PERCEPTIONS

Migration to the EU:
a survey of first-line practitioners' perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic
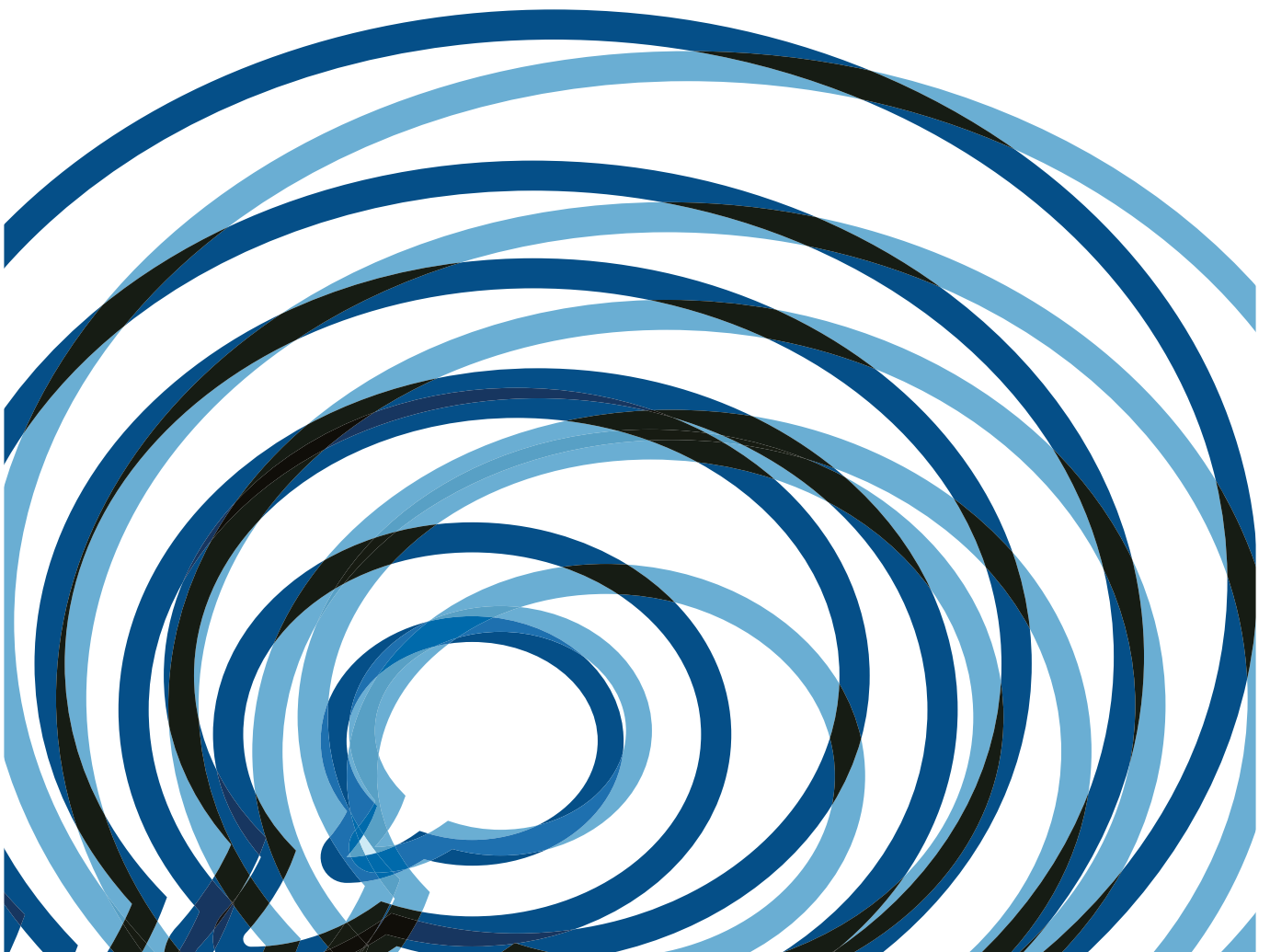
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PERCEPTIONS

The PERCEPTIONS Project

The Horizon 2020 project **PERCEPTIONS** identifies images of and perceptions about the EU held outside Europe and examines the way they influence migration decisions. It further aims to understand how such perceptions are distributed via various channels, how the flow of information could be distorted, and whether inaccurate information could lead to threats to the security of migrants (e.g. through dangerous border crossings) or national security (e.g. radicalisation).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES: The main objectives of the three-year project are (1) to identify narratives, images and perceptions of Europe abroad, (2) to investigate how different narratives could lead to unrealistic expectations, problems and security threats for host societies as well as migrants and in what way; and (3) to create toolkits using creative and innovative measures to react or even counteract them, considering social, societal and structural aspects.

CONSORTIUM: The project involves 25 partners in 15 countries. These countries include 12 European countries and four non-European countries (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Israel). The project runs from September 2019 to August 2022.

Consortium

SYNYO GmbH (SYNYO), Austria

Sheffield Hallam University (CENTRIC), UK

Alma Mater Studiorum Universita di Bologna (UNIBO), Italy

University of Granada (UGR), Spain

University Rey Juan Carlos (URJC), Spain

University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN), UK

Swansea University (SU), UK

University of Rome La Sapienza (SAPIENZA), Italy

Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Netherlands

University of Antwerp (UANTWERPEN), Belgium

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Austria

Kentro Meleton Asfaleias - Center for Security Studies (KEMEA), Greece

Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD), Bulgaria

SINUS Markt- und Sozialforschung GmbH (SINUS), Germany

Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Developpement (CREAD), Algeria

Egyptian Center for Innovation and Technology Development (ECITD), Egypt

ADITESS Advanced Integrated Technology Solutions & Services LTD (ADITESS), Cyprus

Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), France

Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), Kosovo

Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies (FUNDEA), Spain

Koinonia Caritas Cyprus (CARITAS), Cyprus

Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK), Italy

Hellenic Police (HP), Greece

Ministry of Public Security - Israel National Police (MOPS-INP), Israel

Ministry of Interior - Chief Directorate Border Police (CDBP), Bulgaria

Contact

Executive Summary

This report details the results from a survey of first-line practitioners working in the field of migration, launched by the PERCEPTIONS consortium between October and December of 2020. First-line practitioners have been identified as an understudied group in migration-related research (Bayerl et. al, 2020), and the present report aims to help address this knowledge gap. The results also aim to serve as a reference for future migration-related policymaking and research. Within the PERCEPTIONS project, the insights presented in this report will help to inform the creation of materials to support both migrants and practitioners alike.

The survey itself aimed to explore perceptions of Europe that first-line practitioners observe among migrants, how practitioners believe inaccurate information may influence migration, and the impacts of COVID-19 on the field of migration-related work. It was aimed at first-line practitioners of all sectors, from migrant advocacy organisations to border security experts, and was distributed in 14 countries and 11 languages[1]. In total, 788 responses were received, with 589 participants from European countries (the majority from Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain) and 199 from non-European countries (the majority from Algeria). The sample was relatively balanced between participants working in border enforcement and those working in migrant support services.

Key findings that emerged from the survey include the following:

— First-line practitioners surveyed overwhelmingly considered external factors (e.g. violence, different political situations, different levels of opportunity, etc.) and general negative conditions in the country of origin (e.g. war, a weak economy, etc.) to be the main drivers of migration. Practitioners from countries defined as transit countries (Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia) considered person-specific threats in the country of origin (such as religious persecution, etc.) to be especially important in motivating migration.

— Practitioners considered that migrants have a positive idea of Europe and considered this perception to be moderately correct. However, they assessed migrants' perceptions of some aspects of Europe as relatively less favourable. A less positive perception of the rule of law is, in particular, an aspect that should be analysed in greater depth.

— Practitioners who had more direct contact with migrants attributed greater accuracy to migrants' perceptions of Europe with regard to tolerance and non-discrimination, overall quality of life, and women's rights.

— Most respondents disagreed with the imputed belief that migrants who come to Europe based on inaccurate information are more likely to commit crimes or become radicalised. However, responses were quite polarised, with male practitioners, practitioners from transit countries, and intergovernmental practitioners being more likely to agree with such a belief.

— Overall, respondents tended to believe that migrants who make decisions based on inaccurate information are more likely to encounter threats themselves (e.g. use of dangerous routes or human smugglers), but are not more likely to pose a threat to host societies (e.g. via crime and radicalisation).

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[1] Countries in which the survey was distributed were: Austria, Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, The Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Languages in which the survey was available were: Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Romanian, and Spanish.

- Most practitioners did not believe that the COVID-19 situation required closing borders or the suspension of services for migrants. However, responses regarding this issue were highly polarised.

- The majority of first-line practitioners surveyed considered their organisation to be effective, both in terms of general work with migrants and in terms of providing migrants with accurate information.

- However, practitioners did identify some barriers to their organisations' effectiveness, especially legal constraints, insufficient human resources, stress, or psychological burden caused by the work performed, insufficient salary for the work performed and lack of necessary facilities or infrastructure.

- COVID-19 decreased practitioners' satisfaction with their life, their job, and their work-life balance. At the time of the survey, practitioners were only moderately satisfied with their salary and social recognition of their work.

- Practitioners were very dissatisfied with both the European Union´s current migration policies and their respective countries' current migration policies. First-line practitioners working in non-governmental organizations (both non-faith and faith-based) were particularly dissatisfied with both types of policies.

The structure of this document is as follows.
Section 1 details the aims of the survey, as well as its design and distribution. Section 2 provides an overview of the sample obtained and a brief summary of the methodology used to analyse the survey results, with attention to the statistical techniques employed. Section 3 then presents the results of the survey, exploring these results within 5 different themes (Theme 1: Drivers of migration; Theme 2: Practitioners' assessments of migrants' perceptions; Theme 3: Perceptions and potential threats; Theme 4: Migration and COVID-19; Theme 5: Organisational effectiveness and satisfaction with life and migration-related work). Section 4 provides an overview of the results from all of the 5 themes, connecting them to other work from within the PERCEPTIONS project. Finally, section 5 presents the practical and conceptual limitations of the survey, connecting them to potential lines of future research.

Section 1:

Introduction

The first section of this report provides an overview of the aims of the survey, in the context of the PERCEPTIONS project. It also details the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the survey, and the distribution of the survey by country and by language. Finally, it highlights key issues faced during the recruitment period, many of which were related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1. Aims and design of the survey

First-line practitioners, defined as people who have direct professional contact with migrants or potential migrants, have been identified as an under-researched group in the field of migration-related research (Bayerl et al., 2020), yet one able to provide key insights in the area. For example, first-line practitioners' experience working with migrant communities and encounters with migrants may give them insight into how migrants perceive Europe, how their perceptions change over time, whether certain perceptions tend to correlate with certain behaviours, how perceptions are spread, and how inaccurate and/or harmful perceptions could be effectively countered. Moreover, the perceptions and motivations that first-line practitioners attribute to migrants may have an influence on how they themselves interact with migrants in the field, and/or on the ways in which they seek to influence policy and organisational operations.

The survey was designed to focus on first-line practitioners' ideas about migration, their attribution of (accurate and inaccurate) perceptions of Europe to migrants, and the identification of any threats connected to these perceptions. It should be noted here that in dealing with 'perceptions of perceptions', the survey did not aim to investigate migrants' perceptions per se, but rather practitioners' own ideas about how migrants may perceive Europe, and how such perceptions might relate to migration behaviours. It also aimed to gauge practitioners' ideas about the role of inaccurate information in migration decision-making, and any challenges, barriers, and problems in the field of migration, including recent issues related to COVID-19.

These general points of inquiry were distilled into 8 research questions:

	What role do first-line practitioners believe migrants' perceptions of Europe play in their mobility decisions?
	What perceptions of Europe and the target countries do first-line practitioners ascribe to migrants?
	Do first-line practitioners assess migrants' perceptions of various aspects of life in Europe as accurate or inaccurate?
	In the view of first-line practitioners, do certain inaccurate perceptions and narratives about Europe lead directly or indirectly to security threats?
	In what ways do first-line practitioners believe COVID-19 has affected migrant perceptions?
	Do first-line practitioners view their organisations' work with migrants as effective?
	Are first-line practitioners satisfied with their working conditions and European migration policies?
	Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected first-line practitioner's life and job satifaction?

Table 1. Research questions

To respond to these research questions, **10 different modules** were included in the survey[2]:

A.   Professional information (6 questions);
B.   COVID-19 and professional life (6 questions);
C.   Practitioner contact with migrants (3 questions);
D.   Practitioner assessment of migrants' perceptions (4 questions);
E.   COVID-19 and migration (1 question);
F.   Decision-making and migration (2 questions);
G.   Misinformation and migration (2 questions);
H.   Cross-sector contact (2 questions);
I.   Organisational self-assessment (3 questions);
J.   Socio-demographic information (11 questions).

[2] The list below follows the order of the survey itself, and the letters also correspond to the sections within this report. This is to make it easier to locate each section. In many of the figures in this report, the lettering system of the sections is also included. A full version of the survey, including the exact questions in each module, can be found on page 59.

The questionnaire was also designed to capture insights into the structure of the first-line practitioner community surveyed (sectors represented, connections between sectors, sociodemographic characteristics, etc.) and relevant factors such as the profiles of migrants with whom practitioners most frequently work.

As well as capturing quantitative responses to questions, the survey also included seven questions with open response boxes[3] in which participants could write extra explanations for their answers, or extra information they considered relevant.

The survey had different dependency pathways, based on the country in which the participant worked. For EU countries (and the UK[4]), all sections of the survey were included. However, for non-EU countries, certain sections, specifically those that could have potentially been sensitive, were not included[5].

It should also be mentioned that there were programmed dependencies in section A. If a participant answered 'Governmental' in A1., they were sent to question A3. If a participant answered any other option in A1., they were sent to question A4. This information is relevant to understand certain questions in the results section.

Finally, along with the survey itself, participants were provided with an information sheet in which they were informed, in their language, about their rights with regards to data protection and withdrawing responses.

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[3] These questions were A1, A3, A4, B6, F2, H2, and I3. As well as a list of items to choose from, these questions also contained an open-response box in which participants could write.

[4] Despite having now left the EU, during the survey design and implementation period, the UK remained part of the union. UK respondents therefore received an EU version of the survey.

[5] The following sections were not included for non-EU countries: 1. Section H. Cross-sector contact; 2. Section I. Organisational self-assessment; 3. Questions J1. and J5.

1.2. Survey distribution and data collection

The survey aimed to quantitatively analyse the responses of a wide range first-line practitioners across and beyond Europe, to represent all of the countries included in the PERCEPTIONS project. As such, it was distributed in the following countries: Austria, Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, The Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

To facilitate access to such a wide range of first-line practitioners, the survey was translated and made available in eleven different languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Romanian, and Spanish.

To recruit participants, PERCEPTIONS partners distributed links to the survey via email, to a list of contacts that they had identified in earlier project tasks[6]. Partners were also encouraged to share links to the survey on social media, as a method of snowball sampling.

The inclusion criteria for the survey were very broad. The PERCEPTIONS consortium was interested in multiple types of first-line practitioners in the timeframe of the PERCEPTIONS project (2015 onwards), including the following: border security experts; border security policymakers; border security officers and authorities; coast guard officers and authorities; law enforcement agency officers and authorities; law enforcement policymakers; governmental and non-governmental health organisations; governmental and non-governmental welfare organisations; governmental and non-governmental youth and child service organisations; migrant advocacy organisations; legal aid organisations; housing providers and housing assistance organisations; faith-based organisations and faith-based communities.

In terms of exclusion criteria, no persons unable to give informed consent were included in the studies. Minors were also not included, as research with minors bears specific ethical and methodological challenges, and they are generally considered unable to give informed consent. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and the content of the survey questions was explained in a brief introduction, so any potential participants who may have been uncomfortable taking part did not have to do so. Participants were also free to stop answering the survey at any time, and their responses were not saved.

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[6] This list included no personal contact information or names, for data protection reasons.

1.3 Issues with recruitment

It should be mentioned that whilst the response rate for online surveys, especially those without a monetary incentive, is often very low (Cook et al, 2001; Deutskens et al., 2004, Pan et al., 2014; Wright & Schwager, 2008), the response numbers to this survey were lower than expected in many countries.

Whilst there were high numbers of responses from Algeria, Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain, in other countries responses were very limited. Responses were especially low in Austria, Egypt, and France, but were also significantly lower than expected in Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Kosovo, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

The most common barriers to successful recruitment identified were primarily related to the COVID-19 pandemic: lack of availability of participants due to shifts to working from home, difficulties recruiting solely via email (especially in field sites which planned to carry out the survey face-to-face), and a mixture of online research saturation and survey fatigue due to an increase in online research during the pandemic.

An additional barrier to recruitment was the fact that the survey itself was long and complex: on average it took participants around 20 minutes to answer all questions. Indeed, the length of the survey could be an explanation for the large number of incomplete drafts left by participants, which stood at 578 at the time of closing the survey. In addition, some participants noted that language used in the survey was at times unclear (e.g. lack of clarity as to what constitutes a first-line practitioner), and at times too security-focused (e.g. reference to 'security threats'), which discouraged some potential respondents from participating.

These issues are discussed in more detail in the section *Limitations*, and will be addressed in the design of further surveys in the PERCEPTIONS project.

Section 2:
Description of the sample and methodology

2.1 The sample obtained

This section gives an overview of the sample of first-line practitioners who participated in the survey. It includes socio-demographic information like age, gender and languages spoken, highest level of education completed, as well as a range of professional information: the countries, organisations, and levels in which practitioners work; years of experience in the field; the responsibility they had for supervising the work of other employees; and the most common profiles of the migrants with whom they work.

Excluding observations with missing variables, the survey received 788 responses. This sample included practitioners working in a varied spectrum of countries. However, it should be noted that there were a very low number of responses from Austria, Egypt, and France, and a large number of responses from Algeria, Italy, Bulgaria, and Spain (see figure 1), making the sample biased towards the views of practitioners in the countries most represented.
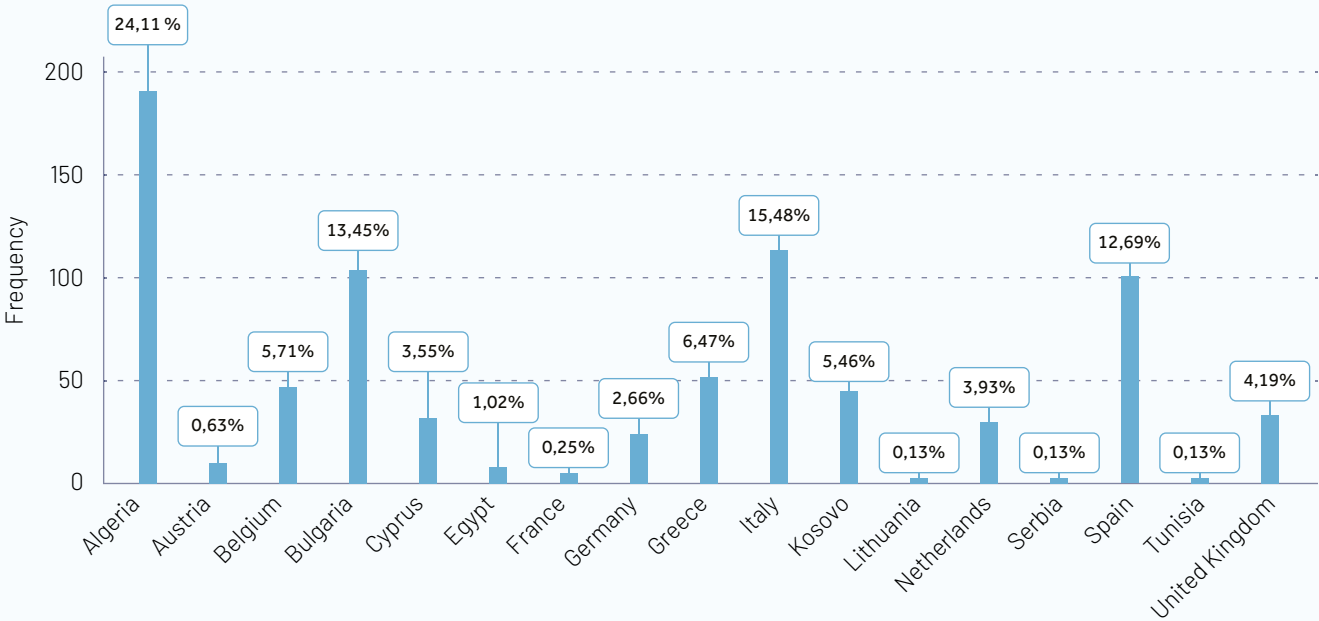
A2. In what country do you work?

