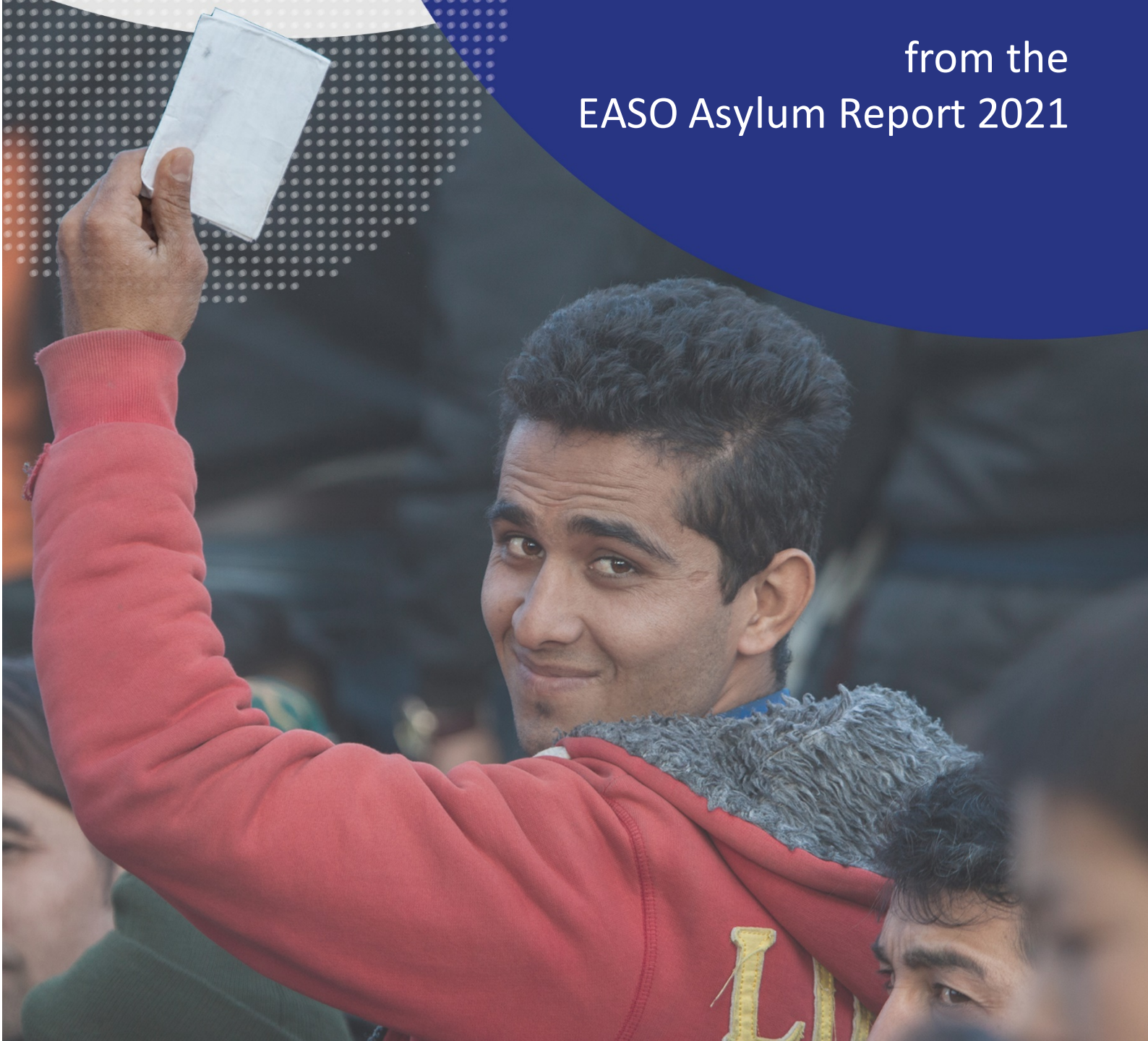




# National Asylum Developments in 2020

from the  
EASO Asylum Report 2021

















## National Asylum Developments from the EASO Asylum Report 2021







This summary presents legislative, institutional and policy developments in asylum and reception in EU+ countries in 2020, as presented in the [EASO Asylum Report 2021](#). Details for each development and further analysis are provided in the report.








This information is also available in a searchable platform, the EASO National Asylum Developments Database: <https://easo.europa.eu/eu-developments>









# Legislative developments









Country	Thematic area	Development
Austria	 Special procedures to process asylum applications	The UK and Northern Ireland were added to the list of safe countries of origin.
Austria	 Return of former applicants	An amendment to the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedures Act, promulgated on 23 December 2020, requires mandatory return counselling sessions to be held at an advanced stage of the procedure.
Austria	 Return of former applicants	The responsibility for return counselling and return assistance was shifted to the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services as of 1 January 2021.
Austria	 Applicants with special needs	The BFA Procedures Law and the Asylum Law were temporarily amended until 31 December 2020, so that unaccompanied minors can be transferred directly to a regional directorate or field office to launch an asylum application, without passing through a first reception centre.
Austria	 Applicants with special needs	The scope of the term family was widened.
Belgium	 Special procedures to process asylum applications	The new Royal Decree establishing the list of safe countries of origin entered into force. The list itself includes the same countries.
Belgium	 Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The Council of Ministers approved a law proposal and a draft royal decree, which aims to adapt the working methods of the CALL to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendments concern the electronic communication of procedural documents and the written procedure.
Belgium	 Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Belgium adopted an exceptional regulation which temporarily allowed an additional procedural document to be submitted

			when the appeal was restricted to a written procedure.
Belgium		Reception of applicants for international protection	In order to fill gaps in labour market shortages caused by the pandemic, applicants were exceptionally exempted from the 4-month waiting period until 30 June 2020. In view of the continuing shortage of workers in some sectors due to the closing of the borders, this measure was resumed from December 2020 until 30 June 2021.
Belgium		Content of protection	The Flemish government adopted a new integration path for newcomers which includes four components (language learning, economic autonomy, social orientation and sponsorship by a Flemish 'buddy') and will conclude with an exam.
Bulgaria		The Dublin procedure	Some processes related to decisions on Dublin cases were clarified, with the aim to have a more efficient and timely procedure.
Bulgaria		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Amendments updated the definitions for the terms 'safe country of origin' and 'safe third country' and additional guarantees were added in the law, as foreseen in the recast Asylum Procedures Directive.
Bulgaria		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The court has to decide ex officio or at the request of the applicant on the right to stay during an appeal against the rejection of a subsequent application.
Bulgaria		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Law on Asylum and Refugees was amended in a comprehensive manner to bring national legislation more in line with the recast Asylum Procedures Directive. For example, the law allows for gathering expert opinions on a larger range of issues. It provides guidance on gathering and using information for the assessment of a case.









Bulgaria		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The time limits for appeal were clarified and a new paragraph was added which underlines that the court decides <i>ex officio</i> or at the applicant's request on their right to remain when the appeal concerns a rejected subsequent application.
Bulgaria		Detention	A draft law aims to amend the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria, including, for example, shorter time limits for appealing decisions on pre-removal detention.
Bulgaria		Legal representation and assistance	Following amendments, the Law on Asylum and Refugees clearly states that state authorities have an obligation to ensure that asylum applicants have access to legal aid.
Bulgaria		Statelessness in the context of asylum	An amendment to the Law on Foreigners was adopted which introduced new grounds for refusing to grant stateless status.
Bulgaria		Content of protection	The amendments to the Law on Asylum and Refugees in Bulgaria added two new circumstances when international protection status ceases: when a beneficiary passes away or when a person refuses expressly to be recognised as a beneficiary of international protection.
Bulgaria		Return of former applicants	The Law on Foreigners was amended to provide clarification on the return procedure. For example, the country to which a return is to be executed must be indicated in the return decision. Automatic suspensive effect was introduced for an appeal which is filed against an expulsion order issued on the grounds of serious threat to public order. In addition, if it is established by a judicial act that a foreigner subject to a removal order cannot be returned to a country due to a risk to the person's life and liberty or persecution, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, an order must be issued which explicitly states the









			prohibition of return and the state to which the foreigner should not be returned. This order is not subject to appeal.
Bulgaria		Applicants with special needs	The Law on Asylum and Refugees was amended to address shortcomings in the identification, legal representation and age assessment procedure for unaccompanied children.
Croatia		Content of protection	Amendments to the Aliens Act extended the scope of persons who can receive a temporary residence permit on humanitarian grounds. These persons have the right to work without an additional work permit or authorisation, to attend vocational training and enrol in education.
Cyprus		Special procedures to process asylum applications	A Ministerial Decision established a list of safe countries of origin.
Cyprus		Special procedures to process asylum applications	An amendment specified that an application could be examined under the accelerated procedure, and its examination is to be prioritised within 30 days from its lodging. This time limit can be extended up to 2 months. The time limit for lodging an appeal against a negative decision is 15 days.
Cyprus		Special procedures to process asylum applications	When a subsequent application is deemed to be inadmissible, the appeal needs to be lodged within 15 days.
Cyprus		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The asylum authority may reject an application and issue at the same time a return, removal or expulsion order in a single administrative act.
Cyprus		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The House of Representatives adopted an amendment to the Constitution, allowing for an exception from the general 75-day time limit for an appeal against a negative decision of the Asylum Service before the Administrative Court.







