

# 5.1. Revising the organisation of national reception systems

## 5.1. Revising the organisation of national reception systems



Several challenges and critical situations in reception in recent years have catalysed authorities in many EU+ countries to comprehensively review their reception systems (see *Table 3*).<sup>233</sup> The adoption of the recast RCD 2024 spurs further changes for the management of reception, going beyond simple adjustments.<sup>234</sup>

The pressure on reception systems decreased in a few countries in 2024, typically due to a decrease in applications – this was for example the case in Austria. Finland decreased accommodation places by not extending contracts for additional reception centres.<sup>235</sup> In view of this, the Finnish Immigration Service encouraged some residents in reception centres (typically under temporary protection) to apply for municipality residence.<sup>236</sup> Similarly in Sweden, many under temporary protection obtained the right to register in the population registry and transfer from reception to municipalities. Thus, a gradual outflow of persons under temporary protection also contributed to a normalisation of the reception situation. Pressure remained stable in Norway due to a continued number of persons fleeing Ukraine, so the UDI replaced temporary emergency accommodation with regular reception centres in 2024.<sup>237</sup> However, in the beginning of 2025, the situation reversed, and the UDI decided to close down several centres hosting Ukrainians.

**Table 3. Examples of strategic changes in national reception systems in 2024**



**Belgium**

A legal framework was established for the use of accommodation places for returns and Dublin transfers<sup>238</sup>



**Bulgaria** A comprehensive reception strategy was being drafted.[239](#)



**Denmark**

Following the pilot project of the 24-hour procedure in Zürich, this working method was extended to all federal centres with procedural functions. As a result, even though the number of applications increased, the pressure on the reception system was eased, with the average length of stay decreasing as well. Furthermore, this led to fewer security incidents in reception facilities



**Ireland**

The government presented a new comprehensive accommodation strategy for international protection applicants. The strategy aims to reform the system over the medium and long term, moving away from a full reliance on private service providers towards a core of state-owned accommodation.[240](#)



**Lithuania**

Following the reorganisation and restructuring of the Refugee Reception Centre, a new Reception and Integration Agency was established, with operations starting in January 2025.[241](#)



**Luxembourg**

A new centre was established for people of the following profiles: i) people in the Dublin procedure; ii) people awaiting a voluntary return after their applications for international protection have been definitively rejected and where all possible appeals have been exhausted; iii) occasionally, irregular third-country nationals who did not apply for international protection.



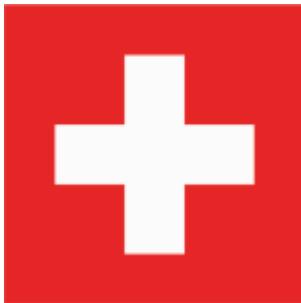
**Netherlands**

The Distribution Act came into force, aiming to ensure more structural reception places and a more balanced distribution of applicants across the country. The new government announced its intention to withdraw this act, as a way to deter new applications, but the act remained in force in 2024 and its implementation was ongoing, with strong support from COA and the majority of municipalities.[242](#)



**Sweden**

Following a government assignment, the SMA prepared for a reformed reception system with accommodation based on collective reception centres or return centres for rejected applicants.[243](#) Since 1 March 2025, applicants are entitled to financial support if they live in the facility they were assigned to. Under certain circumstances exceptions can be made, for example, if an applicant lives with immediate family, assuming they are residents in Sweden. Applicants are also obliged to participate in courses on the Swedish society.[244](#)



Switzerland

Following the pilot project of the 24-hour procedure in Zürich, this working method was extended to all federal centres with procedural functions. As a result, even though the number of applications increased, the pressure on the reception system was eased, with the average length of stay decreasing as well. Furthermore, this led to fewer security incidents in reception facilities.<sup>245</sup>

In contrast, reception systems remained saturated in the Benelux and Ireland,<sup>246</sup> despite the fact that new places were opened and additional staff were recruited in each country.<sup>247</sup> Belgium had a record number of reception places in 2024 but still was unable to meet demand.<sup>248</sup> In addition to continuously high numbers of applications and delays in asylum procedures, each country experienced issues with outflow from reception, as several rejected applicants overstayed while recognised beneficiaries could not transfer to their own accommodation due to a general housing crisis. Court judgments condemned national authorities for failing to provide reception to applicants or to abide by agreements with municipalities, and obliged many authorities to pay penalties in these cases.<sup>249</sup> In its appeal to one of the judgments, the Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) underlined that the penalties did not solve the issue of the overcrowded initial reception centre in Ter Apel, and allocating asylum seekers to other crowded reception centres would mean a violation of agreements with these municipalities as well.<sup>250</sup>

233

See for example: European Union Agency for Asylum. (June 2024). [Asylum Report 2024](#). European Union Agency for Asylum. (July 2023). [Asylum Report 2023](#). European Union Agency for Asylum. (June 2022). [Asylum Report 2022](#). European Union Agency for Asylum. (June 2022). [Asylum Report 2022](#).

234

European Commission. (2024, June 12). [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Common Implementation Plan for the Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). COM(2024) 251 final.

