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Despite these efforts, challenges remain in ensuring applicants' right to interpretation. The first and most evident obstacle in the provision of interpretation services in the asylum procedure is the lack of interpreters in rare languages, and challenges were reported from an increasing number of EU+ countries. For example, Belgium, Croatia and Switzerland notably reported difficulties in finding Kirundi-speaking interpreters. The Lithuanian Red Cross Society reported that, although interpretation services were fully operational at the beginning of 2023, the influx and changes in profiles of applicants, combined with a decrease in EUAA translators, led to shortages in certain central and eastern Asian languages.780The Finnish Immigration Service also reported challenges in finding interpreters for example for Ganga and Luo. In other countries, civil society organisations reported shortages of interpreters in particular locations, such as the Lampedusa hotspot in Italy781or the Sofia police station in Bulgaria.782

In 2023, funding issues, delays in payments or the absence thereof led service providers to stop a number of operations. Equal Legal Aid reported that METAdrasi, the primary interpretation provider in Greece, halted many of its tasks for similar reasons.783In November 2023, however, METAdrasi declared that the Greek Ministry of Immigration and Asylum had addressed their concerns and announced the restoration of interpretation services in reception centres and the asylum service.784

As a result of these impediments, many applicants were not able to access their right to interpretation, which negatively impacted their experience in the asylum procedure and reception system. Consequences varied from delays in the procedure to being denied access to healthcare. For example, one civil society organisation, Border Violence Monitoring Network, described the case of a minor applicant who could not get medical information or treatment due to the lack of interpreters in Corinth, Greece.785

- 780Lithuanian Red Cross Society | Lietuvos Raudonojo Kryziaus. (2023, November 30). Input to the Asylum Report 2024.
- 781Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration | Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione. (2023, November 30). Input to the Asylum Report 2024.

- 782Council on Refugee Women in Bulgaria. (2023, November 30). Input to the Asylum Report 2024.
- 783Equal Legal Aid. Input to the Asylum Report 2024
- 784Metadrasi. (2023, November 1). *Επαναφορά της διερμηνείας στα Κέντρα Υποδοχής και στην Υπηρεσία Ασύλου [Restoration of interpretation in Reception Centres and the Asylum Service]*.
- 785Border Violence Monitoring Network. (2023, November 30). Input to the Asylum Report 2024.

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