

# Reception arrangements

## CHAPTER 4





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## Introduction

This Chapter provides practical guidance on reception arrangements for persons arriving as part of irregular mixed movements. “Reception arrangements” consist of measures adopted by a host country in order to meet the immediate needs of new arrivals. These measures are provided to all persons, regardless of status, in order to ensure their welfare until their referral to appropriate processes and procedures. This Chapter does not address medium- or longer-term arrangements that may subsequently become necessary and that vary depending on an individual’s status in the host country.

Reception arrangements in the immediate period following arrival generally have two important goals:

- to address basic material and psychosocial needs of all arrivals (e.g. accommodation, food, clothing, and medical services); and
- to distinguish between various categories of persons, including persons seeking international protection and those with specific needs.

This Chapter focuses on the first goal. The second goal, which relates to the processing and procedural aspects of reception, is addressed in Chapters 5 and 6. Since reception arrangements in practice generally address both goals, the examples provided in Chapter 5 are also relevant to this Chapter.

The use of designated “reception centres”, where a range of necessary services can be provided by different experts, has been a particularly useful way to manage reception arrangements for large groups and/or in locations with frequent arrivals of asylum-seekers and migrants. This can be advantageous for new arrivals, whose needs are met by qualified staff, and for the authorities, as reception centres provide an organized setting that allows them to target their responses. Depending on the specific situation, however, smaller group homes, community placements or private accommodation may be more appropriate than large reception centres.

The practical examples in this Chapter provide suggestions on the location and administration of reception arrangements, conditions and services available at reception centres (if applicable), and training of reception staff. Some of the examples provided address reception arrangements for asylum-seekers more specifically. The examples demonstrate that proper reception arrangements can reduce onward movements without recourse to detention. The examples also show the crucial role that civil society actors often play in providing services.

## Operationalizing reception arrangements: Suggestions for stakeholders and support UNHCR can provide to partners

### Suggestions for stakeholders

- Engage with relevant actors on appropriate services needed as part of reception arrangements to address the immediate needs of all arrivals.
- Encourage the development of open reception centres with appropriate safeguards and conditions that meet human rights standards.
- If semi-open or closed reception centres are established, advocate for access by relevant international organisations or NGOs to assess protection and assistance needs.
- Provide information to all arrivals on, for example, their rights and obligations in the host country, reception arrangements, available services and legal options (including asylum procedures).
- Ensure that services provided address the immediate needs of arrivals.
- Conclude agreements and/or standard operating procedures on the roles and responsibilities of the various governmental, non-governmental and international agencies involved in reception arrangements.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure protection-sensitive reception arrangements.

### Support UNHCR can provide to partners

- Advise States on appropriate legal and policy frameworks for reception arrangements.
- Assist States to establish reception arrangements that comply with international human rights standards.
- Approach donors for financial support to improve reception conditions.
- Encourage the use of open reception centres.
- Help improve reception standards by providing technical advice in cooperation with other agencies (e.g. ICRC, IFRC, IOM and UNICEF).
- Train staff involved in reception arrangements on refugee law and international protection considerations, and assist to develop standard operating procedures.
- Act as the point of referral and support for persons in reception centres who may be in need of international protection.
- Lobby for access to closed reception centres to enable new arrivals to be registered and provided with temporary documentation, especially where a high percentage of new arrivals may be refugees.

## 4.1. Reception arrangements provided in reception centres

The use of designated reception centres may be a useful way to meet the needs of new arrivals travelling as part of mixed movements, particularly in the event of larger numbers of, or frequent, arrivals. Note, however, that reception centres may not always be an appropriate or necessary way to provide reception arrangements, and alternatives such as smaller group homes, community placements or private accommodation may be more suitable. Where reception centres are used, the following considerations apply.

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### 4.1.1. Location

The location of reception centres depends on the entry points and modes of transport being used by migrants and refugees travelling as part of mixed movements to arrive in the transit or destination country. The advantage of building a reception centre close to a border, port or other entry point is that it is more accessible to arrivals and authorities are better able to provide immediate assistance to them.

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### 4.1.2. Administration

Reception centres can be managed by government authorities, NGOs and/or international agencies. Private contractors are also sometimes employed to help manage reception centres.

