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4.1.1. Making asylum systems more resilient

4.1.1. Making asylum systems more resilient

Section 4.4.2 Legislation changes

Legislative and policy debates in 2024 centred around building resilient and efficient asylum systems. For example, legislative changes in Finland116 and France117 did not reform the asylum procedure itself but considered access to the asylum procedure (*see Section 3*), shortened the length of the residence permit granted to beneficiaries of international protection (*see Section 8*) and aimed to make returns more efficient (*see Box 5*). Reform initiatives were launched, for example in Belgium,118 but changes in the government resulted in a change of direction to adapt to the new government's policy and the implementation of the Pact. For example, the new government in the Netherlands aims to move towards the strictest ever asylum system.119

In Switzerland, 5 years after the complete revision of the Asylum Act and procedures, a collaborative process among the confederation, cantons, cities and municipalities was launched to elaborate a new comprehensive asylum strategy. One objective is to rapidly remove unfounded asylum applications from the asylum system and devote more resources to victims of persecution.120 The Portuguese government approved an action plan on migration, which includes several measures to restructure and increase the resources of the newly-established Agency on Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) to strengthen its efficiency.121

Initiatives to further digitalise asylum procedures continued in 2024. Major projects were ongoing in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and the Netherlands. The new director of the Norwegian Directorate for Migration (UDI) committed to digitalising the whole migration sector, including developing a new IT and case management system for the agency.122 These initiatives work towards the IT infrastructure which is necessary for requirements of the Pact.

After the adoption of the legislative package of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in June 2024, EU+ countries started preparations for its implementation and organised working groups and task forces (usually overseen by the Ministry of the Interior) to draft their National Implementation Plan by the end of 2024. National authorities identified areas where the most challenges would be faced, such as ensuring adequate coordinating structures and sufficient

financial and human resources.

Anticipating the needs, the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees (SAR) recruited new staff and further trained existing staff,123 including through staff exchanges to other national authorities. 124 The national budget dedicated to asylum authorities was significantly increased in Ireland 125 and Lithuania126 so new employees could be recruited and trained. To reduce costs in the asylum sector in Switzerland, the recruitment of additional staff was approved in order to tackle the backlog of pending cases and to achieve substantial savings.127 While Italian authorities planned to increase the number of staff, the number of employees in fact decreased in 2024 due to a high turnover. Administrative staff of the National Asylum Commission and the Territorial Commissions in Italy went on strike demanding better working conditions in May 2024.128 High turnover and difficulties in recruiting and training new staff were challenging for the Croatian authorities as well.

Some governments committed to a swift implementation of the Pact. For example, two draft laws were already approved by the German federal government,129 and the Federal Minister of the Interior stated that the cabinet was counting on a rapid and comprehensive implementation of the new rules.130 The new Dutch government expressed its wish to opt out of CEAS in case of EU Treaty amendments, while it considered the implementation of the Pact to be essential for limiting the influx of migrants to the Netherlands and thus pledged to prioritise its implementation.131

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