

# Refugee Dispersal Policy (RDP) Data Set: Technical Report

This version: 12/10/2025

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## Abstract

Many European countries are concerned about the asymmetric distribution of refugees within their territory. In response, they have developed sophisticated policies designed to spatially disperse refugees. By investigating these policies, we make three key contributions. First, we develop a conceptualization of refugee dispersal policies (RDPs) as systems of sub-national responsibility-sharing in asylum governance based on five policy attributes and three ideal types of dispersal regimes. These policies seek to alter the ‘natural’ spatial distribution of asylum seekers and refugees by allocating them to particular places within the national territory. Second, we introduce a novel dataset capturing the dispersal policies of 32 European states, culminating in an original index measuring the restrictiveness of these policies. Third, we theorize states’ motivation for adopting refugee dispersal and examine factors driving cross-country variation in their restrictiveness. The present technical report accompanies the original research article and describes the coding process as well as the sources used.

## Please cite this report as follows:

Bartl, Walter, and Philipp Lutz. 2025. *Refugee Dispersal Policy (RDP) Data Set*. Sachsen-Anhalt Datenarchiv und Repositorium SADAR. Halle (Saale): Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt. doi:10.25673/1914118-10.

## Please do also refer to the corresponding article:

Bartl, Walter, and Philipp Lutz. 2025. Comparing Refugee Dispersal Policies. Varieties of Responsibility-Sharing in Europe. *Governance*, e70072. doi:10.1111/gove.70072.

## Data collection and coding process

Following the conceptualization of refugee dispersal policies (RDPs), we developed a codebook containing the rules and providing examples for assigning numerical values to qualitative information on dispersal policies. The data collection and the content analysis was carried out in two stages. The first stage focused on collecting sources, extracting relevant policy information for country profiles, and testing the empirical applicability of the coding rules (Mayring, 2014, p. 41). For that purpose, we introduced research assistants to the extraction of information, the practice of coding and discussed with them the applicability of the coding rules. During the first stage, information was collected from the Asylum Information Database (ECRE, 2023a), scholarly literature, and official sources. While most of the texts collected were in English, we also utilized sources in the national languages of the countries analysed when necessary. In case of missing information, the search was extended until we could extract data for each country in each policy attribute to compile complete country profiles.

In the second stage, we focused on ensuring the reliability of the assigned codes and fine-tuning the rules for attributing consensual values. The country profiles were coded by two independent coders, and inter-coder agreement was tested for each attribute by calculating Krippendorff's Alpha (Krippendorff, 2011). This procedure formed the base for refining the coding rules and resolving discrepancies through discussion between the authors (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). In cases where the country profiles lacked sufficient information to resolve conflicting codes, additional sources were consulted to complement the existing information.

## Coding instruction

Coders received the following coding instruction and codebook: “The aim is to code regulations applying to asylum seekers during the stage of the regular asylum procedure that are in place in the year 2020. Hence, the focus is not on regulations during the registration stage or after a decision on protection has been made. The codes shall refer only to formal regulations and standard operating procedures that have not been put in place to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. In case of a discrepancy between formal regulations and standard operating procedures, priority is on the formal regulation. If information on the focal period is not available, older and more current regulations should be considered instead (in that order). If several forms of reception are operated in parallel, the code should refer to the dominant form.”

Table 1: Coding scheme for RDPs

| Attribute   | Value                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Value label         | Coding rule                                                                                                                                                                    | Examples, disambiguation                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bindingness | Bindingness of dispersal refers to the host states' spatial conditions of membership for asylum seekers during the regular procession of their asylum application. It does not refer to special rules that might apply to individuals before they lodge an asylum application, to people subject to international relocation agreements, such as the EU-Turkey statement or the Dublin procedure, or to individuals after they have received the (positive or negative) result of their asylum application. |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|             | 0                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No dispersal policy | As the standard operating procedure, asylum seekers arrange their accommodation individually without spatial restrictions; the size of the public reception system is minimal. | There is a maximum of one reception centre for asylum seekers in financial need or otherwise vulnerable groups; therefore, there is no need for dispersal decisions. |

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           | 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Conditioned dispersal   | A factual dispersal policy exists, but the target group can also choose to opt out and find individual accommodation in a different subnational territory. The dispersal policy does not intend to cover 100% of the target population.                   | There is more than one reception centre for asylum seekers (e.g. in financial need). In Serbia, for example, asylum seekers are assigned to a particular reception centre for processing their asylum application, but are free to choose their accommodation anywhere. In Bulgaria, it is the same, although only a minority can do it for financial reasons. Those staying in a reception centre are bound to a free movement zone around the centre.                                                                                                                     |
|           | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Forced dispersal        | The target group cannot choose to find their individual accommodation or are restricted to settlement in particular territorial units. The dispersal policy intends to cover 100% of the target population.                                               | a) Only official facilities exist, no individual housing. b) Individual housing is possible, but only in assigned areas or requiring a special permission. In Turkey, for instance, asylum seekers are expected to arrange their accommodation but are assigned to administrative centres in particular areas for their procedure. Settlement is restricted in some provinces, with an upper cap (maximum share of refugees among the residents). In Lithuania, the default is to stay in the reception centre and private accommodation is allowed only after application. |
| Sanctions | Sanctions refer to the structure of consequences related to compliance with the spatial rules of dispersal policies. We use the term incentives to denote financial or in-kind benefits to those individuals of the target group complying with the rules of the dispersal policy, or negate those benefits in case of non-compliance. We use the term negative sanctions to denote more severe consequences that negatively affect the asylum procedure in case of non-compliance. |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|           | 0                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No sanctions specified. | No sanctions apply to non-compliance with geographical restrictions of free movement.                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|           | 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Mild sanctions          | Government assistance depends on the participation in dispersal. In-kind benefits are provided on site of reception centres. Financial benefits might be reduced in private accommodation or financial contributions are required for individual housing. | Sanctions often depend on auxiliary monitoring such as the requirement to ask for permission to leave the facility, curfews or reporting duties.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Severe sanctions        | Severe sanctions apply in case of noncompliance with restrictions on free movement and negatively affect the asylum procedure.                                                                                                                                                 | Severe sanctions often apply only to a subset of the original target population, such as only those asylum seekers that are accommodated in reception centres. In that case, the value of 2 is to be assigned. Financial incentives can coexist with severe sanctions. In that case, the value of 2 is to be assigned.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Governance         | Governance of reception refers to the decision processes for establishing reception structures on the territory of the host state. The focus of this dimension is the creation and abolishment of reception facilities, not their operational management. |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                    | 0                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Market governance       | Asylum seekers are generally expected to arrange their accommodation individually, and the public reception system is minimal. Only one reception facility for asylum seekers in the regular procedure exists, typically for those who are in financial need.                  | The focus is on a) the formal structure and b) the standard operating procedure, with a) overruling b). The ideal typical case for the value 0 would be that no public reception facilities exist at all, except one for asylum seekers in the regular procedure who are in financial need. In Cyprus, for instance, there is only one reception facility for regular asylum seekers, which is usually overcrowded, indicating that the state predominantly relies on the housing market for accommodation. |
|                    | 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Negotiated governance   | Negotiations, consultations, and agreements with regional or local governments (depending on the state form) determine the allocation of reception facilities. Hosting reception centres is voluntary for subnational territories, and they can reject hosting asylum-seekers. | In the UK, the central government is formally required to consult local governments for the allocation of reception facilities. In the literature, it is claimed that contracting with private providers actually allows the central government to bypass local governments. According to the rule of prioritizing formal regulations, this should be coded as 1.                                                                                                                                           |
|                    | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Hierarchical governance | Central responsibility for establishing reception facilities or mandated delegation to subnational authorities. Otherwise, primary and secondary law regulate the responsibility of subnational actors for providing reception facilities.                                     | During the influx of a high number of refugees, in Sweden, for example, the voluntary governance structure was complemented with the creation of centrally administered reception facilities. Public tendering and housing contracts of the state with local providers implement a “quiet” form of hierarchical governance.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Dispersal criteria | Dispersal criteria refer to the formal or informal rules applied to dispersal decisions, that is, the assignment of individuals to particular territories or places.                                                                                      |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

|            |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | 0                                                                                                                                                                 | No criteria                              | This applies if only if there is no dispersal taking place, i.e. when there is a maximum of one reception facility. It means that neither explicit nor implicit dispersal criteria are present and no standard procedure of dispersal is known. | The object of classification is only the first subnational level of dispersal. The focus is on a) the formal structure and b) the standard operating procedure. If there is no explicit information on formal regulations, information on standard practices can be used for coding. The code 0 applies if neither formal criteria are specified nor information on standard practices indicate informal dispersal criteria. |
|            | 1                                                                                                                                                                 | Implicit, informal, qualitative criteria | Informal or qualitative criteria are assessed in a discretionary way.                                                                                                                                                                           | Implicit criteria include, for example, the existence of reception centres in certain places and the available capacity of places in these centres                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|            | 2                                                                                                                                                                 | Explicit, quantitative criteria          | Quantified criteria are specified and applied on a national level.                                                                                                                                                                              | Quotas for regions or municipalities (depending on state form) typically aim to produce an even distribution across the national territory. Quotas can also set an upper limit to avoid concentration (such as in Turkey). The specification of quota of any form should be coded with the value 2.                                                                                                                          |
| Monitoring | Monitoring refers to the existence of publicly available statistics on the residence of asylum seekers across the national territory at different spatial scales. |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|            | 0                                                                                                                                                                 | No subnational refugee statistics        | No publicly available statistics exist for the number of asylum seekers or refugees below the national level.                                                                                                                                   | Often statistics on asylum-seekers are confined to the national level without further information about spatial settlement patterns.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|            | 1                                                                                                                                                                 | Regional monitoring                      | Publicly available statistics on the spatial settlement of refugees exist on the regional level. In the EU, that equals the NUTS 2 level.                                                                                                       | These statistics are published regularly (e.g., in two consecutive years) and are reported in a similar structure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|            | 2                                                                                                                                                                 | Local monitoring                         | Publicly available statistics on the spatial settlement of refugees exist on the local level. In the EU, that equals the NUTS 3 level.                                                                                                          | These statistics are published regularly (e.g., in two consecutive years) and are reported in a similar structure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## Country profiles

This section gives an overview of the country profiles we used as a basis in the coding process. The information we extracted from sources is ordered according to the policy attributes we defined as relevant for the purpose of our analysis. The information was to be extracted by direct quotes or by paraphrasing the text in sources. Often, country profiles contain more information than was actually decisive in the coding process. This proved to be useful for gaining a more holistic understanding of the cases analysed.

## Austria

### *Bindingness*

According to Basic Welfare Support Agreement of 2004 (Grundversorgungsvereinbarung – GVV) between the federal government and the federal states, asylum seekers are accommodated in federal basic care facilities operated by Federal Agency for Care and Support Services (Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen – BBU), during the first step of the asylum procedure, the admissibility procedure. The BBU is in charge since December 2020 (ECRE, 2022b, p. 89) and operates 24 reception centres as of 2021 (ECRE, 2022b, p. 103). When the application is passed over to the regular procedure, asylum seekers are allocated to a particular federated state. From there, the federated states are responsible for providing the accommodation and basic care support (ECRE, 2022b, p. 87). Each federated state has a department which is responsible for administering basic care for asylum seekers. The state's department decides whether they operate a basic care facility, conclude contracts with NGOs and landlords to provide accommodation, or allow asylum seekers to rent private accommodation, according to their quota they have to fulfil (ECRE, 2022b, p. 103). The possibility for asylum seekers to rent private accommodation depends on the state which they are dispersed to. In the case of private accommodation, the states provide financial support. The amount of financial support varies (ECRE, 2022b, pp. 92–93). Furthermore, asylum seekers “are obliged to reside in the [state] which provides them with Basic Welfare Support”, even in the case of private accommodation (Nagel & Reeger, 2021, p. 5). “However, asylum seekers have no possibility to choose the place where they will be accommodated according to the dispersal mechanism, although family ties are usually considered. Moreover, it is not possible to appeal the dispersal decision because it is an informal decision taken between the Ministry of Interior and the respective federal province” (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100f.).

### *Sanctions*

During the admissibility procedure, asylum seekers are only allowed to stay in the district of the reception centre (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100). If these restrictions are violated, asylum seekers can be fined between €100 to €1000 or with detention for up to two weeks if the fine can't be paid (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100). After the “application is admitted to the regular procedure”, asylum seekers have the right to move freely around Austria (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100), but they have to reside in the state which provides Basic Welfare Support (Nagel & Reeger, 2021, p. 5). With a “case-by-case” decision, the freedom of movement of asylum seekers can be restricted (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100). According to the Aliens Employment Act of 1975, asylum seekers are allowed to participate in the labour market after a period of 3 months of applying for asylum (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100).

### *Governance*

The GVV regulates the shared responsibility between the federal state and constituent states. Therefore, the Federal Republic is responsible for all asylum seekers during the admissibility procedure (Rosenberger & Müller, 2020, p. 99; Nagel & Reeger, 2021, p. 5). Since December 2020, the BBU is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers at the national level (ECRE, 2022b, p. 14). As soon as the regular procedure starts, the federated states are responsible for the reception of the asylum seekers. Every state has to provide reception centres or alternative accommodations (e.g., contracts with private owners of hostels or hotels), based to their population (ECRE, 2022b, p. 105; Berthelot et al., 2023). It is also up to the states under what conditions they allow private accommodation.

### *Criteria*

According to the GVV of 2004, the dispersal follows a quota scheme, following the population of the federated states (ECRE, 2022b, p. 103). Besides the quota system, asylum seekers are dispersed based on their needs, “for instance in places for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, single women or handicapped persons” (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100). Furthermore, family ties are usually considered (ECRE, 2022b, p. 100). Despite the quota regulation, the federal provinces often do not provide enough accommodation for asylum seekers. E.g., Vienna hosts about double the amount of asylum seekers regarding the quota while Lower Austria hosts only half of the supposed amount (ECRE, 2022b, p. 101).

### *Monitoring*

Statistics on the total amount of asylum seekers exist only at the national level (1999-2022) (BMI, 2023). Surprisingly, the statistics that displayed the spatial dispersal of asylum seekers on a state and even district level in Austria from 2002 to 2005 were discontinued.

## **Belgium**

### *Bindingness:*

“The arrival centre occupies the “Petit-Château” in Brussels since December 2018. It brings together the Fedasil teams in charge of the first reception and the designations, as well as the 'Registration' service of the Immigration Office” (FEDASIL, n.d.). After lodging their application with the Immigration Office, asylum seekers are first accommodated at the arrival centre of FEDASIL (Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers) where initial social and medical screenings are conducted (ECRE, 2020a, p. 81). “Fedasil will then allocate them a reception place where the asylum seeker will benefit from material assistance (i.e. accommodation, meals, clothing, medical, social and psychological assistance, a daily allowance – pocket money – and access to legal assistance and services such as interpreting and training)” (ECRE, 2020a, p. 81). “Dispatching [service of FEDASIL] will refer you to the reception location which will provide you with material assistance. As an asylum seeker, you may stay at a reception location while your application is being dealt with. [...] Just like all other asylum seekers, you are assigned a mandatory registration place (also known as ‘code 207’). This is usually a Fedasil or Red Cross reception centre. Material assistance will be provided at this location. This includes accommodation, food, clothing and social, legal, medical and administrative guidance. There are approximately forty reception centres in Belgium. The assignment of a mandatory registration place does not mean that you are not permitted to move around freely on Belgian territory. During your stay, you may enter and leave the reception location at your own free will (but you must adhere to the house rules). [...] You are not obliged to stay at the reception location that you are assigned to. to. But, if you live elsewhere, you will not receive any material assistance (except for medical care, which is guaranteed for all. [...] If you have spent four months in a collective reception location, you may ask for individual accommodation. Whether that application is honoured or not depends on the number of available places at that particular time” (Luxen, n.d., pp. 10–11). “If no transfer is possible, asylum seekers may leave the reception centre and find their own place of residence. They will then be considered as code 207 ‘No show’” (Dauvrin et al., 2019, p. 27). In early 2019, 444 persons had been classified as a “No show” (Dauvrin et al., 2019, p. 26) this is a rather rare event.

