Please cite as: EUAA, '4.10.4. Western Mediterranean region' in *Asylum Report 2022*, mai 2022.

4.10.4. Western Mediterranean region

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The Council of Europe launched a free Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) online course on “Asylum and Human Rights” in Tenerife, Spain, in co-operation with the Bar Association of Tenerife (ICATF) and Spain's General Council of Lawyers.933 Several civil society organisations continued to report on shortcomings in the provision of legal assistance on the Canary Islands, especially for detained migrants, due to a lack of specialised lawyers in immigration matters. 934

A practical guide on legal assistance for sea arrivals was published in August 2021 by the Spanish General Council of Lawyers.935 The guide provides information on best practices to ensure the quality of legal assistance, access to administrative files and working methods during health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a preliminary assessment, the Supreme Administrative Court in Portugal allowed a judicial review when the applicant complained of a lack of information on free legal aid in the asylum procedure, including having a lawyer during the interview. The judgment on the merits of the case is pending. Throughout 2021, UNHCR continued to provide legal information to asylum applicants in Portugal, through its partner the Portuguese Refugee Council. 936

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- 936In the first semester of 2021, 300 asylum-seekers were provided with information and 638 interventions were made within the RSD procedure. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (September 2021). Bi-annual fact sheet 2021 Portugal. https://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/6172aeeaf/bi-annual-fact-sheet-2021-09-portugal.html?query=legal%20aid

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