed felt under a certain amount of pressure when the questionnaires were distributed. They pointed out that, given the difficult atmosphere dominated by the focus on results and productivity in their department, the research was seen as a means for the administrative authorities to control workers.

An interesting exception is the Municipality of Venice, where the manager of the department surveyed was committed to involving all categories of worker, regardless of their type of employment contract.

*...the questionnaire was distributed to all staff employed in the department (around 40*

people), regardless of what type of contract they were employed under. So here, we have – given who made up the service – freelance colleagues, employees on fixed-term contracts and others on permanent contracts... (staff member, Immigration Service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

8. That said, the majority of workers who agreed to complete the questionnaire and take part in the focus groups are clerical staff with administrative functions; very few supervisory staff completed the survey (table 12). It is interesting, in this respect, to emphasise a methodological factor: the anonymity of the questionnaires was guaranteed by the Trade union representatives who handed them out; the sample was not set up in such a way as to ensure that a fixed number of clerical or supervisory staff completed the questionnaire. This was for two reasons:

- ❖ as the survey was not statistical, we did not impose any rules on the composition of the sample, in order to make the task of distributing it easier;
- ❖ the experience of *Public Services Meeting Migrants* shows that making it compulsory for supervisory staff could be a deterrent for employers. In fact, when it came to returning the completed questionnaire, some workers feared that the survey was a way of the administrative authorities checking up on their work – particularly in countries such as France and Spain – where the work in the public services, and in particular in immigration departments, is dominated by the imperative of productivity.

For all these reasons, no conditions were imposed on the composition of the sample. In the same way, the director of the Immigration Service in the Municipality of Venice confirmed that he wanted to reassure staff that the questionnaires were anonymous and that completing the survey was in the department's interest:

*...I was keen to explain that the questionnaires had been distributed entirely anonymously and that I – as the manager of the department – had no idea about who had completed them and who hadn't. When it came to collecting them back in, people did it anonymously on their own, returning them (the questionnaires: Ed.) in sealed envelopes (...). On top of that, our participation in the survey is something I dealt with directly, without asking permission from anyone higher up to distribute the survey or anything else... I ran it here, within the department, as a manager, and I think it should be seen as one of the things one does as a matter of course so that people can analyse and study the sector (...) ... I don't think the administration as senior managers should get involved: that's why I didn't ask permission and the employees who agreed to take part did so entirely independently and anonymously (...)* (staff member, Immigration Service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

**Table 11. Type of contract**

Type of contract	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. Permanent	59	47.97	37	78.72	51	64.56	12	80.00	17	38.64	<b>176</b>	<b>57.14</b>
b. Fixed term	50	40.65	3	6.38	15	18.99	1	6.67	25	56.82	<b>94</b>	<b>30.52</b>
c. Temporary work	9	7.32		0.00		0.00		0.00	0	0.00	<b>9</b>	<b>2.92</b>
d. Consultant	3	2.44		0.00	7	8.86		0.00	0	0.00	<b>10</b>	<b>3.25</b>
e. Other	2	1.63	7	14.89	6	7.59	2	13.33	2	4.55	<b>19</b>	<b>6.17</b>
Other			1		17						5	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100.00</b>

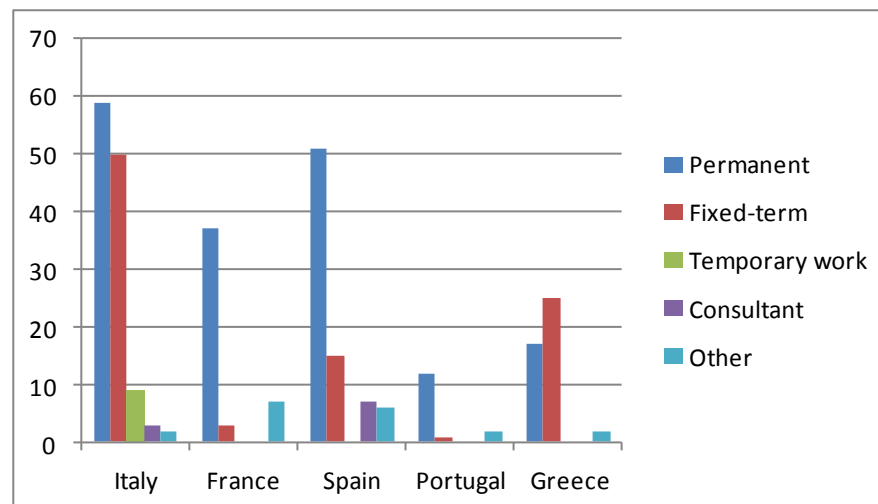


Table 11 provides an interesting piece of data concerning the composition of the sample. This is the distribution of questionnaires to people in the workplace who might be considered “new” figures in the administrative authorities, in particular linguistic and cultural mediators. An initial analysis of the results is striking with regard to the (almost) complete lack of questionnaires completed by professionals who are now seen as central in working with migrant users.

This prompts us to make two remarks: the first is related to the contractual instability that characterises people in this type of occupation, and which can be an impediment to their willingness to participate in an international survey; the second is related to the exclusion of people in these occupations from the life of their department, insofar as they are seen by permanent employees not as colleagues but as professionals in transit.

Examining the results in more detail, another aspect emerges: even if they are seen as professionals with an essential role to play in working with migrant users, the presence of linguistic and cultural mediators is still very rare in services aimed at migrant users and even more so in the social and health services, which are open to any kind of user.

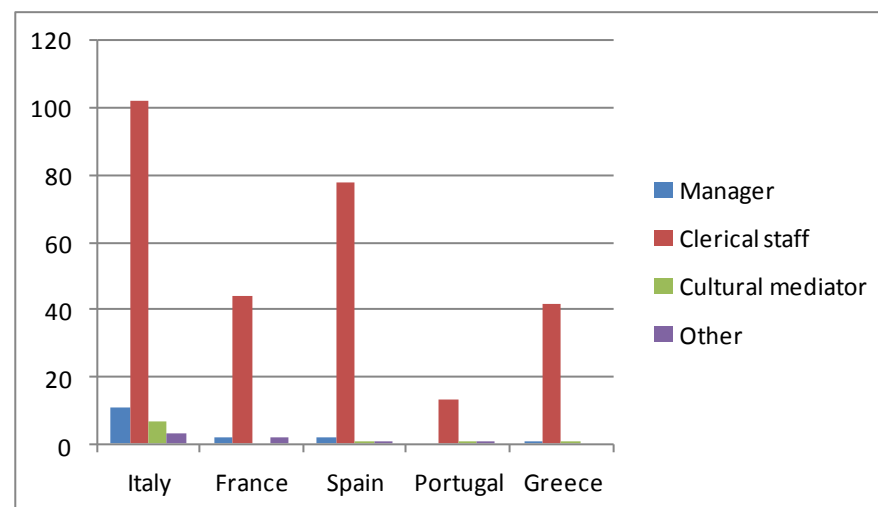
In general, at least one representative of linguistic and cultural mediators was questioned in almost all the services surveyed who have them. Furthermore, with regard to the immigration service in the Municipality of Venice (Italy), where mediation really is seen as an important resource in the department, a mediator took place in the focus groups.

