



EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

Second Focussed Study 2013

The Organisation of Reception Facilities for Asylum Seekers in the different Member States

Common Template



The Second Focussed Study 2013 is co-funded by the EU and the Greek Ministry of Interior in the context of the European Migration Network

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We would like to thank for their cooperation the Group for the Receipt and Evaluation of the Study at the National Contact Point of the European Migration Network in the Ministry of Interior:

a) Vitsentzatos Athanassios

b) Kosmidis Michael

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We would also like to thank for his overall support and for information provided by Mr Christos Dimopoulos, Head of the Housing Management Service for Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Juveniles, Division of Social Intervention of the National Centre for Social Solidarity, Ministry of Labour Social Security and Welfare. Additionally, we would like to thank the NGOs Arsis, Medicines Du Monde and Hellenic Red Cross for providing information in relation to reception facilities for asylum seekers, which they manage.

The European Migration Network (EMN) was established in 2003, originally as a preparatory action of the European Commission, with the aim to provide the European Commission and the Member States with objective, reliable, comparable and up-to-date data on migration and asylum, so as to underpin European Union policy-making and consequently national policies of the Member States in these areas. In turn, the Council of the EU, in 2008, with the Council Decision 381/2008/EC founded the EMN, as a permanent structure, operating within the European Commission, with the participation of Member States in order to achieve these goals.

More information on the EMN and its work can be found on the website

www.europa.eu

or on the Greek website

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This study was conducted with the financial support of the European Union and the Ministry of Interior within the scope the European Migration Network. The research contents are of the sole responsibility of the author. In any case, the European Union and the Ministry of the Interior cannot be held liable for any use of the information made by third parties.

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Acronyms

DG	Directorate General
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
NCSS	National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA)
ERF	European Refugee Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FRC	First Reception Centers
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
m-s	Member state
NB	National Budget
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PD	Presidential Decree
GG	Governmental Gazette

Definitions

The following key terms, principally coming from Directive 2003/9/EC, Directive 2011/95/EU, and the EMN Glossary, used in the Common Template are defined as follows:

Accommodation centre means any place used for collective housing of asylum seekers. (Source: Article 2 (l), Directive 2003/9/EC and the EMN Glossary)

Applicant for international protection means a third-country national or a stateless person who has made an application for international protection in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken. (Source: Article 2 (i), Directive 2011/95/EU)

Application for international protection means a request made by a third-country national or a stateless person for protection from a Member State, who can be understood to seek refugee status or subsidiary protection status, and who does not explicitly request another kind of protection outside the scope of Directive 2011/95/EU that can be applied for separately. (Source Article 2 (h) Directive 2011/95/EU)

Country of origin means the country or countries of nationality, or, for stateless persons, of former habitual residence. (Source Article 2 (n) Directive 2011/95/EU)

Final decision refers to a decision on whether the third-country national or stateless person be granted refugee status by virtue of Directive 2011/95/EU and which is no longer subject to a remedy within the framework of Chapter V of this Directive irrespective of whether such remedy has the effect of allowing applicants to remain in the Member States concerned pending its outcome, subject to Annex III to this Directive. (Source: EMN Glossary)

Gender refers to the socially constructed attributes, roles, activities, responsibilities and needs predominantly connected to being male or female in given societies or communities at a given time. (Source: EMN Glossary)

Material reception conditions mean the reception conditions that include housing, food and clothing, provided in kind, or as financial allowances or in vouchers, and a daily expenses allowance. (Source: Article 2 (j), Directive 2003/9/EC and the EMN Glossary)

Reception conditions mean the full set of measures that Member States grant to applicants for international protection in accordance with Directive 2003/9/EC. (Source: Article 2 (i), Directive 2003/9/EC and the EMN Glossary)

Reception facilities refer to all forms of premises used for the housing of applicants for international protection.

Unaccompanied minors means a minor who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the member State concerned and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into care of such a person; it includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States. (Source: Article (l), Directive 2011/95/EU)

Vulnerable persons refers to minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. (Source: Article 17, Directive 2003/9/EC and the EMN Glossary)

Aim of the study

Despite introduction of harmonised reception standards at EU level via the Reception Conditions Directive of 27 January 2003, and concomitant codification in national legislation, Member States have difficulty to ensure (similar) reception conditions in practice. Such difficulties consist of, on the one hand, shortages of available places for applicants and, on the other hand, differentiation of reception conditions between Member States or even at sub-state level.

(Member) States are presented with different challenges, due to both external as well as internal factors which place considerable pressure on the reception systems.

These challenges require an organisation of reception facilities sufficiently *flexible* to adapt to fluctuating numbers and to react promptly to sudden high influxes while maintaining *quality* standards for reception conditions. In this context flexibility, efficiency, cost control and the quality of reception facilities are interlinked..

Taking the aforementioned into account, this study aims at informing the target audience, the Commission and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on the organisation of reception facilities for applicants for international protection in the different (Member) States, identifying good practices and existing mechanisms for efficient, flexible reception facilities whilst maintaining the quality of such reception facilities and controlling costs.

EMN FOCUSSED STUDY 2013

The Organisation of Reception Facilities for Asylum Seekers in different Member States

Top-line “Factsheet”
(National Contribution)
Executive Summary
(Synthesis Report)

National contribution

Overview of the National Contribution – introducing the study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections of the Focussed Study, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policymakers.

The Focussed Study at hand aims at informing the target audience, the Commission and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on the organisation of reception facilities for applicants for international protection in Greece, identifying good practices and existing mechanisms for efficient, flexible reception facilities whilst maintaining the quality of such reception facilities and controlling costs.

Approximately 55.000 asylum applications are pending today, whereas the Asylum Service and the Appeals Authority were launched only last June, following hard criticism by representatives and high rank officials of the EU, international organizations and NGOs¹. In 2012 9.575 applicants arrived at Greece and 1.279 applicants for international protection were allocated mainly at Accommodation Centres, rented flats and hotel rooms, arranged and paid by the responsible authorities. Criteria employed for the allocation are the profile of the applicant (minor, vulnerable person etc) in relation with the availability at appropriate reception facility for him/her.

Responsible state authority for the allocation of applicants and the management of reception facilities issues in general is the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) at Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare/Division of Social Perception and Solidarity is also designated as the Responsible state authority for the European Refugee Fund. The collective accommodation centers, run by external service providers, are co-funded by the ERF and the National Budget, with the exemption of two centers established by Presidential Decree and funded by the National Budget. It is notable though that the majority of the reception facilities operate or even exist in the context of time- and aim-specific programmes and fragmented funding due to bureaucracy may have a crucial impact on them.

External Service Providers are responsible for day-to-day operation of the centers and the realization of the material reception conditions within the legal framework of PD 220/2007 and the individual Programme Agreement they have concluded with EKKA. Until recently central coordination was limited to the fundamentals. Since March 2012 a central database is launched with statistics on available capacity and on inflow/outflow of applicants, that offers a comprehensive picture of the reception facilities network and better respond to crises.