Cyprus		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	An amendment clarified that an appeal against a rejection of the asylum application together with a return, removal or expulsion order has suspensive effect.
Cyprus		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The time limits to lodge an appeal against a final decision of the Asylum Service in front of the Administrative Court for International Protection were amended: 30 days for the regular procedure and 15 days for the accelerated procedure. The time limits to launch an appeal against a decision of the International Protection Administrative Court was reduced to 14 days from 42 days.
Cyprus		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The composition of the Administrative Court of International Protection was amended, and the number of judges increased first from 3 to 5, then from 5 to 10.
Cyprus		Reception of applicants for international protection	A Ministerial Decision defined the provision of material reception conditions in cash.
Czechia		Statelessness in the context of asylum	A new legislative proposal was presented to the Parliament, which includes among other aspects of the asylum procedure, the establishment of a statelessness determination procedure.
Denmark		Access to procedure	The Danish Immigration Service took over some responsibilities of the registration process from the police.
Denmark		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Danish parliament adopted a bill introducing the possibility to transfer asylum applicants for adjudication of asylum claims and subsequent protection in third countries.
Estonia		Access to procedure	The Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens was amended allowing to extend the registration time limit to 10 working days exceptionally in emergency situations.








Estonia		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The amendment of the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens clarified that the PBGB must update the list of safe countries of origin at least once a year.
Estonia		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The amendment of the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens allows the PBGB to request assistance from EASO and to be involved in the processing of an asylum application in the territory of another state, based on an international agreement or an EU act.
Estonia		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The PBGB may now publish the application number and the title of the decision on its website and do not notify the decision in another manner when the applicant's location is unknown or when there is an emergency situation.
Estonia		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Amendments to the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens clarified that the rejection decision includes a return decision and a prohibition on entry for 3 years.
Estonia		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	An amendment clarified that the appeal against the rejection and return decision has a suspensive effect.
Estonia		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The administrative court may order an applicant's detention without the descriptive and reasoning part when it is faced with a high number of detention requests. These parts are provided to the applicant if the detention decision is contested.
Estonia		Detention	The Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens was amended to include the conditions and timeframes for detaining applicants in an emergency situation caused by mass arrivals.
Estonia		Detention	A new surveillance measure was introduced, the appearing for counselling.














Estonia		Return of former applicants	The criteria for the risk of absconding when a return decision is issued were clarified.
Estonia		Return of former applicants	Compliance with a return decision issued to a minor or an adult foreigner with limited active legal capacity will be organised by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult person who is staying with the person in Estonia.
Finland		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A new act entered into force regulating the processing of personal data by all authorities involved in migration affairs. Corresponding amendments were made in the Reception Act, the Immigration Detention Act, the Integration Act and the Citizenship Act.
Finland		Reception of applicants for international protection	A temporary amendment was passed to the Aliens Act to extend the period of an applicant's right to work. Applicants were temporarily able to work in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and fisheries without a waiting period and they could continue to work in these sectors longer, until they are in the country and receive material reception conditions, despite an enforceable removal decision.
Finland		Applicants with special needs	The age limit for follow-up care for unaccompanied children was extended from 21 years to 25 years.
Finland		Applicants with special needs	A working group has been set up to draw up a new act to assist victims of human trafficking. The working group's mandate runs until the end of 2022.
France		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Benin was removed from the list of safe countries of origin.
France		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The validity period of the asylum application certificate was extended to 10 months for applicants in the regular procedure and 6 months for applicants in the accelerated procedure. These can then be renewed in periods of 6 months.








France		Content of protection	A draft law was presented to the National Assembly, which would prohibit the regularisation of foreigners in irregular situations, such as former applicants.
France		Applicants with special needs	The Ministry of the Interior provided instructions to the prefectures on the early examination of residence permit requests of unaccompanied minors under the care of departmental childcare services. The objective is to ensure that rights - in particular work permits related to vocational education programmes - do not immediately cease when the minor reaches adulthood.
France		Applicants with special needs	A draft law was adopted by the senate which aims to improve and simplify processes for the support of vulnerable minors.
France		Applicants with special needs	A decree amended the terms of state-financing related to the reception of persons declaring to be unaccompanied children.
Germany		Detention	A draft law introduces the additional preparatory detention ( <i>Ergänzende Vorbereitungshaft</i> ) for persons awaiting removal, if they pose a serious risk to others' lives or for significant interests of internal security.
Germany		Content of protection	The Act on Tolerated Status related to Education and Employment of 8 July 2019 entered into force on 1 January 2020.
Germany		Content of protection	The German Act on the Deployment of Social Services Providers was adopted, which provides aid, for example, for language course providers to help mitigate the effect of the pandemic and prevent bankruptcy.
Greece		Access to procedure	An urgent legislative act suspended applications from people arriving illegally in Greece for 1 month.








Greece		Access to procedure	Following a law amendment, the Regional Services for Reception and Identification are also considered to be competent receiving authorities for the full registration of international protection.
Greece		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The implementation of the rules on the exceptional border procedure - which applies to third-country nationals in Reception and Identification Centres in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos - were extended until 31 December 2021.
Greece		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Bangladesh and Pakistan were added to the list of safe countries of origin.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A Joint Ministerial Decision was issued on the procedure and criteria to register in the Register for Rapporteurs-Assistant Case Handlers for Asylum.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Decisions may be notified by e-mail, where the decision is considered to be notified 48 hours after it was sent to the applicant.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A Registry of Rapporteurs and Assistants for Case Officers in Asylum was created.

Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	When the applicant does not comply with the duty to cooperate, especially the duty to remain in communication with the authorities, the application or the appeal is presumed to be implicitly withdrawn. Previously, in this case the application was examined under the rules for manifestly unfounded applications.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new law outlined the development of information systems in reception structures and clarified the end of material reception conditions for recognised beneficiaries of international protection.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	A Ministerial Decision was issued on the creation of temporary reception establishments for applicants for international protection.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	A Joint Ministerial Decision was issued on the terms of material reception condition under the ESTIA II programme, implementing Law No 4674/2020.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	A Ministerial Decision amended the framework of the ESTIA II programme for the accommodation of applicants for international protection.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	A law added two new types of Regional Services of the Reception and Identification Service: closed structures for temporary reception of applicants against whom a restraining order was issued and closed controlled structures of islands.
Greece		Detention	The police director may issue a detention order upon the Asylum Service's prior notice. A judicial review is undertaken for the prolongation of the detention order but not for the initial order. The maximum initial detention period was extended from 45 days to 50 days and the total maximum detention period was extended from 3 months to 18 months.







Greece		Detention	Children's protective custody was abolished.
Greece		Detention	The concept of closed controlled island structures (KEDN) was clarified.
Greece		Legal representation and assistance	A Joint Ministerial Decision re-defined the criteria to be registered in the Register of Greek and Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations and the Register of Members of Non-Governmental Organisations, which are active in matters of international protection, immigration and social integration within the territory of Greece.
Greece		Legal representation and assistance	A Joint Ministerial Decision clarified the implementation rules for the provision of legal aid to applicants for international protection.
Greece		Interpretation services	An amendment clarified that where the provision of interpretation is not possible in the applicant's language of choice, interpretation is provided in the official language of the applicant's country of origin or in another language which may reasonably be assumed to be understood by the applicant, including international sign language.






Greece		Interpretation services	A Ministerial Decision specified that interpretation services must be provided free of charge by the Asylum Services during meetings between an applicant and a lawyer, and these meetings should not exceed 2 hours in total.
Greece		Applicants with special needs	The establishment of locally-competent Units for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors in EKKA are planned according to a new law.
Greece		Applicants with special needs	A Joint Ministerial Decision was issued on age assessments, foreseeing the establishment of a Unit of Medical Examination and Psychosocial Support in Reception and Identification Centres and Temporary Reception or Accommodation structures where the age assessment procedures are carried out.
Hungary		Access to procedure	A new section and a new Article 32/Z were added to the Asylum Law: This allows the NDGAP to confiscate any object (for example, mobile phones, laptops) when the facts cannot be clarified otherwise, there would be a significant delay in clarifying the facts without confiscation or not seizing the object would jeopardise the success of the examination procedure. Previously the rules of the General Administrative Law defined the rules for seizure.
Hungary		Access to procedure	A new point k) was added under Asylum Law, Article 86(1): The NDGAP can also request data from authority responsible for citizenship matters, in order to fulfil its task.
Hungary		Access to procedure	Asylum Law, Article 86/A was amended: The NDGAP can receive and process personal data that are publicly available








			due to public interest, including from foreign databases.
Hungary		Access to procedure	A new Article 80 was added to the Asylum Decree: This allows the NDGAP to ask for support from the National Security Service to access data available on any objects under seizure.
Hungary		Access to procedure	Government Decree No 233/2020 (V.26.) defined special rules for the asylum procedure and requires applicants to submit a letter of intent at a Hungarian diplomatic mission in a non-EU country prior to their entry to Hungary and application for asylum.
Hungary		Access to procedure	Law LVIII of 2020 ratified Government Decree 2020 (V.26.) on special rules for the asylum procedure until 31 December 2020.
Hungary		Access to procedure	Law CLXII of 2020 modifies Law LVIII of 2020 and extends the application of special rules for the asylum procedure until 30 June 2020.
Hungary		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Paragraph 8a was added under Asylum Law, Article 32/Y to clarify circumstances when the procedure to enforce a financial claim - which arose during the asylum procedure - ceases.
Hungary		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Under Asylum Law, Article 15, the threshold to exclude a person from subsidiary protection became lower: instead of violating national security, it is enough if the person's stay in the country endangers national security.
Hungary		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The definition of a particular social group changed under Asylum Law, Article 64(1d): before the two elements (common characteristics, distinct identity in the relevant country) were alternative, divided by an "or", now and "and" links them and the two elements are cumulative.










