

National Drugs Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025

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Regional Round table

Importance of human rights and evidence based national drug strategies in HIV
response

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Situation with migrants in North Macedonia

- North Macedonia is one of the central points for transit through the Balkan route, towards the final desired destinations.
- Experiencing North Macedonia as a transit country and not a final destination, the average detention time of refugees in transit centers is **several days**.

Reception centers in North Macedonia

- The reception centers Vinojug(Gevgelija) and Tabanovce (Kumanovo),
- the reception center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo (Skopje),
- the reception center for foreigners - Gazi baba (Skopje).

Vinogug and Tabanovce transit centers

- The Vinogug and Tabanovce transit centers were established with the beginning of the migration crisis as transit centers, they were supposed to be **temporary**, but they **remained**.
- They mainly serve migrants who will be caught together in a car with a smuggler during an illegal entry attempt and are kept as witnesses in the criminal proceedings against the smuggler.
- Sometimes it can also be about unaccompanied children

- In the two transit centers, there is a lack of psychosocial assistance, especially for vulnerable categories.
- A certain type of support is provided by a social worker.
- Furthermore, the children staying in these centers were not included in formal education.

Reception Center for Asylum Seekers

Persons who wish to apply for asylum are accommodated in the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers in Vizbegovo.

- All persons, regardless of their health and mental health, as well as problems related to addictions, have been accommodated in this one center with a decision of the CSW.

- A rulebook has been drawn up for that*:

Annual plan for individual work should include:

psychological support,

access to social services,

access to medical care,

involvement in the community (cultural and social activities)

inclusion in the educational process (schools and kindergartens),

inclusion in programs for vocational trainings and

inclusion in programs for studying the Macedonian language or programs for studying

sign language

*<https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/pravilnicisocijalna/2021/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D0%B7%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B7%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5%20%D0%BD%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B6%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%20%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0-1.pdf>

Right to health care

“Human rights in health care of the Republic of Macedonia from the point of view of refugees and asylum seekers”*

Until acquiring insurance, the recognized **refugee** has right to basic health services like the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

The funds for the treatment of **rejected applicants** are fully provided by the UNHCR office.

Challenges: language, transport, waiting for documents - certificates and ID cards to be issued to them, not informed health care professionals.

Reception Center for Asylum Seekers

- At the moment, there are **16** people in the Reception Center in Vizbegovo,
- for the whole year **2022** there were about **180** people.
- On average, most of them stay for **up to a month**, but there are also people who are waiting for a decision for more than a year.
- “There are often cases where people with drug and alcohol dependence come”. **MYLA**

Macedonian Young Lawyers Association

- The **Balkan Refugee and Migration Council** (BRMC) is an informal coalition of 5 CSO's (Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Civil Rights Program Kosovo, Group 484, **Macedonian Young Lawyers Association**, Vaša prava BiH).
- The coalition has been established in **December 2017** .
- They are also members of the **European Council on Refugees and Exiles** (ECRE).

