



Input by civil society to the EASO Annual Report 2016

EASO has started production of the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2016, in line with Article 12 (1) of the EASO Regulation. The report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of important asylum-related developments at EU and national level, and the functioning of all key aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The report will be finalised by collecting information from EU+ countries, civil-society stakeholders, UNHCR and other relevant sources on main developments in asylum policies and practices of EU+ countries in 2016.

Previous reports can be consulted on EASO's website: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/annual-report>

We would kindly like to ask you to provide your **observations**, - preferably bullet points to facilitate further processing of your input - **on developments in asylum law or practice in 2016 (and early 2017) in the areas listed below, reflecting the usual structure of the report**. Observations may concern national practices of specific EU+ countries or the EU as a whole.

The EASO Annual Report will not describe the national asylum systems in detail but present key developments in 2016, including **improvements and new/remaining concerns**. The topics listed below reflect the structure of chapter 4 of the EASO report on the 'Functioning of the CEAS'. We kindly ask all contributors to provide brief summaries only on those topics/issues that have seen important **improvements/deterioration as well as new concerns or where previous relevant concerns remained in 2016**.

Please bear in mind that the EASO Annual Report is a public document. Therefore, your input should be, whenever possible, supported with references to written sources to ensure transparency. That can be done by providing links to any documents such as position papers, important press releases, studies, comments, input to the other reports, public statements to government programs, etc.

While EASO endeavours to cover all relevant developments and strives to include as many references as possible, the final content of the EASO Annual Report remains bound by its terms of reference and volume. Therefore, while all contributions are gratefully received and recognised, EASO may edit contributions for length and clarity and use the submissions to best serve the objective of the Annual Report: to improve the quality, consistency and effectiveness of the CEAS.

Please provide your input by filling in this document (with attachments if required) and emailing it to ids@easo.europa.eu **AND** consultative-forum@easo.europa.eu **by 20 February 2017**.

Within the areas, please highlight the following **type of information**:

- NEW positive developments; improvements and NEW or remaining matters of concern;
- Changes in policies or practices; transposition of legislation; institutional changes; relevant national jurisprudence.
- Please use the topics listed below as a guide to providing input for each section. **DO NOT** provide information unrelated to relevant new developments.

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DISCLAIMER: The information submitted in this document to the EASO Annual Report on the situation on Asylum 2016 is only a selection of new and remaining concerns, positive developments and relevant new trends relating to a number of countries covered by the Asylum Information Database (AIDA), coordinated by ECRE. This document is therefore by no means to be considered as a comprehensive overview of key issues or challenges relating to the asylum systems in the countries concerned. For further and more detailed analysis, see www.asylumineurope.org.

1) Access to territory and procedure

1.1. Access to territory

New / remaining matters of concern

Hungary: Since March 2016, an ever-growing number of refugees and migrants continue to gather in the “pre-transit zones”, which are areas partly on Hungarian territory that are sealed off from the actual transit zones of Röszke and Tompa, by fences in the direction of Serbia. The clear factors that determine who is allowed access to the transit zone are time of arrival and extent of vulnerability. The other determining factors are not so clear. In Röszke there are three separate lists for those waiting: one for families, one for unaccompanied minors and one for single men. In Tompa there is a single list containing the names of all three groups. Both lists are managed by a so-called community leader or list manager who is chosen by the people waiting at the given place and who communicates both with the Serbian and Hungarian authorities. Only 5 people per transit zone are allowed to enter per day. In January 2017, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee’s attorneys were denied access to the part of the transit zone where asylum seekers are placed. They can only provide legal assistance to those who already signed the mandate.

Legal amendments that entered into force on 5 July 2016 allow the Hungarian police to automatically push back asylum seekers who are apprehended within 8 km of the Serbian-Hungarian or Croatian- Hungarian border to the external side of the border fence, without registering their data or allowing them to submit an asylum claim, in a summary procedure lacking the most basic procedural safeguards. Between 5 July and 31 December 2016, 19,057 migrants were denied access (prevented from entering or escorted back to the border) at the Hungarian-Serbian border. Serious inhuman treatment by the personnel in uniforms was reported by various sources.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Hungary, 2016 Update, February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2k3zGE9>.

