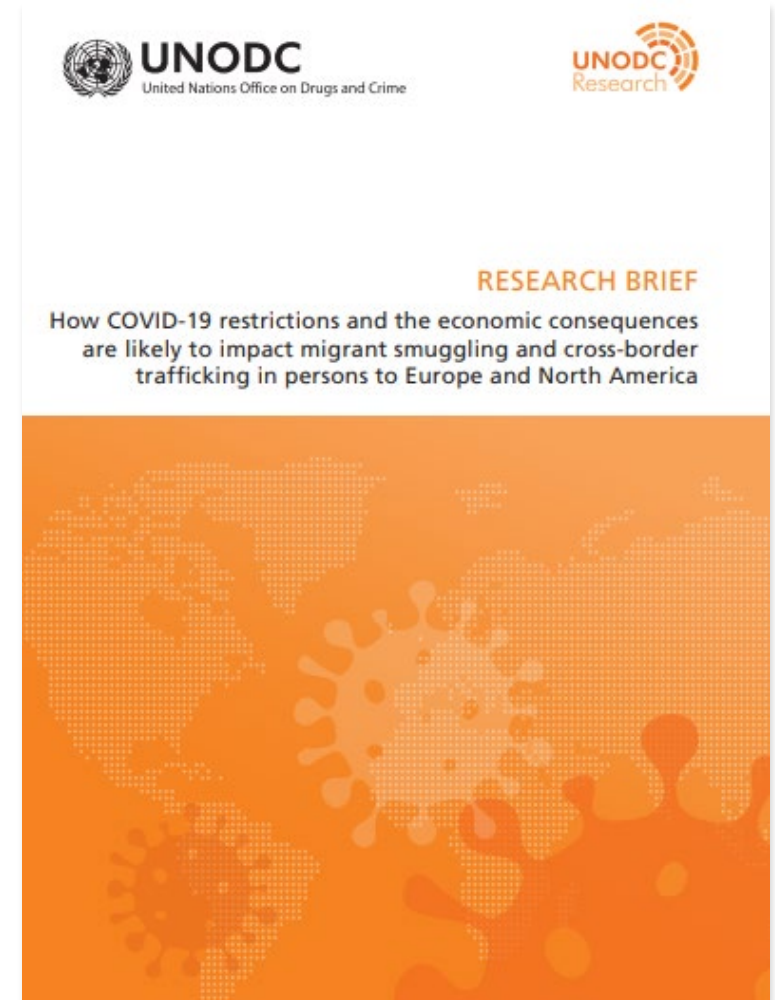


Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons to Europe & North America

- Short-Term Effects
- Medium to Long-Term Effects
- Policy Implications

You can download the Research Brief at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y857hpek> !



