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4. Daily expenses allowance

Introductory remarks

Whereas the aspects of food, housing and clothing are clearly defined in the RCD, the instrument does not directly address the details and purpose of the daily expenses allowance. Nevertheless, the concept is essential to respond to applicants' needs.

The daily expenses allowance covers other essential needs of applicants for international protection addressed by the RCD that go beyond housing, food and clothing (those being covered through financial allowance, whenever not provided in kind or in the form of vouchers).

In this document, the concept of 'daily expenses allowance' should be understood as having three different purposes, namely:

- to allow applicants to reach a minimum level of physical subsistence, beyond the basic necessities of housing, food or clothing;
- to ensure a minimum standard of participation of applicants in the socio-cultural life of the Member State they are residing in;
- to enable applicants to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy.

This guidance refers to 'daily expenses allowance' as a minimum as the monetary allowance provided to the applicant for no specific purpose and at his or her free disposal ('pocket money'). Additionally, where specific non-food items or other complementary needs are not provided in kind or in the form of vouchers, their costs could also be taken into account when calculating the amount of the daily expenses allowance provided to the applicants.

As seen in the previous sections, the standards with regards to housing, food and clothing, as well as certain other non-food items, can be achieved irrespective of whether applicants receive the relevant items in a financial allowance, in kind or in the form of vouchers. At the same time, the last element ('pocket money') is based on the consideration that a dignified standard of living can only be achieved when applicants have a certain degree of financial autonomy. In other words, at least part of the allowance provided to them should not be allocated for a specific purpose but rather be at the free disposal of the applicants to allow them to use it in line with their own personal needs and preferences.

In light of the varying standards and costs of living across Member States, this section does not attempt to define the exact level of daily expenses allowance that should be provided to

applicants. Irrespective of the method used for calculation the daily expenses allowance, the three purposes listed above should always be fulfilled. As such, the daily expenses allowance should not be mistaken as an act of generosity; instead it is of the same importance as housing, food and clothing and forms an essential part of the material reception conditions.

Legal references — daily expenses allowance
Article 2(g) RCD: definition of material reception conditions

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 28: Ensure that an adequate daily expenses allowance is provided.

Indicator 28.1: A clear definition of the scope of daily expenses allowance exists.

Indicator 28.2: The method for the calculation of the daily expenses allowance is clearly determined.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *'Determined' means that the elements taken into account when determining the amount of the daily expenses allowance and the factors taken into account when assessing the amount under each of them are described.*

Indicator 28.3: The daily expenses allowance is provided at free disposal ('pocket money') and allows applicants to obtain an adequate degree of autonomy.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *Daily expenses allowance 'at free disposal' can never be provided in kind. The actual amount should be determined in relation to the national context. This should take into account complementary needs beyond the basic needs, such as products or services of individual choice (e.g. cultural activities, sweets, tobacco products, games, going out).*

Indicator 28.4: The amount of the daily expenses allowance also reflects as a minimum the following expenses, unless ensured in kind: communication and information, school items, personal hygiene and body care, leisure activities and costs for transport when related to access to healthcare and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance, and education for children enrolled in school.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *With regards to the in-kind provision of school items and personal hygiene and body care, see Standards 25 and 26: Access to hygiene products and other non-food items and Standard 29: Access to necessary healthcare.*

Indicator 28.5: The daily expenses allowance is provided regularly, and no less than once a month with regards to the 'pocket money'.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *The regularity of provision should be determined according to the purpose (if specified), the amount and the form chosen for the provision of the allowance. Transparency should always be ensured.*

Good practice with regard to the provision of the daily expenses allowance

It is considered good practice:

- to take into account the individual situation of the applicant (e.g. age/family composition) when calculating the amount of the daily expenses allowance provided;
- to provide the daily expenses allowance in advance of the period to be provided;
- to provide the allowance to each adult member of the family separately (and not to the 'head' of the family for the entire family).