

## Position paper



# Dignified and resilient asylum reception to support inclusive societies

Strong, inclusive communities can be achieved through supportive reception systems that prioritise people's agency and inclusion needs. Drawing on the first-hand experience of National Red Cross Societies as key actors in national reception systems and auxiliaries to their public authorities<sup>1</sup>, this position paper offers **recommendations to the EU, Member States and associated European countries** to improve access to reception and to raise the quality of reception standards for asylum seekers, while respecting their rights and dignity. The recommendations also aim to support the humane implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The **European Commission** can play a decisive role in **monitoring** how authorities apply the reception rules and in ensuring rights-compliant approaches.

- 1 Ensuring access to adequate reception conditions for all asylum seekers
- 2 Creating a welcoming and inclusive reception system
- 3 Empowering people beyond accommodation and material support
- 4 Investing in support for the transition out of the reception system

“ A positive reception experience starts with safe, supportive spaces that help people recover and feel part of the community. ”

## Introduction

Under the UN Refugee Convention, EU Member States are required to ensure the dignified treatment of people seeking international protection. In EU law, this broad obligation is further clarified and defined as 'reception', referring to a set of obligations that Member States must fulfil towards asylum applicants from the moment they ask for protection. These include 'material reception conditions', such as housing, food and clothing (either provided in-kind or through allowances or vouchers), as well as a daily expense allowance. In addition, Member States are expected to provide access to other rights such as information, medical care, education, employment and legal assistance<sup>2</sup>.

While EU law aims to ensure comparable living conditions for applicants across the EU, reception conditions continue to vary significantly across Europe, partly due to the socio-economic disparities among Member States. As a result, many asylum seekers move to other countries seeking better opportunities or conditions. Family connections and community support networks are also key factors – their importance was clearly emphasised when people displaced from Ukraine after February 2022 were free to choose which EU country to settle in and many chose places where they had family or community ties.

Countries are free to offer various forms of accommodation, such as private housing, open collective centres (the most commonly used), or other premises adapted for accommodating asylum applicants. Some Member States restrict asylum seekers' freedom of movement to a specific location or detain them for various reasons, such as maintaining public order, verifying identity, addressing cases where the applicant has moved irregularly to another country, or assessing the risk that the applicant might abscond.

Generally, measures driven by political decisions to deter migration present challenges to the humanitarian mandate of National Red Cross Societies, which are required to operate in a highly restrictive environment while ensuring protection and addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of all migrants, regardless of their status. Reception providers can, for instance, be asked to deny migrants access to reception services they are entitled to by law, to provide inadequate conditions due to lack of resources, or to curtail freedom of movement in reception facilities. There is often not enough state or local authority support for people to transition into independent living once they have been successfully granted international protection status. Asylum seekers who receive negative decisions and other migrants without legal status can also be abruptly excluded from accommodation and reception conditions without further consideration.



IFRC teams onboard the Ocean Viking provide humanitarian assistance (such as health and psychosocial support, food, water and information) to people rescued in the mediterranean, 2024. © Camille Martin Juan / IFRC

Since EU provisions allow flexibility, countries often adopt the lowest possible standard, leading to a ‘race-to-the-bottom’ effect. This is driven by concerns that more generous support might attract asylum seekers, or because providing high quality reception is not a priority in public expenditure. The absence of consistent and coherent investments in the reception of asylum seekers has highlighted structural weaknesses and resulted in insufficient reception capacities. This has a negative impact on people – affecting their ability to integrate, achieve independence and maintain wellbeing – as well as on societal cohesion. This reactive approach persists despite the predictable nature of migration, as people continue to move each year due to a range of factors, including the global political and security situation.

In their auxiliary role, many National Red Cross Societies are tasked with running and managing first reception centres, other emergency facilities and longer-term accommodation. Some offer a broad range of services within reception facilities to support asylum seekers and facilitate their access to healthcare, pre-schooling and schooling, language courses, employment, family reunification, legal and psychosocial support.

