

## 3.8.2.1. Enhanced availability and accessibility of information

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During the year, national authorities introduced some temporary measures, made institutional changes and published additional information on the asylum procedure. Civil society organisations also continued to support the authorities in the provision of information.

Following a public tender, the UDI in Norway awarded a 4-year contract to Caritas Norway to provide information and guidance to newly-arrived asylum seekers as of 1 June 2023.[674](#) This meant that the Information and Guidance Programme, which was run by NOAS, ended on 31 May 2023, after 20 years of operation.[675](#)

The Fedasil Info Point, which was closed in 2022, was reopened in 2023 next to the Bordet reception centre in Belgium. The centre has expanded tasks to support applicants residing outside of the reception network, migrants in transit and people without a legal residence. Caritas International is in charge of the initial welcome and information provision, while several stakeholders then provide more in-depth information.[676](#)

In Estonia, UNHCR and partners continued to provide information and legal counselling to new arrivals and refugees about asylum procedures, access to temporary protection and access to rights and services to facilitate their inclusion and integration.[677](#)

The second Performance Update of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) in the Netherlands indicated that information provision in the asylum process was outdated. To address this, the service plans to modernise the digital system so that the latest information is rapidly available, such as the status of an application and when a decision is expected.[678](#)

In Portugal, AIMA plans to create 10 more contact points for asylum seekers and a call centre to address queries in 2024.[679](#)

New material, services and platforms related to information provision which were made available during the year are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. New material, services and platforms related to information provision, 2023**

Stakeholder	Development	Type
National authority (Slovakia)	A project was initiated to provide improved instructions for asylum seekers, using pictograms and translations in several languages.	Information material
National authority, UNHCR Slovakia and Human Rights League	A <a href="#">leaflet</a> was produced in various languages on what steps asylum seekers can take once they arrive in Slovakia.	Information material

Stakeholder	Development	Type
<b>Human Rights League (Slovakia)</b>	A series of Frequently Asked Questions were published to provide information on the authorisation to remain when administrative expulsion is not possible. <a href="#">680</a>	Information material
<b>National authority (Malta)</b>	In March 2024, the IPA, with assistance of the EUAA, published a detailed booklet about the asylum procedure and a booklet specifically for unaccompanied minors. These booklets are given to all applicants who lodge an asylum application in Malta. The IPA, with assistance of the EUAA, also produced three videos related to the asylum procedure, namely on information on the asylum procedure for adults, information on the asylum procedure for unaccompanied minors and the rights and obligations of an asylum seeker in Malta. All these products were translated into different languages. The IPA is currently also working on the development of its own website. UNHCR and the Ministry for Home Affairs developed an information leaflet to be made available at all immigration and reception centres.	Information material
<b>JRS Romania, in collaboration with Terre des Hommes (Romania)</b>	Three videos were produced which explain in detail the obligations of asylum applicants during the asylum procedure, the accommodation system in Romania and the forms of international protection that may be provided to asylum applicants.	Information material
<b>OFPRA (France)</b>	Welcome booklets for beneficiaries of protection were updated. <a href="#">681</a>	Information material
<b>SAR (Bulgaria)</b>	SAR presented a child-friendly video, which was produced by UNICEF Bulgaria, to unaccompanied minors. The video addresses the social services which are available, and it is available in Arabic, Bulgarian, Dari, English and Pashto. <a href="#">682</a>	Information material
<b>Legal Centre for the Protection of Human Rights (PIC) (Slovenia)</b>	PIC published information videos on complementary pathways, sponsorship schemes and family reunification. <a href="#">683</a>	Information material
<b>Asylum Office (Spain)</b>	A new website was launched: <a href="https://proteccion-asilo.interior.gob.es/es/inicio/">https://proteccion-asilo.interior.gob.es/es/inicio/</a>	Information material
<b>Directorate of Immigration (Iceland)</b>	A new web application was launched to provide information to asylum applicants. Frequently Answered Questions were made available and additional queries can be sent through a web form. <a href="#">684</a> In response to a high number of inquiries, the directorate published information on residence permits for family members in Palestine. <a href="#">685</a>	Platform
<b>National authority (Luxembourg)</b>	A new <a href="#">website</a> with information for asylum applicants was launched in February 2023 (it is only accessible from within the country). Information is available in several languages, with a read-aloud function. It contains information on first-time applicants, the Dublin procedure for those who have already applied elsewhere, reception, social benefits and returns.	Platform
<b>Office for Foreigners (Poland)</b>	An online portal was launched, which is available in several languages, to help beneficiaries of international protection to fill out residency applications. <a href="#">686</a>	Platform