Synthesis Report

According to Eurostat published statistics, Greece has received from 2008 to 2012 a total of 64,971 applicants for international protection. Only during 2012, asylum seekers amounted to 9,575, while

¹ For further information regarding asylum in Greece for 2012 see: “Annual Policy Report 2012” (Greece), European Migration Network, July 2013 .

<http://emn.intrasoft-intl.com/Downloads/prepareShowFiles.do;jsessionid=8766A669E40C159E2DEA055BF96BD0CE?entryTitle=01.%20Annual%20Policy%20Report%202012>

in the same year only 1,279 applicants for international protection were placed in a reception facility. It should be noted that these 1,279 placements include applicants who came to Greece in previous years and were awaiting of their request for international protection to be examined as well as their being placed in a reception facility.

These statistics reveal vividly the pressure in the system of reception facilities for asylum seekers in the country and give an initial idea for the individual dimensions of the placement of applicants in the appropriate facility type. Delays in the processing of international protection requests and in the placement of applicants in a reception facility are aggravated because Greece is in a transitional stage regarding its asylum system as of June 2013 when the new Asylum Service (Law 3907/2011²) has become fully functional. At the same time there is an ongoing examination of pending applications (55,000 in December 2012) under the procedure of the old asylum system provided by PD 114/2010³.

It is evident, that although the Greek legislation with PD 220/2007⁴, "Adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in Member States (OJ L 31/6.2.2003)" complies with EU law, in practice Greece is one of the member states facing the greatest difficulties in providing similar reception conditions with the other Member States.

These difficulties are due to, firstly, deficit of availability, and secondly, diversification of reception facilities. Specifically, the types of host structures in Greece are: collective open reception centers, special reception centers for vulnerable groups, unaccompanied minors' reception centers, private homes or apartments and hotel rooms, and distinct areas in First Reception Center for the illegal aliens that apply for international protection. The majority of the reception facilities are managed by non-state actors and financed by the European Refugee Fund and national resources. Exceptions are the centers, which were established by Presidential Decree and funded by the state budget. However, the financial responsibility rests with the state authorities and in particular DG of Social Welfare and Solidarity / D / Department of Social Awareness and Solidarity, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, which is the managing authority for the European Refugee Fund. First Receptions Centres are an exemption as they are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (Law 3907/2011).

These structures are further differentiated, even within the same type of structure, because each managing authority (for example NGOs) implements in the facilities that they manage the provisions of the individual Programmatic Agreement, which they have signed with the National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) which is the competent department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare. Consequently they do not implement uniform operating rules for all reception facilities, which follow the general legislation on reception conditions for asylum seekers and ad hoc funding agreements. Therefore, the reception conditions vary considerably in different reception facilities.

Regarding the quality of the reception facilities, there were widespread criticism from

² GG. A-7/26.01.2011, L.3907/2011 "Establishment of Asylum Service and First Reception Service, adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Directive 2008/115/EC" on common standards and procedures in Member - States returning illegally staying third-country nationals "and other provisions."

³ GG A 195/22.11.2010, PD 114/10 'A uniform identification process to aliens and stateless of the refugee status or subsidiary protection ', in compliance with Directive 2005/85/EC

⁴ GG A' 251/2007, PD 220/2007, "Adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in Member States (EEL 31/6.2.2003)"

representatives of international organizations, following visits to centres which accommodates asylum seekers (Commissioner EU Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström⁵, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants, F. Crépeau⁶) and by members of the Hellenic Parliament in the form of enquiries during the parliamentary scrutiny. Also, scientific studies and reports of NGOs adequately analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in the country.

The flexibility of the Greek reception facilities of asylum seekers should be examined in the light that since their creation they are constantly under great pressure and the availability of beds is consistently far below demand. Aggravating factors exacerbate the situation are clearly the geographical position of the country, external factors such as returns under the Dublin II, at least until the judgement of the case *MSS vs Belgium and Greece*; the turmoil in neighbouring areas of North Africa and the Middle East; structural problems of national asylum system, which extend the stay of asylum seekers in the country and in accommodation centers and especially the present fiscal crisis.

However, by the end of 2011 when NCSS⁷ became the coordinating authority for reception facilities for asylum seekers, coordination in cases of extraordinary pressure has significantly improved, while the inauguration of databases which give real time data regarding availability is a prerequisite for further efforts of improving the crisis management systems.

In conclusion, the organization of the reception facilities of asylum seekers in Greece although it is adequately regulated through legislative institutions, in practice it is proved unable to meet the standards set. Indicatively, it is mentioned that despite given pressure there is prioritisation of housing requests of unaccompanied minors by placing them into centres regardless of whether they have filed an asylum application, providing free hospital care in emergency or non-emergency events, and registering them in school irrespective of their legal status. Also, by prioritising requests based on the vulnerability of cases, vulnerable groups are protected by their placement in a reception facility. On the other hand, the greatest weakness of the reception facilities system is its deficiency in beds, followed by the lack of uniform operating regulations in the centers and of methods of quality control in the facilities.

Section 1

Different types of Reception Facilities and different Actors

Q1. Please indicate in Table 1 below what type of reception facilities exist in your (Member) State.

In case your (Member) State offers a different type of facility which is not listed in the table below, please include and describe this by adding additional rows to the table below. Please also indicate how many of these facilities exist and indicate what their capacity is and how many applicants were accommodated in these facilities per year starting from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2012.

Should your (Member) State not be able to provide the maximum capacity, please provide a brief explanation for this and specify the actual number of applicants accommodated in a certain type of facility on an annual basis for the period 2008-2012.

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/ellada/press-center/news/archives/news_20121005_malmstrom_episkepsi_el.htm

⁶ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12858&LangID=E>

⁷ GG 2016 t II / 9-9-2-11, MD 93510/28-07-2011, "Assignment of the Management System of housing applications of aliens seeking asylum in the National Centre for Social Solidarity"

Answers concerning the open accommodation centres, rented flats and hotel rooms are drawn from the Annual report 2012 by EKKA, the website of UNHCR-Greece on accommodation centres and information provided by external service providers (NGO ARSIS, Medicines du Monde, Hellenic Red Cross) following respective query to them, and the Press. Collective open accommodation centres include all categories that are later individually discussed. By March 2012 there was no responsible government authority to keeping statistics regarding the accommodation of applicants for international protection. The data shown for the previous period have been collected by NGOs that manage reception facilities. Indicative data for previous years regarding accommodation centers for unaccompanied minors have been obtained by external service provider managing such centers

Table 1 Different types of Reception Facilities

Type of accommodation	Does this type of facility exist in your Member State?	If so, how many of these facilities existed at the end of 2012?	Specify the maximum number of applicants the facilities could accommodate	Number of applicants accommodated in such facilities per year during 2008-2012
Collective initial/transit reception centres	Yes. Law 3907/2011, art. 6 et seq provides for the establishment of First Reception Centres, but respective provisions came into force in March 2013.	None. The first First Reception Centre was launched in March 2013.	N/A	0
Collective open reception centres⁸	Yes	16 (inclusive of special types of reception facilities referred below)	1200	2012: 1279 out of 2264 applicants were allocated but applicants from previous years were also being accommodated.
Special reception centres or facilities for vulnerable groups (e.g. victims of torture or specific vulnerable female applicants)	Yes	At least 4 (unaccompanied girls, single-parent families, victims of trafficking)	124	2012: 279 (88 single-parent families)
Special separate reception centres for unaccompanied minors	Yes. Very young minors (under the age of 15) are not included in this category, as they may be accommodated in facilities for	9	Approx 328	2012: in total 601 minors-new applicants were allocated (801 out of 823 were originally allocated). Due to sudden departures,

⁸ Open centres means that applicants are free to enter and leave the centre whenever they want.