“You will only be assigned individual housing if there are sufficient places available. If there is no room, you will be placed on a waiting list. You cannot choose the municipality within which you wish to be housed, but you can always refuse the place that is offered. [...] You will still receive material assistance while in [an] individual accommodation” (Luxen, n.d., p. 30). After being granted international protection, refugees are entitled to stay at the reception centres for 2 additional months before they have found a suitable private accommodation (ECRE, 2020a, p. 81). EU citizens applying for asylum are not provided with accommodation in reception centres (ECRE, 2020a, p. 115).

### *Sanctions:*

Asylum seekers that live in reception centres are given priority over applicants staying at a private address (ECRE, 2021b, p. 34). If asylum seekers do not access the reception system and choose private housing, they have to pay for a lawyer by themselves, if the person at whom they are staying, has sufficient financial means (ECRE, 2020a, p. 83). Access to the labour market is available after 4 months (ECRE, 2020a, p. 105). Asylum seekers can only enjoy the material and other provisions they are entitled to in the reception place they are assigned to. If the asylum seeker refuses the place assigned, or is absent from the assigned place for 3 consecutive days without prior notice, or is absent for more than 10 nights in one month (with or without prior notice), Fedasil can decide to refuse him or her material conditions (ECRE, 2023b). After another application, the right will be regained, but sanctions from Fedasil are possible. “Finally, you may also be transferred to another reception centre as a sanction if you, for example, break the house rules at your reception location” (Luxen, n.d., p. 11).

### *Governance:*

The asylum procedure is ruled by law and implemented by the CGRS (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons). FEDASIL is responsible for the supply of accommodations and for dispersal. As of March 2023, the 109 main collective reception centres were mainly managed and organized by Fedasil, Croix Rouge and Rode Kruis (ECRE, 2023b, p. 125). There are also some places available in the Belgian Local reception initiative for asylum seekers called ILA – LOI (Initiative Locale d’Accueil – Lokaal Opvang Initiatief) (Dauvrin et al., 2019).

“The location of a reception centre is strongly determined by the availability of infrastructure, as well as by a political decision-making process in which an equilibrium is sought, for example between regions, but also according to the political composition of the local government. The decision regarding the location of a collective reception centre is made by the Council of Ministers and proposed by the Secretary of State responsible for asylum and migration. The role of Fedasil in this decision-making process is limited. Equally, most of the municipalities involved have been allowed little or no participation or advice in the decision-making process concerning the opening of collective reception centres. Mayors are informed shortly before the opening of a centre by the Secretary of State. As the management of reception centres was in the hands of Fedasil or non-governmental organizations, local governments mainly took up the role of facilitator, stimulating dialogue among the different actors involved, as well as with local populations. [...] In some cases, local governments resisted the opening of reception centres, putting forward arguments based on figures concerning the increased presence of foreigners in their municipality. In a couple of these cases, the political pressure has been sufficient to prevent the opening of a reception centre. However, in our research, we have found that local governments have had a positive attitude overall towards the opening of collective reception centres. They saw it as their contribution within a collective responsibility to face the challenges of the refugee reception crisis” (Mescoli et al., 2019, p. 180). However, there are also municipalities that do not host reception centres – partly because of opposing allocation decisions insinuated by the central government (Hantson et al., 2022, p. 78).

### *Criteria:*

“The law provides for accommodation to be adapted to the individual situation of the asylum seeker, but in practice places are mostly assigned according to availability and preferences under the reception model introduced in 2015” (ECRE, 2021b, p. 111, 2020a, p. 103). “The Dispatching service will seek a reception place for you, [considering]: the number of available places on that day, your situation, so that you can be assigned a suitable place to stay. Dispatching takes account of the composition of your family, the age of your children, your health and your knowledge of one of the country’s languages (Dutch, French or German)” (Luxen, n.d., p. 10). “For the assignment to a specific centre, Fedasil should legally consider the centre’s occupation rate, the asylum seeker’s family situation, age, health condition, vulnerability and the procedural language of his or her asylum case. There are no monitoring or evaluation reports about the effective assessment of all these elements in practice. Albeit legally binding criteria, these do not seem to always be [considered]. In theory, an asylum seeker or his or her social assistants can ask to change centre at any given time during the procedure, based on these criteria. Fedasil itself can also decide to change the location of reception, based on these criteria” (ECRE, 2023b, pp. 114–115). The dispersal decision is aided by a software platform (Zotto, 2022).

### *Monitoring:*

Belgium has no publicly available information on the spatial settlement structure of asylum seekers (CGRS, n.d.).

## **Bulgaria**

### *Bindingness*

Typically, asylum seekers are accommodated in one of the 4 reception centres operated by the “State Agency for Refugees” (Държавна агенция за бежанците -SAR). Asylum seekers can choose to rent private

accommodation, but in doing so, they have to renounce their right to social and material support (ECRE, 2022c, pp. 66–67). As of December 2021, 405 asylum seekers opted out of the possibility to residence in reception centres, while, at the same time, 2447 of 5160 available places in reception centres were occupied (ECRE, 2022c, p. 67). In 2017, “statutory movement zones” around the reception centres were implemented. Asylum seekers need permission to leave those areas. However, in the case of court appearances or medical assistance, this permission is not needed (Otova, 2020, p. 272; ECRE, 2022c, p. 64).

### *Sanctions*

The withdrawal of material reception, such as accommodation, is only admissible in “cases of disappearance of asylum seekers when the procedure is discontinued”. Typically, this withdrawal is practised by the SAR for asylum seekers who are supposed to return under the Dublin Regulation (ECRE, 2022c, p. 63).

Violating against the “statutory movement zones (...) can result in placement in a closed centre until the asylum procedure ends with a final decision” (ECRE, 2022c, p. 64). Asylum seekers are allowed to participate in the labour market, if the asylum procedure takes more than 3 months (ECRE, 2022c, p. 69).

### *Governance*

All reception centres are managed and operated by the SAR (ECRE, 2022c, p. 66). Furthermore, the SAR is the determining authority in all matters regarding asylum, including the dispersal of asylum seekers (ECRE, 2022c, pp. 17–18; EASO, 2022, p. 11).

### *Criteria*

Asylum seekers are dispersed based on the availability of places in one of 4 reception centres. Vulnerabilities and family ties of asylum seekers are taken in account (EASO, 2022, p. 11; ECRE, 2022c, p. 66). Due to a turmoil in the Harmanli reception centres, authorities started accommodating asylum seekers regarding their nationality (Otova, 2020, p. 273). Thus, the nationality of the asylum seekers plays a role in the dispersal. E.g., the Voenna Rampa facility in Sofia accommodates mainly asylum seekers from Afghanistan or Pakistan, while “Ovcha Kupel houses mainly families from Syria, Iraq and Africa” (Otova, 2020, p. 273) and other facilities host mixed nationalities (ECRE, 2022c, p. 66).

### *Monitoring*

The Ministry of Interior and the SAR publish monthly statistics of applicants (ECRE, 2022c, p. 7). No information about the dispersal is given (SAR, 2023). At the time of writing, the statistical report of the Ministry of Interior was not accessible (Ministry of Interior, 2023a).

## **Croatia**

### *Bindingness*

According to the Ordinance on Material Reception of 2015, asylum seekers have the right to be accommodated in a reception centre from the moment express the intention of applying for asylum. Following structural changes on the internal organization of the Ministry of Interior in 2019, the Department for International Protection is responsible for examining the applications and empowered to make decisions in the first instance (ECRE, 2023c, p. 21). The Law on International and Temporary Protection (LITP) of 2015 allows asylum seekers to rent private accommodation at their own cost anywhere on the territory of Croatia. To do so, they need the prior permission from the Ministry of Interior for this purpose (ECRE, 2023c, p. 79). There is no available information on how many asylum seekers opt out for reception centres in favour of private accommodation, or on how many asylum seekers are accommodated in reception centres at all (ECRE, 2023c, p. 83). However, private accommodation seems to be of minor importance due to insufficient financial support of asylum seekers (Pandek & Župarić-Iljić, 2018, p. 235).

### *Sanctions*

Asylum seekers living in the reception centres must inform the head of the reception centre if they want to leave the reception centre overnight. The maximum allowable absence from the reception centres is 15 days (ECRE, 2023c, p. 82). According to the LITP of 2015, the material receptions of asylum seekers can be restricted or even denied, in case of violation of this rule (ECRE, 2023c, p. 81). Furthermore, the restriction of movement is used as an alternative to detention of asylum seekers. This measure can be used for application-related purposes like establishing or verifying identity and nationality or preventing the abuse of the application process etc. (ECRE, 2023c, p. 82). According to the LITP, asylum seekers have unrestricted access to the labour market 9 months after applying for asylum (ECRE, 2023c, p. 89).

### *Governance*

Since the Decree on the internal structure of the Ministry of Interior in March 2019, all organization regarding asylum matters is dealt with by the “Directorate for Immigration, Citizenship and Administrative Affairs”, which is under the Ministry of Interior. This directorate is further divided into the organizational units “Service for International Protection”, and “Service for Reception and Accommodation of Applicants for International Protection”. The latter is responsible for operating of two reception centres for applicants for international protection. One of which is located in Zagreb and the other one in Kutina (ECRE, 2023c, p. 21).

### *Criteria*

There is no concrete dispersal scheme. The dispersal of asylum seekers is decided based on the availability of available places (EASO, 2022, p. 11; ECRE, 2023c, p. 81). However, the reception centre in Kutina aimed to host vulnerable asylum seekers (ECRE, 2023c, p. 83)

### *Monitoring*

The Ministry of Interior annually publishes statistics on the number of asylum seekers (2008-2023) (Ministry of Interior, 2023b).

## **Cyprus**

### *Bindingness*

In general, the Refugee Law states that asylum seekers can move freely in the area that is controlled by the Republic of Cyprus and can choose the own accommodation and report their address (ECRE, 2023d, p. 92). Different from other residents and visitors, they cannot cross the “green line” to the northern areas.

### *Sanctions*

Sufficient resources lead to the termination of material reception benefits (ECRE, 2023d, p. 81). In the past, any form of employment – independent of income – or the authorities assuming “voluntary unemployment” has led to existential financial benefits being withdrawn. Renting accommodation is difficult, because of down payments that are often required and some landlords refusing to rent to asylum seekers. This as led to a renting market, with slum lords as important providers of accommodation.

“Asylum seekers are obliged to report any changes of living address to the authorities either within five working days or as soon as possible after changing their address. If they fail to do so, they may be considered to have withdrawn their asylum application, although in practice lately there have been no indications of this being implemented. There is no legislative differentiation regarding the provision of MRC [material reception conditions] based on the area of residence” (ECRE, 2023d, p. 92).

### *Governance*

The Asylum Service is a department of the Ministry of Interior, responsible for three reception centres (Pournara, Kofinou, Limnes) and four shelters for unaccompanied and separated children (ECRE, 2023d,

p. 93). They have a total capacity of 2700 places in the centres and 90 at the shelters. People who have arrived at the territory of Cyprus are referred to the first reception centre, Pournara, for the initial registration procedure. Limnes was originally designed in 2021 as a closed return facility, but also has an open section. “The reception centre located in Kokkinothrimithia, on the outskirts of Nicosia, was originally established in 2014 as a tented facility with a 350-person capacity with EU funding” (ECRE, 2023d, p. 93). Meanwhile, more stable constructions have been established and the capacity increased. However, it is mostly overcrowded (e.g. with 2000 to 3000 persons in 2022) and people tend to spend days around the centre before they are admitted.

During the regular procedure, there is one reception centre, located in the village of Kofinou some 40 km from Nicosia, which was expanded in 2014 to a 400-bed capacity. This is the only centre that provides accommodation for the entire duration of the asylum procedures and permits freedom of movement. Expanded capacities are expected to become available in early 2023 (ECRE, 2023d, p. 94).

However, the “main form of accommodation used by asylum seekers is private accommodation secured independently, in all areas of Cyprus. There are no standards or conditions regulated for rented accommodation in Cyprus. Therefore, asylum seekers living in private accommodation may often be living in appalling conditions. Asylum seekers are expected to find accommodation on their own and there are no services available to refer persons to suitable accommodation or assist persons to identify and secure accommodation, including vulnerable persons and families with children, [except for] an extremely few cases where the SWS [Social and Welfare Services] assist. Indicatively at the end of 2022 there were over 35,000 asylum seekers in the country whereas the total capacity of Centres is under 3000” (ECRE, 2023d, p. 94).

#### *Criteria*

In Cyprus, there is no mechanism for the dispersal of asylum seekers (ECRE, 2023d, p. 92). “The Minister of Interior may restrict freedom of movement within some the controlled areas and decide on the area of residence of an asylum seeker for reasons of public interest or order. Asylum seekers living in the community reside where they choose, [except for] Chloraka, in the Paphos district where, according to a Ministerial Decree issued in December 2020, new asylum seekers are no longer allowed to reside. The rationale behind the decision includes reasons such as the “massive settlement of International Protection holders” in the area, resulting in “social problems” and “demographic change”. Individuals originating mainly from Syria have been residing in the particular area for over 10 years, some even before the Syrian conflict. The number of Syrian residents has particularly increased during the past 4 years, as a result of the Syrian crisis. The Decree was issued after demonstrations were held by several local actors, which raised concerns over the potential for “racial alteration” of the community, due to approximately 20% of its residents being Syrians. Public discussion raised by a crime involving a Syrian resident resulted in the stigmatization of the whole Syrian community in the area. The Decree fails to provide informed and relevant reasons for imposing the particular restrictions while it introduces a racially discriminatory rationale, contradicting the provisions of Directive 2013/33, as well as various anti-discriminatory provisions outlined by international and local legal texts. Until today, the situation remains unresolved” (ECRE, 2023d, p. 92).

#### *Monitoring*

There are no statistics about the settlement pattern of asylum seekers. Accordingly, a different report noted: “For example, in Cyprus, Estonia and Poland, monitoring is undertaken ‘manually’ through regular reporting from centre officers to the central Asylum Services” (EMN, 2014, p. 10).

## **Czech Republic**

#### *Bindingness:*

Reception Centres (ReC) “serve for the accommodation of newcomer applicants for international protection for the duration of the basic entry procedures, including identification of persons, submission of application for international protection, and medical examination. The applicants are provided with accommodation, meals, basic sanitary supplies, health care, social and psychological services, and leisure

time activities. The applicants are not free to leave the facility. The RFA MOI operates a Reception Centre in the transition zone of Prague International Airport of Václav Havel (outer Schengen border), a Reception Centre in Zastávka and a Reception Centre in Bělá-Jezová” (RFA-MOI, 2021, p. 6). However, at this stage of the process, refugees are not registered as asylum seekers yet. Therefore, this stage is not coded.

“Following the entry procedures at the reception [centre], the applicants for international protection (those who cannot provide for their own accommodation) can stay in one of the residential [centres] [ResC] until their application is processed (within the competence of DAMP). They are free to leave the [centre], and they receive financial allowances and prepare their own meals. The applicants may use the services of social workers, and choose from a variety of leisure time activities, voluntary Czech language courses, legal and psychological assistance. The RFA MOI operates [three] residential [centres] in Kostelec nad Orlicí, Havířov, and Zastávka” (RFA-MOI, 2021, pp. 6–7).

