

Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2025

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Dear Colleagues,

The production of the Asylum Report 2025 is currently underway. The annual [Asylum Report](#) presents an overview of developments in the field of international protection in Europe.

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 your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2024 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 2024 on issues related to asylum in EU+ countries (**'Part B' of the form**).

These may be reports, articles, recommendations to national authorities or EU institutions, open letters and analytical outputs.

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 and contributing organisations will be listed under the Acknowledgements of the report.

All contributions should be appropriately referenced. You may include links to supporting material, such as analytical studies, articles, reports, websites, press releases, position papers.

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.

NB: This year's edition of the Asylum Report will be significantly revamped to achieve a leaner, more analytical report with streamlined thematic sections. The focus will be on key trends in the field of asylum rather than on individual developments. For this reason, information shared by

respondents to this call may be incorporated in the Asylum Report in a format different than in the past years.

Your input matters to us and will be much appreciated!

Please submit your contribution to the Asylum Report 2025 by Friday, 10 January 2025.

Contact details

* Name of Organisation

Equal Legal Aid

Name and title of contact person

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* Email

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

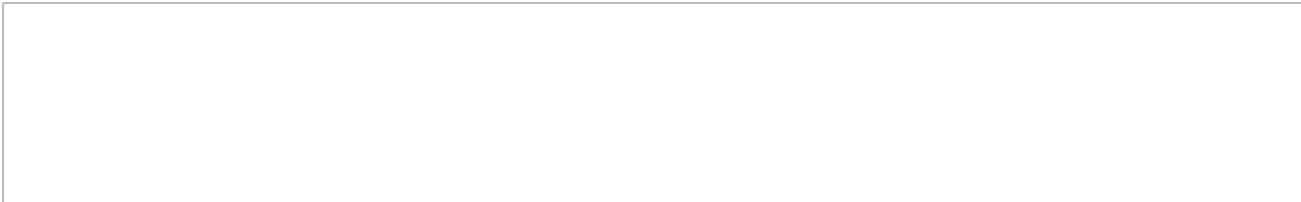
General observations

Before sharing information by thematic area, please provide your general observations on asylum developments as indicated in the following three fields:

What areas would you highlight where important developments took place in the country/countries you cover?

What are the areas, where only few or no developments took place?

Would you have any observations to share specifically about the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in the national context of the country/ countries you cover?



PART A: Contributions by topic

Please share your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2024 by topic. Kindly make sure that you provide information on:

- New developments and improvements in 2024 and new or remaining challenges;
- Changes in legislation, policies or practices, or institutional changes during 2024.

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)

In our experience, access to asylum procedures upon arrival remained an ongoing issue in 2024.

The registration of asylum applications has reportedly been difficult due to the interruption of the provision of interpretation services from the NGO MetaDrasi in Spring 2024. This interruption has led to significant delays in the registration of asylum applications and subsequent applications, as well as difficulties in accessing information or to lodge an appeal. The repercussions of the aforementioned issues are far-reaching, extending beyond these immediate challenges. The absence of interpretation services hinders asylum seekers' ability to adequately disclose vulnerabilities upon arrival, seek necessary psycho-social, medical or legal assistance, and participate in their asylum interviews, among other crucial processes.

Following the termination of the EODY programme and the initiation of the HIPPOCRATES programme, shortcomings in the provision of medical care were reported, particularly with regard to the understaffing of reception facilities, which has resulted in challenges in accessing appropriate medical care, especially for applicants for international protection suffering from chronic diseases. The reception system still lacks a continuous and reliable presence in all critical facilities. As a result, medical screenings are often disrupted and staff are not available to issue medical documentation, conduct comprehensive vulnerability assessments or provide referrals to public hospitals. These significant gaps create additional challenges in adequately preparing vulnerable cases for asylum proceedings, beyond the health risks they pose.

The lack of interpretation services has led to a reduced number of slots available for registration appointments in asylum offices on the mainland, effectively preventing individuals from seeking asylum. Applicants for international protection often report having to make multiple attempts, sometimes over the course of several months, before finally securing a registration interview, if successful at all. Registration interviews have been reported to be scheduled at late dates. This lack of access to asylum procedures leaves applicants in a state of legal limbo, unable to access the national reception system and at risk of abuse, trafficking, and forced returns. Furthermore, applicants have reported prolonged detention in registration facilities, particularly in Malakasa.