The presence and level of involvement of mediators in the work of the services reveals on the one hand, the determination of the administrative authorities to offer a service which is able to take account of the needs of users, interpret them and offer effective responses; and on the other, the desire to offer workers in these services decent working conditions, with the necessary resources to respond to the needs of users and have sufficient knowledge of the subject they deal with in their day-to-day work.

The importance of linguistic and cultural mediation, particularly in services where understanding the problems of users is essential to provide an adequate service that meets good quality standards, was raised by everyone interviewed and the participants in the focus groups.

**Table 12. Role in the workplace**

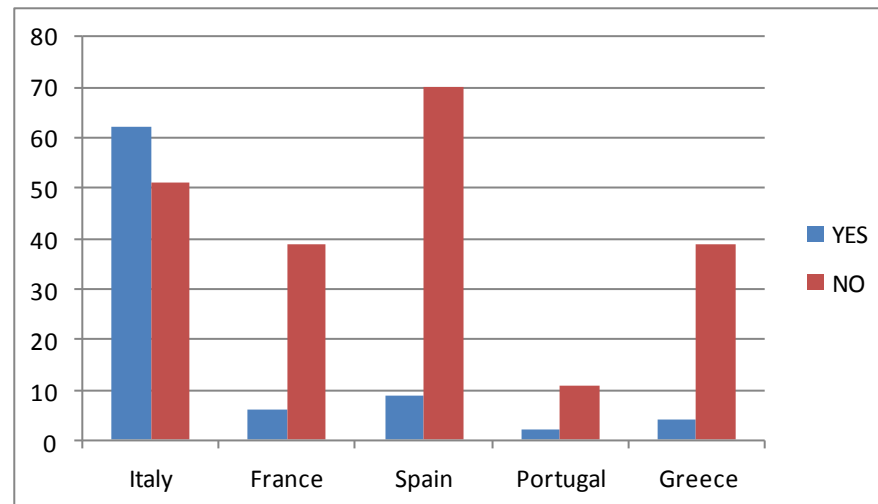
Role in the workplace	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. Manager	11	8.94	2	4.17	2	2.44		0.00	1	2.27	<b>16</b>	<b>5.13</b>
b. Clerical staff	102	82.93	44	91.67	78	95.12	13	86.67	42	95.45	<b>279</b>	<b>89.42</b>
c. Cultural mediator	7	5.69		0.00	1	1.22	1	6.67	1	2.27	<b>10</b>	<b>3.21</b>
d. Other	3	2.44	2	4.17	1	1.22	1	6.67	0	0.00	<b>7</b>	<b>2.24</b>
Other					14						1	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100.00</b>





**Table 13. Presence of a cultural mediator in the service**

Cultural mediator	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. YES	62	54.87	6	13.33	9	11.39	2	15.38	4	9.30	<b>83</b>	<b>28.33</b>
b. NO	51	45.13	39	86.67	70	88.61	11	84.62	39	90.70	<b>210</b>	<b>71.67</b>
Other	10		3		17		2		1		20	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.00</b>



**Mediation (...)** has made a contribution to our work that I consider invaluable. We have been working consistently with linguistic and cultural mediators for 12 years. Some of them are here more often, other less so, because of course it all depends on the needs of the service... (Staff member, immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

Over the last few years, the front desk (one morning a week the service operates on a drop-in basis and offers a preliminary reception service; cases are then passed to the relevant sections: Ed.) has a Bangla linguistic and cultural mediator, because the Bangla community here is the largest and it's also a community that **has some quite complex problems**. That's why it is particularly important that **communications are clear** and also that we **understand the situations the people – especially women – who come to the front desk have come from...** (Staff member, immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

What's more, some of the people who work in the service are originally from abroad... In fact, 8 out of 28 staff on fixed-term and permanent contracts were originally immigrants... (Staff member, Immigration Service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

What's new is that we are now multilingual. If someone comes to the desk who speaks Arabic, French or English, if they're an Iraqi Kurd, an Albanian, if they speak Spanish, and so on, we can help them by welcoming them in their mother tongue and giving them some preliminary information... and start (their file). We use mediators for rare languages and cultures that we can't cover internally within the service... (Staff member, immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

The experience of the Municipality of Venice – where workers of foreign origin are employed in the service only if they have acquired Italian citizenship and have passed a public competitive examination, like all the other employees in the service – is a clear contrast to the experience of the immigration service in Bobigny prefecture, in the suburbs of Paris in France. Accounts from workers in the service there highlighted the fact that there are no mediation resources in a service like Bobigny's, which receives hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of people every day.

We did have some once. A few years ago, I don't know if you remember, there was an association of "women relays", comprised of women from a variety of backgrounds, Turkish, African and so on... and honestly I thought they did a brilliant job. I really liked it. They used to prepare the user's files and if there was a language barrier they were there just to mediate between them and us, but then they were gone – we didn't understand why – perhaps their role wasn't important enough? Or it was a question of budget? (Staff member, Immigration Service, Bobigny prefecture, Paris, France and INTERCO-CFDT staff representative)

Moreover, the participants in the focus group held in Bobigny on 3 July 2012 confirmed on several occasions that workers of foreign origin – Arabic speakers, for example – are not allowed to speak in Arabic to users who do not understand French, or who do not understand it very well.