Hungary		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Asylum Law, Article 75/A included hosted persons (national form of protection) in the rules for reviewing the protection status.
Hungary		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Government Decree No 411/2020 (VIII.30.) extended the validity of Government Decree No 41/2016 (III.9.) until 7 March 2021, stating that there is a continued state of crisis caused by mass migration.
Hungary		Reception of applicants for international protection	Article 80/K(11) now also includes persons whose status ceased or was revoked, meaning that when they submit a subsequent application under the rules applicable during a state of crisis caused by mass migration, they will not be entitled to a residence permit, material reception conditions or access to work. Previously this section included only persons whose application was rejected or terminated with a final decision.
Hungary		Detention	Asylum Law, Article 31/A(1a) was amended: It was added that there needs to be a risk of absconding, in order to take a foreigner into detention, when he/she did not apply for asylum and the Dublin III Regulation might apply.
Hungary		Detention	Asylum Law, Article 31/A(10) was amended: It was added that asylum detention can also take place - in exceptional cases - in a health care institution.
Iceland		Special procedures to process asylum applications	A draft law would add a new Article 35a defining subsequent applications and noting that negative decisions for subsequent applications are automatically reviewed by the Immigration Appeals Board, unless the applicant specifically request otherwise.
Iceland		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The Immigration Appeals Board's rules of procedure were amended, defining practices that have emerged in the past 3 years.


















Iceland		Statelessness in the context of asylum	Iceland acceded to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
Ireland		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The Withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2020 introduced the concept of a safe third country into the International Protection Act 2015 and enabled the Minister for Justice to designate by order a country as a safe third country.
Ireland		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The UK was designated as a safe third country.
Ireland		Reception of applicants for international protection	Some reception-related tasks were transferred from the Minister for Justice and Equality to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, including the provision, withdrawal or reduction of material reception conditions, information provision, the designation of accommodation centre and support for vulnerable persons.
Ireland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Irish government announced its intention at the end of 2020 to reduce the waiting period for asylum applicants from 9 months to 6 months to apply for a work permit. The permission's validity was to be extended from 6 months to 12 months. The new measures were introduced in January 2021.
Ireland		Detention	The International Protection Act 2015 (Section 51B)(Places of Detention) Regulations 2020 set out the places of detention for the purpose of facilitating the return of a person whose application for international protection was determined to be inadmissible and who is subject of a return order.






Ireland		Content of protection	Certain tasks of the Minister for Justice and Equality were transferred to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, including the coordination of the national integration policy, the International Protection Accommodation Services, the International Protection Procurement Services and giving permission to enter and stay in the country for resettlement or temporary protection.
Ireland		Return of former applicants	The International Protection Act 2015 was amended to describe arrangements that may be applied to facilitate the return of a person whose application for international protection was determined to be inadmissible, including reporting requirements, requirements to reside in a particular place, surrender of a passport or travel documents and adult's detention for a maximum of 7 days when there is a significant risk of absconding.
Ireland		Return of former applicants	If the period of validity of a return order made in respect of a person whose application for international protection is determined to be inadmissible expires and the person has not been returned, it will be assumed that the person would like to apply for international protection, which will be notified in writing with an invitation to complete the form.
Italy		Access to procedure	The Head of the Civil Protection Department in Italy ordered in April 2020 that people who were rescued at sea or who arrived independently by sea needed to quarantine on specially-equipped ships before disembarkation.
Italy		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Applications from return facilities (CPR, <i>centro di permanenza per il rimpatrio</i> ) and safe countries of origin are assessed within the accelerated procedure. Applications from a safe country of origin will follow the 9-day procedure, while a new ground for the 5-day procedure was established

			for applicants convicted of serious crimes. The 18-day procedure was revoked.
Italy		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The procedure for a decision on the suspensive effect of an appeal in the second instance has to be taken by the court in a collegial decision.
Italy		Reception of applicants for international protection	A decree law aimed to regularise different residence and employment situations, including the irregular employment of applicants in agriculture, husbandry, fishing, personal assistance services and domestic work.
Italy		Reception of applicants for international protection	Language courses, psychological assistance and integration activities were re-established for all applicants residing in reception centres.
Italy		Reception of applicants for international protection	SIPROIMI was transformed into SAI (System for Reception and Integration). Asylum applicants can now access these reception centres. However, a distinction between services provided to different profiles is made: only beneficiaries of protection can benefit from labour orientation and professional training.
Italy		Reception of applicants for international protection	The income and family support measures provided in the "Cura Italia" Decree, including a EUR 600 allowance, babysitting allowance and COVID-19 special leave, were made accessible to applicants in employment.
Italy		Detention	The grounds for detention were extended: i) when there is a condition for which the rejection of refugee status (for reasons of national security or public order) and exclusion from subsidiary protection status is foreseen; and ii) when a subsequent application is issued during the execution of a removal order.
Italy		Detention	Applications submitted in detention, a hotspot or a repatriation centre are no longer prioritised.

Italy		Detention	The amendments strengthened the duty of authorities to provide information about a detained applicant's rights and entitlements.
Italy		Detention	The amendments further clarified detention conditions.
Italy		Detention	Detained applicants can address petitions and complaints to the national, regional and local ombudspersons.
Italy		Detention	The maximum length of detention was shortened to 90 days from 180 days. This can be prolonged with an additional 30 days for citizens of a country that has signed repatriation agreement with Italy.
Italy		Interpretation services	The National Commission for Asylum in Italy was considering adding new criteria into public tenders to ensure that interpreters have a suitable level of comprehension of the Italian language.
Italy		Content of protection	Labour market access was granted to persons under humanitarian protection for medical reasons or due to natural disasters.
Italy		Content of protection	Legislative Decree No 130/2020 created a special 2-year permit based on respect of the non-refoulement principle.
Italy		Content of protection	Legislative Decree No 34/2020 promoted regularisation on the basis of transforming undeclared work to regular employment in certain labour sectors, and this process could be initiated by asylum applicants as well.
Italy		Content of protection	Legislative Decree No 130/2020 opened labour market access to beneficiaries of national forms of protection based on medical reasons or due to natural disasters.








Italy		Return of former applicants	The list of circumstances in which protection against refoulement applies was extended. In addition to cases where a foreigner is at risk of being subjected to torture in the country of origin, the list includes cases where a person may be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment and where there is a risk of a violation of the right to respect for private and family life.
Italy		Applicants with special needs	The Council of Ministers adopted a protocol between the government and regions, the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano and local authorities to harmonise the implementation of a multi-disciplinary age-assessment procedure.
Latvia		Reception of applicants for international protection	Amendments to the Immigration Law were submitted for approval, shortening the waiting period for applicants to access the labour market from 6 to 3 months.
Lithuania		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Applicants applying at border crossing points or transit zones are not considered to have entered the territory until a decision to allow entrance is issued. The Migration Department must issue this decision within 48 hours. Applicants refused entry are accommodated at the border crossing points or transit zones for the time of lodging an appeal.
Lithuania		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Applications in the accelerated procedure are processed within 10 days.
Lithuania		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The decision on which procedure the applicant follows must be made within 2 working days and no separate decision is issued on this, but the case officer communicates this during the interview. The decision on admissibility is issued within 3 working days from the registration of the application.







Lithuania		Special procedures to process asylum applications	A new definition was adopted for subsequent applications to align it with the recast Asylum Procedures Directive.
Lithuania		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners was amended and states that all asylum-related decisions must be issued within 6 months. When the court returns the case, the deadline is 3 months. The examination of an asylum application is terminated without prior suspension when the applicant absconds.
Lithuania		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The time limit for lodging an appeal against a decision in the accelerated procedure was reduced to 7 days.
Lithuania		Reception of applicants for international protection	An amendment to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners entered into force in January 2020, which granted applicants the right to work if the Migration Department had not taken a decision on their application within 6 months of the lodging and the applicants were not responsible for the delay.
Lithuania		Detention	A new alternative to detention was introduced, limiting the right to free movement to the territory of the accommodation facility.
Lithuania		Legal representation and assistance	The amendments guaranteed free legal aid throughout the asylum procedure.
Lithuania		Interpretation services	Amendments clarified that an applicant has the right to free oral interpretation related to the asylum application.
Lithuania		Return of former applicants	An amendment clarified that a return decision cannot be issued pending the examination of an application for international protection.
Lithuania		Return of former applicants	New criteria were added for assessing whether there was a risk of absconding.