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

In 2024, access to information and legal assistance continued to present significant challenges. As an organisation specialising in legal assistance and representation for asylum seekers, we have observed a notable increase in the number of individuals seeking our legal support since 2022. Specifically, we have recorded a 190% surge in requests for legal assistance between 2022 and 2023, followed by a 34% increase between 2023 and 2024. A significant proportion of these requests (19%) pertained to accessing legal information and counselling, while 22% focused on obtaining legal aid or representation following rejection decisions, underscoring the pressing needs in this area. The disruption to interpretation services, which has led to the closure of information points in reception facilities, has further compounded challenges in accessing basic information. This has partly led to an increased demand for legal information and support, as well as the withdrawal of legal actors from most official reception facilities since 2023. At the same time, there has been a decline in the number of civil society organisations operating in Greece. All of the above factors are contributing to an increased need for legal support, including the provision of legal information, counselling and representation.

Concerning access to legal aid after a rejection decision at first instance, and despite efforts to increase the number of lawyers on the national registry, the number remains insufficient to meet the needs. Furthermore, we have observed patterns of malpractice that significantly hinder the exercise of the right to legal aid, including the difficulty in establishing contact with appointed lawyers from asylum seekers. In addition, applicants are often not clearly informed that an application for legal aid through the Greek registry has been made on their behalf, leading to confusion.

Access to justice in Greece following a second instance rejection decision remains a significant challenge as well, partly due to the costs associated with judicial proceedings, which represent a significant barrier to accessing justice.

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)

As mentioned above, the provision of interpretation services at the asylum service has been greatly disrupted in 2024, causing major issues in the processing of asylum applications, from registration to appeals.

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)

In 2024, derogatory or exceptional procedures, such as accelerated, border or admissibility procedures, continued to be used in excessive numbers and constitute the norm.

The use of admissibility procedures for applicants for international protection entering from Turkey continued, despite the clear lack of prospects for readmission after 2020. It is still unclear what will happen to these cases following the ECJ's preliminary ruling of 4 October 2024. This is a cause for concern as many asylum seekers falling under the scope of this procedure have had their applications rejected and still have a case pending before the administrative courts. The average duration of such procedures in cases represented by ELA is currently 558 days*.

*Data extracted from 94 annulment requests submitted by Equal Legal Aid, between 2021 and 2024.

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)

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)

First instance proceedings continued to give cause for concern. Among the problems observed are:

- Difficulties in lodging an asylum application or a subsequent application due to lack of interpretation services;
- Recurrent postponement of interviews, with long delays in rescheduling;
- Malpractices in the determination of international protection status, in particular for victims of torture, trafficking and gender-based violence, who remain inadequately protected and mostly unidentified;
- Abuses and malpractices in credibility assessments, which result in the rejection of applicants as not credible, despite the submission of multiple and interdisciplinary evidence to substantiate their claims;
- Interviews conducted remotely, with recurrent technical problems that significantly affected the quality of the interviews.

The situation of women survivors of sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV) is of particular concern, demonstrating the failure to uphold international obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention, the Istanbul Convention and other binding human rights framework. Overall, the cases represented by Equal Legal Aid reveal a systemic failure to recognise the unique vulnerabilities of survivors of gender-based violence and to adequately protect them, and reflect a deeply problematic process that subjects survivors to ongoing abuse from the authorities.

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

Delays in the processing of cases by the competent courts in Athens and Thessaloniki have been observed, with a detrimental impact on the protection and essential needs of rejected applicants.

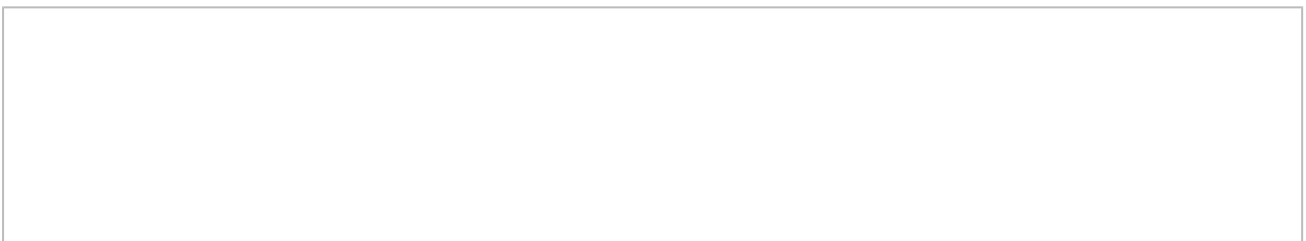
In particular, the examination of requests for interim measures at the Athens administrative court is considerably delayed. For cases represented by our organisations, the average length of time between the submission of an interim measures request and the issuance of a decision is 106 days, as opposed to 33 days in the administrative court of Thessaloniki*. This situation leaves applicants in a legal limbo, undocumented, and with no access to reception conditions while the request for judicial review is pending.