...I was told at the beginning that I was in a French administrative authority and that therefore I had to speak French, but there are times when we need to use our own language; I don't speak Arabic very well but I get by and there have been times when the person doesn't understand anything at all and I get sick of speaking (French) so I speak to them in Arabic and people have commented because I wasn't supposed to speak Arabic because we're in France... (Staff member, Immigration Service, Bobigny prefecture, Paris, France and INTERCO-CFDT staff representative)

Some similar themes to those found at Bobigny prefecture emerge in Spain too:  
...to have someone on the front desk who can explain to me the culture of the person sitting in front of me... a mediator who can explain the problems the person in front of

*me might have... You'd think it would be basic but there's nothing like that... We have to decide on our own whether to give someone a residency permit or not, which is why you would think it would be really important to understand people's situations, really understand where they come from and the main problems they face... We don't just give them a cut-and-dried answer, yes or no, we need to start a file and prepare them... It's very important for us to have people, mediators, who can explain things to us... It's not just an administrative job: it's about people... (Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

*In my case there are translators who just translate and that's all... They're not cultural mediators or anything, they just translate. And they have plenty of work, in fact they're saturated... there are translators for English, French, Arabic and Chinese, which is very big at the moment, but if you need a translator for someone from Afghanistan or Azerbaijan, or Senegal or Rwanda, who doesn't speak Spanish... nothing... Who's going to understand them? (Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

*Think about my position... There I am at the front desk, dealing with users... and I know that behind every problem, everything they say to you and everything they ask you there are loads of things you ought to deal with... And the problems they talk about ought to have a much higher level of general understanding than I can offer... If you have a mediator, it's fine, but otherwise what are you meant to do to answer them, to talk to people?... They start crying, and you worry, and you haven't got the resources to help them... (Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

The problem raised in the Spanish example in relation to the needs of workers in certain services to have access not only to linguistic but also cultural mediation services, has been addressed in the Immigration Service of the Municipality of Venice by bringing workers from immigrant backgrounds into the service itself as operational staff, and delegating some activities to a cooperative of mediators working full-time in the various departments of the service. As some accounts have already suggested, however, linguistic mediation is not enough for certain tasks that need to be carried out:

*Over the years, we've realised that linguistic and cultural mediation is not enough, (...), but that we need **social mediation in terms of conflict mediation or promoting people living alongside each other. Promoting living alongside each other and prevention.** (Staff member, Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)*

In this context, the theme emphasised by the employees of the Immigration Service in Venice, namely official recognition of the new professional profiles, now needs to ensure that services aimed at migrant users or those which the public contacts frequently not only operate effectively but acquire central importance. First of all, recognising these professional profiles enables the services to carry out their role effectively and put employees in a position to respond properly to the questions put to them by the public. Secondly, recognition avoids having the services equipping themselves with the same professional profiles under other names and other contractual terms, which penalise both the workers themselves and employees in the services. This theme is therefore one that should be addressed by the Trade union organisations that protect the rights of workers in the public services, and also act as guarantors of the rights of migrant citizens who contact these services, to seek answers to the problems they face and exercise their rights.

What emerges clearly is the importance of involving managerial staff in the organisation of the service, work-related problems, the needs of both workers and migrant users and changes in the area of migration and integration, which need to be planned and scheduled well in advance in order to avoid workers in the services having to deal with situations that are extremely difficult to manage and for which they do not have access to the information and training they need to offer high-quality service to users.

*... we are not the prefecture and driven by figures... We have a certain... I won't say*

*freedom, but flexibility to decide which actions to focus more or less attention on... Over the last six years, for example, we have been focusing on actions for the migrant women we have seen, to meet local needs.... and no-one has stopped us from doing it. We decided, as an Immigration Service, to take the needs of the local area as our starting point, and we're continuing to do so... (Staff member, Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)*

Conversely, there is a general trend towards desocialising the public services to align them more closely with the principles of economic liberalism and productivity at any price, to the detriment of quality, understanding the needs of the local area and developing models that reflect different realities. In this context, the presence in the services of competent supervisory staff, who are involved in the service's activities and problems, makes a significant difference in terms of respecting and protecting the rights of users and governing the working conditions of those employed by the services.

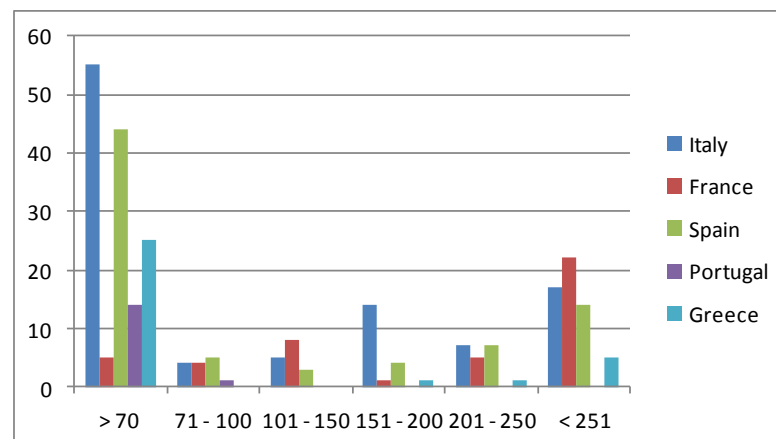
*...we're meant to spend 2 or 3 minutes with each person, not talk and just deal with them. Normally we shouldn't even chat to them. That's what the managers tell us all the time, don't talk, just give them back their cards and that's all. So we go faster. It's about productivity. It's quantitative, not qualitative. (Staff member in the residency permit section of the Immigration Service at Bobigny prefecture)*

In a context of decreasing public involvement in services – both by cutting public spending and through outsourcing services to external agencies (cooperatives, associations, societies, etc.) – the issue of whether or not the services function effectively comes down to the goodwill and ability / interest in understanding situations of their senior managers.

9. The vast majority of questionnaires and first-hand accounts – either from the people who took part in the focus groups or from the Trade union representatives who took part in the training seminar in Bucharest – show that the number of public-sector officials responsible for receiving and dealing with immigrants is extremely limited in all countries and that the workers employed in these services face problematic working conditions that they find difficult to tolerate.

**Table 14. Number of migrants received by the service each day**

Number of migrants received by service	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. > 70	55	53.92	5	11.11	44	57.14	14	93.33	25	78.13	<b>143</b>	<b>52.77</b>
b. 71 - 100	4	3.92	4	8.89	5	6.49	1	6.67	0	0.00	<b>14</b>	<b>5.17</b>
c. 101 - 150	5	4.90	8	17.78	3	3.90		0.00	0	0.00	<b>16</b>	<b>5.90</b>
d. 151 - 200	14	13.73	1	2.22	4	5.19		0.00	1	3.13	<b>20</b>	<b>7.38</b>
e. 201 - 250	7	6.86	5	11.11	7	9.09		0.00	1	3.13	<b>20</b>	<b>7.38</b>
f. < 251	17	16.67	22	48.89	14	18.18		0.00	5	15.63	<b>58</b>	<b>21.40</b>
Other	21		3		19				12		42	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100.00</b>



The case of the sub-prefecture in Aix-en-Provence, which is one of the three sub-prefectures linked to the Marseille prefecture, is quite revealing. Of the 60 employees in the prefecture, just five work in the immigration department. They have to deal with an average of 150 users who contact the service each day. The direct consequence of the cuts in public spending on the immigration department is a reduction in the time available for dealing with the files of migrant users, or reducing the time spent at the front desk with each user, namely, quantifying each aspect of the work to the detriment of the quality of work and the service provided. Furthermore, as was highlighted in the case of Aix-en-Provence, the working environment is very difficult and employees have no specific training, either from the point of view of national and European Union legislation on migration, or on good practices for dealing with migrant users. Let us now look at the question of the disproportionate number of users compared with the number of officials, and offer a few remarks.

