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The challenges and needs of public and private actors involved in migration management

Report¹

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

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1. Reference to committee: Doc. [15882](#). Reference 4783 of 22 January 2024.



A. Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is convinced that co-operation between public and private actors is one of the crucial aspects for successfully managing migration in Europe and for responding to one of the challenges faced by Council of Europe member States, in particular regarding the first assistance, the reception, and the inclusion of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
2. Such challenges emerge in particular at the borders of some Council of Europe member States, as well as in congestion points, which are places where people live in formal and informal contexts.
3. The Assembly recalls the importance of the international and regional treaties as well as customary international humanitarian law protecting migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, in particular: the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Geneva Conventions, the [United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (ETS No. 160), the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201).
4. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197), the Assembly draws the attention of member States to the importance of this convention, and to the Council of Europe's expertise in combating trafficking in human beings, with migrant populations being particularly targeted by this phenomenon.
5. The Assembly invites member States to make use of the Council of Europe's standards and expertise on migration issues, including: the [thematic work](#) on migration of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights; the [standards](#) developed by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) on "Safeguards for irregular migrants deprived of their liberty"; [General Policy Recommendation N°16](#) on safeguarding irregularly present migrants from discrimination issued by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) as well as its 2024 [factsheet](#), "Integration and Inclusion of migrants"; and the Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP).
6. The Assembly recalls the [Reykjavík Declaration](#) adopted during the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe held on 16 and 17 May 2023, during which the Heads of State and Government reiterated "the necessity to fight against trafficking and smuggling of migrants", "while continuing to protect the victims and respect the human rights of migrants and refugees".
7. With regard to civil society, the Assembly refers to [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)11](#) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe. It also refers to Appendix III of the Reykjavík Declaration, the "[Reykjavík Principles for Democracy](#)", which reaffirms that "civil society is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy".
8. On age assessment in the context of migration, the Assembly refers to [Resolution 2195 \(2017\)](#) "Child-friendly age assessment for unaccompanied migrant children", promoting the development of a child-sensitive, comprehensive model of age assessment that would enable member States to meet the needs of unaccompanied or separated children. The Assembly also refers to [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)22](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration, underlining the importance of the principle of presumption of minority for persons undergoing age assessment, and the requirement for member States to implement multidisciplinary and evidence-based age assessment procedures.
9. The Assembly underlines the responsibility of its members, in their capacity as both national lawmakers and members of the Assembly, to act at European and domestic levels to promote the Council of Europe instruments, standards and expertise, and to align national legislation and practice with the recommendations made hereafter, in particular regarding arrival, reception, and inclusion of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 19 May 2025.

10. To ensure that the public and private actors involved in migration management exercise their tasks with respect for the human rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers at first arrival at borders and in congestion points, the Assembly invites the Council of Europe member States to:

10.1. ensure that minimal standards be established for a dignified assistance, with a particular attention to vulnerable people, especially women, children, unaccompanied minors, and victims of trafficking, ensuring their safety in transit and reception facilities, as well as separate and safe spaces;

10.2. ensure adequate medical assistance, both at first arrival and in the long term, including access to psychological and psychiatric support;

10.3. establish clear procedures for the identification of persons with specific needs, including a safe and child-sensitive age assessment for unaccompanied minors, in line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)22 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;

10.4. ensure enough staff and adequate resources to the authorities involved, and a sufficient staff rotation in order to avoid risks of traumas and burnouts;

10.5. train civil servants on legal information and assistance to be provided to migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to overcome legal and administrative obstacles, and on up-to-date country-of-origin information;

10.6. provide financial support to municipalities, and local government bodies overall, affected by recurrent arrivals of migrants on their territory;

10.7. ensure full and clear information to migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers on current legislation on immigration and asylum, and facilitate their access to international protection procedures;

10.8. ensure effective and timely access to the national reception system for people claiming international protection;

10.9. support a closer co-operation between these actors and European agencies, such as the European Union Agency for Asylum, Frontex, and Europol, as well as international organisations, such as the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

10.10. establish independent human rights monitoring mechanisms at European and domestic borders, where they do not exist already.

11. To respond to the challenges and needs of public and private actors involved in the reception and the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers, the Assembly encourages member States to promote inclusion and further social cohesion within host communities and invites them to:

11.1. strengthen the co-operation between public and private actors supporting refugees and asylum seekers, including local government bodies, local communities, and civil society actors;

11.2. favour decentralised decision making by empowering local government bodies and local communities to design and implement integration programmes, encouraging participation in community life;

11.3. establish coherent, locally-driven inclusion policies and ensure assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in overcoming legal and administrative obstacles;

11.4. support public and private actors involved in reception to provide medical care, legal aid, language courses, vocational training, and access to public services, in co-operation with local government bodies, local communities, and civil society actors;

11.5. ensure predetermined and reasonable timeframes for examining applications for international protection, avoiding prolonging the over-reliance on reception centres;

11.6. support the transition from reception to community inclusion, with specific accompanying measures to favour autonomy and independence.

12. To facilitate the way in which public and private actors contribute to the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers, the Assembly calls on member States to:

12.1. end reliance on large-scale reception facilities and prioritise smaller reception facilities, such as houses and apartment units, by investing in dignified small-scale community accommodation, disseminated throughout the national territory;

12.2. adopt the model of “integrated reception” going beyond the mere distribution of food and accommodation, and providing individual programmes designed to enable people to regain a sense of independence and effective involvement in life in the community, in terms of employment, housing, and access to local services and social interaction, through the development of solid relationships with local government bodies, local communities, and local networks;

12.3. ensure dedicated reception facilities for unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, and persons with special needs;

12.4. ensure an independent monitoring mechanism of the different reception facilities, including by offering accessible complaint procedures to people.

13. The Assembly also encourages public-private co-operation in places where informal situations are observed, and where the humanitarian situation is very concerning. National authorities and local government bodies should put in place specific measures to assist people living in informal settlements, to respond to their basic needs and orient them to local services, including the provision of suitable reception facilities and protective measures for minors, women, victims of trafficking, and other vulnerable people.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Sandra Zampa, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly carried out a fact-finding visit to Calais, Dunkirk, and their surrounding areas in France on 25-26 October 2023. The visit was aimed at examining the situation of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and the role of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in providing assistance to them in these areas. The report presented by Ms Stephanie Krisper (Austria, ALDE), who chaired the delegation, raised the numerous challenges and needs of both public and private actors regarding migration management.³ Its conclusions led, *inter alia*, to tabling a motion for a resolution.

