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4.7.1.6 Providing and supporting reception out of reception centres



Systems in the EU largely remain based on the provision of material reception conditions and support in collective reception centres, a few Member States continued or launched initiatives to encourage applicants to find accommodation on their own.

The strategy to promote living outside of reception centres continued in Poland, and applicants were reported to prefer the option of living on their own. The country had 10 centres with a capacity of 1,700 accommodation places
and 3,114 persons in reception in total at the end of 2020, so almost one-half received support outside of reception facilities. Applicants living outside of reception centres can benefit from in cash support distributed by the Polish Post Services. Civil society organisations welcomed this development, since previously, applicants received the financial allowance at a reception centre or at the Office for Foreigners. However, the AIDA report for Poland noted that the date of payment became more unpredictable with this change, and when an applicant did not pick up the allowance on time from the post office, it took a long time to re-send the money, leaving the person without financial support.[578] The Office for Foreigners underlined the legislative framework[xxxvi] and the benefits of the system.[xxxvii] A new project on alternative accommodation which would include all reception services was under development in Lithuania with AMIF co-funding. In the meanwhile, however, residents in the Foreigners' Registration Centre were offered the possibility to reside outside of the centre but to date none had opted for this alternative. UNHCR pointed out that this was because the applicants would then be considered to have sufficient financial resources and not receive support for accommodation, food and clothing. Applicants in Latvia may also opt to use their own accommodation, and this was largely opted for by Belarusian and Russian applicants in 2020.

In Belgium, more than 1,000 asylum seekers chose to stay with limited financial support with their relatives, when they previously were housed in the reception network. In Bulgaria, specific accommodation support was provided to asylum applicants who lost employment and shelter due to the pandemic.

The Council of Ministers in Cyprus decided that applicants for international protection staying in hotel units and other accommodation outside of reception centres will continue to receive an accommodation allowance. Financial support is also provided to applicants for finding their own accommodation. Vulnerable applicants and families with children can use this financial support, even if authorities have already accommodated them in hotel units and other accommodation

outside of reception centres as long as the stay has not exceeded 3 months.579

Applicants are typically accommodated in reception centres in Sweden, but some of them may decide to live outside on their own. To avoid their concentration in certain areas, the so-called EBO rules entered into force
on 1 July 2020, according to which applicants are not entitled to a daily allowance if they choose to reside in specific areas with high rates of immigrants and socio-economic challenges (32 municipalities listed in 2020, revised to 23 municipalities as of 1 January 2021).580

The planned new Irish reception model *(see Section 4.7.1.3)* foresees that applicants are accommodated in reception centres only for a short, 4-month period, after which they would move to accommodation within the community.581

[xxxvi] In accordance with the Regulation of The Ministry of The Interior and Administration of 19 February 2016 on the amount of aid for foreigners applying for international protection, § 6.4 all cash benefits are paid by the 15th day of each month for a given month. Employees of the centers for foreigners are in constant workingcontact with representatives of local Post Office to determine the date of payment. This information is provided to foreigners in the form of an announcement and by phone, a helpline is also available. The general rules for making transfers via the postal operator indicate that the time for a foreigner to receive cash allowance from the date the Office sends them is 2-4 days. Unclaimed money is available at the Polish Post Office for a period of 14 days from the first unsuccessful attempt to deliver them. Additionally, each foreigner is obliged to inform the Office for Foreigners about the change of his place of stay. This must be done as quickly as possible. Otherwise, cash benefits can be sent to the previous place of stay, which is a very common reason for not receiving benefits on time.
[xxxvii] The main benefits of starting a system of postal money transfer of the monthly allowance to asylum seekers are: the possibility of receiving benefits at any time of the day, considering the working hours of post offices, direct delivery at the place of residence of our beneficiaries, the possibility for the head of the family to collect benefits intended for the whole family. The system does not interfere with the obligations of foreigners who have taken up employment and facilitates the process for persons with mobility impairments.

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[579] Υπουργική Απόφαση 90.157 Κάλυψη υλικών συνθηκών υποδοχής σε αιτούντες διεθνούς προστασίας που διαμένουν σε ξενοδοχειακές μονάδες. 7 Οκτωβρίου 2020 [Ministerial Decision 90.157 Coverage of material reception conditions for applicants for international protection residing in hotels. 7 October 2020].
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