

4.1.2.3. Online appointment systems for the registration of applications for international protection

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Circular 5049/2022 introduced a new registration procedure for first-time applicants in Greece. The Skype service was discontinued, and instead applicants could make an appointment through an online platform either in Thessaloniki or Attica. Applicants undergo a reception and identification procedure in a Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) or a Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC), and they are required to stay in the facility throughout this process, for a maximum of 25 days.³⁰⁸ Civil society organisations observed that this period was often longer in practice as a 5-day quarantine period applied (see [Section 4.7](#)) and noted that this practice was de facto detention (see [Section 4.8](#)).³⁰⁹ Civil society organisations also observed several barriers in accessing the asylum procedure for subsequent applicants or for applicants coming from a safe third country (see [Sections 2 and 4.3](#)).^{310,311}

The Spanish Jesuit Refugee Service,³¹² Convive-Fundación Cepaim³¹³ and CEAR³¹⁴ in Spain observed issues in accessing the asylum procedure since the establishment of an online appointment system for the registration of applications. Appointments were often available only after several weeks, and many applicants had difficulties in navigating the website, which was available only in Spanish.³¹⁵ SOS Racism reported on a technical failure which resulted in appointment requests getting lost.³¹⁶ UNHCR reiterated its concern about accessing the asylum procedure.³¹⁷ The Spanish Ombudsperson underlined the impact these delays had on associated rights for applicants, such as access to housing, medical care, psychosocial support and other social benefits.³¹⁸

³⁰⁸ ?????????? ?????????????? ??????????, ?????????? ?????? «????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????» [Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Circular on registration of applications for international protection by the Regional Asylum Offices/ Independent Asylum Units of the Asylum Service], August 31, 2022. <https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/?????????-?????????-?????????-??-3.pdf>

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