

# Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2024

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

Dear Colleagues,

The production of the Asylum Report 2024 is currently underway. The [annual Asylum Report series](#) presents a comprehensive overview of developments in the field of asylum at the regional and national levels.

The report includes information and perspectives from various stakeholders, including experts from EU+ countries, civil society organisations, researchers and UNHCR. To this end, we invite you, our partners from civil society, academia and research institutions, to share with us your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2023 by topic as presented in the online survey (**'Part A' of the form**).

We also invite you to share with us any publications your organisation has produced throughout 2023 on issues related to asylum in EU+ countries. These may be reports, articles, recommendations to national authorities or EU institutions, open letters and analytical outputs (**'Part B' of the form**).

Your input can cover information for a specific EU+ country or the EU as a whole. You can complete all or only some of the sections.

Please note that the Asylum Report does not seek to describe national systems in detail but rather to present key developments of the past year, including improvements and challenges which remain.

All submissions are publicly accessible. For transparency, contributions will be published on the EUAA webpage. For reference, contributions to the 2023 Asylum Report by civil society organisations can be accessed [here](#), under 'Acknowledgements'. All contributions should be appropriately referenced. You may include links to supporting material, such as analytical studies, articles, reports, websites, press releases or position papers. If your organisation does not produce any publications, please make reference to other published materials, such as joint statements issued with other organisations. Some sources of information may be in a language other than English. In this case, please cite the original language and, if possible, provide one to two sentences describing the key messages in English.

The content of the Asylum Report is subject to terms of reference and volume limitations. Contributions from civil society organisations feed into EUAA's work in multiple ways and inform reports and analyses beyond the Asylum Report.

Your input matters to us and will be much appreciated!

**\*Please submit your contribution to the Asylum Report 2024 by Thursday, 30 November 2023.\***

## Instructions

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Before completing the survey, please review the list of topics and types of information that should be included in your submission.

For each response, only include the following type of information:

### Part A:

- New developments and improvements in 2023 and new or remaining challenges;
- Changes in policies or practices, transposition of legislation or institutional changes during 2023;
- Across the different thematic sections feel free to make reference to issues related to the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive at national level.

### Part B:

- New publications your organisation produced in 2023

Please ensure that your responses remain within the scope of each section. Do not include information that goes beyond the thematic focus of each section or is not related to recent developments.

## PART A: Contributions by topic

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**1. Access to territory and access to the asylum procedure (including first arrival to territory and registration, arrival at the border, application of the non-refoulement principle, the right to first response (shelter, food, medical treatment) and issues regarding border guards)**

**2. Access to information and legal assistance (including counselling and representation)**

**3. Provision of interpretation services (e.g. introduction of innovative methods for interpretation, increase/decrease in the number of languages available, change in qualifications required for interpreters)**

**4. Dublin procedures (including the organisational framework, practical developments, suspension of transfers to selected countries, detention in the framework of Dublin procedures)**

**5. Special procedures (including border procedures, procedures in transit zones, accelerated procedures, admissibility procedures, prioritised procedures or any special procedure for selected caseloads)**

**6. Reception of applicants for international protection (including information on reception capacities – increase/decrease/stable, material reception conditions - housing, food, clothing and financial support, contingency planning in reception, access to the labour market and vocational training, medical care, schooling and education, residence and freedom of movement)**

The SCML ensures the reception of asylum seekers following their initial accommodation provided by the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR). The CPR's mission is to guarantee the reception of all asylum seekers who spontaneously request asylum in Portugal. Asylum seekers with a legal decision of inadmissibility and/or an appeal of their request for international protection in Portuguese territory are referred to the SCML until a final decision is rendered on their request (as determined in Article 61, paragraph 2, of the Asylum Law). In 2023, until the third quarter (January to September), the SCML had supported 710 applicants for international protection. In the same period of 2023, 314 asylum seekers were identified for SCML assistance.

The SCML, for the reception of asylum seekers, has human resources, financial means, and accommodation solutions. The SCML has a specialized technical team in social intervention with asylum seekers and refugees, consisting of a Social Service coordination with expertise in Social Policy, four social workers, and one psychologist.

Regarding accommodation, the SCML annually contracts 107 beds in two hotels located in Lisbon,

exclusively for temporary accommodation of asylum seekers after the initial CPR reception. The 107 beds are divided into two autonomous hotel units: one with 80 beds in a hostel for the accommodation of male asylum seekers, and another with 27 beds in a hostel with 9 rooms for the accommodation of family units with or without children and isolated women or women with children in their care. Although the accommodation is gender-divided, there are no differentiated responses for couples, female or male single-parent families, and isolated women; these groups share the same living space within the SCML facilities.