First of all, it is important to remember that the questionnaires were distributed and focus groups carried out in the geographical areas that are most sensitive to the issue of receiving migrants in the various countries involved. In the case of France, the prefectures of Marseille, Paris-Bobigny and Lyon were chosen because they are some of the services in the country with the highest overload in terms of users and are located in regions with the highest number of recorded migrants in their area. According to the French Office of National Statistics, INSEE, in 2008 around 12 million people of migrant origin, including 5.3 million migrants and 6.5 million direct descendants of migrants, i.e. 19% of the population, were resident in France. According to data from 2011, 8.40% of these lived in the Ile-de-France region, 11% in the Rhône-Alpes region and 9% in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region (INSEE, 2011), namely the three regions on which our survey focused.

The majority of new migrants, around 180,000 people per year, contact the prefectures where, according to a report published by the French Ministry of the Interior itself, the conditions in which migrants are received are often very poor, as are the working conditions of staff employed in these services<sup>10</sup>. This is due, amongst other things, to the fact that the number of employees assigned to reception services for migrant users is less than the number needed to meet their needs.

Let us also look at Spain, where in January 2011, around 6.7 million people of migrant origin, namely 14.1% of the total Spanish population of 47.1 million inhabitants (data from the Spanish National Institute of Statistics) were living in the country. The breakdown of the migrant population in the country is, once again, quite varied: the vast majority of migrants are concentrated in Madrid, Barcelona (Catalonia) and Andalusia (data from the Osservatorio Permanente de l'Inmigracion, September 2011). The survey was carried out in services based in these regions.

First of all, these clarifications are useful in gaining a better understanding of the comments made by workers in the services included in the sample, and in assigning the appropriate level of importance to them: even though we are conscious of the fact that our survey makes no statistical claims, the data we have gathered are of considerable value insofar as they refer to the most significant services in the various countries in terms of receiving and managing (in the case of the social services) migrant users. Although we are conscious of the limitations of our work, we are keen, nonetheless, to draw attention to the representativeness of the accounts / data collected.

In particular, the services included in the sample are, in the vast majority of cases, purely public services (table 15) – with just a few exceptions, noted earlier, for combined services in Italy and Spain – and receive an average of around 100 migrant

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<sup>10</sup>Info Migration, ELIPA survey – New migrants in 2009, issue 19, January 2011, Department for Immigration and Integration, Ministry of the Interior, Overseas territories, Local authorities and Immigration. Project funded by the European Integration Fund, 2010.

users every day (table 14). The most striking exceptions are the prefecture in Bobigny (Paris, France) and the sub-prefecture in Le Raincy (Paris, France), where an average of 1,000 people contact the service every day. Another interesting item of data concerns services in the Municipality of Athens and certain Italian health and social services, which receive 250 migrant users every day. This represents 18% of our sample.

*...let me say something: The reduction in staff numbers in the administrative authorities is resulting in outsourcing and delegating a significant proportion of the work of receiving and managing migrants to private-sector organisations or religious associations such as Caritas... Before, we worked in the public sector with people with high levels of skill in the area of social services, etc. but we are now losing these skills because we have outsourced the service (...) And once services are outsourced you can no longer guarantee their quality... (CCOO representative at the Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

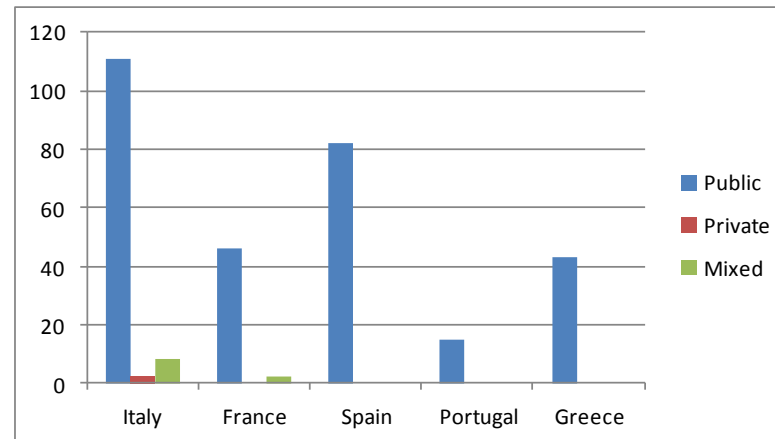
The outsourcing of services to private-sector and in some cases denominational organisations has led to a loss of quality control in relation to services that had historically fallen within the remit of the public sector. This has a decisive influence on the ability of the public services to guarantee the protection of not only workers' rights, but the rights of service users. What we want to emphasise here are the significant consequences of the trend towards reducing the role played by the public sector in areas where its presence provided a guarantee that rights would be protected both for users (migrants, in this case) and for the workers themselves.

*...migrants arriving in a foreign country where they don't know the rules are very vulnerable... and effectively it's us, the people who work in the administrative authorities, who are responsible for kick-starting a process with the authorities to ensure that they protect these people's rights and offer them high-quality services... (Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

10. As far as consideration of the working conditions of the workers surveyed goes, the results of the questionnaires show that conditions are very variable: in general terms, all the workers questioned were unhappy about their working conditions in terms of stress, work overload, the very high number of users contacting the services each day compared with the number of employees in the services and unsuitable premises but more importantly, the complete or almost complete lack of essential professionals (such as mediators) to work with migrant users.