Often, Red Cross staff and volunteers are the first point of contact for people arriving in Europe, offering food, medical aid and a safe place to recover from the journey and contact relatives.

### **Ensuring access to adequate reception conditions for all asylum seekers**

Regardless of how Member States choose to organise their reception systems, they must ensure an adequate standard of living for asylum seekers “which guarantees their subsistence, protects their physical and mental health and respects their rights under the Charter<sup>3</sup>. The Court of Justice of the EU confirms<sup>4</sup> that to uphold the dignity of asylum applicants, Member States must adhere to these provisions, considering people’s needs, potential vulnerabilities and the best interests of children.

State authorities tend to equate an adequate standard of living with the bare minimum, providing asylum seekers with conditions that only meet their basic material needs.

Although an adequate standard of living should go beyond just the basics, it is often challenged





A group of children who had applied for asylum participate in an excursion with the scouts, 2025. © Icelandic Red Cross

by administrative practices that delay or deny access to even the most basic material conditions, including accommodation.

For instance, while EU law allows Member States to reduce or withdraw material reception conditions as a sanction for overstepping rules within the reception system — whether due to unwanted behaviour or refusal to cooperate with authorities — this can jeopardise the achievement of an adequate standard of living. Mechanisms to address misuse or non-compliance ought to be justified, proportional and ensure that essential needs for a dignified life are always maintained. It is important to employ a protection-focused approach when implementing the new reception rules.

Moreover, under the Pact on Migration and Asylum, authorities will be required to withdraw reception conditions from applicants who move into their territory irregularly. However, they are still required to ensure

that the person does not find themselves in a situation of extreme material poverty which undermines their integrity and dignity by preventing them from meeting their most basic needs – such as a place to live, food, clothing, personal hygiene and healthcare – that would affect their physical or mental health.

While everybody should always be able to meet their basic needs and access healthcare<sup>5</sup>, this often proves difficult in practice for people in the situations described above. Delaying or denying reception conditions puts additional strain on social services, risks creating social tensions, and leads people to destitution. It also exposes them to dangerous or undignified means of securing their livelihood, such as trafficking. Inaccessibility, especially in healthcare, can escalate the severity of needs, often resulting in emergency care interventions, which can have a lasting negative impact on a person's health and will be more costly for the state.



We call on EU Member States to:

- » **Invest in the preparedness of their national reception system** to prevent challenging situations from escalating into humanitarian crises. Lessons from past emergencies highlight how important it is for authorities to regularly assess their capacities, such as the availability of accommodation and adequate IT systems, and to put longer-term measures in place to address the continuing reality of global displacement. The concept of crisis<sup>6</sup> thus needs to be carefully assessed, especially given the inclusion of several predictability mechanisms in the Pact on Migration and Asylum, such as the Annual Asylum and Migration Report in the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation, and the Blueprint mechanism, that support the creation of well-prepared reception systems. Contingency planning should be regular and should incorporate frequent monitoring of conditions<sup>7</sup> as well as buffer capacities, an early warning system and budgetary flexibility. It should not only involve the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) and local authorities, but also expert organisations like the Red Cross, which often respond to emergencies, particularly when reception capacities are insufficient<sup>8</sup>.
- » **Ensure that access to material support is not hindered by administrative barriers in accessing international protection procedures.** In line with the newly adopted Asylum Procedures Regulation and the recast 2024 Reception Conditions Directive<sup>9</sup>, reception conditions, including material support and accommodation, should become available to all migrants who express their wish to seek asylum, without requiring any additional formalities. A timely kick-off of the asylum procedure is crucial for ensuring access to other rights such as education, employment and even healthcare. Implementing the Pact offers Member States an opportunity to guarantee effective access to protection for everyone arriving in their territory, whether by land or sea. All the actors involved should be properly trained and adhere to the deadlines assigned to each stage of the asylum procedure, from the initial expression of intent to the formal registration of the application. Adequate investments should be made to recruit suitable public officials and build the necessary capacity for timely registration of international protection claims.