2. The motion for a resolution tabled on 11 December 2023 entitled “The challenges and needs of public and private actors involved in migration management” (Doc. 15882) recalls the multiplicity of actors involved in the reception and protection of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The text raises the questions at stake about the sharing of roles and competences in the upholding of reception systems, the efficiency of the existing procedures, and the responsibility of the respective institutions and actors involved.

3. This report is also based on an information memorandum presented by Mr Paul Gavan (Ireland, UEL) following a fact-finding visit that the committee carried out in Sicily and Lampedusa, Italy, on 16-18 September 2024.⁴

4. I carried out a fact-finding visit in London, Dover, and Canterbury, in the United Kingdom, from 24 to 26 March 2025, in the context of the preparation of the present report.

5. The observations made on the basis of the visits in these three member States made it possible to delineate a general overview of the various migration routes in Europe and at Europe’s borders. Various institutions of the Council of Europe have observed highly precarious conditions for migrants, particularly regarding formal reception facilities and informal contexts, exacerbated by a structural lack of essential means and services, at borders of several of Council of Europe member States. The situations observed in these various congestion points raise the issue of how to uphold international commitments and norms in such sensitive places.

6. Public actors are the national and local public authorities, administrations, or agencies dealing with the first arrival, the reception and the management of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers within the institutional reception system, and sometimes in the informal reception context. Regarding the private actors, there are two different types: on the one hand, there are those that have contracts with public authorities and are sub-contracted to manage or co-manage, with public authorities, reception facilities at a number of stages of the reception system. On the other hand, there are private actors such as charities, foundations, or NGOs, which work in close co-operation with the public sector, most of the time at different stages of reception, from the very first arrival to the integration policies in host communities. International institutions, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also play an important role in assisting public and private actors in migration management.

7. With such a variety of actors involved in migration management, and taking into account their roles, interactions, and co-operation, the focus of the report is to better understand: the relationships between all actors at the various stages of the migration management systems; the positive outcomes of such relationships or partnerships observed in different States; and which legal framework, methods, and reception systems can be used as good practices in the Council of Europe member States to ensure a better inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in host communities.

2. First arrival and vulnerabilities identified

8. When migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers arrive in Europe, they have several immediate needs and require first-instance assistance to ensure their safety, dignity, and access to essential services. During the fact-finding visit carried out in Sicily from 16 to 18 September 2024, the delegation visited the Lampedusa

3. See AS/Mig/Inf(2023)14.

4. <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/9651/more-solidarity-needed-among-member-states-for-the-migrants-arriving-in-lampedusa-the-gateway-to-europe>.

hotspot. By meeting the different institutional and non-institutional stakeholders involved in the management of the constant arrivals on this small island, the delegation gained better insight into the organisation of the disembarkations and the first reception of migrants, at the door of Europe.

9. The authorities in Lampedusa explained the process of arrival and management of migrants, from their disembarkation and during their short stay (in general, a maximum of 72 hours and an average of 24 hours), in the Lampedusa hotspot (Contrada Imbriacola hotspot). Hotspots are governmental centres set up in the places of disembarkation, where the operations of first assistance, health screening, identification and information on how to claim for international protection take place.

10. After search and rescue operations, the rescued people disembark at the Lampedusa port, thanks to the coast guard authority. A triage conducted by a team of doctors, nurses, and cultural mediators aims to identify needs for immediate and potential future medical care. Common health issues include hypothermia during the winter, dehydration and heat strokes during the summer period, diabetes, burns, or inhalation of toxic fumes from boats' engines. This initial phase is also the appropriate moment for identifying vulnerabilities.

11. The delegation was present at the Lampedusa port on 16 September 2024, at 20:45, to witness the disembarkation of approximately 70 migrants who were rescued by the Lampedusa Coast Guard Authority. The parliamentarians expressed their sympathy towards the situation and commended the authorities for their efficient handling of the disembarkation process.

12. Many people arriving in Lampedusa are, indeed, exhausted and traumatised by their journeys and have often experienced violence, including gender-based violence and torture, trafficking, labour exploitation, forcible return, or potential abusive detention in transit countries. Unaccompanied minors and women (including pregnant women), who are at risk of experiencing, *inter alia*, trafficking and sexual violence during their migration journey, are among these vulnerable individuals. A significant number of them may be thus dealing with intersecting vulnerabilities, such as pregnant women who have suffered from sexual violence, or unaccompanied minors who have been victims of torture.

13. There are numerous actors involved in the first operations and present at the pier and in the area. They collaborate within the community-based protection framework to identify and swiftly and efficiently assist vulnerable people, or those with specific needs.

14. At disembarkation, the police proceed to identification, with the support of the UNHCR, helping in identifying individuals with vulnerabilities, such as single mothers or pregnant women, individuals with disabilities, or unaccompanied minors. Other private actors are present in this crucial initial phase, such as CISOM (Corpo Italiano di Soccorso dell'Ordine di Malta), Save the Children, Mediterranean Hope, or the nuns of the Unione Internazionale delle Superiore Generali.

15. Once identified as vulnerable, the migrants get certification of their vulnerabilities, which will help them later during the next phases of the reception system. Once the initial medical care is administered, the people are transported by bus to the Lampedusa hotspot, where a dedicated health centre continues to provide medical support.

16. The initial phase of identification entails conducting brief interviews and collecting comprehensive data on migrants, including personal details such as their name, date of birth, and fingerprints of all ten fingers, which will be registered in national and international databases. The interpreters also play an essential role as socio-cultural mediators in assisting migrants to understand the various steps of the pre-identification process. Furthermore, migrants receive informative sessions on their rights, including on how to apply for international protection and the right to asylum, from different entities, including the Italian Red Cross, the European Union Agency for Asylum, UNHCR, and the IOM, the latter of which covers subjects such as trafficking and labour exploitation.

17. People arriving in Lampedusa may also be victims of trafficking. When there is a potential trafficking situation picked up during the pre-identification phase, the police notifies the responsible department. The pre-identification phase allows for the gathering of data on the origins of the journeys, with the technical support of Frontex. For this purpose, Frontex officers receive specialised training to identify indicators of trafficking when conducting confidential interviews at the hotspot.⁵

5. On the critical situation of migrants victims of human trafficking, see the 2024 GRETA's Report and Government's Comments, www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/italy1.