Luxembourg		Access to procedure	A draft law would amend the “Law on international protection and temporary protection” by extending the group of officers of the Grand Ducal Police authorised to carry out checks required in the context of the submission of an application for international protection. It is proposed to confer this power to all members of the Grand Ducal Police, whereas at present, this task is exclusively reserved for members of the judicial police service.
Luxembourg		The Dublin procedure	A draft law would modify the remedy system available for the Dublin procedure to ensure the efficiency of the procedure, while keeping legal guarantees at the maximum level. It would modify and align the time limits and methods of appeal.
Luxembourg		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	A draft amendment of the “Law on international protection and on temporary protection” would introduce changes to appeal possibilities against a decision to withdraw international protection. The amendment would align appeals against withdrawals with those against refusals in the normal procedure for greater harmony, whereas currently an appeal against withdrawals falls under common law.
Luxembourg		Content of protection	An amendment to the Immigration Law was presented to the parliament, which aimed to simplify the family reunification procedure in general and to extend the time limit for facilitated family reunification criteria for beneficiaries of international protection from 3 months to 6 months.
Luxembourg		Content of protection	The reform of the Integration Act is foreseen, and the Minister for Families and Integration launched a public consultation.







Luxembourg		Applicants with special needs	A new regulation sets out the operation and work process of the interdisciplinary commission to evaluate the best interests of unaccompanied minors in a return decision.
Malta		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia were added to the list of safe countries of origin.
Malta		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The definition of manifestly-unfounded applications was amended and aligned with the definition in the recast Asylum Procedures Directive.
Malta		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The International Protection Appeals Tribunal now has a full-time chairperson and two or more members on a part-time basis, appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.
Malta		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The Refugee Appeals Board changed its name to International Protection Appeals Tribunal.
Malta		Content of protection	The International Protection Act set in law the grounds and procedures for granting, excluding or revoking Temporary Humanitarian Status.
Malta		Content of protection	A new provision regarding the cessation of international protection (unequivocal renunciation) was added to the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations.
Malta		Applicants with special needs	SOGI was included to be a particular social group under the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulation.
Netherlands		Access to procedure	The Aliens Circular set in law the practice that an applicant is under the duty to provide all information that might potentially influence the asylum application, which includes criminal past, acts that might fall under the Geneva Convention, Article 1F and any measures that other Member States might have imposed on the person.
















Netherlands		The Dublin procedure	The Aliens Circular was amended to reflect CJEU jurisprudence in Jawo and clarified when an applicant can be considered to have absconded.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The temporary law suspending the incremental penalty payments was passed and applicants are no longer entitled to compensation when the IND does not decide on their case within 6 months. The law will be in force for a year.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A draft decree would revise and shorten the Dutch regular asylum procedure from 8 days to 6 days. The draft underwent a public consultation process by the end of November 2020.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The policy on sur place refugees was clarified, based on the jurisprudence of the Council of State.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Further guidance was added on how to interpret the element "political conviction": it is clarified that the applicant cannot be expected to exercise restraint on his/her fundamental political views, which may be actions or expressions that are particularly important for the person's identity or moral integrity.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	When assessing the recast Qualification Directive, Article 15(c) criteria on whether there is serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict, the IND needs to take into account whether there is a basic security structure present in the country of origin or in a specific area of the country.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The IND amended its policy on Sudan and previously-granted asylum permits will be reassessed if the permit was granted due to the situation in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.






Netherlands		Detention	An amendment to the Aliens Act established a clear legal basis for continuing the detention of a rejected applicant at the border during the appeal phase in the border procedure.
Netherlands		Detention	The grounds were extended for placing an unaccompanied minor in detention for the purpose of return.
Netherlands		Statelessness in the context of asylum	The draft law on the statelessness determination procedure was presented to the Dutch parliament.
Netherlands		Content of protection	The Alien Circular 2000 now explicitly states that the IND has to always include in the decision on family reunification all indicative statements and documents, and in some cases, further examination may be initiated. When a contradiction leads to no further investigation, this has to be motivated.
Netherlands		Content of protection	Further clarifications were provided for the assessment of family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection. For example, the fact that the family members were not named during the asylum procedure is not in itself a ground to reject family reunification, but it can be taken into account when assessing the actual family link. For foster children, the biological parents' identity and the foster parent's family link to the biological parents always need to be clarified. When the biological parents are still present, the link between a foster child and foster parents can only be recognised for family reunification under very exceptional circumstances.
Netherlands		Return of former applicants	The time limit for announcing the exact date of the forced removal is shortened from 48 hours to 36 hours (Article A3/6). The announcement can be omitted if there is a risk that the prior announcement would endanger the safety or health of the person or the family members. If the

			departure cannot take place, a new option is sought, and if the removal can take place within 2 days from the original date, a new prior notice is not necessary.
Netherlands		Return of former applicants	The Aliens Circular was amended and clarified that when a child is born after a parent has received a return decision, even though the child is subject to an independent return decision, the period of voluntary return is aligned to the parents' decision and expires at the same time.
Norway		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The UDI introduced a new case management flow by which 70% of applicants receive a decision within 21 days of lodging an application, assisted by the Qlik Sense tool.
Norway		Content of protection	Persons granted protection in Norway may obtain a long-term residence permit after 5 years, instead of the previous 3 years, following legislative amendments that entered into force in December 2020. The language knowledge requirement for naturalisation was increased from A2 to B1 level.
Norway		Content of protection	The new Integration Act was adopted in Norway and entered into force in January 2021.
Norway		Content of protection	The Norwegian government passed a law which provides the possibility to increase the length of introduction programmes and training by 6 months due to the pandemic.
Norway		Content of protection	The Norwegian parliament passed a bill amending the Social Services Act, which requires third-country nationals older than 30 years with insufficient Norwegian knowledge to participate in language training as a condition to receive financial support.







Norway		Applicants with special needs	According to the amended Immigration Regulations, the UDI and UNE are given access to obtain necessary information from the child welfare service for the purpose of case processing.
Poland		Content of protection	Humanitarian visa holders are permitted to work without a work permit since 1 December 2020.
Poland		Content of protection	A draft amendment was submitted to the Social Assistance Act, which aims to grant the right to individual integration programmes for beneficiaries of international protection married to Polish citizens (amendment accepted on 15 April 2021).
Portugal		Content of protection	A provisional regularisation process was launched in Portugal, settling the situation of around 365,000 foreigners, including asylum applicants.
Slovenia		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A proposal was put forward and adopted in 2021 to amend the International Protection Act. Among a set of comprehensive changes, for example, sanctions would apply when an applicant does not comply with the duties or obstructs the implementation of the asylum procedure. The amendment also widens the grounds on which an asylum application can be rejected as manifestly unfounded.
Spain		Applicants with special needs	In 2020, the Secretary of State for Migration introduced changes granting access to work permits for unaccompanied children aged older than 16 years. In addition, the government announced a reform allowing permission to stay based on their integration path rather than on their participation in the labour market.

Sweden		Access to procedure	National authorities were enabled to take a foreigner's photo and fingerprints at entry, exit or during internal checks for the Schengen Information System, if the person's identity cannot be identified in another manner.
Sweden		Access to procedure	The Swedish Migration Agency, the police and Swedish diplomatic missions abroad were also given the right to process sensitive data, as described by the Aliens Data Act, and to test and develop existing IT systems for managing the personal data of third-country nationals, for example to participate in international cooperation.
Sweden		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The Swedish Parliament adopted the government's proposal from December 2020 to incorporate the rules on safe countries of origin in the Aliens Act. The new rules allow the Swedish Migration Agency to consider an application manifestly unfounded if the applicant comes from a country included in the list. The amendments enter into force on 1 May 2021.
Sweden		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The Swedish Migration Agency proposed eight countries to be considered safe countries of origin: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Kosovo, Mongolia, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and USA. The new list is foreseen to enter into force on 1 May 2021.
Sweden		Reception of applicants for international protection	The so-called EBO rules entered into force on 1 July 2020. According to these rules, applicants are no longer entitled to a daily allowance if they choose to reside in specific areas with high rates of immigrants and socio-economic challenges (32 municipalities listed in 2020, revised to 23 municipalities as of 1 January 2021).