Support services are often provided by a number of different actors according to their respective mandates and areas of expertise. A formal agreement among various stakeholders helps to promote a consistent, coordinated and comprehensive approach to manage the centre and address the needs of arrivals. It also helps to define the roles and responsibilities of the actors and to develop standard operating procedures. Agreements can include guidelines on standards of treatment of reception centre residents and provisions for monitoring by independent entities in order to ensure compliance with human rights standards.

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### 4.1.3. Staff training

Staff involved in the day-to-day activities of a reception centre can benefit from training on the principles of international refugee and human rights law, standards of treatment and care (e.g. cultural sensitivity and conflict management) and on how to assist persons with specific needs such as, inter alia, women at risk, unaccompanied and separated children, trafficked persons, victims of torture and trauma, and disabled persons.

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### 4.1.4. Conditions in the reception centre

Security and respect for the dignity of all inhabitants of the reception centre are best guaranteed through, for example, limits on the number of persons accommodated in the reception centre, adequate space and privacy in sleeping arrangements, separate washing facilities for men and women, sanitary and hygienic conditions, the adoption of measures to identify traffickers and smugglers and to prevent them from entering or using the reception centre, and regular maintenance of facilities including ventilation, heating and cooling.

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#### 4.1.5. Services provided

Services that can be provided at a reception facility include: regular meals that are sufficient in quantity and that respect dietary, cultural and religious requirements; timely distribution of basic non-food items such as clothing, sanitary products, blankets, and towels; medical check-ups upon arrival, including identification and treatment of persons with acute medical needs; counselling and psychosocial assistance; information on legal options such as asylum procedures and specific procedures for persons with specific needs, such as trafficked persons, unaccompanied and separated children, and women and girls at risk.

Individuals arriving at reception centres can make better use of reception arrangements and available services if they are provided with practical information about, for example: their rights and obligations as residents of the centre; time and location of meals; facilities for religious and cultural practices; access to communication devices, including telephone, internet services and directories; and confidential and accessible complaints procedures.

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#### 4.1.6. Open, semi-open or closed reception centres?

The decision as to whether reception centres for persons travelling as part of mixed movements should be open, semi-open or closed will depend on a range of factors, including: the profile of the individuals concerned; their desired destination country; the location of reception centres; and the overall level of support services provided through reception arrangements. Provision of appropriate accommodation, support services, and access to information and counselling from the early stages after arrival may reduce the incentive to abscond from open reception centres.

Similarly, semi-open reception centres with measures to ensure ongoing presence in the centre, such as daily reporting requirements, are also effective for accommodating irregular arrivals.

Where individuals are held in closed reception centres, detention is subject to relevant legal safeguards, including under international human rights law. International legal standards provide that any decision to detain individuals is to be made on a case-by-case basis by a duly appointed authority and based on criteria established in law.<sup>1</sup> Any period of detention is required to be necessary and reasonable in all the circumstances, proportionate and non-discriminatory. Effective, independent and periodic review of detention by a court empowered to order release is also critical in ensuring compliance with international human rights standards. Granting competent NGOs, international organizations, lawyers and consular officials access to closed reception facilities and the opportunity to meet with individuals helps to ensure implementation of these standards in practice. It also provides individuals who wish to apply for asylum with the necessary support. Detention of persons with specific needs is never appropriate even for short periods. This applies to children, nursing mothers and women in the later stages of pregnancy, as well as persons with physical or mental disabilities or with acute medical needs.

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<sup>1</sup> See criteria in the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1996* and the *1951 Convention and its Protocol*. See also: UNHCR's *Executive Committee Conclusion No. 44 (XXXVII) on Detention of Refugees and Asylum-seekers*, UNHCR *Note on Accession to International Instruments and the Detention of Refugees and Asylum-seekers*, 19 August 1986, EC/SCP/44, UNHCR *Revised Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-seekers*, 26 February 1999.

Alternatives to detention, such as release of recognized refugees and registered asylum-seekers to community groups, accommodation with family or friends, and church or community housing, can provide a more humane approach to managing irregular arrivals. It can also reduce the cost of maintaining detention facilities and ensure compliance with international legal standards.

## 4.2. Practical examples of reception arrangements

A range of more or less comprehensive reception arrangements have been adopted by different States in different regions. The following examples focus particularly on reception arrangements at points of first arrival. They show the range of services that States provide including psychosocial and medical assistance, material support (accommodation, food, clothing, non-food items), as well as access to legal assistance, cultural orientation and individual or group counselling that is age- and gender-sensitive.