- » **Make sure all asylum seekers maintain an adequate standard of living and are protected from destitution<sup>10</sup> by refraining from reducing or withdrawing reception conditions.** Authorities should clearly justify any decision to reduce or withdraw reception conditions. They must detail the consequences, ensure applicants have access to legal assistance to exercise their rights, including the right to appeal, and explain where they can access basic services and healthcare. In all circumstances, authorities should thoroughly assess whether individuals are experiencing vulnerabilities before implementing any measures that may reduce or withdraw reception support.
- » **Use the possibility in EU law to accept people who have moved onwards to their territory instead of withholding their reception conditions.** In line with the provisions of the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation<sup>11</sup>, authorities should allow these individuals, especially people experiencing heightened vulnerability and children, to continue their asylum procedures within their territory and ensure they have access to the full set of rights under EU law. This is especially important for applicants whose protection and integration needs are unlikely to be adequately met in their first country of arrival<sup>12</sup>.



A woman takes part in a traineeship programme accompanied by her counterpart from the Spanish Red Cross. The Spanish Red Cross supports people who have migrated to access employment through training and partnerships with employers, 2019. © Spanish Red Cross

- » **Better use and enhance synergies between EU funding instruments, particularly the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), and the Cohesion Funds<sup>13</sup> to cover services linked to reception.**

AMIF should be used to increase capacity, improve reception management, fund early integration activities and reinforce asylum authorities for fair and efficient application processing in the EU. ESF+ can complement these efforts by supporting additional inclusion measures and providing access to services for migrants at risk of exclusion, regardless of their status, who may otherwise fall through the gaps. The Cohesion Funds can support broader investments in social infrastructure and access to essential services. Finally, in line with the partnership principle<sup>14</sup>, Member States are obliged to work closely with non-profit organisations to build trust and ensure a neutral, socially inclusive approach to the treatment of people in migration.

### **Creating a welcoming and inclusive reception system**

A positive reception experience requires welcoming people into safe places designed to help them strengthen their resilience, with services that enable a sense of belonging within the community. Reception conditions

have a substantial impact on the integration of newcomers.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to providing accommodation for asylum seekers; instead, it should be based on the specific needs of each applicant. For instance, trafficked persons, torture survivors, and people living with disability may need specialised housing options, along with appropriate care and professional support. Similarly, unaccompanied children require safe and suitable accommodation. In other cases, private accommodation, particularly for families, is preferable as long as it does not lead to isolation. Where possible, accommodation should be community based, allowing for interactions and access to services, while keeping facilities as small as possible and sufficiently staffed to enable personalised follow up.

More and more, Member States are restricting applicants at various stages of the asylum procedure in facilities that can resemble detention, primarily justified as a means to prevent absconding<sup>15</sup> or maintain public order. National Red Cross Societies have highlighted the harmful impact of such confinement, even for short periods of time, on the wellbeing of migrants, particularly children and other people experiencing heightened vulnerability. In fact, practice suggests that good reception conditions can reduce the likelihood of absconding and onward movements.



Staff from the Netherlands Red Cross having a conversation with a person staying in a reception centre, Emmeloord, 2024. © Mona van der Berg



We call on EU Member States to:

- » **Work with all relevant actors towards creating acceptance to welcome asylum seekers and publicly acknowledge the positive impact of such an approach.** National Red Cross Societies extend their efforts beyond service provision. They actively work with local communities to raise awareness, overcome prejudice and prepare residents for the arrival of newcomers<sup>16</sup>. National Red Cross Societies implement a range of initiatives that engage both migrants themselves and locals as volunteers, such as buddy programmes and social activities for children<sup>17</sup>. Such activities enhance migrants' wellbeing, reduce isolation and promote inclusion by fostering social connections and community engagement.