Figure 1. Practitioners' responses to the question In what country do you work?

To facilitate analysis, the countries were grouped into two categories: on the one hand, all those in geographic Europe, classified as countries of destination, and on the other hand, the non-European countries (Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia), classified as countries of origin and transit. For simplicity, these categories are respectively labelled 1) Europe and 2) Transit countries[7].

First-line practitioners' organisations also operated in a wide range of sectors, from women's services to border and customs enforcement. For analytical purposes, these sectors of work were also grouped into larger categories. The first group (labelled 'Enforcement agencies') included sectors more related to security, border control, and governmental functions of a diplomatic and political nature, whilst the second group (labelled 'Support services') included different sectors related to support for immigrants. The third group (labelled 'Other') included all sectors that did not fit into the first two categories. Organisation type is one of the variables most used for the statistical analysis in this report, in order to explore differences in perceptions of the three abovementioned groups[8]. The distribution of respondents between the groups was relatively balanced, with 39% in group 1 and 48% in group 2.

The first-line practitioners surveyed worked in organisations operating at a range of different levels of governance: intergovernmental, governmental, non-governmental, and other. As can be seen in table 2, there was a clear predominance of governmental organisations (including LEAs) and non-governmental organisations (non-faith based). In addition, 75 respondents chose the option 'Other', reporting in an open response box that they worked for a range of organisations, from private companies to voluntary groups, to academic institutions, to the media or freelance professions (e.g., lawyers). Other open responses to this question made reference to organisations that could have been included in the previous categories, for example foundations or government agencies.

As table 2 illustrates, most respondents working in governmental organisations indicated that their organisation worked at the national level. In other words, governmental organisations in this sample were above all national. The majority of participants working in non-governmental organisations, on the other hand, worked predominantly at a local and national level, with very few international organisations, as can be seen in table 1.

Figure 2 shows the levels at which practitioners' organisations worked (e.g., intergovernmental, non-governmental), along with the specific sectors in which they operated (e.g., women's services, immigration and asylum services). Participants who worked in governmental organisations (292 in total) were also asked about the administrative levels at which their entities operated (local-communal, federal-national, international, state-prefectural, other).

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[7] As mentioned on p5, sections H and I, and questions J1 and J5 were not available for non-EU countries (in our sample Transit countries: Algeria 199, Egypt 8, Tunisia 1), so the sample for these sections and questions is 589 and not 788.

[8] Group 1 includes the following sectors: border enforcement, customs enforcement, and internal law enforcement (120 responses, 15.2%); diplomatic and legal aid, judiciary, etc. (35 responses, 4.4%); and governance and policymaking, immigration and asylum services, and judiciary and legal services (159 responses, 20.1%). Group 2 includes non-governmental organizations that carry out support work: youth work (261 responses, 33.12%), women's services (7 responses, 0.9%), child services and education or VET (55 responses, 6.9%), psychological and health services (32 responses, 4.1%), housing services (4 responses, 0.5%), immigrant advocacy (20 responses, 2.5%).

A1. Do you work for a non-governmental, governmental or intergovernmental organisation?

A5. In what sectors does your organisation primarly operate?
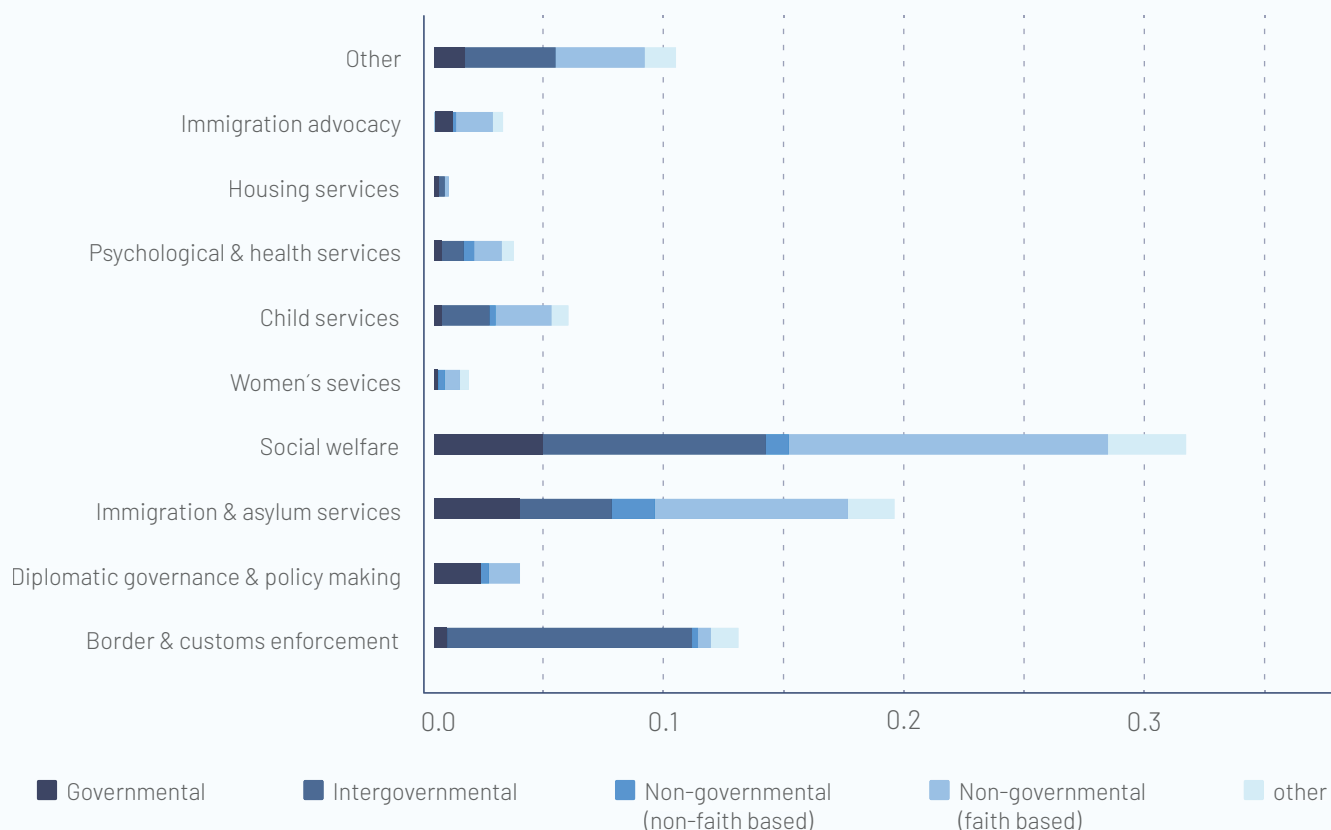
Figure 2. Practitioner affiliations and sectors

In terms of gender, 377 (47.84%) respondents were women, and 392 were men (49.75%). It should be noted that there were different gender balances in the populations from European countries and transit countries: amongst the European participants, there were 313 women (53%) and 258 (43%) men, whilst amongst participants from transit countries there were 64 (32%) women and 134 (67%) men. With regards to gender balances amongst the different sectors in which practitioners worked, the most pronounced differences were seen in the sector of customs enforcement and internal law enforcement. In this group, out of a sample of 120 practitioners, 82 were men (69%), 32 were women (27%), and 6 chose not to answer.

99% of participants were between the age of 20 and 69 years old. Indeed, in the sample there was only one respondent who was 19 years old, and only seven who were over 70. The age group most represented was 30-49 years old, which accounted for 63% of the total sample. These percentages were the same in both European countries and the transit countries.

In general terms, the educational level of the first-line practitioners surveyed was very high. All respondents had completed at least secondary education, vocational training, or a professional certificate. In addition, as shown in table 2, 85% of respondents had a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or PhD (with 34.7%, 40%, and 10.3%, respectively).

In terms of responsibility for supervising the work of other employees, the sample was relatively balanced. Overall, 356 (48%) respondents claimed to have responsibility for supervising other employees, whilst 388 (52%) reported that they did not. 44 respondents chose not to answer. This balance was present amongst both European respondents (with 265 claiming to have supervision responsibility and 294 claiming not to) and respondents from transit countries (with 91 respondents claiming to have supervision responsibility and 91 claiming not to). On average, participants could speak 2 languages and had lived in at least one country[9] other than the one in which they were working at the time of the survey.

First line practitioners reported that the most prevalent profile of the migrants with whom they worked was that of a person who arrives through irregular channels (43%), without travel documents (30.8%), holds an official nationality (only 5.8% indicated they mostly worked with stateless migrants), and does not have protected status (only 10.8% indicated they mostly worked with protected refugees). Only 10.3% of practitioners considered that the majority of migrants with whom they worked arrive through regular channels[10].

Variable	Freq	Perc %
Europe	589	74.7%
Transit countries (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia)	199	25.3%
Intergovernmental	26	3.3%
Governmental	292	37%
Non-governmental	341 (89, faith based; 252 non faith-based)	43.3% (11.4%, 31.9%)
Other or Choose not to answer	129 (75, other; 54 Choose not to answer)	16.4% (9.5%, 6.9%)
Governmental organisations: Local/municipal/communal	64	8.1%
Governmental organisations: State/prefectural/regional	47	5.9%
Governmental organisations: National	171	21.7%
Group 1: "Enforcement agencies"	314	39.8%
Group 2: "Support services"	379	48.1%

(1/2) Table 2. The survey sample, including the countries in which practitioners worked, organisation type and level, years of experience, gender, age, and level of education.

[9] In the survey, living in another country was defined as having spent 6 months or more there.
[10] In question C3 of the survey, first-line practitioners were asked to assess the extent to which six statements applied to the migrants with whom they work, more specifically to what percentage of migrants they thought each statement applies. The scale used was divided into five percentage ranges, from 0% to 20%, from 20% to 40%, from 40% to 60%, from 60% to 80%, and from 80% to 100%. When a group of respondents indicated that a statement applied to 80% or more of migrants, the statement was considered to reflect the majority of migrants with whom the group works.

Variable	Freq	Perc %
Group 3: "Others"	95	12.1%
Years of experience	Mean 10.6, SD 7.75, Median 9 (European 10.09, 7.79, 8; Transit 11.1, 7.7, 10)	Min 0, Max 40 (Europe 0-40; Transit 0-38)
Men	392 (Europe, 258; Transit 134)	49.75% (Europe 43%, Transit 67%)
Women	377 (Europe, 313,Transit 64)	47.84% (Europe 53%, Transit 32%)
Age	18-19 (1) 20-29 (110) 30-39 (266) 40-49 (234) 50-59 (129) 60-69 (30) 70 or above (7)	18-19 (0.1%) 20-29 (14%) 30-39 (34%) 40-49 (30%) 50-59 (17 %) 60-69 (4%) 70 or above (0.9%)
Level of education	Vocational training or professional certificate (59) Secondary education (59) Bachelor's degree (274) Master's degree (315) Doctorate (81)	Vocational training or professional certificate (7.5%) Secondary education (7.5%) Bachelor's degree (34.7%) Master's degree (40%) Doctorate (10.3%)

(2/2) Table 2. The survey sample, including the countries in which practitioners worked, organisation type and level, years of experience, gender, age, and level of education.

In the sample, a high percentage of practitioners, 66.32%, reported having frequent contact with migrants (defined as contact several times a month or more) prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a plurality of practitioners (26.37%) reporting daily contact. However, at the time practitioners were surveyed, which was during the pandemic, the percentage of practitioners reporting frequent contact dropped to 52.48%, and the percentage who had daily contact with migrants decreased to 16.37%. Furthermore, the percentage of practitioners who claimed never to have contact with migrants increased during this period, from 12.92% before COVID-19 to 21.54% during the pandemic. Figure 3 clearly highlights the decrease in professional contact with migrants caused by the pandemic.

These observations are consistent with the results explored in the section Theme 4: Migration and COVID-19, which show an impact on operations due to COVID-19.

How often do you have contact with recently-arrived migrants from non-EU countries during the course of your work?
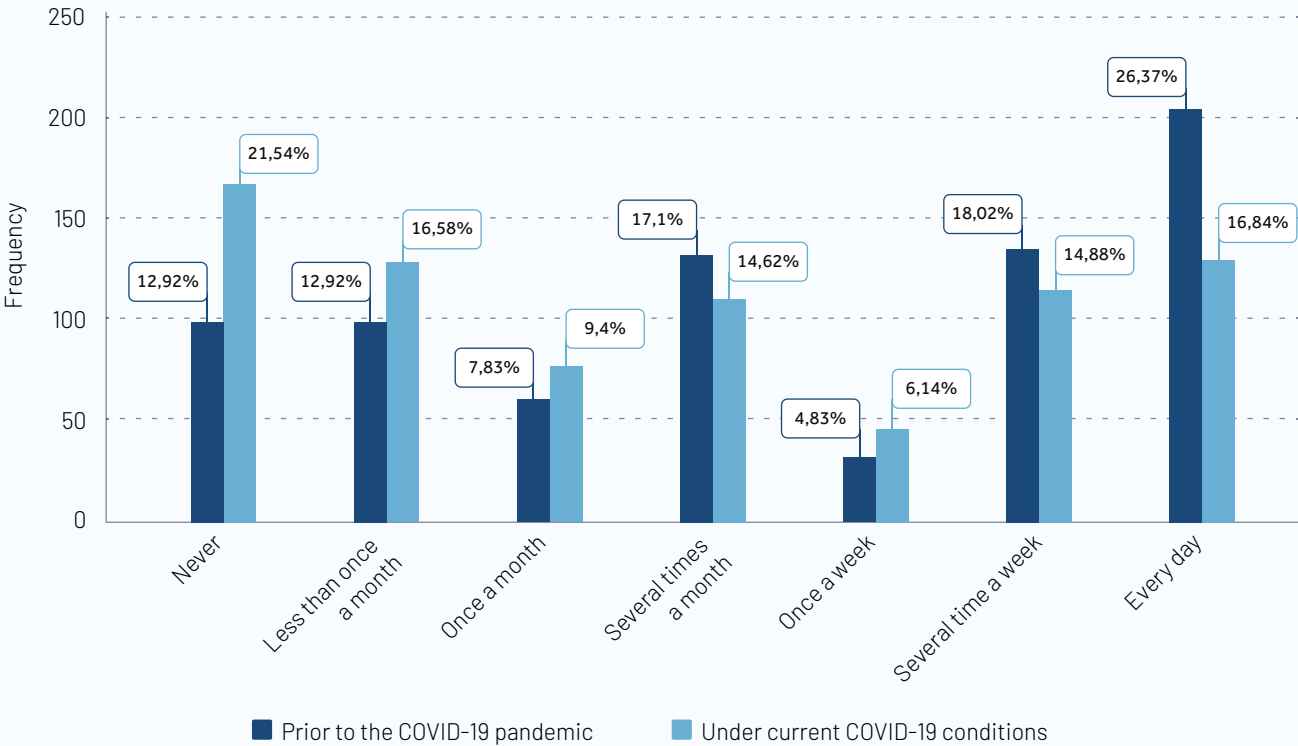

Figure 3. Comparison of practitioners' contact with recently-arrived migrants before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 A note on methodology

A range of statistical techniques were employed to analyse the results of the survey data. The tables containing these analyses have been excluded from the present report, in order to present results in a more reader-friendly format[11]. However, this section aims to provide a brief overview of the methodology and techniques used.

There are a wide range of variables in the dataset, and those most relevant to the research questions (see table 1) were selected for analysis. To provide preliminary answers to these questions, each of the selected variables was analysed, and frequency tables and descriptive statistics were created to present the outcomes. Via this approach, it was also possible to observe trends in the distribution of frequencies that, on certain occasions, displayed a high deviation. When trends in the distribution of frequencies were polarised, the structure of these deviations was then clarified through statistical analysis, in which different variables were compared in order to answer the research questions. The ordinary least squares technique was the technique most employed in this report.

Most of the dependent variables used in the survey are qualitative, but given that they follow a Likert scale, they were treated analytically as quantitative variables. In addition, all the independent variables are qualitative, and they were treated as dummy variables. The following were used as independent variables: type of country (European country or transit country), type of organization (enforcement agencies or support services), and practitioners' contact with migrants.

In the following section, the results of estimating the dependent variables in relation with the independent variables are presented, in line with the research questions. Each independent variable is a categorical variable and, therefore, these variables were inserted into the models as dummy variables. That is, each category for each variable was introduced as one variable. For mathematical reasons, it was not necessary to include one category for each variable. For example, in the case of 'country' there were two categories (Europe and Transit), so one had to be omitted. Likewise, as 'sector' had 3 categories, one also had to be omitted. The omitted category was the one to which the rest of categories were compared. In a previous stage, statistical analyses were used to investigate whether there were significant differences in some of the salient features by gender and countries. These analyses included, firstly, a Shapiro test to assess whether the variable followed a normal distribution and, secondly, a T test for groups with normal distribution and a nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test for those without[12].

As mentioned in section 1, the survey also contained seven optional questions in which participants could respond freely (i.e. by writing in a text box, rather than selecting an item). Responses to these questions were received in 10 languages, that is, all languages available except Romanian. A qualitative analysis of the narratives contained in these responses is also presented in the results section.

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[11] They can be provided upon request by contacting the authors of this report.
[12] These types of analysis were carried out to analyse significant differences between practitioners from European and transit countries, and between male and female first-line practitioners. They were carried out for sections F and G of the survey, due to the relevance of the questions in these sections (see Annex 1: Survey). Statistical significance was set at 0.05 (p-value less than 0.05) throughout this report.

Section 3:
Main results

This section details the main results of the survey. The results are organised around 5 themes, each of which is based on one or more of the research questions guiding the survey (see table 1):

Theme 1:   Drivers of migration
Theme 2:   Practitioners' assessments of migrants' perceptions
Theme 3:   Perceptions and potential threats
Theme 4:   Migration and COVID-19
Theme 5:   Organisational effectiveness and satisfaction with life and migration-related work

Each theme starts with 'key findings', which are then explored and developed in more detail. Within the results, differentiations are made between different types of first-line practitioners, on the basis of the type of organisations in which they worked, the type of country in which they were located (categorised as European or transit countries), and their main areas of work.

Theme 1: Drivers of migration

Research question:

What role do first-line practitioners believe migrants' perceptions of Europe play in their mobility decisions?

Key findings:

— Practitioners overwhelmingly considered poor conditions in the countries of origin to be the main drivers of migration.

— In comparison, personal decisions were thought to have much less influence on migratory movements.

Migration is a complex phenomenon, related both to external factors (such as violence, political situations, and levels of opportunity) and more personal decisions. To gain insights into the drivers of migration, the survey asked practitioners to assess which types of factors they believed to be more influential for the migrants with whom they worked.

Practitioners were asked to make this assessment on a scale from 0-10, in which 0 indicated that personal decisions have more impact on migration, and 10 indicated that external factors have more impact. As can be seen in figure 4, in terms of factors driving migration to Europe, most first-line practitioners surveyed were inclined to consider external factors as more influential than personal decisions. Of the 702 responses received to this question, 572 (81%) were above 5, and 424 (61%) were above 8, clearly indicating external factors as those practitioners considered to have more influence.

Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, which factor do you believe has more influence on their mobility behaviour?

Figure 4. General responses to the statement "Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, which factor (personal decisions/external factors) do you believe has more influence on their mobility behaviour?"

A more detailed analysis shows that practitioners from transit countries were especially inclined to assign more importance to external factors (see figure 5). This was also the case amongst practitioners who had contact with migrants several times a week/month. In comparison, first-line practitioners working at an intergovernmental level tended to consider negative conditions in the country of origin as less important.

Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, which factor do you believe has more influence on their mobility behaviour?
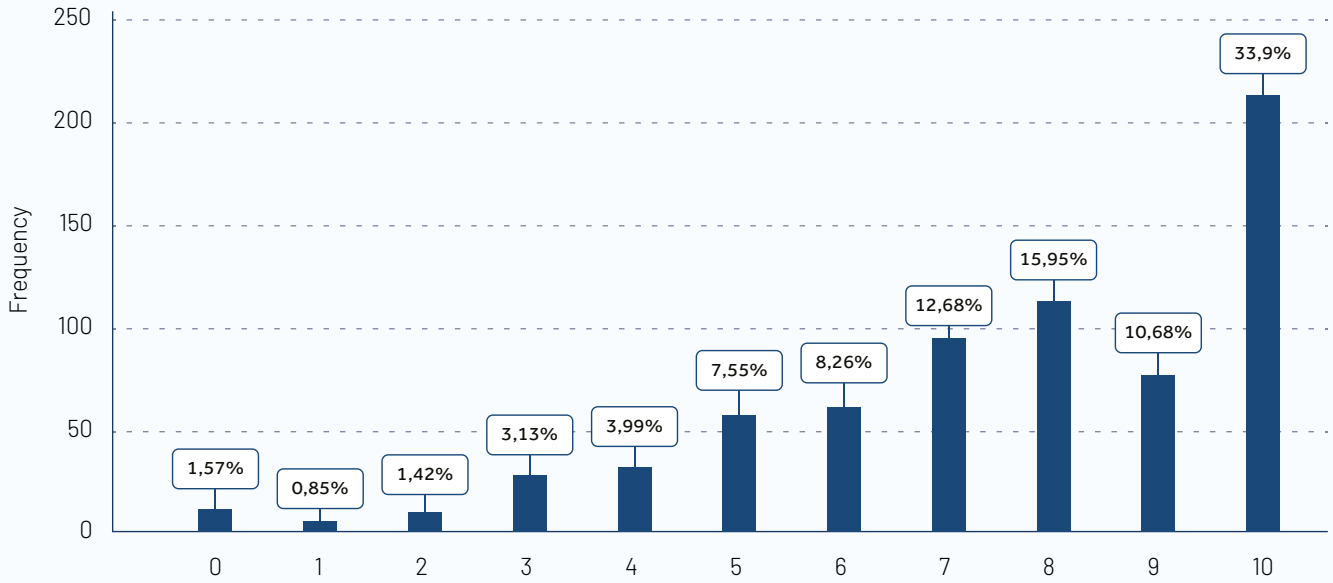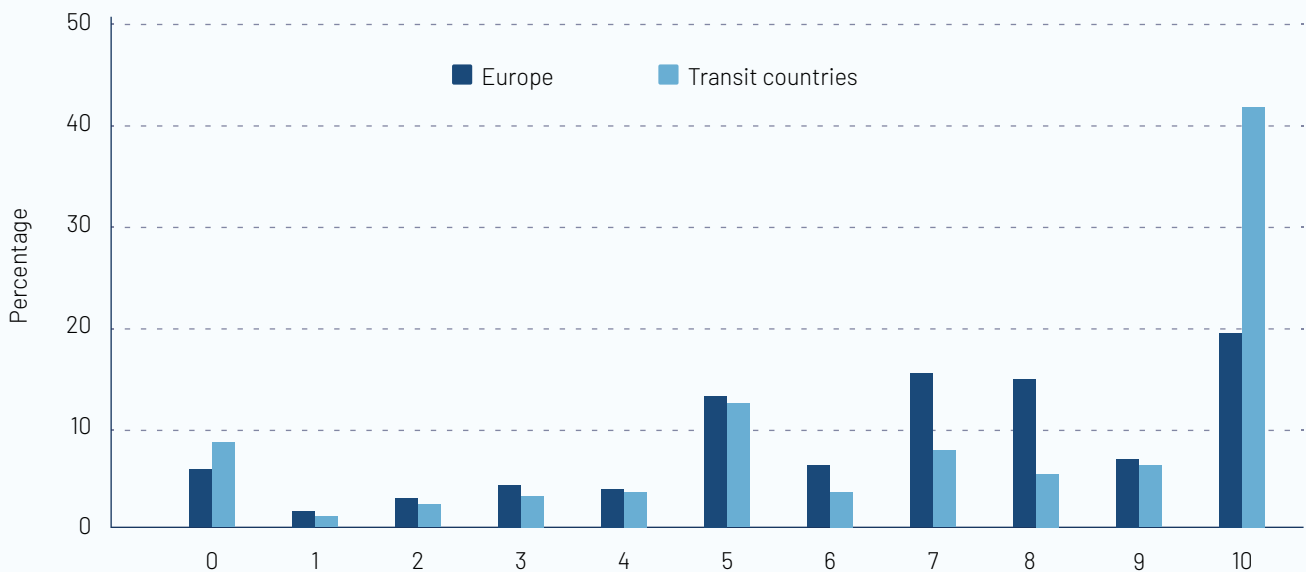

Figure 5. Responses to the statement "Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, which factor (personal decisions/external factors) do you believe has more influence on their mobility behaviour?", from practitioners from Europe and transit countries.

Practitioners were also asked to assess the importance of four more specific factors in motivating migration behaviour to Europe: generally positive conditions for migrants in Europe; person-specific opportunities in Europe; generally negative conditions in the country of origin; and person-specific threats in the country of origin.

There was a widespread perception amongst practitioners that negative conditions in countries of origin (for example war, a weak economy, etc.) are an extremely important factor. These results can be seen in figure 6. It is relevant to note that even practitioners who displayed highly polarised opinions on other issues (for example, regarding COVID-19 management, see Theme 4: COVID-19 and migration) overwhelmingly agreed that negative conditions in the country of origin are of extreme importance in migration decisions.

Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, how important do you think the following factors are in motivating migration to Europe?
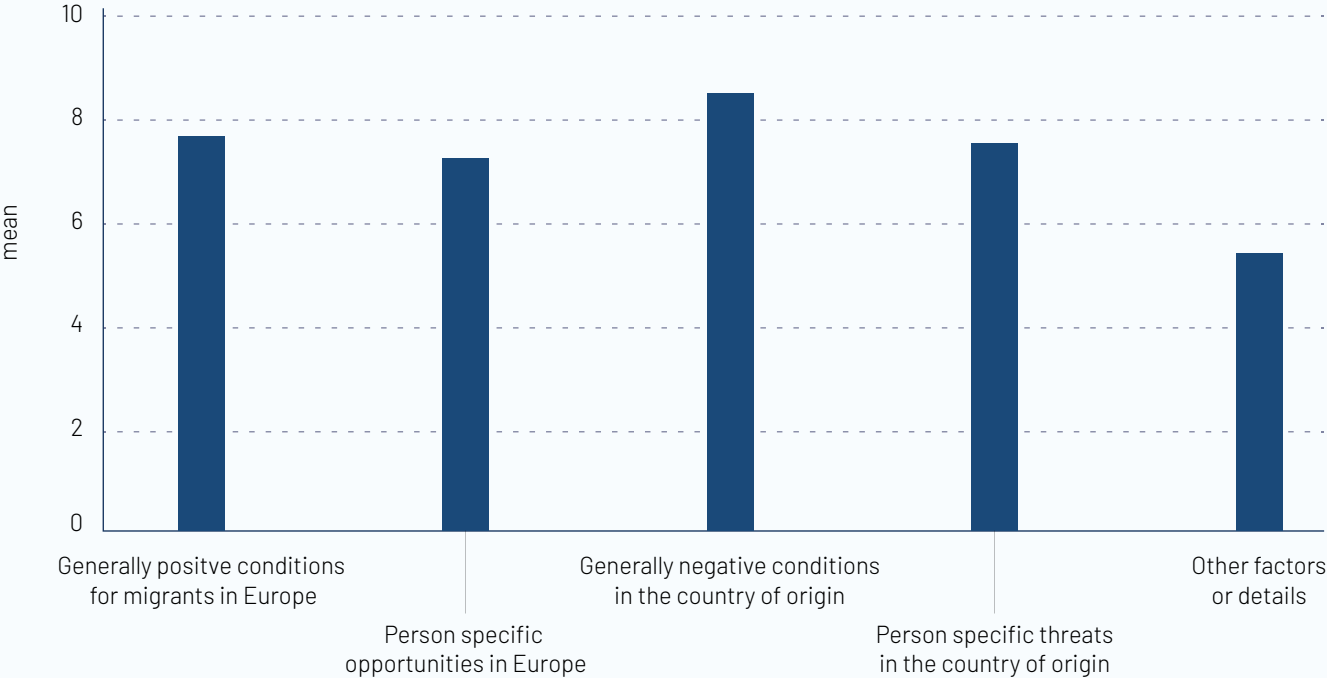
Figure 6. Mean of responses to statements about factors motivating migration.

Practitioners from transit countries also considered the following factors as important in motivating migration: personal opportunities in Europe, such as family reunification; a specific job or opportunity (38% of practitioners from transit countries rated this as 10 on the scale used); person-specific threats in the country of origin, such as religious persecution, sexual discrimination, etc. (41% of practitioners from transit countries rated this as 10 on the scale used); and other factors or details. Practitioners who had more contact with migrants also tended to highlight person-specific threats as especially relevant. In addition, female practitioners rated this last factor as more important than their male counterparts (with ratings of 7.7 versus 7, respectively).

Practitioners were also invited to specify any other factors they saw as important in driving migration in an open response section. There was an enormous variety of qualitative responses, which then were organised around the narratives about push and pull factors identified the PERCEPTIONS project literature review (Bayerl et. al, 2020:40). Examples of all the identified narratives were found in the sample. A selection of these open responses is provided in table 3, below.

Narratives identified as push and pull factors in PERCEPTIONS literature review	Examples in the survey
Economic	• "Improving living standards" • "Deteriorating economic and social conditions" • "Poor living conditions" • "Poverty and the shortage of opportunities for dignified work"
Cultural	• "Migratory context of the country of origin (if individuals from the same neighbourhood have left and reached, then there is a tendency to think that this is accessible and reachable, because it has happened to people that we know well)"
Environmental	• "Influence of climate change on living conditions" • "Climate changing/catastrophic climatic event"
Familial	• "Dedication to support their family who is living in deprivation" • "Pressure and expectations from their own family. Feeling responsible" • "Family situation (e.g. domestic violence)" • "Violence in the family"
Political/security related	• "Better life and security. Prosecution" • "Security" • "Terrorist groups and currency counterfeit" • "Recruiting of terrorist organizations"
Social improvement	• "Seeking independence and freedom / Self actualisation and searching for social and economic development / Seeking to live in another space and in another culture"

Table 3. Narratives identified as push and pull factors in PERCEPTIONS literature review and in open responses to question F2.

Theme 2: Practitioners' assessments of migrants' perceptions

Research question:

What perceptions of Europe and the target countries do first-line practitioners ascribe to migrants?

Do first-line practitioners assess migrants' perceptions of various aspects of life in Europe as accurate or inaccurate?

Key findings:

— First-line practitioners surveyed considered that migrants have a positive idea of Europe and consider this perception to be moderately correct. The rule of law was the item that practitioners believed migrants valued most negatively.

— Practitioners who had greater contact with migrants attributed greater accuracy to them in terms of their perceptions of tolerance and non-discrimination, overall quality of life, and women's rights.

This section analyses the perceptions of Europe that first-line practitioners ascribe to migrants. Here, it should be reiterated that, in dealing with 'perceptions of perceptions', the survey aimed to investigate practitioners' own ideas about how migrants may perceive Europe, and how such perceptions might relate to migration behaviours. That is, results cannot be taken to reflect migrants' perceptions in and of themselves.

Practitioners were asked to rate migrants' perceptions as either positive or negative and either accurate or inaccurate. They were asked about various types of perceptions: migrants' general perceptions of the country in which they were working at the time of the survey, migrants' general perceptions of Europe, and migrants' perceptions of specific aspects of life in Europe (for example, access to healthcare, social welfare etc.).

2.1 General perceptions: positive or negative?

Figure 7 illustrates the general perception that practitioners ascribed to migrants, about both the country in which they were working at the time of the survey, and Europe as a whole. It should be noted that the time period referred to in figure 7 is pre-COVID-19. Practitioners were asked to indicate whether the general perception of the migrants with whom they worked was negative or positive in this period, on a scale in which 0 indicated an extremely negative perception and 10 an extremely positive perception.

D1. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of your country? What about their view of Europe as a whole?
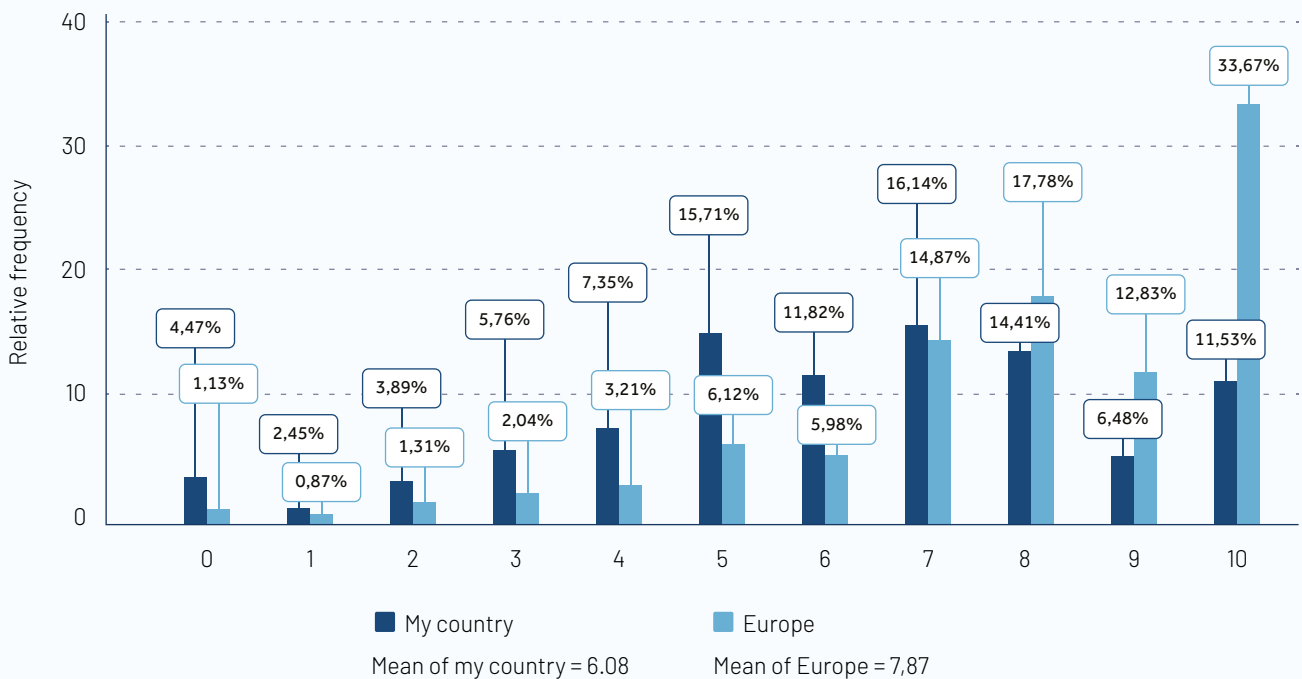
Figure 7. Practitioners' assessment of migrants' general view (positive or negative) of Europe and of the countries in which practitioners work.

Overall, practitioners believed that migrants' views of the country in which they worked were moderately positive (6.08 on average), but not overwhelmingly positive. On the other hand, migrants' views of Europe were assessed as more positive in general (7.87 on average). Only 11.53% of respondents considered that migrants had an extremely positive view of their country (with a score of 10) compared to 33.67% who stated this of Europe.

Statistical analysis of the correlation between the responses and certain groups of practitioners showed that, although in general terms all groups of practitioners considered that migrants had a more positive perception of Europe than the country in which they worked, there are some notable differences.

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Statistical analysis of the correlation between the responses and certain groups of practitioners showed that, although in general terms all groups of practitioners considered that migrants had a more positive perception of Europe than the country in which they worked, there are some notable differences.

Firstly, regarding the region of origin, practitioners from non-European countries classified as transit countries tended to clearly assess migrants' perceptions of their country as less positive than their perceptions of Europe. Practitioners from European countries assessed migrants' perceptions of their countries and of Europe as a whole as more similar.

Secondly, regarding the type of organisation in which practitioners worked, those who worked in intergovernmental organisations tended to assess migrants' perceptions of the EU as more positive, compared to practitioners who worked in governmental organisations. It should be noted that most practitioners defined their organisation as intergovernmental.

Finally, in terms of the type of sector in which practitioners worked, those grouped as support services, when compared with those in enforcement services, tended to consider that migrants had a more positive view of their country and a relatively less positive perception of Europe.

Furthermore, in terms of the degree of contact with migrants, the more contact the practitioners had, the more positive the vision they ascribed to migrants, both in terms of perceptions of Europe and of the country of work.

2.2 Perceptions of specific aspects of life in Europe: positive or negative?

As well as general perceptions of Europe and the practitioners' countries, participants were also asked about migrants' views on specific aspects of life in Europe (see figure 8).

D2. And do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of the following aspects of life in Europe?

Figure 8. Practitioners' assessment of migrants' views (positive or negative) of specific aspects of Europe.

Overall, the perceptions practitioners ascribed to migrants for these various aspects of life in Europe were positive. However, there were some notable differences. The most positively assessed perception was that of overall quality of life, with a score close to 8, and the least positively assessed was that of the rule of law, which was the only item that scored slightly below 6.

Other aspects of life in Europe which were less positively perceived, that is those that practitioners rated relatively low (below 7), were educational and economic opportunities and the system of government.

In contrast, the most valued aspects of life in Europe, according to practitioners, were overall quality of life, the opportunity for family reunification, freedom of expression, and access to residence permission for migrants.

In these specific aspects, the more contact first-line practitioners had with migrants, the more positive the perception of Europe that they ascribed to these migrants. Figures 9 and 10 show that, compared to practitioners who dealt with migrants on a daily basis, practitioners who claimed they never had contact with migrants tended to assess these migrants' perceptions about certain aspects of Europe as less positive.

D2. And do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of the following aspects of life in Europe? by Never

Figure 9. Migrants' perceptions of aspects of life in Europe (positive or negative), as assessed practitioners who say they "never" have contact with migrants.

D2. And do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of the following aspects of life in Europe? by Every day
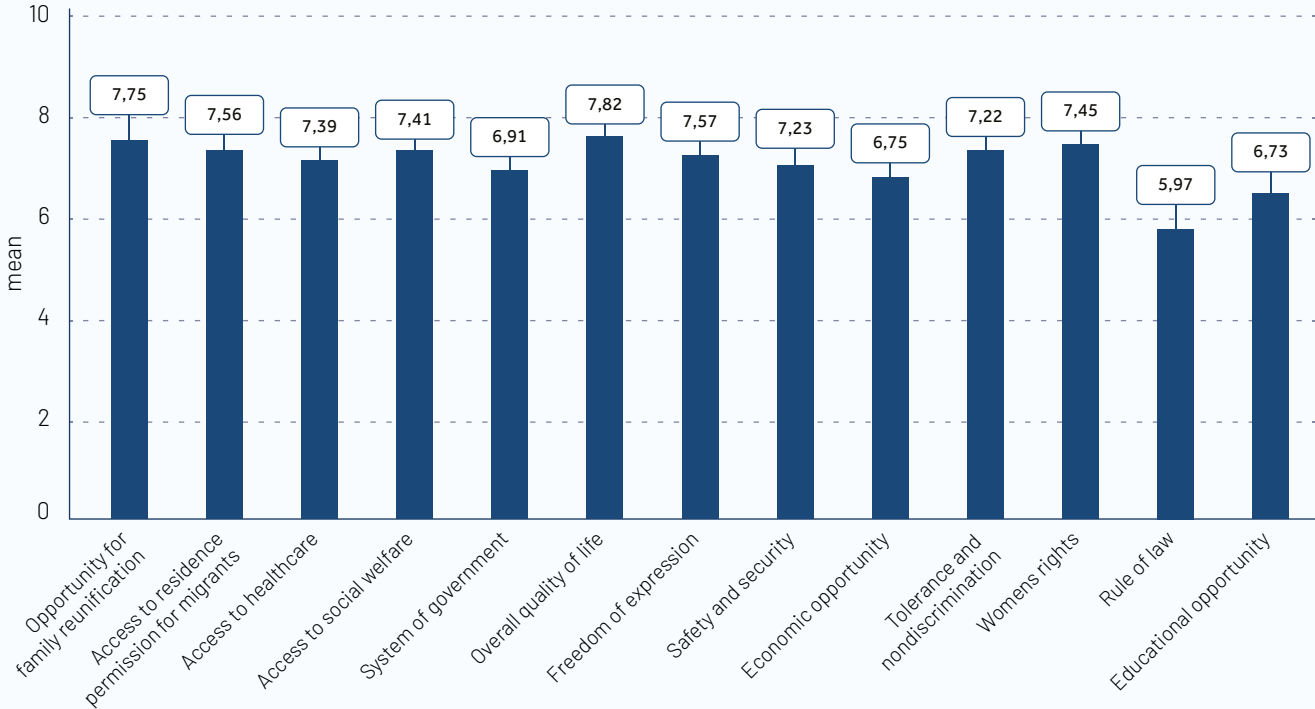

Figure 10. Migrants' perceptions of aspects of life in Europe (positive or negative), as assessed by practitioners who say they have contact "every day" with migrants.