The examination of requests for judicial review in administrative courts is also lengthy, with an average length of 455 days for cases pending before Athens Administrative Court, and 498 days for cases pending before Thessaloniki Administrative Court**.

*Data extracted from 77 interim measures requests submitted by Equal Legal Aid, between 2021 and 2024.

**Data extracted from 94 judicial review requests submitted by Equal Legal Aid between 2021 and 2024.

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



11. Children and applicants with special needs (special reception facilities, identification mechanisms/referrals, procedural standards, provision of information, age assessment, legal guardianship and foster care for unaccompanied and separated children)

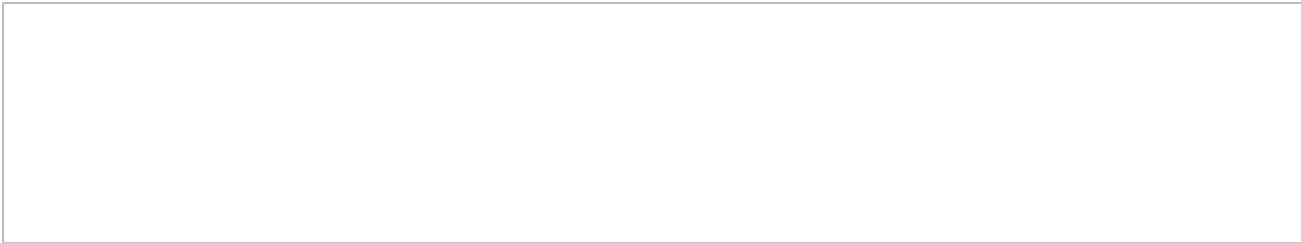
12. Content of protection (including access to social security, social assistance, healthcare, housing and other basic services; integration into the labour market; measures to enhance language skills; measures to improve attainment in schooling and/or the education system and/or vocational training)

13. Return of former applicants for international protection

14. 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)

15. National jurisprudence on international protection in 2024 (please include a link to the relevant case law and/or submit cases to the [EUAA Case Law Database](#))

16. Other important developments in 2024



PART B: Publications

1. If available online, please provide links to relevant publications produced by your organisation in 2024

- ELA and 36 organisations, open letter: "Put an end to the disruption of interpretation services still undermining asylum seekers' rights in Greece", 1 November 2024: <https://www.equallegalaid.org/open-letter-put-an-end-to-the-disruption-of-interpretation-services-still-undermining-asylum-seekers-rights-in-greece/>
- ELA and 18 organisations, joint statement: "Provision of cash assistance to asylum seekers in Greece must resume immediately", 24 September 2024, <https://www.equallegalaid.org/joint-statement-provision-of-cash-assistance-to-asylum-seekers-in-greece-must-resume-immediately/>
- ELA, I Have Rights and Mobile Info Team, joint submissions to the Committee of Ministers of the of the Council of Europe in the cases of M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece & Rahimi v. Greece, August 2024, https://www.equallegalaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MSS_IHR_MIT_ELA_August_2024_-_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf
- ELA and 5 organisations, joint statement, "Lack of interpretation services lengthens existing delays to access asylum and leaves people without protection" 29 May 2024, <https://www.equallegalaid.org/lack-of-interpretation-services/>
- ELA and Heinrich Boll Stiftung Thessaloniki, docu-series, "Lost in a legal maze: 10 + 1 stories of asylum seekers in Europe", 30 April 2024, <https://www.equallegalaid.org/lost-in-a-legal-maze-a-series-of-11-stories-of-asylum-seekers-in-europe/>

2. If not available online, please share your publications with us at: 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
1				
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Useful links

[EUAA Asylum Report 2024 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2024\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2024)

[Executive Summary -Asylum Report 2024 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2024/executive-summary\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2024/executive-summary)

[Sources on Asylum 2024 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2024\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2024)

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

[International Protection in Europe: 2023 in Review \(https://euaa.europa.eu/international-protection-europe-2023-review\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/international-protection-europe-2023-review)

Background Documents

[Word template to submit input](#)

Contact

[Contact Form](#)