Before being directed to a reception centre, people who have just arrived at the Helsinki port are offered emotional support by the Finnish Red Cross, 2021. © Finnish Red Cross

- » **Avoid fragmentation of the reception system as far as possible.** Authorities often set up different facilities based on the stage of the administrative process or available capacities, ranging from initial arrival and emergency accommodation to longer-term reception. Asylum seekers are frequently transferred between these facilities, which disrupts their access to rights such as employment and education, and their integration. Occasionally, this might also exacerbate the burden of bureaucracy, forcing asylum seekers to restart certain processes each time they move. When deciding where to place people, authorities should consider applicants' specific needs, the importance of keeping families together, the best interests of children and, as far as possible, the applicants' views and opportunities for integration.

- » **Conduct vulnerability assessments as early as possible and retake them at each subsequent stage of the process following the initial screening, to ensure people receive specialised support.** Vulnerability is not a static state and might not be visible or detectable in the first interaction. The ongoing monitoring of vulnerabilities and their intersectionality is particularly important for preventing people from being detained or returned to countries of origin or transit where their lives and fundamental rights are at risk. This becomes even more critical in the context of admissibility and accelerated asylum procedures, due to the short time frames for appeals in these cases<sup>18</sup> and the very limited suspensive effect<sup>19</sup>. Research has shown<sup>20</sup> that vulnerability assessments should be carried out by professionals trained in trauma-informed care, mental health and cultural sensitivity. When it comes to unaccompanied children, an adequate number of guardians should be employed and trained. Vulnerability assessments require trust, commitment, a coherent approach and investment from authorities as well as close coordination with civil society organisations. Their expertise and humanitarian perspective are crucial for identifying persons with *invisible* vulnerabilities, such as persons at risk or in a trafficking situation, torture survivors or people experiencing ill treatment. For example, National Red Cross Societies involved in vulnerability assessments work with multidisciplinary teams consisting of mental health and social work professionals, nurses, health professionals and protection officers.

“ **Vulnerability assessments must be conducted as early as possible and retaken at each subsequent stage of the process following the initial screening, to ensure people receive specialised support.** ”

- » **Make sure that detention remains a measure of last resort<sup>21</sup>.** Besides the high management costs of detention, it has serious harmful consequences on a person's physical and mental health and their ability to integrate. This is particularly the case for children, who must never be detained for immigration-related purposes. Detention must remain necessary, reasonable, proportionate to a legitimate purpose and based on an individualised assessment. A concern in the recast 2024 Reception Conditions Directive is the broad discretion given to place applicants "in a specific place" for public order or to prevent absconding, potentially leading to arbitrary deprivation of liberty or restrictions of movement. All deprivation of liberty, regardless of its nature or how the facilities are labelled, should be recognised as detention and adhere to the necessary procedural safeguards<sup>22</sup>.

**Detention should remain a measure of last resort. Besides the high management costs of detention, it has serious harmful consequences on a person's physical and mental health and their ability to integrate.**

- » **Ensure that humanitarian organisations have access to all types of facilities, respect their mandate and formalise their distinct role in agreements with the relevant authorities.** Immigration-management measures often extend to providing reception. It is important to clearly separate duties related to migration control from the provision of accommodation and social services. Reception services should be regarded as social and healthcare services and therefore be overseen and monitored by social and healthcare authorities, rather than immigration authorities. Humanitarian actors may be asked to remove residents who are no longer eligible for reception, allow law enforcement to carry out immigration enforcement in

reception centres, assist with obligations placed on residents to regularly report their whereabouts to authorities, or share information about their beneficiaries. In such situations, and in others where the Red Cross operates alongside authorities performing migration management duties, it is essential that agreements clearly convey that our mandate is purely humanitarian and that we operate in line with our principle of independence and the 'do-no-harm' principle. Active measures should be taken to prevent humanitarian actors from being perceived as collaborating with authorities in the surveillance and policing of migratory movements. Otherwise, this can create an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, deter migrants from seeking our help<sup>23</sup> and jeopardise our operations and reputation globally.