Stakeholder	Development	Type
<b>Ministry of Asylum and Migration (Greece)</b>	The authority's website was enhanced to make content accessible to persons with disabilities, such as dyslexia and visual impairments <a href="#">687</a>	Platform
<b>Central Government Information Portal (Ireland)</b>	A new website was launched with information on international protection, such as statistics, types of protection and procedures to follow. <a href="#">688</a>	Platform
<b>Swedish Migration Agency (Sweden)</b>	As of October 2023, expanded services are available in more service offices. The offices are administrated by the state and provide information from several government agencies in one place. Staff assist applicants with digital services, completing the application correctly, printing and sending documents, and explaining processes. <a href="#">689</a> In addition, information services are now offered in more locations. <a href="#">690</a>	Services
<b>National authority (Cyprus)</b>	An information kiosk was set up in Pournara where applicants can seek information on the status of their file and ask questions about the asylum procedure in general.	Services
<b>Office for Foreigners (Poland), in collaboration with the IOM</b>	The office continued to organise "Information Saturdays" on the regularisation of stay. Third-country nationals can receive information on the content of and process for regularisation, receive letters and summons, submit declarations and use the document personalisation service. <a href="#">691</a>	Services
<b>IOM Lithuania</b>	A new one-stop information hub was opened for migrants and refugees to help with any challenges upon arrival. The services include legal advice, psychological counselling and career guidance. <a href="#">692</a>	Services
<b>Ministry of Asylum and Migration (Greece)</b>	To immediately assist the families of the victims of the Pylos shipwreck, the ministry opened a hotline to provide information.	Services
<b>National authority (Croatia)</b>	When required, information is provided orally to illiterate applicants.	Services

### *Prevention and voluntary returns*

Some countries focused efforts on deterring nationals from countries with low recognition rates from undertaking perilous journeys to the EU, only to have their application rejected. For example, with the aim of preventing irregular migration and the risks of exploitation, the Belgian State Secretary for Asylum and Migration launched an information campaign in Guinea, raising awareness of the dangers of irregular migration, local employment opportunities and legal migration channels and informing locals that there was a low chance of receiving protection in Belgium. This was in response to an increase in asylum applications by Guineans in 2023, while 75% of the claims were rejected.[693](#)

Similarly, the authorities in Cyprus launched the "[Let's talk truth about Cyprus](#)" campaign in September 2023, aiming to discourage irregular migration from sub-Saharan countries, such as Cameroon, Congo and Nigeria. The campaign's objective is to debunk myths about Cyprus and provide accurate information on the realities of asylum in the country.

Some national authorities raised awareness among rejected applicants about the possibility of a voluntary return to the country of origin. To this end, the UDI in Norway launched an application process for organisations to receive grants (NOK 1 million in total) to inform illegally-residing individuals who reside

outside of the reception system about assisted returns.<sup>694</sup> In Finland, a new Decree on Assistance for Voluntary Returns aims to encourage rejected asylum seekers to leave the country quickly and refrain from appealing the decision. <sup>695</sup>

<sup>674</sup> Caritas Norway. (2023). *Norge skal veilede nyankomne asylsøkere [Norway will guide newly arrived asylum seekers]*.

<sup>675</sup> Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers | Norsk organisasjon for asylsøkere. (2023, August 9). *NOAS ute av informasjons- og veiledningsprogrammet [NOAS removed from the information and guidance programme]*.