### 4.2.1. Central America

#### MEXICO: ALBERGUE BELEN IN TAPACHULA 1997 – PRESENT

##### A. Background and Rationale

The Albergue Belén is one of five “open reception centres” known as *Casas del Migrante* (“Migrants’ Houses”) in the region, run by the Scalabrinian Order of Catholic priests. They provide an alternative to the State-run detention facilities (“migration stations”) for persons arriving with or without entry permits and proper travel documents. The Albergue Belén provides temporary accommodation and basic services to all migrants travelling through, or arriving in, Tapachula, Chiapas State. UNHCR has signed an agreement with the Albergue Belén to provide additional reception services to asylum-seekers.

##### B. Actors

- IOM;
- Local NGOs;
- Mexican National Commission for Refugee Assistance; and
- UNHCR.

##### C. Actions

- The Albergue Belén provides reception services to migrants, trafficked persons and asylum-seekers. Asylum-seekers who approach either the National Commission for Refugee Assistance or UNHCR are referred to the Albergue Belén.
- The services provided in the Albergue Belén include accommodation for a maximum period of three days, which can be extended up to 14 days for migrants and asylum-seekers and beyond 14 days for asylum-seekers with specific needs, subject to the agreement of UNHCR. Food, material items and psychosocial services are also provided.



- The centre is an open facility, and migrants and asylum-seekers who wish and can afford to reside elsewhere are free to do so. The Albergue Belén has a curfew of 10:00 pm. For three hours during the day, residents are required to remain outside so that the building can be cleaned. Other than these restrictions, migrants and asylum-seekers are free to come and go as they please.
- Unaccompanied children can be exceptionally transferred to government or private childcare facilities which provide appropriate accommodation, access to education and health services, as well as legal advice for children seeking asylum, refugee children and those entitled to complementary protection.

#### D. Review

The Albergue Belén provides a successful alternative to detention in managing irregular migration and demonstrates that non-governmental entities can assist governments in providing reception services. In 2008, Albergue Belén opened a specific area for trafficked persons. The level of the reception standards provided in the Albergue Belén has reduced the number of improperly documented individuals who abscond and move to another Mexican State.

While the Albergue Belén provides an important service for migrants and asylum-seekers at the southern border of Mexico, the centre is often unable to accommodate asylum-seekers for the entire period during which their asylum application is processed. Registration services are only available for persons seeking international protection and not for migrants. Further, unauthorized and improperly documented arrivals, including those waiting for repatriation, who are apprehended by local police or migration officials do not have access to the Albergue Belén.

#### E. Further information

Available at: <http://www.migrante.com.mx/Tapachula.htm>.

A description of the Albergue Belén and an interview with Padre Flor who runs the centre is included in the article by Cynthia Gorney, "Mexico's Other Border," National Geographic Magazine, February 2008.

Available at: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2008/02/mexicos-southern-border/cynthia-gorney-text>.

### Costa Rica: Manual on Reception Procedures



The Manual has been developed collaboratively between the Ombudsman's Office, immigration authorities, UNHCR and IOM in Costa Rica. The manual establishes guidelines and pre-screening recommendations for reception arrangements of migrants and asylum-seekers, including persons with specific needs.

**Annex 1** – Costa Rica, Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería, *Manual Administrativo y de Procedimientos de los Centros de Aprehensión Temporal para Extranjeros en Condiciones Irregulares*, 2008

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## 4.2.2. Central Asia

### **KYRGYZSTAN: RECEPTION CENTRE FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN BISHKEK 2007 – PRESENT**

#### **A. Background and Rationale**

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Kyrgyz Government and State Committee for Migration and Employment (SCME), opened Central Asia's first reception centre for asylum-seekers in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in November 2007. The purpose of the centre is to better assist asylum-seekers who have fled from 12 different countries and particularly from the civil wars in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

#### **B. Actors**

- Kyrgyz Government;
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration (MOLEM); and
- UNHCR.

#### **C. Actions**

The centre offer a range of services for asylum-seekers:

- temporary accommodation for at least 30 asylum-seekers (up to 100 asylum-seekers in emergency situations);
- medical care;
- common kitchen;
- food;
- showers and laundry rooms;
- equipped children's room;
- education (including language classes); and
- legal counselling.

