

### 3.3.3. Quality

High quality asylum decisions and decision-making processes contribute to the previously mentioned policy aspects: they increase the fairness, integrity and efficiency of the asylum systems. Quality assurance systems, guidance materials and capacity-building measures typically bring back rapidly the initial investment and efforts. The recent extensive legal and policy changes might have contributed to the fact that EU+ countries currently seem to focus more on staff trainings corresponding to their specific needs, the revision of the existing guidance materials and the quality of the decisions delivered in the new legislative and policy framework.

Country	Area(s) concerned	Policy & practice
Belgium	Procedures at first instance	The legal section of CGRS elaborated new guidelines and provided training for protection officers on the major legislative changes that came into force in 2018. The CGRS and the Immigration Office staff continued to follow EASO training modules. Protection officers could obtain extra training from Senior Protection Officers and COI experts based on national training materials, when they were requested to handle cases from countries of origin outside of their initial competencies.
	Reception of applicants for international protection	Fedasil has been developing an early screening tool. The tool allows social workers at the arrival centre to make a first identification of vulnerable applicants for international protection with special reception needs. On the basis of the identification, a reception facility that best corresponds to the needs of the applicant can be sought and designated. The tool was in a testing phase in late 2018.
Bulgaria	Reception of applicants for international protection	Renovation and further enhancement of the facilities: establishment of a secure zone with 100 places for UAM in the Registration and Reception Centre in Sofia, finalising the renovations of the special building for vulnerable applicants in the Registration and Reception Centre in Harmanli, creation of special interview and assessment rooms for UAMs at both sites.
Cyprus	Reception of applicants for international protection	New operational scheme was introduced for the Reception and Accommodation Centre in Kofinou. The government set up a coordination mechanism with all relevant stakeholders to swiftly handle all issues concerning this reception centre.
Estonia	Special procedures - Accelerated procedures	The Police and Border Guard Board developed internal guidelines on accelerated procedures.
	Procedures at first instance	The Police and Border Guard Board has started to develop new training materials for its staff, matched closely with the targeted officials' roles within the asylum procedure. The training components are additional to the EASO training modules.
Finland	Reception of applicants for international protection	The Finnish Immigration Service started annual contingency training sessions in 2018.
	Country of origin information	The Country Information Service of the Finnish Immigration Service created referencing guidelines for country information research and peer review guidelines.
	Procedures at first instance	As a follow up to the asylum decision-making development project LAAVA (ended in October 2018), a separate judicial review team was established within the legal and support services of the Asylum Unit of the Finnish Immigration Service.

Finland	Providing interpretation services	Based on the findings of an internal study on asylum decision-making, the Finnish Immigration Service recruited two quality control interpreters in Arabic and Dari.
	Vulnerable applicants - Victims of FGM	The Asylum Unit of the Finnish Immigration Service updated its guidelines for dealing with FGM cases in the framework of the asylum procedures.
France	Procedures at first instance	The OFPRA continues its regular quality control of decisions issued, with quarterly and annual reviews. During the year, the quality control manager held several meetings with protection officers to inform them of the conclusions of the quality control procedures and to engage in discussions with them.
Germany	Providing interpretation services	The minimum standards for interpreters were increased: interpreters have to hand in a C1 language certificate for the main languages and they have to participate in an online training about the specificities of providing interpretation in the context of asylum procedures.
	Procedures at first instance	The BAMF introduced a multi-level, continuous quality assurance system for asylum decisions.
Greece	Reception of applicants for international protection	The Reception and Identification Service, in cooperation with other agencies, has been compiling material for establishing a Standards and Procedures Manual for the protection of vulnerable groups, victims of human trafficking and gender violence victims residing in hotspots
Ireland	Reception of applicants for international protection	The draft 'National Standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process' was issued for public consultation between August and October 2018.
Latvia	Vulnerable applicants - UAM	Developing new guidelines 'Ensuring representation for unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers and for cooperation with authorities involved'
Lithuania	Procedures at first instance	Development of new guidelines: 'Search for and collection of information in public sources' and 'Interview. Conversation management'. Update of the decision templates on granting or rejecting an application.
Luxembourg	Procedures at first instance	The new government expressed its commitment to intensify efforts to comply with procedural safeguards, timelines for the assessment of international protection applications and in particular regular information on the status of the assessment of the application for international protection within the framework of the international protection procedure.
Netherlands	Reception of applicants for international protection	The COA - in cooperation with the Coordination Centre for Human Trafficking, the Red Cross, the Dutch Council for Refugees - developed an e-learning module on the identification of human trafficking and it has also created - in cooperation with the national Coordination Centre for Human Trafficking, the Expertise Centre for Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling, the Centre of Expertise on Aliens, Identification and Human Trafficking and Jade Zorggroep - a training course in the recognition of signs of human trafficking and human smuggling.
	Procedures at first instance, Vulnerable applicants	The State Secretary for Justice and Security announced that the credibility assessment of LGBTIs and converts is going to be revised.
Slovakia	Procedures at first instance	The Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior prepared instructions on assessing country of origin information, on granting subsidiary protection and on mutual cooperation between the relevant departments of the Migration Office.

<b>Slovakia</b>	Access to procedure	The 'Nový Horizont 2018' military exercise took place in eastern Slovakia between 10 and 12 July 2018. In cooperation with other relevant units, the representatives of the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior carried out a simulation on the modalities of dealing with refugee crisis situations: registration of refugees, health checks, emergency accommodation.
<b>Spain</b>	Procedures at first instance	The OAR drafted new internal guidelines for assessing applications, including information based on Spanish and EU jurisprudence and following EASO guidelines.
<b>Sweden</b>	Procedures at first instance	The Legal Affairs Department of the Swedish Migration Agency conducting several audits: quality of asylum decisions in general (annual audit), thematic audit of conversion cases, audit of the Asyl 360 pilot project.
	Content of protection - Withdrawal of international protection, Vulnerable applicants - UAM	
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Access to procedure, Procedures at first instance, Special procedures - Safe third countries, Admissibility	The Home Office further developed its asylum policy guidance and letter templates for use by caseworkers. For example, it published guidance on asylum screening and routing and it updated its guidance relating to safe third-country cases and similar inadmissibility case types.