

Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2026

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

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

* Name of organisation

Save the Children

Name and title of contact person

Federica Toscano

* Email

federica.toscano@savethechildren.org

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 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)

Access to territory and first arrival at borders

In 2025, access to EU territory for asylum seekers, including children, continued to be shaped by restrictive border management practices across several external borders. Save the Children’s Crossing Lines report documents a persistent trend towards limiting physical access to border areas, restricting entry points, and applying emergency or exceptional measures that de facto prevent individuals from reaching asylum procedures. At the Polish Belarusian border unaccompanied children continued to arrive primarily through irregular crossings often after experiencing violence coercion and deprivation. Upon reaching Polish territory children frequently faced obstacles to accessing protection including immediate returns limited information and restricted opportunities to express an intention to seek asylum.

In Greece arrivals of children remained high particularly to Crete yet reception and registration arrangements were largely ad hoc. Children including unaccompanied minors and families with infants were often accommodated in temporary or informal spaces lacking basic infrastructure healthcare and child appropriate services.

In Spain children were generally allowed to disembark yet prolonged stays at ports of arrival in overcrowded conditions were reported before transfer to reception facilities. In Italy access to territory was generally ensured following disembarkation but initial reception often took place in overcrowded hotspots with limited child specific support. In Finland border closures and securitisation significantly restricted access to territory and asylum procedures.

Registration access to the asylum procedure and non refoulement

Barriers to the registration of asylum applications persisted in 2025. In Poland unaccompanied children frequently experienced delays between expressing an intention to seek international protection and the formal registration of their application resulting in prolonged periods without safeguards or departure from the territory

prior to registration.

In Greece legislative measures temporarily suspending access to the asylum procedure for certain arrivals raised serious concerns regarding compliance with the principle of non refoulement particularly in light of the presence of children. Limited vulnerability identification increased the risk that children were returned without adequate assessment.

In Spain delays in identification and registration particularly for unaccompanied children postponed access to asylum guardianship and reception conditions. In Italy the expansion of accelerated and border procedures increased the risk that children entered the asylum system without sufficient procedural safeguards or access to information and legal assistance. In Finland emergency measures raised concerns regarding effective access to asylum and protection against refoulement.

Pushbacks and border practices

Pushback practices or measures with similar effects continued to affect children in 2025. At the Polish Belarusian border children including unaccompanied minors were subjected to pushbacks despite their expressed need for protection. In Greece allegations of pushbacks at sea and on land continued including cases involving children with limited accountability mechanisms in place.

In Spain summary returns and informal practices limiting access to asylum procedures persisted particularly at land borders. In Italy fast track post arrival procedures and cooperation with third countries contributed to indirect pushback risks. In Finland restrictive entry policies resulted in constructive pushback effects by preventing access to asylum procedures altogether.

Right to first response shelter food and medical assistance

Across all examined contexts access to immediate assistance upon arrival remained inconsistent. Children frequently lacked timely access to shelter food medical care and psychosocial support during the initial phase following arrival.

In Poland children arriving through forested border areas often relied on civil society for emergency assistance. In Greece Spain and Italy overcrowded or temporary reception facilities limited access to adequate care. In Finland restricted access to territory also limited the provision of first response assistance.

Role and conduct of border authorities

Border authorities continued to play a decisive role in determining access to protection. Across Poland Greece Spain Italy and Finland insufficient training on child sensitive procedures age assessment and vulnerability identification contributed to inconsistent outcomes for children. Limited oversight and accountability mechanisms increased the risk of rights violations particularly for unaccompanied and separated children.

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

Save the Children consistently identifies limited access to timely information and legal assistance as a structural barrier affecting children's access to protection, especially at EU external borders. Children frequently lacked clear and child appropriate information on their right to seek asylum, the steps of the procedure, and available support mechanisms at the moment of arrival and during the initial phase of border procedures.

In Poland, unaccompanied children at the Polish Belarusian border often received little or no information from border authorities regarding their right to apply for international protection. Information on asylum procedures was frequently unavailable in languages understood by children or provided only after significant delays. Access to legal assistance was limited in practice, particularly at the border stage, with legal counselling often dependent on civil society organisations rather than state structures. Delays in appointing guardians further restricted children's ability to access legal representation and effectively exercise their procedural rights.