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	child protection such as Agios Andreas Kalamakiou, Hamogelo tou Paidiou (PD 266/1999, art. 7)			fluctuation in facilities for minors should also be taken into account. At the 3 open accommodation centres run by ARSIS: 2008: 31 2009: 94 2010: 116 2011: 168 2012: 168
Private houses or flats: arranged and paid for by competent authorities	Yes	At least 24. Arranged by NGOs in the context of respective housing programmes or undertaking of urgent measures, or <i>ad hoc</i> by local government.	118	N/A
Private hotels: arranged and paid for by competent authorities	Yes. On an <i>ad hoc</i> basis, as part of housing programmes run by NGOs or as immediate arrangement to tackle emergency cases.	At least 2 hotels.	N/A	N/A
Individually arranged accommodation such as houses, flats, hotels and/or possibilities of staying with friends and/or family⁹	Yes. In very few cases inadequate financial allowance (e.g. 120 euro/month) for a limited period of time was given by the state authorities to rent a place	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other premises for the purpose of accommodating applicants for international	No	-	-	-

⁹ Please specify whether applicants receive (or have the possibility of receiving) a financial allowance in case they have individually arranged their accommodation.

protection which are arranged and paid for by the competent authorities			
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Q2. Which authority (ies) carry financial responsibility over the reception facilities?

- (a) State authorities**
- (b) Local authorities / regional governments**
- (c) External service provider such as NGOs, actors from the private sector or any other kind of third party involvement?**

The vast majority of reception facilities are run by non state actors and co-funded by the European Refugee Fund and the National Budget, with the exemption of the accommodation centres that have been established by Presidential Decree, and are funded by the National Budget (STATE ACCOUNT Φ220 KAE 5216). Overall financial responsibility is carried upon by the responsible state authorities. In particular, during the period 2008-2011 by virtue of L. 3613/2007, Directorate of Social Welfare and Solidarity/Division of Social Perception and Solidarity at Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity was designated as the Responsible state authority for the European Refugee Fund and the management of asylum applicants' allocation and accommodation. By virtue of L. 4052/2012 the Division of Social Perception and Solidarity and its responsibilities were transferred to the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare at the beginning of 2012.

In the case that a non state authority -NGO or local authority- is entitled funding by the ERF and the State for implementing a specific housing programme for asylum seekers (running an accommodation centre, arranging and being charged for hotel rooms or flats), then this authority as well as the responsible state authority shall be audited by the responsible Directorate (41st) of the General State Accounts Office at the Ministry of Finance (L. 3613/2007¹⁰).

First Reception Centres fall within the responsibility of Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection as it provided in Law 3907/2011.

Q3. Which authorities carry executive responsibility¹¹ over the facilities:

- (a) State authorities**
- (b) Local authorities / regional government**
- (c) External service provider such as NGOs, actors from the private sector or any other kind of third party involvement?**

According to Article 1, paragraph 1δ of PD 220/2007¹² "Adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in Member States (EE L 31/6.2.2003)", the executive responsibility for reception facilities lies with the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. As already mentioned the transfer of the responsible Directorate from Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Welfare (L. 4052/2012) entailed the transfer of the responsibility over the reception facilities to the latter, too. Nevertheless, authorities, such as NGOs, designated in charge of a certain

¹⁰ L. 3613/2007 "Provisions concerning Independent Authorities, General Inspector of Public Administration, Inspector Auditor of Public Administration and other matters concerning the Ministry of Interior, GG. 263/A/23.11.2007

¹¹ Executive responsibility refers to the day-to-day running of the reception facilities and would also for example include including quality control of the services provided in the facility.

¹² PD 220/2007, "Adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in Member States (OJ L 31/6.2.2003)" GG A' 251/2007

reception facility, receiving funding from the ERF and the National Budget, carry the executive responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the reception facility. Modalities of this responsibility are defined in the context of the respective agreement concluded with the state authority¹³.

Q4. In case reception facilities are run by local authorities/regional governments or with the involvement of an external service provider (e.g. NGOs or actors from civil society), please indicate whether the reception facilities are centrally coordinated (i.e. does one single authority still carry overall responsibility for the reception of applicants for international protection?)

Yes. According to PD 220/2007 transposing into Greek legal order Directive 2003/9/EC, overall responsibility for the reception of applicants for international protection and the coordination of stakeholders is carried centrally by the responsible state authority, i.e. since 2012 the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare/Directorate of Social Welfare/Division of Social Perception and Solidarity (National Centre for Social Solidarity)¹⁴. However, since the executive responsibility is held by various third party providers (NGOs), and given that there is no uniform regulation for the operation of all reception facilities, due inter alia to differentiated establishment conditions the specifics of hosting vary significantly from structure to structure.

Q5. In case reception facilities are run by local authorities/regional governments or with involvement of an external service provider (e.g. NGOs or actors from civil society), how is their involvement regulated?

Have any formal coordination mechanisms between the different actors been signed (for example cooperation agreements stipulating the division of competences)?

Yes. The involvement of external service providers (NGOs and others) in the operation of the reception facilities is regulated on a case-by-case basis, depending on the provisions of the individual *Programme Agreement* concluded between the external service provider and the Division of Social Perception and Solidarity, Department for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers at the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Welfare. By virtue of Ministerial Decision 93510/28-07-2011 (GG B 2016/2011) coordination of the third parties involved in the *system for managing accommodation applications* submitted by the applicants for international protection at stake was assigned by the Ministry of Health to the National Center for Social Solidarity (today at Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare)¹⁵.

With regard to Centers of First Reception, Law 3907/2011¹⁶, art. 9 par.5 provides for the involvement of civil society actors that fulfill certain criteria of quality and security and are registered in the respective record to-be-established at the Headquarters of the First Reception Service.

Section 2

Take up of Reception Facilities: Factors determining access to the different types of facilities

Q6. Please provide a short overview of which applicants for international protection are entitled to reception facilities provided by the State. Please complete Table 2 below:

¹³ Interviewee 1

¹⁴ Interviewee 1

¹⁵ <http://www.ekka.org.gr/EKKA!show.action?type=estia>

¹⁶ GG A-7/26.01.2011, n.3907/2011 "Establishment of the Asylum Service and the first reception service, adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Directive 2008/115/EC:" on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals "and other provisions"

Answers draw information from PD 220/2007, PD 114/2010 and Interviewees 1,2,3,4.

