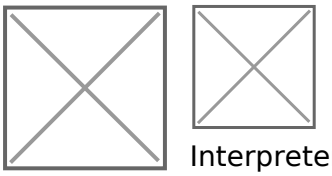
Please cite as: EUAA, 'Section 4.11 Interpretation services' in *EASO Asylum Report 2021*, Ιανουάριος 2022.

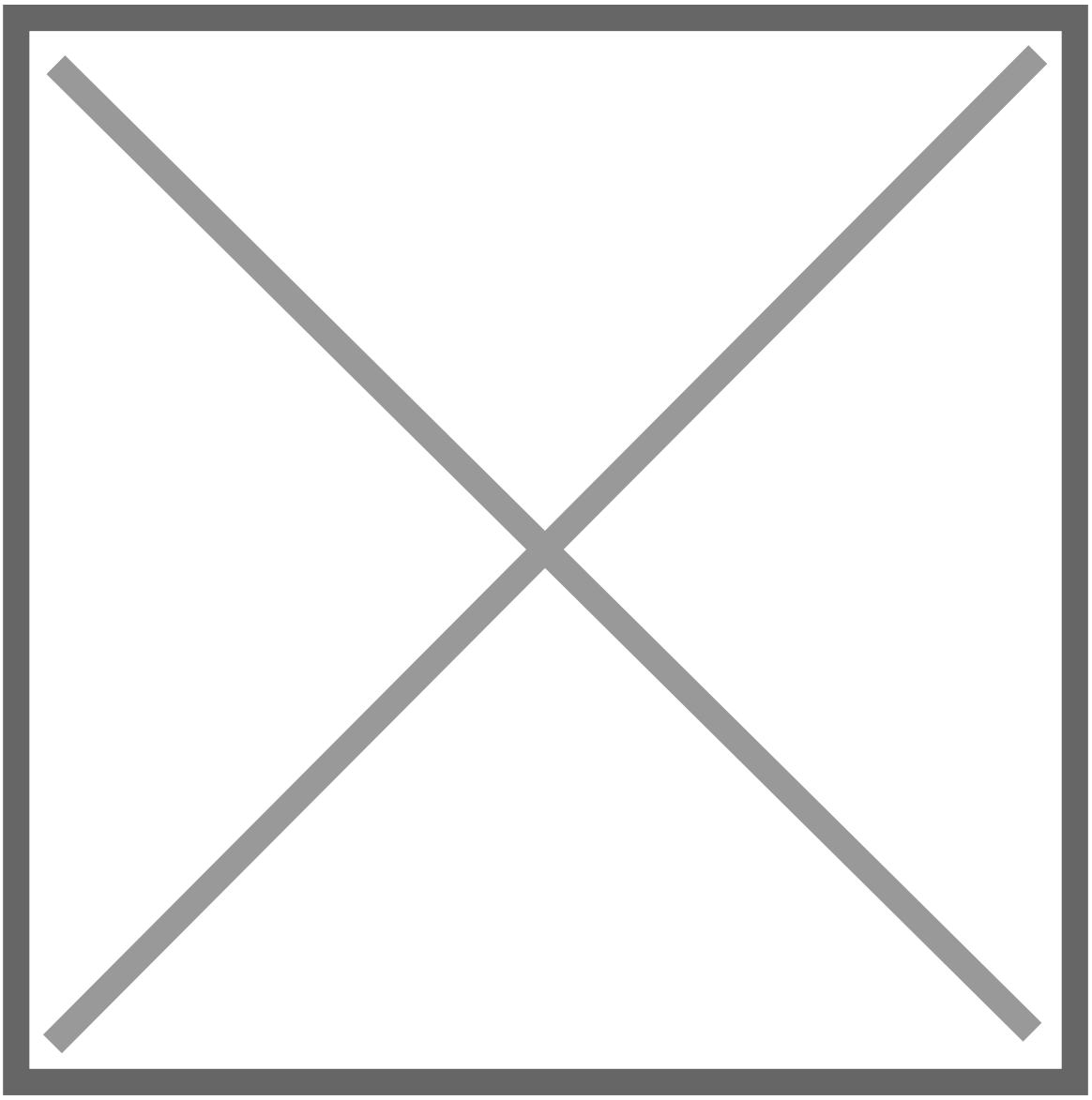
Section 4.11 Interpretation services



Interpreters play a key role throughout the asylum procedure to ensure that the exchange of information between the applicant and the asylum authority is accurate and understood by both parties. Skilled interpreters can reflect the nuances of a dialect and address the specific needs of vulnerable applicants. They can also help authorities in obtaining relevant information to facilitate the timely access to procedure and address any issues during reception. While the recast Asylum Procedure Directive sets out the legislative provisions for interpretation, in practice the quality, integrity and efficiency of interpretation services are indicators which must be met by Member States. In the absence of adequate services, the result of the final decision could be affected.