In Greece, there are serious gaps in access to legal assistance following arrival, particularly in contexts where emergency or restrictive measures were applied. For example, children arriving in Crete in 2025 often lacked access to information on asylum procedures and were not systematically referred to legal counselling services. During periods when access to the asylum procedure was suspended for certain arrivals, legal assistance became even more difficult to access, increasing the risk that children were returned or detained without having received counselling or representation. In this context, documented pressure on civil society organisations providing legal aid, led to undermined access to justice for children.

In Spain, while legal frameworks formally guarantee access to information and legal assistance, in practice children often experienced delays in receiving counselling and representation. Unaccompanied children in particular were frequently identified late, meaning that access to guardianship and legal assistance was postponed. During prolonged stays at ports of arrival or in temporary facilities, children had limited access to legal information or individual counselling on their asylum options.

In Italy, restricted access to information and legal assistance during the initial stages following arrival, particularly in hotspot settings and accelerated procedures. Children and families often entered asylum procedures without having received adequate information on their rights or access to independent legal advice. Rapid transfers between facilities further disrupted continuity of legal counselling and representation.

Across all contexts, Save the Children finds that access to information and legal assistance relied heavily on civil society actors rather than being systematically ensured by state authorities. Insufficient child appropriate information, delayed access to legal counselling, and gaps in representation weakened procedural safeguards and increased the risk of rights violations, particularly for unaccompanied and separated children.

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)

Save the Children reports that children at EU external borders frequently lacked access to interpretation in a language they understood during arrival screening, identification and registration procedures. In several countries, interpretation was either unavailable at the point of arrival or provided only in a limited number of languages, often not reflecting the changing profiles of arrivals. As a result, children were sometimes unable to understand procedural information, express protection needs or challenge decisions affecting them, including age assessment outcomes.

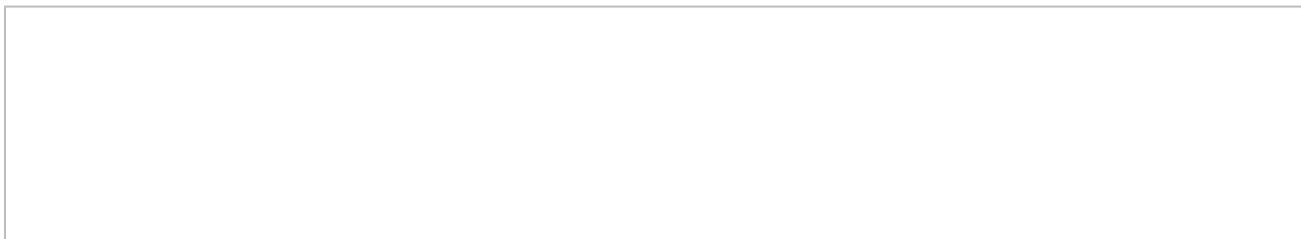
In Greece, interpretation gaps were particularly acute in newly emerging arrival locations such as Crete. Rapid increases in arrivals combined with insufficient reception infrastructure resulted in limited availability of interpreters during first reception and detention. Interpretation was often prioritised for a narrow set of languages, leaving speakers of less common languages without effective communication support. In detention settings, access to interpretation for legal counselling and vulnerability assessment was reported to be sporadic and dependent on NGO presence.

In Poland, unaccompanied children arriving at the Polish Belarusian border frequently lacked access to interpretation during initial encounters with border authorities. Communication often relied on basic English or non verbal interaction, which was insufficient for explaining asylum rights or assessing vulnerability. Interpretation services were largely provided by civil society actors rather than embedded in border procedures, limiting consistency and coverage.

In Spain, Save the Children research indicates that access to information legal assistance and interpretation is generally ensured once children enter the formal reception and asylum system. Interpretation services and legal counselling are typically available during the asylum procedure and within reception facilities, supporting children and families in understanding their rights and procedural steps. For unaccompanied children access to legal representation improves following identification and referral to child protection authorities. However challenges remain at the earliest stage of arrival particularly at ports and border locations where delays in identification and transfer can temporarily limit access to interpreters and legal assistance.