Table 2 Categories of applicants entitled to reception facilities

Different categories of applicants depending on type/stage of procedure	Entitled to reception facilities (Yes/No)	Are these applicants entitled to standard or specific reception facilities¹⁷?
Applicants under Dublin II¹⁸	Yes	Standard reception facilities
Applicants in admissibility procedures¹⁹	Yes	Standard reception facilities
Applicants subject to accelerated procedures	Yes	Standard reception facilities
Vulnerable groups of applicants²⁰ (with specific psychological/medical assistance needs)	Yes	Standard reception facilities
Unaccompanied minors awaiting decision for international protection	Yes	Minors' reception facilities
Unaccompanied minors who have exhausted the procedure for international protection and are awaiting return	Yes	Minors' reception facilities
Applicants who have lodged an appeal procedure	Yes	Standard reception facilities
Applicants who have lodged a subsequent application	Yes	Standard reception facilities
Applicants who have received a positive decision on their international protection application²¹	Yes, they may stay 30 days after the notification of a positive reply.	Standard reception facilities
Applicants who have exhausted the procedure for international protection and who are awaiting return	Formal procedure provides for reception facilities for the applicants for international protection. In practice though an applicant is not automatically expelled after having received a rejection, on social grounds.	Standard reception facilities
Other (e.g. applicants from other EU Member States, families with	Apart from asylum seekers, minors are the only group	Minors' reception facilities.

¹⁷ Specific reception facilities refer to facilities which divert from mainstream reception facilities, e.g. depending on the type of applicant, or stage/procedure.

¹⁸ Applicants under Dublin II means those applicants for which a Dublin procedure has been initiated and who are awaiting a Dublin decision determining the responsible country for examining the asylum claim.

¹⁹ Admissibility procedures refer to the stage of the application in which (Member) States determine whether an application will or will not be considered in substance based on the criteria laid down in Article 25 of Directive 2005/85/EC (the Asylum Procedures Directive) which stipulates circumstances in which Member States are allowed to declare application as inadmissible and are subsequently not required to examine the application.

²⁰ The Reception Conditions Directive makes reference to the following categories of applicants under vulnerable groups: unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, persons who have been subjected to torture, rape, or other serious forms of psychological, physical, or sexual violence.

²¹ If possible please specify for what duration they are still entitled to reception facilities.

children with an irregular migrant status, applicants from safe third countries of origin etc. Please specify)	entitled to accommodation irrespective of its legal status.	
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Q7. From the aforementioned categories of applicants who are entitled to reception, can any be excluded from reception facilities for particular reasons (e.g. because the applicant has sufficient financial means, or because the applicant has misbehaved in a reception facility, or any other reasons)?

The reception facilities have each its own operation regulation, which the applicant for international protection accepts by signature upon arrival at the accommodation center. The practice is that if it is established that one has sufficient financial resources he/she is excluded by housing benefits²². Also if he/she leaves the facility where he/she was placed by the Central Authority without informing or without permission, where required he/she may be expelled. Still, he/she can be excluded if he/she does not comply with reporting duties or he/she does not respond to a request for information or to appear in the examination of the application process of personal interview within the period laid down. In case of the disappearance of the applicant, who voluntarily contacts the competent authority the Central Authority shall issue adequately reasoned decision, on the renewal of the grant of some or all reception conditions, taking into account the reasons for the disappearance. The decision is notified to the applicant²³.

In case of violation of the regulations of the facility, the applicant shall be informed in writing by the Director of the Center for the consequences of his/her actions, and in particular regarding his/her expel from the facility, in accordance with the rules²⁴.

Against the decision of expel from the Reception Center the applicant may, within five days after service of the decision to appeal it before the Board of the Organisation, which is responsible for the operation of the accommodationcenter. The decision on appeal shall be issued within five days after the appeal and it is served to the applicant.

The Director of the Centre may request the assistance of the police when the applicant notified for the final decision of expel refuses to comply.

Decisions to limit, suspend or refusal of reception conditions and in particular those concerning people with disabilities, are specifically justified and until their issue the supply of material reception conditions is not limited and it is not cut off. These material reception conditions are limited or interrupted only to the extent that is expressly provided in the relevant decision. In any case access to emergency health care is ensured.

However this does not apply to the minors' group; in case minors misbehave, they are transferred to another minors' reception facility (PD 220/2007 and Dimitropoulou & Papageorgiou, 2008)²⁵.

Q8. a) Does your (Member) State carry out an assessment of vulnerability which could result in assignment to special reception facilities for vulnerable groups of applicants?

Yes. In 2011 the National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA)²⁶ was assigned the responsibility of collecting and managing applications for allocation at reception facilities, submitted originally by

²² Interviewee 1

²³ Interviewee 3

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Interviewee 1

the applicants for international protection and unaccompanied minors to public authorities or cooperating providers of reception and social support services for the target group, and forwarded in turn accordingly. In this context EKKKA has developed standard *vulnerability evaluation forms*, which have been distributed to actors/external service providers/authorities dealing with applicants and designated as responsible to forward applications for allocation at reception facilities. These forms are forwarded to EKKKA along with the rest documents of the applicant's file. Subsequently, EKKKA prioritizes applications depending on their vulnerability by employing *standardized evaluation tables*, drafted on the grounds of international standards, experience and the theory on vulnerability evaluation. The vulnerability of each situation in combination with space availability results to allocation of an asylum seeker at a respective reception facility. (Interviewee 1)

Q8. b) If yes, please indicate whether the assessment of vulnerability is:

a) Obligatory and laid down in law

Yes. According to P.D. 220/2007, "Adaptation of Greek legislation to the provisions of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in Member States (EEL 31/6.2.2003)" art.17 it is provided that in applying the provisions of Chapter B concerning reception conditions, the competent authorities and the local authorities arrange for the special treatment of applicants belonging to vulnerable groups such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, the elderly, pregnant women, single parents with minor children and persons who have undergone torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.

b) Standard practice (Yes/No)

c) Optional (Yes/No)

Q9. Which authority/(ies) carry responsibility for deciding on the allocation of applicants for international protection to different reception facilities?

NCSS (National Centre for Social Solidarity)²⁷ holds since 2011 by virtue of Ministerial Decision 93510/28-7-2011(GG2016 B/9-9-2011) the exclusive responsibility of allocating applicants of international protection to reception facilities. In particular the Housing Management Service for asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors gathers all housing requests as well as the social profile of the applicants. Subsequently, they allocate applicants taking into consideration the particular situation of each applicant and the availability of the reception facilities.

Q10. How do these authorities allocate applicants to different types of reception facilities?

Please state whether one of the scenarios below, or a combination thereof, are applicable to your (Member) State and briefly describe:

i) Capacity;

Yes.

ii) Dispersal Mechanism;

Yes.

iii) Type of asylum procedure;

²⁶ GG 2016 t II / 9-9-2-11, MD 93510/28-07-2011, "Assignment of the Management System of housing applications of aliens seeking asylum in the National Centre for Social Solidarity"

²⁷ <http://www.ekka.org.gr/EKKA!show.action?type=estia>

No.

iv) Stage of asylum procedure;

No.

v) Profile of the asylum applicant;

Yes.

vi) Duration of the asylum procedure;

Yes.

vii) Other criteria (e.g. family composition)?