**Table 15. Type of services**

Type of services	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. Public	111	91.74	46	95.83	82	100.00	15	100.00	43	100.00	<b>297</b>	<b>96.12</b>
b. Private	2	1.65		0.00		0.00		0.00	0	0.00	<b>2</b>	<b>0.65</b>
c. Mixed	8	6.61	2	4.17		0.00		0.00	0	0.00	<b>10</b>	<b>3.24</b>
Other	2				14				1		4	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100.00</b>





Difficult working conditions and the targets set in relation to productivity are a source of stress and unhappiness for workers who, in turn, are unable to offer users a high-quality service. (Table 16)

*There are people who arrive at 2 a.m. to get a place in line and get to us at 4 p.m. and then we say "No, you haven't got such and such a piece of paper" and you need to join the queue again tomorrow. I find that utterly, utterly, utterly aberrant. You try to shrug it off at the end of the day, you say to yourself: this lady came in, and we treated her like a dog, because we don't have the time (...) The stress is unbelievable. (Christine, an employee in the residency permit section of the Immigration Service at Bobigny prefecture)*

11. Another relevant aspect highlighted by the vast majority of the workers questioned was the difficulty of working with users who neither understand nor have adequate knowledge of the services offered by the departments and offices of the various administrative authorities, but also with users who do not have regular access to the services, for a wide variety of reasons, which makes communications, following up files and understanding each case significantly more complicated for the workers involved.

As far as knowledge and understanding of the services is concerned, the lack of coordination between the various administrative authorities and between the different services in the same office was highlighted, in terms of guiding and giving users accurate and timely information on the services offered by different departments, sections and offices. This would save wasting enormous amounts of time, stress and humiliation for users and for workers, who often find themselves carrying out tasks for which they are not qualified (for example, providing information on topics they do not fully understand, etc.).<sup>11</sup>

*... it's supposed to be important to have good coordination between the various administrative authorities that deal with migration and migrants... in terms of food, housing, social questions, etc. If there were better coordination we could help users who contact the various services and offer them some guidance... That's what's missing... Every authority works in isolation... Coordination between the various administrative departments strikes me as essential... (...) and the lack of it is something that we, as the people on the front desk in the immigration services, have to compensate for every day, even though we know that we don't have the training or up-to-date information we need to do it... (Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

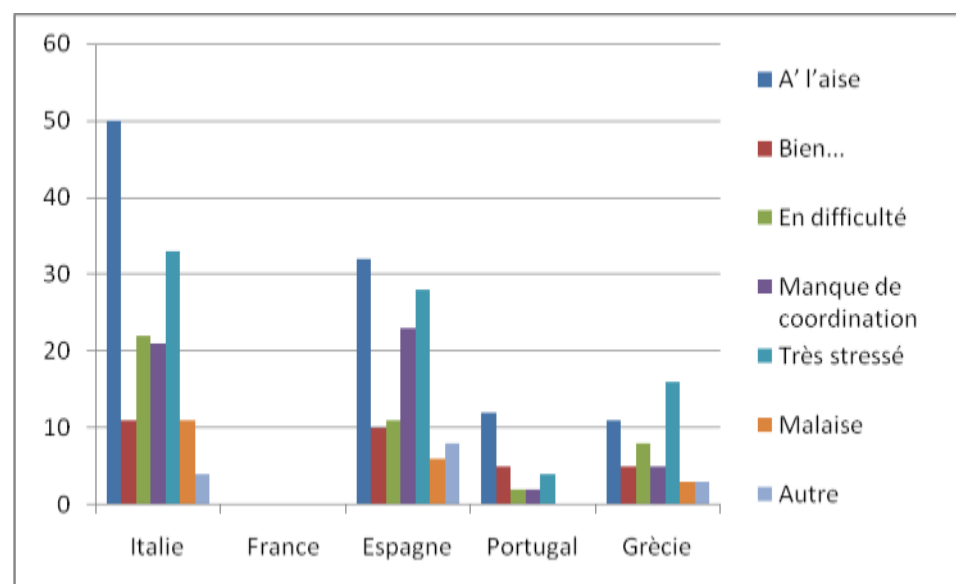
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<sup>11</sup>The need to introduce information points for migrants was also clearly highlighted in the results of *Public Services Meeting Migrants*.

**Table 16. Working conditions**

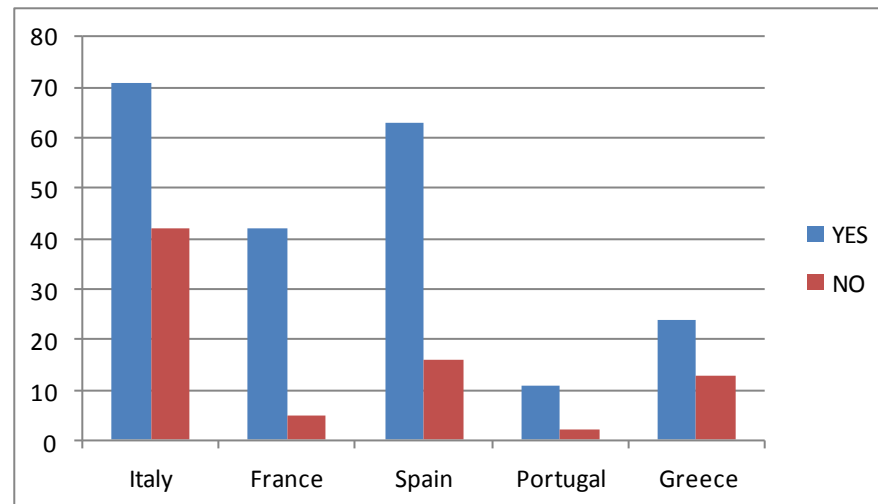
Working conditions	Italy		France*		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. Comfortable	50	32.89			32	27.12	12	48.00	11	21.57	<b>105</b>	<b>30.35</b>
b. OK...	11	7.24			10	8.47	5	20.00	5	9.80	<b>31</b>	<b>8.96</b>
c. Struggling	22	14.47			11	9.32	2	8.00	8	15.69	<b>43</b>	<b>12.43</b>
d. Lack of coordination	21	13.82			23	19.49	2	8.00	5	9.80	<b>51</b>	<b>14.74</b>
e. Very stressed	33	21.71			28	23.73	4	16.00	16	31.37	<b>81</b>	<b>23.41</b>
f. Unhappy	11	7.24			6	5.08		0.00	3	5.88	<b>20</b>	<b>5.78</b>
g. Other	4	2.63			8	6.78		0.00	3	5.88	<b>15</b>	<b>4.34</b>
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.00</b>			<b>118</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\*Question not included in questionnaire distributed in France