The reception centre contains sufficient space and security measures to allow asylum-seekers to spend time both indoors and outdoors in safety and peace.

#### **D. Review**

Since its establishment in 2007, the reception centre has assisted over 300 refugees and asylum-seekers providing them with a vast array of services to develop individual skills and favour their integration capacities. The reception centre has continuously increased its services to adapt to asylum-seekers' needs and progressively extended its activities from its initial purpose of providing only emergency assistance to now also providing legal counselling, social and medical assistance, and language courses.

### 4.2.3. Gulf of Aden

## YEMEN: THE MAYFA'A AND AHWAR RECEPTION CENTRES 1995 – PRESENT



### A. Background and Rationale

The Mayfa'a Reception Centre (MRC) is a UNHCR-run facility located near the main coastal entry point of Bir Ali in the Shabwa Province of Yemen. In the absence of government-run reception programmes, the MRC provides necessary accommodation and reception services for arrivals travelling by boat from Bossasso, Somalia. The MRC is an "open centre" where individuals are free to move in and out of the facility. In 2008, UNHCR opened a second reception centre, the Ahwar Reception Centre, in Abyan Governorate. Reception services are also offered to new arrivals at Kharaz Camp.

### B. Actors

- Danish Refugee Council (DRC);
- INTERSOS (an Italian Humanitarian Aid Organization);
- local NGO, Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS);
- UNHCR; and
- the Yemeni coast guard.

### C. Actions

- Depending on the disembarkation point and its proximity to MRC, new arrivals can be directly transported to the MRC or taken first to the transit centre in Mayfa'a Hajar.
- Accommodation, medical care and a welcome package containing practical information on the centre is provided to new arrivals. Male and female areas with separate sanitary facilities are available.
- New arrivals are provided with information on their available options namely: asylum procedures, or transfer to Kharaz Camp or to the Basateen Urban Settlement in Aden. They are also given leaflets on Yemeni laws and regulations and on services provided in Kharaz and in urban areas. These leaflets are available in Somali, Oromo, Arabic and English.
- The DRC conducts a preliminary registration of Somalis who are recognized as refugees by the Government of Yemen on a *prima facie* basis and of non-Somalis who wish to seek asylum. Non-Somali asylum-seekers are issued a temporary protection appointment slip valid for 10 days. This allows them to approach UNHCR Offices in Aden or Sana'a for RSD procedures. Somalis are provided with temporary refugee documents, valid for three months, and are counselled on the assistance provided in Kharaz Camp and, in urban areas, on their rights and obligations in Yemen. Somalis are directed to government-run, permanent registration centres that are fully supported by UNHCR, where they undergo ProGres registration and obtain a refugee identification card.
- INTERSOS identifies persons with specific needs and continues to assist them when they move to Kharaz Camp or to the Basateen settlement. INTERSOS also manages the Child Friendly Space in the centre.

- Training is provided to Yemeni coast guards on international refugee and human rights law, as well as on rescue at sea.
- New arrivals usually pass between two and five days in MRC before SHS transports them to the camp or urban area. SHS carries out logistics and distribution of material assistance to new arrivals at MRC.
- Non-Somali arrivals with specific needs who wish to seek asylum are transported to the Kharaz Reception Centre where they are processed under UNHCR mandate RSD procedures.
- The Ahwar Reception Centre operates on a similar basis to MRC. The main difference between them is that, in light of its location, new arrivals are transported directly to Ahwar Reception Centre without passing through any transit point.

#### D. Review

The Mayfa'a and Ahwar Reception Centres, as well as the reception arrangements in Kharaz Camp, have helped to address the immediate protection needs of, and provide basic assistance, support and information to, maritime arrivals in Yemen. They have also facilitated basic profiling exercises to better develop and tailor responses to the different needs of arriving groups. Addressing the needs of new arrivals, however, has become more difficult as the number of entry points along the Yemeni coast has increased from 15 to an estimated 60. In addition, the security situation makes it difficult for UNHCR staff to access the coast and provide adequate support to its partners, and medical care is limited and not always adequate in emergency cases.