18. The parliamentary delegation visited the Lampedusa hotspot. The facility has devised protocols tailored to the diverse populations, who receive food, water, and clothing, as part of the initial reception system. They have access to washing facilities – although limited – and charging stations for their mobile phones, crucial to allowing them to communicate with their families. In addition, the staff evaluate their humanitarian needs. The delegation learnt that the hotspot improved after June 2023, when the Italian Red Cross took over its management. Since then, staff numbers have increased, and the centre has been better organised. Nevertheless, the delegation was disappointed by the inadequate conditions at the Lampedusa hotspot: beds, mattresses, showers and bathrooms are in bad condition. The delegation believed that the facilities could be significantly enhanced. Civil society representatives also underlined the risk of promiscuity of minors with adults, as it seems difficult to separate unaccompanied minors and women from male adults, especially at night.

19. Once the period spent in the Lampedusa hotspot is over, migrants are transferred to the main island of Sicily by ferry, and then, if they express the will to apply for international protection, they are sent to reception centres for asylum seekers situated throughout Italy. If migrants do not express the will to apply for international protection, a different path is initiated: as irregular foreign nationals, they cannot stay on the Italian territory. This may result in the detention in the so-called CPR detention centres, until the final execution of the return to the country of origin, or in an order issued to leave the Italian territory within seven days. In practice, the order to leave the territory in 7 days is not or cannot be complied with and, as a result, some people stay in the territory without a residence permit living in precarious conditions, at risk of exploitation.

20. In conclusion, in Lampedusa, the delegation recorded that co-operation between the different actors – institutional and others – in the first phase of the arrival, and the involvement of all the civil society organisations operating on the island, leads to an effective and respectful management of people, even in complex situations.

21. During my fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom on 24-26 March 2025, I was able to visit the Western Jet Foil Processing Centre, in Dover, where the migrants rescued in the English Channel are disembarked. This centre is the main reception point for migrants arriving by small boats who succeed in crossing the Channel after having left France.⁶ I was able to observe on 25 March 2025 morning the disembarkation of 65 migrants, including six women and three children, rescued by the British coast guards.

22. The British border forces explained that at this preliminary stage, no one was arrested, in order to fulfil humanitarian duties before law enforcement. In this spirit, rescued migrants go through a well-organised pre-identification process where men, women, and presumably or claimed unaccompanied minors are put in separate areas. There is a first screening with fingerprints taken, and the identification of potential vulnerabilities. This includes the identification of potential medical emergencies, for which the agents are in contact with a doctor present within the centre, and with the local hospitals if needed. The medical unit indicated that it often observed injuries linked to the crossing, in particular burns due to the engines of the boat. The first interaction is very short, with 10 languages available. In order to trace all the screening stages, but also the facilities where the migrants are oriented, all migrants are equipped with bracelets equipped with chip readers giving the information of all the stages they go through. This first-arrival process lasts in general one hour but can go up to about six hours.

23. The next step is the immigration check; the migrants are informed that they are officially under arrest as they arrived irregularly. The immigration agents do not ask too many questions at this point given the traumas of the journey. This step is followed by a control of all the items in the possession of the migrants, the procedure being filmed in its entirety. If required, the migrants can be reoriented to an interview room after that inspection.

24. Within a maximum of 24 hours from their arrival, the applicants are transferred within the reception system to hotels across the United Kingdom, managed by private companies and large private groups, to which the Ministry of the Interior has fully sub-contracted the management of reception. Minors are transferred to a dedicated centre, which I also visited, where they stay for 24 hours, without being allowed to leave. They are then sent to different parts of the country, where local authorities take care of them.

25. The border forces explained that the criminal networks of smugglers also act on the British territory and recruit, and even force migrants travelling by buses to their temporary accommodation to follow traffickers.⁷

6. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats-monthly-data.

7. For more details about migrant human trafficking in the United Kingdom, see for instance the GRETA United Kingdom Third Evaluation Round, www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/united-kingdom1.

26. During the fact-finding visit, I met with representatives of civil society organisations. The director of the Humans for Rights Network explained her organisation had been in contact with a whistleblower from a private company responsible for part of the screening process when people arrive in the United Kingdom. She gave an example of a young woman who had arrived in the United Kingdom the week before and disclosed that she had been trafficked to the United Kingdom and that if she was to be sent into the accommodation system, she would be kidnapped. According to the interlocutor, no action was taken.

27. It was very useful to compare the operations that follow rescue operations in both Dover and Lampedusa. The procedures at Dover are fast, each step follows the other rapidly, while they seem to respect European and international standards and practices. There is considerable deployment of means and resources and the facilities appear adequate overall, from a material point of view.

28. This clear procedural efficiency observed in the United Kingdom may however lead to the risk of failing to identify possible vulnerabilities, as in the cases of minors or of victims of trafficking, since the screening is carried out through brief observations and interviews by staff from the Home Office – equivalent to the ministry of the Interior – and operators of private companies that manage the various reception facilities. There are moreover no psychologists or other professionals, nor international organisations, such as the UNHCR and IOM, or NGOs with specific training, working alongside the police, as is the case in Italy.

3. First and second reception systems: strengths and weaknesses

29. A comprehensive understanding of migration to Europe necessitates recognising that the reception system in Italy and in other countries of arrival does not receive all people who have arrived, and as a result many are excluded from the protection network. Some of those who do arrive at reception centres leave the centres soon after their arrival and continue their journey to other European destinations or remain in Italy and in other countries of arrival and resort to undeclared work. People who are not taken in charge by the formal reception systems stay in informal situations – informal camps, squats, or living in the streets – and suffer from a lack of essential means. Their situation is worse than asylum seekers and refugees, despite living conditions remaining critical in several reception centres throughout Europe.

30. As explained in the previous section, Italy's reception system for asylum seekers and refugees consists of two levels of reception, preceded by the initial phase of assistance which takes place in the congestion points, particularly those established in places of disembarkation, such as Lampedusa.

31. The first phase for people expressing the will to apply for asylum after their identification takes place in the governmental first reception centres (CAS). Asylum seekers remain in such centres until their application for international protection is completed. The second reception and integration phase is ensured at territorial level by local authority projects.

32. The first reception centres are determined by the prefectures, in consultation with the local authority where they are situated. The public authorities handle first reception tasks, such as initiating asylum procedures, evaluating health conditions, and addressing vulnerabilities. They also provide basic necessities, such as housing, meals, clothing, health care, and linguistic-cultural mediation.