Short-Term Effects on Smuggling of Migrants

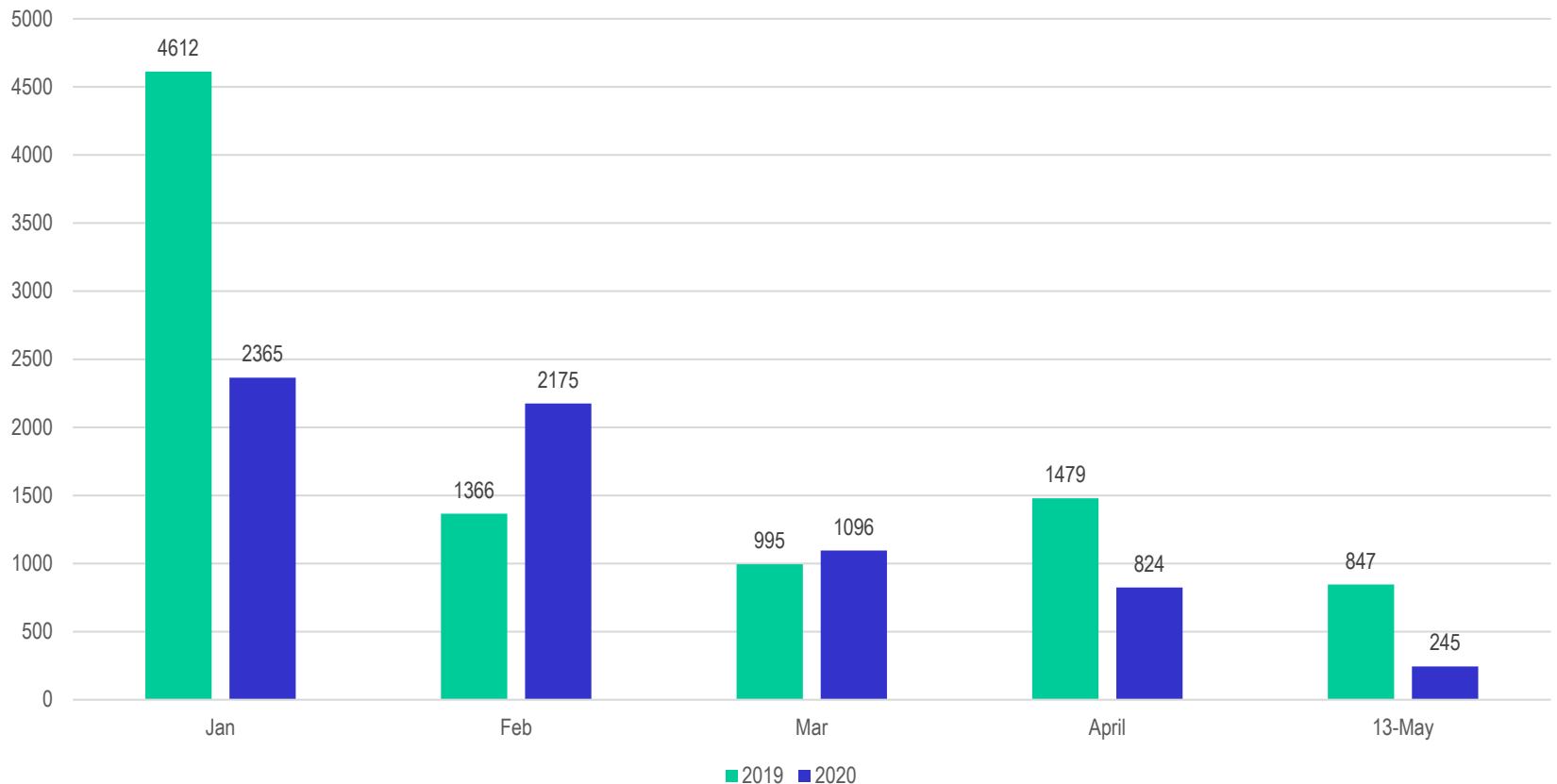
- Lockdowns and travel restrictions have not stopped journeys facilitated by smugglers (to EU; C. America & Venezuela).
- Different impact of COVID-19-related restrictions on migrant smuggling of people fleeing conflict/persecution, compared to other migratory movements

Migrants & refugees on Med routes caught between:

- (1) Need to flee conflicts/poverty;
- (2) dangerous sea journeys;
- (3) reduced SAR operations;
- (4) COVID-19 risks *en route*.