### Yemen: Additional Reception Arrangements

#### The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Yemeni Red Crescent (YRC) Activities Along the Red Sea Coastline

The DRC and the YRC are engaged in protection monitoring of, and information gathering about, new arrivals along the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea coastline. Those new arrivals deemed to be most in need are identified and provided with basic material assistance. On behalf of UNHCR and the Government of Yemen, the DRC and YRC conduct initial registration of asylum-seekers and refugees as well as pre-screening of spontaneous arrivals. The presence of the DRC and other partner agencies along the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea coastline, as well as training and mass information campaigns by DRC, UNHCR and local radio stations have improved awareness and capacities of government authorities and host communities on the right to asylum, human trafficking, irregular migration and the human rights of persons on the move.

For further information on DRC activities along the Gulf of Aden, see **Annex 2** – DRC, *Horn of Africa and Yemen, Quarterly Report*, 2009.

#### “Empowering Yemen to Address Mixed Migration and Protection of Vulnerable Migrants Travelling through the Gulf of Aden Route”

This is a two-year project, initiated by IOM in 2009, that aims to enhance the capacity of frontline Yemeni police, immigration officials, coast guards, government agencies, international organizations and NGOs to provide assistance to the large influx of migrants and asylum-seekers who arrive in, or transit through, Yemen.

A network of focal points located strategically along the western and southern Yemeni coast provide timely information and counselling to persons in need of assistance and/or international protection. This project also includes capacity-building and awareness-raising activities about human trafficking, inter-ministerial cooperation on human trafficking and a series of workshops on the identification of victims of trafficking, shelter management and medical and psychosocial recovery for trafficked persons and exploited migrants. It further aims to enhance coordination between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to address the immediate needs of arrivals and to expand identification and referral mechanisms.

For further details, see: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/activities/africa-and-middle-east/middle-east/yemen>.

#### 4.2.4. Mediterranean region

##### **Greece: Enhancing the Reception Capacity for Migration Flows at Border Areas (“AEGEAS PROJECT”)**

This project aimed to enhance reception capacities at arrival points in Greece in order to address maritime mixed movements. It involved the provision of immediate assistance to new arrivals and profiling in detention centres, as well as the referral of persons in need of international protection and those with specific needs to appropriate processes and procedures.

For further details, see Chapter 5.

##### **ITALY: STRENGTHENING RECEPTION CAPACITY TO HANDLE MIGRANTS REACHING THE ISLAND OF LAMPEDUSA (“PRAESIDIUM PROJECT”) 2006 – PRESENT**



###### **A. Background and Rationale**

The “Strengthening Reception Capacity to Handle Migrants Reaching the Island of Lampedusa” (“Praesidium Project”) is an initiative of the Italian Ministry of Interior. Starting in March 2006, it involves several humanitarian agencies and is designed to develop protection-sensitive reception systems for migrants and asylum-seekers arriving as part of irregular maritime movements in Southern Italy. Assistance and information services are provided in Lampedusa and other points of entry in Italy. Since March 2009, the project has been entirely funded by the Italian Ministry of Interior. Individuals arriving at the island of Lampedusa include nationals from Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, Iraq, Nigeria, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Sudan.

###### **B. Actors**

Principle partners:

- IOM;
- Italian Red Cross;
- Save the Children-Italy (since March 2008); and
- UNHCR.

Other actors involved:

- Government of Italy;
- Italian Immigration Police;
- local authorities;
- local NGOs; and
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

### **C. Actions**

- Partners provide joint and agency-specific information leaflets (in Italian, French, English, Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Bangla and Urdu) and counselling sessions informing newly arrived or rescued migrants and potential asylum-seekers of their rights and obligations.
- Partners ensure the proper identification of persons who may have international protection needs and provide assistance to persons with specific needs (e.g. women, unaccompanied children and families, trafficked persons, victims of torture and trauma).
- All actors involved work together to create an efficient referral system for groups and individuals with specific needs in the context of transfers from the arrival points to reception centres within Italian territory.
- Formal and informal on-the-job training and capacity-building activities for reception staff are provided by all agencies.
- UNHCR provides support to individuals wishing to apply for asylum and liaises with the competent police officers in order to guarantee and facilitate admission to the RSD procedure.
- UNHCR assumes responsibility for monitoring reception centres for asylum-seekers, and IOM monitors pre-removal centres where detained migrants are held pending the implementation of the expulsion order.