33. The second reception system is managed by the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, established in 2002, recently renamed Reception and Integration System (SAI, for Sistema Accoglienza Integrazione). The programmes associated with the second reception system go beyond providing the basic necessities as observed in the first reception centres. They encompass a wide range of services designed to help individuals to regain their independence, such as Italian language courses, vocational training, legal guidance, access to local services, job placement assistance, housing support, social integration, and comprehensive psycho-social healthcare services.

34. During the fact-finding visit to Italy, the delegation visited in Giarre, near Catania, the CAS and SAI run by a non-profit private actor, the Cooperative Iride, where about 50 young adult men were hosted in the same building. The manager and the legal and social operators working in the two centres underlined that the exclusion of asylum seekers from the SAI increases precariousness and lowers their chances of taking part in programmes aimed at fostering social inclusion.

35. Regarding asylum support and accommodation in the United Kingdom, asylum seekers can apply for accommodation, subsistence, or both. In providing accommodation, the authorities are required to have no regard to "any preference that the supported person or his dependants, if any, may have as to the locality in which the accommodation is to be provided". Similarly, the law requires them to have no regard to "his personal preference as to the nature of the accommodation to be provided".

36. All asylum seekers are screened in order to identify and protect vulnerable individuals and ensure that they are placed in suitable accommodation. They have access to health and social care services, including support for mental health, as from their point of arrival in the United Kingdom, and continue to benefit from such support while in asylum accommodation. The support package provided usually consists of furnished accommodation, with utility bills and council tax paid, and a weekly cash allowance to meet other essential living needs.

37. As initial transit reception centres, asylum seekers may spend two or three weeks in initial accommodation centres while their claim is considered. There are moreover private houses or flats arranged and paid for by the authorities as well as private hotels, supposedly used on very rare occasions and on an emergency basis, but *de facto* commonly used. There are additionally situations of individually arranged accommodation, such as houses, flats, hotels, or staying with friends or family. Such accommodation is not paid for by the Home Office. Individuals staying in this type of accommodation are able to apply for subsistence only for essential living needs.

38. An asylum claim may be put through the detained fast track procedure if, after a screening process, it appears to be one that may be decided quickly. There are four accommodation facilities designated for use in such procedures.

39. During the fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom, I visited Manston Asylum Processing Centre, which follows the first-arrival processing in Dover's Western Jet Foil processing centre. The centre is a large former military base, which has been rehabilitated into a reception centre. In this centre, the migrants go through a biometric room, which is managed by staff from the Home Office. The following phases with interviewers questioning the migrants about their crossing, intentions etc. are however sub-contracted to a private company. Similarly, the medication units are also sub-contracted to the private sector and are in charge of the assessment of health issues, diagnoses, and treatment.

40. I also visited headquarters of associations that protect and support, including materially, refugees and asylum seekers in Canterbury and in other places near London. For instance, I met with volunteers, refugees and asylum seekers in the Bell Farm Christian Centre, a church which turns into a canteen every day and welcomes dozens of people. Such a visit demonstrated the importance of the local communities and local initiatives, the most successful way of integrating refugees and asylum seekers.

41. I noted that asylum procedures in the United Kingdom could take several months, obliging people, individuals, and families alike, to spend long periods of time in hotels managed by private contractors. The living conditions in these hotels are not always decent, and they often provide only minimal services, with no access to work, or education, or other activities, which could lead to psychological distress and uncertainty. During such a long period of time, asylum seekers are not allowed to work until their status is recognised, resulting in months of inactivity, with minimal subsidy provided by the State.

42. I also observed the abrupt transition once the protection status was granted, as beneficiaries only have a few weeks to leave their accommodation and are often left without any support for inclusion and access to services. This results in cases of homelessness, and situations where people must solely rely on the protection of associations to survive, look for accommodation and find work. Moreover, families can be moved from one city to another, without taking into account the continuity of children's education.

43. The moment of transition from reception to integration into the community and to independence is thus the most critical and often leads to highly precarious situations. Many people leave the formal reception system at this exact transition time. This crucial period requires close co-operation between all the relevant public and private actors to ensure a smooth transition and an effective inclusion into local communities.

44. Among the local actors, it is equally important to involve the diaspora organisations, which can prevent and overcome many practical, administrative, and legal issues for refugees and asylum seekers. Heard by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons during an exchange of views held on 18 October 2024, Ms Alexandra Mamaeva, Coordinator and Representative of the People's Embassy of Belarus in Slovenia, cited the example of Poland, which was faced with a high number of migrants arriving from Belarus, and which established a working group with Belarusian lawyers and human rights defenders to find better integration solutions for these refugees. A further positive example is Italy, where the co-operation between the Italian local authorities and the People's Embassy of Belarus helped Belarusian applicants in preparing their documentation, resulting in over 30 successful refugee status decisions in 2025. In April 2025, Ms Mamaeva informed that a second case of obtaining a foreigner's passport without the need for international protection had been recorded in Italy.

4. Unaccompanied foreign minors

45. All along their migration routes, there are vulnerabilities for unaccompanied minors. Their fragile situations require special consideration and a specific approach. As underlined by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in its Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)22 on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration⁸, being unable to prove their age can increase this vulnerability and the risk of being subjected to violence, exploitation, abuse and/or becoming victims of trafficking. This recommendation is the first international legal instrument setting human rights standards on age assessment in the context of migration. The Committee of Ministers recalls “the right of the child to have their best interests given primary consideration in all matters concerning them and that any legitimate interest of the State to determine the age of a child must respect the rights of that child”.⁹ The recommendation includes the principle of presumption of minority for persons undergoing age assessment “unless and until determined otherwise through an age assessment procedure”. Importantly, it requires member States to implement multidisciplinary and evidence-based age assessment procedures. It reminds member States that a medical examination for age assessment purposes should only be undertaken when reasonable doubts remain about the person’s estimated age once the other measures of the procedure have been exhausted. It also adds that the “age assessment should be carried out by designated professionals, in accordance with relevant professional obligations and standards, and appropriate professional training should be provided for all those responsible for age assessment and related procedures”.