Yes. When allocating applicants EKKKA takes into account primarily space availability (beds) for the specific applicant, based on his/her profile and especially whether it is about a vulnerable person or a minor. The waiting period for the applicant to find a place in the appropriate reception facility is also taken into consideration. Modalities of his/her transport to the reception facility (geographical distance between the applicant and the reception facility) are also determinants. In particular with reference to minors, the availability of an escort for the minor's transport to the facility is also taken into account.

Q11. Is the process for assignment of applicants to different reception facilities:

a) Laid down in legislation (Yes/No);

Presidential Decree 220/2007, which transposed into the Greek Legal Order Directive 2003/9/EC laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers, foresees in article 6 par. 2 that an asylum seeker possessing no housing or adequate resources to meet his housing needs, shall have access to accommodation in an Accommodation Center or other place, in accordance to provisions of par. 3, after having submitted an application to the authorities competent for collecting and examining these applications. Par. 3 of the same article outlines the procedure according to which Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity informs the responsible Central Authority (today NCSS) of the available Accommodation Centers and other places deemed as appropriate to accommodate asylum seekers. Allocation at the accommodation facilities is realized by the Central Authority (today NCSS), after having taken into consideration protection of family life, operation of agencies for social services, perseverance of harmonious relations among the applicants, ability to transfer applicants to the place of residence where they have been assigned.

Furthermore, PD 220/2207 includes clear provisions for the allocation of specific categories of asylum seekers at the appropriate reception facilities. To be more specific, according to article 17 responsible authorities and local self-administration agencies provide for the special treatment of vulnerable asylum-seekers such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.

Special care is taken for minors in general and unaccompanied minors in particular. According to art. 18 par. 2 responsible authorities for reception and accommodation of asylum seekers ensure access to rehabilitation services for minors who have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, or who have suffered from armed conflicts, and ensure that appropriate mental health care is developed and qualified counselling is provided when needed. By virtue of art. 19 par. 2 (a) and (b) responsible authorities for accommodation shall also ensure that unaccompanied minors are placed with adult relatives, with a foster-family, in accommodation centres with

special provisions for minors, (d) in other accommodation suitable for minors and are protected from trafficking or exploitation. As far as possible, siblings shall be kept together, taking into account the best interests of the minor concerned and, in particular, his or her age and degree of maturity.

Likewise, there is a special provision for the victims of torture and violence: art. 20 par. 1 provides that responsible authorities shall ensure that, if necessary, persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious acts of violence receive the necessary treatment of damages caused by the aforementioned acts.

In a nutshell, the procedure of allocating and finally accommodating asylum seekers in the appropriate facilities results from the provisions for receiving/examining and replying to an application for accommodation and the respective cooperation of the involved actors (state and non state). Within this procedure, at present, NCSS has a crucial role.

b) Outlined in soft law/guidelines (Yes/No);

c) Not outlined in official documents, but there is a standard practice in place (Yes/No)

Q12. Provided there is sufficient capacity, does your (Member) State offer the applicant a choice for reception facility/location?

In practical terms it is a common place that capacity is inadequate for satisfying all applications for accommodation at a reception facility. In turn a personal choice is limited not to say unrealistic.

In any case, it is a basic principle that care should be taken at Accommodation Centers so that family members are lodged together (art. 7 and 13 of PD 220/2007). Furthermore special care should be taken so that minor children of applicants or applicants who are minors are lodged with their parents or with the adult family member responsible for them or other person responsible for them, whether by law or by custom, taking into account respect for their particularities with the aim of an harmonious coexistence.

It is a fundamental principle of the system for managing accommodation applications, as already mentioned in other answers, to allocate asylum applicants at the most appropriate Accommodation Center on the basis of their demographic features and their inclusion or not in the categories of asylum seekers with special needs.

Q13. a) Does your (Member) State provide for a possibility to relocate applicants for international protection to different reception facilities after initial assignment to a reception centre?

Yes. Article 13 par. 8 PD 220/2007 provides for the transfer of asylum applicants under the supervision and support of the Central Authority (today NCSS), only if this is necessary, informing respectively their legal advisers of the transfer and the new address of asylum applicants.

The same article par. 2 foresees that housing at Accommodation Centers cannot be longer than one year. After this period applicants shall be facilitated so that they find the appropriate private housing facility.

Especially regarding unaccompanied minors it is stressed that changes of accommodation should be limited to the minimum (article 19 par 2 (d)).

Q13. b) If yes, which of the below criteria are applied, or a combination thereof, for relocation to a different reception centre:

- i) ***Capacity/bed management issues*** Yes
- ii) ***Change in family profile (e.g. birth of a child)*** Yes

- iii) **Medical or special need reasons** Yes
- iv) **Incidents at centres which may require transfer to alternative accommodation** Yes
- v) **Time limits (procedural-driven)** Yes
- vi) **Programme for voluntary return to the country of origin** Yes
- vii) **Any other reasons?** In exceptional cases a minor may be transferred to another facility reception so as to have access to specialised educational institute²⁸. (Interviewee 1)

Section 3 Quality:
National Legislation on Material Reception Conditions

Q14. According to national legislation in your (Member) State, what are applicants for international protection who are accommodated in reception facilities entitled to in terms of the following reception conditions:

- a) **Food;** Yes
- b) **Clothing;** Yes
- c) **Financial allowance**²⁹.

Art. 12 PD 220/2007 is the legal provision that corresponds to art 13 of the Directive 2003/9/EC. Specifically, art. 12 provides that authorities responsible for the material reception conditions ensure certain living standards mainly relevant to the health, the basic needs of the applicants and the protection of their fundamental rights. This provision is inclusive of the applicants with special needs as well as those under detention conditions. In case the applicant is over 67% handicapped, and he cannot be accommodated in an accommodation centre then he receives a respective allowance during the process of his application. In case the applicant possesses sufficient financial means, he is not entitled some or any of the aforementioned material reception conditions and healthcare. Criteria for sufficient means are defined by Legislative Decree 57/1973 and relevant Decisions.

Q15. Please indicate in Table 3 below for each type of reception facility in place in your (Member) State: the available surface per applicant (in square meters); the supervision rate (number of staff per applicant); and specify whether applicants have the possibility to take part in organised leisure activities.

Data is drawn by relevant legislative texts, Dimitropoulou & Papageorgiou 2008:58 et seq, Interviews.

Table 3 Other quality criteria for reception facilities that relate to the applicant’s experience of being accommodated in a reception facility

<i>Type of accommodation</i>	<i>Available surface per applicant in square meters</i>	<i>Supervision rate (number of staff per applicant)</i>	<i>Possibility of leisure activities? Yes/No. If yes, briefly describe</i>
Collective initial/transit reception centres	At least 4 m ² per person (Internal Regulation 7001/2/1454η/24-1-2013, Ministerial	406 are provided in total.	Yes

²⁸ Eg Minor whose mother tongue is French who was moved to a facility near a French school to complete high school and be able to continue his studies (interviewee 1).