As is shown in the next figure, practitioners from transit countries generally attributed a more positive perception of Europe to migrants. The aspects to which they ascribed a significantly more positive perception were the following: opportunity for family reunification; system of government; overall quality of life; freedom of expression; safety and security; and finally, tolerance and non-discrimination.

D2. **And do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of the following aspects of life in Europe?**
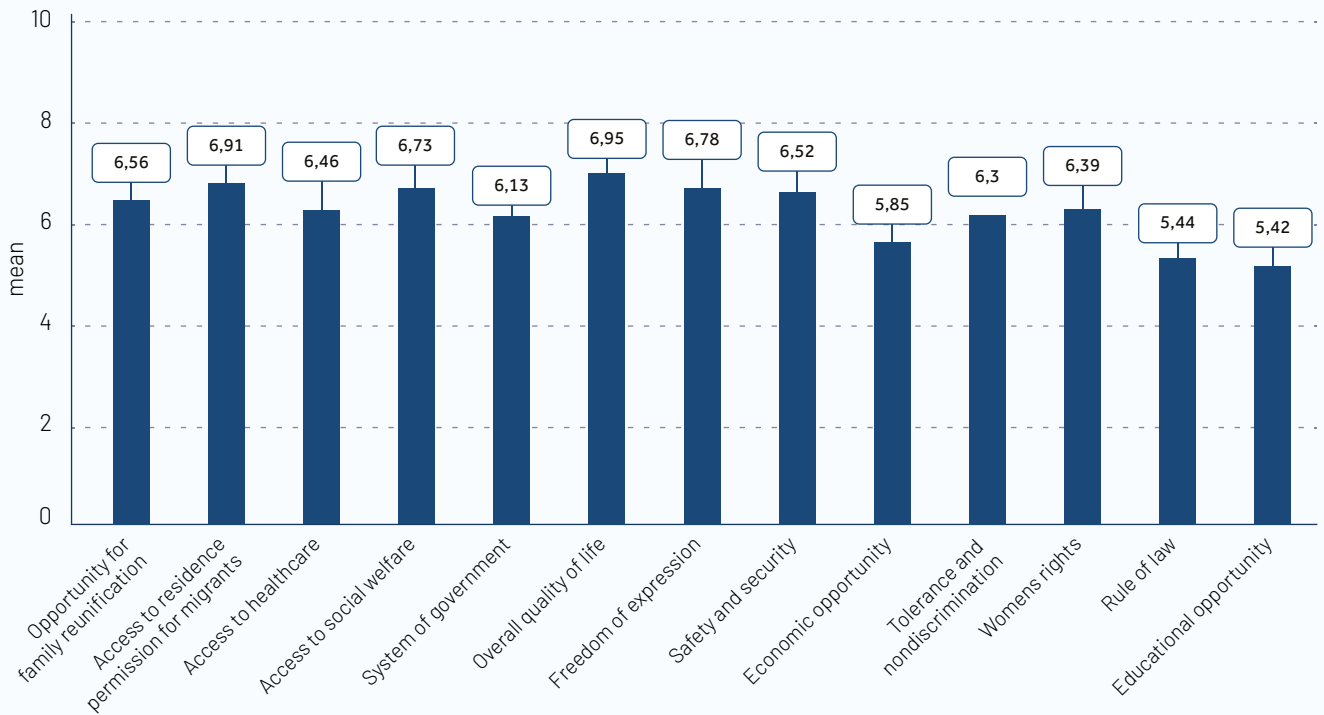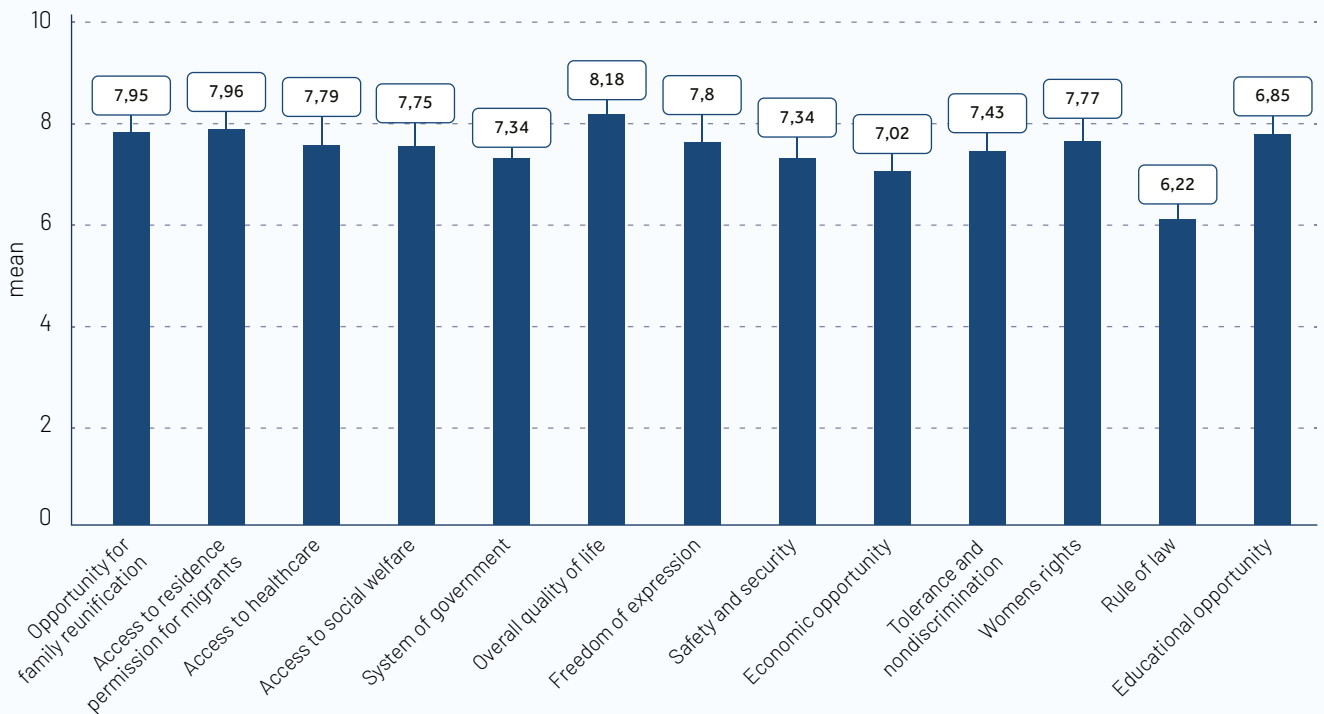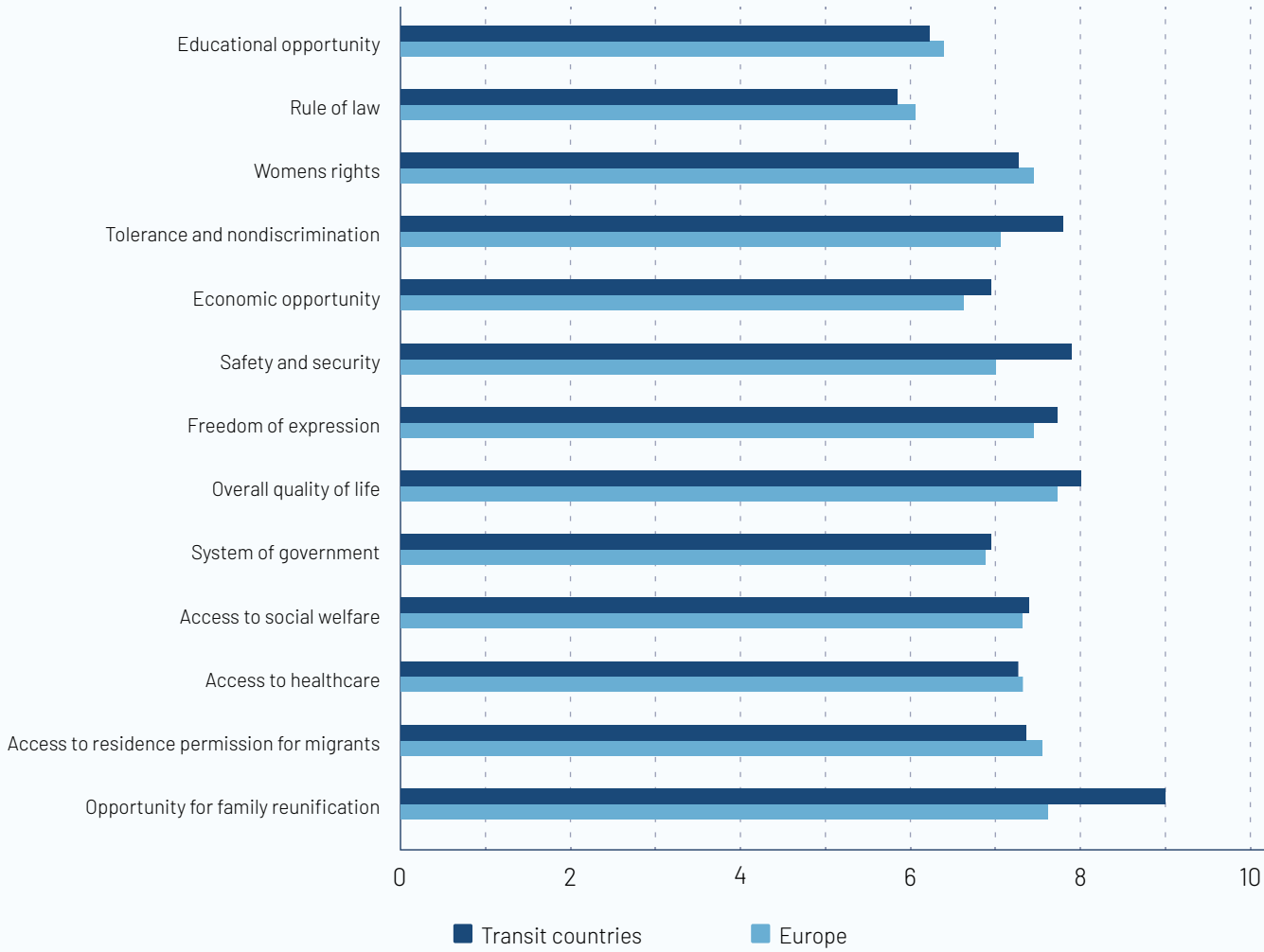

Figure 11. Migrants' perceptions of aspects of life in Europe (positive or negative), as assessed by practitioners from Europe and from transit countries.

2.3. General perceptions: inaccurate or accurate?

As well as assessing migrants' perceptions as positive or negative, first-line practitioners were also asked to assess migrants' perceptions as accurate or inaccurate. A scale was used in which 0 meant expectations were considered extremely inaccurate while 10 meant expectations were considered extremely accurate. Again, the time period referred to in questions on accuracy and inaccuracy of perceptions was pre-COVID-19.

D3. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally inaccurate or accurate expectations regarding life in your country? What about their expectations regarding life in Europe?
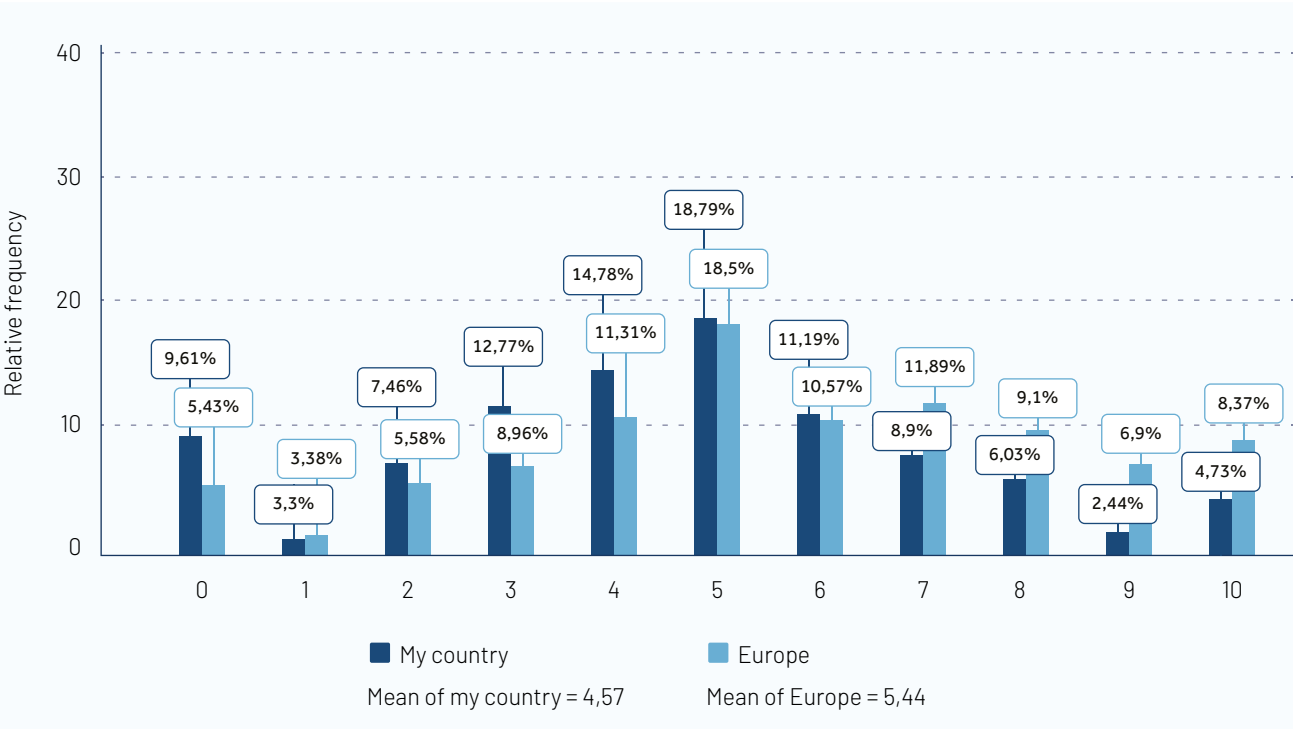
Figure 12. Practitioners' assessment of migrants' general expectations (accurate or inaccurate) of Europe and the countries in which practitioners work.

According to results, practitioners believed that migrants' expectations about the country where they were located were not entirely accurate, the mean (4.57) being closer to attributing inaccurate perceptions to migrants. On the other hand, in terms of Europe as a whole, the mean (5.44) is close to attributing an accurate expectation of the continent to migrants. 9.61% of respondents considered that migrants had extremely inaccurate expectations regarding the country in which they were working, and only 5.43% believed the same regarding Europe. Overall, practitioners did not seem to clearly attribute an absolutely accurate or inaccurate expectation of the country or of Europe to migrants, with the majority of the responses being around 5 on the Likert scale used, an indecisive response midway between 'extremely inaccurate' and 'extremely accurate'.

2.4. Perceptions of specific aspects of life in Europe: accurate or inaccurate?

Practitioners were also asked to provide a more in-depth assessment of how accurate they believed migrants' perceptions were with regards to particular aspects of life in Europe (see figure 13). In this sense, practitioners did not seem to strongly consider migrants' expectations as accurate or inaccurate. Rather, responses from practitioners were grouped around the middle of the scale used, which indicates that expectations were considered neither extremely inaccurate nor extremely accurate. These moderate or neutral responses could also be interpreted as reflecting an unclear position from respondents, or that these respondents had doubts as to how to answer.

D4. Do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally inaccurate or accurate view of the following aspects of life in Europe?
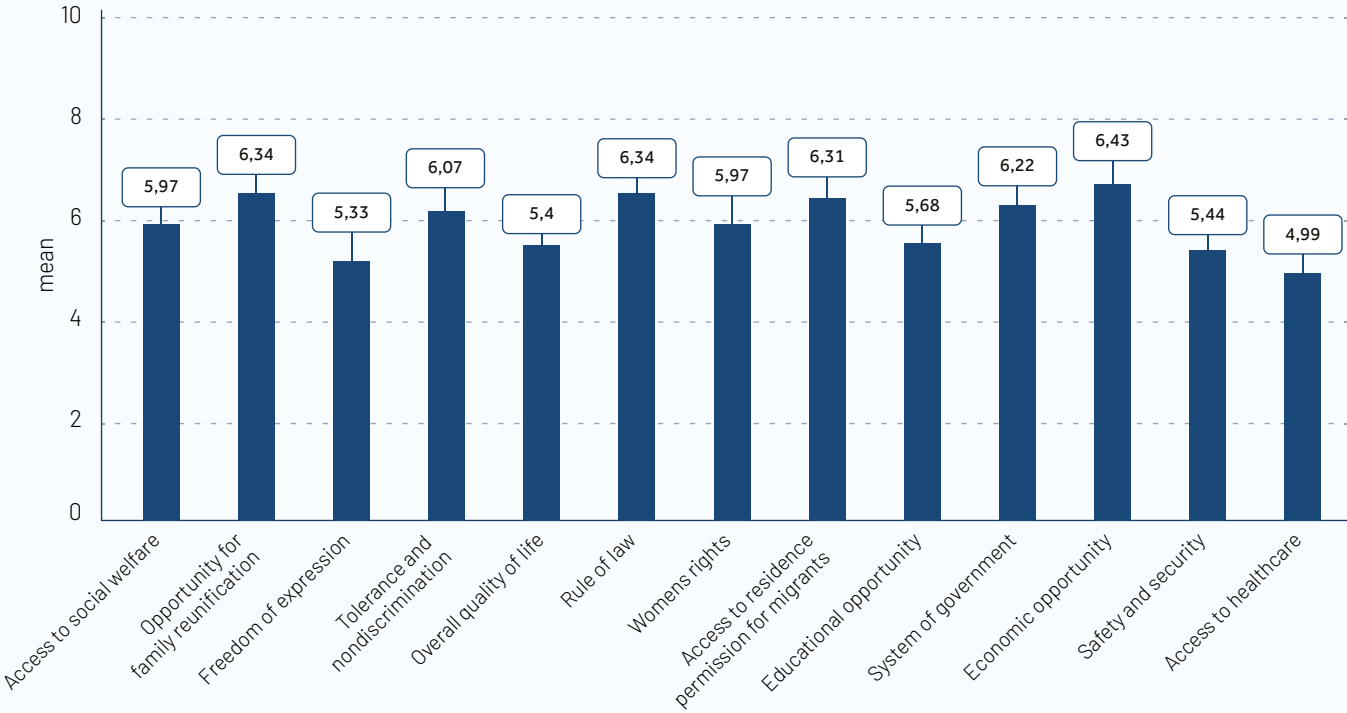

Figure 13. Practitioners' assessment of migrants' expectations (accurate or inaccurate) regarding particular aspects of Europe.

The expectations considered to be relatively less accurate were perceptions related to access to health care, freedom of expression, and overall quality of life. On the other hand, the expectation considered most accurate was that of economic opportunity, which, according to the previous question, was assessed as relatively negative. In other words, practitioners considered that migrants had a relatively less positive view of economic opportunities in Europe, and that this expectation was correct. Practitioners also indicated that migrants' relatively negative perceptions of the rule of law, which was considered the least positive of all aspects of life in Europe, was a relatively accurate perception.