Integration Asylum Centres serve as temporary accommodation of individuals who have been granted international protection in the form of asylum, or subsidiary protection, joined the State Integration Program, and who cannot provide for their own accommodation. The individuals accommodated in those centres are provided with assistance and consultations of social workers, counselling focused on getting accommodation and jobs, and other integration services, including Czech language courses which are the flagship of the State Integration Program activities. The maximum length of stay of foreigners is 18 months; however, most of them stay for a considerably shorter period of time. The RFA MOI operates IACs in Brno, Jaroměř, Havířov, and Ústí nad Labem – Předlice” (RFA-MOI, 2021, p. 7).

#### *Sanctions*

There are incentives to live in an asylum facility because the own accommodation would have to be paid for by the asylum seekers themselves.

#### *Governance:*

“In 2021, the RFA MOI (in compliance with Section 84 of Act 325/1999 Sb., on Asylum, as amended, and the Czech Government Resolution no. 303 of April 7, 2016, and also in compliance with Section 151 of Act 326/1999 Sb., on the Residence of Foreigners in the Territory of the Czech Republic, and the Czech Government Resolution no. 286 of 30 March 2016) provided a contribution of CZK 10 per person accommodated in the asylum facility per day to partially cover the municipalities’ spending for accommodation of foreigners in asylum and detention facilities located in their respective territories. In 2021, a total of CZK 1,799,010 was paid to municipalities where asylum and detention facilities for foreigners were located” (RFA-MOI, 2021, p. 23). Asylum facilities are governed centrally through the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior.

#### *Criteria:*

Three residential centres exist. Allocation of people to centres is made according to local criteria.

#### *Monitoring:*

The Czech Statistical Office collects data about the number of foreign citizens and their registered residence (Křížková & Šimon, 2022). However, on the internet site of the Czech Statistical Office, there is only information at the national level (Czech Statistical Office, 2023). Regional data on Ukrainian refugees is available from the Ministry of the Interior (Adunts et al., 2022).

## **Denmark**

#### *Bindingness*

Once, Denmark was the first country to sign the Geneva Convention.”There are two core acts that define Denmark’s reception and integration conditions: The Aliens Act, initially introduced in 1983, and the Integration Act, established in 1999” (Kreichauf, 2020, p. 52). “Since the early 1990s, Danish asylum

legislations have been revised and toughened several times, often because of increasing arrivals as well as rising neo-nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiments. Denmark's relation with the EU in the fields of immigration and asylum reflects this development" standing outside the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) (Kreichauf, 2020, p. 45). Until 2003, it was possible to apply for asylum at a Danish mission abroad. Amendments to the Aliens Act, e.g. in 2011, introduced a parallel welfare system with lowered benefits for asylum seekers. "When it comes to refugees, the Danish government laid out a new path with a law passed in the spring of 2019, called the Paradigm Shift, moving the focus from integration to return to the countries of origin. The goal is now to send refugees back as soon as conditions allow for it. The word "integration" has been replaced with "self-support and return". However, the law does not replace the integration programme, which is still in force" (European Commission, n.d.).

Since 2011: Living in a reception centre is obligatory for asylum seekers. They can live outside asylum centres after staying 6 months in Denmark (Kreichauf, 2020, pp. 53–55). "Upon arrival, asylum seekers are taken to registration at the Sandholm Centre, Denmark's official reception centre, where they are accommodated up to 6 months... The Danish Red Cross operates most accommodations... The Danish Ministry of Justice and the Danish Immigration Service decide on the legal regulations, locations of centres and living standards" (Kreichauf, 2020, p. 53). The state decides where newcomers reside (Myrberg, 2015, p. 323). Although the number of centres changed between 2015 and 2020, the basic regulation for asylum seekers during their application process did not (Hernes et al., 2023a, p. 17).

### *Sanctions*

There is a so-called "activation program" in the reception centres which includes daily tasks such as cleaning the facility, doing laundry, recycling or repairing. This program is mandatory for all asylum seekers above the age of 18. If they fail to participate, financial provisions are cut (Kreichauf, 2020, p. 61). Kreichauf describes the entire setting of the reception centre as a form of "campization" that separates asylum seekers from Danish society (e.g. through curfews) and submits them under heteronomy and control by the state. "Protection seekers should also sign a contract with the reception centres where they commit to certain activities and work [to] receive an additional benefit. If they do not comply with the contract, they may have the additional integration benefit reduced or removed completely" (Hernes et al., 2023a, p. 26).

### *Governance*

The Danish Ministry of Justice and the Danish Immigration Service decide on the legal regulations, locations of centres and living standards" (Kreichauf, 2020, p. 53). The state decides where newcomers reside (Myrberg, 2015, p. 323). Gov

### *Criteria:*

"This quota also impacts the distribution of asylum centres to less populated areas with low shares of immigrants. It is applied to justify the remote location of centres: Since accepted refugees do not have access to bigger cities, it would not be feasible to open centres in 0-municipalities. In Hovedstaden, all 0-municipalities (Albertslund, Brøndby, Høje-Taastrup, Ishøj and Copenhagen) are in Greater Copenhagen. As a result, there is no asylum centre in or in the neighbouring municipalities and suburbs of Denmark's capital city. The closest centres to Copenhagen are Centre Kongelunden (10 km to the city centre) and Centre Sandholm (30 km to the city centre)... Neither asylum seekers nor refugees have the legal opportunity to live in bigger cities. In Hovedstaden, centres are predominantly located in former military bases and hospitals in forests 10–50 km away from larger urban settlements. Particularly, the location of centres in Bornholm is striking: Three shelters are located on the remote and sparsely populated isle of 39,756 inhabitants. One ferry connects Bornholm with the Danish mainland, taking approx. 5 h" (Kreichauf, 2020, p. 57).

### *Monitoring*

From 1980 to 1995 there were regional statistics for provinces (Wren, 2003, p. 62). The Ministry of the Interior records the number of foreign nationals by municipality (Wren, 2003, p. 73). The Danish authorities publish statistics on asylum seekers at the municipal level (e.g., Udlændingestyrelsen, 2024).

## **Estonia**

### *Bindingness*

The Asylum policy was established in 1997. The first refugee reception centre was opened in 2000. In 2005, the Estonian Act of Granting International Protection to Aliens (AGIPA), the main act regulating the asylum system, came into place in 2005. However, a national expert, Mariliis Trei, commented in an online interview on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 that the entire asylum system came to work only in 2015 (cf., Trei, 2023).

Asylum seekers live in one of two accommodation centres. Upon permission of authorities, individual accommodation based on asylum seeker's own means is possible (Trei, 2024). Resettled refugees (i.e., with a positive decision) were meant to be dispersed across regions in Estonia (Trei & Sarapuu, 2021). However, this policy did not work very well, because of discrimination on the housing market. Recognized refugees get a financial lump sum for settling into their own flat.

### *Sanctions*

There are incentives to live in reception centres due to benefits in-kind and financial advantages.

### *Governance*

Since 1997, asylum policy belongs under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior and partly to the Ministry of Social Affairs (Trei 2021, p. 12). The Ministry of Social Affairs together with the Estonian National Social Insurance Board is responsible for the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees (ibid.). The AS Hoolekandeteenused state-owned company is responsible for administrating the refugee reception centre since 2000 (Trei & Sarapuu, 2021). International organizations and NGOs are responsible for the every-day services but not for reception centres (Trei, n.d., p. 12).

### *Criteria*

Two reception centres existed in 2022/23. Since no formal procedure exists, informal criteria apply.

### *Monitoring*

According to a national expert, there are no public statistics on the spatial settlement of asylum seekers available (Trei, 2024).

## **Finland**

### *Bindingness*

During the asylum procedures, the asylum seekers can still opt out and stay with friends or family in private accommodation. However, it has to be near their administratively assigned reception centre and the Immigration Service Center for the purpose of asylum interviews (Wahlbeck, 2019, p. 20). As soon as being granted asylum, they are placed in a specific municipality. They, then, can choose to either live in the reception centre provided by the municipality or arrange their own private accommodation and report their residency to the respective local authority (Alho, 2021, p. 92; Lahdelma, 2023, p. 1233).

### *Sanctions*

“The protection seekers are not obligated to live in the reception centres and do not lose reception allowance if they live independently. However, they do not get paid for renting an apartment or managing their own accommodation. Even if they decide not to live in a reception centre, they must be registered as a client with a designated reception centre and show the staff a rental agreement or proof of living at a

specific address” (Koikkalainen et al., 2023, p. 30). These financial incentives correspond with earlier regulations (Meyer & Pfohman, 2004).

#### *Criteria*

“In Finland, there is no formal criteria for the distribution of asylum seekers across the national territory. The Finnish Immigration Service is responsible for the procedure, and a national data register on asylum seekers is, according to my interviews, a useful tool in the coordination. Yet, there is no fixed regional quota system and the legislation on reception does not provide criteria for the distribution” (Wahlbeck, 2019, p. 19). However, the concentration of everything in the capital of Helsinki is generally avoided (Wahlbeck, 2019, p. 20).

#### *Governance*

Reception centres for asylum seekers during their application procedure are governed by the central state through public tendering: “Currently, the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) arranges a public competitive tendering process for providing reception services. It was last carried out in 2022/23. To maintain healthy competition, a maximum of two districts were given to any one bidder. Services are provided by 23 different operators in different parts of Finland: 10 regional branches of the Finnish Red Cross, the cities of Kajaani, Kotka, Tampere, Vaasa, the municipality of Vöyri, seven companies, such as Kotokunta Oy, Luona Oy, and Medevida Oy, and a non-governmental organisation called Kuopion Settlementti Puijola” (Koikkalainen et al., 2023, p. 32). Only after a positive protection decision, municipalities can decide whether to sign agreements to take on refugees in the first place (Wahlbeck, 2019, p. 38).

#### *Monitoring*

Statistics of refugees by region and municipality, provided by Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration (n.d.).

## **France**

#### *Bindingness*

Every asylum seeker, except those under the accelerated or the Dublin procedure, is entitled to receive material reception. The material reception can be denied if asylum seekers don’t follow the dispersal decision by refusing to go to their designated region or by refusing their accommodation option (ECRE, 2023e, p. 96). As of December 2020, only 51% of asylum seekers with the right to receive material reception conditions were actually accommodated in reception centres, due to the lack of available places (ECRE, 2021a, p. 102). So far, this problem remains unsolved, even due to a slight decrease in non-accommodated asylum seekers. In 2021, 58% of asylum seekers were accommodated in reception facilities, while in 2022, this number reached 62% (ECRE, 2023e, p. 102). The lack of housing opportunities for eligible asylum seekers has led to the formation of informal camps, e.g., around Paris and Calais, and to homelessness among asylum seekers in other cities. The informal camps still seem to exist, despite the efforts to close them since 2015 (ECRE, 2023e, pp. 105–107). Furthermore, since a reform in 2018 on the dispersal mechanism, the allocation has to be followed even if the applicant is not offered a place in a reception centre, which means that “non-compliance with the requirement to reside in the assigned region entails a termination of reception conditions” (ECRE, 2023e, p. 101). However, following a new reception scheme of 2021, the Ministry of Interior has ensured that the assignment to a region is only applicable if accommodation can be provided. In 2021 and 2022, this commitment was followed in practice (ECRE, 2023e, p. 101).

#### *Sanctions*

According to an amendment in 2018 of the Ceseda, the material reception conditions can be reduced or withdrawn if the asylum seekers does not present himself before relevant authorities (ECRE, 2023e, p. 99).

The decision to reduce or withdraw reception conditions can be made by OFII. The decision of the refusal of material conditions must be motivated. Since 2019, this also applies for the decision of withdrawal. (ECRE, 2023e, p. 100). In some cases, the prefectures reduce the reception conditions systematically, while other cities don't allow material reception in the case of subsequent applications (ECRE, 2023e, p. 100). Since March 2019, asylum seekers are only allowed to participate in the labour market if the OFPRA has not decided about the application after 6 months from the application date (ECRE, 2023e, p. 110).

### *Governance*

OFII is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers after they are registered by the prefectures, which includes the dispersal decision (ECRE, 2023e, p. 102). Furthermore, the asylum claim is sent to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (Office français de protection des réfugiés et des apatrides — OFPRA). After the asylum claim is sent to the OFPRA the payment of financial allowance starts (ECRE, 2023e, p. 95).

In general, there are 3 different types of reception facilities (ECRE, 2023e, p. 102):

- CADA: Accommodation centres for asylum seekers in general and accelerated procedure (43,602 places in 2020; 46,632 in 2022)
- HUDA: Emergency accommodation centres for asylum seekers in Dublin procedure (51,826 places in 2020; 52,160 in 2022)
- CAES: Reception and administrative situation examination centres for transit purposes (3,136 places in 2020; 6,622 in 2022)

All reception centres are managed by subcontractors such as the semi-public-company Adoma or different NGOs. The funding is provided by the state, while the respective prefect is entrusted with the financial management (ECRE, 2023e, p. 102).

### *Criteria*

The Code on Entry and Residence of Foreigners and on Asylum (Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile – Céseda) provides a national reception scheme. This scheme regulates the dispersal of asylum seekers throughout the national territory. Following the national scheme, regional schemes implemented by the corresponding prefects regulate the dispersal within each region (ECRE, 2023e, p. 96). The decision made by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration – OFII) takes the vulnerability and the general situation of the asylum seeker into account. Furthermore, the dispersal decision is informal, which means it cannot be appealed (ECRE, 2023e, p. 101). This leads to the circumstance that, in practice, the most asylum seekers are accommodated in areas with the most reception capacity and not evenly throughout the country. A new scheme of applicable since January 2021 foresees a more equally distribution (ECRE, 2023e, p. 101).

### *Monitoring*

OFPRA publishes annual reports about their activity, including statistics on asylum applications by the most common nationality of asylum seekers (2001-2022) (OFPRA, n.d.). The OFII also annually provides reports about their activity, including asylum applications by the most common nationality and the dispersal throughout the different regions in France (2009-2020) (OFII, n.d.).

## **Germany**

### *Bindingness:*

Asylum seekers are not entitled to choose where to reside. Their permission to stay (Aufenthaltsgestattung) is restricted to the district where their reception centre is located. The freedom of movement restriction is obligatory. Asylum seekers are subject to a residency obligation ("Residenzpflicht") in the assigned administrative district also when they change to a private accommodation (ECRE, 2023f, 6, 120-126).

“However, Federal States have the possibility to extend this geographical restriction to the jurisdiction of other foreigners’ authorities or the area encompassing a whole Federal State, or even to another Federal State, provided that there is agreement between the concerned Federal States. Asylum seekers in Brandenburg, for example, have the freedom to move in all of Brandenburg and Berlin” (ECRE, 2023f, pp. 120–121). The residency obligation shall generally end after 3 months (Section 59a (1) Asylum Act) or after the obligation to stay in the initial reception centre ends. However, the latter has been extended for up to 18 months in 2019 (Engler et al., 2023, p. 23). The average duration of stay varies according to nationality and also the region where the reception centre is located (Classen, 2022).

#### *Sanctions:*

If asylum seekers leave the town or district in which their reception centre is located, it can lead to the rejection of their asylum application (ECRE, 2023f, p. 78). Moreover, there are restrictions for accessing the labour market, which is only possible after 3 months, when an asylum seeker left the initial reception centre. And also, asylum seekers cannot be self-employed (ECRE, 2023f). The law provides for a possibility of a reduction of material reception conditions.

#### *Governance:*

In Germany, the federal states are responsible for providing accommodation for asylum seekers by law (ECRE, 2023f). Germany has a very hierarchical dispersal mechanism (ECRE, 2023f). The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is responsible for the allocation of asylum seekers (ECRE, 2023f, p. 20).

