

The background of the slide features a photograph of a building with a blue-tinted glass facade. In the foreground, there is a large, blue, oval-shaped logo with twelve yellow stars arranged in a circle, similar to the European Union flag. The letters 'EASO' are mounted on the wall in a 3D, metallic style, partially overlapping the blue oval. A large, semi-transparent blue circle with a yellow border is positioned on the right side of the slide, containing the main title and date.

# **EASO CONSULTATIVE FORUM THEMATIC WEBINAR**

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19  
ON ASYLUM IN THE EU**  
23 JULY 2020



# Impact of Covid-19 on EASO activities

Session 1: Presentation by Mark Camilleri Head of Executive Office

## EASO horizontal response to covid-19



### Contingency Plan

Adjustment to existing or planned activities in response to covid-19 and a special contingency plan has been drawn up to cover all EASO's activities



### Covid-19 Response Team

The COVID response team has been addressing the situation as it evolved, discussing the measures needed to be taken within the Agency at every stage



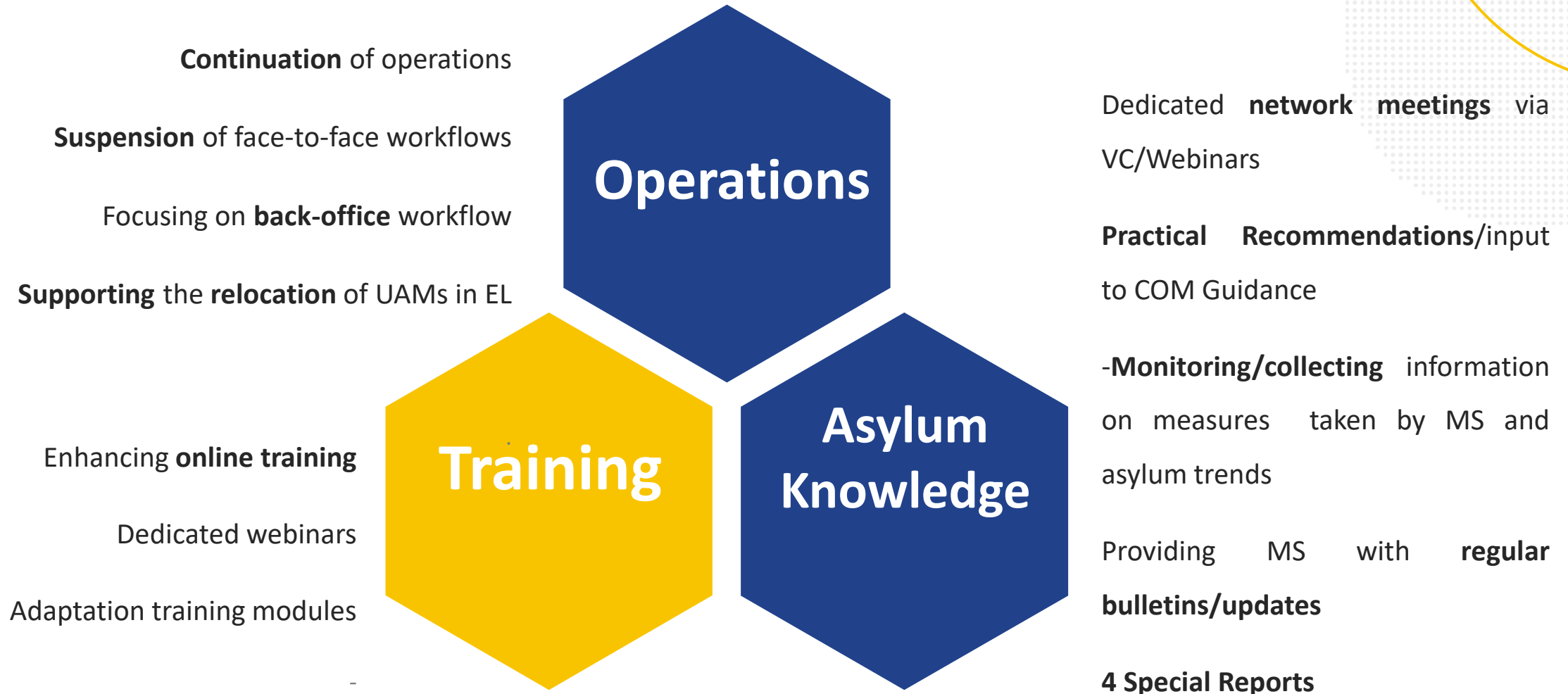
### Return to Office Plan

A Return to Office Plan was finalized for the EASO premises for a gradual return of the staff members to the office while adopting physical distance rules and respecting the requirements imposed by MS



# Session 1: Impact of covid-19 on EASO activities

Presentation by Mark Camilleri Head of Executive Office





# The impact of Covid-19 on Member States' asylum and reception systems

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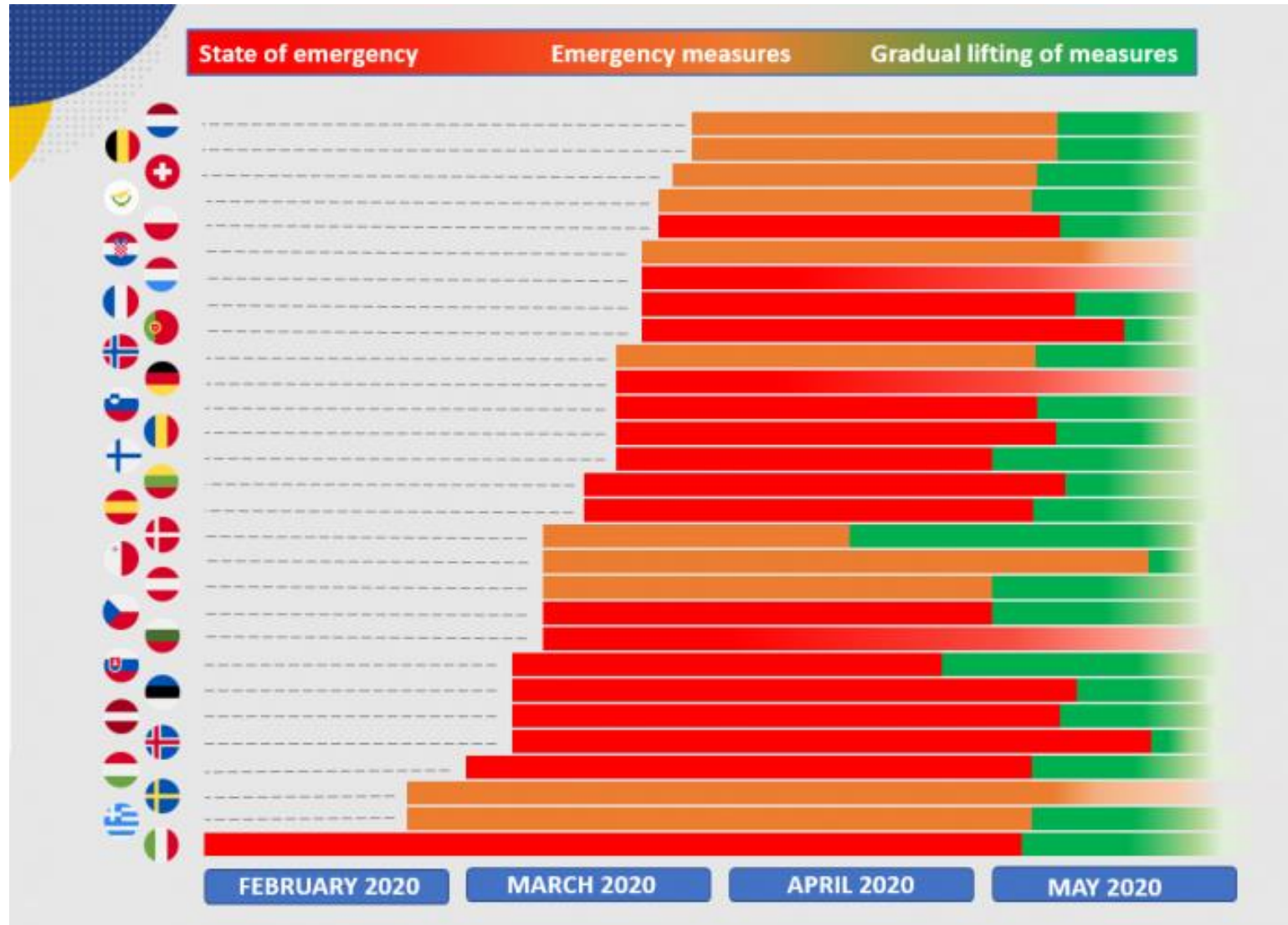
## Session 1