Concerning accommodation, when the capacity through contracted beds is exhausted, the SCML financially supports asylum seekers in finding alternative housing in the private rental market. However, in 2023, there was an increase in difficulties finding housing in the private rental market at affordable prices due to the available financial support. Additionally, there is a shortage of housing supply in Portugal, with a greater impact in urban areas such as Lisbon. This housing market situation has increased accommodation challenges for the more vulnerable populations, including asylum seekers.

The SCML also provides financial support to asylum seekers for subsistence expenses (food and personal expenses), housing (in cases where they turn to the free housing market), and medical assistance. For minors, support is also provided for education expenses (school supplies).

The SCML's intervention is limited to the Lisbon metropolitan area. It is noteworthy that asylum seekers in Portugal can freely circulate throughout the territory.

Since 2022, asylum seekers in Portugal can access the job market from the moment they apply for asylum. Therefore, in 2023, the SCML's technical team also developed its intervention in this area. For this purpose, there is guidance to employment and training centers, job search support offices. The team assists in creating CVs and works with asylum seekers to submit applications.

However, a constraint identified is that asylum seekers often face a recurring problem of limited recognition of their educational qualifications acquired in their countries of origin, leading to frequent underemployment. Additionally, employers do not recognize the legal status of asylum seekers as a qualification for their legal hiring. Linguistic barriers exacerbate this difficulty in labor market integration.

The technical team also works on guiding asylum seekers to entities that offer Portuguese language learning courses.

Therefore, although the asylum system in Portugal covers some domains of access to services, the SCML team provides support oriented to overcome specific challenges. Among these challenges, there is mediation in access to healthcare, education, reception in educational establishments for school-age children, coordination with judicial entities, and other institutions of civil society.

The main challenge is highlighted as the increase in the number of asylum seekers and the significant difficulties in accessing housing for this population.

## **7. Detention of applicants for international protection (including detention capacity – increase /decrease/stable, practices regarding detention, grounds for detention, alternatives to detention, time limit for detention)**

**8. Procedures at first instance (including relevant changes in: the authority in charge, organisation of the process, interviews, evidence assessment, determination of international protection status, decisionmaking, timeframes, case management - including backlog management)**

**9. Procedures at second instance (including organisation of the process, hearings, written procedures, timeframes, case management -including backlog management)**

**10. Availability and use of country of origin information (including organisation, methodology, products, databases, fact-finding missions, cooperation between stakeholders)**

**11. Issues of statelessness in the context of asylum (including identification and registration)**

**12. Vulnerable applicants (including definitions, special reception facilities, identification mechanisms/referrals, procedural standards, provision of information, age assessment, legal guardianship and foster care for unaccompanied and separated children)**

**13. Content of protection (including access to social security, social assistance, healthcare, housing and other basic services; integration into the labour market; measures to enhance language skills; measures to improve attainment in schooling and/or the education system and/or vocational training)**

**14. Return of former applicants for international protection**

**15. Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes (including EU Joint Resettlement Programme, national resettlement programme (UNHCR), National Humanitarian Admission Programme, private sponsorship programmes/schemes and ad hoc special programmes)**

**16. Relocation (ad hoc, emergency relocation; developments in activities organised under national schemes or on a bilateral basis)**

**17. National jurisprudence on international protection in 2023 (please include a link to the relevant case law and/or submit cases to the [EUAA Case Law Database](#))**

## 18. Other important developments in 2023

## **PART B: Publications**

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### **1. If available online, please provide links to relevant publications produced by your organisation in 2023**

<https://www.repository.utl.pt/handle/10400.5/27538>

### **2. If not available online, please share your publications with us at: [Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu) or upload your file using the functionality below (max. file size 1MB).**

Please upload your file

The maximum file size is 1 MB

3. For publications that due to copyright issues cannot be easily shared, please provide references using the table below.

	Title of publication	Name of author	Publisher/Organisation	Date
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## Contact details

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Name and title of contact person

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I accept the provisions of the EUAA [Legal and Privacy Statements](#)

### Useful links

[EUAA Asylum Report 2023 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023)

[Executive Summary -Asylum Report 2023 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/executive-summary\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/executive-summary)

[Sources on Asylum 2023 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2023\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2023)

[National asylum developments database \(https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database)

[Asylum in Europe in 2022: A Year in Review \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-europe-2022-year-review\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-europe-2022-year-review)

### Background Documents

[Word template to submit input](#)

### Contact

[Contact Form](#)