The comparative graph (figure 14) below displays the relationship between practitioners' assessments of both the positivity/negativity and the accuracy/ inaccuracy of migrants' expectations regarding aspects of life in Europe.

What kinf of expectations did migrants generally have regaring the following aspects of life in Europe?
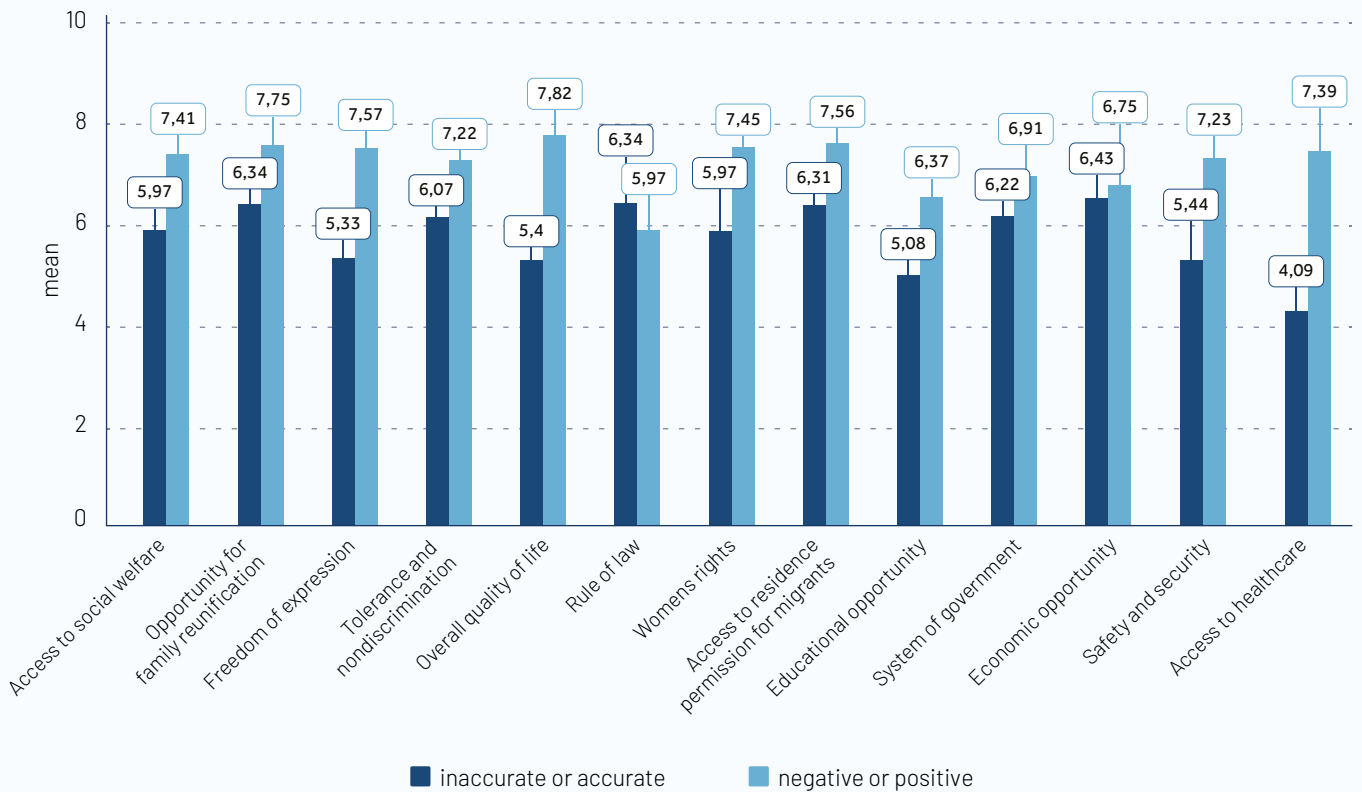
Figure 14. Migrants' positive or negative views compared with their accurate or inaccurate expectations, according to practitioners.

As the figure above shows, there were aspects of life in Europe, such as access to residence permissions for migrants and opportunity for family reunification, that were considered as both relatively accurate and positive. Other aspects present an important discrepancy for the PERCEPTIONS project: a perception that practitioners considered to be positive but less accurate. An example of such an aspect of life in Europe is migrants' positive vision of access to health care, assessed as relatively inaccurate by practitioners.

Theme 3: Perceptions and threats

Research question:

In the view of first-line practitioners, do certain inaccurate perceptions and narratives about Europe lead directly or indirectly to security threats?

Key findings:

— Most respondents disagreed with the imputed belief that migrants who come to Europe based on inaccurate information are more likely to commit crimes or become radicalised, although responses were quite polarised.

— Overall, respondents tended to believe that migrants who make decisions based on inaccurate information are more likely to encounter threats themselves (e.g. use of dangerous routes or human smugglers), but are not more likely to pose a threat to host societies (e.g. via crime and radicalisation).

— **However:** Practitioners from transit countries and intergovernmental practitioners tended to see more of an association between inaccurate information and threats for host societies.

Whilst it would be improper for the PERCEPTIONS project to claim any causal relationships between certain perceptions and security threats, the project can hope to generate some hypotheses about the relationships between perceptions, mobility behaviours, and threats. Accordingly, practitioners were asked about any relationship between misinformation amongst migrants and potential problems it could create.

First, practitioners were asked the extent to which they considered inaccurate information to be a problem in migration infrastructure or service provision, along migration pathways, in countries of transit, and in countries of destination. To do so, they were offered a scale which ranged from 0, meaning "Not a serious problem", to 10, "An extremely serious problem".

As shown in figure 15, nearly all respondents came close to considering inaccurate information (whether about migration infrastructure or service providers, along migration pathways, in countries of transit, or in countries of destination) to be a serious problem, with a certain decrease when referring to the situation of transit countries and destination countries. It is worth mentioning that female first-line practitioners gave significantly higher ratings to all statements than their male counterparts (8.2 versus 7.6, 8 versus 7.3, 7.8 versus 6.9, and 7.7 versus 6.9, following the order of statements in figure 15). That is, compared to male practitioners, female practitioners assessed misinformation in all spheres as a more serious problem.

Based on your professional experience, how serious of a problem for potential and recently-arrived migrants is inaccurate information about conditions along migration pathways, countries of transit, and countries of destination?
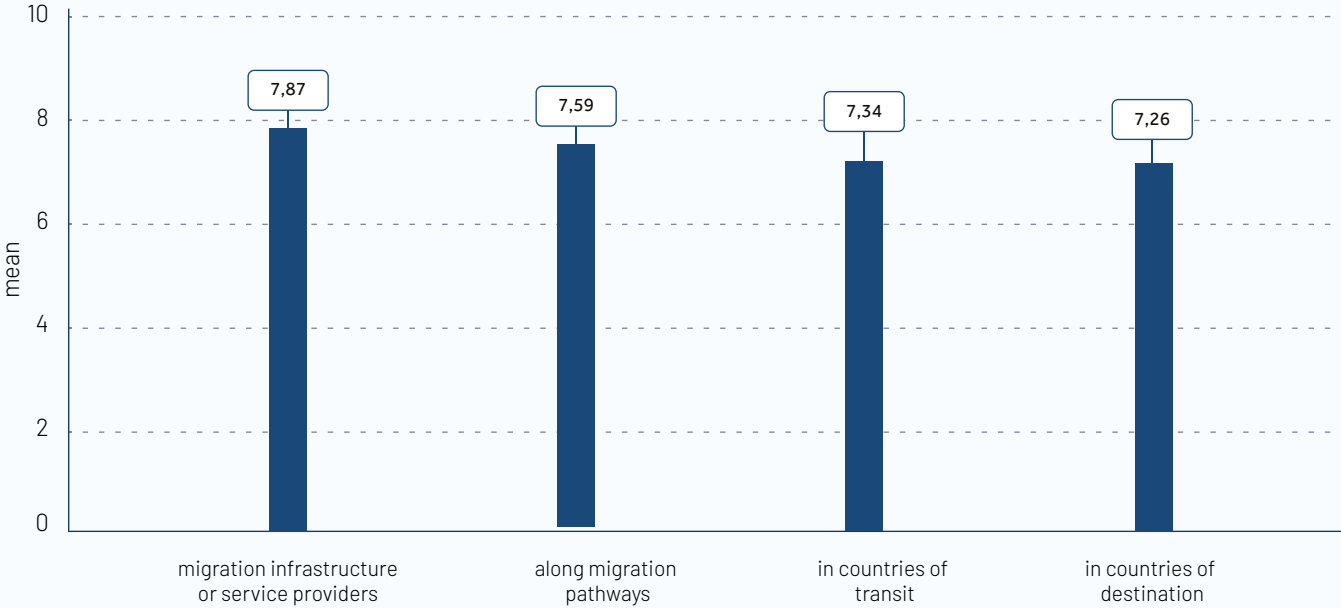
Figure 15. Mean of responses to statements about misinformation as a problem for recently-arrived migrants.

Practitioners were also asked to assess the relationship between misinformation and certain migratory behaviours in more detail, in questions in which they were asked whether they totally agreed (10 on the scale) or totally disagreed (0) with a series of statements.

Practitioners showed a certain tendency to agree with the statement **"Many migrants migrate to my country using regular channels because of inaccurate information about life here"** (27.5% of respondents marked 6 or above), although a considerable percentage of practitioners (21.5%, 167 responses) totally disagreed, selecting 0 on the scale used. However, it is relevant to note that the second most frequently chosen option, with 18.71% of the responses (145), was the option midway between 'completely agree' and 'completely disagree'. In other words, a significant number of practitioners did not openly agree or disagree with this statement. Female practitioners more strongly disagreed with this statement than their male counterparts (with average ratings of 3.6 versus 4.1, respectively).

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Practitioners also tended to agree with the statement **"Many migrants migrate to my country using irregular channels because of inaccurate information about life here"**. Indeed, 19.2% (149 responses) of practitioners in the sample completely agreed with the statement. Again, the option midway between agree and disagree was the second most frequently selected (16.77%).

Responses to the statement **"Many asylum seekers migrate to my country because of inaccurate information about life here"** were more ambiguous: the response average was very close to 5, midway along the scale used. Indeed, a plurality of practitioners positioned their responses in the middle of the scale (16.9%), neither agreeing nor disagreeing. There was also a significant percentage of practitioners at the two extremes: 14.97% completely agreed with the statement and 11.74% completely disagreed. Comparison between the previous question, which referred to migrants in general, and this one, which refers to asylum seekers, shows that more respondents totally disagree that misinformation affects asylum seekers' migration movements (11.74%) compared to other migrants' movements (9.16%). Additionally, practitioners from European countries more strongly agreed with this statement than practitioners from transit countries (with ratings of 5.3 and 4.8, respectively).

In contrast, 24.65% of respondents totally agreed with the statement **"Migrants use dangerous routes because they do not have correct information about the risks and benefits"**.

Similarly, a plurality of respondents (24.26%) totally agreed with the statement that **"Many migrants engage human smugglers because of inaccurate information about risks and benefits"**.

On the other hand, a plurality of respondents (22.2%) completely disagreed the statement "**New migrants who come to my country based on inaccurate information are more likely to commit crimes"**. However, responses were, again, quite polarised, with 14.45% of respondents totally agreeing with the connection between inaccurate information and criminal activity.

A plurality of respondents (22.7%) also disagreed with the statement **"New migrants who come to my country based on inaccurate information are more likely to become radicalised"**. However, it should be noted that a high percentage of practitioners did agree with this statement (12.4%), and another significant percentage neither completely agreed nor disagreed, choosing an ambiguous answer (18.7%).

As noted, responses about the relationship of misinformation and migration were highly polarised. Through statistical analysis, the extremes of the polarisation were identified more clearly. Male practitioners, practitioners from transit countries, and those defined as intergovernmental tended to agree that inaccurate information could lead to increased crime and radicalisation (see figure 16). In contrast, practitioners working in support services disagreed that inaccurate information could cause such risks.

G2_7.
New migrants who come to my country based on
inaccurate information are more likely to become radicalised

Perceptions on the following risk associated with misinformation, by countries
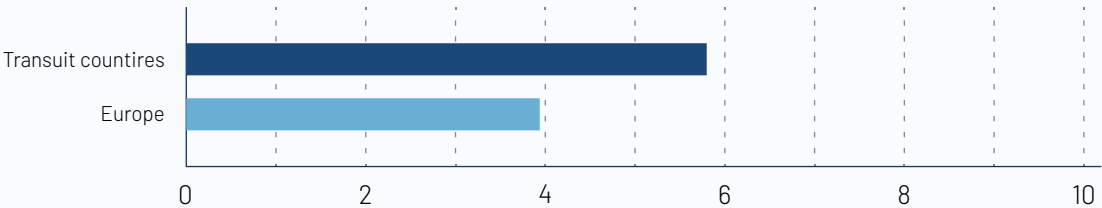
by services
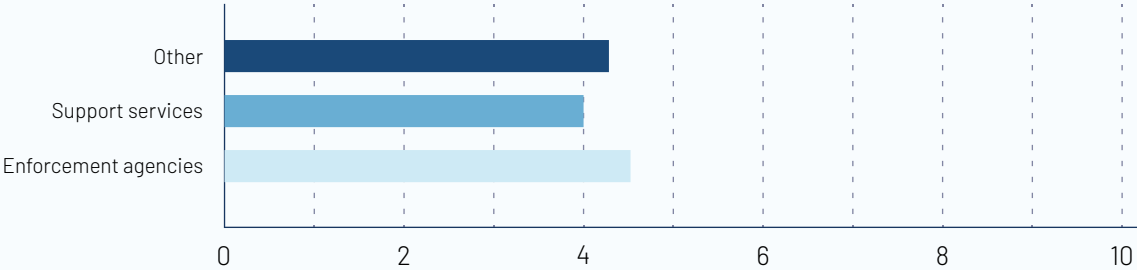
by affiliation
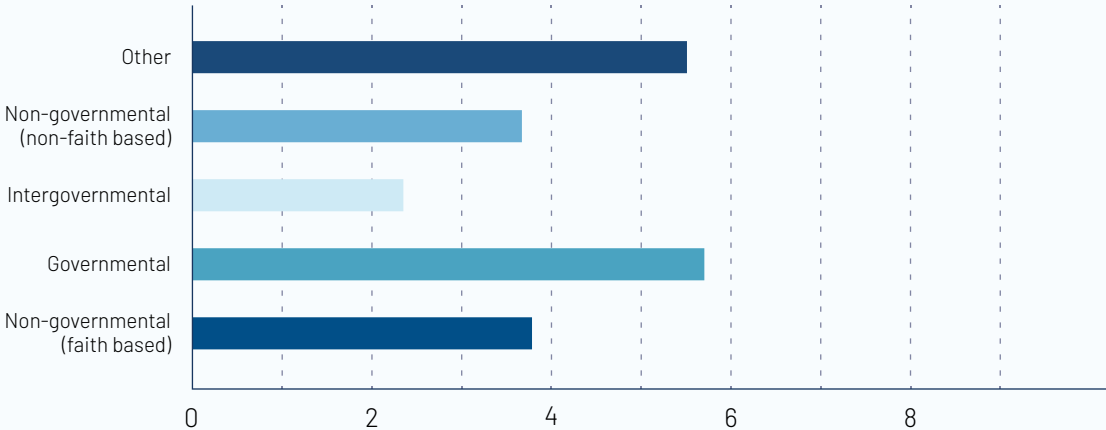
*Figure 16. Perceptions on different risks associated with misinformation by
first-line practitioner country, service type, and organisation type.*

Theme 4: Migration and COVID-19

Research question:

In what ways do first-line practitioners believe COVID-19 has affected migration?

Key findings:

- Practitioners were undecided as to whether migrants see life under COVID-19 in their country as better than most countries.

- Most practitioners disagreed that COVID-19 will result in less migration to their country.

- Most practitioners did not believe that the COVID-19 situation requires closing borders or the suspension of services for migrants.

- **However:** Practitioners working in border enforcement, as well as intergovernmental and non-European practitioners, tended to support closure of borders and services.

COVID-19 has had a strong impact on the PERCEPTIONS project, as it has on all aspects of society. For this reason, a set of questions was designed that sought to gauge the impact that the pandemic had had on practitioners, both in terms of their organisations' work and in terms of migration to their country in general. It should be noted here that the responses are indicative of the time that the survey was online (September-December 2020).

4.1 COVID-19: Impacts on organisations' operations

First, practitioners were asked to rate to what extent the pandemic had affected their organisations' operations, both in a general sense and in terms of their work with migrants. They were also asked to predict the duration of the impact of the pandemic on their organisations' work.

Practitioners indicated that:

- Most of their organisations had been affected in some way by COVID-19 (67.3% of respondents marked 6 or above, on a scale in which 0 meant their organisation had not been affected at all, and 10 meant that their organisation had been affected very severely)

- COVID-19 had affected their organisations' provision of services, but not severely (29.19% said their organisations continued to operate normally, 47.71% stated that their organisations were operating without significant restrictions, and only 2.46% indicated that their organisations' activities had been completely suspended)

- They expected that COVID-19 would affect their organisations for either between 1-6 months (47.5%), or between 6 months- 1 year (39.7%), with a small minority indicating that they expected the effects of the pandemic to last more than 1 year (11%).

- Many organisations were already providing services related to the pandemic (39.5% of practitioners indicated that their organisation provided some type of COVID-19 related service).

Practitioners were also given the option to detail specific COVID-19 related services that their organisations provided, via an open response box, and there was a great variety of responses in many languages. The main types of services provided included the following:

- Provision of information about the virus and preventative measures (including translation of guidelines to as many as 24 languages, in some organisations)

- Delivery of medical supplies (masks, gloves, hydroalcoholic gel)

- Testing and contact tracing

- Quarantines and prevention of entry of infected people into the territory in which the organisations operated

Some organisations also provided additional services related to the pandemic, such as the provision of food and shelter for homeless people, social and psychological assistance for families, or tablets for access to distance learning and online recreational and artistic activities.

Such responses demonstrate an adaptability to circumstances amongst the first-line practitioners surveyed, and provide an idea of the wide variety of social needs that the pandemic has brought to light.

4.2 COVID-19: Impacts on migrants and migration

As well as assessing the impact of COVID-19 on their work, practitioners were also asked to judge to what extent COVID-19 has affected immigration, what perceptions they thought immigrants had about the situation arising from COVID-19, and what kind of measures they thought should be implemented.

To do so, they were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with seven statements related to the pandemic. The scale used in this section ranged from 0, indicating the practitioner completely disagreed with a statement, and 10, when they fully agreed.

The statements below are listed with a code which identifies each of the statements in figure 17.

In response to the statement **"Migrants see life under COVID-19 in my country as better than in most countries" (E1_1)**, a plurality of practitioners (15.89%) gave a response in the middle of the scale. This could indicate neutrality amongst respondents (i.e., they neither agreed nor disagreed that migrants see life under COVID-19 in their country as better). However, the second most chosen option (12.71%) was 'totally disagree', indicating that a significant percentage of practitioners believed that migrants perceived life under COVID-19 as better elsewhere.

Responses to the statement **"Migrants see the state's reaction to COVID-19 in my country as more effective than in most countries" (E1_2)** displayed a similar pattern to those of the previous statement. Once more, the majority of responses were grouped around intermediate positions (midway between 'completely agree' and 'completely disagree'), although there was an increase in those that completely disagreed with the statement.

In response to the statement "**COVID-19 will change the way migrants see my country for the worse" (E1_3)**, the number of people who said they did not agree increased. Nevertheless, the most chosen option was the one in the middle of the scale, midway between 'completely agree' and 'completely disagree'. In other words, most respondents did not believe that COVID-19 would worsen the image that migrants have of their country, but a great number did not clearly agree or disagree with the statement.

As for the statement **"COVID-19 will result in less migration to my country" (E1_4)**, a plurality of first-line practitioners indicated that they totally disagreed. However, it should be noted that the responses to this item were highly polarised, with a significant number of people who believed that COVID-19 would reduce immigration to their country.

As well as questions related to migrants' perceptions, respondents were also asked about certain actions to be taken regarding COVID-19. These responses showed high levels of polarisation. Regarding the statement **"My country's borders should be closed as long as COVID-19 remains a threat" (E1_5)**, a plurality strongly disagreed (29.4%), while the second most chosen option was 'totally agree' (22.5%).

