



Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2026

Dear Colleagues,

The production of the *Asylum Report 2026* 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 2025 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 2025 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: Similarly to last year, this year's edition of the Asylum Report will be leaner and more analytical, 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. It will also feature prominently as info boxes in the [country overviews](#).

Your input matters to us and will be much appreciated!

- *Please submit your contribution to the Asylum Report 2026 by **Friday, 9 January 2026**.*





Contact details

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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:

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

Access to work and early participation

Access to the labour market for asylum seekers improved in practice after the abolition of the 24-week rule, although major barriers remain due to work permit requirements, administrative waiting periods and fragmented local support structures. These developments renewed attention to early participation and labour market access as key elements of reception and integration.

Reception, housing and local initiatives

Throughout 2025, reception conditions in the Netherlands remained under pressure due to capacity shortages and limited outflow to housing. At the local level, municipalities continued to explore different approaches to reception and housing. These developments point to the growing role of local implementation in managing system pressure and supporting continuity between reception and longer-term integration.

Participation and integration under the Civic Integration Act 2021

Implementation of the Civic Integration Act 2021 continued to focus on early participation (“direct participation”), combining language learning with participation (“duality”) and, where possible, work. Experiences from practice indicate ongoing tensions between language requirements, participation activities and other responsibilities, underlining the need for tailored approaches and flexibility within integration pathways.





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

3. **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?**

In 2025, the Netherlands continued preparations for the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. National policy discussions placed a strong emphasis on limiting arrivals and introducing stricter procedures, including draft legislation on emergency asylum measures and a proposed two-status system distinguishing between different grounds for protection. These proposals would entail differentiated rights regarding family reunification and residence security and raise questions about legal safeguards and longer-term integration prospects for applicants.

PART A: Contributions by topic

Please share **your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2025 by topic**. Kindly make sure that you provide information on:

- ✓ New developments and improvements in 2025 and new or remaining challenges;
- ✓ Changes in legislation, policies or practices, or institutional changes during 2025.

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)

Labour market access for asylum seekers

In 2025, access to the labour market for asylum seekers in the Netherlands continued to evolve. The abolition of the 24-week rule (work restricted to 24 weeks a year) led to a sharp increase in the number of requested work permits (TWVs) — from approximately 600 permits granted in 2022 to more than 16,500 by early September 2025 — highlighting the labour potential of people seeking asylum and underlining the importance of early participation (“direct participation”).

At the same time, the mandatory work permit (TWV), waiting periods and administrative complexity remain significant barriers to effective labour market participation. In its consultation response, as well as in the joint position of employers and civil society organisations on the draft decree *Improving labour market access for asylum seekers*, OpenEmbassy concludes that the proposed measures, in their current form, do not sufficiently improve effective access to work and instead introduce new barriers, while a simpler and more transparent system is needed for both employers and people in the asylum procedure. Proposed measures that differentiate access to work based on the likelihood of receiving protection introduce additional uncertainty and implementation challenges, while leaving key structural barriers, such as the TWV system, unchanged.

Reception and Housing

In 2025, reception conditions in the Netherlands remained under severe pressure due to persistent shortages in accommodation capacity. Structural bottlenecks in the asylum system continued to result in overcrowding at key entry points, most notably the reception centre in





Ter Apel, where overcapacity led to safety concerns and deteriorating living conditions for both applicants and the local community. Against this background, the new government announced its intention to repeal the Distribution Act (*Spreidingswet*), a law designed to ensure a more even distribution of reception places across municipalities.

At the same time, proposals were put forward to abolish priority access to housing for beneficiaries of international protection. While formally related to housing policy, this measure is directly linked to reception capacity, as reduced outflow to housing leads to longer stays in reception facilities and further congestion of the asylum system. Together, these developments risk increasing reliance on large-scale emergency reception, prolonging stays in overcrowded facilities and undermining both reception standards and opportunities for early integration. Evidence from research and practice consistently shows that timely access to stable housing is a key precondition for successful integration, labour market participation and wellbeing, and therefore an essential component of a humane and effective reception system.

Small-scale reception models

In parallel, implementation of the Distribution Act (*Spreidingswet*) has enabled many municipalities to develop more decentralised and small-scale reception models, in which participation and integration already start during the reception phase. These approaches often involve participatory forms of reception, cooperation with residents and the mobilisation of local networks, illustrating how reception policy choices can influence integration outcomes in practice.

*** Further background and references to publications and initiatives related to these themes are provided in Part B.*

- 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, decision-making, 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. 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, health care, 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)

Participation and integration of newcomers

In 2025, the implementation of the Dutch Civic Integration Act 2021 continued to focus on early participation (“direct participation”), combining language learning with participation and, where possible, work. Findings from the longitudinal study *Perspectives of Civic Integration Participants*, conducted by OpenEmbassy in collaboration with Regioplan and BMC, show that this dual approach is widely supported by newcomers, but remains difficult to realise in practice. Persistent tensions between language requirements, participation activities and other responsibilities, such as work, care tasks and health-related issues, can hinder sustainable integration outcomes.

Research and practice indicate that participation is strengthened when language learning is better aligned with future perspectives and ambitions related to work, and when opportunities for informal language practice and social connections are available. In addition, access to timely, appropriate and accessible healthcare — particularly mental health support — has emerged as an important enabling condition for sustained participation. Low-threshold and culturally sensitive forms of care, organised close to people’s living environment, can support newcomers’ ability to engage in language learning, participation and work.