²⁹ Please explain what costs the financial allowance is intended to cover (e.g. does it cover accommodation costs, does it include pocket money etc) and specify whether the financial allowance is provided de facto and/or whether it can be used to remunerate applicants who carry out work (small tasks) within the reception facility.

	Decision, art. 20 par. 5)		
<i>Collective open reception centres</i>		<p>Lavrio Accommodation Centre (est. by PD 266/1999): the Director and max 26 employees, including social service.</p> <p>At the other accommodation centres, which are run mainly by NGOs, apart from the Director, the number of employees is not stable. However, certain categories of personnel are ensured (cook, cleaner, administrative support, security, social service or psychologist). Ad hoc teacher for Greek language (applicants speaking the language teach the others esp. at facilities accommodating minors), legal support, translator.</p>	<p>Yes. Sport activities (football, tae-kwon-do etc), educational activities, cinema, excursions.</p>
<i>Special reception centres or facilities for vulnerable groups (e.g. victims of torture or specific vulnerable female applicants)</i>		<p>Apart from the Director, the number of employees is not stable. However, certain categories of personnel are ensured (cook, cleaner, administrative support,</p>	<p>Yes. Sport activities (football, tae-kwon-do etc), educational activities, cinema, excursions</p>

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		security, social service or psychologist). Ad hoc teacher for Greek language (applicants speaking the language teach the others esp. at facilities accommodating minors), legal support, translator.	
<i>Special separate reception centres for unaccompanied minors</i>		Apart from the Director, the number of employees is not stable. However, certain categories of personnel are ensured (cook, cleaner, administrative support, security, social service or psychologist). Ad hoc teacher for Greek language (applicants speaking the language teach the others esp. at facilities accommodating minors), legal support, translator.	Yes. Sport activities (football, tae-kwon-do etc), educational activities, cinema, excursions.
<i>Private houses or flats: arranged and paid for by competent authorities</i>			
<i>Private hotels: arranged and paid for by competent authorities</i>			
<i>Individually arranged accommodation such as houses, flats, hotels and/or possibilities of staying with friends and/or family</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Other premises for the purpose of accommodating applicants for international</i>	No		

<i>protection which are arranged and paid for by the competent authorities</i>			
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Q16. Has your (Member) State developed guidelines or a handbook in relation to the reception offered to applicants for international protection?

There is not a comprehensive handbook exclusively on reception conditions. However, a handbook with the *Basic Information for asylum seekers in Greece* (June 2013), including information on reception conditions, translated in 20 languages has been issued by the UNHCR-Greece in cooperation with the Asylum Service (translation services by the NGO *METADRASI*). Furthermore, each reception center has its own internal house rules and applicants to be accommodated accept these rules in writing when allocated to any of them.

Illustration of the actual situation of reception facilities is included in a report by UNHCR, 2011. At Centers of First Reception, the Regulation for Internal Operation provides for the distribution of information leaflets in all necessary languages (Min. Decision 7001/2/1454η/24-1-2013, art.4 par.4).

Q17. What control mechanisms are in place to ensure that reception conditions are provided according to the standards specified in national legislation or other protocols/regulations?

Each unaccompanied minor is assigned to a Prosecutor for Unaccompanied Minors. Furthermore representatives of the UNHCR-Greece or other authorized agent may have access to reception facilities. The Ombudsman for the Migrant, Refugee and Ethnic Greek may also refer to the matter. MPs via Parliamentary Scrutiny have been very active in raising issues regarding the reception conditions (facilities and material conditions).

Regarding Centers of First Reception, a Regional Supervising Committee, accountable to the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection, is established by virtue of L. 3907/2011, art.12.

Q18. Has there been a public debate about the quality of reception facilities in your Member State in the period from 2008 onwards - to date?

The recent visits of the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström³⁰, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Migrants Rights, F. Crepéau³¹ and especially their criticism on below-standard conditions regarding detention centers at the borders and in general, where illegal immigrants and asylum seekers are held, raised *inter alia* the issue of the quality of reception facilities. Furthermore Reports by national or international NGOs³² and primary research work may shed light to the stake at hand, in the context of open public discussions with the participation of academics, stakeholders etc.

In addition, in the context of Parliamentary scrutiny, MPs of the Hellenic Parliament have submitted queries on the reception facilities (source and amount of allocated funds, sub-standard overcrowded facilities, condition of the Accommodation Centre in Lavrio etc).

Q19. Does primary research exist in your Member State, evaluating the quality of reception facilities?

Yes.

- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Laboratory for the study of migration and diaspora (EMMEDIA), *Models of closed and/or open refugee reception facilities, 2002-2004*, co-funded by the European Social Fund and Community initiative EQUAL
- EMN Studies, *Reception System, its Capabilities and the Social Situation of Asylum Applicants*

³⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/ellada/press-center/news/archives/news_20121005_malmstrom_episkepsi_el.htm

³¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12858&LangID=E>

³² http://www.unhcr.gr/fileadmin/Greece/News/2013/PCjuly/2013_July_Positions_GR.pdf

in Greece, March 2005 by KEPE

- Dimitropoulou, G. & Papageorgiou, I. (assigned by UNHCR-Greece), *Unaccompanied Minors asylum Seekers in Greece*, April 2008
- MSc Dissertations mainly focusing on the Accommodation Centre for Minors in Anogeia, Crete (2009, 2011)
- AIDA (Asylum Information Database), *National Country Report: Greece*, June 2013, Greek Council for Refugees.

Section 4
Flexibility

Q20 Please fill out the national statistics in Table 4 below:

Available data has been collected from Eurostat (years 2008-2012, various issues, see Sources) and the Annual Report 2012 by EKKA.

Table 4 National statistics on flexibility

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total number of applicants entitled to reception	19,884	15,928	10,273	9,311	9,575
Total number of applicants accommodated in reception facilities					1,279 new applicants out of 2,264 applications for access to reception facility. There were already applicants allocated from previous years.
Maximum number of applicants that could be accommodated in reception facilities					
Average occupation rate in reception facilities					

Q 21. Please describe any pressure that your (Member) State may have experienced in relation to the reception of applicants for international protection during the period 2008-2012 and briefly explain possible reasons for such pressure. (Note that annual statistics from Eurostat on the number of applications for international protection, first decisions, etc. over the years 2008-2012 will be incorporated in the relevant section of the Synthesis Report. Hence, if relevant, you may refer to a period of pressure by comparing the number of applications with the capacity of your (Member) State's reception system).

The capacity of Greece's reception system is always much lower than the respective demand. There is permanently a pressure being exerted on the reception facilities of the country that results from:

- (a) the geographical position of the country as a gate to Europe in combination with its extended sea borders, that render border control a hard task.
- b) external factors, such as the Dublin II Regulation effect, at least till the adjudication of the *M.S.S. vs Belgium and Greece* case ; the turmoil in Northern Africa (*Arab spring*)
- (c) structural problems of the national asylum system: long duration for deciding upon an application entails extended stay at reception facility
- (d) other domestic factors: fiscal situation influences allocated funds and actions relevant to upgrading reception facilities.