Presented by Maria Papaioannou,  
Information and Analysis Officer



# Key Findings

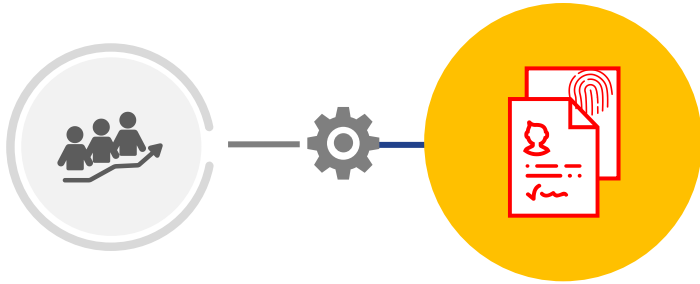
Emergency measures on the basis of public health and security







# Asylum and Reception procedures



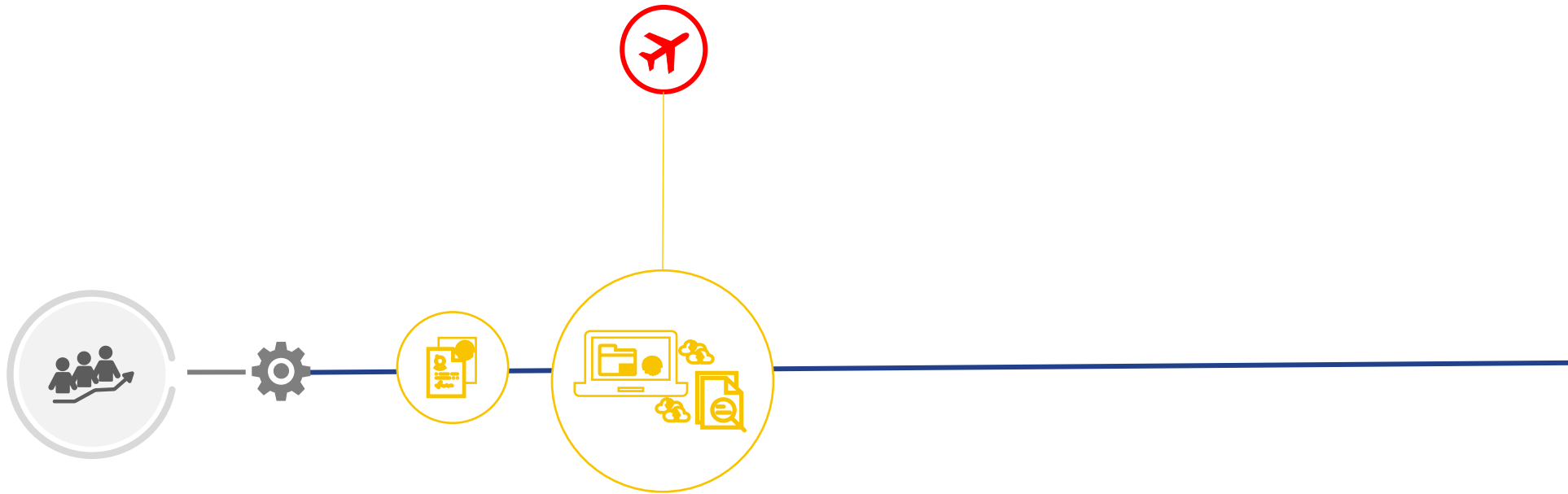
## Registration/Lodging

- suspended or restricted
- extensions of deadlines to apply
- introduction of electronic tools to lodge applications/ submit documents





# Asylum and Reception procedures



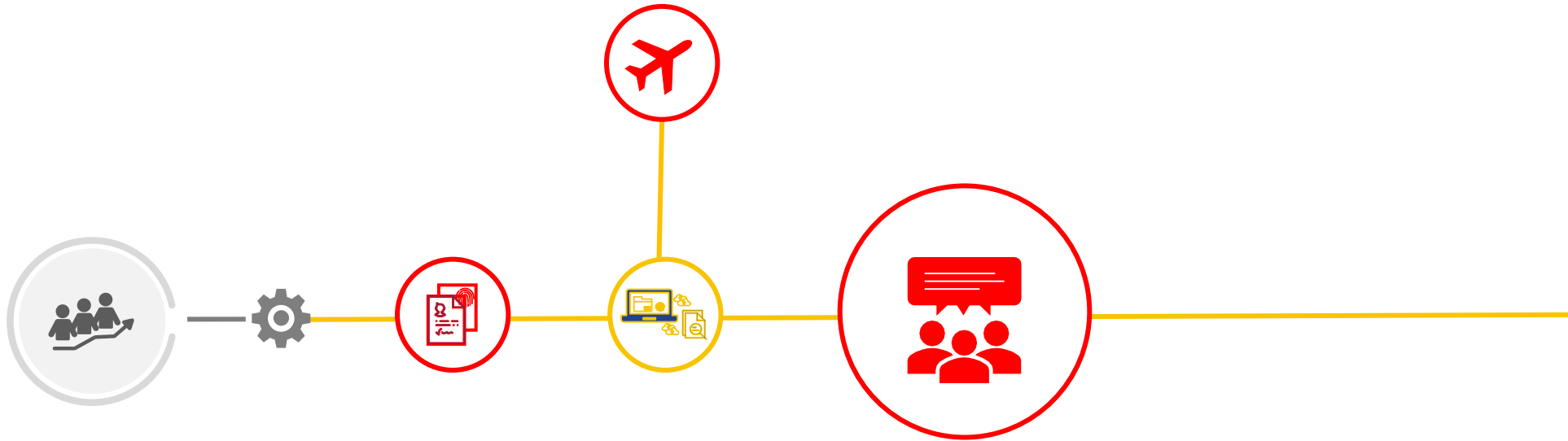
## Dublin Procedures

- Suspension of Dublin transfers





# Asylum and Reception procedures



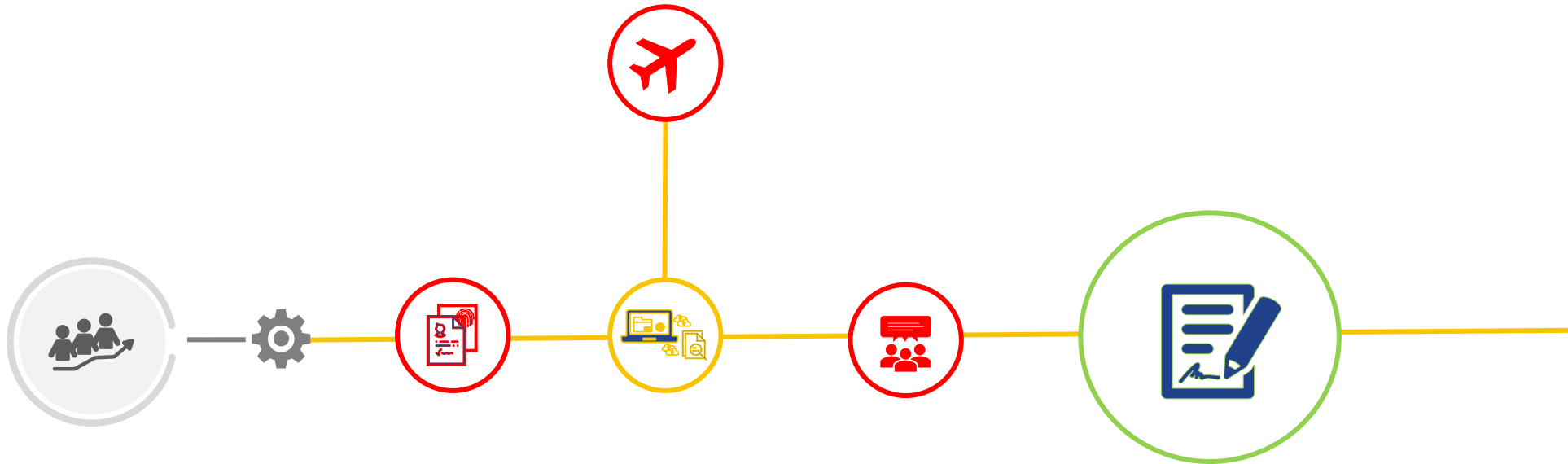
## Personal Interviews

- At least, 17 EU+ countries discontinued personal interviews during the emergency measures.
- Resumption through alternative methods and modalities to carry out or resume personal interviews. (e.g. video-conference, extensive preventative measures)