Bulgaria: Many incidents of violence, including deaths, were reported throughout 2016 on the Bulgarian-Turkish border. On 28 January 2016, UNHCR reported to be seeking further details after being alerted about the deaths of two Afghan nationals, who apparently have died of cold while trying to cross into Serbia from Western Bulgaria. On 7 February 2016 a girl aged 15 and a woman aged 30, both Iraqi nationals of Kurdish origin, deceased of hypothermia near the Bulgarian-Turkish border in the area of Malko Tarnovo, allegedly caused by the push back to Turkey the night before by the border police patrol who made the group they have travelled with to cross a local stream at temperatures below zero degrees Celsius. On 25 March 2016 a family couple from Iraq who were intercepted while hiding in a truck at Lessovo border checkpoint complained before the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee field staff that one of the border policemen used a taser against them, despite the fact the use of such devices is not allowed during regular border checks. On 18 November 2016, the BHC reported to have received another 33 reports of robbery, physical violence and degrading treatment of asylum seekers by policemen for the period between May and September 2016. On 13 January 2017, UNHCR voiced concern regarding an incident of two Iraqi men found dead near the Bulgarian-Turkish border, reportedly succumbing to cold and exhaustion. Earlier in the year, the body of a Somali woman was also found by the authorities.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Bulgaria: 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/AFkYdT>.

Poland: In its 2016 border monitoring on the Brest-Terespol border-crossing point, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights has found that the Polish Border Guards seem to ignore the intention to apply for international protection expressed by foreign nationals at the border crossing station in Terespol, and that they deny access to Polish territory. This practice violates the principle of non-refoulement, laid down in the Refugee Convention. According to this principle, it is not permitted to deny access to the asylum procedure after a person has declared that they fear persecution in their country of origin. To do so also violates Polish law: the Polish Foreigners Act provides that access to an asylum procedure cannot be denied on the basis of

the person not having valid entry documents. There are also grave concerns about the interview process conducted by border guards. In many cases, interview questions did not relate to the fear of persecution. Further, some border guards conducting interviews have very limited knowledge of Russian, confidentiality is not guaranteed, and there are cases of humiliation. With the access to the asylum procedure being limited, many people in need of protection remain stranded in Brest and make repeated attempts to access the procedure.

Source: Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, A road to nowhere, October 2016: <https://goo.gl/95AMNy>.

Switzerland: Since the summer of 2016, there have been reports of persons who were refused entry at the southern Swiss border with Italy. These persons tried to enter Switzerland by train or on foot at the border in Chiasso, coming from northern Italy. They were rejected by the Swiss border guards, and were subsequently stranded in the Italian town of Como, in a park near the train station. In September 2016, the Red Cross opened a shelter for these people, while other NGOs have provided services. It has been criticised that the Swiss border guards operate with racial profiling, as they have reportedly picked out all black passengers from the train. There has been broad media coverage of the situation. The situation is not transparent. It has proven difficult to document concrete cases, as it was not always clear whether or not the persons actually wanted to apply for asylum in Switzerland. Some of them also explicitly wanted to travel on to Germany, which is why they were rejected by the Swiss border guards. However, there are strong indications that at least some persons who wanted to seek protection in Switzerland were prevented from doing so. The Swiss Refugee Council has visited Chiasso and Como on several occasions, and is in discussion with the Swiss authorities in this regard. The Swiss Refugee Council stresses that, in case of doubt, the person must be directed to the reception and processing centre in Chiasso, where it is in the competence of the State Secretariat for Migration (and not the border guard) to examine whether or not there is a well-founded claim for asylum or not.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Switzerland: 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/S3QSIK>.

Croatia: Allegations of push backs from Croatia have been received by UNHCR in Serbia. While UNHCR has shared this information with the Croatian authorities, so far none of the allegations have been subject to thorough investigation. Still according to UNHCR this is because the allegations lack precision as to the exact date and location of the incidents reported. Reports from early 2017 make reference to 1,600 cases of alleged push backs.

Sources: ECRE, Balkan route reversed: The return of asylum seekers to Croatia under the Dublin system, December 2016: <http://bit.ly/2kueKpB>; Save the Children, 'Refugee and migrant children injured in illegal border push-backs across Balkans', 24 January 2017: <http://bit.ly/2jH4a2I>; Human Rights Watch, 'Croatia: Asylum seekers forced back to Serbia', 20 January 2017: <http://bit.ly/2k9cLej>.

