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Introduction and background

The recast Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (hereafter RCD) specifies that:

‘standards for the reception of applicants [that] suffice to ensure [applicants for international protection] a dignified standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States should be laid down’ [1].

The Directive leaves a considerable degree of discretion to define what constitutes a dignified standard of living and how it should be achieved. At the same time, national reception systems differ greatly in setup and modalities for the provision of reception conditions. Consequently, standards for reception conditions continue to vary across EU Member States, causing differences in treatment of applicants for international protection.

More recently, the European Agenda on Migration [2] has further underlined the importance of a clear system for the reception of applicants for international protection as part of a strong common European asylum policy. Specifically, it refers to the need for further guidance to improve the standards on reception conditions across EU Member States.

It is in this context that this guidance has been developed. The development process of this document follows the established Quality Matrix methodology set up by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The document has been drafted by a working group composed of EU Member States’ experts, as well as representatives of other relevant stakeholders in the field of reception and fundamental rights, including the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Moreover, members of the EASO Consultative Forum have been consulted prior to finalisation of the guidance. The EASO Network of Reception Authorities was consulted over the guidance and it was subsequently formally adopted by the EASO Management Board.

It should also be noted that the European Commission’s proposal for a recast of the RCD (COM(2016) 465 final) of 13 July 2016 specifically refers to these operational standards and indicators.

1. The Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection recast (hereafter RCD), recital 11.

2. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 'A European Agenda On Migration', COM(2015) 240, 13 May 2015.

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