Sweden		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new governmental project is planned to be implemented in Sweden in 2021, obliging applicants to attend a one-day information session about the host society.
Sweden		Applicants with special needs	Changes to the national legislation introduce a departure ban for children who are at risk of being taken abroad for marriage or female genital mutilation.
Switzerland		Access to procedure	A draft amendment to the Asylum Act would allow the State Secretariat for Migration to access and analyse data from applicants' mobile phones, in order to verify their identity, with full respect of the principle of necessity and proportionality, and in compliance with the right to respect for private and family life.
Switzerland		Reception of applicants for international protection	An amendment to the Asylum Act entered into force, which describes the modalities and limits of video surveillance in federal reception centres.
Switzerland		Reception of applicants for international protection	An amendment to Ordinance 1 on asylum settles the implementation rules for video surveillance in federal reception centres.
Switzerland		Reception of applicants for international protection	A draft amendment would explicitly include that applicants are under a general travel ban and they could only travel if this is necessary for the asylum procedure or for their removal.
Switzerland		Reception of applicants for international protection	An amendment to Ordinance 2 on asylum settled the funding of security costs of federal reception centres when they are temporarily closed. The confederation pays a lump sum for a year, even when the centre is closed.
Switzerland		Detention	An amendment clarified that minors cannot be held in detention for the purposes of return.

Switzerland		Content of protection	An amendment from 2018 to the Asylum Act entered into force on 1 April 2020, which enables the State Secretariat for Migration to pronounce a general travel ban for a group of refugees from a certain country of origin (particularly to neighbouring countries of that country of origin), if there is a well-founded doubt that the travel ban to the country of origin is not respected.
Switzerland		Content of protection	An amendment to the ordinance on delivering travel documents for foreigners clarified when refugees under a travel ban can still receive an exceptional authorisation to travel to a country falling under that travel ban.
Switzerland		Content of protection	The possibility to impose a travel ban is planned to be extended to persons with temporary admission.
Switzerland		Content of protection	A draft amendment would allow persons with temporary admission to change their assigned canton if they follow a long-term vocational training or are employed in another canton
Switzerland		Return of former applicants	An amendment to the ordinance on implementation of return and expulsion of foreigners settles access rights, data security and data retention of the new information system, eRetour.







# Institutional developments








Country		Area	Development
Austria		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU, <i>Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen GmbH</i> ) started its activities on 1 December 2020 related to the provision of material reception conditions.
Czechia		Return of former applicants	Regional offices of the Czech Return Unit were established in Brno and in detention centres in Bělá–Jezová, Balková and Vyšní Lhoty.
Denmark		Return of former applicants	The Danish Return Agency started its operations on 1 August 2020 and is responsible for tasks linked to return, with the exception of forced removals.
France		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The position of the Minister Delegate for Citizenship was created under the Minister of the Interior, responsible for asylum and integration
France		Resettlement	The French Ministry of the Interior approved the decentralisation of the resettlement system, with the aim of enhancing the role of regional authorities in the integration of resettled refugees within the regional <i>préfectures</i> .
France/Germany		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly created a new joint working group on migration, asylum and integration.










Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	<p>The organigramme of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum was adopted in December 2020.</p> <p>The Ministry of Migration and Asylum was re-created in January 2020, following a merge with the Ministry of Citizen Protection in July 2019.</p>
Greece		Applicants with special needs	<p>The Special Secretariat for the protection of unaccompanied and separated minors was appointed as the competent authority for the protection of unaccompanied children.</p>
Luxembourg		Reception of applicants for international protection	<p>On 1 January 2020, the National Reception Office (ONA), which is under the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, replaced the Luxembourg Office for Reception and Integration (OLAI) for the reception of asylum applications. The responsibility for integration was transferred to the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region under the Department for Integration.</p>
Malta		Processing asylum applications at first instance	<p>The Office of the Refugee Commissioner changed its name to International Protection Agency. The Refugee Commissioner's title was changed to Chief Executive Officer and the Assistant Refugee Commissioner is now called Deputy of the Chief Executive Officer.</p>
Slovenia		Access to information	<p>The Ministry of the Interior took over the information provision sessions, after the expiry of a contract with an NGO who was previously charged with this task.</p>





## Policy – integrity








Country		Area	Development
Austria		Content of protection	The number of withdrawals initiated by the BFA continued to increase.
Austria		Return of former applicants	Binding working procedures with defined workflows and standards for all stakeholders have been developed to guarantee an efficient and uniform application and enforcement of (assisted) voluntary returns and reintegration.
Belgium		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The Council of Ministers adopted the draft royal decree establishing a list of safe countries of origin. The draft did not include any changes to the list of safe countries from the previous year.
Belgium		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Minister of Asylum and Migration announced new measures aiming to fight against the abuse of the asylum system. Persons already benefitting from international protection in another EU Member State no longer receive material reception conditions. Dublin applicants who abscond and re-apply for reception following 6 months are also no longer entitled to material reception conditions. Fedasil evaluated these rejections in an individual manner, case-by-case, taking into account any possible vulnerabilities. This policy was withdrawn later in 2020.
Belgium		Access to information	Fedasil published two new brochures on the reception of applicants for international protection and on voluntary return.
Denmark		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Minister for Immigration and Integration decided that the processing of cases for persons with temporary residence permits which were granted on the grounds of the general









		Content of protection	circumstances in the Damascus area should be accelerated.
Denmark		Content of protection	The Danish Immigration Service reassessed the issuance of residence permits to several hundred Syrians from the Damascus area.
Finland		Access to procedure	The Finnish Immigration Service published a report on the duty of the authorities to clarify and gather information on immigration matters in general, including for asylum applications. The report forms part of the AMIF-funded MISEC project, which aims to strengthen cooperation between immigration and security authorities.
Finland		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Following an ECHR decision at the end of 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service reviewed approximately 500 cases.
Germany		Reception of applicants for international protection	New AnkER facilities were opened. In 2020, the model has been implemented in 8 of 16 federal states. 7 AnkER facilities have been set up in the state of Bavaria, 1 AnkER facility in each of the states of Saxony and Saarland. In addition to that, seven 'functionally-equivalent facilities' exist nationwide. The functioning of these facilities was evaluated and the results were published in February 2021.
Greece		Access to procedure	In the framework of the Consolidated Government Policy Plan 2021, the Prime Minister announced among the main projects related to asylum and migration the establishment of an "innovative closed controlled structures" on the island and inland with multiple levels of security.
Ireland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Irish International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) implemented a new policy in respect of COVID-19 prevention measures to require applicants who were away from







			
Malta		Content of protection	the centre for more than one night without permission to undergo a period of quarantine before readmission to the centre.  Criteria for the Specific Residence Authorisation (SRA) policy was modified.
Netherlands		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The State Secretary for Justice and Security presented the revised list of safe countries of origin.
Netherlands		Reception of applicants for international protection	Following up on the initiative from the State Secretary for Justice and Security, the COA started to accommodate at a separate location in Budel applicants from safe countries of origin and those who have already obtained international protection in another Member State. Applicants receive only basic material reception conditions in kind and stricter reporting obligation applies to them, as they need to report daily and in addition, every time they leave or come back. The location has extra security personnel. Vulnerable applicants cannot be accommodated here.
Netherlands		Reception of applicants for international protection	Following a serious incident, applicants in reception may now be placed temporarily in time-out, a separate, sober place within a reception facility where applicants would only be entitled to material reception conditions in kind, not in cash.
Poland		Content of protection	The Polish government announced the introduction of a humanitarian visa scheme for Belarusians from mid-August 2020 onwards.
Spain		Reception of applicants for international protection	The State Secretary for Migration signed new instructions in December 2020, noting that only recognised beneficiaries of international protection can be referred to the second phase of the national reception system as of 2021.

## Policy – efficiency









Country		Area	Development
Austria		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	Both chambers of the administrative court started deciding on asylum cases and more staff was recruited.
Belgium		Access to procedure	Applicants had to book an appointment online for their registration between April and October 2020. The first instance tribunal of Brussels ruled that this practice was against the law, hence from 30 October 2020 registration in person started again at the arrival centre, without prior appointment.
Belgium		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Council of State suspended the project which aimed to pilot the use of videoconferencing in open centres. This is due to the fact that the Royal Decree on the functioning of the CGRS does not mention this among the competencies of the authority. The project can only continue once the Royal Decree is amended.
Belgium		Processing asylum applications at first instance	During the months when personal interviews were halted the focus was on caseloads for which an interview had already taken place. Furthermore, the focus during this period was also on cases where it was clear, based on written documents, that the applicant was in need of international protection (mostly Syrians or where a family member had already obtained international protection). Likewise, subsequent applications without any new elements received a decision without an interview. When interviews resumed, priority was given to applicants who were within the reception system of the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) and already had a status in another EU+ Member State and Brazilian







			applicants who were already in the country before applying for asylum.
Belgium		Content of protection	The Council of Ministers agreed on the creation of an Inter-ministerial Conference on Migration and Integration.
Belgium		Resettlement	A new community sponsorship programme was activated and the first families arrived to Belgium through this programme at the end of 2020.
Bulgaria		Reception of applicants for international protection	Specific accommodation support was provided to asylum applicants who lost employment and shelter due to the pandemic.
Bulgaria		Content of protection	The National Refugee Employment and Training Programme in Bulgaria was extended for 2020.
Croatia		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Croatia is developing and implementing a new IT application (RECORD) with AMIF funding that aims to improve the quality of collecting, managing, processing, monitoring and reporting data in the field of international protection. Funds for the implementation of the project proposal were approved on 23 November 2020. In April 2021, the technical specifications for the project were being drafted.
Czechia		Content of protection	The 14 Regional Integration Centres in Czechia continued their work in 2020 and their funding was secured for 2021.
Finland		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Ministry of the Interior launched a project to assess the impact of future migration trends on immigration administration, especially on the functioning of and resources for the Finnish Immigration Service.