Most respondents disagreed with the idea that **"Normal immigration services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat" (E1_6)**, with 39.83% stating that they completely disagreed with this measure. However, 16.15% completely agreed with the statement, with 'completely disagree' as the second most chosen option. Here, again, it is worth highlighting how polarised the responses were, as many people either completely agreed

or completely disagreed. Despite this polarisation, the mean showed clear general disagreement with both the idea that normal immigration services should be suspended (61.4% of respondents marked between 0 and 4) and that asylum services should be suspended (65.7% marked between 0 and 4).

Responses to the statement "**Asylum services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat" (E1_7)** were even more polarised, with 45.40% against the measure (marking 0) and 16.71% strongly for it (marking 10).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on migration, as in all areas of life. Based on your professional experience, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
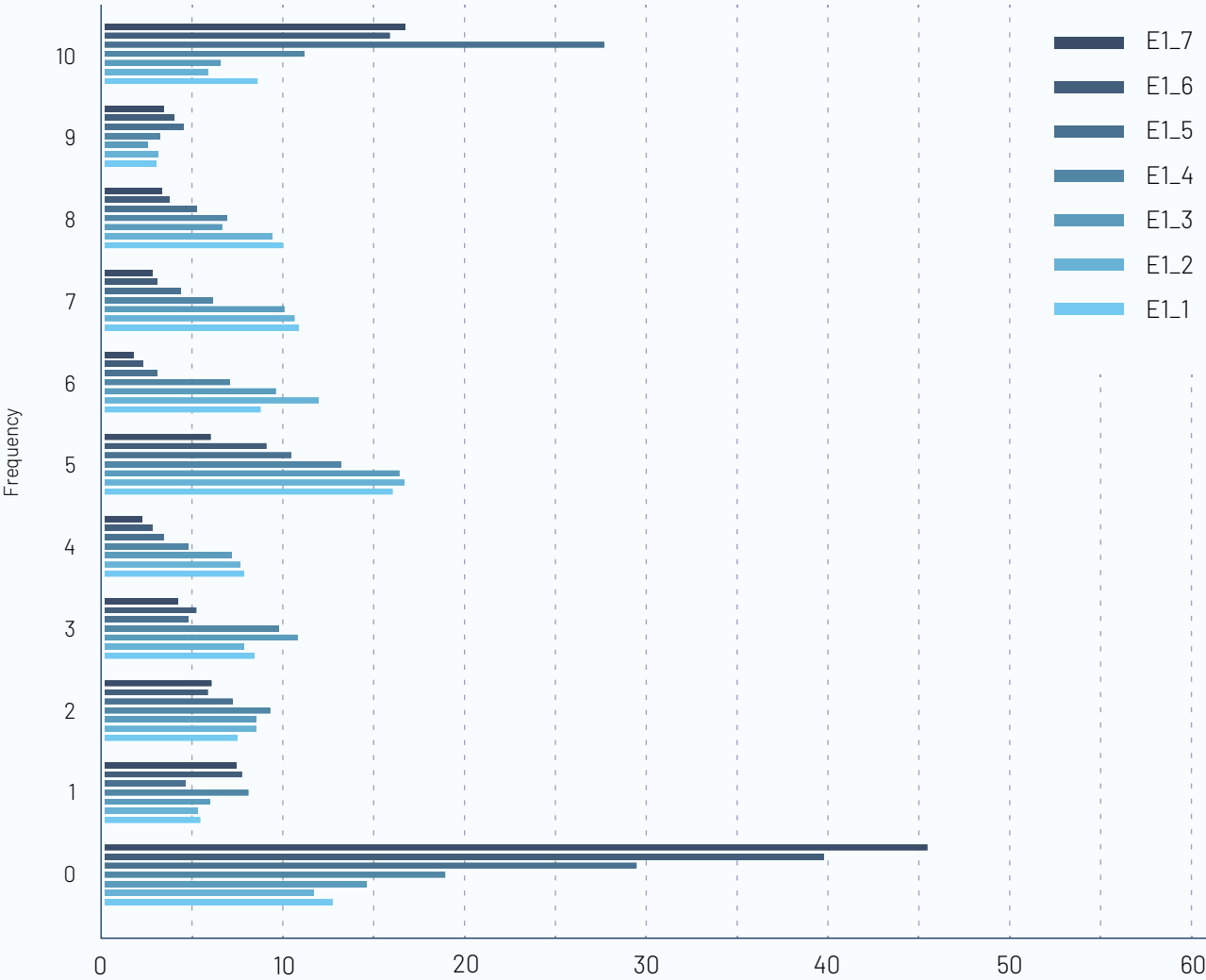
Figure 17. Frequency of responses to all statements on COVID-19 and migration.[13]

As the graph above shows, responses to statements on COVID-19 and migration tended towards the extremes, with many of the respondents choosing 'completely agree' or 'completely disagree'. This may be related to controversial discussions and opinions surrounding the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic and how to manage it.

Statistical analyses were used to further explore this polarisation (see figures 18 and 19).

E1. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on migration, as in all areas of life. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

My country´s borders should be closed as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.
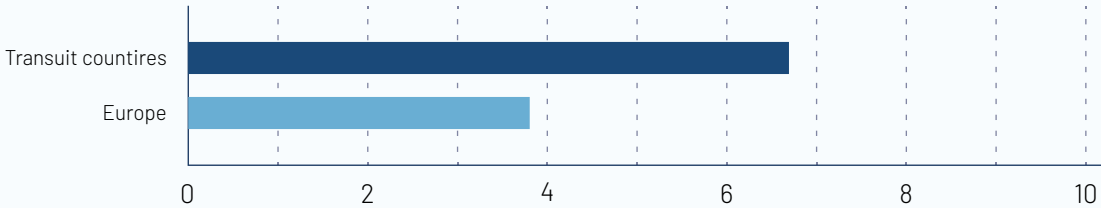
Normal immigration services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.
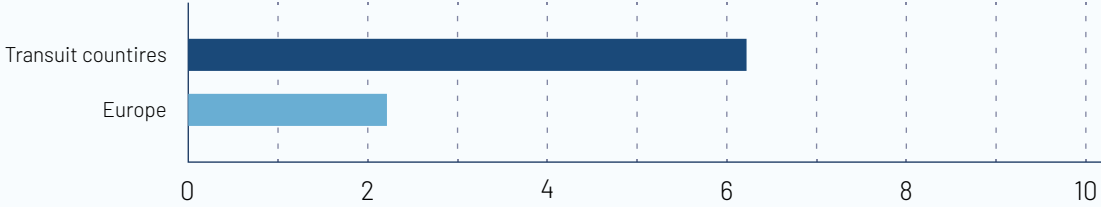
Asylum services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.
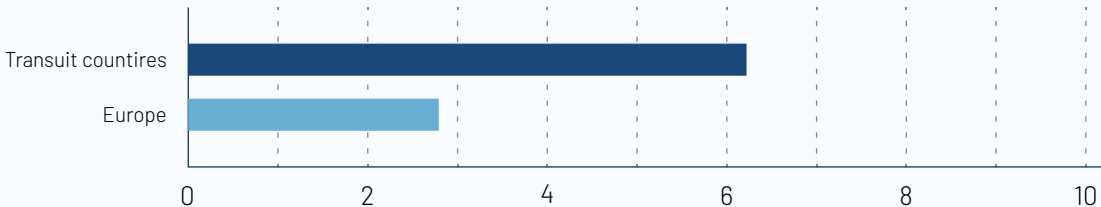
Figure 18. Agreement or disagreement with measures connected to COVID-19 and migration, from practitioners from Europe and transit countries (statements 1-3).

E1. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on migration, as in all areas of life. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

My country´s borders should be closed as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.
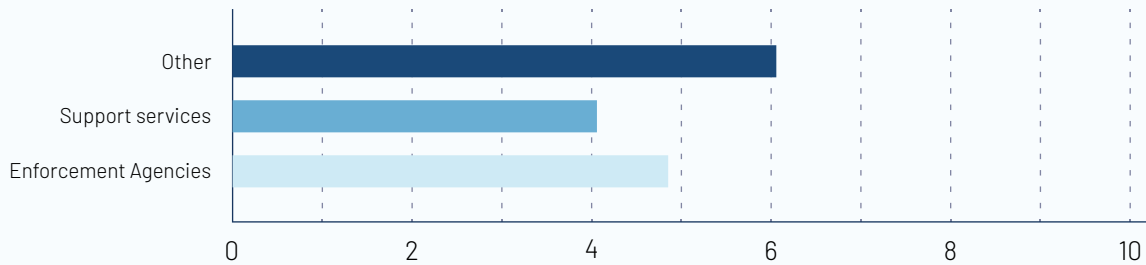
Normal immigration services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.
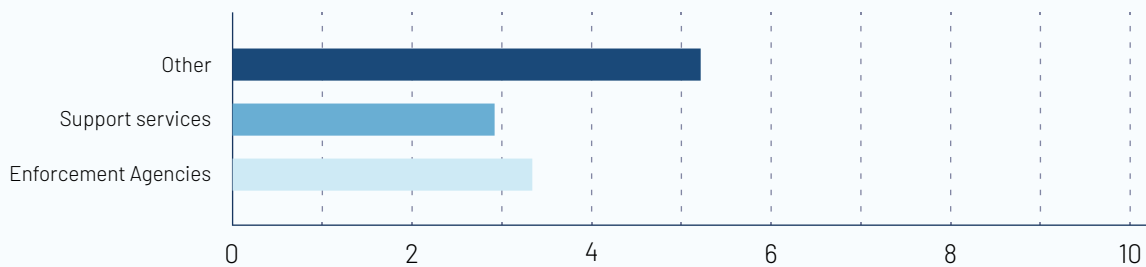
Asylum services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.
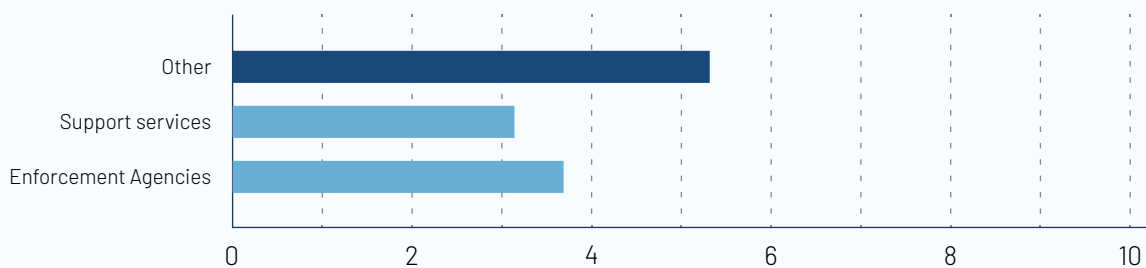
Figure 19. Agreement or disagreement with measures connected to COVID-19 and migration, from practitioners working in support services, enforcement agencies, or other sectors (statements 1-3).

The figures above show several different trends:

- Practitioners working in transit countries were also in favour of closure, while those working in Europe were not.

- Those working in border enforcement services tended to support closure compared to those working in support services, who disagreed with this measure.

Other noteworthy trends that are not reflected in the graphs are that:

- Practitioners working at the intergovernmental level tended to agree with the closure of borders and services.

- hose who had a lot of contact with migrants (i.e. those who said they dealt with migrants every day) did not want to close borders and services.
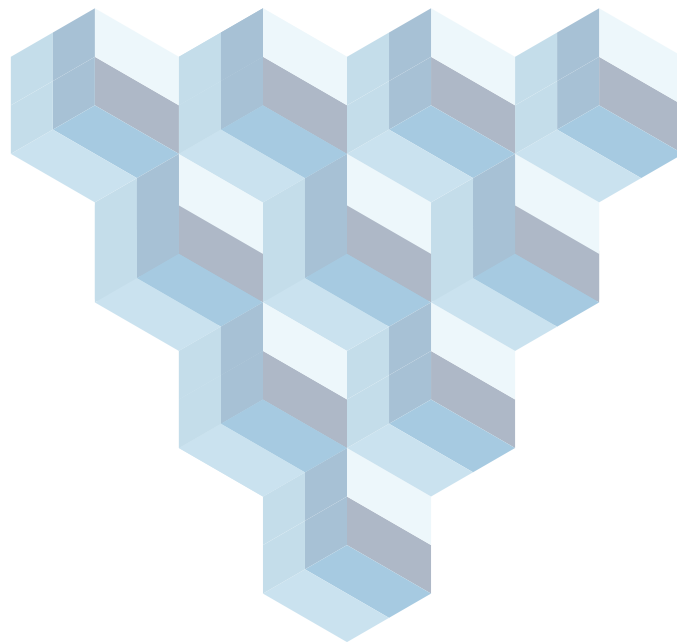
Theme 5: Organisational effectiveness and satisfaction with life and migration-related work

Research question:

Do first-line practitioners view their organisations' work with migrants as effective?

Are first-line practitioners satisfied with their working conditions and European migration policies?

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected first-line practitioner's life and job satisfaction?

Key findings:

— The majority of first-line practitioners surveyed considered their organisation to be effective in both general work with migrants and in providing migrants with accurate information.

— However, some barriers were identified: legal constraints; insufficient human resources; stress or psychological burden caused by the work performed; insufficient salary for the work performed and lack of necessary facilities or infrastructure.

— COVID-19 has decreased practitioners' satisfaction with their work-life balance, their job, certain aspects of their working conditions, and their life in general.

— Practitioners are very dissatisfied with both the European Union´s current migration policies, and their country's current migration policies.

One key output of the PERCEPTIONS project is to provide toolkits to support first-line practitioners in their work with migrants, as well as a library of best-practices in migration-related work. For this reason, it was considered important to gauge how effective practitioners perceive their organisations to be, and what barriers they face in their work14.

As well as being asked to assess how effective their organisations were on a general level, practitioners were also asked to assess effectiveness in specific areas: work with migrants and provision of accurate information to migrants. To do so, they were asked to rate organisational effectiveness on a scale in which 0 was "Not effective at all", and 10 was "Extremely effective. The respondents perceived a high level of effectiveness in providing accurate information to migrants (7.76 out of 10) and in general work with migrants (7.79 out of 10).

Analysis also showed that the more contact practitioners had with migrants, the more effective they perceived their organisations to be.

As well as exploring practitioners' perceptions on the effectiveness of their organisations, the survey also explored potential barriers practitioners face in their work. Respondents were asked "Do any of the following barriers inhibit your organisation's effectiveness in working with migrants?" and provided with a scale in which 0 meant "No, not at all" and 10 "Yes, very severely".

Figure 20 gives a summary of the results below. The main variables considered to be a barrier to organisational effectiveness (those which scored more than 5) were: legal constraints, insufficient human resources, stress or psychological burden caused by the work performed, insufficient salary for the work performed, and lack of necessary facilities or infrastructure.

Practitioners who had more contact with migrants tended to consider jurisdictional conflict and insufficient human resources to be especially important. Intergovernmental practitioners, on the other hand, gave greater importance to language barriers.

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14 Questions on assessing organisational effectiveness were not displayed to non-EU respondents, as the content was thought to be potentially sensitive.

I3. Do any of the following barriers inhibit your organisation´s effectiveness in working with migrants?
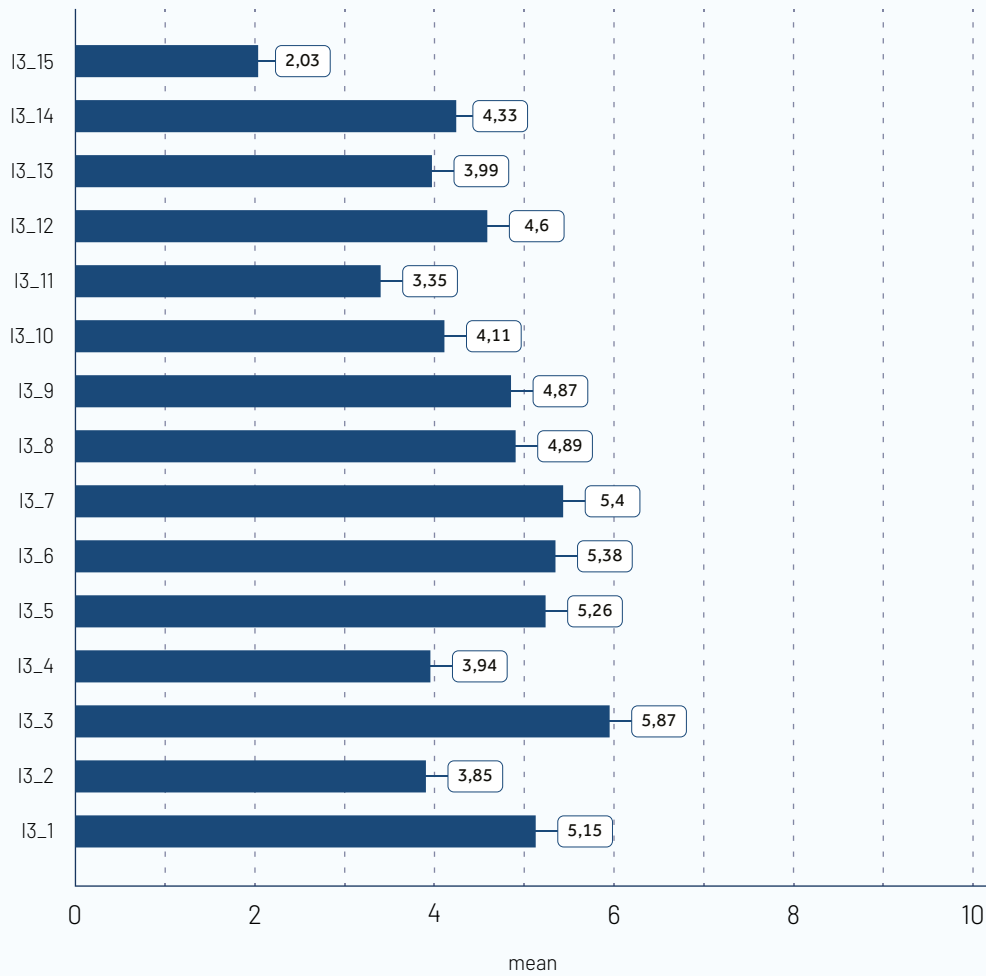
Figure 20. Barriers that inhibit the effectiveness of first-line practitioners' organisations', in work with migrants[15].

Practitioners were also asked to specify what other factors inhibited their organisations' effectiveness in an open response section. Several interesting insights were found here, for example:

— "Political willingness"

— "Politics and public opinion where detention for migration-status is considered as bad as detention for criminal facts"

— "Limited scope of intervention"

— "Regional policy centred on identity politics"

[15] I3_1 (Legal constraints), I3_2 (Jurisdictional conflicts), I3_3 (Insufficient human resources), I3_4 (Lack of professional training), I3_5 (Stress or psychological burden caused by the work performed), I3_6 (Insufficient salary for the work performed), I3_6 (Insufficient salary for the work performed), I3_7 (Lack of necessary facilities or infrastructure), I3_8 (Poor coordination among stakeholders), I3_9 (Lack of coherent strategies and procedures), I3_10 (Lack of suitable operational tools as hardware, software, etc.), I3_11 (Lack of expertise), I3_12 (Language barriers), I3_13 (Cultural barriers), I3_14 (Lack of comprehensive data on migrants), I3_15 (Other).

- "Some poor contract conditions of workers (shifting of duty stations, short-term renewable contracts...)"