### **Empowering people beyond accommodation and material support**

Meeting people's basic needs is the minimum precondition for preserving their dignity. Various standards apply depending on the type of accommodation or the stage of the asylum process – whether awaiting screening, after registering an asylum claim, or having been rejected and awaiting transfer to another country, to name a few. EU jurisprudence has affirmed that even the saturation of the reception network does not justify any derogation from meeting an adequate standard of living<sup>24</sup>.

Our work shows that a positive reception experience that prepares asylum seekers for full participation in society requires more than meeting their basic needs. More efforts are needed to support asylum seekers in taking an active role in shaping their lives and contributing positively to society.

However, barriers faced by asylum seekers to access rights such as employment are usually not caused by individual factors but by broader systematic shortcomings, such as a lack of resources or social workers, which also negatively affect local populations. In some cases, difficulties are compounded by language and cultural barriers, as well as limited access to information and guidance. This situation is even more difficult for people with specific support needs, which are often hard to identify and may limit their access to specialised health and social care.





Through the Lët'z Work ! programme, asylum seekers learn to understand the job market in their new host country with the support of the Luxembourg Red Cross, 2024.  
©Luxembourg Red Cross

We call on EU Member States to:

- » **Guarantee that the standards and conditions are tailored to people's immediate needs and extend beyond that, regardless of the type of facility.** Facilities should always ensure health, sanitation, water, connectivity, nutrition and safety of spaces, considering specific needs and vulnerabilities. Access to schooling for children, medical care, social and legal assistance, and psychosocial support are also essential for safeguarding people's physical and psychological integrity. Sufficient privacy, like private bedrooms or bathrooms and spaces for confidential discussions, gives people a sense of dignity but also contributes to safety, particularly for people in vulnerable situations. Autonomy, such as the ability to cook their own food, restores agency to individuals and is also cost effective. Similarly, good practice suggests that involving residents through advisory boards or representative councils can greatly enhance their self-resilience and reduce tensions within centres and in the community. In sum, authorities should
- always seek to reinforce the standards included in the recast Reception Conditions Directive<sup>25</sup> and EUAA guidance<sup>26</sup>.
- » **Ensure that people residing in private housing are not left to manage** on their own and receive the necessary social and legal support to access their rights. When **financial allowances** are provided to asylum seekers, these should adequately cover basic needs but also preserve their dignity and autonomy<sup>27</sup>. Sufficient levels of financial support rather than in-kind assistance allow people to take responsibility for their lives.
- » **Guide all interactions and decision-making processes by the do-no-harm principle**, ensuring that reception conditions do not inadvertently worsen their condition or place people at risk. Therefore, it is essential that any staff working with migrants, whether in reception facilities or elsewhere, receive ongoing training to increase their understanding of people's individual situations and needs.



“Reducing the time it takes to access the labour market and education for children is particularly beneficial for supporting integration and self-sufficiency.”

The Red Cross reception centre in Genappe hosts 244 asylum seekers, including 23 unaccompanied children, 2024. © Belgian Red Cross

