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icon for institutional changes in reception

The tasks and responsibilities of authorities responsible for reception continued to be adjusted in 2021, for instance in Austria, Cyprus, Greece and Iceland.

The operationalisation of the new administrative body responsible for reception continued in Austria. The new Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU, Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen GmbH) started its activities related to legal advice and representation, translation and interpretation services, return counselling and return assistance and human rights monitoring on 1 January 2021. It had already started tasks related to the provision of material reception conditions on 1 December 2020.619 The agency introduced quality criteria for all activities and offered training to staff. Strict qualification criteria and a special training programme were developed for all new staff joining the BBU. However, the Quality Advisory Board expressed concerns about the BBU's lack of institutional independence as the legal aid provider *(see Section 4.11)*.620

The Asylum Service in Cyprus established new sectors which are responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection.621 In addition, the implementation and operationalisation of a reception allocation bureau was planned in the First Reception Centre Pournara to collect statistics, follow in- and outflows, and gather information on residences of applicants who are leaving the centre.

Ministerial responsibilities for reception were re-shuffled, impacting the institutional organisation in Greece and Iceland. Following the re-organisation of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, some services were centralised, and corresponding offices and staff from the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) were transferred to the ministry.622 RIS staff participated in several training programmes, for example, on administrative procedures, identification and support to victims of human trafficking, and data management. After the general elections in September 2021 in Iceland, a new presidential decree was adopted on the re-allocation of ministerial responsibilities. Consequently, the Ministry of Social Affairs became responsible for providing material reception conditions and organising other aspects, such as medical services, children's education and leisure activities.623

Training for reception staff continued in most EU+ countries (*see Section 5*). Notably, Fedasil in Belgium launched a seven-module training programme for managers and training in breathing techniques for staff working in reception centres to support their emotional resilience. The content of the training on dealing with aggression was expanded. In Bulgaria, reception staff could apply for a special Master's programme at the Sofia University specially designed for persons working with refugees and migrants.624

In Malta, training initiatives for members of reception staff included orientation and induction training for new members of staff, train-the-trainer sessions on conflict management, train-the-trainer sessions on the EUAA modules on management in reception and reception of vulnerable persons, training on human trafficking, torture and other EUAA training sessions. Staff received training in basic first aid (122 officials), fire safety training (128 officials) and mental health first aid (22 officials) from a list of 13 reception staff training initiatives.

Some countries, for example Belgium and Luxembourg, faced challenges in recruiting new staff, especially social workers and medical staff.

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https://www.stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?RecordID=75615383-fe9c-472b-9012-9dfbaa06be5a

- 624State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет. (2021, August 30). Информационна среща със служители от РПЦ-София, „Военна рампа“ [Information meeting with staff from the Sofia Registration and Reception Centre]. https://www.aref.government.bg/en/node/462

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