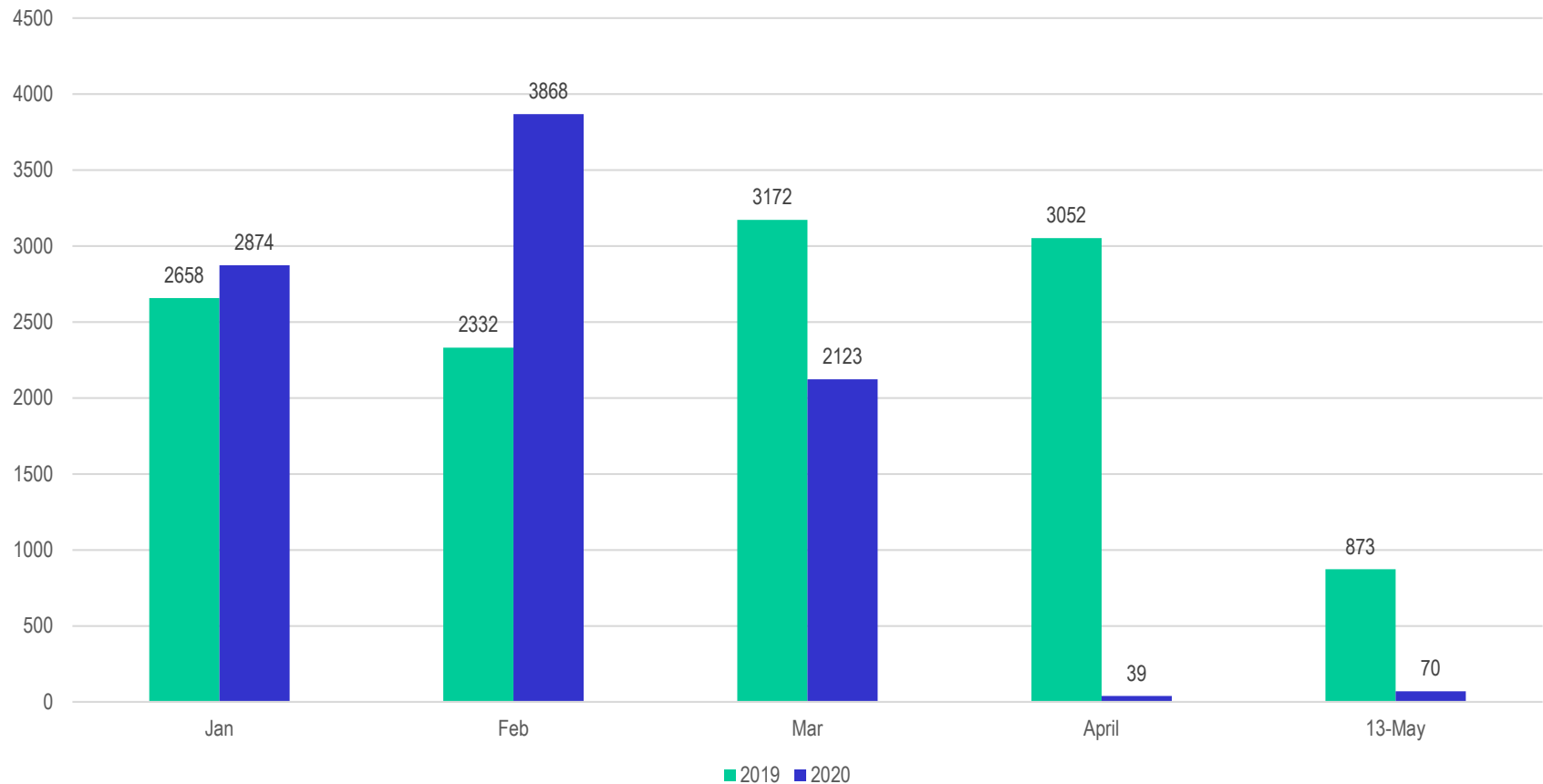
Recent trends in people arriving along Mediterranean Routes