In 2007, a new centre was built on the island of Lampedusa to increase its reception capacity from 190 to 740 individuals. The new centre offers larger living spaces, heating and cooling systems, and a well equipped outpatient department which is open 24 hours a day.

### **D. Review**

The Praesidium Project formed part of an innovative operational model based on partnership between national authorities, multilateral agencies and local NGOs. As a result of its success in meeting the needs of individuals and assisting the Government of Italy in managing arrivals, the Praesidium model has been extended to the Sicilian coast, South-east Italy and to Sardinia (“Praesidium II”). The project was further extended to Bari, Crotone, Foggia and Sardinia to address the increase in irregular sea arrivals in Calabria and Sardinia (“Praesidium III”). The project is currently in its fourth phase (“Praesidium IV”).

Access to, and information provided by, individuals accommodated in the reception centres has led to a better understanding of the mixed movements in this region of the Mediterranean. The training provided to Italian border officials has improved their understanding of, and ability to, identify protection concerns. The presence of IOM and UNHCR at reception facilities has ensured that all arrivals are provided with relevant information and that they are referred to appropriate differentiated processes and procedures.

The project's future development is, however, uncertain due to a substantial change in the Ministry of Interior's policy vis-à-vis irregular maritime arrivals in early 2009. This new approach contains a number of restrictive measures, such as the creation of a detention centre for expulsion in Lampedusa and interdiction of boats transporting migrants and asylum-seekers on the high seas and returning them to Libya. These measures are likely to change the administrative and operational framework of the Praesidium Project.

In addition, it must be underlined that irregular migration to Southern Europe in particular decreased in 2009 and 2010. Available data indicate that sea arrivals in Italy will have decreased by as much as 80 per cent in 2010. Such a situation has consequences on the Praesidium Project. The project nevertheless provides an important model to be replicated elsewhere in order to address mixed movements.

### E. Further information

**Annex 3** – Agreement between the Ministry of Interior and UNHCR regarding the joint activities of the Ministry of Interior and UNHCR in Lampedusa

**Annex 4** – Tennant, V. and Janz, J., *UNHCR, Refugee Protection and International Migration: A Review of UNHCR's Operational Role in Southern Italy*, UNHCR, 2009

**Annex 5** – Médecins Sans Frontières, *Over the Wall: A Tour of Italy's Migration Centres*, 2010

## MALTA: BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF MALTA AND THE NETHERLANDS - COOPERATION FOR CAPACITY BUILDING ON RECEPTION ARRANGEMENTS 2005 – 2006

### A. Background and Rationale

Responding to Malta's call for European solidarity to address the challenges arising from the high number of maritime arrivals, the Dutch Central Organization for the Reception of Asylum-seekers (COA) agreed in 2005 to provide technical assistance to the Government of Malta to improve reception arrangements for undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers.

### B. Actors

- Emigrants Commission (Maltese NGO);
- EC;
- Government of Malta: Organization for the Integration and Welfare of Asylum-Seekers (OIWAS, now AWAS) within the Ministry of the Family and Social Solidarity and the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs (MJHA);
- Government of the Netherlands: Dutch Central Organization for the Reception of Asylum-seekers (COA); and
- UNHCR.

### C. Actions

The project has two main objectives, as outlined below.

1) Improve reception arrangements:

- COA organized missions to exchange best practices;
- COA provided on-the-job training to OIWAS;
- COA provided advice to OIWAS on how to improve reception conditions in June 2006; and
- UNHCR provided detailed information on the status of Malta's reception facilities.

2) Relocate from Malta to the Netherlands:

- In 2005, 36 individuals who had been granted refugee status in Malta were transferred to the Netherlands;
- UNHCR provided recommendations on the criteria and procedures for the transfer of refugees; and
- other countries (i.e. Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal and France) also offered a limited number of places for the relocation of refugees from Malta.

### D. Review

The project is a useful example of close and effective inter-State cooperation. It combines capacity-building activities, as well as the relocation of refugees from Malta to other States in an exercise of burden sharing. Relocation arrangements from Malta for an additional 255 refugees have been developed under the 2010-2011 EUREMA Project (Pilot Project for Intra-EU relocation from Malta), which involves cooperation among 11 EU Member States as well as UNHCR and IOM. Further, the upcoming Mare Nostrum Project, led by the Italian Ministry of Interior in collaboration with IOM and MJHA, will provide better operational assistance at reception centres to persons in need of international protection (e.g. by establishing common practices and procedures in Italy and Malta, and providing legal information, cultural and job orientation, and medical assistance).