Evaluation of Drug treatment system*

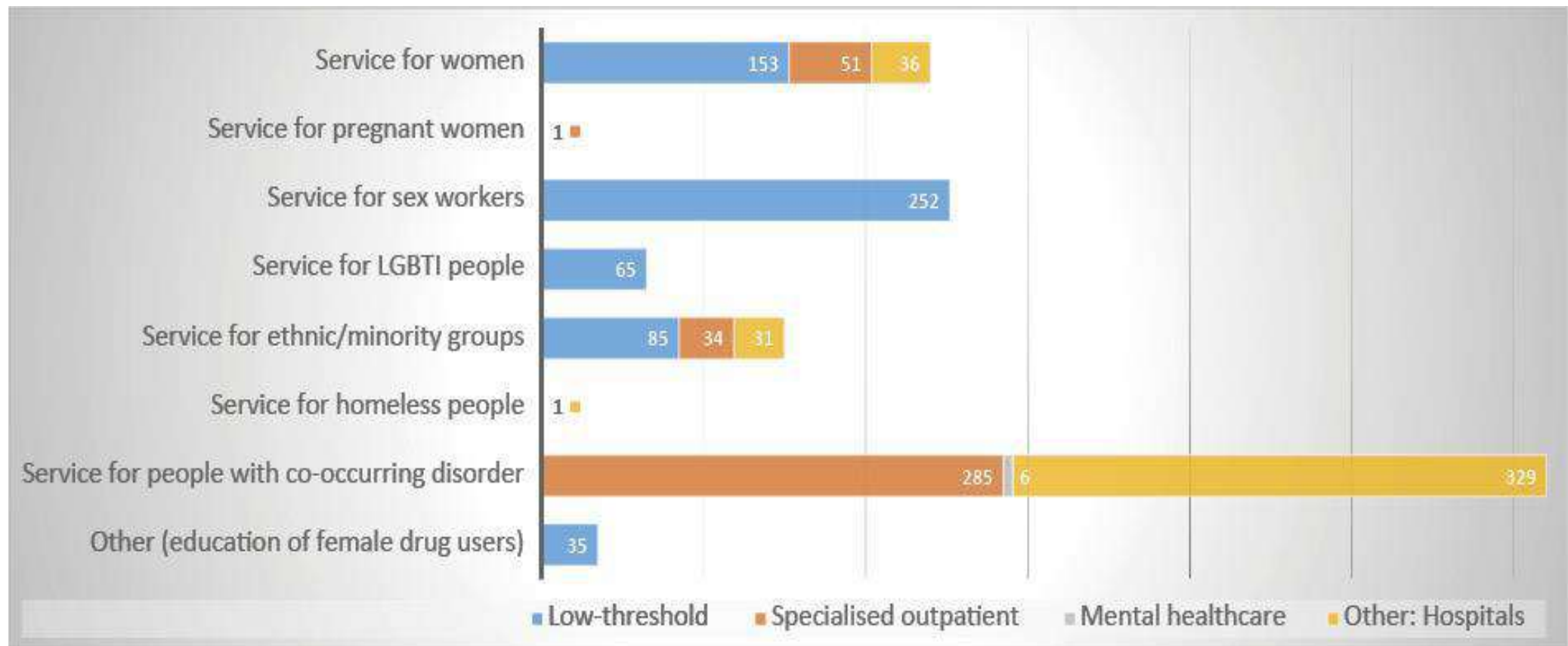
- *Regarding the principle 5 – “Responding to the needs of special subgroups and conditions”:*
- **The country has no specific services and outreach activities for this marginalized group (refugees) .**

*https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeasterneurope//Treatment_Quality_Standards_for_Drug_Addiction_ENG.pdf

THERE IS FREE LEGAL AID FOR refugees offered by CSO- Macedonian Young Lawyers Association.

Results of the Substance Use Disorder Treatment Facility Survey in North Macedonia (2019-2020)

Number of vulnerable people who received treatment in 2019 from different services



Evaluation of the National Drugs Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2014-2020*

- **Relevance** (how much the Strategy addresses the key priorities and what is the degree of applicability) was rated **very high**,
- **Impact** was rated **insufficient**,
- **Implementation**- partially, the **new activities** not implemented

AP	partially implemented	fully implemented	not implemented	ongoing
2014-2017:	50%	21%	29%	
2019-2020	15%	46%	35%	4%

Reasons for weak implementation:

the **over-ambitiousness of the document** and the absence of **political will and interest** ;

the absence of cooperation and **transfer of responsibility**;

the absence of **coordination** and a system of **regular reporting on the degree of implementation**.

*<https://hops.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/1-Evaluatsija-na-Natsionalnata-strategija-za-drogi-na-Republika-Makedonija-2014-2020-za-CIP.pdf>

National Drugs Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025

Analysis of problems and needs:

Thanks to treatment programs (OAT), HRPAs as well as to the access of anti-retroviral therapy the country has very low prevalence of HIV/AIDS. In the last 10 years, there have been **only 2 new HIV cases**, infected through drug injection, reported in North Macedonia.

National Drugs Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2025

- “...programs for treatment of PWSUD need to be adapted towards specific needs ...”
- balanced approach (demand and supply reduction)
- **BUT** one significant **challenge** is lack of financial resources for implementation of drugs policies

Strategic priority and objectives

- **Strategic priority 1: Reducing drug demand**
- **Strategic priority 2: Reducing drug supply**
- **Strategic priority 3: improvement of coordination and communication among competent institutions**
- Strategic objective 1.1: To have an effective system of drug prevention established within the education and health sectors, based on good practices
- Strategic objective 1.2: To have good quality programs for **treatment** of drugs in place, **inclusive of all people** according to their gender, age and the type of drug used
- Strategic objective 1.3: To have **Harm reduction programs that** are improved, **sustainable and adjusted to the needs of users**
- Strategic objective 1.4: To have an improved **accessibility to local social services for users.**

The National Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 is based on the premises of the:

- protection of human rights,
- guaranteed security of all citizens,
- equal opportunities for all citizens,
- equal and balanced access for citizens,
- and should cater to the needs of different target groups,
- shared responsibility and coordinated access and of cost-efficiency.

Thank you for the attention !
Q&A