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EU+ countries continued to invest in the digitalisation of interpretation services throughout the year. Some countries developed or expanded systems, while others resorted more to using existing videoconferencing facilities.

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany uses video hubs to provide remote interpretation. The interpreters are connected through video transmission to personal interviews (or other steps in the asylum procedure) which are carried out in requesting branch offices. Transmission is provided exclusively from the Federal Office's premises through a secure internal network.

Finland increased the number of interpretation services provided by video, while Slovenia purchased new equipment in order to launch a remote interpretation system in 2022. The system will facilitate interpretation into rare languages when interpreters are based outside of the country.

In Bulgaria, remote interpretation during registration and eligibility interviews was used in reception centres located outside of the capital, where interpreters are harder to find and employ. According to civil society organisations, however, this creates additional difficulties for the applicant as video communication is often disrupted or unclear due to connection issues.966 Similarly, issues with quality were reported during simultaneous telephone interpretation in border procedures in France,967 and in Sweden remote interpretation proved to be challenging in some cases as well. 968

To address concerns about the inefficiency of the Skype appointment system and issues accessing the platform due to the limited capacity and availability of interpretation, the Greek Asylum Service made instructions available in 16 languages as of October 2021.969 In addition, to cope with COVID-19 restrictions, METAdrasi developed a new videoconference system which covers approximately one-quarter of translation needs within the asylum procedure.970

Information material related to COVID-19 and vaccinations was translated into different languages. For example, to reach the refugee community in Cyprus, UNHCR translated COVID-19-related information into 12 languages and disseminated it through different channels,971 while in Czechia, a comprehensive information material with relevant information on labour

arrangements and rights and opportunities in accessing financial support related to COVID-19 was translated into Arabic, English and Russian and shared through relevant NGO websites, newsletters as well as hard copies distributed in refugee facilities across the country.[972]

Bulgaria launched an awareness-raising campaign on vaccinations. SAR's social experts provided information material prepared by the Bulgarian Red Cross and translated it into the main languages of applicants.[973]Moreover a child-friendly storybook was developed by UNHCR and translated into several languages, providing child friendly information on COVID-19 *(see Section 4.9)*.[974]

966-974

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