46. In March 2025, the European Court of Human Rights stated in its Chamber judgment *F.B. v. Belgium* that, without ruling on the reliability of the bone tests or on the applicant’s proven minority, the decision-making process leading to the decision to terminate her care as an unaccompanied foreign minor following the age assessment procedure was not accompanied by sufficient procedural safeguards under Article 8 (right to respect for private life) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), concluding unanimously to a violation of Article 8.¹⁰ The Court noted *inter alia* that it did not appear from the file that the applicant had actually been informed of the need to give her consent to the medical test being carried out. It also stressed that, given their invasive nature, medical examinations could only be carried out as a last resort if other means of removing doubts about the age of the person in question had not produced conclusive results.

47. In Italy, Law No. 47 of 2017 introduced a single procedure to identify minors, comprising thus the fundamental step for ascertaining the age, on which depends the possibility of applying protection measures in favour of unaccompanied minors. It provides that a social and medical age assessment procedure may be ordered by the judicial authority, when there are well-founded doubts about the age declared by a presumed unaccompanied minor and when it is impossible to establish his or her age through documentary evidence. The child must be informed of the objectives, methods, and consequences of the age assessment, and must be treated as a minor until the conclusion of the procedure. According to the law, age assessment procedures must be carried out with a multidisciplinary approach, by professionals with appropriate expertise, involving a cultural mediator. The result must indicate the margin of error, and the individual in question must be presumed to be a minor in case of doubt. The final decision on the individual’s age, adopted by the judicial authority, must be issued to both the person concerned and the guardian, thus allowing for an appeal.

48. The 2017 Law also introduced measures concerning strengthening rights and protections in favour of minors, starting from the reception stages. The regulatory framework for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors distinguishes between first and second reception and establishes the principle that unaccompanied minors may under no circumstances be detained or received in return centres. All unaccompanied minors shall be received within the framework of the SAI, the capacity of which must therefore be commensurate with the actual presence of foreign minors in the national territory. Asylum seekers who have been placed in the SAI while under 18 years old remain in reception centres until their application for international protection is completed. In the second reception centre, the minors can stay until 18 years old, or 21 years old with a judge’s authorisation, only if the child gets new permits in certain situations. The complexity and bureaucratic character of such procedures, is however said to form part of the obstacles to integration.

8. www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/age-assessment-in-the-context-of-migration-new-committee-of-ministers-recommendation. See also the Council of Europe’s publication “Age assessment for children in migration - A human rights-based approach (2021)”, which is a practical guide for policy makers, available at <https://edoc.coe.int/en/migration/11032-age-assessment-for-children-in-migration-a-human-rights-based-approach.html>.

9. CM/Rec(2022)22.

10. Application No. 47836/21.

49. Additionally, Law No. 47 of 2017, provided the establishment by the regional guarantors for childhood and adolescence, a computerised list of voluntary guardians available to take on the guardianship of unaccompanied foreign minors. The law shifted the ability to open guardianship and appoint a guardian from the tutelary judge to the Juvenile Court, so all the jurisdictional procedural decisions relating to unaccompanied foreign minors are made by the same judge.

50. The Law Decree No. 133 of 2023 introduces several novelties about child identification and age assessment. It provides for the possibility for the public security authority to proceed with examinations to determine the age of an alleged minor, as an exception to the already codified procedure based on the socio-medical assessment conducted by multidisciplinary teams. Among the changes, it establishes that the procedure for the socio-sanitary assessment of the child's age must be concluded within 60 days from the date on which such assessment is ordered by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Several interlocutors, however, expressed concerns about the recent legislative developments, which may affect the quality of the Italian reception system for unaccompanied minors.

51. This law also provides that, if needed, there is the possibility for prefects to establish extraordinary reception centres for minors, with different services and fewer guarantees than ordinary SAI centres. The length of stay of unaccompanied minors in the first reception centres varies according to the number of arrivals, and the availability of space in the dedicated centre. Their prolonged stay in these first reception centres poses a challenge, despite the fact that their stay may not exceed 30 days according to the law.

52. During the fact-finding visit to Sicily, the parliamentary delegation visited the first reception centre for unaccompanied minors in Catania, called Il Nodo, funded by the EU Asylum Migration and Integration Fund. The centre hosted about 20 minors and was staffed with a multidisciplinary team offering basic services, such as Italian language courses and legal guidance, as well as various additional activities, such as gardening and access to professional training through partnerships with local companies.

53. The delegation also visited the CivicoZero centre in Catania, managed by the organisation Save the Children. This day centre for minors is open until 18:00 every day, and provides resources, educational opportunities, psychological support, and language courses to unaccompanied minors aged 14 and above, with an average age of around 16-17 years old. For children under 14 years old, *CivicoZero* ensures that the child protection authorities are notified. Workshops are set up to offer minors legal advice and assist them in preparing CVs, among other things. The centre also offers them legal assistance and educates them about their rights, empowering them to make informed choices about their lives and futures. The centre's staff, particularly cultural mediators, frequently come into contact with the young individuals on the streets.

54. During the fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom, I followed the age assessment process at the Western Jet Foil Processing Centre, in Dover, where the migrants rescued in the Channel are disembarked. The migrants claiming to be minors are separated from the adults. The British border forces base their assessment on a procedure of two inspectors assessing the age visually. These agents must determine whether the migrant seems significantly and not significantly over 18 and must agree on their assessment. If the migrant is assessed by the agents as appearing significantly over 18, he or she is oriented to an interviewing room where the person will exchange with an agent about his or her story, to identify potential evidence, or on the contrary inconsistencies, reinforcing or contradicting the assessment of the first two agents. If this agent also believes that the person is significantly over 18, he or she goes straight into the adult system.

55. During the meeting with civil society representatives, I was informed about the potential deficiencies of the above-mentioned visual age assessment process. The Director of Policy of the Helen Bamber Foundation, also co-chairing the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium grouping over 100 organisations working to promote the rights of young migrants and refugees, expressed her concern about the visual age assessment, resulting too often in wrongly considering minors as adults, resulting to hundreds of children being oriented to the adults' reception system. During the same meeting, the Director of the Humans for Rights Network explained they had been working with 28 children treated as adults due to a wholly inadequate visual age assessment upon their arrival.

56. Following the visit of the Western Jet Foil Processing Centre, I visited the Kent Intake Unit, which is exclusively dedicated to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and is where they are officially detained. There is also an interview with the minors, where they are informed about the next steps, but also about issues such as the risk of trafficking. This interview is furthermore an opportunity to identify health issues that would not have been identified before, at the Western Jet Foil Processing Centre. The centre, where the minors stay in general a maximum of 24 hours, was well maintained, with television, games, seats, access to

drinks, dishes, showers, toilets, and a prayer room, but without beds. There is an observation room from where agents have a view on the room where minors stay, *inter alia* to ensure that there are no tensions among minors.

