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4.11.3 Improving quality

Several countries strengthened their quality assessment mechanisms throughout 2020 to raise the standards for and quality of interpretation services. In Finland, the Tulppaani project developed a quality control model for interpretation during asylum interviews, using peer-to-peer review, random checks[900] and new guidelines for interpreters.[901]

Similarly, the “Project Bridge” launched by UNHCR to support authorities in Austria seeks to improve the quality of interpretation in the asylum procedure by developing comprehensive and multi-level training and continued education for interpreters.[902] In addition, the Austrian Government Programme 2020-2024 includes training, monitoring and quality improvement for interpretation services, and the Quada project, developed with UNHCR, provides asylum-specific training to interpreters.

In Croatia, the AMIF-funded project, ‘Translation and expansion of the network of translators in the process of granting international protection’, was implemented to better integrate beneficiaries of international protection.

In Germany, the training programmes for interviewers and other employees using interpretation services were extended and new quality control procedures were introduced. In Belgium, targeted training was provided to voluntary interpreters within the framework of a project funded by Fedasil and implemented by the social translation agency of the ASBL Brussel Onthaal and the Brussels Institute for Applied Linguistics (BIAL) of the University of Brussels (VUB).[903]

A new legal position was issued in Sweden for the assessment of interpreters needed for interviews, reception and any other asylum procedure. The requirements were clearly laid out in order to procure a number of new contracts with different interpretation agencies.[904] Similarly, the National Commission for Asylum in Italy is considering adding new criteria into public tenders to ensure that interpreters have a suitable level of comprehension of the Italian language. This issue was also reported in Slovenia, where interpreters are not required to prove their level of knowledge of the Slovenian language or the language into which they interpret.[905] The Slovenian Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of the Interior added that for some languages it would be difficult to require a certified document proving a certain level of knowledge.

The State Agency for Refugees and UNHCR reported a continued lack of qualified interpreters in Bulgaria,[906] and the ECtHR mentioned a shortage of interpreters of certain languages in the country. Civil society organisations in Malta highlighted a lack of interpretation services in the

second instance determination procedure.[907] Similar deviances were observed in Bulgaria.[908]

In Portugal, the quality of interpretation remained a challenge due to a lack of training of service providers, who are often individuals with sufficient command of a language. The Portuguese Refugee Council observed that it was difficult to secure interpreters for certain languages (Bambara, Bengali, Kurdish, Lingala, Mandinka, Nepalese, Pashto, Tamil, Tigrinya, Sinhalese, and to a lesser extent Arabic and Farsi).[909] Similar issues were reported in Hungary for Arabic, Eritrean dialects and Sorani[910] and in Slovenia, where the shortcomings can affect the application's credibility assessment.[911]

The Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process examined issues regarding the provision of interpretation during accommodation in the International Protection Process in Ireland and recommended to adopt a code of conduct and introduce an accreditation test for interpreters from mid-2023.[912]

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