### E. Further information

**Annex 6** – UNHCR Report on the Malta-The Netherlands Responsibility-sharing exercise, 10 April 2007

**Annex 7** – Cameron, B., *Asylum Policy in the European Union: An Examination of the Reception Conditions and Housing Facilities for Asylum-seekers in Malta*, 2010

## Malta: The Coordination and Provision of Welfare Services in Closed Centres (COPE)

COPE is a pilot project that was implemented in Malta from October 2008 to November 2009. The project aimed to provide a mechanism to improve the provision of social welfare services to improperly documented individuals in closed centres.

Activities included: developing counselling methods and intervention strategies to address psychological needs; providing care to persons with specific needs; developing a profiling tool to identify employment and educational skills for men and women in closed centres; offering gender-sensitive counselling sessions; developing a training programme, including language and skills training; providing recreational activities; and offering cultural orientation sessions.



The objective was to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees into society once released.

#### 4.2.5. Southern Africa

### **SOUTH AFRICA: STRENGTHENING RECEPTION CAPACITY IN MUSINA, 2009 – PRESENT**

#### **A. Background and Rationale**

Since 2008, the town of Musina, in the Limpopo province of South Africa, has witnessed a considerable influx of Zimbabwean refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers. The movement is caused, inter alia, by the deterioration of the situation in Zimbabwe as well as the opening of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) Refugee Reception Centre at the Musina Showgrounds in July 2008. Estimates of the number of persons registering for asylum through DHA in Musina ranged from 300 to 400 per day. Faced with a situation of almost crisis proportion, UNHCR and partners developed a number of responses building on local initiatives.

#### **B. Actors**

- UNHCR, UNICEF, and IOM;
- Médecins Sans Frontiers (MSF), Save the Children-UK, Jesuit Refugee Service;
- local NGOs, namely Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), Musina Legal Advice Office (MLAO) and local faith based organizations; and
- South African public authorities: DHA, the Department of Social Development (DSD), the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Musina Municipality.

#### **C. Actions**

- Provide asylum and migration-related information as well as information on services available in Musina (e.g. accommodation, access to health care, etc.);
- open two transitional shelters – one for women, the other for men;
- open a shelter for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and women at risk, and develop an informal referral and reporting mechanism; and
- provide accommodation to unaccompanied minors, and establish standard operating procedures for the assistance of unaccompanied minors.

#### **D. Review**

The situation in Musina was viewed initially as a short-term emergency. However, the number of arrivals has remained constant since March 2009. While the shelters provide essential services, conditions remain basic and significant improvements are still required in particular at the shelter for minors. There was improvement in the assistance provided by the DSD thanks to the strong mentorship provided by UNICEF and Save the Children-UK. Several task teams and reviews mechanisms were established by UNHCR and its partners, and basic requirements were established for the local organizations running protection programmes and shelters in Musina in order to ensure that international standards were met.

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## 4.2.6. South-eastern Europe

### **EASTERN EUROPE: INCREASING PUBLIC HEALTH SAFETY ALONGSIDE THE NEW EASTERN EUROPEAN BORDER LINE (PHBLM) 2007 – PRESENT**

#### **A. Background and Rationale**

The Increasing Public Health Safety Alongside the New Eastern European Border Line (PHBLM) Project aims to support appropriate health care as a fundamental human right for undocumented individuals entering the EU from its eastern borders. The objective is to minimize public health risks, and enhance the ability of border management and public health staff to address the health needs of migrants in detention.

#### **B. Actors**

- University of Pécs, Hungary;
- Andalusian School for Public Health;
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC);
- FRONTEX;
- IOM;
- World Health Organization (WHO); and
- targeted countries (Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as Romania).

#### **C. Actions**

- Provide a situational analysis of the current public health conditions and border management procedures along the eastern border of the EU.
- Improve access to health care for migrants in detention centres.
- Develop a training course for border officials and health professionals of the targeted countries.
- Establish minimum public health standards and propose structural changes for existing border management detention procedures.
- Develop guidelines for public health in the context of border management and detention, changes to the regulations relating to hygiene construction regulations, detention conditions, communication channels, and capacity of health/public health services in the border regions of the targeted countries.
- Disseminate lessons learnt to relevant public health and migration authorities of the targeted countries.