Q 22. Which flexibility mechanisms are foreseen and/or have been used in case there are shortages or surpluses in reception facilities? Please answer this question by indicating in Table 5 below whether any of the below mechanisms exist in your Member State and whether they have been actually used:

Answers provided with the kind assistance of Interviewee 1.

Table 5 Flexibility Mechanisms

Type of mechanism	Does this exist in your (Member) State? (Yes/No)	If yes, please describe	Has this mechanism been used? (Yes/No) If yes, please describe
Early warning mechanism³³ (including any software programmes monitoring capacity and occupancy in reception facilities)	Yes	EKKA has set up databases, that provide the following information: comprehensive picture of available beds at each reception facility in real time; capacity record of facilities, average waiting periods, annual capacity record.	Used for the dispersal of applicants at facilities. In cases of emergencies (eg ship wreck carrying asylum seekers) it provides right away a picture of availability.
Additional reception centres acting as buffer capacity	No		
Emergency plans			

³³ An early warning mechanism refers to a monitoring system, e.g. a mechanism that monitors the inflow of applicants for international protection, evaluating in particular whether the (Member) State possesses the necessary capacity to deal with increased (or decreased) pressure. Such a monitoring system would enable identification of possible shortcomings (or excess capacity) at an early stage. An early warning mechanism could for example include a.o. any software programmes monitoring capacity and occupancy rate in reception facilities.

Budget flexibility (to in- or decrease the budget when necessary)	Yes, when justified by the needs.	E.g. for construction works or maintenance work regarding the buildings.	
Employing more case-workers to speed up decision-making	Yes	EKKA coordinates involved authorities	In case of massive arrivals or sinking boat with asylum seekers
Fast-tracking procedures			
Application of different standards/modalities of reception conditions in emergency situations³⁴	No		
Provision of financial vouchers/allowance to cover costs of private accommodation	Rare and inadequate		
Review for specific categories of applicants who obtain priority access to reception	No		
The use of excess space for other purposes	no		
Other?	no		

Q 23. Please indicate best practices in handling (disproportionate) pressure as well as ability to adjust to fluctuating numbers of applications over time. Where possible, please refer to the use (and effectiveness) of any of the aforementioned flexibility mechanisms.

Financial allowance to cover cost of private accommodation for some months after the reception facility was shut down. (Sperxeiada)

Financial allowance to cover cost of private accommodation for 3 months as there was no place available in reception facilities. (Thessaloniki)

Accommodation in hotels when applicants had to leave refugee camp in Patra.

Accommodation in hotels when applicants had to leave Lavrio reception facility due to static problems (GCR)

³⁴ Article 14 paragraph 8 of the Reception Conditions Directive 2003/9/EC stipulates that: “Member States can exceptionally set modalities for material reception conditions different from those provided for in Article 14 for a reasonable period which shall be as short as possible, when: an initial assessment of the specific needs of the applicant is required; material reception conditions, as provided for in article 14, are not available in a certain geographical area; housing capacities normally available are temporarily exhausted; the asylum seeker is in detention or confined to border posts. The different conditions must cover in any case basic needs”.

Section 5
Efficiency

Q24. Please fill in the national statistics Table 6 below (please provide figures or, if not possible, estimates thereof):

Data drawn from the preamble of relevant legislative texts (PD 220/2007), as cited below in the table in detail; Eurostat (2008-2012, various issues, see Sources); answer to MP query (see Sources); website of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare (see Sources). It should be noted that ERF funds appearing in this table are the allocated funds and not necessarily those collected (absorbed) at the end of the day. It should also be said that the website of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare was the only source available at the time of the research regarding ERF funding; the responsible state authority was unable to provide any information due to technical reasons.

Table 6 National Statistics on Efficiency

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
National budget allocated to the reception of applicants for international protection	Annual cost caused by the implementation of the provisions of (A) art. 4 par. 1 (B)art. 3 par.3, 5 par. 1-3, 9 par. 1, 12 par. 1-2, 13 par. 6 & 10 of PD 220/2007 is estimated to be 75.000 and 3.495.000 euros respectively. Cost relevant to the material reception conditions, healthcare and vocational training cannot be estimated as it depends on the number of the applicants entitled access. Respective amounts from the National Budget are allocated at the Accounts of responsible Ministries, primarily that of the Ministry of Health and today the Ministry of Labour.	Likewise	Likewise	Likewise	Likewise
Total costs of	-	-	-	-	-

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reception					
Total direct costs³⁵	1.615.698 euros for Lavrio, Sperxeiada and Patra/Greek Red Cross (National Budget)	1.125.000 euros for Lavrio and Sperxeiada/ Greek Red Cross (N.B.) --ERF '2008': 1.386.780 euros allocated to NGOs programmes plus NB 462,259.41 euros	--1.337.500 euros for Lavrio and Sperxeiada/ Greek Red Cross (N.B.) --ERF '2009': 3.051.548,89 euros allocated to NGOs programmes plus NB 1,017,182.95 euros.		
Total indirect costs³⁶	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total costs of reception including Dublin cases	-	-	-	-	-
Total costs of reception excluding Dublin cases	-	-	-	-	-
Inflow of new applicants to reception facilities	Not available via a comprehensive database, gathering and clearing statistics from all reception facilities.	Not available via a comprehensive database, gathering and clearing statistics from all reception facilities.	Not available via a comprehensive database, gathering and clearing statistics from all reception facilities.	Not available via a comprehensive database, gathering and clearing statistics from all reception facilities.	1279 new applicants were allocated according to the central database at NCSS.
Inflow/return of applicants who have temporarily left a reception facility	Not available via a comprehensive database, gathering and clearing statistics from all reception facilities. Such records may be kept at each accommodation centre or (if) aggregated at the level of each external service provider	Likewise	Likewise	Likewise	Likewise
Outflow of applicants from reception facilities, who do not return later	Not available via a comprehensive database, gathering and clearing statistics from all reception facilities. Such records may be	Likewise	Likewise	Likewise	Likewise

³⁵ Direct costs refer to explicitly defined costs and budgets for the reception of applicants for international protection in each (Member) State.

³⁶ Indirect costs refer to costs that are not directly measurable (as costs are borne by a wide range of stakeholders and further relate to the applicant's access to general public services).

	kept at each accommodation centre or (if) aggregated at the level of each external service provider				
Share of applicants in reception facilities who have received a final decision on their application	In total 1.340 applicants received a final decision on appeal. Not enough data to relate it to applicants in reception facilities.	In total 2.105 applicants received a final decision on appeal. Not enough data to relate it to applicants in reception facilities.	In total 3.455 applicants received a <i>First instance</i> decision. Not enough data to relate it to applicants in reception facilities.	In total 625 applicants received a final decision on appeal. Not enough data to relate it to applicants in reception facilities.	In total 1650 applicants received a final decision on appeal. Not enough data to relate it to applicants in reception facilities.
Median³⁷ range of an applicant's stay					
Interquartile³⁸ ranges of an applicant's stay					

Q25. Are cost (estimations) available for the flexibility mechanisms used in your Member State (see Question 22)?

No.

Q26. What is the tolerance time for extended stay of applicants in reception facilities who have already received a final decision on their application?

30 days.