# Asylum and Reception procedures



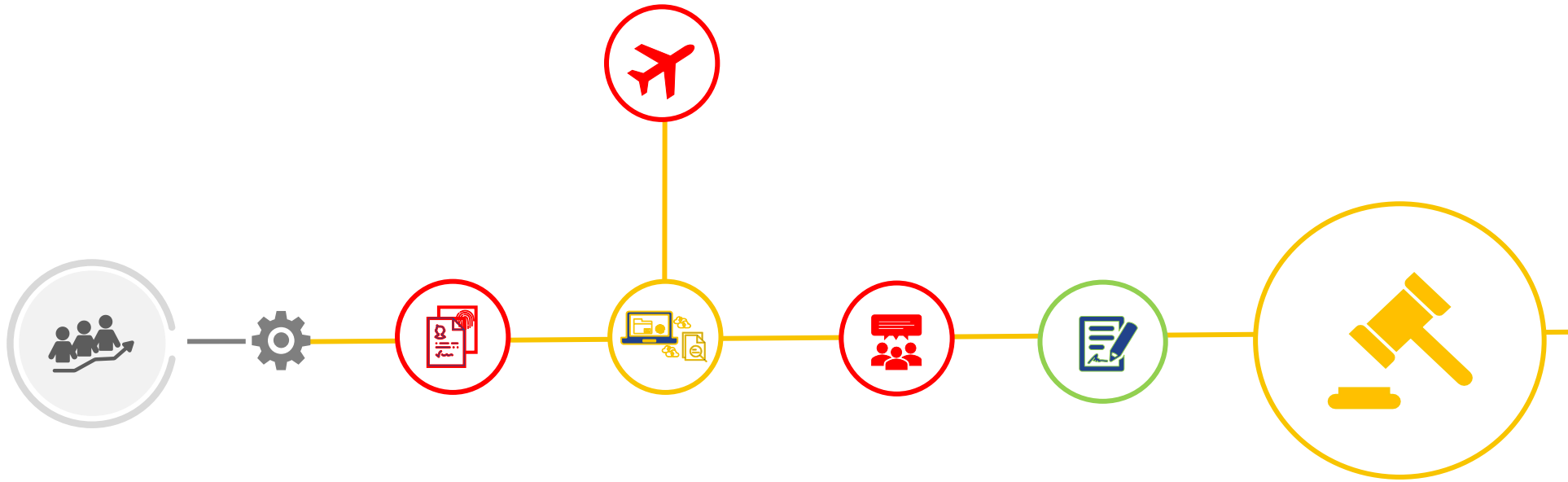
## Decisions

- Teleworking arrangements in national authorities allowed for the processing of existing backlogs
- Postal disruptions, internal reorganisation and/or lack of services (e.g. legal aid/interpretation) have affected the notification of decisions.





# Asylum and Reception procedures



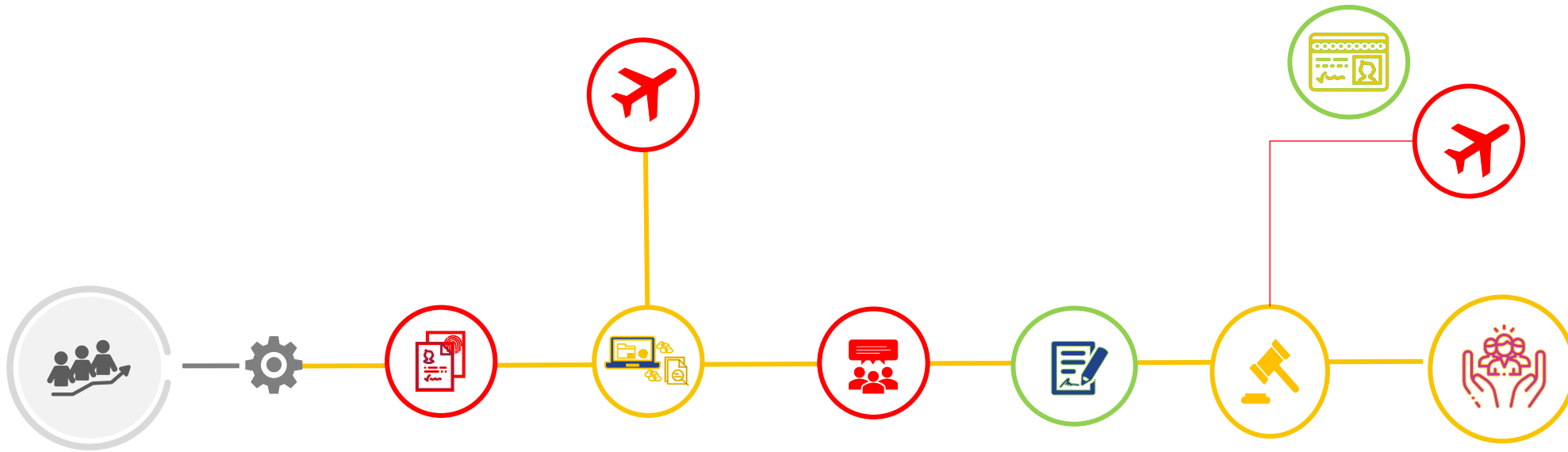
## Appeal Procedures

- Access to public was limited or suspended
- Hearings suspended or limited to urgent cases
- New arrangements in place videoconference, telework, written procedures, use of electronic tools, extensive preventative measures and new ways of work (re-adaptation of rooms, limitation of number of people present in the same room etc).





# Asylum and Reception procedures



Impact on Return, integration activities

Resettlement and family reunification also affected

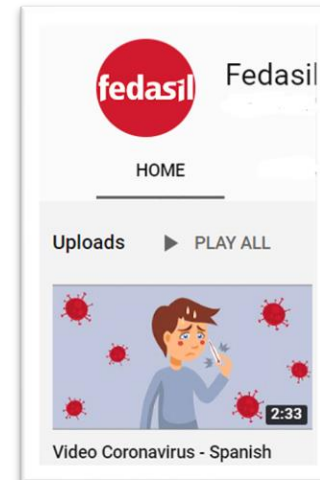
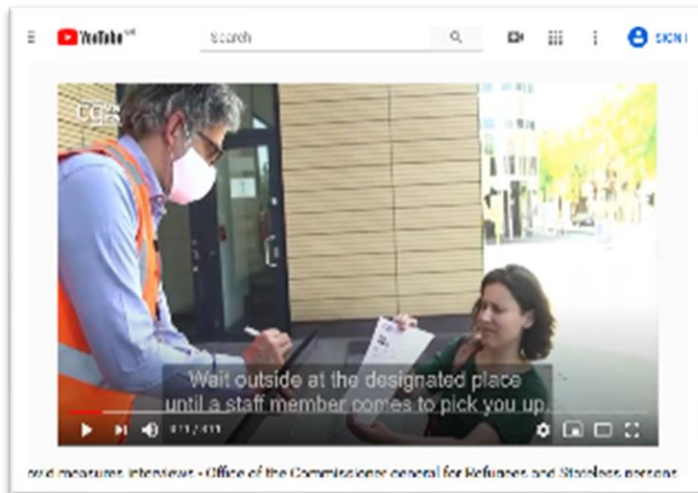




# Reception procedure



- Specific measures for newly-arrived asylum seekers (self-isolation, quarantine, placement in emergency structures and health screening)
- Creation of emergency shelters
- Medical screening
- Reorganization of services (food/cash distribution, educational/other group activities)
- Provision of information
- Impact on detention