Relevant national jurisprudence

Austria: An increasing number of rejections at the Slovenian border have been reported in 2016, which have often been based on communication by police officers with poor interpretation service. The Administrative Court (LVwG) of Styria ruled such rejections to be unlawful on the ground that they employed standardised wording, instead of being based on well-founded grounds pursuant to the Schengen Borders Code.

Source: LVwG Styria, Decision 20.3-918/2016-15, 9 September 2016: <http://bit.ly/2jRiX7z>.

1.2. Access to the procedure

New / remaining matters of concern

France: While the introduction of the "guichet unique" by the 2015 asylum reform aimed at reducing delays relating to registration, this additional step has led to more complexity and delays in accessing the procedure in practice. At the time of writing, the 3-day deadline was not respected in several Prefectures: in Lyon the average delay is approximately 15 days, in Paris the delay exceeds 1 month and in Seine Saint Denis, asylum seekers may be waiting for almost 2 months before getting registered. Delays in the registration of applications in Paris have led to judicial action before the Administrative Tribunal of Paris, with over a hundred cases condemning the Prefecture to register asylum claims. In Bretagne, Western and

Eastern France, the average delay is approximately 3 weeks. In other places, like in Perpignan for example, the delay is very short; asylum seekers can be registered in only two days.

Source: AIDA, Country Report France, 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/y1Gpxa>.

The Administrative Court of Paris ruled in over 135 cases that the Prefecture violated its obligations by failing to register asylum applications within the 10 working day deadline foreseen by the recast Asylum Procedures Directive. The Prefecture has been ordered to register asylum applications promptly. Pending registration, asylum seekers in the Paris region have been at risk of detention, or deportation as a result of the congestion of registration services. However, in a decision concerning Guiana, the Council of State found a temporary suspension of access to the asylum procedure to be in line with the law.

Source: ECRE, The length of asylum procedures in Europe, AIDA Legal Briefing No 7, October 2016: <http://bit.ly/2cUC948>; AIDA, 'France: Council of State upholds suspension of registration of applications in Guiana', 17 November 2016: <http://bit.ly/2jSk9P>.

Italy: Contrary to Italy's obligations under the recast Asylum Procedures Directive, the Questura of Rome suspended registration of asylum applications from 21 September to 21 October 2016, on the ground that the processing of existing claims should be prioritised.

Source: AIDA, 'Italy: Access to the procedure "suspended" in Rome', 23 September 2016: <http://bit.ly/2k4eyxo>.

2) Access to information and legal assistance

2.1. Legal representation in appeals

Relevant national jurisprudence

Austria: duties of the legal advisors provided by the state for the appeal procedure were clarified by a decision of the Administrative High Court. As of 1 October 2016, they are under the obligation to participate in hearings before the Federal Administrative Court and to represent applicants during the proceedings, if the asylum seeker so wishes. The Constitutional Court decided that differentiating the scope of legal advice according to the type of procedure – asylum, basic care or return proceedings – is discriminatory and, therefore, unconstitutional.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Austria, 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/92vxSw>.

3) Providing interpretation services

3.1. Quality of interpretation

New / remaining matters of concern

Spain: Since June 2016, the Ministry of Interior has changed subcontractors for the provision of interpreters to the OAR and all police offices that register asylum applications in the Spanish territory, for which NGOs do not provide services anymore. The contract was awarded to the Ofilingua translation private company. Since then, several shortcomings have been reported, mainly due to the fact that the agency does not have a specific focus on migration and asylum, for which it did not count on the needed expertise due to the sensible thematic of asylum and did not have the contacts of most of the needed interpreters by the OAR. Also, interpreters who were working before with NGOs are now paid much less and their working conditions have worsened, thereby potentially affecting the quality of their work.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Spain, 2016 Update, February 2017, <https://goo.gl/4aFY04>.

4) Dublin procedure

4.1. Individualised guarantees

New / remaining matters of concern

Croatia: The increasing trend of Dublin procedures towards Croatia, namely from Austria and Switzerland, has led to transfers by and large of vulnerable persons (families with children, persons with severe illness). Very often transfers to Croatia take place on very short notice and without prior guarantees from the Croatian authorities that the persons concerned have access to appropriate care and accommodation. In very limited

cases, the Austrian Dublin Unit has obtained assurances from the Croatian Dublin Unit, however only consist of general references to the applicable legal framework and administrative arrangements made for health care in relation to asylum seekers.