235

Ministry of the Interior | Sisäministeriö. (2024, July 1). [The Finnish Immigration Service is reducing the amount of accommodation in the reception system](#). Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto Migrationsverket. (2024, October 23). [Contracts for additional places in reception centres not continued next year](#).

236

Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto Migrationsverket. (2024, May 6). [Now is a good time to apply for a municipality of residence as some reception centres will close](#).

237

Norwegian Directorate of Immigration | Utlendingsdirektoratet. (2024, March 19). [Avvikler 3 000 mottaksplasser](#) [Discontinuing 3,000 reception places].

238

Loi du 12 mai 2024 modifiant la loi du 15 décembre 1980 sur l'accès au territoire, le séjour, l'établissement et l'éloignement des étrangers et la loi du 12 janvier 2007 sur l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile et de certaines autres catégories d'étrangers sur la politique de retour proactive [Law of 12 May 2024 amending the law of 15 December 1980 on access to the territory, stay, establishment and removal of foreigners and the law of 12 January 2007 on the reception of asylum seekers and certain other categories of foreigners on the proactive return policy], 12 May 2024.

239

State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | ?????????? ??????? ?? ?????????? ??? ?????????????????????? (2024, April 1). ????????????? ?? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????????? ?????????? [Development of a Strategy for the Admission of the Republic of Bulgaria].

240

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth | An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige. (2024, March 27). Government agrees new comprehensive accommodation strategy for International Protection applicants

241

Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania | Lietuvos Respublikos socialin? s apsaugos ir darbo ministerija. (2024, October 3). Paskelbtas konkursas ? Pri?mimo ir integracijos agent?ros direktoriaus (-?) pareigas [Competition for the post of Director of the Reception and Integration Agency has been announced]. Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania | Lietuvos Respublikos socialin? s apsaugos ir darbo ministerija. (2025, January 15). Pab?g?li? pri?mimco centras tapo Pri?mimo ir integracijos agent?ra [The Refugee Reception Center became the Reception and Integration Agency].

242

Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers | Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers. (2025, February 24). Spreidingswet [Distribution Act]. Association of Dutch Municipalities | Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten. (2024). Standpunt en werking van de Spreidingswet [Position and operation of the Distribution Act].

243

Government Offices of Sweden | Regeringskansliet. (2024, March 7). Uppdrag att förbereda för ett reformerat mottagningsystem [Task to prepare for a reformed reception system].

244

Swedish Parliament | Sveriges Riksdag. (29 January 2025). New procedures for asylum seekers' accommodation.

245

Federal Council | Der Bundesrat | Conseil fédéral | Consiglio federale. (2024, February 20). [Beat Jans annonce au Tessin des mesures pour soulager le système de l'asile](#) [Beat Jans announces measures in Ticino to ease the burden on the asylum system]. State Secretariat for Migration | Staatssekretariat für Migration. (2024, September 21). [Asile: fort recul du nombre de requérants du Maghreb dans les centres fédéraux](#) [Asylum: sharp drop in the number of applicants from the Maghreb in federal centres].

[246](#)

Council of Europe (CoE), Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024, October 15). [Ireland: the situation of Travellers, Roma and asylum seekers requires more attention](#). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2024, August 1). [UNHCR Welcomes High Court Judgment Upholding the Human Rights of Homeless Asylum Seekers](#).

[247](#)

International Protection Accommodation Services. (2024, October 3). [Planning for new centres](#). Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers | Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers. (2025, March 17). [Capaciteit en bezetting](#) [Capacity and occupancy].

[248](#)

Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2024, November 14). [36.000 places d'accueil](#) [36,000 reception places].

[249](#)

Belgium, Labour Court [Cour du travail/Arbeidshof], [M.T. v Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers \(Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile, Fedasil\)](#), 2023/AL/355, 15 May 2024. Link redirects to the English summary in the EUAA Case Law Database; Ireland, High Court, [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission v Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth & Ors](#), [2024] IEHC 493, 1 August 2024. Link redirects to the English summary in the EUAA Case Law Database; Luxembourg, Administrative Tribunal [Tribunal administratif], [Applicant v National Reception Office \(ONA\)](#), No 50138R, ECLI:LU:TADM:2024:50138, 8 March 2024. Link redirects to the English summary in the EUAA Case Law Database; Netherlands, Court of Justice of Northern Netherlands (Rechtbank Groningen - Noord-Nederland), [Municipality of Westerwolde v Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers \(Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers, COA\)](#), C/18230420 / KG ZA 23-241, ECLI:NL:RBNNE:2024:129, 23 January 2024; Netherlands, Court of Justice of Northern Netherlands (Rechtbank Groningen - Noord-Nederland), [Municipality of Westerwolde v Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers \(Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers, COA\)](#), C/18/238475/KG ZA 24-145, ECLI:NL:RBNNE:2024:4250, 30 October 2024.

[250](#)

Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers | Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers. (2024, November 27). [COA in hoger beroep tegen vonnis over opvang in Ter Apel](#) [COA appeals against judgment on reception in Ter Apel].