- » Accompany people at each step of their process. National Red Cross Societies have found that adequate resource allocation for social work is essential to reduce stress, build trust and, importantly, help people access relevant public services<sup>28</sup>. It is highly advised that authorities invest in trauma-informed social support and intercultural mediation services to help asylum seekers navigate administrative steps and access their rights, including education, healthcare and employment. Individuals should have access to free legal assistance, time to prepare for interviews and appeal negative decisions, and support from expert organisations. This is especially critical given the increasing complexity in asylum procedures under the Pact. Some people may not be able or may choose not to apply for international protection, so they should have access to sufficient information about other protection or regularisation procedures. Reportedly, many migrants arriving in Europe have faced traumatic experiences, such as arbitrary arrest, detention, abuse and trafficking, underscoring the acute need for specialised mental health and psychosocial interventions<sup>29</sup>.
- » Support the unique role and work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in **tracing and restoring family links**, and facilitate the **swift reunion** of asylum seekers with their families. Reconnecting with loved ones is crucial for integration, as the stress of separation can be overwhelming. Knowing their family members are safe – and, where appropriate, reuniting with them – is essential for a smooth transition into their new life.
- » Ensure access to rights such as employment and education for all, regardless of the type of asylum procedure, and maintain this access for people with a return decision, especially where return cannot be enforced. Reducing the time it takes to access the labour market and education for children is particularly beneficial for supporting integration and self-sufficiency. Likewise, the new obligation to invest in language courses and vocational training for adults strengthens these efforts<sup>30</sup>. Asylum-seeking women often face additional barriers to accessing employment. Therefore, specific actions to help them learn the local language, find jobs and build connections in their new communities can enhance their independence and autonomy. Denying certain applicants – such as those in accelerated asylum procedures or from safe countries of origin – access to the labour market may lead to a growing number of people without the right to work. Given the extensive list of grounds that can trigger accelerated procedures, both at borders and elsewhere on a country's territory, there is a legitimate concern that this could lead to people being marginalised, limiting their opportunities to connect with service providers or community networks<sup>31</sup>. It could also drive them into the informal labour market, increasing the risk of exploitation and abuse.



## Investing in support for the transition out of the reception system

Transitioning out of reception services, whether by choice or after a positive or negative asylum decision, is not an easy process. The level and quality of rights and services available from the outset are crucial to supporting people's transition to independent living. Ensuring affordable and dignified housing is a significant factor – if not the primary condition – for people's health, employment prospects, educational access and engagement in local life.

However, the organisation of private housing and support services for people once they have been granted international protection status<sup>32</sup> varies greatly across Europe and is also a significant challenge in the governance of reception systems. In fact, neither the Reception Conditions Directive nor the Qualifications Regulation contains any specific provisions on the transition from government-supported accommodation provided in the context of reception conditions to private housing.

The lack of affordable housing, compounded by legal and administrative constraints and discrimination, often prevents people from exiting the reception system. In cases where strict policies limit the duration of stay in accommodation for asylum seekers or terminate social benefits, this can result in destitution and homelessness. Certain groups, such as rejected asylum seekers or people in a vulnerable situation, including adolescents, are particularly at risk of being excluded due to such policies.

We call on EU Member States to:

- » **Ensure that beneficiaries of international protection have early access to social and housing support services** such as social housing, social benefits, rental subsidies and support from social services – support that is typically only available after international protection status is granted. Providing information, counselling and mentorship through social workers (both at reception centres and in social welfare services) is an important way to support the transition to independent housing<sup>33</sup>. This also involves not differentiating between different groups based on the type of international protection status and ensuring that everyone receives the same rights.
- » **Acknowledge the essential role of independent housing for people's integration and social inclusion and ensure equal access to the housing market.** Even after obtaining international protection, obstacles persist. These are both practical, such as the identification of certain residence requirements, and structural ones, like discriminatory attitudes and rising rental market and energy prices. Our experience points to several good practices that could facilitate access to independent housing, including targeted financial assistance to cover the initial costs of signing a lease, early provision of information and guidance on tenants' rights, and effective access to mainstream social and housing policies<sup>34</sup>. Authorities should consider the specific circumstances of family members joining beneficiaries of international protection and make necessary plans before their arrival<sup>35</sup>.

Staff from the Netherlands Red Cross talking to a person staying in a reception centre, Goirle, 2024. © Mona van der Berg.