Source: ECRE, Balkan route reversed: The return of asylum seekers to Croatia under the Dublin system, December 2016: <http://bit.ly/2kueKpB>.

4.2. Suspension of transfers to prevent *refoulement*

Relevant national jurisprudence

Hungary: Appeal bodies in 15 European countries have ruled against Dublin transfers to Hungary on account of risks of inhuman or degrading treatment and/or indirect *refoulement*, while at least 6 countries (Czech Republic, Italy, Finland, Netherlands, Slovakia, United Kingdom) have suspended transfers to Hungary as a matter of policy.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Hungary, 2016 Update, February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2k3zGE9>.

Bulgaria: Appeal bodies in at least 6 European countries have ruled against transfers to Bulgaria due to risks of arbitrary detention, substandard conditions, as well as lack of integration prospects. On 1 February 2017, the Human Rights Committee also issued interim measures to prevent the transfer of a family from Austria to Bulgaria.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Bulgaria, 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/AFkYdT>.

5) Specific procedures (border, accelerated, admissibility)

5.1. Border procedure

Transposition of legislation

Greece: National law (Article 60 L 4375/2016) has incorrectly transposed Article 43 of the recast Asylum Procedures Directive, insofar as it allows the examination of the merits of asylum applications in a border procedure, beyond the cases where Article 31(8) of the Directive applies. As a result, during 2016 the “special border procedure” foreseen in cases of emergency has been applied in respect of in-merit examinations of applications of certain nationalities such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Pakistan or Bangladesh.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Greece, 2016 Update, February 2017, Forthcoming.

New / remaining matters of concern

Hungary: The Immigration and Asylum Office has taken inadmissibility decisions based on the “safe third country” concept, without respecting the 3-day deadline foreseen by Section 51(11) of the Asylum Act for challenging the application of the concept. In 2016 the Szeged Court quashed some of these inadmissibility decisions precisely because the 3-day deadline for submitting additional evidence was not respected. However, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee still observes that in some cases, the IAO simply asks the asylum seeker after the interview if he or she has something to add in the following 3 days and if the asylum seeker answers “no”, then the IAO does not wait for the 3 days to pass, but immediately issues an inadmissibility decision. The HHC’s lawyers also observed that in Röszke transit zone the IAO case officers only accept the submissions of the asylum seekers on the safety of Serbia in their individual case in written English. When asylum seekers wanted to submit something in their mother tongues, the case officers sent them away saying that they should ask their friends to translate these into English.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Hungary, 2016 Update, February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2k3zGE9>.

6) Reception of applicants for international protection:

6.1. Adequate standard of living

New / remaining matters of concern

United Kingdom: An inquiry into the asylum accommodation system by the UK Parliament has expressed grave concern at the inhuman conditions facing asylum seekers.

Source: House of Commons, *Asylum accommodation*, 31 January 2017: <http://bit.ly/2kvzK0b>.

7) Detention:

7.1. Grounds for detention

7.1.1. Dublin detention

Relevant national jurisprudence

Switzerland: The Federal Court laid down important principles concerning detention in Dublin procedures in a May 2016 ruling. The court found that a person may not be detained for the sole reason that he or she previously applied for asylum in another Dublin State. There must be an individual examination of specific indications of a “significant risk of absconding”.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Switzerland, 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/S3QSIK>; Federal Court, Decision 2C_207/2016 of 2 May 2016.

7.1.2. Public order detention

New / remaining matters of concern

Belgium: An increase in detention orders based on the protection of public order under Article 54(2) of the Aliens Act has been reported during 2016. This has led to detention based on allegations that were later dispelled or which the judiciary has not prosecuted. When reviewing such detention orders, courts have ruled them to be unlawful.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Belgium, 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/hCk9wN>.