Section 6 Conclusions

Q27. Please summarise the organisation of reception facilities in your (Member) State, indicating main strengths and weaknesses (please specify any evidence for these findings)

The legal framework of the organization of reception facilities in Greece consists primarily of P.D. 220/2007 which transposed Directive 2003/9/EC otherwise the *Reception Conditions Directive*. Furthermore it includes the Presidential Decrees establishing state-funded accommodation centres (PD 266/1999 and PD 366/2002). Funding for the reception facilities comes from the National Budget and the European Refugee Fund, whereas local authorities may ensure further offers esp. with regard to material reception conditions (food supplies, healthcare, courses etc).

NCSS (National Centre for Social Solidarity), previously at Ministry of Health and now at the

³⁷ The median is the numerical value separating the higher half of the distribution of the lower half (middle value).

³⁸ The interquartile ranges refer to the value of the first quartile (25 percentile) and the third quartile (75 percentile) in a distribution.

Ministry of Labour, Social security and Welfare, is the responsible central state authority for the allocation of asylum applicants and in general for the management of reception facilities issues. Hellenic Police or other designated actors forward to NCSS requests for access to reception facilities.

The latter include 16 accommodation centres; hotel rooms and flats arranged by and charged to involved authorities. They are situated in urban, semi-urban or rural environment. All accommodation facilities are run by external service providers (NGOs), on the basis of a Programme Agreement concluded between the State and the External Service Provider.

This is the situation of the organization of reception facilities in a nutshell. In practice important differences can be discerned at the day-to-day operation of its reception facility, depending on the target group, the location, the timely funding. The obvious *merits* of the above cited organisation include:

-the existence of a central State Authority to allocate, coordinate, standardise procedures, collect and sort data so as to set up a comprehensive database with statistics on crucial aspects concerning demographic features of the applicants and capacity in real time.

-designating NGOs as the authorities to run the reception facilities, as NGOs are much more flexible and active/re-active than the State, participate in umbrella international advocate organizations, are considered to be more friendly to the applicants and hence closer to their needs, and they bear updated expertise thanks to their scientific staff.

-unaccompanied minors are accommodated irrespective of having lodged such an application, so as not to be exposed in the street. Free healthcare and access to education irrespective of their legal status compose a solid starting point for their protection.

Still:

-With the exemption of the two state funded accommodation centres, funding for all other facilities confronts bureaucratic procedures, which may slow down its availability with dramatic consequences on the facilities' resources. Furthermore, many NGOs run annual housing programmes that may end at anytime due to fragmented funding.

-Each Collective Reception Facility has its own House Rules and keeps its own record of accommodated applicants/capacity. This can be ascribed to the different profile of each accommodation centre (location, target group) and each External Service Provider. However this regime has undermined the establishment of a central information repository regarding reception facilities (capacity, cost, in- and outflows, actual material reception conditions).

-The alternative of rented flats individually is limited financially and in time.

-The absence of an institutionalized agency to conduct checks on day-to-day operation regarding respect for the international standards is notable.

In general, the number of beds is insufficient, there are no house rules in accommodation centres in practice, available scientific personnel is incommensurate to accommodated applicants, inadequate training of personnel before its professional engagement with the specific group of people. Adding to the above the problems concerning the institution of guardianship of minors in Greece, the situation becomes very negative for this vulnerable group. In particular, in the case of minors discontinuity of funding and shortages in staff which can meet the psychological and intellectual needs hinder their integration into Greek society³⁹.

Q28. Please summarise whether your (Member) State has experienced pressure on its reception facilities (in terms of both in-and outflow, and duration of the processing time of applications) and

³⁹ Demeli P. T., (2012), "On the protection of unaccompanied refugee minors: The Creation of the Center for unaccompanied minors" Villa Azadi" Lesbos "in Troumeta S. (ed.), The refugee and migration issues, Papazisis.

indicate what measures have been most successful in handling such pressure

Greece has experienced great pressure on its reception facilities. In 2012 pressure is evident from the percentages of new applicants allocated at accommodation centres for all categories but that of minors. With reference to unaccompanied minors the issue is the absence of reception facilities for girls and minors under the age of 12.

In case of massive incidents there is no provision of an emergency plan and EKKKA manages the situation by appealing to the involved external service providers and asking for extra space at the accommodation centres. During these periods average waiting period for allocation ranges from 30-60 days, far from the usual 15 days. (Interviewee 1)

Q29. Please describe best practices in controlling costs of reception facilities whilst ensuring quality (maximum half a page)

The above discussion leads into the picture of a rather uncertain and confusing situation of reception facilities in terms of funding, management and internal modus operandi, prolonged accommodation due to extended procedure for the examination of applications. These features aggravate the troublesome relation between cost and quality. Still one can discern several best practices.

Allocation of the applicants on the basis of certain criteria, among which those increasing the cost (transport modalities such as distance and the need for an escort).

Synergies with local external providers for offers to the reception facilities, esp. with reference to material reception conditions (food supplies, healthcare, courses).

For adults and families individually rented flats in combination with external service provision and networking regarding health services, food supplies, intercultural arbitration, psychological and social support are a reasonable in terms of cost and qualitative alternative

A faster procedure for examining the asylum applications shall cut down the cost, as a result of shorter waiting periods for accommodation. Furthermore cost due to healthcare or medical treatment shall be reduced as illness/diseases emerging when living in the street or under substandard housing conditions shall be avoided. (Interviewee 1)

With reference to unaccompanied minors, a procedure for defining their actual age shall facilitate the inclusion of real minors at the hostels. This may upgrade provided services and shall limit bullying behaviors. In addition right ascertainment of a minors' age show the exact needs of accommodation centres for minors (Interviewee 1)

Annex 1 Reception Conditions in different Reception facilities

Please fill out the table below concerning the rights granted to applicants for international protection as laid down in national legislation in different reception facilities.

The relevant legislation can be found in Sources. There is also information from the interviews referred in the Sources.

Table A1.1 Reception conditions in different reception facilities

	Collective initial/transit reception centres	Collective open reception centres	Special reception centres/facilities for vulnerable groups	Special separate receptions centres for UAMs	Private houses or flats ⁴⁰	Private hotels ⁴¹	Individually arranged accommodation ⁴²	Other premises	Comments
Food	x	x	x	x				-	
Clothing	x	x	x	x				-	
Financial allowance⁴³	-	x	x	x	x	x		-	Also for handicapped over 67 %
Emergency health care	x	x	x	x	x	x		-	
Medical care	x	x	x	x	x	x		-	
Psychological care	x	x	x	x	x when it is under the auspices of a NGO			-	
Free legal assistance	x	x	x	x				-	
Interpretation services								-	

⁴⁰ Arranged and paid for by competent authorities.

⁴¹ Arranged and paid for by competent authorities.

⁴² E.g. houses/flats/hotels and/or staying with friends and family.

⁴³ Please explain what this consists of.

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Access to education	-	x	x	x	x	x		-	
Access to vocational training	-	x	x	x	x	x		-	
Access to employment (after which period of time?)	-	x right-away under certain conditions	x	x	x	x	x	-	
Other? Please add	Leisure, religion								

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