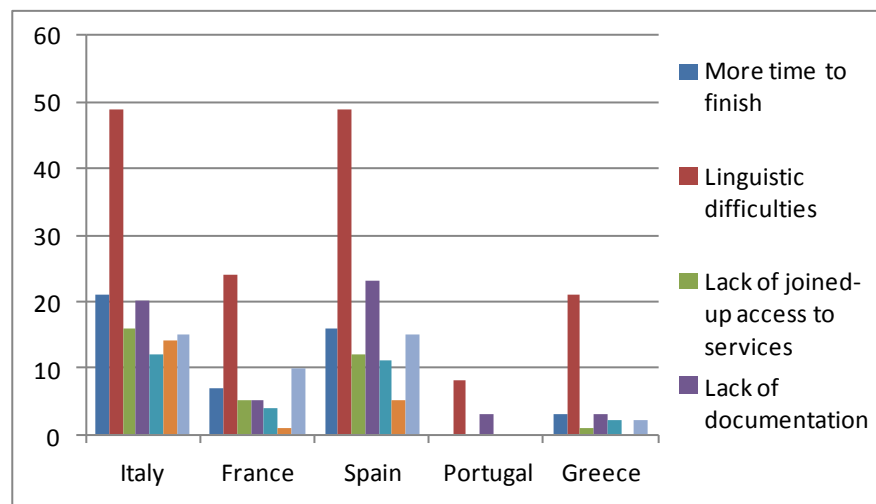
**Table 17. Specific problems with migrant users**

Work issue	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
a. YES	71	62.83	42	89.36	63	79.75	11	84.62	24	64.86	<b>211</b>	<b>73.01</b>
b. NO	42	37.17	5	10.64	16	20.25	2	15.38	13	35.14	<b>78</b>	<b>26.99</b>
Other	10		1		17		2		7		24	
Total	123		48		96		15		44		326	
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.00</b>



**Table 17b. Main issues**

Issue	Italy		France		Spain		Portugal		Greece		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
More time to finish	21	14.29	7	12.50	16	12.21		0.00	3	9.38	<b>47</b>	<b>12.47</b>
Linguistic difficulties	49	33.33	24	42.86	49	37.40	8	72.73	21	65.63	<b>151</b>	<b>40.05</b>
Lack of joined-up access to services	16	10.88	5	8.93	12	9.16		0.00	1	3.13	<b>34</b>	<b>9.02</b>
Lack of documentation	20	13.61	5	8.93	23	17.56	3	27.27	3	9.38	<b>54</b>	<b>14.32</b>
Understanding of services	12	8.16	4	7.14	11	8.40		0.00	2	6.25	<b>29</b>	<b>7.69</b>
Migrant status	14	9.52	1	1.79	5	3.82		0.00		0.00	<b>20</b>	<b>5.31</b>
g. Other	15	10.20	10	17.86	15	11.45		0.00	2	6.25	<b>42</b>	<b>11.14</b>
<b>Total Valid</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>32.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>100.00</b>



*The relationship with migrant users is very complex for all of us, I believe. I used to work in another public service, but I didn't work with migrant users in the main... and I think it's really complicated and causes a lot of stress, apart from the difficulties all workers in the public sector are facing at the moment: we have to deal with human situations, the situations our users are facing in their lives and they can be really dreadful... It's why there's always some degree of empathy and solidarity with what they've gone through, but at the end of the day we're the ones who have to deal with the difficulty of managing a situation that's full of complications, such as understanding different languages, cultures, religions and so on. It's important to remember that we, the people who work in the public services, are overwhelmed by the problems in the sector... And on top of that there are very few of us compared with the number of users, who all have different kinds of problem... and it's very difficult to manage, because we have to sort things out that we don't know very much about ourselves....*  
(Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)

In contrast to what was said above and the results of the questionnaires, the focus group in Venice emphasised the fact that there are no specific problems working with migrant users if the services are well organised and focused on this kind of audience. In other words, working with migrant users is not problematic if the services are equipped with the essential tools needed for working with this audience, which applies as much to migrants as to any other type of user. Participants in the focus group highlighted the increasing bureaucratic complexity characterising the administrative authorities in Italy. It is this, combined with a lack of means and resources, rather than the type of user, that (according to the opinions of the focus group participants) is making work in the service less enjoyable and more stressful. It is the general working conditions in the public sector, particularly as far as service with reception desks open to the public are concerned, that suffer particularly badly from policies to cut spending and the level of control that follows them, depriving services and workers of autonomy. The work is becoming more difficult and stressful because it does not fit into various situations. According to workers in the Immigration Service in Venice, it is not a problem of users but a problem of service organisation.

*...the type of user has nothing to do with the difficulties we face, on the contrary; it's great working with migrant users. They ask us different questions every time, which allow us to broaden our knowledge and our views... (...) It has more to do with the problems of organisation within the service, the problems associated with the difficulty of organising a service that is changing all the time, is constantly shifting and needs a flexible approach... whilst the administrative authorities have a tendency to structure procedures and make them more bureaucratic and complicated...* (Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)

We will come back to a number of these points in the conclusions, but it is nonetheless interesting to include a few comments here on the working conditions in the various services included in the sample, either reception services in the strict sense of the word, provided by prefectures (and sub-prefectures) or other services. First there are the environmental conditions: long queues at the desks, inappropriate settings for receiving users and guaranteeing their privacy when discussing their cases, often inappropriate settings for protecting the rights of women or elderly people, etc.; and then the fact of having only limited time to dedicate to users – which is normally very short – to meet quantitative targets, makes working in these services more difficult and inhuman. All workers in reception services must, in fact, deal with the imperative of prioritising productivity over quality. This is why the accounts of Trade union representatives – particularly those who took part in the training seminar in Bucharest – reported a tendency to see these services as a starting point for a career or the place people came back to if they experienced problems in the normal course of career progression. These are services in which workers do not feel valued and where the quality of their work is assessed on the basis of the number of cases dealt with each day, rather than the quality of answers given and the welcome offered to users.

## **ABOUT ROMANIA:**

Romania is a country that currently receives few migrants (Bulgarians, Moldovans, Chinese and Thais); conversely, huge numbers of Romanian workers leave the country to work in France, Italy and Portugal (because of the linguistic similarities). These are both skilled and unskilled workers, who, in the majority of cases, enter their host country legally.

Research carried out to date shows that the highest number of qualified emigrant workers is employed in the health sector. In 2011, 7,000 doctors trained in Romania were working outside their own country, including 2,800 who had emigrated over the course of 2011.

The other professional category that is heavily affected by emigration is midwives and nurses. To date, however, there is no reliable data on the number of emigrants in this sector.

The main reasons for emigration, according to the studies and data gathered by PUBLISIND, are economic (because of the difference in salaries between Romania and other European countries where professionally qualified Romanians can find work), career opportunities and family reunion, amongst others.

