Annex to the Briefing for MEP Candidates

Annex I: Key Issues Facing Refugees in the EU

Research conducted by RRE from early 2016 to present indicates widespread human suffering across the continent, as a direct or indirect result of the CEAS, Dublin protocols and national level policies:

- **Living Conditions**: The living conditions documented by RRE have indicated that refugees and displaced people are often denied access to basic shelter and adequate sanitation facilities. Many are living in sub-par, unsanitary conditions in overcrowded reception centres at the ‘hot-spots’ in Greece and Italy, or in complete destitution at transit-points such as Calais, Ventimiglia, and the streets of major cities such as Paris and Brussels.

- **Health and Medical Care**: Large numbers of displaced people have experienced health problems since arriving in Europe, often due to unhealthy living environments or the experience of violence. Mental health issues are widely reported, ranging from insomnia and anxiety to suicidal tendencies among respondents. In light of this, it is alarming that only a small proportion of displaced people appear to have access to medical care in Europe.

- **Access to Information**: A striking absence of accessible information available to refugees and displaced people on their rights and opportunities, as well as information on European asylum law has been documented. This lack of information risks leading to a situation in which rumour spreads and may cause refugees to jeopardise their claim or take life-threatening journeys. It may also increase the length of time spent in harmful environments.

- **Violence**: Within the context of border closures, RRE has documented worrying occurrences of police violence in the form of physical violence, verbal abuse, the excessive use of tear gas and reports of arbitrary detention, including of unaccompanied minors. In many locations, this violence is reported to take the form of dangerous or life-threatening forms.

- **Children in Displacement**: The failings of the CEAS have also put children at increased risk of, or exposure to, violence and ill-health. The lack of legal advice, guidance and adequate safeguarding mechanisms for displaced children in Europe puts them at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse and can often lead to them taking life-threatening journeys or falling into the hands of traffickers.

- **Women in Displacement**: Research raises severe concerns about the lack of safeguarding measures and adequate camp design, coupled with a lack of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, including during pregnancy and following rape, which not only allows high levels of sexual and gender-based violence to unfold but also exacerbates the consequences of such violence.

In addition, a mix of policies aimed at externalising responsibility outside the European Union have led to widespread atrocities unfolding at its doorstep:

- **Arbitrary Detention, Torture and Slavery**: Refugees and displaced people intercepted by the Libyan coastguard are being returned to Libya despite reports of detention, torture and slavery. According to reports by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), individuals disembarked in Libya tend to be sent to arbitrary detention, with no due legal process. This front-line organisation has strongly condemned the current European policies.

- **Rights Violations and Unlawful Returns**: The EU-Turkey Statement saw €6 billion in additional funding to be spent in Turkey in exchange for the return of displaced people in Greece, despite a number of concerns regarding fair access to asylum procedures, forced deportations and reports of serious human rights violations occurring in the country.
Annex II: Further Reading

On the lived experiences of refugees in Europe

- [Refugee Rights Europe research reports](http://refugeerights.org.uk/reports/)

On the situation in the Mediterranean and Libya

- [MSF article on deaths in Mediterranean and abuse in Libya](https://www.msf.ie/article/migration-european-government-policies-condemn-people-be-locked-libya-or-drown-sea)

Making the Case for Change

- [ECRE's Call on States to Ensure Fundamental Rights Protection in the Reform of the Dublin System](https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Legal-Note-3.pdf)
- [Council of Europe Statement: European states must put human rights at the centre of their migration policies](https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/european-states-must-put-human-rights-at-the-centre-of-their-migration-policies)
- [Human Rights Watch recommendations for CEAS reforms](https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/18/towards-effective-and-principled-eu-migration-policy)
- [Council of Europe resolution on externalisation and human rights](http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=24966&lang=en)

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