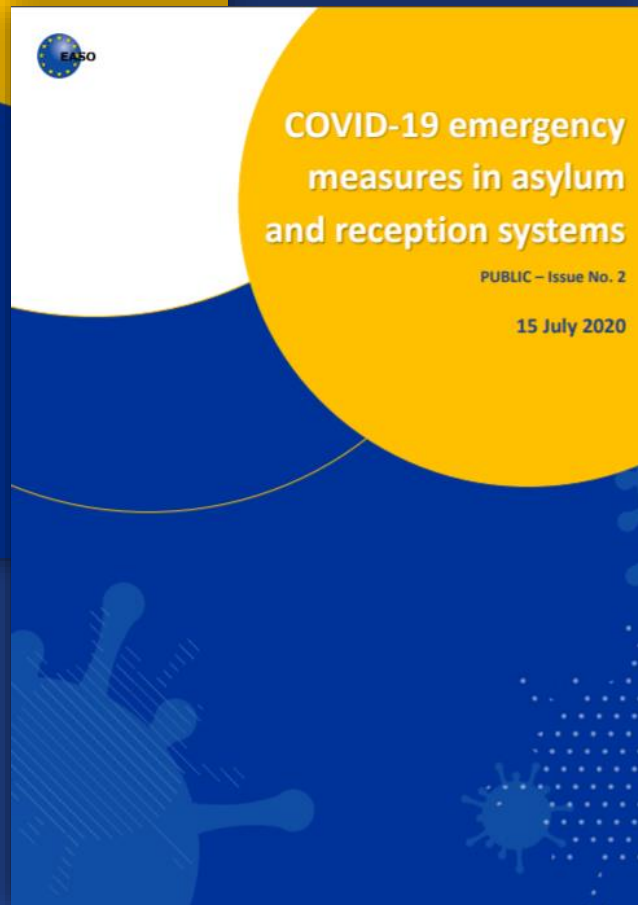
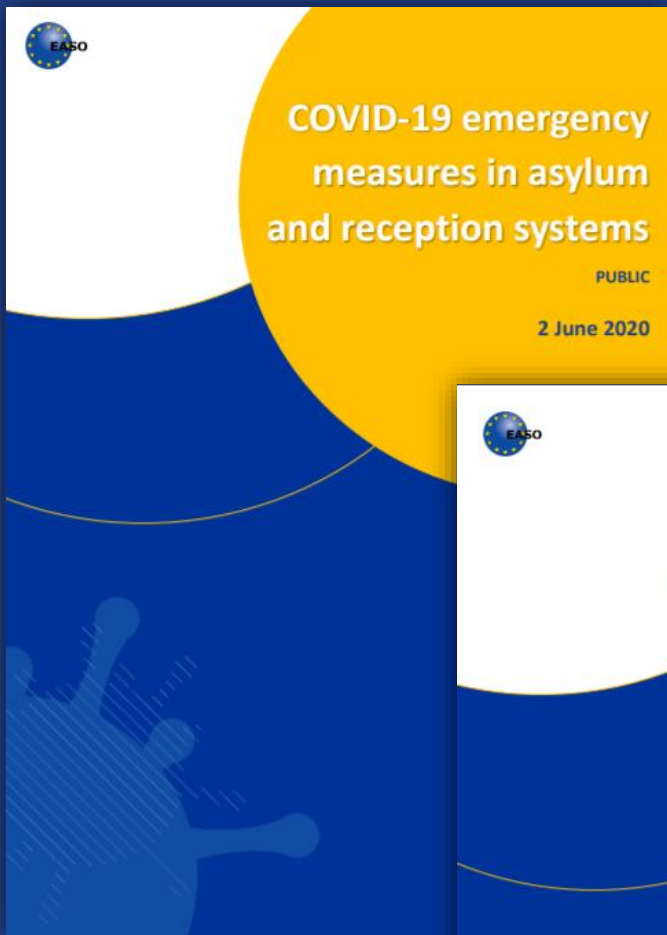


# Covid-19 measures in asylum and reception – Way Forward?

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- **New tools and processes as the emerging ‘new normal’**
- **E-governance:** automatisisation of processes, introduction of electronic tools for registration and lodging an application, remote management of applications, provision of information with video tools adjusted to different target groups, remote interviewing via IT means, inter-operability of technical solutions
- Development of **contingency plans** for the immediate operationalisation of emergency shelters or isolation areas will be crucial for controlling infections within reception centers
- **New challenges** e.g. the quality of remote interviews, access to and skills needed to use electronic tools by applicants, the quality of processes and data protection
- **EASO is supporting MSs to adapt to new processes:**
  - **Practical recommendations on conducting the personal interview remotely**
  - **Practical recommendations on conducting remote/online registration (lodging) EASO Practical Guide Series, June 2020**





# Covid-19 Emergency Measures in Asylum and Reception

EMAR reports available at  
EASO website





# QUESTION & ANSWER

SESSION



# The challenges faced by CSOs working in the field of asylum in the EU

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## Session 2

Presented by Catherine Woollard,  
Director ECRE



# The impact of of covid-19 on CSOs working in the field of asylum in the EU

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## Session 2

Presented by Portuguese Refugee Council,  
Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen,  
Swedish Red Cross



# The impact of Covid-19 on Asylum Seekers



## Challenges and Practices on the Ground

VLUCHTELINGENWERK VLAANDEREN



# Table of contents



- Who are we?
- The changes in the procedure after the outbreak of COVID-19
- The challenges on the ground



# Who are we?



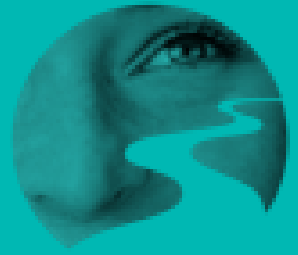
Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen is an umbrella organization that defends refugee rights

- **Field work**
- Putting pressure on the policy.
- Sensitizing the general public.
- Supporting everyone who is in solidarity with refugees.





# Changes after the outbreak of COVID-19



**March 25:**  
Monitoring  
twice in a  
week



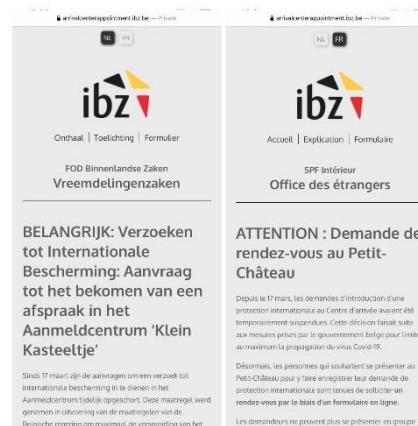
**April 6:**  
The Corona Actors  
+  
Daily monitoring at the  
Arrival Center

**April 16:**  
Supporting AS with  
filling the online  
form

**March 17:**  
The closure of the  
Arrival Center  
(IBZ+FEDASIL)



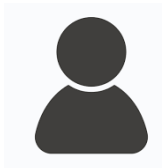
**April 6:**  
The Online  
Appointment  
System