Furthermore, emigration amongst health professionals is increasing in Romania and elsewhere as a result of the current economic crisis: this has proved to be a powerful tool for governments, which have subsequently been able to reduce salaries, cut the number of jobs in the public sector and limit the rights of workers and Trade union organisations, whilst constantly reducing the scope for social dialogue.

Emigration in the health sector is particularly serious insofar as, according to the projections produced by PUBLISIND, there is a real risk of the sector disappearing by 2025 if nothing is done.

The main measures to be taken are: renegotiating the salaries paid to healthcare professionals; offering career prospects in public-sector healthcare facilities for Romanian professionals; improving working conditions; and ensuring adequate supplies of instruments and medicines in healthcare facilities.

The case of Romania is particularly interesting insofar as it shows that the current economic crisis is contributing to new migratory trends. Some countries in the EU, for example, which in recent years had been considered as host countries (e.g. Hungary, Greece or Spain) are in the process of reversing the trend and sending migrants to other EU countries, such as Germany.

This is affecting both skilled and unskilled workers.

12. A final aspect that this project aimed to address are the responsibilities that the workers surveyed attribute to Trade union organisations. We have seen that, naturally, they see the unions' main responsibility as defending / protecting the working conditions of employees in the public services. The vast majority of workers believe that the trade unions should also take responsibility for training workers, and in particular in areas related to migration, in the event that the public authorities do not take charge of it. One interesting point that emerged from the survey is that of protecting new professional profiles (e.g. linguistic and cultural mediators, but also conflict mediators and those who work to promote people living alongside each other, i.e. people who are trained in "coexistence" and conflict prevention), whom the trade unions should be looking after.

The workers surveyed think that the trade unions should also take on other tasks, such as:

- Sharing information about legislation on migration with workers (60% of the staff questioned stated that they were not familiar with any international conventions, not even the main documents relating to protecting the rights of migrants and asylum seekers);
- Getting more involved in protecting the working conditions of workers in the public services (particularly in the case of workers in reception services);

*When it comes to communicating with management it works better if it comes from the trade union, rather than one or two members of staff, because if everyone did it that would be great, but staff are afraid so in general they don't get involved, so it's better if it comes from the union. It's a mediation role too. (Staff member, Naturalisation service, Bobigny prefecture, France)*

- Sharing information about the main standards concerning migration with the migrant users who contact the services and who, according to what the workers surveyed think, do not know what they are actually entitled to;
- Lobbying the management of immigration services for linguistic and cultural mediators;

*...it's supposed to be really important to have mediators,... to ensure there is at least one mediator in each office to deal with immigrants... that could be something the union does.... (Staff member, Immigration department, Madrid, Spain)*

1. Taking care of language courses for immigrants to ensure that, once they contact the services, they can express themselves and understand the information they are given.

*... the union is an important player when it comes to providing Italian lessons for foreigners. As a coordinating body for the subjects this kind of service can offer, we see the union and volunteers as key players in providing free courses.... (Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)*

**Table 18. Role of the union**

Italy	Spain
<p>Information / Specific training</p> <p>Support for users</p> <p>Support for workers in the services</p> <p>Promoting the role of local administrative authorities</p> <p>Worker protection</p> <p>Advising employers</p> <p>Mediation</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Improving internal organisation</p> <p>Lobbying</p> <p>Specific training</p>
Portugal	Greece
<p>Information on users' rights and duties</p> <p>Employee training</p> <p>Closer relationship to services</p>	<p>Ensuring the service is adequately managed</p> <p>More active (in relation to the needs of the institution – residency and foreign nationals' service and workers)</p> <p>Sort out the shortage of staff for administrative tasks in the services</p> <p>Solidarity, support and a point of contact for problems Protection</p> <p>Information</p> <p>Inclusion in social initiatives</p> <p>Training</p>



In most cases, the trade unions are most highly valued for their abilities to defend individuals, protect rights and mediate with management.

*... as far as renewals are concerned (for residency permits: Ed.) and defending workers as such, the unions play quite a positive role. (...) And also for protecting the rights of migrants. In the immigration departments we do offer support but mostly we refer those who need legal assistance to other service organisations, including the trade unions... (Staff member, Immigration service, Municipality of Venice, Italy)*

In some cases, the union is also seen as an “ally” of the services in effectively resolving the problems encountered by users. In cases where the services act as organisations for protecting the rights of all citizens and all users, the unions can represent not only a way of resolving tangible situations but also an extension of their public activities in terms of defending and protecting rights. As we were reminded by one of the Trade union activists who took part in distributing the questionnaires and organising the focus groups, unions can also serve the administrative authorities by supporting the organisation of information and advice points, as is done in Spain<sup>12</sup>.

*For trade union activists like us, it’s extremely important to be able to guide migrant users towards different offices, services and departments in the administration (el capeleo)... We believe that there should be someone in every service – every immigration service but also in every service that migrant users contact frequently – who can guide them on the specifics of the various services... (CCOO National Representative, Spain)*

In general, Trade union organisations are not seen as bodies that can put forward political responses to the decisions made by governments and administrative authorities. It is very rare for workers to have a clear perception of the role of the trade unions as a key social player with the ability to promote change and engage in dialogue with national and international institutions. These aspects need to be considered in detail so that Trade union organisations and their international and European federations engage in clearer and more significant communications on local realities and workplaces.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, we will recap a number of points and highlight some key findings.

The first finding concerns the growing climate of control by central administrative authorities on the efficiency (control of time) of workers, creating a sense of mistrust and fear of expressing personal opinions. The consequence of this is that it de-legitimises the opinions of workers, even on topics – such as the quality of service offered to users – which concern them directly. From the point of view of the survey, this fear had a significant influence on the responses to the questionnaires. In fact, in several cases the possibility of being identified led workers to refuse to complete the questionnaire or to complete it partially by excluding the section on personal data. The fear of being viewed negatively by the central administration often prevents workers from giving their opinion on problem areas that need to be improved to guarantee a higher quality of service. This explains why the majority of employees who agreed to complete the questionnaire were those in a more secure employment situation. In fact, the type of contracts under which most workers who responded were employed were either fixed-term or permanent contracts; contracts for services are rarely found amongst front-line workers, dealing directly with migrant users on the desk in reception services.

The second finding concerns the perception of the majority of workers surveyed of immigration services/departments themselves, which are seen as a rite of passage in the early stage of

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<sup>12</sup>A more detailed description of advice centres run by the trade union in Spain can be found in the final report of the *Public Services Meeting Migrants* project, available from [lalla.greco@gmail.com](mailto:lalla.greco@gmail.com).

one's career or as a punishment in the middle of their working lives for employees who have run into career progression problems. Accounts from France, Greece and Spain converge on the fact that immigration departments (particularly in respect of reception services, local authorities and employment services) are generally made up of workers without any particular aptitude, training or interest in working in direct contact with migrant users.