57. During a hearing held by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons during its meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 18 October 2024, I was able to gather first-hand testimonies from NGO representatives acting along the Balkans migration route. On that occasion, the representative of the Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment indicated that due to insufficient reception conditions, a lack of staff and of systematic vulnerability screening procedures, vulnerable asylum seekers were often not identified as such and were not receiving the services and help required. In police procedures, the identification of unaccompanied minors irregularly crossing the border continued to be a challenge. While official statistics on the number of unaccompanied minors processed for irregular crossing or expressing the intention to apply for asylum was not gathered, only 46 unaccompanied minors lodged the application for international protection in Slovenia in 2023. This meant that the majority of unaccompanied minors were either unidentified as such or left the formal reception system before lodging any application. The representative of the Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment thus recommended that Slovenia establish a systematic vulnerability screening procedure both by the police and in the context of the asylum procedure, which would allow proper identification, assistance, and protection of vulnerable groups.

5. Informal settlements

58. Migrants who are not taken in charge by the formal reception systems of countries of arrival, and who stay in Europe in informal situations face a significant lack of basic necessities, continuous health and safety risks, and legal and administrative barriers. In informal camps, migrants face a lack of essential means: there are recurring problems of access to water, food and appropriate equipment for cooking. There are also difficulties in cleaning, sanitation and showering, maintaining goods, and access to toilets. There is furthermore a lack of access to non-food items, such as blankets, tents, clothes or shoes. There have been also recurring reports of goods being confiscated or destroyed by police forces. Such congestion points also face deficient housing, including the lack of adequate and separate shelters for young people and families. Lastly, there is inadequate access to healthcare, including mental healthcare.¹¹ These persons often lack effective access to their fundamental rights and are excluded from public services. Further, they are victims of social isolation and stigmatisation and can be victims of discrimination and hostility from local populations.

59. The parliamentary delegation which visited Calais and Dunkirk areas, in France, on 25-26 October 2023, was appalled by the humanitarian conditions observed in those areas, with many people living in informal camps. The delegation observed insufficient accommodation, often located in remote and inaccessible areas, forcing residents to rely on State-organised transport. The housing situation was particularly alarming for vulnerable groups such as women and minors. In the Pas-de-Calais and Nord départements, a lack of shelters for children exposed them to various risks and left them without the required protection.

60. The delegation highlighted that many migrants in Calais and Dunkirk could not return to their countries of origin and had nowhere else to go. This was compounded by a deficient formal reception system, lack of information on asylum rights, and lengthy and complicated administrative procedures. The delegation observed informal camps suffering from limited access to essential needs: overcrowded food and water distribution points, insufficient non-food supplies like blankets or tents, and restricted healthcare access. At the time of the visit, an estimated 4 000 migrants were living in the region, including 2 000 in Grande-Synthe/Loon-Plage alone.

61. During a hearing with the committee on 6 December 2024, the representative of Doctors without Borders (MSF) stated that in Belgium, asylum seekers are systematically denied their reception-related rights: as of March 2024, 3 800 asylum seekers were waiting to access the reception network and related services, with many having to seek refuge in the overwhelmed shelter network, informal squats or on the streets. The representative added that psychologists reported a clear deterioration in the mental health of those forced into homelessness, exacerbated by insecurity.

11. www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/struggle-healing-under-poor-living-conditions-greece.

62. During the hearing held by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons in Ljubljana, on 18 October 2024, the representative of the Italian Consortium of Solidarity (Consorzio Italiano di Solidarietà) demonstrated the value added by the civil society organisations acting at borders to help municipalities in dealing with the arrivals of migrants and assisting them, especially the migrants crossing the border into Italy via Slovenia and arriving in Trieste.

6. Testimonies

63. It was important for me to hear from the persons concerned, and to meet them, when possible, on location, either in formal or in informal contexts. For this purpose, this report reproduces two testimonies of migrants met by the two parliamentary delegations during the fact-finding visits to France and Italy. This is complemented by a testimony following the fact-finding visit I carried out to the United Kingdom.

64. During its 2023 fact-finding visit to France, the parliamentary delegation met with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers both through centres managed by NGOs and in the informal context, in the land around Calais and Dunkirk. Parliamentarians discussed, among other persons, with a young 24-year-old Afghan in the region of Grande-Synthe. He was part of a group of mostly young males, living in the middle of nowhere. He explained the delegation he had taken four months to reach the Calais region, explaining he had been expelled several times at States' borders and had to change his route to reach Calais many times. He also explained that he tried to get enough money to pay the smugglers in order to cross the Channel. Parliamentarians raised the question of the danger in crossing the Channel, but the young man was determined to reach the United Kingdom, as his family had financed part of his trip and was expecting him to succeed and send back money from there. He additionally explained that the United Kingdom was his destination as he had contacts there, who were working there and able to help him. The exchange was very touching. In the middle of nowhere, in the dust, this young man was full of hope and determination, despite all the obstacles he had met with since he had fled from Afghanistan.

65. During its fact-finding visit to Sicily, on 16-18 September 2024, the delegation was able to engage in emotional exchanges on several occasions with young adults, women, and unaccompanied minors. The delegation heard, for instance, Ahmed's poignant testimony. This former unaccompanied minor explained that he left his home country Senegal as an adolescent and arrived in Italy in 2016. Ahmed explained that many people left the country because of the violence they experienced, obliging them to seek safety elsewhere, as staying would expose them to further harm. He added that they also encountered violence during their migration journey, and frequently met dangerous criminals; this was particularly aggravated for girls and women, who often endured sexual violence. He underlined that educational opportunities in Senegal were scarce. "I am one of the lucky ones because I was welcomed by a community", he said. Ahmed finally highlighted the necessity to provide psychological aid to migrants upon their arrival and recognised the trauma they faced in their country of origin and throughout their migration journey.

