

# European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

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- European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) an alliance founded in 1974
- Comprises 106 organisations in 40 European countries
- Mission: promote the establishment of fair and humane European asylum policies and practices in accordance with international human rights law

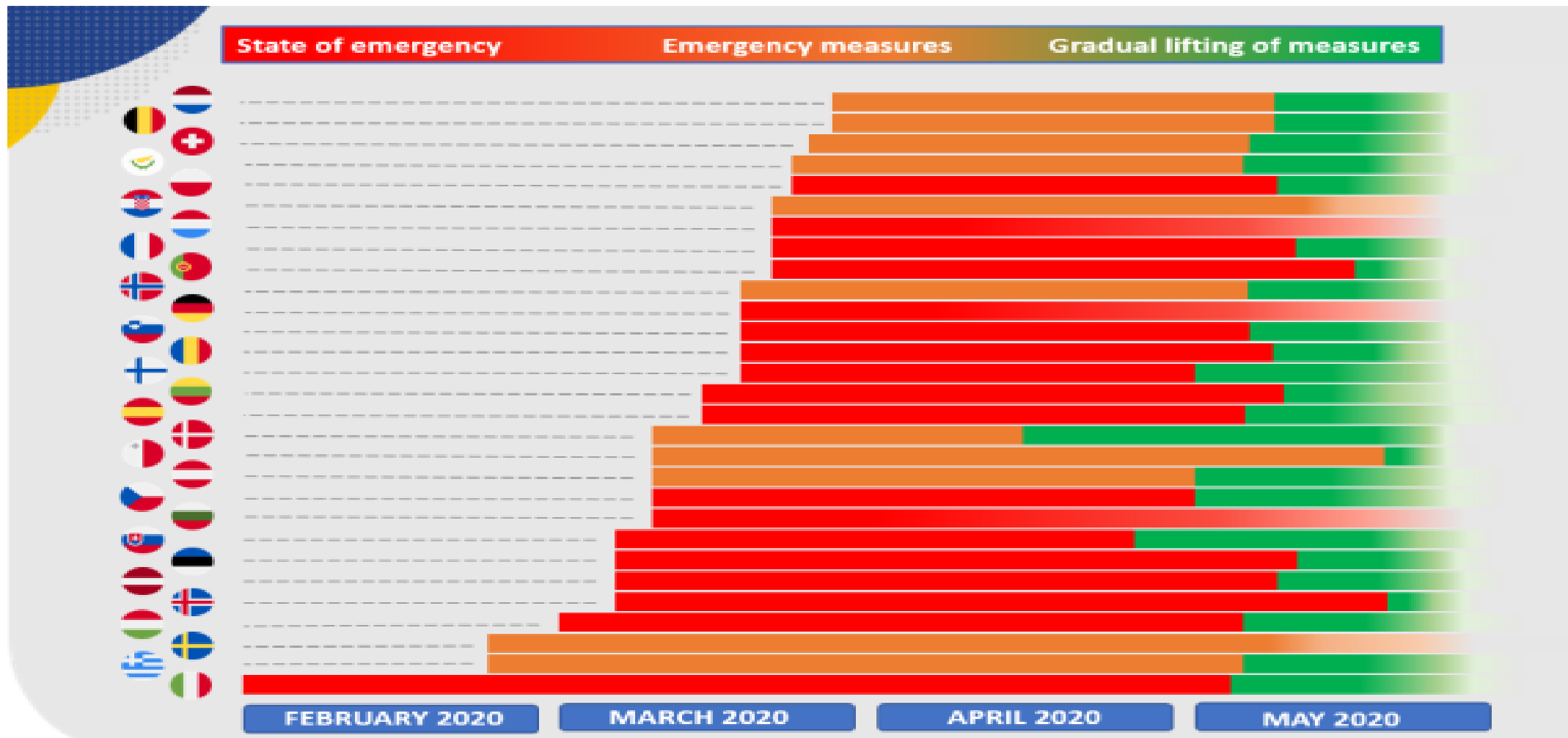
# The impact of Covid-19 on Refugees

- No countries or communities spared from the covid-19 pandemic
- It hit vulnerable communities the hardest, including refugees and migrant communities
- Measures to prevent the spread of the virus do not work for refugees
- The virus exposes and deteriorate the humanitarian consequences of policies implemented in Europe
- Within Europe, refugees and migrants are more held in detention and destitution
- Many left in legal limbo without legal status, pending or post asylum-decisions.
- Deliberate policy choices

# Emergency measures introduced by the European Member States

(Source: EASO)

Timeline of general emergency measures from introduction to the lifting of measures



# Negative and positive responses

- Temporary closure of borders in many European Member States
- Temporary suspension asylum procedures in Greece, Cyprus, Belgium and the Netherlands
- Suspension of Search and Rescue operation in the central Mediterranean
- Denying disembarkation of boats in Malta
- Member States arbitrary decisions breaches international and European law and left people in need of international protection in limbo

On 16 April, the European Commission published its guidance, reiterated the access to territory by and registration of people in need of international protection needs to continue.

### **Positive responses to the Covid-19:**

- Regularisation of undocumented migrants (Italy, Portugal)
- Expansion of the right to work (Belgium)
- The right to access to medical care (Ireland)
- Eased measures in detention (Spain, France)
- Suspension of Dublin transfers (many MS including Germany)
- Improved reception conditions
- Evacuation of vulnerable and elderly people out of camps from Islands

# Contribution from Refugee and migrant communities

- Role of refugees and migrants should be valued and recognised
- Crucial jobs carried by refugees in migrants
- Great initiatives by Refugee-led organisations
- Corona help-desk for refugees in the Netherlands
- Crowd-funding initiative in Athens, Greece

# Human rights tool to address discrimination

- Legal and litigation (complaint from lawyers before national courts)
- Advocacy (influence government policies and practices, promoting best practices )
- Self-advocacy from refugees (story telling, making videos from refugee camps)

Thank you!