#### *Criteria:*

In Germany, there is a fixed quota system based on the so-called Königstein Key and the countries of origin. Certain branch offices of the BAMF are responsible for certain countries of origin (ECRE, 2023f). “The allocation of the asylum seeker to a particular area is not a formal decision that can be legally challenged by the individual” (ECRE, 2023f, p. 122). Another placement decision is taken at the state level, allocating refugees to districts, most often according to a similar quota system.

#### *Monitoring:*

The BAMF publishes a monthly report on how many applications were lodged. It also gives specific information about how many asylum seekers are assigned to which district and reception centre.

## **Greece**

#### *Bindingness:*

Camps are the most common form of accommodation in Greece. “As of October 2020, [on the mainland] there were 5918 accommodation units in total with a capacity of more than 31,000 places. [...] There were also the RICs [Registration and Identification Centres] on the islands. It was estimated that the facilities on the islands hosted 42,000 people in February 2020, despite their limited capacity of 5400. ESTIA [Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation], offering urban accommodation, has benefited more than 64,600 people since its launch in January 2015, with 4604 apartments and 8 buildings in 21 cities in Greece.” (Blouchoutzi et al., 2022, p. 5). The hotspot approach of the EU was implemented in Greece beginning in 2015. “Five hotspots, under the legal form of First Reception Centres – now known as Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) – were established in Greece on Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, and Kos. In 2021, on Samos, Leros and Kos, the RICs were converted into ‘Closed Controlled Access Centres of Islands (CCAC)’. [...] It was initially planned that the five hotspot facilities would have a total capacity of 7,450 places. According to official data, however, their capacity had increased to 13,338 places by the end of 2020. The construction of the ‘Closed Controlled Access Centres of Islands (CCACI.)’ in 2021 further increased capacity to 15,934 places” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 39). “Following the issuance of the Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) on 7 June 2021, which designated Türkiye as a safe third country for

applicants from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, applications submitted by applicants of these nationalities on the islands and in the mainland, are examined under the safe third country concept. This was renewed by another Joint Ministerial Decision in February 2022. A fast-track border procedure is applied to applicants subject to the EU-Türkiye statement, i.e. applicants arriving [at] the islands of Eastern Aegean islands after 20 March 2016. This takes place in the Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) where hotspots are established (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos) and before the Rhodes RAO” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 28). Hence, these cases do not fall into the focal subject area of our research. Mainland “(open) Temporary Reception and Accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers and other legal ‘categories’ of displaced people, [were] established and operating mainly since 2016. The UNHCR, initially assisting the Greek government in setting them up, was in autumn 2018 replaced by the IOM in providing ‘site management support’, while several NGOs operate specific services within. Like island hotspots, most of these facilities are essentially camps. Originally built to respond to a situation labelled as ‘emergency’, hence their official designation as ‘temporary’, they are still in place five years on, even though their numbers have been fluctuating, as have those of their residents. In late May 2021, a population of 23,652 (with over 41 per cent of children) was dispersed in 31 camps across the mainland country. [...] Indicatively, about 12.6 per cent of camp residents reside in tents, rub halls, common areas or makeshift shelters, whilst 28 per cent did not have a shower in their accommodation unit, that being in most cases a container. Despite significant differences, most are located in isolated rural areas or at the outskirts of major urban centres [...]. The average distance of all sites from the nearest health facility is about 9, 4.4 km from a pharmacy, 12.6 km from a tax office and 6.4 km from a cash machine” (Papatzani et al., 2022, p. 4388). “According to the available statistics, 12,239 asylum seekers were accommodated in mainland camps (March 2022) and 4,371 asylum seekers remained in Reception and Identification Centres/Closed Controlled Access Centres on the islands. 1,843 applicants were accommodated in ESTIA accommodation scheme (urban apartments) in November 2022, but the scheme was terminated at the end of 2022” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 21).

Since the end of 2016 (and in a reformulated version from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020), “the geographical restriction on each asylum seeker who enters the Greek territory through the Eastern Aegean Islands is imposed automatically when the asylum application is lodged before the RAO of Lesvos, Rhodes, Samos, Leros, and Chios and the AAU of Kos. The applicant receives an asylum seeker’s card with a stamp on the card mentioning: ‘Restriction of movement on the island of [...]’. In case the applicant holds the new type of ‘smart card’, a separate category stating whether they are subject to the geographical restriction is included on the card (e.g. stating ‘Ανευ’ if no restriction is applied). No individual decision is issued for each asylum seeker” (ECRE, 2023g, 41; 154). The restriction on movement can be lifted for vulnerable groups and “persons whose applications can be reasonably considered to be well-founded” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 154). In general, the Head of the Asylum Service can still issue restriction of asylum seekers to a specific place, if it is deemed necessary for the swift procedures or for the purpose of public interest or public order. “Applicants who are subject to this type of restriction are provided with material reception conditions, as long as they reside within the place indicated and, in case of non-compliance, the provision of material reception conditions is interrupted in accordance with article 61 of the Asylum Code” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 152).

“People arriving through the [Greek-Turkish land border in] Evros ... are not subject to the EU-Türkiye statement. Therefore, they are not subjected to the fast-track border procedure and there is no geographical restriction imposed on them upon release. Persons entering Greece through [...] Evros are however subject to reception and identification procedures at the Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) in Fylakio, Orestiada, which was inaugurated in 2013. People transferred to the RIC in Fylakio are subject to a ‘restriction of freedom of movement’ applied as a de facto detention measure, meaning that they remain restricted within the premises of the RIC for the full 25-day period [after arrival]” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 50). Beyond the eastern islands, asylum seekers can reside in a reception centre or in private accommodation in Greece. All in all, there are 24 reception centres with 49,790 places and 10,363 places in private accommodations (ECRE, 2023g, p. 158).

#### *Sanctions:*

“Asylum seekers are entitled to reception conditions from the time they submit an asylum application and throughout the asylum procedure. [...] In case of status recognition, reception conditions are terminated

[...] within 30 days of the notification of the positive decision” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 152). However, due to delays in registration, continuing also after the introduction of an electronic registration platform in 2022, access to reception is delayed or factually denied (ECRE, 2023g, p. 152). Provision of material reception conditions is means-tested, i.e. it applies only to persons that are without employment or that earn less than the Minimum Guaranteed Income. “Material reception conditions may be provided in kind or in the form of financial allowances” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 147). Since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, “cash assistance is provided to those eligible [...], as long as it can be certified that they continue to reside in the facilities designated by the MoMA (i.e. facilities of the reception system). Applicants who are not accommodated in these facilities need to first apply, then be referred to and lastly placed to such accommodation, before the procedure for accessing the cash assistance can (re)start. In these cases, the application can only be made through actors that are registered on the special referral platform of the ESTIA program (e.g. NGOs), while referrals can only take place under the responsibility of the RIS” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 149).

In case of non-compliance with the assigned territory or accommodation or in case of non-compliance with reporting duty about personal information, new address, employment and so on, the provision of material reception conditions can be reduced or withdrawn (ECRE, 2023g, p. 151). Asylum seekers who fail to comply with the restrictions on movement can be detained (to get them back on their allocated island) and their asylum process can be interrupted (ECRE, 2023g, p. 157). Regular reporting practices also apply at open reception centres on the mainland. Not being present during the “population verification” procedure might result in losing the accommodation in the reception facility (Papatzani et al., 2022, p. 4394).

#### *Governance:*

The Head of the Asylum Service is responsible for the restriction of the movement of asylum seekers. The Asylum Service operates autonomous within the Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. The Reception and Identification Service under the Ministry of Migration and Asylum is the responsible authority for the reception of asylum seekers. Since the termination of the ESTIA accommodation scheme, Greece’s reception system became more camp-based (ECRE, 2023g, p. 144).

The construction of first reception centres on the islands is centrally governed: “On 19 August 2022, a Greek Council of State’s decision paved the way for the continued construction of a new EU-funded closed controlled access centre in a 71250 km<sup>2</sup> forest in Vastria on Lesbos island. However, an application for suspension by the North Aegean Region and by local communities (Komi and N. Kydonia), regarding the access road to the structure of Vastria was accepted by the Commission of Suspensions of the Greek Council of State in temporary decision 199/2022-19/12/2022. This prohibited any construction until the final judgment of the court on the application for its annulment, as it was considered that the construction of the road would lead to irreversible destruction of the forest and impact the rare birdlife of the protected area” (ECRE, 2023g, p. 40).

#### *Criteria:*

The EU-Türkiye statement established the criterion of restricting the freedom of movement of those arriving at the Greek islands (ECRE, 2023g). “In line with the interviews, our understanding is that the allocation of asylum seekers in Greece was a responsibility of the central government and did not follow a plan driven by specific criteria” (Blouchoutzi et al., 2022, p. 10).

#### *Monitoring:*

There are statistics provided by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum on the number of applicants per region/island (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, n.d.). There are also statistics about the occupancies in each reception facility made available by the International Organization of Migration (ECRE, 2023g, p. 161).

## **Hungary**

#### *Bindingness*

Hungary once had a small but fairly well-functioning reception system. This was basically dismantled between 2013 and 2020 (Segarra, 2023; Nagy, 2018). “From March 2017 until 21 May 2020 the main form

of reception had been detention, carried out in the transit zones” (ECRE, 2022d, p. 73). Towards the end of 2020, all the asylum seekers who had been detained previously in transit zones, were then transferred to open reception facilities (ECRE, 2022d, p. 73). Currently, registered asylum seekers are hosted in an open reception facility, but there is no formal restriction to private accommodation. “Asylum seekers who are not detained can move freely within the country but may only leave the reception centre where they are accommodated for less than 24 hours unless they notify the authorities in writing about their intention to leave the facility for more than that” (ECRE, 2022d, p. 77). There is law restricting the right to arrange private accommodations in case of crisis due to mass migration (ECRE, 2022d, p. 77). However, “[u]nder the current rules set out in the Transitional Act, the special rules imposed on by a state of crisis due to mass migration are not applicable, i.e. there is no restriction with regard to private accommodation” (ECRE, 2022d, pp. 77–78). “All in all, due to the low number of asylum seekers, the role of open reception centres remained limited in the Hungarian asylum system” (ECRE, 2022d, p. 73). “At the end of 2020, there were only 6 asylum seekers residing in open facilities [...]. [At] the end of 2021, a total of 5 asylum seekers were accommodated in Balassagyarmat (Vámoszabadi was empty)” (ECRE, 2022d, p. 77).

### *Sanctions*

“Only those asylum seekers who are deemed destitute are entitled to material reception conditions free of charge [... considering] the financial situation of their spouse and direct relative, he or she does not have an asset in Hungary providing for their living, and their total income does not surpass the minimum amount of old age pension. If an asylum seeker is not destitute, the determining authority may decide to order that the applicant pays for the full or partial costs of material conditions and health care” (ECRE, 2022d, p. 74). According to the Asylum Act of 2007, asylum seekers are allowed to participate in the labour market after a period of 9 months after applying for asylum and if the vacancy cannot be filled by Hungarians or people from the European Economic Area (ECRE, 2022d, p. 82). The Asylum Act of 2017 provides several penalties for asylum seekers. If an asylum seeker leaves their designated territory of accommodation for at least 15 days, they can be sanctioned (Section 30 Asylum Act). However, due the proclaimed “state of crisis due to mass migration” this rule has not applied since March 9, 2016 (ECRE, 2022d, p. 73). There are no restrictions of freedom of movement for recognized refugees (ECRE, 2022d, p. 125).

### *Governance*

Until July 1, 2019, the Asylum and Immigration Office (Bevándorlási és Menekültügyi Hivatal – IAO) was responsible for dispersal, accommodation, and the provision of basic care for asylum seekers. Since then, the National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing (Országos Idegenrendészeti Főigazgatóság — LDAP), which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, took over the responsibility (ECRE, 2022d, p. 19). As per the Asylum Decree of 2007, all reception facilities are under the jurisdiction of the asylum authority and thus – since 2019 – under control of LDAP (ECRE, 2022d, p. 80).

### *Criteria*

There is no specified dispersal scheme, but Hungary allocates asylum applicants according to the procedure they are in to one of two reception centres that operated in 2022 (in Vámoszabadi and Balassagyarmat) (Segarra, 2023). “[A]s a general rule, recognized persons and [registered] applicants are accommodated in the reception centre [Vámoszabadi] and those under aliens’ proceedings are placed in the community shelter [Balassagyarmat]” (ECRE, 2022d, p. 79). In Fót, close to Budapest, there is a centre for unaccompanied minors (ECRE, 2022d, p. 79).

### *Monitoring*

Until the NDGAP became the asylum authority in 2020, the IAO released statistical reports on asylum-seeking persons on a nationwide level. Since 2020 the NDGAP releases the reports. The reports do not include information about the dispersal of asylum seekers within the country (National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing, 2022).

## **Ireland**

### *Bindingness*

According to the Reception Conditions Regulation of 2018, every person with an “intention to seek asylum” and insufficient resources is granted the access to reception conditions, which includes accommodation (ECRE, 2023h, p. 85). However, material reception is only available for asylum seekers at the designated reception centre assigned by the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76), and if they obey the house rules (ECRE, 2023h, p. 86). However, applicants for asylum are allowed to live outside the Direct Provision by e.g., renting their own flat or living with friends or relatives. In this case, they are excluded from any form of material reception and financial allowance, except healthcare. In the case of asylum seekers with special reception needs and if the accommodation capacity is exhausted, an exception to this regulation can be made (ECRE, 2023h, p. 87). Nevertheless, since September 2018, the Direct Provision program reached its capacity, resulting in the creation of temporary, so-called emergency accommodations in hotels and other holiday homes (ECRE, 2021d, p. 63). In 2022, still due to limits of capacity, tent style accommodation and other forms like sport halls, conference rooms etc. were introduced as emergency accommodation for asylum seekers (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76). This problem remains unsolved, resulting in, as of March 2023, no state-provided accommodation for 408 asylum seekers at all (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76). As of September 2020, there were 44 regular reception centres and 36 emergency accommodation locations with a capacity of 6,937, and 2,059, respectively, available (ECRE, 2021d, p. 80). In January 2022, it's been 46 reception centres with 19,700 places and 79 emergency accommodation locations with 12,264 places (ECRE, 2023h, p. 97). Most of them are state-owned.

### *Sanctions*

As mentioned, material reception conditions are only available at the designated reception facility provided by the IPAS (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76). The Irish Refugee Council reports cases where the material reception was withdrawn after asylum seekers have been absent for more than one night in their designated reception centre to visit friends/family or for purpose of work (ECRE, 2023h, p. 92). Access to the labour market for asylum seekers was totally forbidden before July to 2018. After a Supreme Court decision, this ban “was struck down as unconstitutional” (ECRE, 2023h, p. 111). Since then, and according to the Reception Conditions Regulations, applicants for asylum are allowed to work after a period of 6 months, if no first-instance decision has been made to this point after applying for asylum. Nevertheless, the permission to work still prohibits asylum seekers from working in public bodies (ECRE, 2023h, p. 112).

### *Governance*

The International Protection Office (IPO) under the Department of Justice and Equality is responsible for registering asylum seekers and making first-instance decisions (ECRE, 2023h, p. 25), while the IPAS, a subdivision of the Department of Justice and Equality, is responsible for accommodating asylum seekers and thus for the dispersal throughout the different reception facilities (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76; EASO, 2022, p. 16). Since 2000, the system of “Direct Provision” regulates the reception conditions for “persons in the international protection application process”. Since then, asylum seekers are no longer entitled to benefit from the regular welfare system. Instead, the provision of basic needs is fulfilled with a largely cash-less system, the Direct Provision (ECRE, 2023h, p. 86).

### *Criteria*

Arriving asylum seekers are accommodated in the Balsekin reception centre in Dublin for a period of 4–8 weeks before being sent to their designated reception centre. The decision is based on availability of places throughout the reception centres (EASO, 2022, p. 16) by the IPAS (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76). As of October 2019, most of the reception centres are mixed centres, while 7 centres are designated male-only, and 1 is a female only centre (ECRE, 2023h, p. 76).