#### **D. Review**

Based on the situational analysis of the magnitude and nature of the current health hazards in border management and detention centres, training modules on migration and the right to health were developed for health-care professionals to ensure that public health concerns, health needs and the rights of migrants entering the EU along the eastern border line are adequately addressed.

#### **E. Further information**

Available at: <http://www.migrant-health-europe.org/>.

See also *Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Providers*, 2009, available at: [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=1&products\\_id=510](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=1&products_id=510).

## Albania: Transit Reception Facilities

Transit reception facilities have been established at 17 border crossing points in Albania. The “Unified Pre-screening Tool” is an operational tool used to identify and channel asylum-seekers, trafficked persons and economic migrants into appropriate processes and procedures.

For further details, see the Unified Pre-screening of Detained Migrants/CARDS Project in Chapter 5.

## TURKEY: “SATELLITE CITIES” - THE TURKISH EXPERIENCE 1987 – PRESENT

### A. Background and Rationale

The Turkish Government began implementing “Satellite Cities” in 1987 as a model to facilitate the release of asylum-seekers from detention centres pending determination of their status. The system is designed to accommodate asylum-seekers and refugees who are monitored by the Turkish police. There are currently 30 designated satellite cities in Turkey that receive asylum-seekers on a regular basis.

### B. Actors

- Minister of Interior, Turkey (MOI);
- Turkish police and detention staff; and
- UNHCR.

### C. Actions

- An asylum-seeker who applies for asylum while in detention is reported to the MOI. The MOI then instructs local staff to process the asylum application.
- Local staff conduct RSD interviews with asylum-seekers in detention centres and send their files to the MOI which then issues instruction to the local authorities to transfer the asylum-seeker to a designated satellite city within 15 days.
- The asylum-seeker is notified in writing by the local police of his/her transfer to a satellite city, and the written notification serves as a travel permit for the transfer to the satellite city.
- The released asylum-seeker is required to register upon arrival with the police at the designated satellite city and must subsequently present him/herself to the police on a regular basis.
- Once the asylum-seeker is released, s/he receives counselling and is informed about the next steps in the asylum procedure. The asylum-seeker is issued a residence permit, which serves as proof of legal residence in the country and entitles the holder to access all State basic services such as health, social assistance, and education.
- The asylum-seeker is free to choose his/her own accommodation and is entitled to work in the satellite city.
- UNHCR staff visit each satellite city to counsel asylum-seekers and to meet with the police and all relevant authorities, such as the Education Department, the State social assistance organizations, hospitals, schools, NGOs, etc.

- UNHCR has NGO partners in 26 satellite cities that provide support services to asylum-seekers. UNHCR also maintains an inter-active website which allows asylum-seekers to check their asylum applications and provides telephone counselling, as needed.

#### **D. Review**

The model of satellite cities allows for the release of asylum-seekers from detention and provides them with access to social services while in designated areas. It has reduced the stigma associated with detention, while ensuring that authorities retain control. Police actively monitor the asylum-seekers through regular reporting requirements either on a daily or weekly basis.

Although the system does not ensure freedom of movement throughout the country for asylum-seekers, it is nonetheless a preferred alternative to detention. If the released asylum-seekers wish to leave the satellite city for any reason, they need to request a travel permit from the Aliens' Police Department. In principle, asylum-seekers are entitled to work in the designated satellite city. However, obtaining a work permit is cumbersome and cultural and language barriers make it difficult for asylum-seekers to access the labour market.

#### **E. Further information**

**Annex 8** – UNHCR, "Satellite Cities" as an Alternative to Detention: the Turkish Experience

### **Council of Europe: Questionnaire and Draft Guidelines for Monitoring Visits by Parliamentarians**



The Questionnaire and Draft Guidelines for Monitoring Visits by Parliamentarians is a useful tool when visiting holding centres for irregular migrants and asylum-seekers in Europe. It highlights the types of issues that need to be examined in the context of monitoring reception centres established in response to the large influx of irregular movements.

**Annex 9** – Council of Europe, "Draft guidelines for parliamentarians when monitoring holding centres for irregular migrants and asylum seekers", 2007

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