- » **Support people in moving out of reception centres.** The time limits for leaving the asylum reception system following a positive decision can vary significantly. Some Member States may extend the period for beneficiaries of international protection to remain in these facilities, which is positive. Transitional measures are equally important, including for people in vulnerable situations who need ongoing support. For example, it is crucial that state and local authorities work together to identify available housing options that can be used during this transition. The reality is clear: a shortage of affordable housing, rising rental prices and long waiting lists in the social rental sector make it unreasonable to expect people to secure their own accommodation.
- » **Make sure that reception conditions are provided to rejected applicants in all types of procedures until a final decision is reached in their administrative process and especially in cases where their return cannot be enforced<sup>36</sup>.** In all cases, there is an obligation under EU and international human rights law to prevent people from becoming destitute. In fact, many people cannot be returned from the EU because of human rights obligations, non-cooperation of the country of return and factual considerations, among other reasons<sup>37</sup>. Support should be available for people who are not granted status to secure their rights and avoid marginalisation, including alternative pathways to residency. Facilitating their integration helps prevent the high social and economic costs of exclusion<sup>38</sup>.
- » **Simplify the requirements in EU law, specifically the Long-Term Residence Directive<sup>39</sup>, to allow people to move to another EU country sooner than the current norm and requirement of five years of residence.** This flexibility would enable people to relocate to countries with better job prospects or connections with family, friends or diaspora communities, where they are more likely to settle and succeed<sup>40</sup>. Such mobility would offset the need for strict requirements to remain in their initial EU country and would promote both economic and social growth across the region.

## Conclusion

National Red Cross Societies believe that a holistic approach to reception is essential – one that invests not only in reception capacities but also in procedures and integration support that place people, their wellbeing and aspirations at the centre. This approach enables people to transition from relying on state-provided support to becoming self-sufficient. Our experience shows that early investment in migrants strengthens social cohesion and fosters more inclusive communities. In light of the Pact on Migration and Asylum's implementation, which includes stringent measures for migrants, it is crucial to understand and respect the Red Cross' humanitarian mandate to provide impartial and non-discriminatory services. The Migration Strategy<sup>41</sup> for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement sets it out clearly: by defending the humanitarian space and humanising migration in our respective societies, we can build more tolerant narratives that put respect for all at their heart.



Belgian Red Cross staff organises activities for children and adults at the reception centre in Genappe, 2024. © Belgian Red Cross