These developments underline the importance of tailored approaches and sufficient flexibility within integration pathways. Insights from this research have also informed evidence-based policy papers and local experimentation aimed at improving the combination of learning, participation and support.

*** Further background and references to publications and initiatives related to these themes are provided in Part B.*





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 2025 (please include a link to the relevant case law and/or submit cases to the [EUAA Case Law Database](#))

16. Other important developments in 2025

Political context in relation to reception and integration

Beyond thematic developments in reception, integration and labour market access, the asylum system in the Netherlands was further shaped in 2025 by electoral dynamics and political polarisation. In the run-up to and aftermath of national elections, asylum and integration became central themes in political debate, accompanied by proposals such as emergency asylum legislation, a two-status system and changes to residence permits. This context contributed to policy volatility, affecting the capacity of implementing organisations and local authorities to plan and invest in sustainable reception and integration solutions.

In late 2025, significant budget cuts to the Dutch Refugee Council (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland) were confirmed, leading to a planned reduction of its presence in reception facilities from approximately 350 to around 70 locations from 2026 onwards. Although the operational impact will materialise in 2026, the decisions were finalised in 2025 and are expected to reduce access to independent information, support and early identification of vulnerabilities. At the same time, responsibilities related to family reunification and legal counselling are increasingly concentrated within government bodies, raising questions about the separation between decision-making and independent guidance. Evidence from other EU Member States suggests that early, independent legal counselling can contribute to both procedural fairness and efficiency.





Part B: Publications

1. If available online, please provide links to relevant publications produced by your organisation in 2025:

Maintaining reception capacity and housing pathways in the Netherlands (consultation responses, OpenEmbassy, 2025)

These consultation responses address proposed changes to the Dutch reception and housing framework, including the planned repeal of the Distribution Act (*Spreidingswet*) and the abolition of priority housing access for beneficiaries of international protection. Drawing on research evidence and municipal practice, they highlight how these measures risk reducing reception capacity, slowing down outflow to housing and increasing pressure on the asylum system, while underlining that timely access to stable housing is a key precondition for integration, labour market participation and wellbeing.

[Consultation response on the Distribution Act, OpenEmbassy, May 2025 \(Dutch\)](#)

[Article about our consultation response “Distribution Act for humane reception”, OpenEmbassy, 2025 \(English\)](#)

[Consultation response on housing for beneficiaries of international protection, OpenEmbassy, March, 2025 \(Dutch\)](#)

Practice-based initiatives on reception conditions (OpenEmbassy, 2025)

In addition to research and policy input, OpenEmbassy contributed in 2025 to several practice-based initiatives aimed at improving reception conditions in cooperation with public and civil society partners. These initiatives focus on strengthening quality, dignity and opportunities for participation during the reception phase.

Examples include:

[Humane Reception / New Neighbourhood Home \(with the Netherlands Red Cross\) / Participation Desk in shelter locations \(Meedoenbalie\)](#)
(in English)

Participation and integration of newcomers

Local approaches to direct participation

In addition to national-level research and policy input, several local initiatives provide practical insight into how direct participation is implemented in practice. These initiatives focus on tailored support and improved combinations of language learning, work and participation, illustrating how national integration objectives are translated into local practice, including through informal language learning, access to work and low-threshold support.

[Care cafe Venlo \(VitaValley / Doctors of the World / OpenEmbassy\) / Acces to work The Hague, Participation Program Den Helder / Direct Participation from day 1 Arnhem / Perspective of people from Ukraine Enschede \(English\)](#)





Research and policy input on direct participation

The study *Perspectives of Civic Integration Participants* (third report, 2025), commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, examines how newcomers experience the combination of language learning, participation and support, and identifies factors that facilitate or hinder early participation. Building on these findings, the article *Participation starts on day one* and the consultation response *Extension Grounds for Civic Integration* translate the research into practical and policy-relevant insights, highlighting the need for tailored approaches and flexibility in integration timelines.

[OpenEmbassy, Regioplan & BMC \(2025\). *Perspectives of Civic Integration Participants – Third Report 2024–2025*. Commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment \(the Netherlands\) - in Dutch.](#)

[Article: Participation starts on day one; experiences of newcomers with the Civic Integration Act 2021, OpenEmbassy, 2025 \(Dutch\)](#)

[Response to the Online Consultation on Extension Grounds under the Dutch Civic Integration Act \(OpenEmbassy, 2025\) - Dutch](#)

This consultation response supports expanding the grounds for extending the civic integration period and argues that greater flexibility in timelines is necessary to enable realistic and sustainable participation. It highlights practical barriers that can delay participation and stresses the importance of timely and workable extension mechanisms.

[Article / response to the Online Consultation on Strengthening Labour Market Infrastructure \(OpenEmbassy, 2025\) - English / Dutch](#)

This consultation response addresses proposed reforms to strengthen regional labour market infrastructures in the Netherlands. It highlights that newcomers — including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection — are often insufficiently reached by mainstream employment services due to institutional fragmentation, and underlines the importance of regional coordination and closer cooperation to unlock this labour potential.

2. If not available online, please share your publications with us at:
Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu

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	Date
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