INTERNET



FR / NL





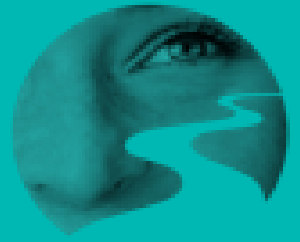
# The challenges faced by AS



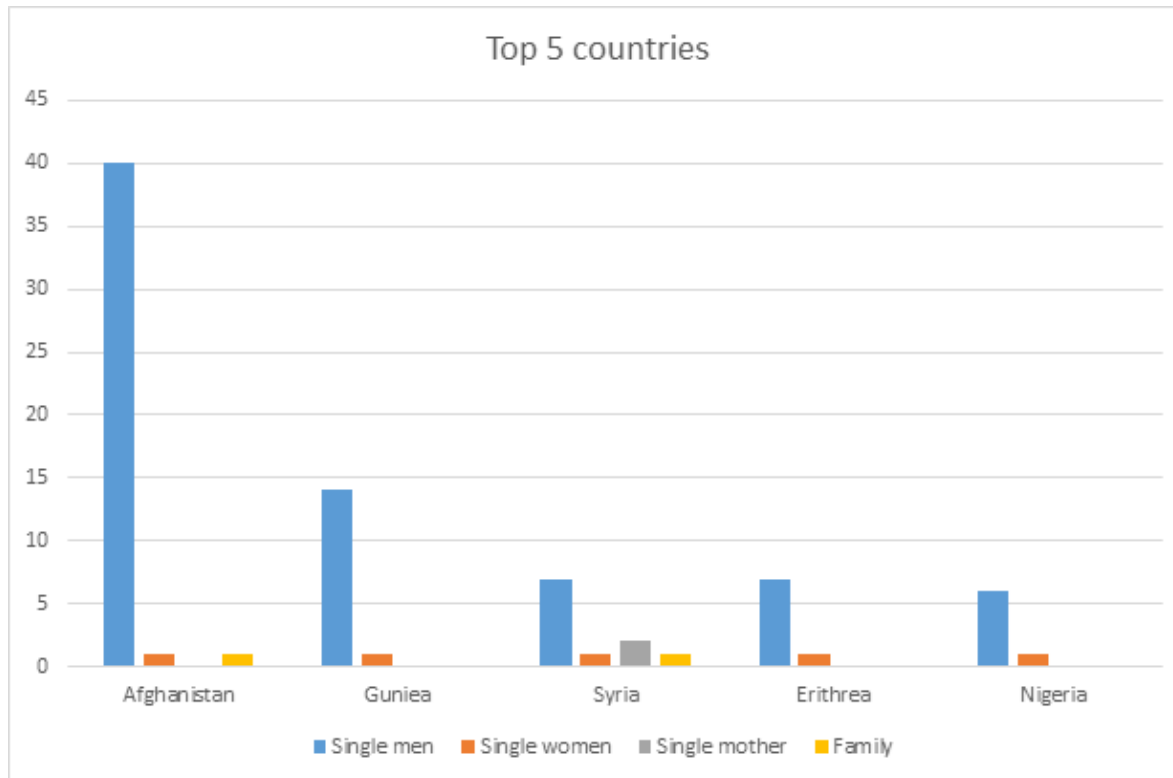
- April 17, Mamadou
  - **partially disabled**, no phone, no technological literacy, no good language skills
  - no confirmation e-mail, **23 days** in the streets
- May 04, Babeni
  - no email address, phone, no technological literacy, no network
  - he did not receive the invitation e-mail waited, **5 weeks** in the street
- June 11, A family composed of 8
  - a baby, a toddler, a child with epilepsy
  - no phone, no literacy, no network
  - **5 weeks and still waiting for an appointment**



# The Challenges faced by the NGOs



125 asylum seekers **IN THE STREETS**- Covid-19 prevention?  
From 24 countries





# The Civil Society Pushes for an Exit-strategy



June 22 -July 17: 116 AS

The labor court condemns Fedasil:

- a pandemic situation
- forced to survive on the street or in precarious emergency shelter with private individuals or NGOs
- danger on public health



“respecting the court’s decision no matter what”

overtime developed into

“not taking responsibility”

CSOs are going to the Court of First Instance!!



# Conclusion



If the online registration was launched as a measure to protect asylum seekers and public health from Covid-19,  
Could we say that it meets its objective?



Thank you for your attention!  
Startpunt Field Team

If you are interested in reading our “situation reports”,  
please do not hesitate to contact us:

Sagia Hammoud: [sagia.hammoud@vluchtelingenwerk.be](mailto:sagia.hammoud@vluchtelingenwerk.be)  
Gizem Dinç: [gizem@vluchtelingenwerk.be](mailto:gizem@vluchtelingenwerk.be)



# Meeting mental health and psychosocial needs during the Covid-19 pandemic: Swedish Red Cross experiences

Sara Fridlund, [sara.fridlund@redcross.se](mailto:sara.fridlund@redcross.se)

EASO webinar 23 July 2020





# Swedish Red Cross Health and Care Department

- Six treatment centers for refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants affected by torture, armed conflict and migration.
- Members of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, IRCT.
- 1 695 patients received treatment in 2019.





# Adjustments to the Covid-19 pandemic

- Digital solutions for meetings with patients in our treatment centers.
- A psychosocial support hotline for the public.
- A digital platform focused on mental health:  
<https://www.rodakorset.se/fahjalp/psykisk-halsa-och-psykisk-ohalsa/>
- Communication efforts and local response.





# Meeting patients through digital solutions

- **Implementation process**

- Identification of project group and outline of a project design
- Review and identification of possible solutions/tools
- Risk analysis
- Selection of 3 digital solutions / tools: 1) Care Connect by KRY, 2) Microsoft Teams and 3) “My healthcare-meeting”
- Development of routines
- Launch





# Meeting patients through digital solutions: lessons learnt

## Positive

- Quick process to set up.
- Enables maintained services for persons in need.
- Some patients are more satisfied.
- Possibility for the future: reach persons in more remote areas, increase access to services.

## Negative

- Physical meetings are in most cases preferred.
- Security and confidentiality issues.
- Technical challenges.
- Holistic response not possible and certain interventions cannot be done.
- Not suitable for all persons.

➔ To be further evaluated

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**Thank you!**



**Swedish Red Cross**





# QUESTION & ANSWER

SESSION



# Anticipated and emerging asylum trends

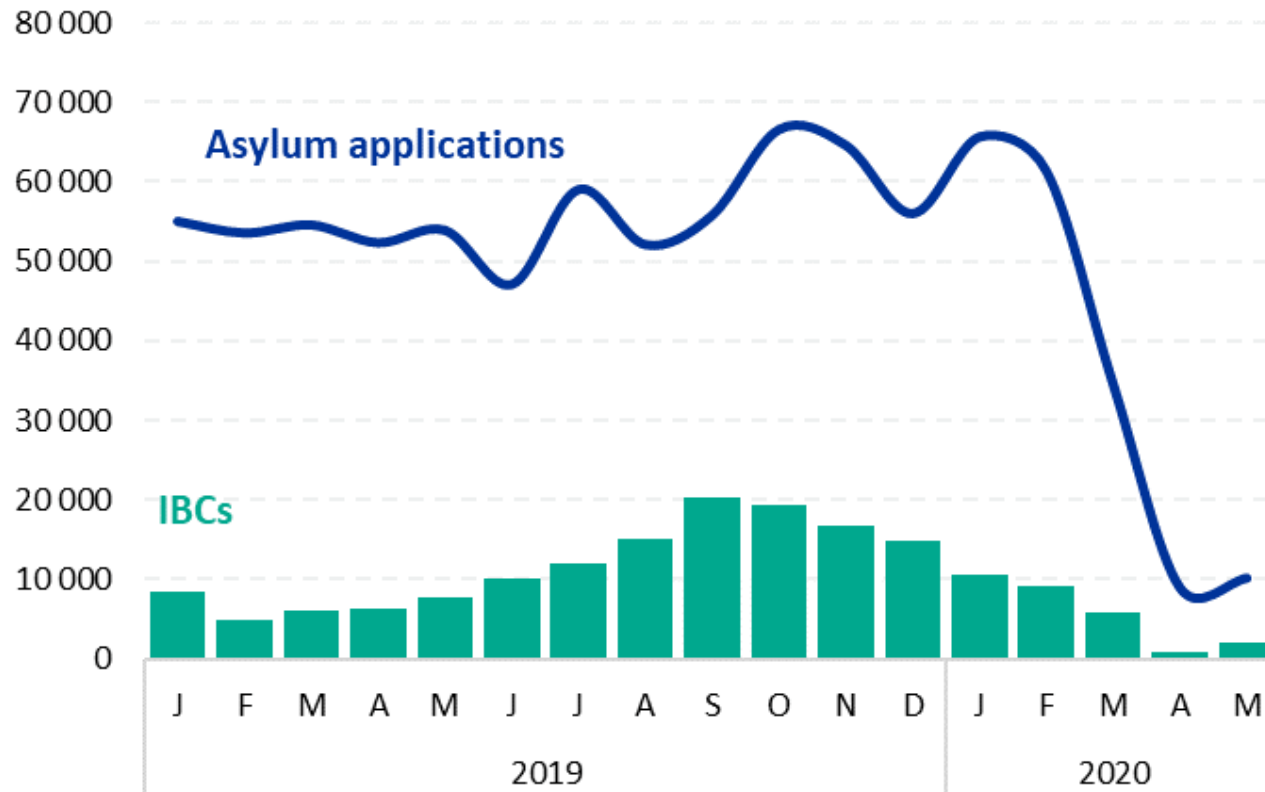
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## Session 3: What is next ?