More generally, one aspect of working conditions in the public sector at a time of economic crisis seen in all the countries covered by the study concerns the imbalance in the number of employees compared with the users who contact the services, and the workload. In most cases, workers who retire are not replaced, which subsequently increases the workload in these services. In Spain, two different phenomena are occurring at the same time: a cut in public spending, which is forcing a reduction in the number of workers in the public services and immigration departments, and a decline in migration for the first time in ten years. The decline has immediately led the government to cut the number of officials employed in the immigration departments of local authorities. Furthermore, the Spanish government elected in November 2011 is in the process of amending the legislation on migrants' access to health and social services, whilst reducing the entitlement to social services of migrant citizens without the proper documents. In addition to this are some precarious conditions – in terms of the working environment but above all, human resources who are qualified and prepared to respond to the needs of migrant users – of immigration services in the regions most affected by migration in Spain. The grave crisis Greece is suffering has reduced the number of employees in the immigration departments by half.

A more general consideration that can be drawn from the responses to the questionnaires and accounts gathered during the seminar in Bucharest (23 and 24 May 2012) and in the focus groups concerns the deterioration in public services. The results of our survey point to the dismantling of public services as social institutions, as a direct consequence of the disengagement of the welfare state – which has become purely a matter of control – in order to cut public spending.<sup>13</sup> This, in turn, has a negative effect on workers, who lose scope for independence in their working practices and become simple operatives without any participation / autonomy of evaluation and decision-making in relation to the various situations with which they are confronted.

Given the devaluing of workers in the public services (the vast majority of whom are women) and the services themselves, and in light of the dehumanised treatment of migrant users, the trade unions are faced with the fundamental task of reaffirming the founding values of high-quality public services, both in terms of the content of the services provided (the public services are bastions for the protection of the fundamental rights of all and for all) and their structure (proportionality in the ratio of workers to users, adequate premises, presence of linguistic and cultural mediators, etc.).

Given the difficulty of the situation, Trade union organisations have a central role to play in unionising and defending not only workers in the public services but also migrant workers – including those who are employed on outsourcing contracts in administrative authorities and public services – to ensure that the rule of law is fully re-established and that a new phase of social dialogue can begin.

The accounts and realities that emerge from the questionnaires and focus groups on the presence of migrant workers in the services included in the sample show that very often, rather than serving as bastions for the protection of rights, the public services are complicit in the exclusion of migrant workers. Rather than protecting them as human beings and workers, the public services reproduce the image of marginalised workers who carry out less skilled jobs or whose contractual position is extremely vulnerable. The trade unions must step in to fill the gap in protection and responsibility in order to defend the rights of all workers and all human beings.

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<sup>13</sup> These considerations, amongst others, also formed part of the speech by Mr Patrick Taran, who was previously in charge of the Migration section at the ILO, at the training seminar in Bucharest, which will be available soon on the website [www.migration-euromed.eu](http://www.migration-euromed.eu).

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendations reflect, in the main, the considerations set out in our analysis above. They reflect both the urgency of reaffirming the values inherent in the provision of high-quality services (for both workers and users) through lobbying both central governments and European and international institutions to renegotiate the agenda on public-service policies; and the work of the trade unions on plans to protect and improve working conditions for workers in the public services.

In terms of values and social dialogue:

1. Trade union organisations and their European and international federations need to strengthen their role in fighting for better working conditions, based on the change in factors determining the quality of public services; and fight for respect for equality of treatment – including for migrants, whose rights to active participation in society must be protected (e.g. access to economic, social and cultural rights)
2. Trade union organisations must fight to ensure that existing international agreements on the rights of migrant workers are applied and respected in all EU countries.
3. Trade union organisations must provide a political response to the deregulation of public services, the expansion of areas of “non law” and the reduction in the level of services offered to migrants, which is the consequence of an increasing level of control of workers in the public services, the devaluation of their work, a reduction in staff numbers and an excessive workload.
4. Trade union organisations must pay more attention to the working conditions of workers in the public services dealing with migrants: inadequate environmental conditions at work; disproportionate productivity requirements compared with workers’ average capacity; lack of training (see below); lack of linguistic and intercultural support/mediation for workers on the front desks.
5. Trade union organisations must promote the issue of integrating migrant workers on the social dialogue agenda at all levels: local, national and European.
6. Trade union organisations must raise awareness of the importance of gender in the issue of migration, in the public services and more particularly in social services, health, education and training; they must also address the male/female issue in the systematic deterioration of the public services.

In terms of negotiating with the administrative authorities:

7. Trade union organisations must put pressure on the administrative authorities to organise training (online or workplace-based courses), because it is necessary to invest in training for workers in public services in direct contact with migrant users to ensure they are able to deliver high-quality services. Reception, civil status registration and social services are those in which the issue of training is most urgent. The areas in which workers feel they have the greatest need for training/information are: European Union and national legislation, and how to approach users in anthropological and cultural terms.
8. Trade union organisations can contribute to training for workers by organising conferences or workshops to develop knowledge about fundamental human rights and policies on migration, whilst emphasising aspects related to gender and combating racism and xenophobia.
9. Trade union organisations must lobby to ensure recruitment of qualified human

resources with specific training in areas related to migration and promote the recruitment of linguistic and cultural mediators in all services frequently contacted by migrant users.

10. Trade union organisations must raise questions over the productivity indicators established to measure the efficiency of services, favouring qualitative over purely quantitative indicators.
11. Trade union organisations must bring pressure to bear on the administrative authorities to ensure that they have specific communication systems between services in place to guarantee coordination between the various public administrative authorities.

In terms of practical actions:

12. Trade union organisations must continue to identify good practices by encouraging exchanges of information between trade unions in different Euro-Mediterranean countries and other European countries.
13. Organisations in the EuroMed group of the EPSU-PSI must make a commitment to updating the project website [www.migration-euromed.eu](http://www.migration-euromed.eu) on an ongoing basis, regarding the migration situation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
14. The Trade union organisations involved in the project must continue to support the Action Plan of the EuroMed Group of the EPSU-PSI to provide more coverage and visibility of the theme of migration and the public services (see the June 2009 resolution of the EPSU Congress).
15. Trade union organisations must continue to inform their affiliates on the possibilities of European Union funding for projects and programmes with an impact on public services aimed at migrant users, such as organising training courses, online courses and activities designed to strengthen the relationship between the supply and demand for services.