Greece: Concerns regarding the arbitrary use of public order grounds for detention have persisted in 2016, particularly in relation to transfers of asylum seekers from the islands to pre-removal detention centres in the mainland. In June 2016, 43 persons were transferred from Lesbos to the pre-removal facilities in the mainland, where they remained detained for alleged reasons of public order. The Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) visited a number of these persons at Corinth detention facility. Despite the allegation of public order reasons, in a number of cases that GCR followed up, there were no relevant elements in support of any criminal prosecution, while the persons claimed that they were arrested in the framework of a sweep police operation. The same was reported following GCR’s visit to Amygdaleza and Petrou Ralli in July 2016, where 29 unaccompanied minors were transferred from Leros due to their alleged involvement in riots in the hotspots.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Greece, 2016 Update, February 2017, Forthcoming.

7.2. Detention conditions

Remaining matters of concern

Greece: With regard to Tavros (Petrou Ralli) pre-removal centre, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) noted in a 2016 report that “Petrou Ralli Special holding facility for irregular migrants has been visited by CPT delegations on numerous occasions since its opening in late 2005. It remains totally unsuitable for holding irregular migrants for prolonged periods.” The findings on Petrou Ralli are corroborated by the Greek Ombudsman, who has also denounced the conditions in the Corinth pre-removal centre. Conditions have also been recently criticised in Orestiada (Fylakio), where the lack of hot water prevents effective access to hygiene facilities, personal hygiene items are not provided, and no air-conditioning is available in cells. The Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) regularly visits Tavros (Petrou Ralli), Amygdaleza, Corinth, Drama (Paranesti) and Xanthi pre-removal facilities, as well as other detention places in Athens and Thessaloniki, depending on the needs and the availability of resources, and can confirm that these findings are still valid in 2016.

The Greek Ombudsman has also criticised the conditions prevailing in the Police Station of Nafplio, the Transfers Department of the Transfers Subdivision of the Courts of Thessaloniki and the Aliens Division of Thessaloniki, where detainees have no access to outdoor space, as well as the "Illegal immigration" Prosecution Department of Thessaloniki (where women third-country nationals are detained) and the "Illegal immigration Prosecution Department" of Mygdonia where minor third-country nationals are held under “protective custody”, and have reportedly very limited access to light and no open air access, no hot water and no hygiene items. Recent reports from police stations such as Drapetsona in Piraeus have referred to insufficient

Source: AIDA, Country Report Greece, 2016 Update, February 2017, Forthcoming.

8) Procedures at First instance:

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9) Procedures at Second Instance:

9.1. Appeals against Dublin decisions

New matters of concern / Jurisprudence

Italy: During 2016, the Italian administrative courts expressed with several decisions the position that Dublin appeals should be entrusted to the jurisdiction of ordinary courts. In this context, the first significant decision was taken on 18 December 2015 by the Council of State, and subsequently by the Administrative Court of Lazio. On 7 February 2017, the Administrative Court of Lazio declared the appeals lodged against the transfer decisions of the Dublin Unit as “manifestly inadmissible” because they were lodged before the administrative court, and revoked on this basis the free legal aid previously granted. On the other side, however, on 3 February 2017, the Civil Court of Trieste pronounced the lack of jurisdiction of the ordinary judge and referred to the administrative courts, holding that a third-country national has only a legitimate interest and not a subjective right to the definition of the Member State responsible for his or her international protection application. Therefore, at the moment, asylum seekers notified of a Dublin decision lack an actual remedy against the transfer. Both the civil and the administrative courts have given time to the applicants to restart the procedure before the competent judge but, in the meantime, the transfer is not suspended, meaning that asylum seekers lack an actual remedy against it.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Italy, 2016 Update, February 2017, <http://bit.ly/2maTfMw>. See also Council of State, Decision No 5738 of 18 December 2015, available at: <http://bit.ly/2lbkoyn>; Administrative Court of Lazio, Session I-Ter, Decision No 9909 of 22 September 2016; Decision No 11911 of 28 November 2016, available at: <http://bit.ly/2IOS7AX>; Administrative Court of Lazio, Decision No 2044 of 7 February 2017, available at: <http://bit.ly/2lb9ylz>; Civil Court of Trieste, Decision of 3 February 2017.

10) Availability and use of Country of Origin Information:

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11) Vulnerable applicants:

11.1. Victims of trafficking

Positive practice

Spain: In the last quarter of 2016 and early 2017, the Office for Asylum and Refuge has started granting international protection to women victims of trafficking and their children. This practice has been supported by civil society organisations.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Spain, 2016 Update, February 2017, <https://goo.gl/4aFY04>; CEAR, ‘España empieza a reconocer el derecho de asilo a las víctimas de trata’, 16 January 2017: <http://bit.ly/2kfzP9T>.