66. During the fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom, on 24-26 March 2025, I met with several refugees and asylum seekers. This was the case during a meeting at We are Trinity, in Uxbridge, London.¹² We are Trinity is a private non-profit actor supporting accommodation for 18-25 year olds at risk of homelessness and providing housing advice. I exchanged, among other persons, with Jamal, a 20-year-old man originated from Sudan.¹³ He arrived in the United Kingdom five years ago, when he was 15 years old. He explained his long and risky journey throughout Europe before reaching the United Kingdom. He went *inter alia* through Germany and France, where he lived in the street. He finally reached the United Kingdom by boat, where he was interviewed and authorised to stay. Jamal explained his situation was particularly difficult when he arrived in the United Kingdom due to the language barrier and his highly precarious living conditions. He was promised a job opportunity by smugglers when he left Sudan but was left alone once he finally reached the United Kingdom. As he needed money, someone helped him find a job in a supermarket. He was first housed by this person, before finding provisionally accommodation, which was however not appropriate. Furthermore, Jamal explained that he was unsure about his future, and how he could get assistance. He finally met the organisation We are a Trinity, which helped him a lot. Jamal explained that the volunteers accompanied him in various initiatives and he was able to go to college. He explained to me he was thinking of going through an apprenticeship in mechanics. Jamal explained that he was able to reconnect with his family from Sudan thanks to the Trinity and the Red Cross. "I guess I am taking care of myself. I need to stand on my feet", he said.

12. www.wearetrinity.org.uk.

13. For reasons of confidentiality, the name has been changed.

7. Co-operation between public and private actors involved in migration management

67. The observations made during the three fact-finding visits as well as those coming from other bodies of the Council of Europe in various member States demonstrate the urgency to respond to the needs of public and private actors involved in migration management, with the objective of a dignified reception of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Europe. Such solutions suppose either domestic policies and/or European ones.

7.1. Successful public-private partnerships

68. Public authorities should further involve the numerous non-profit private actors in the management of migration and in the assistance to, reception of, and inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees. These actors can positively work alongside public actors and, ultimately, facilitate inclusion. Public-private partnerships can be successful in informal situations too, where the humanitarian situation is very concerning.

69. There are various administrative and elected authorities on different levels who have responsibility vis-à-vis migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, depending on their respective functions and mandates. When the delegation who went to Calais and Dunkirk areas, in France, met representatives of municipalities, it observed that their approach to this responsibility varied. While some municipalities were reluctant to assist migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as well as humanitarian actors, some others such as in Grande-Synthe were doing their best to do so, despite limited resources. The delegation was impressed by the engagement of the NGOs supporting migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, despite limited means and a recurrent lack of human resources. The NGOs can be distinguished between mandated by public authorities and non-mandated associations.¹⁴ Mandated NGOs benefit from public authorities' delegation and public funds with a view to assist the individuals concerned on various aspects, such as shelters, food and water distribution, electricity supplies, information, etc. Non-mandated NGOs are more numerous and depend on private funds. Public authorities work smoothly with mandated NGOs, whereas there are more tensions with non-mandated NGOs, the latter working either where State and mandated associations are absent, or in a supplementary manner. The delegation could observe successful public-private partnerships where the public local authorities demonstrated willingness to co-operate with non-profit private actors, such as in the municipality of Grande-Synthe.

70. The fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom also demonstrated the efficiency of public-private partnership. In the first arrival, sub-contracting thorough medical checks to private medical companies allowed a specialised corps to carry out such examinations efficiently. It is important that some crucial screening steps be dealt with by specialised professionals, as this is a particularly sensitive phase in which to avoid trauma and psychological violence, but also to identify potential vulnerabilities among migrants. I welcomed the ongoing process aimed at reducing the backlog in the examination of the asylum claims and the intention expressed by the authorities to stop the use of hotels and consider other kinds of accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers.

71. The public-private partnerships are successful when frontline services and the screening phases at arrival are efficient and when legal information about the rights to asylum and refugee status, and information about accommodation, etc. is provided to migrants. Such partnerships are also successful when appropriate and ambitious training programmes are in place for staff members dealing with migrants from both public and private actors. This is especially important in order to ensure smooth and harmonised procedures, and to make informed decisions on the situations of the migrants checked and interviewed. The monitoring of activities of all the actors involved in migration management is essential to prevent human rights abuses and precarious conditions in reception facilities at all levels of the reception systems. For this reason, independent public monitors should be able to visit any publicly or privately managed reception facilities. Successful partnerships also require a stability of the law, as too much political change creates frequent changes in migration policies, which hinders the development of a long-term vision for all actors involved in the management of such policies.

14. On 25 October 2023, the delegation met with the Migrant Support Platform, represented by: Ms Julie Brémont, Coastal Child Protection Co-ordinator (Inter-association project – ECPAT France / Utopia 56 / Safe Passage / Croix-Rouge Française); Ms Alexia Douane, Refugee Women Centre; Ms Chloé Magnan, Calais Food Collective (access to water and issues relating to places of confinement – Administrative detention centre); Ms Amélie Moyart, Utopia56 (coastal marauding and rescue needs at sea/shipwrecks, deaths at the border); Ms Bérandère Lucotte, French Red Cross; Ms Noémie Cassiau, Human Rights Observers (access to rights, police violence, expulsions); Ms Ella McGee, Care4Calais (British humanitarian aid provider).

7.2. A better inclusion in local communities

72. The parliamentary delegation which visited Sicily in September 2024 could observe successful examples of policies prioritising small reception facilities. The delegation visited for instance in Giarre, near Catania, first (CAS) and second (SAI) reception centres run by a non-profit local private actor. About 50 young adult men were hosted in the same building, on different floors. These centres are part of the territorial Bronte project, a network of small reception centres distributed among several municipalities, carried out in the territory for over 15 years, taking on the most difficult challenges of inclusion and turning them into opportunities, for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as for Sicilian operators and professionals who find employment on the island. These facilities provide Italian language courses, vocational training, activation of internships in the local area and volunteer activities that periodically engage migrants in supporting the local community. The delegation commended “the implementation of small reception centres, which prevents the formation of isolated communities. This is why the consortiums of small municipalities or municipal joint projects in migration management are seen as successful models.” The good reception practices witnessed by the delegation can be largely attributed to the experience that public and private actors gained in the last ten years, after the massive arrivals in 2014-2016. Contrarily, it has been demonstrated that the presence of ghettos and segregation can foster negative consequences, such as radicalisation. The delegation thus noticed the agility and the effectiveness in terms of inclusion of the reception system when it remains on a small scale. Moreover, the delegation praised the positive attitude of local populations vis-à-vis migrants reaching Sicily, especially in Lampedusa. This demonstrates the benefits of collaborating with local populations, which ultimately leads to a smoother and more secure experience for migrants and host communities.