Presented by Teddy Wilkin,  
Head of Data Analysis and Research Sector



# Asylum applications in the EU+ during the COVID-19 outbreak



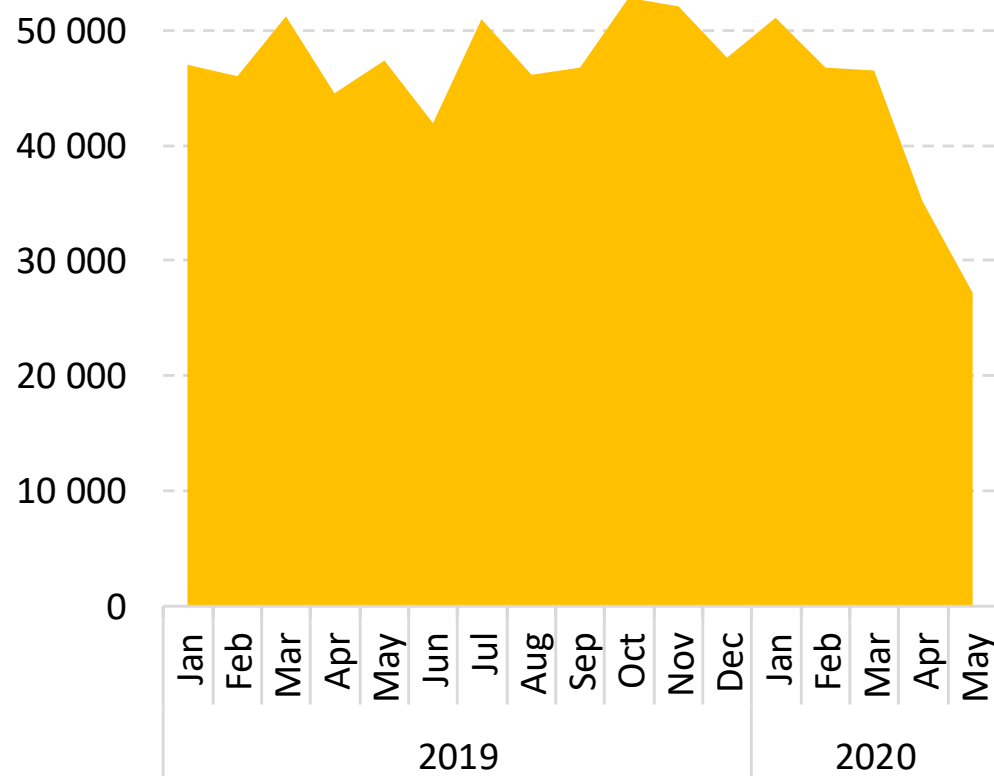
Source: EASO and Frontex data.

- Before the COVID-19 outbreak, asylum applications were much increased
- In May applications down by 85% compared to pre-COVID levels (10 200)
- Continually more applications than illegal border crossings

