Quality assessment of reception conditions: expert meetings in Stockholm and Dublin



Earlier this year (March 2018), during its National Contact Points meeting in Malta, the EASO network of reception authorities gave a mandate to EASO to develop a practical tool enabling national authorities to conduct self-assessments of reception conditions, based on EASO standards and indicators. This led the reception team of the Asylum Support Unit (ASU) to organise a series of activities to gather expert input on the development of this tool, with two complementary meeting organised in October.

On 3 and 4 October in Stockholm (Sweden), the launch of the working group in charge of developing the tool took place, hosted by the Swedish Migration Agency. It gathered quality experts from Belgium, Czech Republic, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Sweden, as well as representatives of EASO and EPRA (European Platform of Reception Agencies). This first meeting gave room for experts to present their national practices and to conduct a mapping of their needs in terms of assessment of reception conditions. This gave a clear indication of the route ahead in terms of technical specifications for the future tool.

On 10 and 11 October in Dublin, EASO and EPRA organised their fifth and last common workshop on the same topic, hosted by the Reception and Integration Agency of Ireland and gathering representatives from 15 EU+ states. Experts went over the findings of a questionnaire sent out during the summer on EU+ states practices regarding the way they control and assess the quality of reception conditions and developed specific tools to assess them.

On 10th October, delegates visited the accommodation centre of Mosney in County Meath. This Former holiday village (capacity of 3000 places), operating since 1947, was reformed as an accommodation centre in 2003, for a capacity of 800 people, many relocated from Greece, in about 250 individual houses. Experts were impressed by the high reception standards and by the innovative practices demonstrated in terms of independent living and integration in local communities.

These practices included the The Mosney Food Hall, whose introduction in 2017 enabled all residents to live independently and cook for themselves. Each household is allocated weekly credit points, transferred to a debit card, to enable them to purchase their daily needs from a wide variety of food, toiletries and household items. The introduction of the food hall is reported to have drastically lowered the stress levels within resident communities. (More in this article)

The work of EASO on the development the quality assessment practical tool will continue this year and in 2019. A second meeting in Trondheim (Norway) on 13-14 November during a study visit will allow experts of the working group to meet again and to assess their progress.

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