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# 4.7.2.2. Adapting reception systems

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icon for reorganisation of reception systems

The exceptional situation in reception prompted several national administrations to continue with the adaptation of their reception model and the implementation of the reception pathway. Proposals were made for adjusting multiannual strategies and objectives, as well as to make funding available in a more flexible manner. As more people were in need of reception, than foreseen at the beginning of 2022, funding for reception was significantly increased through additional budgets in several countries. The arrival of persons in need of temporary protection also prompted the need to revise and update existing asylum and reception contingency plans, for example in Slovenia and Slovakia.607

The concept for a new reception and accommodation model (the idea of creating a new model) was approved in Lithuania, and the Ministry of the Interior started the preparations for the necessary legislation. Under the model, the SBGS and the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior retain functions related to the identification of applicants, the international protection procedure, detention and return. Tasks related to the accommodation of applicants, health checks, interpretation services and psychological support would be transferred to a new entity under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.608

In March 2022, the Spanish government adopted Royal Decree 220/2022 of 29 March 2022, approving the regulation governing the reception system. The new regulation entered into force on 31 March 2022, establishing an assessment and referral step and a two-phase reception system which adapts benefits and paths to the profile of an applicant – largely similar to the previous system. The legislation clarified that the second phase is only accessible to recognised beneficiaries of international protection. The financing of the reception system was revised to provide more stability for all participating stakeholders. Funding for three organisations (CEAR, Accem and Red Cross) was initially approved to implement international protection programmes, and 24 organisations were authorised to provide reception for applicants for international protection in the beginning of 2023.609 The regulation also gathered all standards and guidelines that were previously scattered in different legislative pieces.610 In further improving the reception of applicants for international protection, CEAR highlighted the positive experience with the management of reception for persons in need of temporary protection and advocated for this model to be extended to all persons seeking protection in Spain.611 UNHCR also underlined that the one-stop shop approach, through the creation of CREADEs, was a positive

development which should be maintained.612

For adjusting the reception path, Iceland opened an arrival centre in Reykjavík, where all services are offered in the same facility, including registration by the police, reception interviews, first health inspection and needs analysis for permanent housing. The centre welcomes both applicants for international protection and persons in need of temporary protection.613

A new emergency first-reception centre was established in Luxembourg for applicants for temporary protection, with a capacity of 600 beds. Since September 2022, due to the mass influx of applicants for international protection and persons fleeing the war in Ukraine, the site welcomes both applicants for international protection and people in need of temporary protection.

In Greece, a new legal code was adopted compiling in one legislative document all rules related to reception.614

The Belgian Fedasil presented its new management plan for the period 2021-2026, defining the organisation's strategic and operational objectives. The agency aims to develop a sufficiently flexible reception system, based on buffer places, instead of opening and closing centres. The plan also foresees investing in improving the quality of reception, as well as residents' and employees' security. Fedasil intends to focus on adapting its internal organisation, for example by improving collaboration across different services, and between the headquarters and reception centres. More emphasis should be put on preparing residents for the life after reception, whether in Belgium or elsewhere.615 Still, the implementation of this plan met major difficulties due to the crisis that unfolded with the significant lack of reception places.

In the Netherlands, COA updated its Multiannual Strategy 2020-2025 and noted that, due to the current developments, it was unrealistic to assume that all goals would be achieved by 2025. Thus, the strategy was extended with an additional year. The goals were also re-prioritised, and in 2023, the organisation will focus on establishing a stable reception system with small-scale facilities as one of the elements in achieving this, the outflow of recognised beneficiaries of international protection, improving COA's agility and implementation capacity, and public affairs and stakeholder management.616

The Austrian Court of Audit published the results of the special audit of federal reception facilities in January 2022, covering the period 2013 to 2020. The audit recommended changes in the financing and re-negotiation of rental contracts for the opening and closing of facilities. The report also urged the federal government to plan more strategically for an eventual significant increase in the number of applicants in need of reception.617

The arrival of persons in need of temporary protection increased reception costs in many EU+ countries. For example, the SMA in Sweden noted that its administrative costs needed to be increased to cover new recruitments *(see Section 4.4)* and it estimated that SEK 7 billion was needed to cover increased costs for municipalities and regions during 2023 *(see Section 4.14)*. 618 The Slovak government approved an increase in the allowance for the accommodation of beneficiaries of temporary protection under the Act on Asylum, which was provided until

February 2023.[619]

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