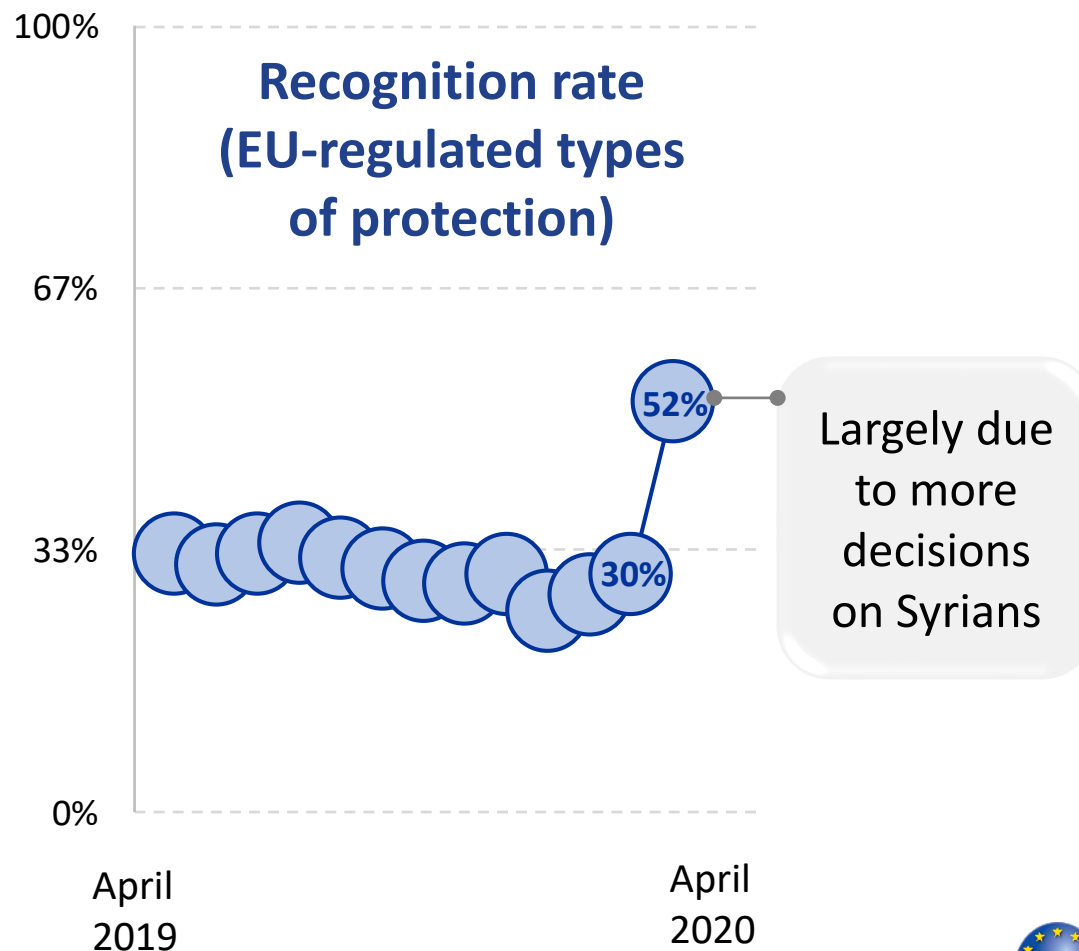


# Fewer asylum decisions and a different caseload

## First-instance decisions



## Recognition rate (EU-regulated types of protection)





# How to understand, monitor and forecast the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?



**COVID-19 cases and patterns**

## Factors with direct and indirect impacts on asylum-related migration



**Conflict and violence**



**Food insecurity and poverty**



**Age structure of the population**

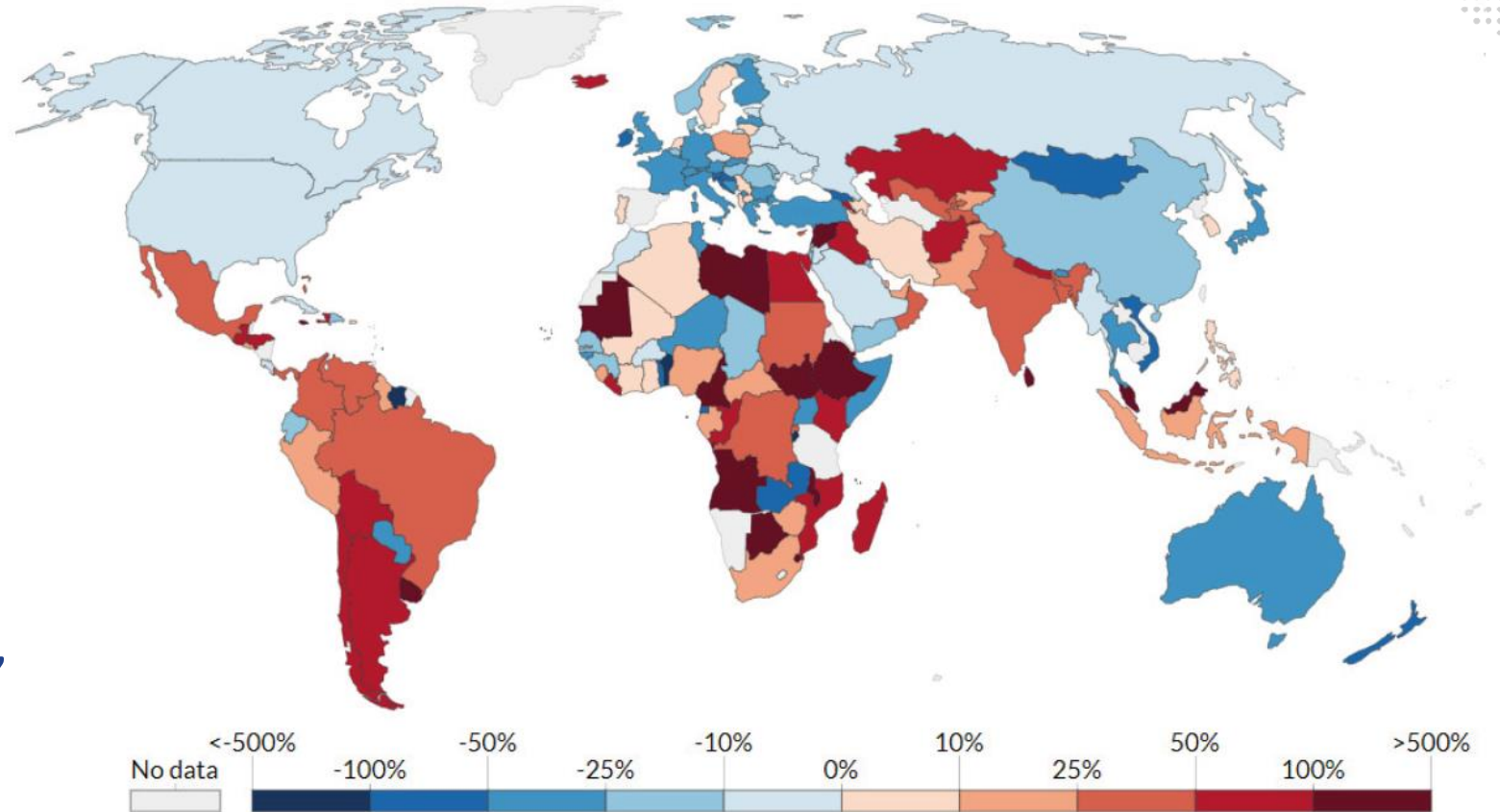


**Epidemic risk/health care**



# COVID-19 spread in countries of origin

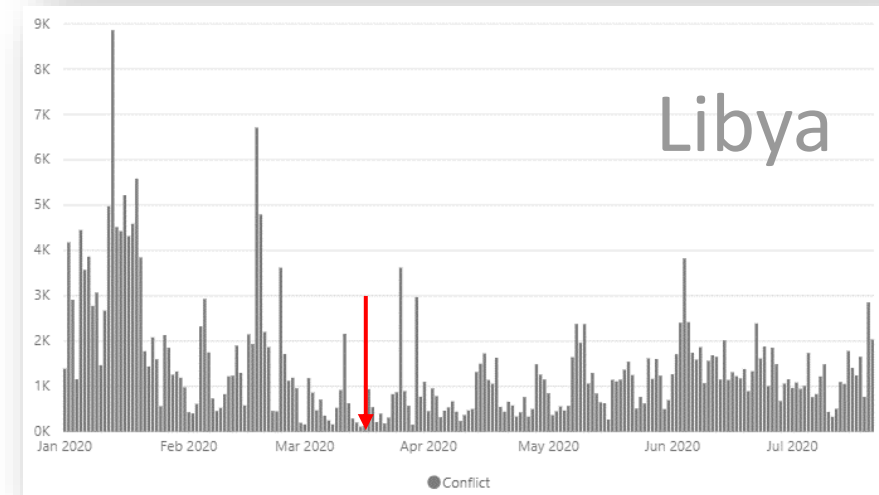
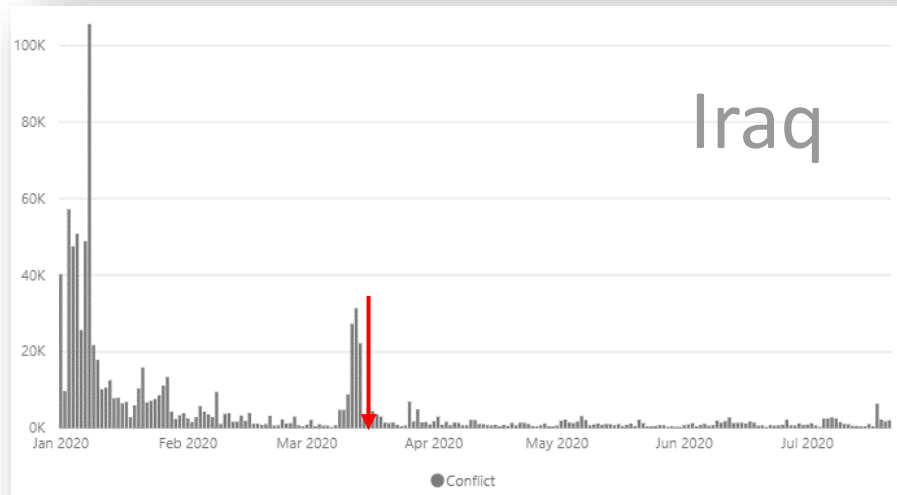
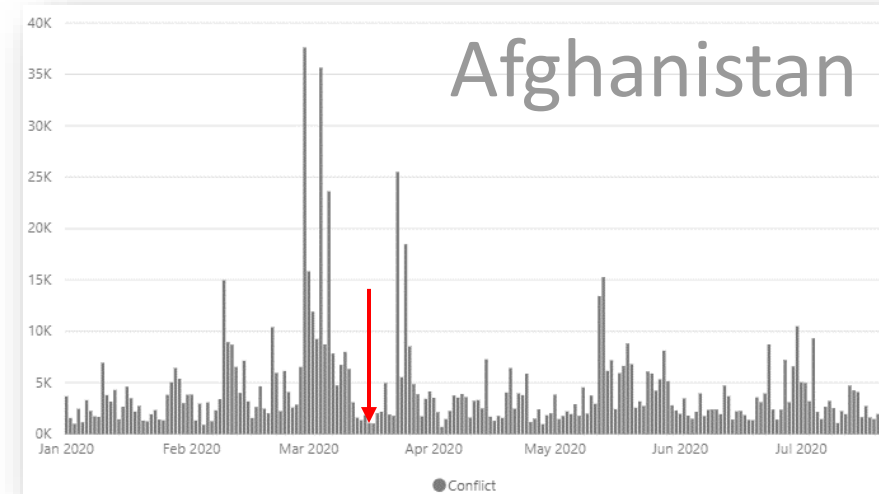
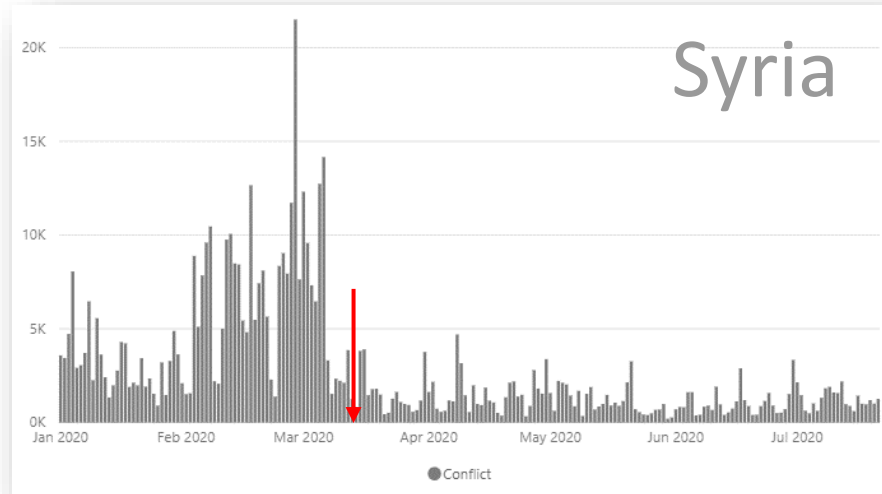
- Pandemic slowing down in the EU+ but rising in South America, Russia and some African countries
- Importance of testing facilities
- Likely impact on the economy, living conditions, poverty, conflict etc.