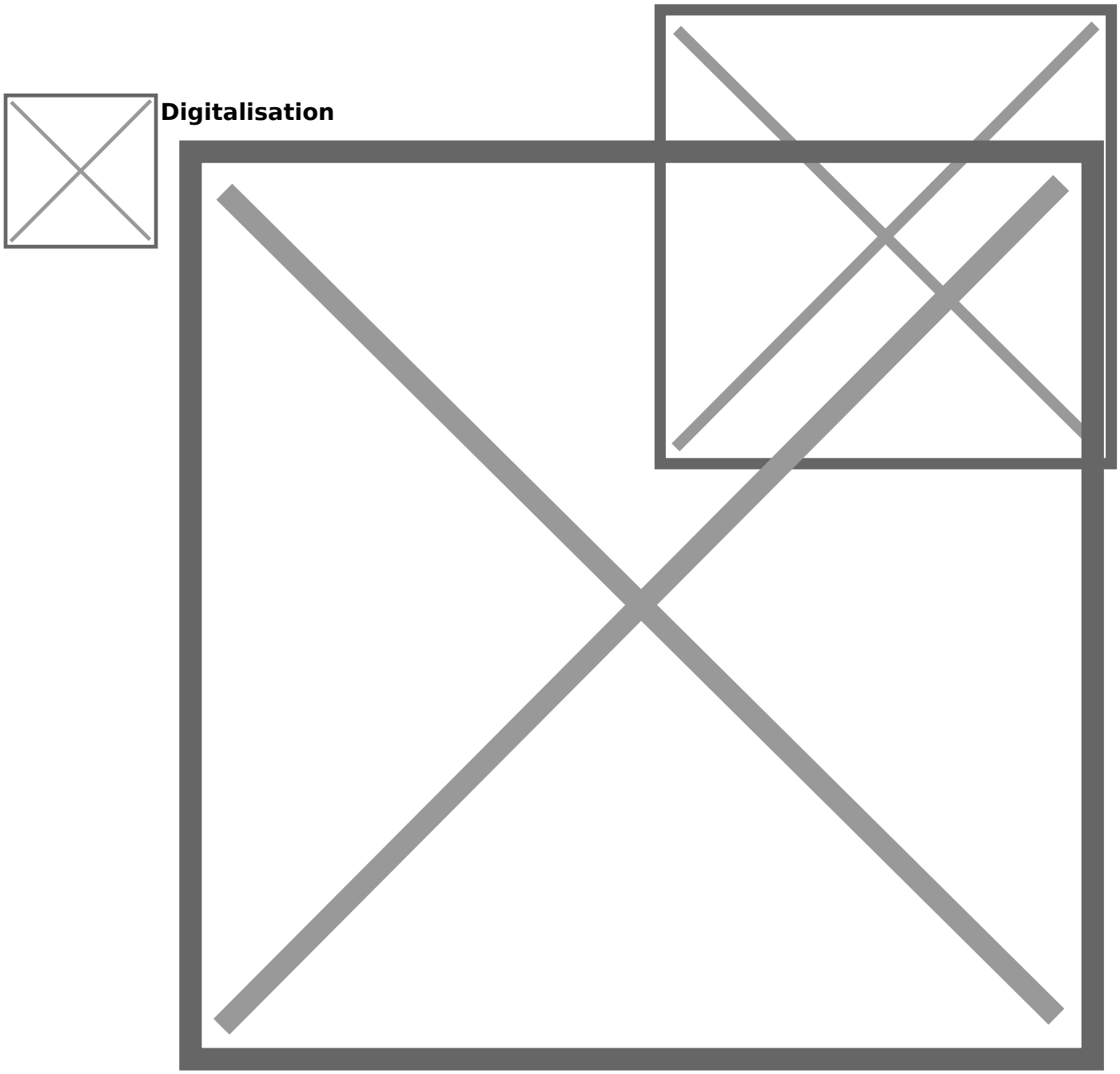


COVID-19



The pandemic had a direct impact on any face-to-face services throughout the asylum procedure. EU+ countries needed to rapidly develop new strategies to provide interpretation, while ensuring the safety of employees and asylum applicants. Some countries already had remote interpretation services in place, but many had to adapt their approach on site to adhere to national health and safety guidance in order to ensure the continued provision of information in a language understood by the applicant.

Many resources in 2020 were concentrated on translating information into several languages on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

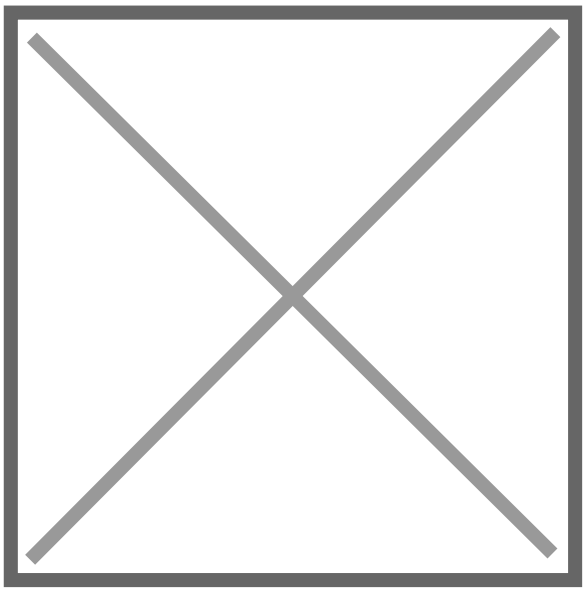


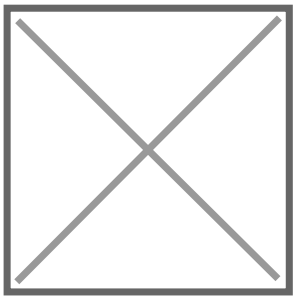
Digitalisation

Due to the implementation of new technologies and smart organisation, Member States were able to implement a safe way to conduct interviews with interpretation. Interpretation by telephone and videoconferencing became the norm in several countries. Many EU+ countries already had systems in place for remote interviews, while other countries established online interviews for the first time. To assist, EASO and UNHCR [877] published guidelines on conducting remote interviews with a focus on remote interpretation.

EU+ countries updated their websites by publishing information in several languages, and some developed new platforms to facilitate language recognition and interpretation. For example, the State Border Guard Service in Lithuania acquired 12 language translator devices, Travis Touch Go, to provide quality interpretation in reception, after using online translation services to identify an applicant's language.[878] It was reported that the use of translation tools, such Google Translate, increased, but users should be aware of possible inconsistencies with automated translations which can be misleading and the absence of some languages and dialects altogether.[879]

Civil society organisations also took initiatives to connect volunteer interpreters with asylum applicants digitally by developing applications[880] or contributing to the development of an automated speech recognition technology to help speakers of marginalised languages with low literacy rates.[881] Similarly, Germany developed an automatic language recognition tool to support identification of nationality, and Hungary is currently considering introducing a similar system.[882] The Migration Agency in Sweden further developed the digitalised handling of linguistic analysis by streaming voice samples to linguistic analysts, and Italy is in the testing phase of the 'Sindaca'





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