<sup>676</sup> Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2023, September 27). *Nouvelle adresse pour le Point Info de Fedasil [New address for the Fedasil Info Point]*.

<sup>677</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023, August 25). *Estonia Operational Update - Q2 2023*.

<sup>678</sup> Immigration and Naturalisation Service | Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst. (2023, May 23). *De IND loopt tegen grenzen van uitvoerbaarheid aan [IND has reached limits of feasibility]*.

<sup>679</sup> Government of Portugal | Governo de Portugal. (2023, October 29). *Agência para a Integração, Migrações e Asilo: O primeiro dia de um novo paradigma [Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum: The first day of a new paradigm]*.

<sup>680</sup> Human Rights League | Liga za čudské práva. (2024, May 15). *Odpovede na otázky o aktuálnej situácii v oblasti migrácie [Answers to questions about the current migration situation]*.

<sup>681</sup> French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons | Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides. (2024, May 15). *Les outils pour accompagner les demandeurs d'asile et personnes protégées [Tools to support asylum seekers and protected persons]*.

<sup>682</sup> State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministries | ??????? ?????? ?? ????????? ??? ?????????????? ??????. (2024, May 15). ????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????????????????? ?????? ??? ?????????????? ??????? ? ?????????? [Video introduces international asylum seekers unaccompanied children to social services in Bulgaria].

<sup>683</sup> Legal Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Environment | PIC - Pravni Center Za Varstvo ? lovekovih Pravic in Okolja. (2024, May 15). *Kaj so dopolnilne poti in sponzorske sheme? Kaj pomeni združitev družine? (VIDEO) [What are complementary pathways and sponsorship schemes? What does family reunification mean? (VIDEO)]*.

<sup>684</sup> Directorate of Immigration. (2023, October 20). *New service web up in the air*.

[685](#) Directorate of Immigration. (2023, November 24). *The right to family reunification*.

[686](#) European Website on Integration. (2023, February 7). *Poland: New website provides assistance with residency applications*.

[687](#) Ministry of Migration and Asylum | ?????????? ?????????????? ??? ??????. (2023, October 20). *Information Guide for Beneficiaries of International Protection*.

[688](#) Government of Ireland | Rialtas na hÉireann. (2023, June 16). *New website with latest information on International Protection in Ireland launched*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/5888e-new-website-with-latest-information-on-international-protection-in-ireland-launched/>

[689](#) Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) | Migrationsverket. (2023, October 10). *Migrationsverkets service på fler statliga servicekontor [The Swedish Migration Agency's services at several government service offices]*.

[690](#) Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) | Migrationsverket. (2023, April 19). *Migrationsverkets service på fler statliga servicekontor [The Swedish Migration Agency's services at several government service offices]*.

[691](#) Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland | Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. (2024, May 15). *Dla obywatela [For the Citizen]*.

[692](#) International Organization for Migration. (2023, October 23). *E. Bingelis: „Atidaromas naujas centras skirtas užsieniečiams“ [E. Bingelis: "A new center is opening for foreigners"]*. <https://lithuania.iom.int/lt/news/e-bingelis-atidaromas-naujas-centras-skirtas-uzsienieciams>

[693](#) Nicole de Moor. (2023, November 2). *De Moor lanceert preventiecampagne in Guinée: “nog beter dan terugkeer is tegengaan dat mensen naar hier komen” [De Moor launches prevention campaign in Guinea: "even better than returning is preventing people from coming here"]*.

<https://>

[694](#) Norwegian Directorate of Immigration | Utlendingsdirektoratet. (2023, November 2). *Tilskudd til informasjonstiltak om assistert retur [Grants for information measures on assisted return]*.

[695](#) Finnish government. (28 August 2023). *Ministry of the Interior to prepare a new Decree on Assistance for Voluntary Return*. <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410869/ministry-of-the-interior-to-prepare-a-new-decree-on-assistance-for-voluntary-return>