### *Monitoring*

The IPO publishes monthly statistics on asylum applications by nationality at the national level (2017-2023) (IPO, 2023). The Immigration Service Delivery provides data about the number of asylum applications at the national level and publishes them via Eurostat (Eurostat, 2023).

## **Italy**

### *Bindingness*

“Italian legislation does not foresee a general limitation on the freedom of movement of asylum seekers. Nevertheless, the law specifies that the competent Prefect may limit the freedom of movement of asylum seekers, delimiting a specific place of residence or a geographic area where asylum seekers may circulate freely” (ECRE, 2021e, p. 128). The Italian asylum system requires the asylum seekers to arrange their own private accommodation in case of sufficient material resources. The access to reception facilities is reserved only for asylum seekers deemed destitute (ECRE, 2021e, p. 117). In fact, “in 2021, many asylum seekers accommodated in CAS [emergency reception centres] were subjected to a withdrawal of reception measures, with requests for [considerable] reimbursements [based on] presumed sufficient economic resources” (ECRE, 2021e, p. 112). Once destitute asylum seekers request access to the reception centre, they no longer have a choice in the location or destination (UNHCR, 2023).

The existing reception system in Italy is designed along two major stages: At the initial stage of asylum reception, first aid and identification operations, take place in First Aid and Reception Centres (CPSA), also called hotspots. Once their application is lodged, they are transferred to governmental first reception centres or – in case of place unavailability – temporary accommodation facilities (CAS) and stay until a decision is reached. When they are granted refugee status, they are then transferred to a secondary reception centre SPRAR (ordinary reception centres) facilities, now relabelled as S.A.I. facilities, where the integration programs take place (ECRE, 2023i, p. 117; Giannetto et al., 2019, p. 21). People can stay in SPRAR centres for six months, which may be extended for a further six months on an ad-hoc basis (Giannetto et al., 2019, p. 21). In general, during the stay in reception centres, temporary leave must be authorized by the authority. There are different curfews and different time limits to exit and re-enter for each reception facility, which are all laid down in a contract and made known to the asylum seekers at the beginning of the accommodation period (ECRE, 2021e, p. 129).

### *Sanctions*

Material reception conditions can be withdrawn if the asylum seeker doesn't present themselves at the assigned centre or left without notifying the authority; or if they have committed a serious violation or continuous violation of house rules (ECRE, 2021e, p. 122). In case of sufficient material possession, asylum seekers are also cut off from the reception system, and can be requested reimbursement if they have been accommodated at such facilities (ECRE, 2021e, p. 125).

### *Governance*

The asylum system regime in Italy has been described as a “multi-level governance” (Campomori & Ambrosini, 2020; Giannetto et al., 2019). The Italian system consists of different types of reception centres for different purposes, which are managed and run by different actors. “A preliminary phase is related to identification and assistance, which is conducted at major disembarkation sites (‘hotspots’) and major governmental centres such as CARA (Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo). Secondary reception is carried out by the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), which was put in place in 2002 following the first refugee inflows. A main feature of this system is that it is set up and managed upon the decision of municipality administrations (LAU-2 administrative units). Thus, the SPRAR system is run by local authorities on a voluntary basis and is not for profit. It is funded by the national government through money channelled to local municipalities and provides reception services such as language courses, psychological care, training, and labour market integration programs. The SPRAR system is often singled out for its small-scale organization, aimed at refugee integration at the local level. Yet, since municipalities' political orientation and administrator's capacity determine the presence and distribution of

SPRAR reception centres across the country, at the height of the Refugee Crisis (2014–2015) in December 2014, only 433 out of around 8,000 municipalities were hosting a SPRAR project (and only 700 in 2017). This proved to be insufficient to manage the unprecedented inflow of asylum seekers that began in 2014. Hence, a third (parallel) track of (second stage) reception centres was set up on a 'extraordinary' basis. These Temporary Reception centres (Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria — CAS) were created to deal with the lack of capacity of the existing reception centres and quickly replaced both SPRAR and CARA as the go-to system for the new government. [...]" (Campo et al., 2020, p. 8).

While the SPRAR facilities, now S.A.I., are set up and managed by the municipal authority (Campo et al., 2020, p. 3), the CAS system is run directly by the state authority through the local office Prefecture in the region. The CAS system was first introduced in 2014 to cope with the asylum seekers influx (Acocella & Turchi, 2020, p. 76) and can only host asylum seekers, while the S.A.I. facilities can host both asylum seekers and people granted refuge (Acocella & Turchi, 2020, p. 82). There is also a legislation which makes it possible to set up new CAS facilities, if there are insufficient places in the S.A.I. facilities (Acocella & Turchi, 2020, p. 77), and in principle the local authorities cannot block the settlement of CAS facilities in their territory (Campomori & Ambrosini, 2020, p. 4). In addition to it, there are also reception facilities run by the church or private voluntary associations functioning as alternatives to the S.A.I. facilities (ECRE, 2021e, p. 134). In 2018, the Salvini "decree drastically reduced the economic incentives for local governments to activate a SPRAR. First, it cut monetary allowances for governmental reception centres, from €35 to a little more than €20 per capita per diem, favouring large-scale economies of CAS. More interestingly, the dismantling policy also included more subtle design strategies, mostly aiming to at least partially appease actors supporting the liberal regime. In this sense, the decree did not erase the SPRAR (as threatened), but it downsized the system (rebranding it SIPROIMI). These centres could no longer host asylum seekers, only individuals who either enjoyed international protection or were unaccompanied minors" (Di Giulio & Gianfreda, 2023, p. 2902).

"The allocation of [CAS] centres within the provincial territory is coordinated by local Prefectures, which open public bids that are eventually assigned to cooperatives, NGOs or private operators based on the quality of the project and the tender cost schemes. The location of refugee centres is proposed and decided by economic operators, without consultation with local municipality administrations. Within the terms of the law, procurement calls remain open for 35 days, even less if a case of urgency is made. At the height of the crisis, the vast majority of procurement calls were set up with the 'competitive open procedure' (i.e. any interested operator may submit an offer in response to a summons for bid) and unfilled bidding is less than 2% [...]. This Dispersal Policy aimed to reduce the concentration of asylum seekers and refugees in urban and disembarkation areas, as well as share the "costs" of reception and hospitality through a gradual and sustainable distribution of asylum seekers across the whole national territory. However, a critical point of the CAS system is that, unlike SPRAR, its 'temporary' and the private nature does not aspire to ensure the provision of integrated refugee reception services such as psychological support, training and job market integration. Thus, while CAS ended up being geographically dispersed, they provide fewer integration services than the ordinary system, such that very few asylum seekers in CAS can participate in the labor market, for example" (Campo et al., 2020, p. 11).

As one example for the governance of the CAS facilities, according to the interviewees in Veneto, "the Prefectures [are] the main actor involved in decision-making and implementation of asylum seekers reception at the local level. The Prefecture of Venice is in charge of the redistribution across the region of the quota of asylum seekers assigned by the Ministry of Interior. Each Prefecture of the region (Belluno, Padova, Rovigo, Treviso, Venezia, Verona, Vicenza) is then in charge of distributing the assigned asylum seekers across the province of competence, i.e., in the various municipalities. In light of the local administrations' attitude described above, the Prefectures (upon the Ministry's request) had to establish numerous CAS in order to accommodate the increasing number of asylum seekers. The management of CAS was assigned through a public bid to non-institutional actors (both for-profit and non-profit)" (Giannetto et al., 2019, p. 31).

### *Criteria*

The quota system in Italy is applied to the CAS facilities, which were created as temporary reception centres in order to cope with the refugee influx. On the other hand, the SPRAR centres – that have been renamed — are facilities locally run by municipalities with extended functions such as provision of integration programs. In December 2016, the “Bari Agreement” was issued, signed by ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) and the Ministry of Interior, establishing a specific quota of refugees per municipality for the CAS facilities. In addition, a “safeguard clause” exempts the municipalities with existing reception facilities that have met already the above ratio from setting up new temporary reception centres (CAS) (Campo et al., 2020, p. 3; ECRE, 2023i, p. 142; Giannetto et al., 2019, pp. 16–17).

“Each year in the period of 2014–2018 CAS centres hosted around 75 per cent of asylum seekers in Italy [...]. CAS is a private-enterprise system financially supported by the national government, but run by private stakeholders who provide services (food and accommodation) for refugees and migrants. Some CAS are housed in former group accommodation buildings, but the vast majority are divided across networks of private apartments. The number of asylum seekers is centrally allocated to province-based Italian Prefectures according to the “Allotment Plan” (Piano Nazionale di Riparto), which sets the number of asylum seekers as a proportion of the provincial resident population (i.e. about 2,5 out of 1,000 inhabitants)” (Campo et al., 2020, p. 9). “Asylum seekers can be placed in centres all over the territory, depending on the availability of places and based on criteria, providing about 2.5 accommodated asylum seekers per thousand inhabitants in each region. The placement in a reception centre is not done through a formal decision and is therefore not appealable by the applicant” (ECRE, 2021e, p. 128). Despite the quota, “the distribution of asylum seekers and protection holders in Italy remains highly imbalanced between regions” (ECRE, 2023i, p. 145).

### *Monitoring*

There are statistics about the number of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection by region, provided by Ministry of Interior (ECRE, 2021e, p. 128).

## **Latvia**

### *Bindingness:*

If asylum seekers cannot pay for a facility on their own, they are accommodated at a reception centre, 17 km from Riga (OCMA, 2020, p. 13). The Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers is a Collective facility for all applicants in Mucenikei, Ropaži, Region (EASO, 2022, p. 17). Asylum seekers have the choice to opt out and live on their own.

### *Sanctions:*

Asylum seekers have to inform an employee if they want to leave the centre for more than 24 hours. If asylum seekers leave the centre without permission for longer than 48 hours, the employees of the centre have the right to suspend the daily payment for the time of absence (OCMA, 2020, p. 18).

### *Governance:*

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) is a state institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior in Latvia (OCMA, 2020/2023). It is responsible for the asylum policy and the accommodation of asylum seekers.

### *Criteria:*

If an asylum seeker has no sufficient means, he is accommodated in a public reception centre (OCMA, 2020, p. 13). The accommodation of asylum seekers depends on the number of persons to be admitted and the capacity of premises.

### *Monitoring:*

The OCMA collects information about the place of residence in the Register of Natural Persons (OCMA, n.d.). Asylum seekers inform the OCMA about their addresses, when they don't live in the centre, but there is no public data on the settlement pattern of asylum seekers (e-mail from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs on 22. Dec 2023).

## **Lithuania**

### *Bindingness*

The "Foreigners' Registration Centre (FRC) in Pabradė is the main institution accommodating asylum seekers during the examination of their application and third country nationals who came into the country illegally and thus were detained (in the separate building). The Foreigners' Registration Centre has accommodation for 92 asylum seekers. The Centre accommodates an average of 500-600 asylum seekers throughout the year. The average duration of their stay at the centre is 2 months. The daily subsistence cost for one individual is 60 LTL. The Ministry of the Interior and the State Border Guard Service (hereinafter the SBGS) under the Ministry of the Interior are responsible for the activities of the FRC" (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 3). The "Refugees Reception Centre (RRC) in Rukla accommodates unaccompanied minors seeking asylum and aliens who were granted asylum in Lithuania. [...] The Refugee Reception Centre as a social institution under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour" (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 3). In general, asylum seekers are required to stay in centres throughout their application procedures, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at the RRC and others at the FRC. Asylum seekers who have legally entered the country may arrange their own accommodation of their choice, if they have proved of sufficient financial means and been permitted by the Migration Department (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 6). In this case, they are cut off from material reception while having no rights to work (Lithuanian Red Cross [LRC], 2023a). In the case of accommodation in centres, asylum seekers cannot choose the location themselves and are assigned to different centres depending on the stage of application, e.g. border procedure or initial interviews (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 13; LRC, 2023b). "The Lithuanian legal framework guarantees the accommodation for all asylum seekers: both for those arrived legally and illegally. The law does not provide for the refusal to accommodate asylum seekers for the lack of places in the centres, or to evict individuals from the place of accommodation because of violations of local regulations or for other reasons. ... On the decision of the Migration Department, an asylum applicant may be permitted to reside in the place of his choice if the asylum applicant so desires, but that rarely happens" (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 3). Asylum seekers normally stay in the reception centre, but it seems to be allowed that they stay in a private accommodation, if they find one (because of discrimination, that seems impossible) (Popova, 2018, p. 112).

### *Sanctions:*

"Asylum seekers can reside in the place of their choice on the decision of the Migration department. In such case, they are" neither provided any services nor entitled to financial allowances (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 5). "Asylum seekers having legally arrived into the country and residing in the FRC are entitled to leave the Centre for 24 hours. Unaccompanied minors residing in the RRC may leave the Centre for 72 hours" (IOM & EMN, 2013, p. 6). Article 84 of Lithuania's Law on the Legal Status of Aliens stipulates that if an asylum seeker leaves a Foreigners' Registration Centre or Refugee Reception Centre without authorisation or fails to return within 24 hours, the examination of their asylum application may be suspended (Republic of Lithuania, 2008).

### *Governance:*

The state has "has full responsibility for the implementation and day-to-day running of reception facilities" (EMN, 2015, p. 15).

### *Criteria:*

All asylum seekers are allocated to the Registration Centre. The director of the centre decides on the provision of support for the integration of recognized refugees into the municipality's territory (Popova 2018, p. 109).

### *Monitoring:*

National statistics do not contain information on settlement structures of asylum seekers and refugees (e.g., Statistics Lithuania, 2017, 2023).

## **Luxembourg**

### *Bindingness*

There are different reception facilities for different stages of the asylum procedures. As of December 2022, there are 53 temporary accommodation structures (SHTDPI), two first-time reception centres (CPA) and one temporary reception centre (CAP), and additionally 11 accommodation facilities for people granted refuge (Ministry of Home Affairs Luxembourg, 2022, pp. 41–42). All asylum seekers have to be accommodated in CPA on arrival before they are transferred to SHTDPI based on place availability and allowed to stay there until the end of their procedures (Ministry of Home Affairs Luxembourg, 2020, p. 31). After the application procedure, “asylum seekers are brought to a shelter where they live during the asylum process. Asylum seekers are moved around in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg according to a system [of reception facilities]” (Glorius & Nienaber, 2022, p. 153).

After asylum seekers are approved for international protection, they can seek housing outside reception facilities (Glorius & Nienaber, 2022, p. 153). However, “as of the end of 2021, 44.4% of the residents in the national temporary reception facilities, meant to host only asylum seekers during their application period, were migrants who had already successfully concluded the process, and thus held a valid resident permit for Luxembourg, but were unable to move out due to the difficult housing conditions in the country” (Gilodi et al., 2023, p. 6). This suggests that there is no movement restriction for people who have been granted refugee status and a valid resident permit (Gilodi et al., 2023, p. 11).

### *Sanctions*

No information is found that suggests an incentive to stay in the reception centres, nor negative sanctions. It is safe to assume that there is no sanction, as people with refugee status are expected to leave the reception centre but are still allowed to stay in the reception centres if they are unable to find a flat and as long as they pay rent for that (Gilodi et al., 2023, p. 11).