- "Funding opportunities are mostly short term and restricted to specific locations or sectors, under-performing governmental authorities and reception services (e.g. lack of infrastructure, delays)"

- "European, national and local politics affecting operation aspects of response, anti-migrant rhetoric and attacks, distrust towards NGOs, heavy and ineffective bureaucracy"

Practitioners were asked to rate their satisfaction in different areas on a scale in which 0 was "Extremely dissatisfied", and 10 was "Extremely satisfied". Figure 21 shows how responses differed before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All things considered, how satisfied are or were you with...?
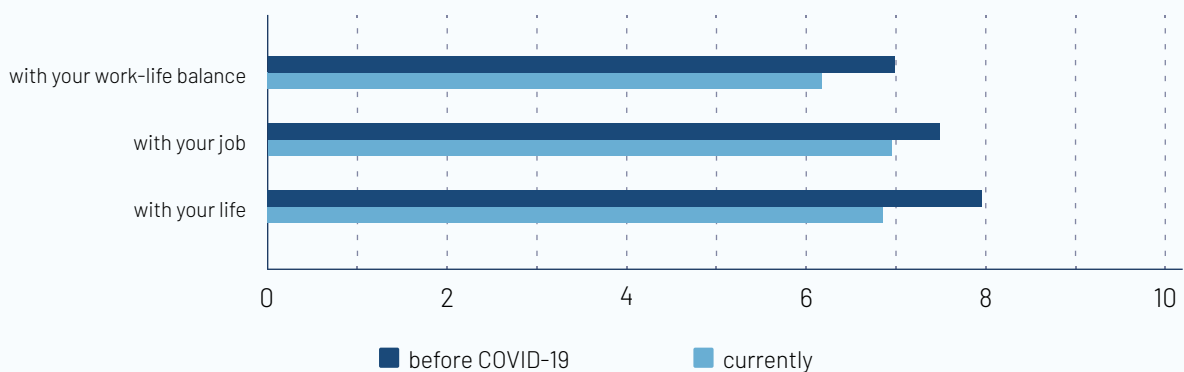
Figure 21. Practitioners' satisfaction with work, life, and work-life balance pre and during COVID-19.

As may be expected, first-line practitioners' satisfaction with their work-life balance, their job, and their life in general decreased during the pandemic. Life satisfaction decreased by 1 point (from 7.9 to 6.9), and job satisfaction and satisfaction with work-life balance decreased by 0.6 points (from 7.4 to 6.8, and from. 6.9 to 6.3, respectively).

In terms of satisfaction with other work-related aspects, such as the social recognition of work and salary, practitioners' responses were relatively low (5.6 and 5.9, respectively), considering that in these types of questions ratings are usually higher (van Praag et al., 2003).

All things considered, how satisfied are you with...?
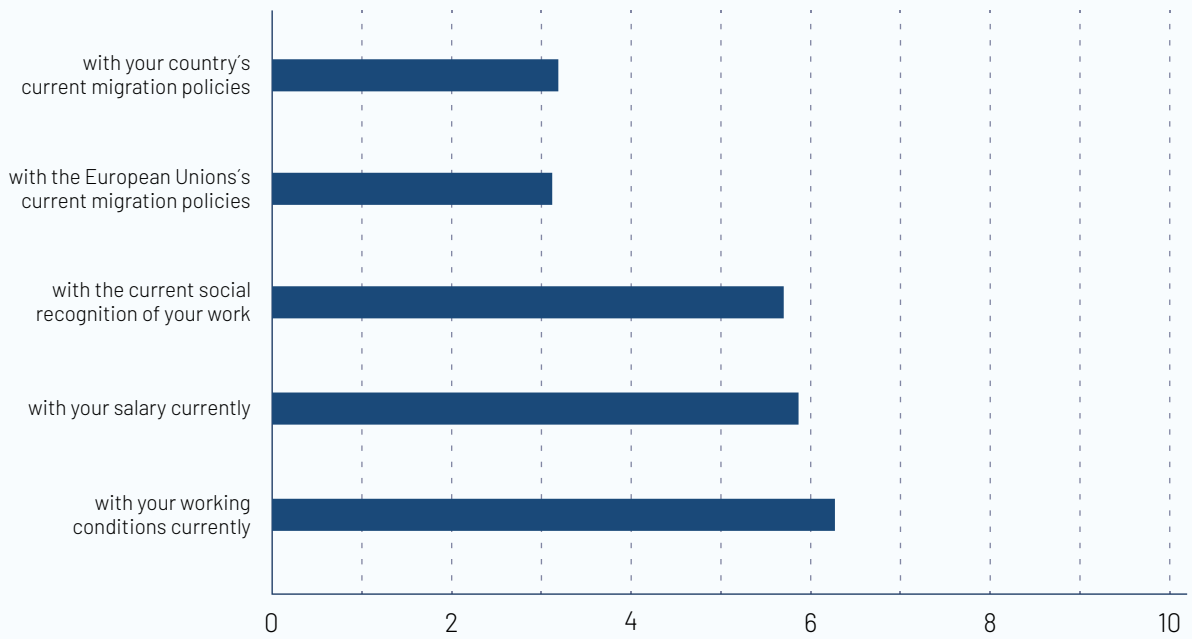
Figure 22. Practitioners' satisfaction with migration policies and different aspects of their jobs.

In addition to satisfaction with salary and working conditions, figure 22 shows first-line practitioners' satisfaction with migration-related policies. Satisfaction with both the European Union's current migration policies, and with practitioners' countries' migration policies was very low (3.2 out of 10 and 3.3 out of 10, respectively).

Ratings from practitioners working in governmental and intergovernmental organisations were slightly higher (3.7 and 3.8 respectively), whilst the mean of ratings from practitioners working in non-governmental organisations were around 2.5 out of 10. Some potential reasons for these low ratings, and differences among practitioners, are discussed in the following section.

Section 4:
Conclusions & Discussions

First-line practitioners in the field of migration are very important stakeholders for whom there is little evidence, both in terms of information on their perceptions and on the characteristics of their work. The current report, which has presented the results of a survey of first-line practitioners in Europe and North Africa, helps to address this knowledge gap.

The survey sample (N=788) included respondents from varied countries (74.7% European countries, 25.3% transit countries) and was balanced in terms of gender (women 47.8%, men 49.8%). It was also relatively balanced between practitioners working in enforcement agencies (39.8%) and those working in migrant support organisations (48.1%). Within the sample, there was a predominance of responses from practitioners in governmental organisations (37%) and of those in non-governmental, faith-based organisations (31.9%).

According to the answers of the first-line practitioners surveyed, the most prevalent profile of the migrants with whom they work was that of a person who arrives through irregular channels, without travel documents, who holds an official nationality (i.e., is not stateless), and who does not (yet) have protected status.

Overall, first-line practitioners believed that

migrants have a positive idea of both Europe in general and the country in which they were working at the time of the survey. The aspects of life in Europe which practitioners assessed as most positively perceived by migrants were o verall quality of life, the opportunity for family reunification, freedom of expression, and access to residence permission for migrants were the aspects of Europe. On the contrary, the relatively less positive perception of the rule of law in Europe stands out as an aspect that should be analysed in greater depth.

It should be noted that, compared to other groups, practitioners from transit countries generally attributed a more positive perception of Europe to migrants. The aspects to which they ascribed a significantly more positive perception were the following: opportunity for family reunification; system of government; overall quality of life; freedom of expression; safety and security; and tolerance and non-discrimination.

In terms of assessments of the accuracy of migrants' perceptions, most practitioners considered migrants' perceptions about Europe to be moderately accurate. Practitioners who had greater contact with migrants attributed greater

accuracy to migrants' perceptions of tolerance and non-discrimination, overall quality of life, and women's rights.

However, perceptions themselves are not necessarily the most significant factor driving migrants to leave their countries, according to practitioners. Whilst migration is always a complex phenomenon, influenced by both personal decisions and external factors (violence, different political situations, different levels of opportunity, etc.), according to the sample, external factors are the ones that carry the most weight. That is, practitioners overwhelmingly considered poor conditions in the countries of origin and positive conditions in Europe to be the main drivers of migration, highlighting both factors in a significant way in the survey results. However, some practitioners did identify the presence of a narrative amongst migrants tentatively named as "Europe as the promised land", which could be explored in the remaining qualitative tasks of the PERCEPTIONS project.

At the level of migration-related policy making, practitioners' insights on the drivers of migration invite consideration of policies based on improving conditions in migrants' countries of origin. Indeed, their insights seem to fit with policy recommendations from the project EUMAGINE (Hemmerecks et al., n.d.), which highlighted that improving conditions in countries of origin may be the best way to reduce migration (though it should be mentioned that such policy recommendations have been debated extensively).

Regarding the relationship between inaccurate information and potential threats, female practitioners generally assessed inaccurate information as a more serious threat than their male counterparts. Most respondents agreed that inaccurate information could place migrants in situations of risk, both in terms of using dangerous routes to Europe and engaging human smugglers. However, the majority of respondents did not believe there was a relationship between misinformation and

a greater likelihood of migrants committing crimes or radicalisation.

Despite this overall agreement, it should be noted that responses were quite polarised. For example, intergovernmental practitioners, practitioners from transit countries, and practitioners working in enforcement services tended to support the idea that the spread of inaccurate information about Europe among migrants can lead to increased crime and radicalisation. Compared to female practitioners, male practitioners also made more of an association between misinformation and crime and radicalisation. Practitioners working in support services, on the other hand, disagreed that inaccurate information causes such risks. In terms of radicalisation in particular, practitioners surveyed mostly disagreed that inaccurate information fosters radicalisation. Non-governmental faith-based practitioners, in particular, strongly disagreed with any association between radicalisation and misinformation.

This range of responses to questions surrounding misinformation mirrors findings from the PERCEPTIONS literature review, in which it was observed that "there is little consensus on the role of false narratives and their impact on migrants" (Bayerl et al., 2020, p. 4). Overall, however, respondents tended to believe that migrants who make decisions based on inaccurate information are more likely to encounter threats themselves (e.g. use of dangerous routes or human smugglers), but are not more likely to pose a threat to host societies (e.g. via crime and radicalisation). That is to say, in the language of securitisation theory (Balzacq, 2011) developed in the PERCEPTIONS literature review, practitioners identify migrants as a referent object, what is under threat, rather than a referent subject, the cause of the threat.

Although results from the survey cannot be considered to identify causal links between misinformation and threats, they may shed some light on how and where certain narratives are formed. According to the analysis of

policies and policy recommendations developed by the PERCEPTIONS project "countries of origin and transit such as Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt (are) following a crimmigration approach, criminalizing irregular migrants, including asylum seekers" (Ben Brahim & Rogoz, 2020, p. 22). Findings from the survey may be in line with this observation, as results indicate greater agreement with the relationship between migration, inaccurate information, and crime among practitioners from transit countries[16].

Practitioners' views on migration policies were particularly noteworthy. First-line practitioners who worked in European countries rated their satisfaction with the European Union's current migration policies, and their countries' current migration policies, as very low (3.2 out of 10 and 3.3 out of 10, respectively). This invites reflection on the question of what is being done wrong in Europe, and in the countries surveyed, to cause such a heterogeneous group of first-line practitioners to be so dissatisfied with migration policies. One possible response is that such dissatisfaction may be linked with the strong critiques, primarily from NGOs, of the violation of human rights of migrant people, the externalisation of border control to third countries, and criminalisation not only amongst migrant people but also amongst activists who defend them.

The health emergency caused by COVID-19 affected the implementation of this survey and led to the inclusion of a set of questions about the impact of COVID-19 on migration services. Results showed that the organisations in which practitioners worked had been moderately affected by the pandemic but had continued to function and adapted to provide support services. Organisations had provided information and awareness services related to the virus and the recommended sanitary measures, they had delivered medical supplies

of different types (masks, gloves, etc.), and they were involved in testing and contact tracing, among other tasks. In terms of other impacts of the pandemic, COVID-19 has also led to significant reductions in first-line practitioners' satisfaction with their life, work, and work-life balance.

In general terms, most practitioners did not believe that the health situation required border closure or the suspension of services for migrants. However, the responses to these questions were highly polarised. According to results, practitioners who worked at the intergovernmental level tended to agree with the closure of borders and services, and practitioners working in transit countries were more in favour of closure than those working in Europe.

Finally, the majority of first-line practitioners surveyed considered their organisation to be effective, both in terms of general work with migrants and in terms of providing migrants with accurate information. However, practitioners did identify certain barriers to their organisations' effectiveness, especially legal constraints, insufficient human resources, stress or psychological burden caused by the work performed, insufficient salary for the work performed, and lack of necessary facilities or infrastructure.

In terms of practical applications, the results of this report, as well as the reflections they invite, encourage the project to develop tools to help practitioners combat threats to migrants related to inaccurate information. As a whole, the results of the survey also suggest that migrants' perceptions about Europe, although important, are not enough to understand migratory behaviours or the risks that may be associated with them.

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[16] It should be noted that the definition of a crime is both subject to change and intensely debated. If irregular migration is defined as a crime, as is the case in Tunisia, Algeria, or Egypt, by definition all irregular migrants are committing a crime. In the majority of European countries, irregular migration is not classified as a crime, but rather an illegal administrative act. However, processes of criminalisation are present in Europe in two forms: 1) through the criminalisation of those who help migrant people, whose acts are labelled as aiding irregular immigration 2) through accusing migrants of committing common minor offences (robbery, small-scale drug trafficking). Open Democracy (2019) illustrates how, in 14 countries in the European Union, there have been more than 250 cases of people having been detained, accused, or sanctioned for carrying out humanitarian work to aid migrants. For an in-depth analysis of these issues see Gordon and Larsen (2020) and Duarte (2020).

Section 5:
Limitations of the survey, and questions for future research

There are several limitations of the present survey that should be taken into consideration, some more practical, others more theoretical.

On a practical level, as mentioned in section 1.2, there were certain features of the survey that proved problematic in terms of recruitment and retention of participants, namely its length and complexity. This may partly explain the level of attrition (578 incomplete responses at the time of closing of the survey). It is also possible, however, that this attrition biased the responses toward first-line practitioners that were more motivated or committed to complete it, for whatever reason, or those more comfortable with the emphasis and tone of the survey (which some participants reported was security-focused at times). If that is indeed the case, the absence of those respondents that were discouraged by this should be taken into account.

As previously noted, there is also an implicit bias in the results towards the views of participants from the countries in which most responses were collected: Algeria, Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain.

On a conceptual level, there are a number of issues that should also be noted. Firstly, the categories of countries of 'destination' and 'transit' were used as approximations to facilitate analyses relevant to the PERCEPTIONS project. However, in reality it can be difficult, even controversial, to categorise countries in terms of migration pathways, for several reasons.

On an individual level, migrants' journeys can often be dynamic, non-linear, and fragmented, despite the fact that migration is often represented as a linear movement from a country of origin to one of destination (Snel, Bilgili & Staring, 2020). Additionally, individual perceptions and experiences of place change overtime, so countries that migrants originally see as their destination may become a place of transit (Brewer and Yükseker, 2009; Crawley and Jones, 2020; Jordan and Düvell, 2002). In the same way, countries of transit may become countries of destination, as migrants choose to stay in a place they initially intended to pass through (Ares Mateos et al. 2020; Zijlstra, 2014).

In terms of migration trends in general, it can also be problematic to assign countries to one category or another, as within any given country there may be a diverse range of migrant people.

That is, as well as nationals who have left or are planning to migrate, there may be migrants for whom the country represents a final destination, and others for whom it represents a point of transit[17]. It should be noted that this is the case of North Africa in general (Baldwin-Edwards, 2007), and of Algeria (IOM, 2021), Tunisia (Garrelli & Tazziolli, 2016), and Egypt (Roman, 2006), the 'countries of transit' represented in this study[18].

The second conceptual limitation of the survey worth highlighting is that both the themes of migration and perceptions are highly complex phenomena, and thus difficult to fully explore through a survey.

Migration, for example, is linked not only to individual decision-making, family context, and socio-cultural factors (De Bruijn et al. 2001; degli Uberti 2014; Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012), but also to geopolitics, international legal frameworks, neo-colonialism, world inequalities, environmental destruction, and resource extraction, to list a few (Bettini, 2019; Gómez Gil, 2020, pp. 43-63; Guevara Urbina et al., 2019; Reinert, 2018).

Equally, investigating 'perceptions of perceptions' is, in essence, research into a complete socio-cultural process of meaning-making, in which ideas of which perceptions are 'accurate' and which are 'inaccurate' may be closely connected to power dynamics (i.e. who and which country and culture and social group decide what is accurate, and on what basis, and relying on which narratives and ideologies) which may be implicit for the observer. Any decision-making based on the outcomes of this survey, therefore, should acknowledge that these empirical findings do not measure migrants' perceptions per se, but first-line practitioners' understanding of them, a process that is necessarily tainted by the worldview and predisposition of each observer involved. This is indirectly evidenced by some of the findings, such as how first-line practitioners with less contact with migrants tended to have more negative views of the migrants' perceptions of host countries.

The findings of the report invite further research on the discourse of the causes of migration, host's perceptions of migrants as a threat, the criminalisation of migration, and the appropriateness of European policies, among other topics. It is worth mentioning that, whilst the threats explored in the survey were very specific (use of dangerous migration routes and human smugglers), other types of threats to migrants are also becoming more prevalent and should be explored in future research. For example, the resurgence of hate speech directed at immigrant populations in various European countries, the rise in security and crisis-focused language surrounding migration in general[19], and the increase in investment in both migration control and the externalisation of border control to private companies and third countries (Akkerman, 2021; Por Causa, 2019). It should be taken into consideration, however, that such research themes may not be best suited to quantitative surveys, which provide an overly reductionist perspective through which to explore complex social phenomena if not supplemented with qualitative data.

In order to tackle the unavoidable limitations of quantification, the aforementioned research themes will be further analysed through qualitative empirical research in the PERCEPTIONS project. It is hoped that in-depth analysis of interviews and focus groups with practitioners and migrants will allow these issues to be explored with more context, depth, and nuance.

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[17] As such, categorising countries as either 'transit' or 'destination' can be informed by and reproduce Eurocentric visions of migration, in which Europe is seen as the only relevant destination for migrants (Düvell, 2012).

[18] It should also be mentioned that, amongst the practitioners surveyed, some worked in European cities, such as Ceuta and Melilla, in which the vast majority of immigrants are in transit to other areas of Europe.

[19] Also, as some research has shown, migration may lead to political instability through the rise of extremist politics when the issue is considered a crisis within host countries (Kotoyannos et al. 2019; Mattelart & d'Haenens, 2014).

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Annex 1: Survey questionnaire

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a survey about the perceptions of Europe held by recently-arrived migrants. By recently arrived, we mean having arrived in your country in 2015 or after. In the survey, you will also be asked about your work, and any impacts COVID-19 has had on it.

The survey forms part of PERCEPTIONS (Grant Agreement number: 833870), a three-year project, which aims to investigate the way that Europe is perceived by current and potential migrants. The project seeks to find out what perceptions of Europe exist, whether they are accurate, how they influence migration decisions, and how they are communicated. The project also aims to investigate whether certain perceptions can be linked to security threats. With the information gathered from empirical research like this survey, PERCEPTIONS will create tools and measures to support migrants and professionals working in the field of migration.

The whole survey will take you approximately 20 minutes to answer. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the survey without any repercussions at any time. You can also save a draft of the survey to continue at a later time. To do so, click on the 'save draft' button on the right of the screen and save the link that appears.

Types of questions asked: For this survey, you will be required to answer questions on perceptions of migrants on Europe, but also some socio-demographic questions. You will not be asked to provide your name or any contact details. Furthermore, no IP addresses will be stored or tracked.

Data collection purpose: The data collected will be aggregated in analysis, meaning that they will not be used in regard to any particular natural person and processed for the scientific research purposes of PERCEPTIONS project. The aggregated and anonymised results of this study will be included in scientific research databases, reports and presentation at conferences.

Data retention: The information you provide will be aggregated and anonymised. The anonymised and aggregated results of the study will be used for scientific research purposes. In any case, personal data will be securely stored and retained for a period of 24 months after the end of the project, namely until 2025 at the latest.

Data Controller: Universidad de Granada

Fields marked with * are compulsory
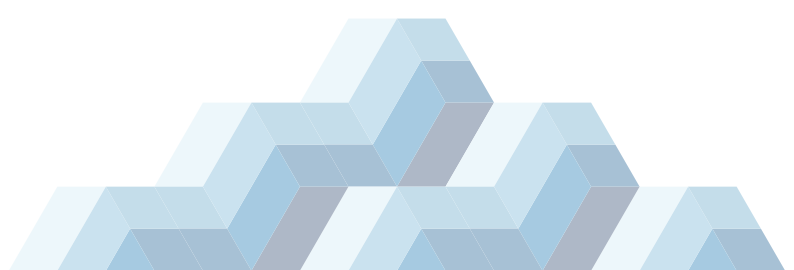
Contact points: If you have any questions about the research study or you wish to exercise your data protection rights (please see the background document Your data protection rights attached), including the right to withdraw, please send an e-mail to: benenwhitworth@ugr.es

If you want to receive a summary report of the main findings regarding this survey, please contact: benenwhitworth@ugr.es, fgquero@ugr.es or marinagc@ugr.es

When contacting researchers, please provide the contribution ID that appears at the end of the survey, so that they can locate your response.