12) Content of protection – situation of beneficiaries of protection

12.1 Family reunification

New matters of concern

2016 reforms in countries such as **Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden** have severely restricted possibilities for family reunification of beneficiaries of international protection through restrictions including waiting periods, maximum deadlines for applying for family reunification, as well as income requirements.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Austria, 2016 Update, February 2017: <https://goo.gl/92vxSw>. AIDA, Country Report Germany, 2016 Update, Forthcoming, AIDA Country Report Sweden, Update 2016, <http://bit.ly/2IKGF9G>.

In **Hungary**, it was reported that refugees of various nationalities, including Syrians are facing difficulties obtaining family reunification visas where they have no valid passports. Recently family reunification became more difficult since the authorities request that all the documents bear an official stamp from the authorities,

proving that they are originals, as well as an official stamp from the Hungarian consulate. All documents have to be translated into English or Hungarian, which is very costly. Hungary does not accept certain travel documents, such as those issued by Somalia for example. Nevertheless, unlike other EU Member States, Hungary refuses to apply any alternative measure that would enable for a one-way travel with the purpose of family reunification in such cases. Consequently, certain refugee families are de facto excluded from any possibility of family reunification based on their nationality or origin.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Hungary, Update 2016, February 2017, <https://goo.gl/dj6XYR>.

12.2. Residence permits

New matters of concern

2016 reforms in countries such as **Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Hungary** or **Sweden** have sought to lower the security of residence afforded to refugees by introducing time-limits to residence permits which were previously permanent. The following time-limitations have been introduced:

Country	Refugee status (in years)		Subsidiary protection (in years)	
	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Austria	Permanent	3	1	1
Belgium	Permanent	5	1	1
Denmark	5	2	5	1
Hungary	10	3	5	3
Sweden	Permanent	3	Permanent	13 months

Source: ECRE, Asylum on the clock? Duration and review of international protection status in Europe, AIDA Legal Briefing No 6, June 2016: <http://bit.ly/2jFNk44>.

12.3. Accommodation

New matters of concern

Italy: As of 25 of January 2016, the Prefecture of Padova has instructed temporary reception centres (CAS) operators to allow persons obtaining international or humanitarian protection to remain in the reception centre only for the next 24 hours after the notification of the decision. It has been reported that across the entire Veneto region, the cessation of reception measures in CAS is imposed immediately after the recognition of one of the forms of protection. As of 28 September 2016, the Prefecture of Ancona has given indications to CAS operators to immediately communicate the names of accommodated persons who have been granted protection, in order to place them out of the centre. In order to offer the same prospects to beneficiaries of international protection, the Ministry of Interior issued a Circular on 5 May 2016, informing that the responsible national authority for SPRAR should give priority for the admission in SPRAR projects to beneficiaries of international protection rather than to asylum seekers. Given the limited number of persons hosted in SPRAR, however, according to ASGI, the measure will not solve the lack of protection of beneficiaries of international protection.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Italy, 2016 Update, February 2017, <http://bit.ly/2maTfMw>.

13) Return of former applicants for international protection

14) Resettlement and relocation

Relocation

New / remaining matters of concern

In January 2016 the Polish government presented the project of the Regulation on the foreigners' relocation in 2016. In the regulation the number of asylum seekers to be relocated in 2016 (400) was specified as well as the mechanism for financing the relocation procedures. The project was criticized by NGOs and public authorities, 166 as not sufficient in the scope of the number of relocated foreigners and the integration measures provided

for them. The regulation has not been enacted until now. Until now not one single asylum seeker has been relocated to Poland.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Poland, 2016 Update February 2017, <https://goo.gl/yKHqyw>.

In Italy it was reported that due to long waiting periods for relocation from Italy, many people eligible for relocation have moved to **Rome** with the aim of speeding up the procedure but have consequently lost their accommodation place and are living in the streets, facing more obstacles than before to receive information regarding the state of play of their procedure. The establishment of special hub in Rome (possibly in the Fiumicino area) to host up to 2,500 persons waiting for relocation was announced to NGOs by the authorities in February 2017.

Source: AIDA, Country Report Italy, Update 2016, <http://bit.ly/2maTfMw> .

15) Other relevant developments