.In Italy, Save the Children research indicates a comparatively more structured use of interpretation and cultural mediation within reception systems following arrival. Interpretation support is frequently provided through contracted cultural mediators operating within hotspots and first reception facilities, facilitating communication with newly arrived children and families during identification and early reception phases. While availability at the immediate point of disembarkation remains uneven, the integration of mediators within reception services has contributed to broader language coverage and improved communication once individuals enter the reception system. This approach has supported access to information and basic procedural understanding for children, including those speaking less common languages, although challenges related to consistency, qualifications and early stage access persist.

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)

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)

Save the Children assesses that in 2025 children and families seeking international protection continued to face detention or detention like restrictions at several EU external borders, often linked to screening identification border management and return related measures. While detention of children is restricted or prohibited in law in most contexts, practice frequently resulted in de facto deprivation of liberty, limited individualised assessment, and insufficient use of alternatives to detention.

In Greece, Save the Children documents that newly arrived asylum seekers including children are systematically subject to restrictions on freedom of movement in Closed Controlled Access Centres and Reception and Identification Centres. The initial restriction lasts five days and can be extended up to a total of twenty five days. There is no effective remedy against the initial restriction and extensions were frequently applied without individualised justification. Release was not always ensured when the maximum duration expired. Following the suspension of access to the asylum procedure for certain arrivals in mid 2025, Save the Children observes that people including unaccompanied children were held primarily in pre removal detention centres or closed facilities without systematic vulnerability assessments. The organisation also notes that policy discussions in 2025 included proposals that would significantly expand detention related to returns, potentially allowing prolonged detention of children within families.

In Spain, Save the Children assesses that administrative detention occurs mainly during initial screening after arrival and in pre removal contexts. Newly arrived migrants may be held for identification and security checks for up to seventy two hours, while detention of children should not exceed twenty four hours. However, Save the Children documents that these time limits were exceeded in practice during mass arrivals, with children and adults held together for several days in unsuitable conditions including at ports of arrival. Capacity constraints contributed to prolonged confinement that functioned as detention in practice.

In Italy, Save the Children observes that while detention of unaccompanied children for migration control purposes is prohibited by law, de facto detention occurred during identification and first reception phases following sea arrivals. Children were often accommodated for extended periods in emergency facilities or hotspots where freedom of movement was restricted and separation from adults was not consistently ensured. Although legislation foresees placement of unaccompanied children in dedicated first reception facilities for a maximum of thirty days, Save the Children assesses that this framework remains only partially implemented in practice.

In Finland, Save the Children documents that detention is used primarily in pre removal contexts and is relatively rare for children, but remains legally permissible for children with families and for unaccompanied children above a certain age. The maximum time limit for detention of unaccompanied children is six days. For children within families, Save the Children notes that detention periods can be significantly longer and that policy discussions in 2024 and 2025 considered extended detention limits. The organisation highlights cases of prolonged detention of families with children and instances of family separation linked to detention practices.

In Poland, Save the Children assesses that unaccompanied children are generally not detained and are instead placed in institutional care. However, detention risks arise when children are wrongly assessed as adults or when they are channelled into return proceedings rather than the asylum system. Save the Children documents that children aged sixteen and above may be detained under return procedures if they have not accessed international protection, particularly in contexts where access to the asylum procedure is restricted or delayed.

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. 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)

All the submission is child-specific.

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 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

PART B: Publications

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

The information provided above is all based on the following documents:

Save the Children Europe: Crossing Lines - Realities of children at EU external borders https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Crossing_Lines_Full_Report_v2.pdf

Save the Children: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/study-report-transnational-research-on-education-quality-barriers-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-poland-moldova-and-romania-2025>

Save the Children: Traversing Danger: Cumulative Risks and Psychological Harm for Children in Migration (2025) - <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/traversing-danger-cumulative-risks-and-physiological-harm-for-children-in-migration-2025>

Save the children - Greek Council for refugees, Children on the Move in Greece - quarterly briefs:

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/children-on-the-move-in-greece-september-december-2025>; <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/children-on-the-move-in-greece-may-august-2025>;

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				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Useful links

[EUAA Asylum Report 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025)

[Executive Summary -Asylum Report 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025-executive-summary\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2025-executive-summary)

[Sources on Asylum 2025 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2025\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2025)

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

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

Background Documents

[Word template to submit input to the 2026 Asylum Report.docx](#)

Contact

[Contact Form](#)