### *Governance*

As of late 2018, the Luxembourgish Reception and Integration Agency (OLAI) was the main actor and oversaw the coordination and implementation of reception measures for asylum seekers. “Local authorities could propose available facilities in which to set up a reception centre or offer land in which new facilities can be constructed. Besides that, they had no direct role in the provision of reception measures, and they were not directly involved in the management of reception” centres (Vianelli & Nienaber, 2024, p. 7; cf. Vianelli et al., 2019, p. 24). However, local authorities can still obstruct the operation of OLAI by being unwilling to cooperate with the state authority in setting up reception facilities, thus hindering the reception of asylum seekers into their local communities, as evident during the 2015 crisis (Vianelli & Nienaber, 2024, pp. 9–11). “In general, municipalities do not have a direct role in the reception system of asylum seekers, but can be indirectly involved to a certain degree. Their role becomes more direct once asylum seekers receive their status” (Glorius et al., 2019, p. 23).

### *Criteria*

Distribution of asylum seekers to temporary accommodation structures SHTDPI is done based on place availability (Ministry of Home Affairs Luxembourg, 2020, p. 31). “Luxembourg does not have a compulsory distribution system obliging municipalities to provide reception places for asylum seekers. The introduction of a compulsory distribution quota has long been discussed at an institutional level, but an agreement has never been reached, primarily because of the opposition of municipalities themselves” (Vianelli & Nienaber, 2024, p. 7).

### *Monitoring*

We found no regional or local statistics on settlement structures of asylum seekers, but there is information on the total number of people hosted in each type of reception centre (Ministry of Home Affairs Luxembourg, 2022, p. 41).

## **Malta**

### *Bindingness*

“Malta does not operate any dispersal scheme, since residence in open centres remains voluntary” (ECRE, 2023j, p. 89). In the case of living in reception centres: “[The] placement in a particular open centre generally implies a limited possibility to change centre, although such decisions could be taken on a case-by-case basis” (ECRE, 2023j, p. 89). “Asylum seekers residing in open centres enjoy freedom of movement around the island(s). All persons living in an open centre are required to regularly confirm residence through signing in three times per week. These signing procedures also confirm eligibility for the per diem [...] and to ensure the continued right to reside in the centre. Residents who are employed, and who, therefore, might be unable to sign three times a week, are not given the per diem for as long as they fail to sign” (ECRE, 2023j, p. 89). However, people can still be evicted from the centres, “due to the delays in processing asylum applications, individuals are usually evicted while they are still considered applicants for international protection holding only a three-month renewable asylum seeker document. This makes it difficult for them to find employment and accommodation” (ECRE, 2023j, p. 89). This implies that there is no bindingness for asylum seekers to stay in the assigned territory. Though, in case of moving out, they must still report to the authority about their residency status (cf. ECRE, 2023j, p. 87).

### *Sanctions*

“The Reception Regulations state that reception conditions may be withdrawn or reduced where the asylum seekers abandon their established place of residence without providing information or consent or where they do not comply with reporting duties, request to provide information, or to appear for personal interviews concerning the asylum procedure, and finally when an applicant has concealed financial resources and has therefore unduly benefited from material reception conditions” (ECRE, 2023j, p. 87).

### *Governance*

All 7 reception centres fall within the AWAS [Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers] reception system. 5 centres are also run by AWAS and 2 by NGOs (ECRE, 2023j, p. 90). The main reception facilities are in Hal Far and in Marsa. The Initial Reception Centre in Marsa is partly used as a closed reception centre for new arrived asylum seekers. No further information found about the specific governance regime among the involved actors, i.e. whether the NGOs or local hosting facility has the autonomy to deny reception.

### *Criteria*

“AWAS indicated that vulnerable applicants and UAMs [unaccompanied minor asylum seekers] are usually accommodated near the Administration Block of each centre [...] for them to have an easier access to the staff and services offered. Apart from the above considerations (age, family composition), there are no clear allocation criteria [based on] which persons are accommodated in specific centres” (ECRE, 2023j, p. 91).

### *Monitoring*

No regular statistics or statistics for dispersal of asylum seekers are published by the authorities (ECRE, 2023j, p. 8). But there is information on arrivals, asylum applications, decisions, and reception of asylum seekers published by the UNHCR.

## **Netherlands**

### *Bindingness*

“The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers – COA) is the authority responsible for the accommodation of asylum seekers and thus manages the reception centres. Asylum seekers who enter the Netherlands by land have to apply at the Central Reception Centre (Centraal Opvanglocatie, COL) in Ter Apel, where they should stay for a maximum of three days. The COL is not designed for a long stay. If applicants arrive during the weekend, they will have access to night reception until registration on the first working day. After this stay at the COL, the asylum seeker is transferred to a Process Reception Centre (Proces Opvanglocatie, POL). There are four POLs in the Netherlands: Ter Apel, Budel, Wageningen, and Gilze, totalling a capacity of 2,000 places. An asylum seeker remains in the POL if the IND [Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst] decides to examine the asylum application in the regular asylum procedure (within eight days). If protection is granted, the asylum seeker is transferred to a Centre for Asylum Seekers (Asielzoekerscentrum, AZC) before receiving housing in the Netherlands. If the IND decides to handle the application in the extended asylum procedure, the asylum seeker will also be transferred from the POL to an AZC. During the procedure, asylum seekers are housed in collective centres. There is no possibility of individual housing, provided by the state at this point” (ECRE, 2020b, p. 70). The extended procedure lasts 6 months as a rule (ECRE, 2020b, p. 6). Only asylum seekers in the “extended procedure” and recognized refugees are transferred to a more open accommodation centre, AZC, which allows them to go out but still enforces a weekly reporting duty (ECRE, 2020b, p. 76). “There is no appeal available against ‘procedural’ transfers (movements) from COL/POL to AZC” (ECRE, 2020b, p. 75). This indicates that asylum seekers are not allowed to opt out of the assigned accommodation throughout their asylum procedures (ECRE, 2020b, p. 70). After being granted asylum, they can still stay in AZC until (social) housing is available.

### *Sanctions*

Material receptions can be reduced or withdrawn if asylum seekers have left the (closed) reception centres without informing the authority or have failed to comply with reporting duties or failed to make appearance for procedural interviews, or have violated house rules (ECRE, 2020b, pp. 74–75).

### *Governance*

Reception centres are managed directly by the state authorities – The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers – COA) (ECRE, 2020b, p. 70). Municipalities have had the possibility to vote against the opening of reception centres on their territory. The reception centres themselves do not have a say regarding the number or the “types” of the asylum seekers they host..

### *Criteria*

There is a central dispersal mechanism managed by the central asylum agency COA (ECRE, 2020b, p. 75), however the specific criteria during the application stages are unclear. After being granted asylum, people can be arranged with social housing usually in the same region as their AZC or according to their needs – family, work, or study (Bakker et al., 2016, p. 121).

### *Monitoring*

Statistics on national level about asylum resettlement divided by nationality are provided by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (n.d.).

## Norway

### *Bindingness*

Asylum seekers are required to stay in asylum reception centres during the whole application process (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration [UDI], n.d.–c). Once their application is accepted, they will be moved from an arrival centre or transit centre to an ordinary reception centre, where they will stay until a final decision is made (UDI, n.d.–b). However, they can apply to move out of the reception centres and live with their close family members if they also live in the same municipality as the asylum seeker's assigned reception centres, or they can apply to move out if they have special needs that cannot be met in the ordinary centres, for example unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (UDI, n.d.–a).

### *Sanctions*

“Financial aids are provided for asylum seekers who stay in reception centres. People who live in private accommodation or alternative reception location are not eligible for this” (UDI, 2024). “On an everyday basis, people are free to come and go as they wish, but further institutional regulations include signing for presence at regular intervals (often weekly), and applying for permission to stay away from the center for longer than three nights, as well as mandatory participation in information meetings and language classes” (Thorshaug, 2019, p. 209).

### *Governance*

“It is a principle that reception centres are to be located all over the country” (Larsen, 2014, p. 4). “In many municipalities, the hosting of a reception centre is controversial and UDI has often experienced that municipalities find ways to delay and even obstruct the establishment of centres” (Larsen, 2014, p. 4). “NGOs, municipalities and private commercial actors are operators that run the centres based on a contract awarded [based on] a public tender. Included in the contract is the requirements specified in circulars issued by UDI. The same requirements apply to all operators” (Larsen, 2014, p. 9). “The Norwegian reception system is not regulated by any primary or secondary legislation; it is governed by requirements/instructions from UDI, and UDI controls their quality. Procurement of reception centres is subject to competition. As there is no regulation by law, potential providers compete [based on] instructions set by UDI. The contracts oblige the service providers to maintain the given quality for the price offered, and it obliges UDI to regular payments, guidance and training for the operator's staff. The contract gives UDI the right to inspect the service provided by the operators” (Larsen, 2014, p. 15). Larsen comments that this procedure is especially suitable for private providers. In August 2016, there were 240 Asylum Reception Centres active, 40% of which were located in peri-urban areas (Simonsen & Skjulhaug, 2019, p. 190). Public tenders allow the central government to expand supply if necessary (Hernes et al., 2023b, pp. 20–21).

### *Criteria*

While asylum seekers are waiting for their cases to be decided, they live in 96 reception centres (asylmottak) spread around the country. The time an asylum seeker spends in a reception center may vary from a few months to more than a year. The contracts to run reception centres are tendered out for open competitions on the private market, and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) maintains agreements with municipalities, voluntary organizations, and private operators (Larsen, 2014). “In allocating applicants to the different centres, UDI is considering: Capacity, Type of asylum procedure [...], Stage of asylum procedure (transit centre for Dublin examination; ordinary centres for other stages). In certain cases, nationality may be [considered] together with other factors. UDI is continuously updated on the number and type[s] of places available in all the centres nationwide, and does individual assessments and consider[s] family compositions, physical handicap, etc to allocate people to appropriate facilities. The decisions are often based on inputs from staff at transit centres, UDI, or guardians, etc. When special needs have been discovered, applicants are assigned to special facilities [...]. The process for assignment of applicants (and former applicants) to different reception facilities is not laid down in legislation, but is described in various soft law guidelines and follows established practices. The applicants cannot [themselves] choose a reception centre, and they can be moved from one centre to another based on consideration of optimal capacity

utilization as well as changes to the family profile (e.g. the birth of a child) and medical consideration [...] (Larsen, 2014, p. 12).

#### *Monitoring*

There are statistics about the number of people hosted in asylum reception centres by county and municipality, provided by the UDI (2020).

### **Poland**

#### *Bindingness*

Asylum seekers can choose to either live in a reception centre or to live privately and receive a financial support to do so (ECRE, 2023k, p. 54). “Despite that under the law accommodation in the reception centre is a rule, usually more asylum seekers choose to receive a financial allowance rather than stay in the centre”. However, the financial support is insufficient to cover all expenses or even to provide the satisfaction of basic needs (ECRE, 2023k, p. 54). This leads to the situation, where asylum seekers have to live in overcrowded apartments, where they share rooms or even beds (ECRE, 2023k, p. 60), for example, by renting substandard quality apartments with several families (Pachocka et al., 2020, pp. 57–58)

#### *Sanctions*

The Law on Protection foresees withholding of material reception conditions in case of absence in the reception centres for more than two days until the reappearance of the asylum seeker (ECRE, 2023k, p. 61). An exception to this rule can be made by a prior notification of absence in the centre (ECRE, 2023k, p. 63). Asylum seekers have the right to work after a period of 6 months after the asylum application has been made, and a final decision for international protection has not been made. In practice, many asylum seekers often do not exercise their right to work because either the final decision is made before the end of six months, or due to the lack of knowledge about this regulation by employers (ECRE, 2023k, p. 67).

#### *Governance*

Responsible for the reception of asylum seekers in Poland is the Office for Foreigners (UdSC) under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior and Administration (ECRE, 2023k, p. 54; Łukasiewicz et al., 2023, p. 21). Asylum seekers have the right to receive material conditions in every kind of procedure. However, material reception conditions are granted after registering in the reception centre, not from the moment of the asylum application (ECRE, 2023k, p. 54). The responsibility for operating the reception centres lies by the UdSC. But it can delegate the operation to private contractors like companies or social organizations. As of 2020, 6 out of 10 reception centres are managed by private actors (ECRE, 2021c, p. 46). As of the end of 2020, 10 reception centres with a total capacity of 1,962 places and an occupation of 819 were operated (ECRE, 2021c, p. 55). Until the end of 2022, only 9 reception centres with a total capacity of 1,714 places and an occupation of 732 were still operated (ECRE, 2023k, pp. 62–63).

#### *Criteria*

The decision of where an asylum seeker will be accommodated is made by the Office for Foreigners (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców — UdSC). Family ties are usually considered. Furthermore, the decision is based on vulnerabilities, medical needs, and the capacity of the reception centres. By law, a relocation can be made for organizational reasons. Usually, this takes place when an asylum seeker moves from a first-reception centre to the final accommodation centre (ECRE, 2023k, p. 62)

#### *Monitoring*

The Office for Foreigners collects data about asylum seekers by their nationality and publishes it in quarterly and yearly reports (UdSC, n.d.). The statistical office of Poland does not provide statistics on asylum (Statistics Poland, 2023).

## Portugal

### *Bindingness*

The dispersal decision is made by the Single Operation Group (Grupo Operativo Único — SOG) (ECRE, 2021f, p. 109). This dispersal decision has is not a subject of onward dispersal decisions (ECRE, 2021f, p. 118), with one exception: Asylum seekers may request a review of the dispersal decision if accommodation, education, employment or health-related grounds justify an exception (ECRE, 2021f, p. 117). In general, all asylum seekers with insufficient resources are entitled to receive material conditions, such as housing (ECRE, 2021f, p. 107). The Institute of Social Security (Instituto da Segurança Social — ISS) provides private housing in different parts of the country, while the Portuguese Refugee Council (Conselho Português para os Refugiados – CPR) not only private accommodation but also operates two reception centres. One primarily for adults and families with children and one for unaccompanied children (ECRE, 2021f, pp. 107–108).

Private accommodation is the most common type of housing with 66.9% in 2021, while 4.2% of asylum seekers stay with friends or family (ECRE, 2021f, p. 119). Despite the dispersal system, there are no specific restrictions of movements within the territory of Portugal, but asylum seekers need to inform the Immigration and Borders Service (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras – SEF) of their place of residence (ECRE, 2021f, p. 116). This leads to challenges in the implementation of the dispersal system according to the Statistical Report of Asylum. Asylum seekers tend to move to the Lisbon Area rather than stay in their assigned area (ECRE, 2021f, p. 118).

### *Sanctions*

Generally, asylum seekers do not face any restriction on the freedom of movement, but they are required to keep the SEF informed about their place of residence (ECRE, 2021f, p. 116). According to the Asylum Act of 2008, material receptions, including housing, can be reduced or withdrawn in case of abandoning the place of residence or the determined place of residence without informing the SEF or the organization involved in organizing the reception conditions or “failing to comply with reporting duties” (ECRE, 2021f, p. 114). “Reception conditions reduced or withdrawn pursuant to grounds [...] above can be reinstated if the asylum seeker is found or presents him/herself to the authorities”. However, there is no clear data on whether there were cases of reduction or withdraw for violating the reporting rule (ECRE, 2021f, p. 115). According to the asylum act, asylum seekers are allowed to participate in the labour market after 7 to 30 days, depending on the type of application, when application is in the regular procedure (ECRE, 2021f, p. 124).

