

Country: Italy

Done by Boris Tcheshirkov and Mariana Stoyanova, Bulgarian Red Cross

No. Asylum seekers 2007	No. of persons granted protection	No. of Ngos'/ GOs'/ projects offering mental health services	No. of NGOs'/ GOs'/ projects working with persons with broken family links	No. of NGOs'/ GOs'/ projects working with survivors of torture	No. of NGOs'/ GOs'/ projects working with the elderly and frail
14000 2008: 31000	7726 (1408 convention refugees, 6318 subsidiary protection)	5	1	2	2

Access to health system: Yes. Asylum seekers accommodated in the screening and reception centres receive medical assistance and care, also medicines there provided by the medical staff of the centre. Refugees by Law are entitled to any social welfare benefit on an equal footing with nationals. They are entitled to work and access to the National Health Scheme.

Legal Access to mental health care: Yes for convention refugees (they have the same access as Italian Citizens. Asylum seekers living in reception centres are there provided with psychological assistance. NGOs are managing these reception centres and the provision of wide range of services including health care and psycho-social support.

Systematic assessment of mental health needs: No. Cases are identified only if individually reported to the staff of the reception centres.

Main stakeholders in the asylum system: Police Provincial Headquarter –Questura, Territorial Eligibility Commissions, National Commission on Asylum, UNHCR, Local municipalities, Italian Refugee council, Caritas, Jesuit Refugee Service – **SPRAR (protection service for refugees and asylum seekers.)**

Country specific features: What drew my attention? Italy continues to be one of the few EU countries without comprehensive asylum legislation. There is no national structure dealing by law with the integration of the recognized refugees.

Difficulties: Lack of a proper mechanism to identify and care for the most vulnerable cases, often there is no link with the external specialized health and psycho-social services.