*Figure 25: Weekly change in confirmed COVID-19 cases (Source: ECDC, Our World in Data). Note: The weekly growth rate on any given date measures the percentage change in the number of new confirmed cases over the last seven days relative to the number in the previous seven days.*



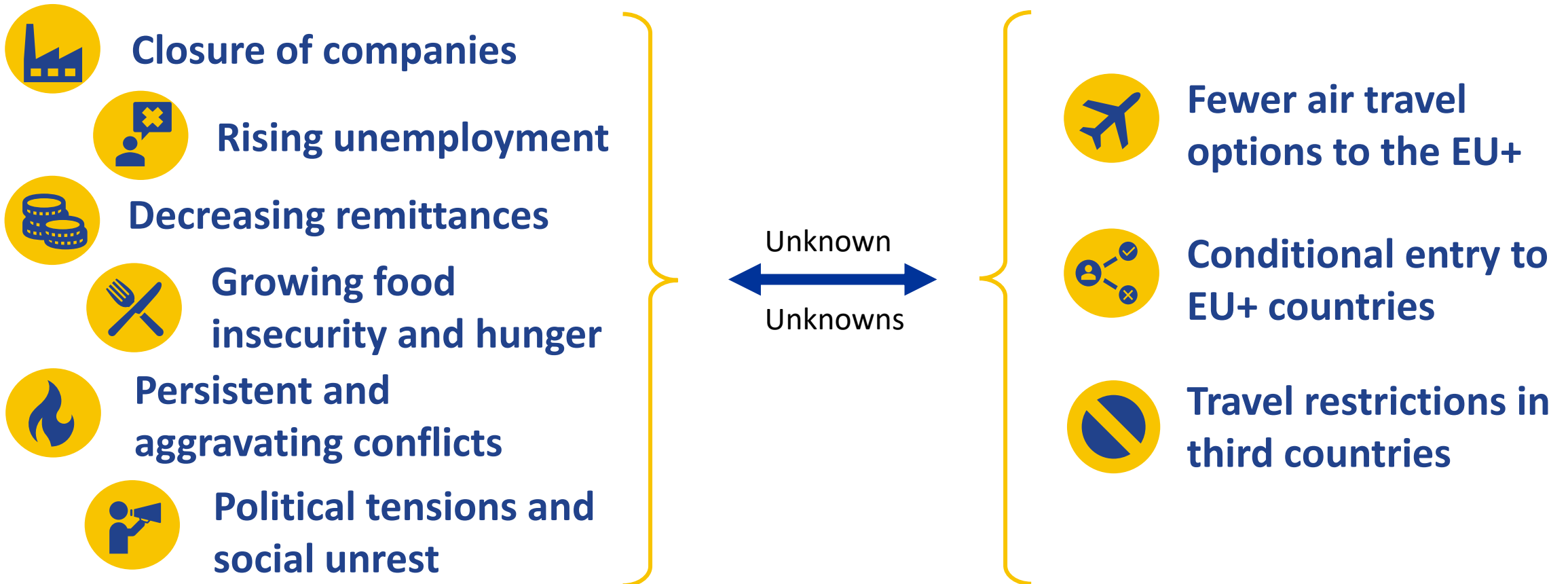
# Conflicts reduced in some but not all areas





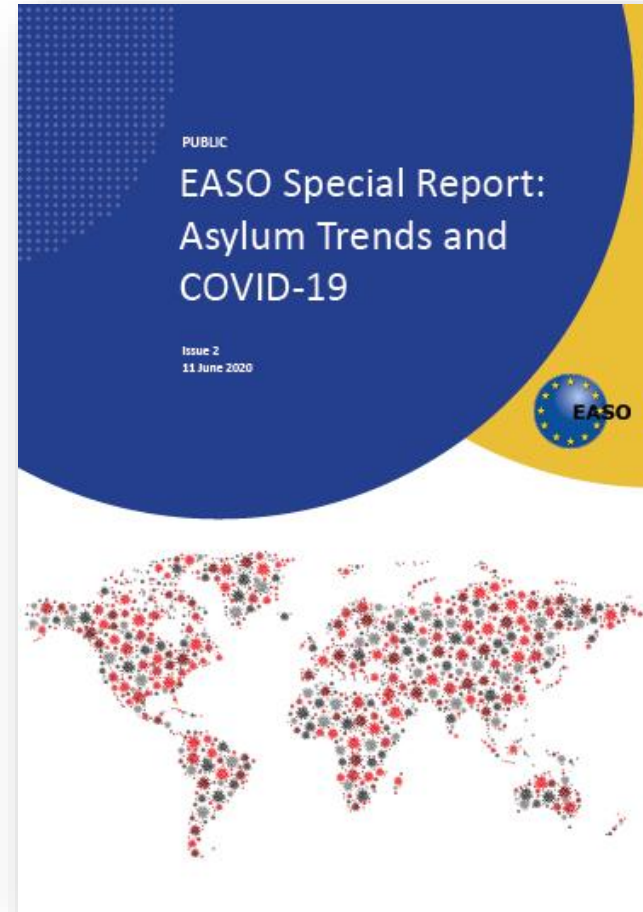
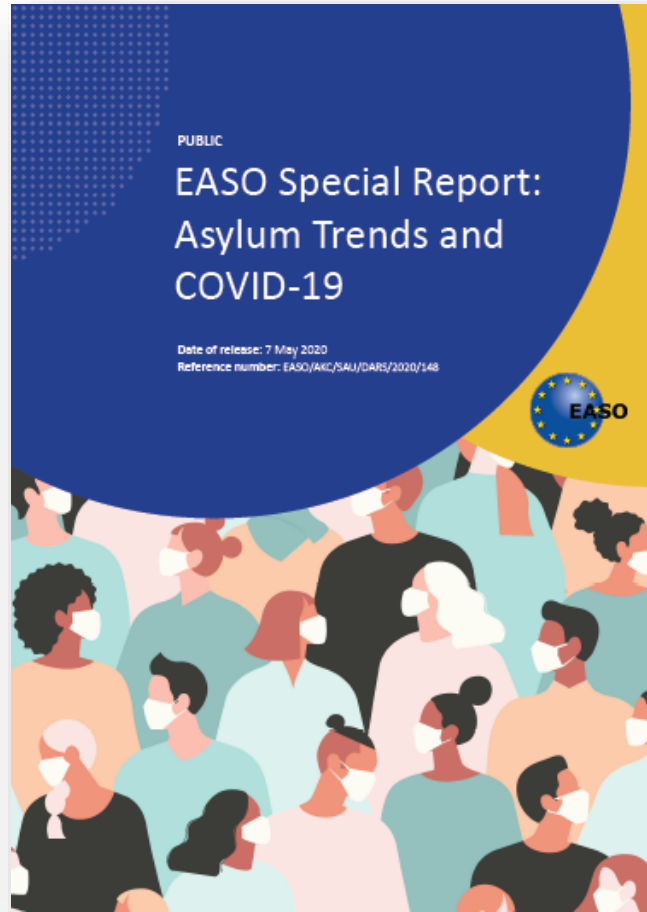
# Forecasting the post COVID-19 environment

- Data are not good enough for forecasting models
- Scenarios require experts to have previous experience





# Special reports on COVID-19 & asylum trends





# The future of the CEAS in the wake of covid-19

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## Session 3: What is next ?

Presented by Ioana Pelin-Raducu  
Policy Officer, DG HOME



# Recommendations for asylum policy in the wake of covid-19

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## Session 3: What is next ?

Presented by Nina Schrepfer,  
Senior Legal Officer UNHCR  
Brussels Office





# QUESTION & ANSWER

SESSION





**THANK YOU**