73. The SAI seems to be a model of “integrated reception” going beyond the mere distribution of food and accommodation, and providing individual programmes designed to enable people to regain a sense of independence and effective involvement in the life of the local community, in terms of employment, housing, access to local services and social interaction, favouring the development of solid relationships with local authorities. For this reason, the access to SAI’s integrated reception services should also be provided to asylum seekers.

74. The delegation furthermore visited in Catania Casa Betania (Centro Astalli), a place of co-housing for mothers with children, run by Centro Astalli. The delegation met with representatives of civil society organisations working on minors’ rights in Sicily,¹⁵ which gave precious insights into civil society’s crucial role in migration management and in supporting the most vulnerable foreign persons in Catania and in Sicily overall. The various public and private actors supporting migrants also prove their efficiency when they co-operate together, as well as with municipalities and different local religious communities.

75. The fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom also offered the possibility for me to meet with successful local initiatives aimed at integrating refugees in local communities. The Trinity Homeless Project for instance supports refugees families, including 168 Ukrainian families, but also families from Sudan and Afghanistan.

76. Following the meeting with the civil society,¹⁶ it appeared necessary to move beyond the housing crisis, and avoid the use of hotels for refugees and situations of homelessness as much as possible. This implies the opening of more accommodation and the devotion of more funds for dedicated support workers, for instance in the context of the Ukrainian resettlement scheme, especially regarding the family reunion scheme, which would represent more arrivals than any of all resettlement routes combined. The representative of Doctors without Borders gave the example of Sudan, from where people reached the United Kingdom following the war, and how the organisation helped Sudanese people in finding accommodation, primarily hotels and other temporary places, thus preventing people and especially families from living in overcrowded housing conditions.

77. The objective of avoiding the use of privately-owned reception facilities, especially hotels in the near future, should reorient accommodation policies of refugees and asylum seekers to local authorities and local initiatives, such as We are Trinity. An appropriate funding of public local authorities will also participate in a successful integration in host communities.

15. Centro Astalli, Caritas, Comunità di Sant’Egidio, Arci, Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration, Diaconia Valdese, Associazione Penelope, Save the Children and other civil society organisations working on minors’ rights in Sicily part of the network Tavolo Minori Migranti.

16. On 24 March 2025, I met with representatives of civil society organisations and INGOs: Care4Calais, Humans for Rights Network, Médecins sans Frontières, Helen Bamber Foundation, Amnesty International, Doctors of the World UK, UNHCR.

78. During a hearing held by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on 11 March 2025, the representative of Jesuit Refugee Service Europe explained that her organisation had developed guidance on hospitality-driven reception for asylum seekers in Europe. Jesuit Refugee Service promotes a guarantee of a sufficient privacy and autonomy by choosing individual/self-catering forms of accommodation, invites public actors to prioritise small-scale accommodation facilities, hosting small numbers of residents, while ensuring the respect of human dignity and guaranteeing a sufficient level of comfort. The representative of Jesuit Refugee Service underlined that beyond providing accommodation, the accompaniment to autonomy is an intrinsic part of a successful reception system, which should be tailored to the needs of asylum seekers and ensure availability of, and actual possibility to reach, necessary services. To ensure a better inclusion in local communities, she stressed the importance of installing facilities located within local communities, fostering encounters with the local population. During the same hearing, a representative of the International Rescue Committee Italy working with the municipality of Trieste underlined the importance of increasing and strengthening local reception capacities, as well as liaising with the central government in order to ensure prompt and swift transfer of asylum seekers to reception centres in other regions when needed.

8. Conclusion

79. There is a need for a harmonised and sustainable approach to migration management that places the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers at its core. Beyond the three member States visited and analysed, such pan-European challenges require co-ordinated, comprehensive policy responses and meaningful collaboration across sectors.

80. There has been a fragmentation of roles and responsibilities among public and private actors. Public authorities at national, regional, and local levels often operate without sufficient resources, particularly at congestion points. This gap is frequently filled by private actors, including NGOs, as well as international organisations such as the UNHCR and IOM, whose contributions are indispensable but often under-supported or inconsistently integrated into State systems. There is thus an urgent need to strengthen, and adequately support these partnerships through effective public-private co-operation, particularly in first arrival and reception contexts.

81. The fact-finding visits revealed significant variance in the quality and efficiency of first-reception procedures. In Lampedusa, for instance, the delegation raised concerns over inadequate, poor infrastructure, and access restrictions. In contrast, the United Kingdom's operations at Dover demonstrated procedural efficiency and adequate material conditions, but also revealed shortcomings in identifying vulnerable individuals due to overly rapid screening and the limited involvement of international and non-profit organisations. These observations suggest that while operational efficiency is essential, it must not come at the expense of thoroughness, human rights protection, or trauma-informed approaches.

82. The two-tiered reception systems in Italy and the United Kingdom, while structurally coherent on paper, often leave individuals in limbo between arrival and long-term integration. The exclusion of asylum seekers from Italy's SAI and the over-reliance on hotels in the United Kingdom highlight deficiencies that hinder social inclusion and foster precariousness. The highly precarious situations of migrants in camps and outside any formal reception system in France and in other countries is a matter of great concern. There must be expanded access to integrated reception programmes, fostering independence, social cohesion, and local actors' engagement. Furthermore, transition from reception to community inclusion for refugees is a critical juncture requiring a comprehensive support from all actors, including diaspora communities, who often serve as cultural and logistical bridges.

83. Unaccompanied minors are among the most vulnerable migrants, yet their treatment often lacks the procedural safeguards necessary to protect their rights, as established by the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and other international and regional treaties. The visual age assessment mostly used in the United Kingdom is concerning, as it frequently results in misclassification and the subsequent mistreatment of children as adults, including detention. Member States should therefore refer to the Council of Europe's recommendations for multidisciplinary, evidence-based age assessment procedures, highlighting the necessity of preserving the presumption of minority and involving trained professionals in the assessment process.

84. The Assembly should call for a strategic rethinking of migration management that favours decentralised, small-scale reception models embedded within local communities. Inclusive and community-based reception practices in Sicily and initiatives such as the United Kingdom's Trinity Homeless Project are

exemplary models that promote mutual understanding, local development, and successful integration. Ultimately, ensuring a dignified and effective reception system requires long-term political commitment, stable legal frameworks, and the inclusive participation of all relevant actors.