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icon presenting alternatives to detaining applicants
According to the recast Reception Directive, detention should be a measure of last resort and only applied after all non-custodial alternative measures to detention have been duly examined in order to better ensure the physical and psychological integrity of asylum applicants. In addition, alternatives to detention are considered to be cost-effective and processing cases efficiently in an environment compliant with human rights. However, according to the recast Reception Conditions Directive, EU Member States must ensure that the rules concerning alternatives to detention are regulated in national legislation.

The Council of Europe and UNHCR undertook various initiatives in 2021 to promote alternatives to detention. UNHCR actively advocated to establish suitable alternatives to detention in Czechia , Estonia and Poland, encouraging countries to refrain from detaining children in particular.

On good practices, in June 2021 Belgium established a new department on alternatives to detention within the Immigration Office, which will become fully operational in 2022. Furthermore, the prolongation of a return decision on a monthly basis is applied as an alternative to detention.

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