### *Governance*

According to the Asylum Act, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Ministério da Administração Interna – MAI) is responsible for providing material reception for asylum seekers in the admissibility procedure, subsequent applications and denied applications, while the Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security is responsible for all asylum seekers in the regular procedure. The Asylum Act defines housing as a part of the material reception. Furthermore, housing is defined as follows: “(a) housing declared as equivalent to reception centres for asylum seekers in the case of border applications; (b) installation centres for asylum seekers or other types of housing declared equivalent to installation centres for asylum seekers that offer adequate living conditions; and (c) private houses, apartments, hotels, or other forms of housing adapted to accommodate asylum seekers” (ECRE, 2021f, p. 111). The Asylum Act also allows the authorities to cooperate with governmental and non-governmental organizations in this matter (ECRE, 2021f, p. 108). In practice, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is the framework for providing the services mentioned above. This framework primarily consists of MoUs between the SEF and CPR, the ISS and CPR and the ISS and Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML). However, in 2020, a resolution of the Council of Ministers was issued to implement a single system of reception and integration as well as a Single Operative Group (SOG), which consists of the organizations mentioned above (ECRE, 2021f, p. 108). In fact, the ISS decides on the material reception conditions for asylum seekers in the regular procedure, while the SCML does the same for asylum seekers at the appeal stage (ECRE, 2021f, p. 111). According to the Asylum Act, the SEF with its Asylum and Refugees Department (Gabinete de Asilo e Refugiados — GAR) is responsible for examining applications of asylum

seekers and first-instance decisions (ECRE, 2021f, p. 29). However, the dispersal decision is made by the SOG (ECRE, 2021f, p. 118).

#### *Criteria*

A social monitoring subgroup of the SOC regularly discusses individual cases concerning the individual monitoring report of asylum seekers and the existing nationwide reception capacity, which can result in dispersal decision (ECRE, 2021f, p. 116). According to the Asylum Act of 2008, only asylum seekers with a lack of resources have to right to receive material reception. However, in practice, most asylum seekers “have benefited from the provision of material reception conditions” (ECRE, 2021f, p. 110).

#### *Monitoring*

Annually, statistics on the dispersal of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection is provided by the SEF (SEF, 2023). Furthermore, the Migration Observatory (Observatório das Migrações) has published a yearly, detailed statistical report about migration issues between 2020 and 2023 (Observatório das Migrações, n.d.), including information on a regional level (e.g. Observatório das Migrações, 2021, p. 135).

### **Romania**

#### *Bindingness*

The dispersal of asylum seekers is coordinated by the General Inspectorate for Immigration through its Directorate for Asylum and Integration (Inspectoratul General Pentru Imigrări — Direcția Azil și Integrare — IGI-DAI), which is responsible for the asylum procedure, such as the basic care for asylum seekers (ECRE, 2022a, p. 17). The asylum seekers are sent to one of the 6 regional centres. The decision by the IGI-DAI cannot be appealed (ECRE, 2022a, p. 108). If desired, asylum seekers may request to stay in private accommodation at their own cost. (ECRE, 2022a, p. 110). In the case of accommodation capacity in regional centres being exceeded, asylum seekers have the right to receive a financial substitution of €100 per month to rent a private accommodation (Vasile & Androniceanu, 2018, p. 11). However, the latter does not seem to apply in practice. As of January 2022, only 501 out of 751 available places in the regional reception centres were occupied (ECRE, 2022a, p. 110).

#### *Sanctions*

According to the Asylum Act of 2006, asylum seekers are only allowed to leave their place of residence with authorization from IGI-DAI and for a maximum of 72 hours (ECRE, 2022a, p. 108). According to the Asylum Decree of 2006, the IGI-DAI can reduce or withdraw the material receptions for the asylum seekers (ECRE, 2022a, p. 106). According to the Asylum Act of 2006, asylum seekers are allowed to participate in the labour market 3 months after applying for asylum. If the applicants already work in Romania at the time of applying for asylum, they are allowed to continue to work (ECRE, 2022a, p. 116).

#### *Governance*

As mentioned, the IGI-DAI has been responsible for the asylum procedure, at the national level, since 2007 (ECRE, 2022a, p. 17). The IGI-DAI manages and operates 6 regional centres for accommodation of asylum seekers by itself. Therefore, the IGI-DAI has territorial offices which manage the reception facility of the respective county (ECRE, 2022a, p. 110; Bejan, 2020, p. 8). Besides the IGI-DAI regional centres, the NGO AIDRom is operating two centres for vulnerable groups (ECRE, 2022a, p. 110).

#### *Criteria*

The IGI-DAI allocates the asylum seekers to the regional centres through a dispersal scheme (ECRE, 2022a, p. 108). However, no information on the criteria of the scheme and the procedure are publicly available. “Management of asylum seekers in centres is partly based on mobilities that are decided and organised by the administration [...]. [N]ewcomers are distributed according to the administrative needs, and solely on

this basis. In interviews, the police hierarchy first and foremost emphasises the primacy of the territorial criterion emphasises the primacy of the territorial criterion – there is a distribution map for asylum seekers in the accommodation centres. However, other considerations seem to prevail; foreigners are distributed according to practical criteria – the availability of places in the centres, but also according to political criteria: they are grouped by nationality or groups of alleged ethnic, cultural or religious proximity” (Michalon, 2017, p. 65).

### *Monitoring*

No statistical data on the place of residence of asylum seekers are available. At the time of writing, neither the IGI-DAI nor the National Institute of Statistics provide sufficient data available (National Institute of Statistics, 2023; IGI-DAI, 2023).

## **Serbia**

### *Bindingness*

“The asylum system was introduced in Serbia with the adoption of the Law on asylum in 2007, which came into force on 1 April 2008” (Krstić, 2019, p. 160). Once foreigners within the territory of Serbia express their intention to lodge an asylum application (e.g. to a police officer), they will go through initial identification procedures and have a registration certificate issued (ECRE, 2023l, p. 72). This registration certificate is not considered a part of the asylum application, and an individual in possession of this certificate is not yet considered as an asylum seeker, “but a person who intends to become one” (ECRE, 2023l, p. 73). After they have received the certificate, they are obliged to report to their designated asylum center or reception center within 72 hours and continue with lodging [an] asylum application, which then grants them [the] status of asylum seeker. After being granted asylum seeker status, they may choose to arrange their own private accommodation at their own cost “exclusively with prior consent of the Asylum Office” (ECRE, 2023l, p. 153). Serbia allows immigrants who expressed the intention to apply for asylum to stay in refugee camps (Galijaš, 2019).

“Article 49 of [the] Asylum Act provides that [an] asylum seeker [is entitled] to reside in the Republic of Serbia, and during that time enjoys freedom of movement throughout the country, unless there exist special grounds for the restriction of movement” (ECRE, 2021g, p. 122).

“Asylum Centres are open and accommodated asylum seekers have the right to leave the centre, although the obligation remains to be present for the daily roll call every evening in order for the centre’s authorities to ascertain that the person in question is still present. If they fail to report, in practice they could be removed from the list and treated as irregular migrants in the future. As ID cards are issued solely to foreigners who have lodged their asylum application, the rest of the people who do not enjoy the status of an asylum seeker may have trouble with the authorities should they be found outside of the Asylum Centre without any documents” (ECRE, 2021g, p. 122).

### *Sanctions:*

“Asylum seekers staying in centres have the right to material reception conditions including accommodation, food, clothing and a cash allowance [independent of income]. The new Asylum Act introduced in 2018 the possibility of a cash allowance for personal needs. However, cash allowance has rarely been granted according to the author’s knowledge, and such practice was reported by beneficiaries of AC in Krnjača in 2022 several times. They outlined that cash assistance of around 4,000 dinars (34 EUR) was monthly provided to families and vulnerable applicants, who are usually applicants who have serious medical conditions. [...] Persons seeking asylum and accommodated at an Asylum Centre or a reception centre [are not entitled] to access social welfare. This remains a possibility for persons staying in private accommodation. Social assistance in these cases shall take the form of a monthly cash allowance provided that the person is not accommodated in an Asylum or Reception Centre and that they and the members of their family have no other income, or that this income is below the legally prescribed threshold for establishment of the amount of social allowance” (ECRE, 2023l, p. 153).

“The most frequently cited rule during interviews with former and current camp residents as the camp’s curfew. Nearly everyone shared an experience of needing to hurry back to the camp to meet curfew, or having to negotiate entry following a missed curfew. During a recent visit in August 2022, this rule was visibly posted on the outside gates of the camp (see Figure 3), and throughout various sign postings within the barracks. One sign in the barracks was posted in French and English and stated: ‘Dear users, We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the house rules are from 10 pm (22:00h) to 7 am, in that period it is not allowed to enter and leave the Center. We emphasize that it is also not allowed to consume alcohol/ and narcotics within the center, nor to come under the influence of alcohol and narcotics. If you are drunk or under the influence of narcotics, you will not be allowed to enter the Center. By disregarding the house rules, you lose the right to stay in CA Krnjača.’ According to former camp residents, failure to respect these rules or any attempt to actively disrupt them, particularly regarding drinking and narcotics, could lead to relocation to a different camp. These relocations would often be to a camp in southern Serbia[,] very distant from the desired proximity to the country’s northern borders” (Collins et al., p. 10). At the same time, the camp management recognizes the need for mobility among users and tolerates absences of up to three days. This is also to be interpreted in a political climate that tries to discourage asylum seekers to stay in Serbia.

#### *Governance:*

In Serbia, there are 12 reception centres with 5,105 places and 7 asylum centres with 3,050 places (ECRE 2023, p. 155). In 2022, six asylum centres were operated and one was inactive (ECRE, 2023l, p. 156). “The first instance body that decides on asylum applications is the Asylum Office that operates as part of the Ministry of Interior Border Police Directorate” (Krstić, 2019, p. 163). The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (CRM) operates the provision of material reception conditions for asylum seekers (ECRE, 2023l, p. 152).

#### *Criteria:*

There is no mechanism for the dispersal of asylum seekers across the country (ECRE, 2023l, p. 154). However, if the asylum seekers wish to stay in centres, they will be transferred to reception centres depending on their current application stage and place availability (ECRE, 2023l, pp. 150–151). In practice, there were instances where asylum seekers also decided to opt out eventually because the remote location of their assigned center might hinder the application process. The criteria between the Ministry of Interior and the CRM allocating asylum seekers to the centres are not described.

#### *Monitoring:*

Only statistics about the applications and the decision of the protection status is published by the UNHCR Office in Serbia on the information of the Asylum Office (ECRE, 2023l, p. 8).

## **Slovakia**

#### *Bindingness*

For the initial procedures, asylum seekers must stay in a closed reception center for three to four weeks. Once the initial procedures are completed, they can either search for accommodation on their own if they can afford it, or if they do not have the financial means, they can get transferred to an open accommodation facility and stay until a final decision regarding the protection status is made (Tužinská, 2023, p. 244).

“As a rule, the applicant is moved to an accommodation centre within one month from lodging an application for international protection. [...] Currently, there are two accommodation centres falling under the competence of the Migration Office: in Opatovska Nova Ves (Veľký Krtíš district) and Rohovce (Dunajská Streda district). The Opatovska Nova Ves centre is designed for families with children and so-called vulnerable persons. The capacity of the accommodation centre is 140 persons [...]. The accommodation centre in Rohovce is intended mainly for adult male individuals. The capacity is 140 persons” (Migration Office, 2018, p. 8).

“Upon request, and after the asylum seeker meets the legal requirements, the Migration Office can permit the asylum seeker to stay outside the accommodation centre, at the asylum seeker’s own costs. After asylum or subsidiary protection is granted, as a part of the integration process, the beneficiaries of international protection are provided with assistance when looking for accommodation, employment, language preparatory courses, education and/or assistance in social issues and access to healthcare” (Migration Office, 2018, p. 9).

#### *Sanctions*

The 2005 amendment to the Asylum act introduced restrictive practices “with regard to freedom of movement, as asylum seekers must ask permission to leave the accommodation centre” (Hurná, 2012, p. 1390).

#### *Governance*

The Asylum Facilities Unit of the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior “manages, coordinates and supports the asylum facilities, the integration centre, and the transit centres at the international airports. It is fully in charge of the reception of asylum seekers” (Migration Office, 2018, p. 7)

#### *Criteria*

Obviously, asylum seekers are allocated to one of the two accommodation centres in the country (cf. Migration Office, 2018).

#### *Monitoring*

Only on national level (Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic [Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej Republiky], n.d.).

### **Slovenia**

#### *Bindingness*

All asylum seekers are accommodated in one of the reception centres operated by the Office for Support and Integration of Migrants (Urad vlade za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov — UOIM) (ECRE, 2022e, p. 72). Until 2015 there was only one reception centre in Ljubljana, but after 2016 3 more reception facilities were opened (ECRE, 2022e, p. 73). Since November 2021, according to the amendments of the International Protection Act (IPA) asylum seekers are no longer allowed to move freely. They are obligated to stay in the municipality of their accommodation (ECRE, 2022e, p. 71).

#### *Sanctions*

Generally, asylum seekers have to respect the house rules of their accommodation. This means they must adhere to a curfew and are not allowed to leave their accommodation during the night. If wished, asylum seekers have to obtain permission to leave the accommodation. This permission cannot be issued for longer than 7 consecutive days and a total of 60 days per year, according to the IPA of 2016 (ECRE, 2022e, p. 72). If these regulations are violated and the asylum seekers stay away from the accommodation for 3 days without permission, the asylum application has to be withdrawn (ECRE, 2022e, p. 72). Asylum seekers have the right to participate in the labour market 9 months after their application for asylum. Apart from the 9-month waiting period, there are no other restrictions on access to the labour (ECRE, 2022e, p. 76).

#### *Governance*

Responsible for the asylum procedure is the International Protection Procedures Division as a part of the Migration Directorate under the Ministry of the Interior (ECRE, 2022e, p. 20). But this does not include

the responsibility of the creation and management of the accommodation for asylum seekers. Therefore, the UOIM is responsible (ECRE, 2022e, p. 73)

#### *Criteria*

The dispersal does not follow a strict scheme, but the asylum seekers are dispersed due to demographic characteristics: “The Asylum Home [in Ljubljana] accommodates mostly single men, women, unaccompanied minors and families, the Branch Facility Kotnikova in Ljubljana exclusively single men, the Branch Facility Logatec serves as a pre-reception centre, and the Student Dormitory Postojna unaccompanied children” (ECRE, 2022e, p. 73).

#### *Monitoring*

The Ministry of Interior publishes annual statistics on the accumulated number of people applying for asylum (2019-2022) (Ministry of the Interior, 2023). The UIOM has published its strategy for migration of 2019 where accumulated numbers for the period of 2003 to 2018 are listed (UIOM, 2019).

## **Spain**

#### *Bindingness*

The Spanish asylum reception system is divided into three main phases, with the first one being the assessment phase, where people receive information about the asylum procedures before they apply. In the second phase, the reception phase, applicants are temporarily housed in “(a) a Refugee Reception Centre (Centro de Acogida a Refugiados, CAR); (b) or NGO-run reception facilities located all over the Spanish territory; or (c) reception facilities under the humanitarian assistance system” for 6 months, with an extension of another 3 for vulnerable people (ECRE, 2020c, p. 84). During this stage, the asylum seeker must remain in the same province (ECRE, 2020c, p. 88). Subsequently, in the third phase, they have to move out of the reception center and receive financial support to find their own private accommodation. Applicants who have sufficient finance and decide to arrange their own independent accommodation are cut off from the reception system “and have no guaranteed access to financial support and assistance foreseen in reception centres” (ECRE, 2020c, p. 82).

#### *Sanctions*

Material reception can be reduced or withdrawn, if the asylum seekers leave the assigned place of residence without informing the authority or without permission, if they have enough economic resources, or if they do not participate in integration programs and activities (ECRE, 2020c, p. 87).

#### *Governance*

“The coordination and management of the reception of asylum seekers falls under the responsibility of the State Secretary for Migration (*Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones*, SEM) of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration” (ECRE, 2020c, p. 81). But most of the reception centres are outsourced and run by NGOs (ECRE, 2020c, p. 81). It seems to be a central regime, with the state authorities making decisions on the asylum regulations without considering the local authorities’ opinions. There is a common handbook, which, however, is non-binding (ECRE, 2020c, p. 81) and each social organization has had its “agreements with the government and its own way of implementing each of its services. In this sense, it has been a highly centralised system while at the same time being worryingly fragmented due to its poorly coordinated outsourcing to the three social” organizations (Gabrielli et al., 2022, p. 6).

