



COMITÉ CONSULTATIF NATIONAL D'ÉTHIQUE  
POUR LES SCIENCES DE LA VIE ET DE LA SANTÉ

CCNE COMMUNICATION

## The CCNE reaffirms its commitment to an ethic of fraternity towards exiled individuals

The CCNE (French National Advisory Ethics Council for Health and Life Sciences) reaffirms its commitment to an ethic of fraternity towards exiled individuals. Solidarity and dignity are fundamental values that should guide health policies for the well-being of all.

**Paris, October 12, 2023.** Just a few weeks before the examination of the bill concerning immigration and integration, the CCNE expresses deep concern about the threat to State Medical Aid (Aide Médicale d'État, AME) for undocumented immigrants on French territory. As already noted by the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs and the General Inspectorate of Finance in a joint report in 2019, this program 'primarily responds to an ethical and humanitarian principle, but also to a public health objective<sup>1</sup>.'

The CCNE wishes to remind that in its [Opinion 127 on the health of migrants](#) in 2017, it highlighted the challenges of access to healthcare faced by exiled individuals in France, country of immigration for several decades. It reasserted that 'health, in the sense defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), must not, in any case, be instrumentalized, especially by maintaining poor sanitary conditions as a means of repulsion.'

*'Migratory movements are the result of various factors such as demographic growth, climate issues, and major geopolitical crises. They are destined to recur and persist. This undeniable reality should drive us to act with fraternity and solidarity.'* - Prof. Jean-François Delfraissy, President of the CCNE

In June 2021, the Council expressed serious concerns following a joint visit by Claire Hédon, Defender of Rights, and CCNE President, Prof. Jean-François Delfraissy, to L'Île-Saint-Denis and Bobigny in Seine-Saint-Denis. The purpose of this visit was to assess the situation in camps and squats where migrants lived. They observed an alarming deterioration in living conditions, raising concerns about the respect for our fundamental values.

The Council also expressed its concerns in 2022, anticipating the long-lasting migratory crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine. It subsequently issued a [press release](#) (March 24) and wrote [an article published in The Lancet](#) (April 25). In both communications the CCNE reiterated, as did the French Constitutional Council afterwards<sup>2</sup>, the universal nature of the fraternity duty towards all migrants or refugees, regardless of their country of origin or the



reasons for their departure. The principle of equity, ensuring access to healthcare and physical, mental, and social well-being for all, was also emphasized.

In a complex geopolitical context, the CCNE reiterates its support for populations forced into exile and its commitment to AME. It believes that this program remains essential, offering undocumented immigrants on French territory access to healthcare, whether in primary care or hospital settings.

'The healthcare system, especially hospitals, must ensure equal treatment and access to healthcare for all. The state must allocate the necessary resources to the healthcare system to meet this requirement.' - Prof. Régis Aubry, Physician and President of the Technical Section of the CCNE

In accordance with the recommendations in its [Opinion 140 aimed at rethinking the healthcare system on an ethical basis](#), the CCNE urges policymakers to pay special attention to exiled individuals. Whether refugees, asylum seekers, or without a residence permits, they accumulate numerous vulnerability factors. It is our duty to support them in their fundamental right to health.

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<sup>1</sup> Report, drawn up by the IGF and IGAS, entitled "L'aide médicale d'État: Diagnostic et proposition" (October 2019), <https://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/AME.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/decision/2018/2018717\\_718QPC.htm](https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/decision/2018/2018717_718QPC.htm)