



# Position statement on the migrant situation in Europe

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**The influx of migrants into Europe and the consequent humanitarian crisis elicits the need for professional involvement in the fields of health and education, as well as specific accompanying measures in the areas of language and communication.**

The Comité Permanent de Liaison des Orthophonistes/Logopèdes de l'Union Européenne (CPLOL) supports all actions towards the best care and support of families seeking refuge in European countries. Apart from their basic needs, this population on the move need to develop communication competences in order to have the best possible integration chances in new environments and settings. Moreover, communication strategies must be established between key workers and migrants to ensure that these families have optimal chances in these precarious situations. As Speech and Language Therapists and as communication experts across Europe, we consider it our ethical duty and responsibility to be open to these new challenges and to respond as professionals.

**With this in view, SLTs throughout Europe can help in different areas:**

➤ **Work in the forefront:**

- Enhance communication skills during the reception phase by promoting, developing and supporting the communication skills of the key workers/volunteers.
- Raise awareness of communication strategies, facilitators and challenges in multicultural settings.
- Act as consultants in the development of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) eg for communication boards.

➤ **Education:**

- Work in collaboration with language teachers to use culturally sensitive strategies in the development of basic language skills.
- Locate educators or SLTs in the migrant population and create a network which can support children and adults in need of specific services within the migrant communities.
- Train officials in host or transit countries on the basics of transcultural communication in order to facilitate in bureaucratic matters.
- Act as liaisons in promoting the acquisition of the host language on a spoken and written level.

➤ **Health:**

- Provide expert support in the field of SLT to cases where our professional expertise is needed.
- Assist in access to health services.

➤ **Integration:**

- Assist in the lowering of cultural barriers, through communication and exchange of knowledge / experiences promoting a multicultural perspective and dialogue between cultures.
- Be the interlocutor & mediator with public and private bodies.

➤ **Entrepreneurship:**

- Assist adults with specific educational requests/demands on the training level, for their integration in the labour market, based on our support in facilitating communication and language.

**In conclusion, CPLOL representing the European SLT community states its support of all migrants in this humanitarian crisis and asserts that SLTs could provide part of the professional help needed in this situation and help to alleviate some of the issues created by this insecure and difficult situation for the migrants, as well as for the host countries.**

Michèle Kaufmann-Meyer, Présidente