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Introduction

Opening remarks

The recast **Reception Conditions Directive** (Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013, hereafter the RCD) lays down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. It aims at ensuring a dignified standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States of the European Union (MS).

At the same time, the RCD leaves a considerable degree of discretion to define what constitutes a dignified standard of living and how it should be achieved. At the same time, national reception systems differ greatly in setup and modalities for the provision of reception conditions, and, consequently, standards for reception conditions continue to vary across MS plus Norway and Switzerland (EU+ States) (4).

This guidance has been designed to serve **multiple purposes**:

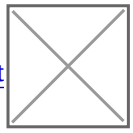
- at *policy level*, it serves as a tool to support reform or development and as a framework for setting/further development of reception standards;
- at *operational level*, it can be used by reception authorities/operators and specifically by those working with unaccompanied children to support the planning/running of reception facilities, to provide for adequate care according to specific needs and/or to support staff and their training.

Therefore, the target group for this guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied children are those working with unaccompanied children as well as policy-makers. The guidance focuses on reception authorities and is written with reception staff in mind. However, there are elements that are applicable to a wide range of staff regardless of their position and profession. Therefore, **those working with unaccompanied children** include all persons who are in direct contact with unaccompanied children in a reception context, irrespective of their employer (the state or municipalities, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs, private contractors, etc.). These especially include social workers, education and healthcare staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff, as well as representatives.

In addition, this guidance could serve as a **basis for the development of monitoring frameworks** to assess the quality of national reception systems.

The development process of this document follows the established Quality Matrix methodology set out by EASO. The document has been drafted by a working group composed of MS experts, taking into account the preliminary input and consultation of a reference group in the field of reception and fundamental rights, including the European Commission, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Before the final adoption of the guidance, the EASO Network of Reception Authorities composed by EU+ States has been consulted and it has been formally adopted by the EASO Management Board.

(4) EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Current migration situation in the EU: Oversight of reception facilities with reference to oversight of reception facilities for children, p. 4, available at http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2017-september-monthly-migration-report-focus-oversight_en.pdf.

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