By clicking "**I consent**", you confirm the following:

- I have carefully read and understood the document *Your data protection rights*.
- I am at least 18 years old.

* Please check the boxes below to give your informed consent to participate in the survey.
at least 2 choice(s)

I consent to my participation in the above survey

I consent to the processing of my personal data for the purpose specified above

Thank you in advance for your participation.
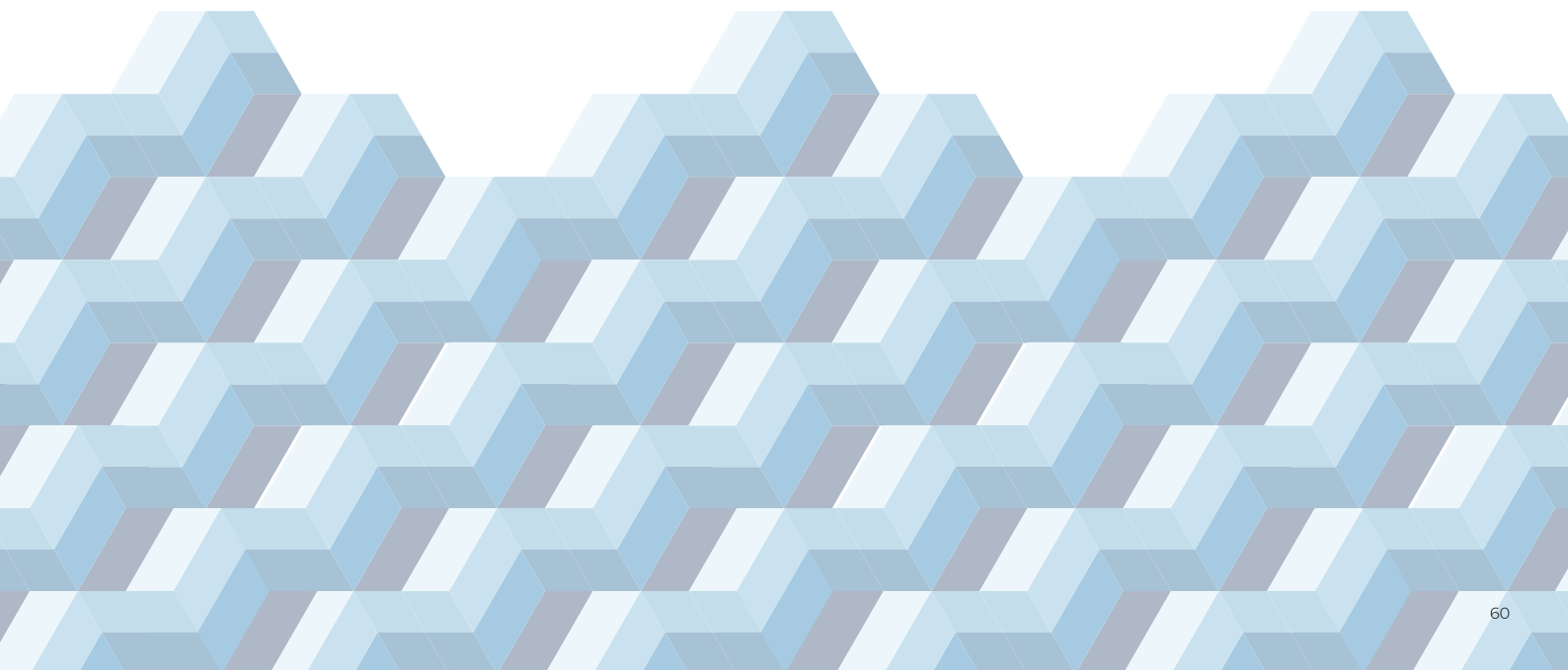
A. Professional information

* A1. Do you work for a non-governmental, governmental, or intergovernmental organisation?
Please check the option that best applies.

- Governmental
- Intergovernmental
- Non-governmental (non-faith based)
- Non-governmental (faith based)
- Other (please specify in the next question)
- Choose not to answer

If you checked the box 'other', please specify the type of organisation you work for.

* A2. In what country do you work?
Please write your country in the box below.

Throughout the survey, this is the country we will ask you about when we refer to 'your country'.

* A3. On what level of government does your organisation mostly work?
Please check the option that best applies.

- National
- State/prefectural/regional
- Local/municipal/communal
- Other (please specifiy in the next question)
- Choose not to answer

If you checked the box 'other', please specify at what level your organisation works.

* A4. On what level does your organisation mostly work?
Please check the option that best applies.

International

Federal/national

State or prefectural

Local or communal

Other (please specify in the next question)

Choose not to answer.

If you checked the box 'other', please specify at what level your organisation works.

* A5. In what sector does your organisation primarily operate?

Border enforcement

Child services

Customs enforcement

Education or VET

Diplomatic (consulates, etc.)

Governance and policymaking

Health services

Housing services

Immigrant advocacy

Immigration and asylum services

Immigrant integration

Internal law enforcement

Judiciary

Labour services

Legal services (legal aid, judiciary, etc.)

Psychological services (counselling, pastoral, etc,)

Social welfare services

Women's services (women's shelters, domestic violence counselling, etc.)

Youth work

Other

* A6. Does your organisation operate in other sectors as well?

Border enforcement

Child services

Customs enforcement

Education or VET

Diplomatic (consulates, etc.)

Governance and policymaking

Health services

Housing services

Immigrant advocacy

Immigration and asylum services

Immigrant integration

Internal law enforcement

Judiciary

Labour services

Legal services (legal aid, judiciary, etc.)

Psychological services (counselling, pastoral, etc,)

Social welfare services

Women's services (women's shelters, domestic violence counselling, etc.)

Youth work

Other

B. COVID-19 and professional life

* B1. Thinking of the period between the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and now, how severely has the pandemic affected your organisation's operations?

0 Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Very severly	Don´t know or choose not to answer

* B2. How severely has the pandemic affected your organisation's work with migrants?

0 Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Very severly	Don´t know or choose not to answer

* B3. What is your organisation's current operational status?

We are operating normally

We have not restricted our operations (e.g. we are working from home, but without loss in capacity)

We have somewhat restricted our operations

We have significantly restricted our operations

We have suspended our operations entirely

Choose not to answer

* B3. What is your organisation's current operational status?

Less than a month

1-2 months

3-4 months

5-6 months

7-8 months

9-10 months

11-12 months

1-2 years

3 years or more

Don't know or choose not to answer

* B4. How much longer do you believe your organisation's operations will be affected?

Less than a month

1-2 months

3-4 months

5-6 months

7-8 months

9-10 months

11-12 months

1-2 years

3 years or more

Don't know or choose not to answer

* B5. Does your organisation provide services directly related to COVID-19 (e.g. provision of health supplies, provision of health information, testing, contact tracing, medical treatment, etc.)?

No

Yes

Choose not to answer

* B6. If so, what services?

Please write your answer in the box below.

C. Practitioner contact with migrants

In this section, we will ask you about your work with recently-arrived migrants from non-EU countries. By recently-arrived, we mean having arrived in your country in 2015 or after.

* C1. **Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic**, how often did you have contact with recently-arrived migrants from non-EU countries during the course of your work? Please consider your organisation's target groups here, *not* your co- workers.

0 Never	1 Less than a month	2 Once a month	3 Several times a month	4 Once a week	5 Several times a week	6 Every day	Don´t know

* C2. **Under current COVID-19 conditions**, how often do you have contact with recently-arrived migrants from non- EU countries during the course of your work? Please consider your organisation's target groups here, *not* your co- workers.

0 Never	1 Less than a month	2 Once a month	3 Several times a month	4 Once a week	5 Several times a week	6 Every day	Don´t know

* C2. Thinking of recently-arrived migrants from non-EU countries with whom you normally have contact during the course of your work, to about what percentage of them do the following statements apply? *at least 6 answered row(s)*

	0-20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%	Don´t know
They arrive through regular channels (legal employment, family reunification, etc.)						
They arrive through irregular channels (covert border crossing, human smuggling, etc.)						
They arrive with travel documents						
They arrive without travel documents						
They are stateless						
They have already received protected status (asylum, refugee status, subsidiary protection, etc.)						

D. Practitioner assessment of migrant perceptions

In this section, we will ask how you think potential or recently-arrived migrants perceive your country and Europe. We remind you that, when we ask about your country, we mean the country in which you work.

Please answer with your professional opinions, based on your interactions with migrants when relevant. We do not expect you to answer on behalf of your organisation.

Please also consider persons who are transiting or attempting to transit through your country on their way to another destination.

* D1. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of your country? What about their view of Europe as a whole?
at least 2 answered row(s).

	0 Extremely negative view	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely positive view	Don´t know
My Country												
Europe												

* D2. And do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had a generally negative or positive view of the following aspects of life in Europe
at least 6 answered row(s)

	0 Extremely negative view	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely positive view	Don´t know
Overall quality of life												
Access to residence permission for migrants												
System of govern-ment												
Rule of law												
Oppor-tunity for family reunifica-tion												

Freedom of expression											
Access to social welfare											
Women's rights											
Economic opportunity											
Toler-ance and non-dis-crimination											
Access to health care											
Educational opportunity											
Safety and security											

* **D3**. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think most potential or recently-arrived migrants had generally inaccurate or accurate expectations regarding life in your country? What about their expectations regarding life in Europe as a whole?

at least 2 answered row(s).

	0 Extremely inaccurate expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely accurate expectations	Don´t know
My Country												
Europe												

* D4. And did most potential or recently-arrived migrants have generally inaccurate or accurate expectations regarding the following aspects of life in Europe?

at least 13 answered row(s)

	0 Extremely negative view	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely positive view	Don't know
Overall quality of life												
Access to residence permission for migrants												
System of govern-ment												
Rule of law												
Oppor-tunity for family reunifica-tion												
Freedom of expression												
Access to social welfare												
Women's rights												
Economic opportunity												
Toler-ance and non-dis-crimination												
Access to health care												
Educational opportunity												
Safety and security												

E. COVID-19 and migration

* E1. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on migration, as in all areas of life. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

at least 7 answered row(s)

	0 Disagree completely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Agree completely	Don't know
Migrants see life under COVID-19 in my country as better than in most countries												
Migrants see the state's reaction to COVID-19 in my country as more effective than in most countries												
COVID-19 will change the way migrants see my country for the worst												
COVID-19 will result in less migration to my country												
My country's borders should be closed as long as COVID-19 remains a threat												
Normal immigration services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat												
Asylum services in my country should be suspended as long as COVID-19 remains a threat												

F. Decision-making and migration

In this section, we will ask you how you think inaccurate information influences migration to Europe from non-EU countries. Please answer with your professional opinions, based on your interactions with migrants when relevant. We do not expect you to answer on behalf of your organisation.

* **F1**. Migration is always a complex phenomenon, influenced by both personal decisions and external factors (violence, different political situations, different levels of opportunity, etc.). Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, which factor do you believe has more influence on their mobility behaviour?

0 Personal decisions have more impact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know

* **F2**. Considering the recently-arrived migrants with whom you work, how important do you think the following factors are in motivating migration to Europe?their mobility behaviour?
at least 5 answered row(s)

	0 Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely important	Don't know
Generally positive conditions for migrants in Europe (security, strong economy, etc.)												
Person-specific opportunities in Europe (family reunification, a specific job or opportunity, etc.)												
Generally negative conditions in the country of origin (war, weak economy, etc.)												
Person-specific threats in the country of origin (religious persecution, sexual discrimination, etc.)												
Other factors or details												

Please specify the other factors below.

G. Misinformation and migration

* G1. Based on your professional experience, how serious of a problem for potential and recently-arrived migrants is *inaccurate information* about conditions along migration pathways, countries of transit, and countries of destination?
at least 4 answered row(s)

	0 Not a serious problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - An extremely serious problem	Don´t know
Inaccurate information about migration infrastructure or service providers (e.g. human traffickers or smugglers)												
Inaccurate information about conditions along migration pathways												
Inaccurate information about conditions in countries of transit												
Inaccurate information about conditions in countries of destination												

* G2. Based on your professional experience, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
at least 7 answered row(s)

	0 Disagree completely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Agree completely	Don´t know
Many migrants migrate to my country using *regular channels* because of inaccurate information about life here												
Many migrants migrate to my country using *irregular channels* because of inaccurate information about life here												
Many *asylum seekers* come to my country because of inaccurate information about life here												
Many migrants use dangerous migration routes because of inaccurate information about the risks and benefits												

Many migrants engage human smugglers because of inaccurate information about the risks and benefits										
New migrants who come to my country based on inaccurate information are more likely to commit crimes										
New migrants who come to my country based on inaccurate information are more likely to become radicalised										

H. Cross-sector contact

* **H1**. How often do you come into professional contact with practitioners from your sector in the following regions? Is this contact mostly positive or negative?

at least 3 answered row(s)

	Frequent contact, mostly negative	Some contact, mostly negative	0 - No contact	Some contact, mostly positive	Frequent contact, mostly positive
Other regions in my country					
EU member states					
Non-EU states					

* **H1**. How often do you come into contact with practitioners from the following sectors? Is this contact mostly positive or negative?

at least 3 answered row(s)

	Frequent contact, mostly negative	Some contact, mostly negative	0 - No contact	Some contact, mostly positive	Frequent contact, mostly positive
Border enforcement					
Child services					
Customs enforcement					
Education or VET					

Diplomatic (consulates, etc.)					
Governance and policymaking					
Health services					
Housing services					
Immigrant advocacy					
Immigrant integration					
Immigration and asylum services					
Internal law enforcement					
Judiciary					
Labour services					
Legal services (legal aid, judiciary, etc.)					
Psychological services (counselling, pastoral, etc.)					
Social welfare services					
Women's services (women's shelters, domestic violence, counselling, etc.)					
Youth work					
Other					

Please specify the other sectors that you come into contact with.

I. Organisational self-assessment (EU only section)

In this section, we will ask you to evaluate your organisation. Please answer with your professional opinions. Your organisation will not have access to your responses. If you choose not to answer a certain question, your other answers will still be very helpful.

* I1. How effective is your organisation in providing accurate information to migrants?

0 Not effective at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely effective	Don't know or choose not to answer

* I2. How effective is your organisation in its work with migrants overall?

0 Not effective at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely effective	Don't know or choose not to answer

* I3. Do any of the following barriers inhibit your organisation's effectiveness in working with migrants?
at least 14 answered row(s)

	0 No, not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Yes, very severely	Don't know or choose not to answer
Legal constraints												
Jurisdictional conflicts												
Insufficient human resources												
Lack of professional training												
Stress or psychological burden of the work performed												
Insufficient salary for the work performed												
Lack of necessary facilities or infrastructure												
Poor coordination among stakeholders (NGOs, etc.)												

Lack of coherent strategies and procedures											
Lack of suitable operational tools (hardware, software, etc.)											
Lack of expertise											
Language barriers											
Cultural barriers											
Lack of comprehensive data on migrants											
Other											

Please specify what other factors inhibit your organisation's effectiveness.

J. Socio-demographic information

* J1. All things considered, how satisfied are or were you with…? *(EU-only question)*
at least 11 answered row(s)

	0 Extremely dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely satisfied	Don't know
… your life currently?												
… your life before COVID-19?												
… your job currently?												
… your job before COVID-19?												
… your work-life balance currently?												
… your work-life balance before COVID-19?												
… your working conditions currently?												
… your salary currently?												

... the current social recognition of your work?										
... the European Union's current migration policies?`										
... your country's current migration policies?										

* J2. About how many years have you been working in your current field?
Only values between 0 and 99 are allowed

* J3. J3. In your main job, do you have any responsibility for supervising the work of other employees?

No   Yes   Choose not to answer

* J4. How many people are you responsible for?
Only values between 0 and 99 are allowed

* J5. All things considered, how much does the management at your work allow you to...? *(EU-only question)*

	0 I have no influence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 I have complete control	Don't know or choose not to answer
...decide how your own daily work is organised?												
... influence policy decision about the activities of the organisation?												

* J6. How many countries have you lived in? Consider periods of six months or longer.
Only values between 0 and 99 are allowed

* J7. How many languages do you speak? Consider those in which you could have an everyday conversation.

Only values between 0 and 99 are allowed

* J8. what country were you born?

* J9. What is your gender identity?

      Male

      Female

      Other

      Choose not to answer

* J10. How old are you?

      18-29

      20-29

      30-39

      40-49

      50-59

      60-69

      70 or above

      choose not to answer

* J11. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

      Primary education

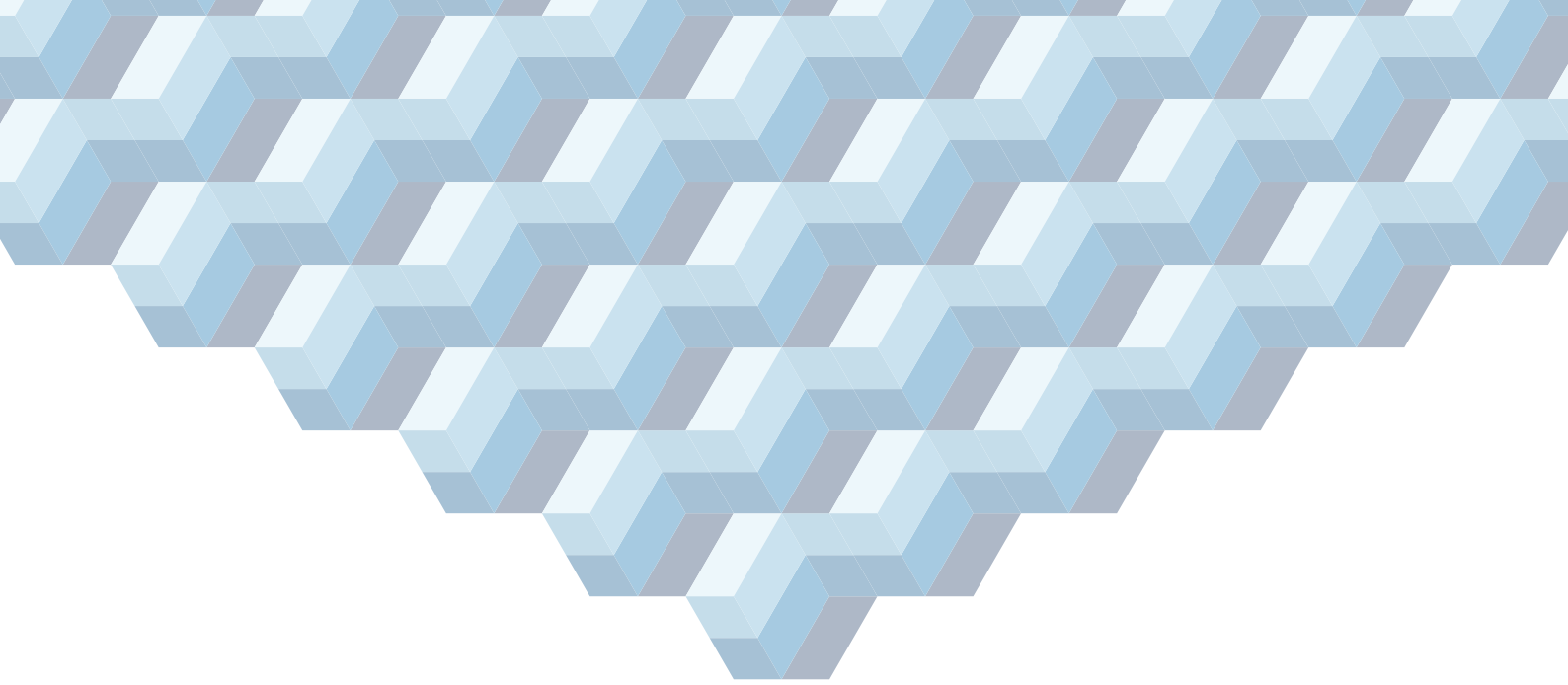   Secondary education

      Vocational training or professional certificate

      Bachelor's degree

      Master's degree

      Doctorate

PERCEPTIONS