Finland		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Finnish Immigration Service started to notify applicants, whenever possible, through phone or videoconferencing about the decision on their application.
Finland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Ministry of the Interior launched a project for preparing a series of legislative amendments that would ensure improved management of large-scale arrivals. The Reception Act and the Immigration Detention Act are both planned to be amended.
Finland		Content of protection	The Government Programme's proposal was under examination to eliminate the sufficient financial resources criteria for family reunifications initiated by minor beneficiaries of international protection.
Finland		Return of former applicants	The Ministry of the Interior launched an update of the action plan for preventing illegal entry and residence for the period 2021-2024.
Finland		Resettlement	The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy commissioned a joint study on the community sponsorship model to evaluate its feasibility within the Finnish context.
Finland		Applicants with special needs	A horizontal action plan against trafficking in human beings was drafted and completed in the beginning of 2021.
France		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Applicants residing in Brittany and New Aquitaine have access to all the documents OFPRA sends them since 15 July 2020. This pilot implements the legislative amendments from 2018 and is foreseen to be extended gradually to the whole territory.
France		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The National Court of Asylum (CNDA) signed an agreement with the bar association on the implementation of video hearings.





France		Content of protection	The Ministry of the Interior posted several IT tools online to support language learning and social orientation for newcomers.
Germany		Reception of applicants for international protection	Following the amendments from 2019, which require adult applicants to live in an initial reception centre for a maximum of 18 months (extendable to 24 months) instead of the previously-applicable maximum of 6 months, German reception centres started to adapt their reception infrastructure and staff numbers.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Asylum Service were in the process of digitalising and some of the following procedures can now be done online: submit the full registration (lodging) for pre-registered applicants, request to change the date of the interview, request to change the personal data or contact information, request a statement on the application status, submit additional documents, apply for legal aid and apply for a Provisional Social Security and Health Care Number.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Among the planned government projects for 2021, the consolidation and upgrading of electronic decision-making, tele-interviewing and tele-interpretation initiatives are foreseen.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A new programme "Project North" was launched in Northern Greece at the end of September 2020 to speed up asylum procedures and conclude pending cases by 2021 in order to alleviate the pressure on accommodation structures.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Ministry of Migration and Asylum announced that all asylum applicants are to be issued a temporary number for health care.










Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	The European Commission created a task force on 23 September 2020 to resolve the emergency situation on Lesbos.
Greece		Access to information	The Ministry of Migration and Asylum launched an online helpdesk for beneficiaries of international protection.
Ireland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Student Support Scheme for people in the International Protection Process was amended and the requirements to have attended three academic years in the Irish school system and to have obtained the Leaving Certificate in Ireland will no longer apply.
Ireland		Content of protection	The National Integration Fund 2020 was launched, with EUR 2.2 million total funding for a 3-year period.
Ireland		Content of protection	The Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration announced EUR 500,000 for community integration projects under the Communities Integration Fund.
Latvia		Content of protection	The Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued humanitarian visas for Belarusians in a shorter timeframe and applicants were required to contact the embassy only once instead of twice.
Lithuania		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new project on alternative accommodation was under development in Lithuania with AMIF co-funding, which would include all reception services.
Lithuania		Content of protection	The integration process of beneficiaries of international protection was adjusted. An individual integration plan is proposed to each beneficiary while they are still accommodated at the Refugee Reception Centre. The plan is updated once beneficiaries settle in a municipality in cooperation with the municipality's body in charge of integration. The support services are






			tailored to each person's specific needs and financial support is defined according to the person's progress and personal efforts
Lithuania		Return of former applicants	A questionnaire was developed and is provided to rejected applicants to assess their willingness for voluntary return.
Luxembourg		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new arrival centre opened in Luxembourg City, where all asylum and reception stakeholders are present at the same location.
Malta		Reception of applicants for international protection	The AWAS reduced the length of contracts signed with male adult applicants for their accommodation from 1 year to 6 months.
Netherlands		Access to procedure	In the framework of the Flexibility of the Asylum Chain Programme, tweaks started to be introduced to the identification and registration process, including the launching of the control board ( <i>regietafel</i> ), setting up a front portal ( <i>voorportal</i> ) in Ter Apel and introducing the use of a common file structure available for all stakeholders of the asylum chain.
Netherlands		Content of protection	The State Secretary for Justice and Security announced that the so-called guest arrangement ( <i>logeerregeling</i> ) for beneficiaries of international protection will continue and is planned to be expanded. Under this arrangement, beneficiaries of international protection may volunteer to be placed with a host family, family or friends, while they are in wait for their definitive housing arrangement.
Netherlands		Content of protection	The COA launched a pilot project in Utrecht for beneficiaries of international protection, where beneficiaries combine studying and apprenticeship in a 2-year programme to become COA employees.







Netherlands		Resettlement	A new multiannual resettlement policy framework for 2020-2023 was established in the Netherlands, including a commitment to resettling 2,000 refugees in 4 years.
Norway		Access to procedure	The arrival centre was re-organised in Norway to include multiply stakeholders within the same centre.
Norway		Return of former applicants	As of March 2020, standard support assistance may be increased in order to ease the return and reintegration process, for example for returnees with special medical needs or if it is assessed to be more cost-effective for Norwegian society.
Romania		Special procedures to process asylum applications	Depending on the claims made and documentation available, authorities prioritised applicants from Algeria, Bangladesh, India, Morocco, Pakistan and Tunisia.
Slovenia		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Additional staff were hired to tackle the pending backlog of cases and shorten delays in the asylum procedure.
Sweden		Reception of applicants for international protection	The list of municipalities where applicants are not entitled to daily allowance was revised if they choose to reside there. Out of 32 pre-identified municipalities, 23 are such areas. The changes entered into force 1 January 2021.
Sweden		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new governmental project is planned to be implemented in 2021, obliging applicants to attend a 1-day information session about the host society. The programme has existed for several years, but it was implemented as a voluntary 2- to 3-hour session.
Sweden		Content of protection	The Swedish Public Employment Service started to roll out the Intensive Year programme for newly-arrived beneficiaries of international protection, which aims to get participants in







			employment within a year after the completion of the comprehensive, full-time integration programme.
Sweden		Content of protection	The Swedish government decided to finance the extension of labour market integration programmes for 12 months to support people whose programme would finish in the midst of the pandemic
Sweden		Return of former applicants	The Swedish government tasked several national bodies, including the police and the Swedish Migration Agency, to analyse the factors that prevent the enforcement of a decision on a refusal of entry or return.
Switzerland		Content of protection	The State Secretariat for Migration and cantonal authorities signed amendments to the convention on cantonal integration programmes for the implementation of the Swiss Integration Agenda, which includes more funds for cantons to carry out their plans.
Switzerland		Content of protection	The Federal Council adopted its opinion on a report by the Political Institutions Committee of the Council of States concerning a parliamentary initiative on granting the same family reunification regimes to beneficiaries of international protection and persons with temporary admission.

## Policy – quality

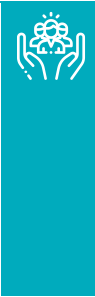

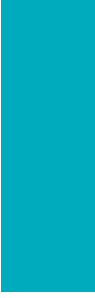
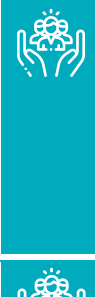


Country		Area	Development
Austria		Processing asylum applications at first instance	Austria's new coalition government announced in January 2020 in its programme for the new government (2020-2024) to work on a comprehensive strategy on migration, based on a clear separation of migration and asylum. The programme foresees shortening and modernising asylum procedures.
Belgium		Country of origin information	CEDOCA developed a new training programme on COI through an online tutorial.
Belgium		Content of protection	The Immigration Office provided detailed guidance on the exceptional circumstances to extend the validity of family reunification decisions and the validity of supporting documents.
Belgium		Return of former applicants	The final report of the commission for the evaluation of policies on foreigners' voluntary and forced return (also known as the Bossuyt Commission) was published.
Bulgaria		Reception of applicants for international protection	The State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria prepared the framework for distance learning for children accommodated in the agency's facilities.
Bulgaria		Detention	Bulgaria increased the capacity of two pre-removal facilities (Busmantsi and Lyubimets) from 700 to 1,060 persons.
Bulgaria		Applicants with special needs	The State Agency for Refugees started to apply EASO standards to identify vulnerable applicants, and it established two safe zones for unaccompanied children in the reception centre in Sofia, which are operated by the IOM.