Sea and Land Arrivals in **Spain**, 2019 & 2020



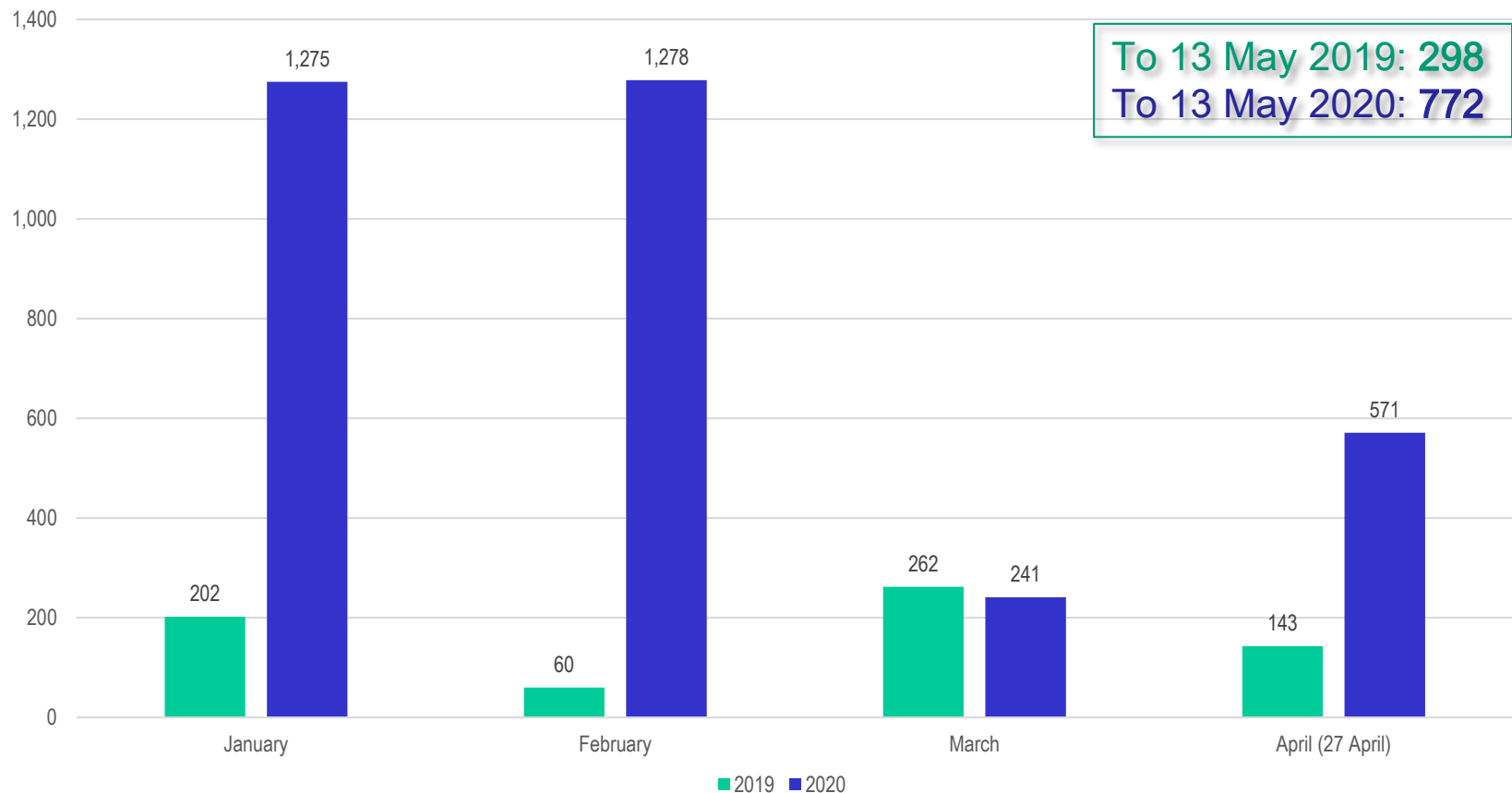
Recent trends in people arriving along Mediterranean Routes

Sea and Land Arrivals in **Greece**, 2019 & 2020



Recent trends in people arriving along Mediterranean Routes

Sea and Land arrivals in Italy, 2019 and 2020



While it has not stopped people making irregular journeys, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to make smuggling of migrants riskier and more expensive



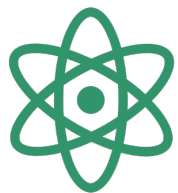
Photo Credit: Nev Rimes on Flickr

Medium-to-Long-Term Effects on Trafficking in Persons

Economic downturn and intensified migration restrictions  tension between:

