Please cite as: EUAA, '4.7.1.2 Adjusting reception capacity' in *EASO Asylum Report 2021*, Ιανουάριος 2022.

4.7.1.2 Adjusting reception capacity

Even though the overall number of asylum applications decreased in 2020, migration patterns affected Member States to various degrees throughout the year. Some Member States continued to lack reception capacity, for example, Belgium, France,[524] Ireland,[525] Luxembourg, Malta,[526] the Netherlands and Spain.[527]

Following a major increase in reception places in Belgium in 2019, the number of places slightly increased and stabilised in 2020. Fedasil reported that 15 new centres were opened throughout the year, while 3 were closed. However, the agency noted that it continued to seek additional places to increase its buffer capacity to improve the flexibility and sustainability of its reception system.[528]

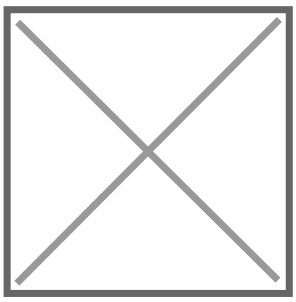
France doubled its accommodation capacity in less than 5 years and established 107,000 places (around 99,000 places in temporary facilities) by 2020, a number which was foreseen to grow by 4,500 new places in 2021.[529] Still, as seen in previous years, these important efforts provided places for only around 51% of applicants, leading to issues about the quality of reception and the creation of informal camps (see hereunder).

The national authorities in Luxembourg noted a persisting issue of one-half of reception residents being overstayers, either recognised beneficiaries of international protection who should move out to more sustainable accommodation on their own or rejected former applicants.

Pressure significantly increased on the reception system in Romania in 2020. Reception places were increased
from 900 to 1,100, with the opening of a new Emergency Transit Centre in Timisoara which provides temporary accommodation for beneficiaries of international protection waiting to be resettled to a third country *(see Section 4.16).* This freed up places in the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in the same city. Capacity is foreseen to be further extended by 500 places in 2021.[530]

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Portugal received AMIF funding to build a reception facility in the Alentejo region.[531]

Some countries, such as Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden were originally planning to close down more facilities in 2020, but due to the pandemic, they kept additional centres open to decrease the overall occupancy rate.



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