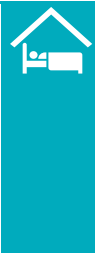
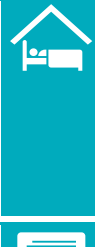
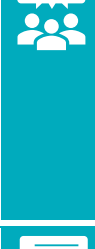
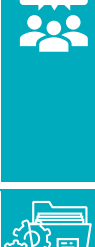




Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new health care project was set up with AMIF funding, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Médecins du Monde. The purpose of the project is the protection of health and prevention of disease among asylum applicants through improved access to initial check-ups and medical consultations in reception centres.
Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	A new health care project was set up with AMIF funding, in cooperation with Médecins du Monde, to tackle the needs of applicants who have been in transit in Bosnia and Herzegovina and who suffer from chronic illnesses or disabilities.
Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	Two projects to refurbish reception centres in Zagreb and Kutina have started, co-financed by AMIF. The projects aim to improve living and working conditions in both centres. A new project of procurement of equipment, co-financed by AMIF, has also started. Through the project, new equipment for ambulances and newborn children will be purchased.
Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	A 3-year project providing psychosocial support for people residing in reception centres, conducted by the Croatian Red Cross and co-financed by AMIF, was started in February 2020. The project aims to improve the level of psychosocial support and social activities available in the reception centres.
Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	Through the project, “Assistance in maintaining adequate living conditions in the reception centres”, the running costs of the utilities in reception centres are co-financed by AMIF.

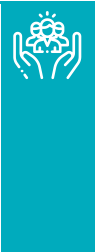
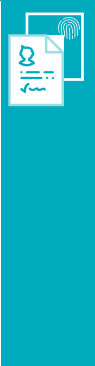




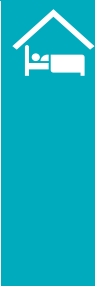

Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	Through a new AMIF co-financed project, “Enlargement of reception capacities of the Reception Centre for International Protection Applicants in Zagreb”, the procurement of accommodation containers is planned to increase accommodation capacity of the facility.
Croatia		Reception of applicants for international protection	The national authorities concluded standard operating procedures on sexual and gender-based violence with UNHCR and national NGOs towards the end of 2020, aiming to start implementation as soon as possible.
Croatia		Legal representation and assistance	The AMIF-funded project, “Providing legal advice in the process of granting international protection” ended in March 2020, and a new project on the same topic of ensuring access to an effective remedy was announced in November 2020.
Croatia		Legal representation and assistance	The AMIF-funded project, “Free legal assistance in the process of granting international protection” was approved in July 2020 to provide asylum seekers without sufficient funds with access to legal assistance, which comprises: assistance in drawing up a claim, representation in first instance administrative disputes and an exemption from payment of the costs of first instance administrative disputes.
Croatia		Interpretation services	The AMIF-funded project “Translation and expansion of the network of translators in the process of granting international protection” was launched, with 43 interpreters .
Croatia		Interpretation services	The AMIF-funded project, “Translation services during providing assistance in the integration process” was ongoing.




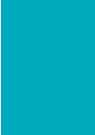



Croatia		Content of protection	The Croatian Action Plan for the Integration of Persons Granted International Protection was developed in 2020 and is foreseen to be implemented throughout 2021-2023.
Croatia		Content of protection	A new 3-year project for the integration of refugees into Croatian society was approved by the Directorate for European Affairs, International Relations and European Union Funds in early March 2020.
Croatia		Resettlement	The AMIF-funded project, “Establishment of a resettlement mechanism” began its implementation in 2017. Until now, two study visits on resettlement programmes have been carried out. During 2020, a short video story was filmed about the integration process of a Syrian family who arrived in Croatia as a group of resettled persons from Turkey. The project also includes the development of a mobile application which provides information on the resettlement programme, arrival and daily life in Croatia. This activity is in its completion phase.
Croatia		Applicants with special needs	Standard Operating Procedures were drafted to improve the coordination of family reunification for unaccompanied children in the framework of the Dublin procedure.
Cyprus		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The forms of notification for rejected applicants for international protection were amended to include information on their rights for effective remedy, timelines and programmes available for voluntary and assisted return operations.
Cyprus		Content of protection	The National Plan on the Integration of Migrants of the Republic of Cyprus was released for public consultation at the end of 2020.







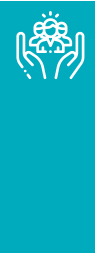







Czechia		Content of protection	The Czech Ministry of Labour updated its guidelines and clarified that public employment services may provide special, employment-related language courses to beneficiaries of international protection to improve their employment chances.
Denmark		Content of protection	The Ministry of Immigration and Integration Affairs published the progress report for 2020 on the Integration Action Plan.
Denmark		Content of protection	The Integration Action Plan 2020 was launched in December 2020, presenting the most important initiatives from 2020 and highlighting some future priorities.
Denmark		Content of protection	The Danish Immigration Service, the Refugee Appeals Board and the Immigration Board have jointly been preparing a memorandum on the protection of foreigners' private and family life in the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN convention on human rights in connection with the new withdrawal ground introduced in 2019. The memorandum was still under work in spring 2021.
Denmark		Content of protection	The Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) published a new information package for social workers in local authorities on providing specialised employment support to refugee and migrant women.
Estonia		Content of protection	The Ministry of Cultural Affairs published guidelines for local governments on integration services.
Finland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The reception centres have started using the electronic skills assessment form, which was developed as part of the AMIF-funded OSAKA project and which finalised in 2019.






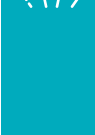


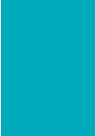
Finland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The "Let's talk about children!" method was fully rolled out in reception centres. The Finnish Immigration Service and MIELU adapted the method to the context of asylum in an AMIF-funded project between 2017-2020.
Finland		Reception of applicants for international protection	The new, general medical screening protocol in Finland, developed through the AMIF-funded TERTTU project, was launched and started to be implemented in 2020.
Finland		Interpretation services	The Finnish Immigration Service developed a quality assurance system for the interpretation services used during asylum interviews, in the framework of the AMIF-funded Tulppaani project.
Finland		Interpretation services	The Tulppaani project developed a quality control model for interpretation during asylum interviews, using peer-to-peer review, random checks and new guidelines for interpreters.
France		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Ministry of the Interior published an updated guide for applicants for international protection.
France		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Ministry of the Interior published its "National plan for the reception of applicants and the integration of refugees for 2021-2023", aiming to create 4,500 additional reception places in 2021.
France		Reception of applicants for international protection	The General Directorate for Foreigners in France launched a telephone support centre for employees of the local orientation platforms (SPADA) and reception centres.
France		Content of protection	The French National Assembly drafted a report evaluating labour market integration policies of applicants and refugees.









France		Content of protection	An instruction on family reunification provided guidance on processing incomplete or inadmissible family reunification requests in an effort to reduce processing times and decrease the number of disputes.
Germany		Access to procedure	The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community submitted to the Federal Cabinet its evaluation report on the Data Exchange Improvement Act, which was adopted in 2016 and introduced a comprehensive and standardised registration of applicants in the Central Registry of Foreigners (AZR).
Germany		Content of protection	The BAMF launched a new digital information platform, offering information on integration services.
Germany		Applicants with special needs	The federal government published a report on the situation of unaccompanied foreign minors in Germany.
Greece		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Greek Asylum Service launched the procedure to register rapporteurs in the special register in the regions of Samos, Lesbos and Chios.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	67 hotel accommodation facilities were planned to be closed by the end of 2020, transferring residents to other inland structures.
Greece		Reception of applicants for international protection	A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Greek Red Cross for support with the provision of material reception conditions, including health services and psychological support.
Greece		Legal representation and assistance	The Greek Asylum Service launched a call to extend the Register of Lawyers providing legal aid to applicants for international protection

Greece		Applicants with special needs	The Prime Minister announced the planned legislative reform for the protection of unaccompanied children for 2021.
Iceland		Reception of applicants for international protection	An additional fixed amount subsistence allowance was paid to applicants for international protection.
Ireland		Reception of applicants for international protection	Based on the findings of the report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process, the government would publish a White Paper on the replacement of the Direct Provision System with a new, non-profit international protection accommodation policy.
Ireland		Reception of applicants for international protection	Applicants living in reception centres became entitled to the Pandemic Unemployment Payment.
Ireland		Legal representation and assistance	The Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process assessed the asylum system in Ireland and made specific recommendations to the Legal Aid Board for improvements.
Ireland		Interpretation services	The Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process examined issues regarding the provision of interpretation during accommodation in the International Protection Process in Ireland and recommended to introduce an accreditation test for interpreters from mid-2023 and to adopt a code of conduct.
Latvia		Detention	The State Border Guard's internal regulations were amended to determine the procedure for children accompanied by an adult applicant who is ordered to be detained.


