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The provision of material reception conditions has been scrutinised and investigated by both state and non-state actors throughout 2021. To help countries, the EUAA launched the Assessment of Reception Conditions (ARC) tool, which includes a self-assessment of material reception conditions in national centres. The indicators in the assessment are based on the Agency's guidance on reception in general710 and on the reception of unaccompanied minors. 711 Several Member States started testing the tool, including Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Spain.

At the beginning of 2022, the Austrian Court of Audit published the results of the special audit of federal reception facilities, covering the period 2013 to 2020. The report urges the federal government to plan more strategically for an eventual significant increase in the number of applicants in need of reception. The audit also recommends changes in financing and re-negotiation of rental contracts for the opening and closing of facilities.712

The Ministry of the Interior in Italy and UNICEF signed an agreement for the monitoring of the quality of reception conditions for minors *(see Section 5)*.713 The Irish International Protection Service (IPAS) published detailed inspection reports on Direct Provision Accommodation Centres and Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres for each county. The inspections include a review of services, a room-by-room inspection and follow-up communication between the inspector and the centre.714 As part of the reform of the reception system in the country, the Irish Refugee Council hoped that an independent monitoring mechanism would be established soon to monitor the implementation of the new standards.715

In Belgium, concerns were raised over the quality of material reception conditions offered in the centre in Jalhay, where a private operator took over the management of the facility from the Croix-Rouge at the end of 2020. Some of the issues highlighted were: a substantial decrease in the number of staff, lack of effective entry-exit control, decreased food allowance, gaps in the provision of health care and the management of medical files, unhealthy accommodation, and a decrease in the allowance for community service.716

Based on this report, Fedasil launched an investigation and put forward several action points to improve the situation, such as strengthening the presence of security personnel (24 hours, 7 days a week) and adjusting the amount of allowance for community service. The investigation found no grounds to suggest that accommodations were unhealthy or that there were gaps in the provision of health care and management of medical files.[717]

Civil society organisations continued to voice their concerns over reception conditions in Spanish facilities, especially the Temporary Reception Centres (CETI) in Ceuta and Melilla and the facilities on the Canary Islands. Accem pointed to the insufficient support for unaccompanied children in Ceuta,[718] while Amnesty International[719] and CEAR[720] reported on over-crowdedness, the poor hygienic situation and limited access to health care in Melilla.

The Spanish Ombudsperson published a report on the situation on the Canary Islands, and related to reception, he underlined that ad hoc emergency structures were not suitable to provide support. The structures also lacked trained staff.[721] These facilities were planned to be dismantled or turned into more permanent structures throughout 2021.[722] Accem reported on escalating tensions which led to several hunger strikes throughout 2021.[723] The Ombudsperson also visited temporary surveillance and assistance centres in Algeciras[724] and Malaga[725] and issued recommendations for improvements to the Ministry of the Interior.

In Poland, the mushroom poisoning of two Afghan children led to inspections from the Commissioner for Human Rights, concluding that the family had access to food and the children's death was an accident. The AIDA report for Poland presents observations from the Polskie Forum Migracyjne that reception centres receive less per capita money for food than public kindergartens, childcare homes and hospitals. The organisation underlined that the quality and amount of food is adequate, but it might not be adapted to cultural differences and not sufficiently diversified.[726]

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