## Endnotes

- 1 To read more about National Societies' auxiliary role, see **Resolution 2** of the 30th International Conference and **Resolution 4** of the 31st International Conference.
- 2 For the purpose of this paper, 'material reception' or 'material reception conditions' refers to the provision of accommodation and other material assistance such as food, clothing, hygiene items and financial allowances. Meanwhile, 'reception' or 'reception conditions' refers to the full set of rights and services to which applicants are entitled, such as information provision, legal assistance, healthcare, education and employment, that also includes material conditions. This definition aligns with both **Directive 2013/33/EU** (the Reception Conditions Directive [RCD]) and its **2024** recast.
- 3 Art. 17(2) **Directive 2013/33/EU** and its 2024 recast.
- 4 Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), Case C-79/13 *Saciri v Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers*.
- 5 Art. 22 2024 RCD and C-233/18 *Haqbin*, **case C 422/21**.
- 6 Regulation (EU) 2024/1359, addressing situations of crisis and force majeure in the field of migration and asylum; EU Parliament Magazine, **Prioritising the protection of people in crisis situations**, 2023.
- 7 EUAA **Regulation 2021/2303**, Chapter 5.
- 8 **Another overcrowding emergency at Ter Apel, Red Cross: "A new low"**, the Northern Times, 2022.
- 9 Art. 3 RCD 2024 and 2013 RCD and Art. 26 of the Regulation (EU) 2024/1348.
- 10 EUAA, **BE: The Labour Tribunal ordered immediate return of the applicant in Fedasil reception center, finding revocation of material assistance contrary to EU law**, 2022.
- 11 See, for example, Art. 35 and 63 Regulation (EU) 2024/1351.
- 12 See, for example, *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece*, *Khlaifia and Others v. Italy*, and *R.R. and Others v. Hungary*.
- 13 European Commission, **Toolkit** on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background, 2021-2027 programming period.
- 14 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.
- 15 European Parliament, **Study** on Reception Conditions Across the EU, 2023.
- 16 Red Cross EU Office, **Moving forward together** – Red Cross approach to social inclusion of migrants, 2018.
- 17 See for example **Belgian Red Cross**, **Danish Red Cross**, **Hellenic Red Cross**.
- 18 Typically, 5 to 10 days for inadmissibility decisions and accelerated procedures. Art. 67, 68 Regulation (EU) 2024/1348.
- 19 This effect may only apply to minors or in cases where an appeal against an inadmissibility decision is based on a safe third country. Art. 67, 68 Regulation (EU) 2024/1348.
- 20 EMN/Red Cross EU joint **inform** about practices and challenges in identifying victims of torture and/or ill-treatment, 2024.
- 21 RCEU, Reducing the use of immigration detention in the EU, **position paper**, 2020.
- 22 See: European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), *Abdolkhani and Karimnia v. Turkey*, Judgement of 22 September 2009, para 125-127; ECtHR, *Amuur v. France*, Judgement of 25 June 1996, para 43; ECtHR, *Riad and Idiab v. Belgium*, Judgement of 24 January 2008, para 68. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) **comments** on (EU) 2024/1346.
- 23 RCEU, Protecting the humanitarian space to access and support migrants, **position paper**, 2021.
- 24 *Saciri v. Belgium*, C-79/13.
- 25 (EU) 2024/1346, Art. 20; similar article in 2013 (EU) 2013/33.
- 26 EUAA, **Guidance** on reception. Operational standards and indicators, 2024.
- 27 ECRE **comments** on (EU) 2024/1346; EUAA, Quarterly **Overview** of Asylum Case Law, June 2023.
- 28 RCEU, **Lessons** from the Safe Homes programme: Hosting as an option to accommodate people who have lost their homes, 2024.
- 29 Danish Red Cross, **Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Migration and Displacement**, 2021.
- 30 Art. 16, 17, 18 Regulation (EU) 2024/1346.
- 31 In *K.S. and others*, the CJEU interpreted Art. 15 of the RCD as precluding EUMS from excluding applicants from accessing the labour market solely on the basis that a Dublin transfer decision had been made. Thus, where applicants are awaiting transfer under (EU) 2024/1351, this alone cannot be used as a reason for denying access to the labour market. See **EUAA Case Law Database**.
- 32 EMN **inform**, Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection, 2023.
- 33 The term 'independent' or 'autonomous' housing includes housing provided by the state outside the reception system, housing partially funded or supported by the state, and completely private housing.
- 34 RCEU, **Lessons** from the Safe Homes programme: Hosting as an option to accommodate people who have lost their homes, 2024.
- 35 REPAIR Project **recommendations**, 2024.
- 36 EUAA, caselaw **2020**, **2021**.
- 37 Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), **Barriers to return: Protection in international, EU and national frameworks**, 2022.
- 38 Council of Europe, **Integration** of migrants and refugees: benefits for all parties involved, 2023.2024.
- 39 2003/109/EC.
- 40 EUAA, **Voices in Europe**, Experiences, hopes, and aspirations of forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine, 2024.
- 41 Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, **Migration Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024–2030**, 2024.

Cover photo: A simulation of a job interview to strengthen employment prospects and put competences into practice, 2019. © Spanish Red Cross



National Red Cross Societies are present at every step of the reception chain, providing short and long-term accommodation, as well as facilitating access to healthcare, education, language courses, employment, family reunification and legal and psychosocial support. By humanising migration in our respective societies, we can build more tolerant narratives that put respect for all at their heart. ”



**RED CROSS**  
**EU OFFICE**

**Representing National Societies in the EU, Norway and Iceland, and the IFRC**

Rue de Trèves 59-61, 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium - T +32 (0) 2 235 06 80

F +32 (0) 2 230 54 64 - [infoboard@redcross.eu](mailto:infoboard@redcross.eu) - [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) /RedCrossEU

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is committed to, and bound by its seven Fundamental Principles

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