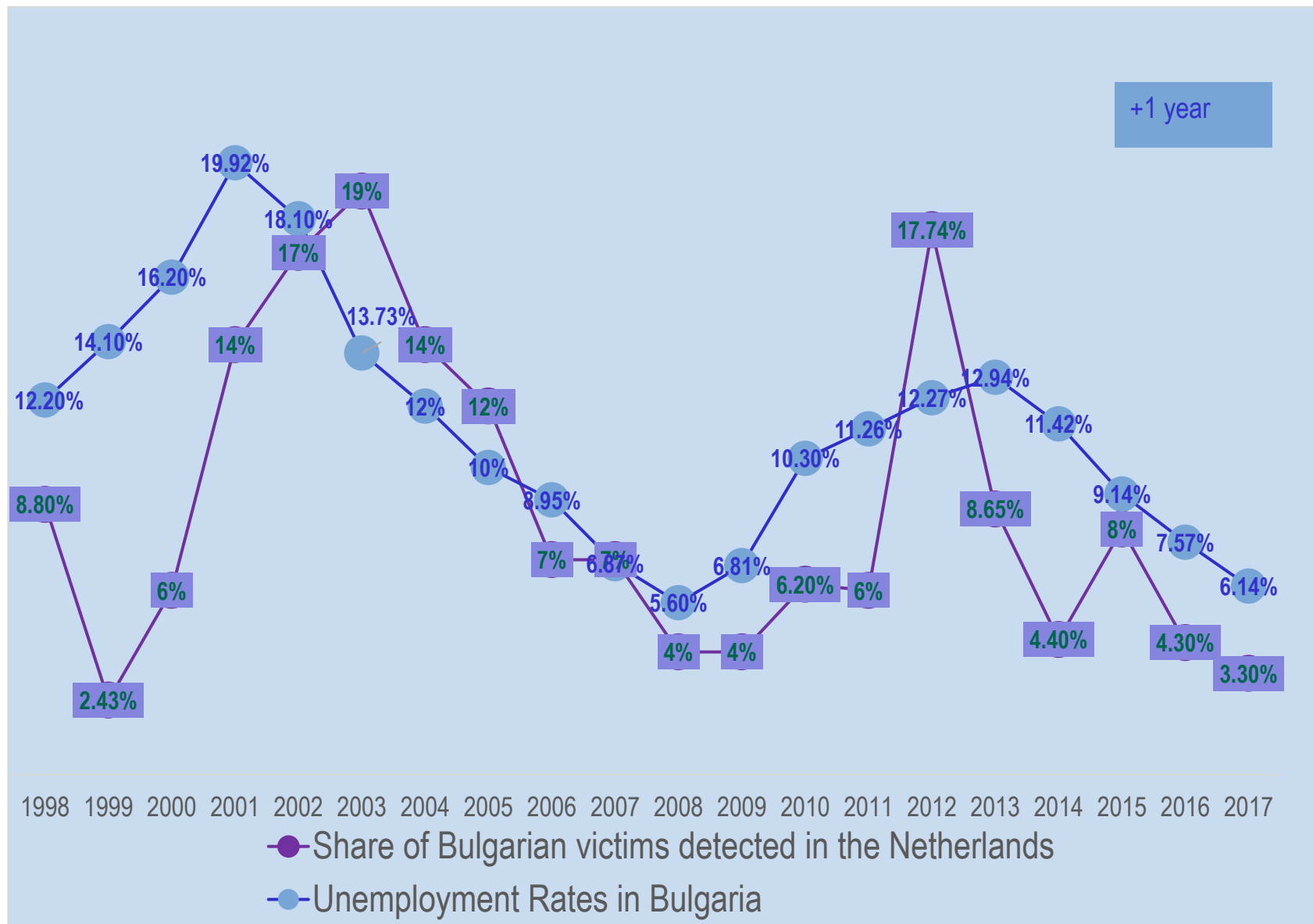
 increased interest in labour migration

 limited options for regular migration



May lead to increase in trafficking, especially for people from **countries experiencing fastest and longest-lasting drops in employment**

E.g., from Bulgaria and Hungary in the Netherlands (vs. from Czechia); from Honduras in USA



Mitigate potential crime & human rights impact of COVID-19 restrictions and economic downturn 

Include in post-crisis recovery plans:

- ✓ Investments in **job creation and economic recovery** in both developed and developing countries;
- ✓ Take into account that (1) lack of **avenues for regular migration journeys** for refugees & migrants, and (2) lack of **regular immigration status** in destination countries, increase opportunities for **migrant smuggling and related abuses**.

#BuildBackBetter

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Thank you!

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