#### *Criteria*

“[T]he person seeking asylum must go where space is available.” (Garcés Mascareñas & Moreno Amador, 2019, p. 12). There is no general dispersal mechanism in the Spanish asylum system, however, the situations of the asylum seekers, such as closeness to family members or biographical features such as age, sex, nationality etc., are also considered as criteria (ECRE, 2020c, p. 88).

### *Monitoring*

There are statistics about the number of asylum seeker by municipality, available on the website of Ministry of Interior (n.d.).

## **Sweden**

### *Bindingness*

Asylum seekers are allowed to arrange their own accommodation (ECRE, 2020d, p. 66). However, if they are unable to, the Swedish Migration Agency will arrange and refer them to a municipality – based on a dispersal system (ECRE, 2020d, p. 68) – which then is responsible for them. In that case, they do not get to choose their destination (ECRE, 2020d, p. 71). “In 2020, a new rule was introduced which generally limited asylum seekers’ settlement possibilities. The change implied that if an asylum seeker chose to reside within an area that was reported by the municipality to be an area with social and economic challenges, rights to special grants and daily allowance could be withdrawn” (Danielsen et al., 2023, p. 19)

### *Sanctions*

In 2020 new rules were introduced, which deny daily allowances to those who chose to settle in “socio-economically challenged” areas (ECRE, 2020d, p. 67).

### *Governance*

Before 2016, every municipality was “expected to be ready to accommodate asylum seekers. To facilitate this, each County Administrative Board encourages municipalities to sign agreements with the Migration Agency” (ECRE, 2020d, p. 68). While the aforementioned policy was voluntary for municipalities, “[a] law was introduced in 2016 so that all municipalities would have to accept persons living in Migration Agency accommodation who have a residence permit” (ECRE, 2020d, p. 71).

### *Criteria*

While quantified criteria for the dispersal of recognized refugees exist, this is not the case for the establishment of reception centres for asylum seekers during their application procedure. Hence, reception centres are created based on discretionary criteria (Danielsen et al., 2023, pp. 19–22).

### *Monitoring*

There are statistics at the municipal level provided and updated monthly by the Swedish Migration Agency (Swedish Migration Agency [Migrationsverket], n.d.).

## **Switzerland**

### *Bindingness*

“The reception system is organised in two phases, the first being under federal and the second under cantonal responsibility. During the first phase – which should not exceed 140 days – asylum applicants are accommodated in federal asylum centres under the responsibility of the State Secretariat for Migration, while upon allocation to a canton, their accommodation is managed at cantonal level” (ECRE, 2020e, p. 84). “Asylum seekers are provided with accommodation during the entire procedure. Accommodation is included in the right to social benefits. Asylum seekers do not have a choice regarding the allocated place of stay and will usually be moved from one centre to another during the entire procedure (first after the cantonal allocation, then within the canton according to their individual situation)” (ECRE, 2020e, p. 88). “As long as asylum seekers stay in a federal centre, they are subject to the semi-closed regime of all federal asylum centres. Exits are only possible with a written authorisation delivered by the SEM [State Secretariat for Migration] once fingerprints and a photograph of the asylum applicant have been taken. Exit hours are

strictly regulated in the ordinance and the general rule allows asylum seekers to go out from 9am to 5pm during the week (from Monday to Friday) and to spend the weekend away, from Friday 9am until Sunday 5pm. SEM may define more extended exit hours in agreement with the commune hosting the federal asylum centre” (ECRE, 2020e, p. 92):

#### *Sanctions*

In general, material reception can be reduced or withdrawn if the asylum seekers refuse to accept reasonable work or accommodation allocated to them (ECRE, 2020e, p. 89), or if they violate house rules (ECRE, 2020e, p. 91). “In case of late arrival or unjustified absence, asylum seekers may be subject to a disciplinary sanction such as being deprived of the possibility to go out on the next day or to access certain areas of the centre” in the federal asylum center (ECRE, 2020e, p. 97).

#### *Governance*

Cantons oversee their own reception centres (ECRE, 2020e, p. 84). “Cantonal reception conditions are regulated by cantonal legislation and differ significantly from one canton to another. Therefore, the allocation to a canton may result in large inequality in terms of material reception conditions. The type[s] of accommodation facilities, as well as the amount of financial allowance, is specific to each canton. Some cantons are known to be restrictive in terms of reception conditions, or even lacking adapted structures for the needs of vulnerable persons” (ECRE, 2020e, p. 92). However, this ‘autonomy’ does not play a role in deciding whether to accept refugees or not.

#### *Criteria*

There is a dispersal criterion, “the distribution key” (ECRE, 2020e, p. 91), based on a certain percentage for each canton according to its population, but the specific situations, such as family members or nationalities of the asylum seekers are also considered for the dispersal.

#### *Monitoring*

Statistics about the number of asylum seekers on cantonal level provided by Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM (2023).

## **Turkey**

#### *Bindingness:*

“Despite being a signatory of the 1951 UN Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and its Additional Protocol on the Legal Status of Refugees of 1967, Turkey presents a ‘geographical limitation’, which only allows European citizens to have refugee status granted” (Paraschivescu et al., 2019, p. 10). “The three main nationalities for first instance asylum applications are Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis, with Syrians being entitled to a special Temporary Protection status” (Paraschivescu et al., 2019, p. 11).

In Türkiye, there is a geographic dispersal policy of asylum seekers across the territory (ECRE, 2023m, p. 81). Each asylum seeker is allocated to a certain province, where he/she has to find private accommodation after registering with the Provincial Directorate for Migration Management (PMM). Asylum seekers have to stay in the chosen accommodation “as long as they are subject to international protection, including after obtaining status” (ECRE, 2023m, p. 81). They have to register their address in the registration system and inform the governorate about it (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, 2013, p. 27). Based on Article 71 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) the PMM rarely sends asylum seekers to a reception and accommodation centre (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, 2013, p. 27). Hence, private accommodation with a restriction of settlement is the rule in Turkey.

### *Sanctions:*

If applicants do not report their address in the assigned province in time or are not found at their address upon three consecutive checks without any excuse, their application is considered withdrawn (ECRE, 2023m, 21; 83; Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, 2013, p. 29). The right for reception and for the benefits are dependent on residing in the assigned province (ECRE, 2023m, p. 83). Moreover, the document for applicants is only valid in that assigned province and the reception conditions could be reduced if asylum seekers do not stay in the assigned satellite city. In practice, the sanctions could be stricter and seem to be dependent on the nationality, the sexuality or sexual orientation, for example. “[M]ost accommodation options for both Syrians and asylum seekers rely on self-financed accommodation in the city in which they have been assigned. In cases where they want to move to different cities, they need to obtain an authorization from the PDMM on health or family grounds; otherwise they might fall into irregularity” (Paraschivescu et al., 2019, p. 27).

### *Governance*

The PMM “has Provincial Departments for Migration Management (PDMM) across the 81 provinces of Türkiye. A Council of Ministers Decision issued in February 2018 established 36 District Directorates for Migration Management (İlçe Göç İdaresi Müdürlüğü) in 16 provinces, under the responsibility of the respective PDMM. [...] If the PDMM cannot register the application itself, it instructs the applicant to report to a different province within 15 days, where he or she is required to reside and to register the application” (ECRE, 2023m, p. 27). The Regulation on Foreigners and International Protection (RFIP) elaborates the dispersal policy as a concept of “satellite cities” across provinces (ECRE 2023, p. 81). The Provincial Directorate for Migration Management (PDMM) is responsible for the information about current open or closed cities (ibid., p. 81). The reception centre is operated by the Directorate General who can outsource the operation to public institutions and agencies or non-profit associations (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, 2013, p. 36). In Turkey, there is one reception centre with 100 places in the province of Yozgat (ECRE, 2023m, p. 84). It is mainly available for vulnerable individuals. Often asylum seekers have to find private accommodation on their own and without financial assistance, so the total number of private accommodations is not available. In regular procedures, private housing is mostly used. In accelerated procedures, asylum seekers are often in detention.

### *Criteria:*

Since 20 May 2022, some cities have been closed to foreign nationalities (ECRE, 2023m, p. 82). If a city reaches a limit of 25 percent of foreign nationalities, no asylum seeker can register in that city any more. “As of 1 July 2022, 1,169 neighbourhoods and 58 cities were blocked to protection seekers registrations” (ECRE, 2023m, 17, 82).

### *Monitoring*

Besides statistic on international protection and temporary protection beneficiaries, the Presidency of Migration Management publishes statistics on the registration of refugees with a residence permit across provinces (ECRE, 2023m, 9f.; Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, 2024). However, the information on the country of origin shows that these foreign citizens most often come from Turkmenistan and Russia; hence they are probably not asylum seekers or refugees. There appears to be no spatial data for asylum seekers. The list of closed cities appears to be published not regularly because although the report of ECRE links to one particular publication but mentions as well that the list is not publicly available.

## **United Kingdom**

### *Bindingness*

When the asylum application is first lodged, people are accommodated in a temporary centre for 2–3 weeks (ECRE, 2023n, p. 63). If they are eligible for long-term support, they then get assigned to a local accommodation, provided by private companies, contracted by the Home Office (ECRE, 2023n, p. 70). In

this case, they do not get to choose the destination (ECRE, 2023n, p. 66) and they are not allowed to stay away from their assigned accommodation (ECRE, 2023n, p. 70). They can also choose to live with families or friends, but receive no support for accommodation cost (ECRE, 2023n, p. 63). In the case of self-provided private accommodation, asylum seekers are not subject to any movement restrictions (ECRE, 2023n, p. 70), but they still have to report regularly to their regional Home Office or get monitored by routine visits from the housing provider.

### *Sanctions*

There are incentives, i.e. support for accommodation costs, if the asylum seekers choose to stay in housings provided by the Home Office's contractors (ECRE, 2023n, p. 63). When they abandon their authorized address or fail to comply with reporting duties or have violated house rules, financial aids can be withdrawn (ECRE, 2023n, p. 69).

### *Governance*

In England, the housing for asylum seekers is privatized through contracting private companies. Asylum seekers are dispersed by the Home Office based on the local availability of housing (ECRE, 2023n, p. 72) and a voluntary agreement has to be reached with the local authority, which also considers the availability of housing facilities in the region (UK Parliament, 2018). However, academic observers claim that the possibility of the Home Office to contract private providers effectively makes this a centrally governed dispersal system: "Most notable among these changes was the transfer of accommodation contracts from consortiums of local authorities to three private providers in 2012. The security contractors G4S, the multinational services company Serco, and the housing company Clear Springs were the new contract holders. These contracts, known collectively as COMPASS, marked a significant shift in the support of asylum seekers and centralised control over dispersal with the Home Office" (Darling, 2022, p. 3).

"The procurement of a replacement [of COMPASS] began formally in November 2017, following inspections that highlighted the failure to deal with properties in substandard, unsanitary, or unsafe conditions. This also coincided with calls for a fairer and more equitable dispersal system, due to issues of clustering and uneven dispersal that were placing pressure on those local authorities and communities which had volunteered to support asylum seekers. In a 2018 report, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee found deepening mistrust of the Home Office by Local Authorities due to pressures on dispersal areas and the Home Office's lack of consultation and collaboration with Local Authorities" (Casu et al., 2023, p. 23).

"The COMPASS contracts have been replaced with new 'Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts' (AASC) and 'Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility' (AIRE) services contracts, which run until 31 August 2029 ... The AASC was divided into seven regional contracts and awarded to Serco, Clearsprings Ready Homes, and Mears, a housing and social care provider. Following the introduction of the new contracts, there was a significant increase in the use of 'contingency accommodation', such as hotels and hostels, to accommodate people" (Casu et al., 2023, p. 24).

### *Criteria*

The Asylum and Immigration Act 1999 was introduced to disperse asylum seekers across the UK to reduce the numbers of migrants claiming welfare benefits and living and working in London and the South East of England (Alonso & Andrews, 2021, p. 509). After their stay in the temporary accommodation, they get assigned to another subnational territory based on the availability of places in that region (ECRE, 2023n, p. 63), usually in North, Midlands and South West of England, in Wales and Scotland but rarely in the South of England or in London (ECRE, 2023n, p. 72).

"A reform programme initiated in 2019 aimed to achieve a more proportionate distribution of asylum seekers across government regions by 2029. It was put on hold in 2020 due to the overarching need to source additional asylum accommodation during the Covid-19 pandemic. In April 2022, the Home Office announced plans to implement a 'full dispersal' model... All local authority areas became asylum dispersal areas and were expected to agree to receive asylum seekers. The change was intended to increase the number

of suitable private sector rental properties available for procurement and support more equitable shares of asylum seekers across the UK. Each grouping of local authorities received an allocation of asylum seekers proportionate to their population size and was asked to develop their own regional implementation plan. The regional plans went ‘live’ in March 2023” (Gower, 2023, p. 16).

There are two forms of quantified criteria in the UK: First, the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts of 2019 “continued with the same percentages in the ‘routing’ system – such as 24 per cent allocated to the North West – perpetuating the uneven distribution of asylum claimants across the country” (Mort & Morris, 2024, p. 14). Second: “Dispersal accommodation is located in areas where the local authority has agreed to take asylum seekers up to a defined limit; that is, no more than one asylum seeker per 200 residents... When considering a property for use as dispersal accommodation, contract providers are required to consult with local authorities to ensure that the property does not negatively impact community plans or local developments... Local authorities have raised concerns about the consultation process, particularly the lack of independent adjudication when disputes arise. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the matter is referred to the Home Office, which makes the final decision. However, we heard that this often occurs without a clear rationale, a named deciding officer, or a formal route for appeal. The consultation process varies in how it is applied across regions. For example, in the North West, local authorities can object to procurement within specific postal areas..., while other regions may have more flexibility to object to specific properties. This inconsistency, along with the absence of a nationally agreed protocol, has led to frustration among local authorities. Although a draft protocol was shared in the past, it was never finalised, leaving disparities in how objections are managed” (Mort & Morris, 2024, pp. 18–19).

### *Monitoring*

There are statistics on the number of asylum seekers by region (one of seven) and local authorities, provided by the Home Office (GOV.UK, 2019). The numbers are given in absolute figures and as a percentage of the population, which supports the evaluation of the quota.

### **Codes assigned**

Based on our conceptual definitions and the codebook we assigned the following codes to the 32 European countries analyzed.

Table 2: Codes assigned to 32 European countries by policy attribute

| <b>Country</b> | <b>Bindingness</b> | <b>Sanctions</b> | <b>Governance</b> | <b>Criteria</b> | <b>Monitoring</b> |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Austria        | 2                  | 2                | 2                 | 2               | 0                 |
| Belgium        | 2                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 0                 |
| Bulgaria       | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 0                 |
| Croatia        | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 0                 |
| Cyprus         | 0                  | 0                | 0                 | 0               | 0                 |
| Czech Republic | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 0                 |
| Denmark        | 2                  | 1                | 2                 | 2               | 2                 |
| Estonia        | 2                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 0                 |
| Finland        | 2                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 2                 |
| France         | 2                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 1                 |
| Germany        | 2                  | 2                | 2                 | 2               | 2                 |
| Greece         | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 1                 |
| Hungary        | 1                  | 2                | 2                 | 0               | 0                 |
| Ireland        | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 1               | 0                 |
| Italy          | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 2               | 1                 |
| Latvia         | 1                  | 1                | 2                 | 0               | 0                 |

|                |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lithuania      | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Luxembourg     | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Malta          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Netherlands    | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Norway         | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Poland         | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Portugal       | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Romania        | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Serbia         | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Slovakia       | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Slovenia       | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Spain          | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Sweden         | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Switzerland    | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Turkey         | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

These codes formed the basis for further comparative analysis, such as the aggregation to a RDP index.

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