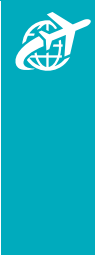
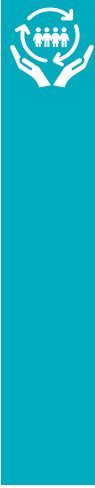



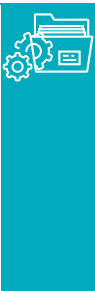
Latvia		Content of protection	The “Support measures for beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and persons with alternative status), reception and accommodation in Latvia” continued in 2020 with funding from AMIF, providing integration courses, Latvian language courses, as well as cultural, sports and recreational events and events fostering intercultural communication and co-operation with the local community. Information Centres for Newcomers (ICI) continued to operate in five different location and help newcomers with the orientation of administration and daily life, following their establishment in 2016 with AMIF support.
Lithuania		Processing asylum applications at first instance	New guidelines were issued on evidence assessments.
Lithuania		Reception of applicants for international protection	The State Border Guard Service (SBGS) and the Lithuanian Red Cross Society signed a cooperation agreement to provide psychological, social, legal and other assistance to foreigners, regardless of their legal status. Lawyers from the Lithuanian Red Cross Society can also access the Foreigners Registration Centre Pabrade to provide legal assistance, when the SBGS is informed in advance. Upon request, lawyers can also provide legal assistance in border control areas. Also upon request, specialists provide support for family reunification for foreigners residing in the FRC.
Lithuania		Content of protection	The Ministry of Social Security and Labour signed a cooperation agreement with the Mykolas Romeris University to provide English or Lithuanian language courses for selected beneficiaries of international protection.










Luxembourg		Content of protection	The Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth published a guide addressed to professionals working with newly-arrived foreign students, with a specific section on minors who are applicants for international protection.
Netherlands		Special procedures to process asylum applications	The IND published its updated work instructions on the border procedure.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A special task force was created in March 2020 to deal with the backlog of more than 15,000 asylum applications. It handled 8,200 by the end of 2020 and was foreseen to continue its work until mid-2021.
Netherlands		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The Administrative Division of the Council of State now uses a new, sixth form of motivation of its decisions. When the court rejects an application, it uses one of the template sentences to provide more context for the ground of the refusal.
Netherlands		Reception of applicants for international protection	The State Secretary for Justice and Security presented a toolbox on dealing locally with disruptive or criminal applicants. The toolbox presents 70 measures which provide support in different areas.
Netherlands		Reception of applicants for international protection	The COA published its new multiannual strategy, which defines its measurable targets for the next 5 years.
Netherlands		Reception of applicants for international protection	The COA and the National Council on Swimming Security signed the National Action Plan of Swimming Security for Asylum Seekers.
Netherlands		Access to information	The COA published a new brochure for employers "Newcomers on their way to work - Guide for employers", providing information to facilitate the employment of beneficiaries of international protection.







Netherlands		Interpretation services	The IND published updated work instructions on working together with an interpreter.
Netherlands		Country of origin information	The IND published new work instructions on the use of sources and country of origin information in the asylum procedure.
Netherlands		Statelessness in the context of asylum	The IND published new work instructions on Palestinians.
Netherlands		Content of protection	The IND published new work instructions on further investigation in family reunification procedures, including DNA testing in the asylum procedure.
Netherlands		Content of protection	The introduction of the new civic integration system was further postponed and it is foreseen to be launched on 1 January 2022 instead of 1 July 2021.
Netherlands		Return of former applicants	The IND published new work instructions providing guidelines to implement ECHR, Article 8.
Netherlands		Applicants with special needs	The Council for Child Protection ( <i>Raad voor Kinderbescherming, RvdK</i> ), the IND and the DT&V set up a permanent partnership under the name “Cooperation for Children in Foreigners’ Policy” ( <i>Samenwerkingsverband Kinderen in het Vreemdelingenbeleid, SKIV</i> ).
Norway		Reception of applicants for international protection	The UDI reformed its reception system, building on a number of long-term contracts which cover the basic level of capacity needs (basic reception).
Norway		Reception of applicants for international protection	The MOT-system was introduced for reception administration, and it is planned to be further developed in 2021.










Norway		Reception of applicants for international protection	The UDI provided special guidelines to all reception centres on preparing for school education.
Norway		Reception of applicants for international protection	One-year-old children in reception centres were included in the financing scheme of free, full-time care in kindergarten.
Norway		Content of protection	The Directorate for Integration and Diversity, in cooperation with municipalities, carried out for the first time a survey on the experiences of participants in the introduction programme.
Norway		Content of protection	The Directorate for Integration and Diversity published a report on municipality expenditure on supporting the integration of refugees.
Norway		Applicants with special needs	An internal review of 54 return cases from 2019 took place in the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) in order to examine how UNE assesses what is in the best interests of the child in return cases.
Portugal		Reception of applicants for international protection	The Council of Ministers in Portugal adopted a resolution establishing a single system for the reception and integration of beneficiaries of international protection.
Romania		Detention	The regulation on accommodation centres for foreigners taken into public custody was amended and a new chapter was added to regulate the General Inspectorate for Immigration's use of personal data.
Romania		Content of protection	The Ministry of the Interior organised a public debate on the draft Government Decision for approval of the National Strategy on Immigration for 2020-2023.



Romania		Content of protection	New methodological norms were published for the implementation of the 2019 amendments of the Integration Act.
Romania		Resettlement	A new Emergency Transit Centre was opened in Timisoara providing temporary accommodation for beneficiaries of international protection waiting to be resettled to a third country.
Slovenia		Applicants with special needs	The Government Office for the Care and Integration of Migrants, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Police, the Ministry of Justice, 11 participating NGOs and UNHCR signed the revised standard operational procedures for the prevention and action in cases of sexual and gender-based violence against persons treated under the provisions of the International Protection Act.
Sweden		The Dublin procedure	The Swedish Migration Agency published a legal position on the applicability of the Dublin III Regulation vis-à-vis the United Kingdom after 31 December 2020.
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency published a legal position on Palestinian passports and their assessment within the asylum procedure.
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency published a legal position regarding certain Yemeni passports.
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on the assessment of applications from Afghan citizens, based on revised country of origin information. The security situation was assessed to be largely unchanged and the legal position includes slight adjustments.

Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on the assessment of applications from Turkish citizens.
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on the security situation in certain parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on the situation in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. (The legal position was repealed in 2021 and is no longer in force.)
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency published its legal position on the derivative status in asylum cases.
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position in the assessment of applications from Syria.
Sweden		Processing asylum applications at first instance	A legal position was published on public assistants, outlining the requirements to be appointed by the Swedish Migration Agency.
Sweden		Interpretation services	The Swedish Migration Agency published a legal position on the competency check of interpreters and translators.
Sweden		Statelessness in the context of asylum	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on the assessment of cases by stateless persons, who previously had their habitual residence in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. (The legal position was repealed in 2021 and is no longer in force.)
Sweden		Content of protection	The Swedish Migration Agency provided clarification on the application of the economic requirement for family reunification, explaining in which cases beneficiaries of international protection

Sweden		Content of protection	and children are exempted from these rules.  The Cross-Party Committee of Inquiry on Migration submitted its report on a sustainable long-term migration policy, proposing several changes to the Aliens Act. This would include for example that beneficiaries of international protection would first get a temporary residence permit.
Sweden		Content of protection	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on considering children's age in family reunification procedures, following the CJEU's relevant judgment.
Sweden		Content of protection	The Swedish Migration Agency published a legal position on the examination of the right to permanent residence permit under the Temporary Act for beneficiaries of international protection who are able to financially maintain themselves.
Sweden		Content of protection	Legal position on residence permit for studies at upper secondary level.
Sweden		Return of former applicants	The Swedish Migration Agency published a new legal position on practical obstacles to the implementation and enforcement of returns.
Sweden		Return of former applicants	The National Audit Office reviewed voluntary and forced return legislation, policy and practices and suggested that the government substantially reorganise the tasks of the authorities and the division of responsibilities. In its reply letter, the government agreed with the recommendations related to reconsidering the process of information flow among the different authorities and agreed partially with other recommendations.

Sweden		Return of former applicants	Legal position on the application of ECHR, Article 3, when illness is invoked.
Sweden		Return of former applicants	A new legal position was issued to provide guidance on the assessment of the right to private and family life in the application of the temporary law, and specifically when assessing whether a decision on a foreigner's return infringes the right prescribed in Article 8.
Sweden		Resettlement	The Swedish Migration Agency developed guidance and tools on preparatory measures for refugees waiting to be resettled, as part of a pilot project to be implemented with UNHCR and IOM.
Sweden		Applicants with special needs	The Swedish Migration Agency published a new legal position on the examination of the best interests of the child.
Sweden		Applicants with special needs	The Swedish Migration Agency published a new legal position on interviewing children.
Sweden		Applicants with special needs	The Swedish Migration Agency updated its legal position on the implementation of decisions related to unaccompanied children.
Switzerland		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The State Secretariat for Migration presented the results of the first evaluation of the law that reformed the asylum procedure in 2019.
Switzerland		Processing asylum applications at first instance	The State Secretariat for Migration assessed the functioning of the asylum system during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Switzerland		Processing asylum applications at second or higher instance	The Federal Administrative Court published its report on the evaluation of the asylum appeals procedure after the reform of the asylum procedure entered into force in 2019.