

Summary of responses to DE AHQ on allowances for asylum seekers

With a view to the rising numbers of asylum seekers in Germany the German EMN NCP started an AHQ on allowances for asylum seekers in the Memberstates and NO (without DK). 23 EMN Member states (MS) submitted an answer, valid as of November 2015.

Scope of allowances

The situation among MS is quite diverse both for the level of allowances and for the way of providing the allowances.

19 MS grant a certain amount in cash explicitly labeled as pocket money while the asylum seekers receive basic welfare support in form of in-kind allowances or vouchers. In-kind allowances comprise more or less in all MS accommodation, clothing, hygiene articles etc. Medical care is included everywhere.

The amount of pocket money – by way of example calculated for a single adult person with provided meals in a reception centre – lays between 9,50 € and 143 € per month (31 days). Two MS pay more than 100 €, seven MS from 50€ to 99 €, and ten MS less than 50 €.

If meals are not provided the amount in cash per month rises in some MS and varies between 178 € and 316 €. In one MS this amount is called “financial assistance” and excludes explicitly additional pocket money. In another MS vouchers for meals can be provided. In one MS the cash amount comprises cost for meals, mobility and communication from the beginning. Another MS does not pay pocket money during the first weeks of reception.

The exemplary calculation for a family of 4 persons (two children) not living in the (first) reception centre anymore but (if possible) in individual housing shows the following: 12 MS do not pay any allowances if the persons reside outside a reception centre or officially provided housing. One MS only pays a lump-sum for three months. Another MS does not cover any rent in such cases.

In 6 MS individual housing is possible. There the cost for rent, heating and (in some cases) furniture is covered in addition to the cash amount (between about 600 € and 1.100 €) covered for personal needs of the family (generally food, clothing). While most MS pay directly (monthly) to the asylum applicants, in one MS they receive vouchers for food and clothing while the rent is paid directly to the landlord.

Most MS follow a household approach, i.e. reduced per capita amount in case of more than one adult and graded amounts for children according their age. According the answers, only two MS have a single per capital amount.

If the family is living in a reception center / provided home, the monthly amounts paid range (assuming that meals are procured by themselves) from 470 € to 859 €. In the five MS where accommodation in the reception center is combined with meals the pocket money are between 41 € and 72 €.

Modes of payment

The mode of payment of cash allowances differs among MS. Seven MS pay weekly, two every two weeks, and 15 make monthly payments.

Duration of granting allowances

During the asylum procedure

In all MS which provided an answer allowances (cash, in-kind) are provided during the procedure. In one MS the amount rises on the level of social welfare (“analogue benefits”): from 359 € to 399 € for pocket money and basic needs for a single adult. In another MS are adapted to her/his income gained by the asylum seeker after having received permission to work while the application is being considered.

In case of a positive decision

11 MS indicate that after a positive decision the level of allowances is according the rules for nationals/EU citizens or according the residence title. In 5 MS there are regulations that the persons can remain for a transitional phase in the reception centre with the hitherto level of allowances.

In some MS allowances are temporary: in one there is a mandatory introductory programme with an introductory benefit, in another allowances are limited for two years, and in a third there is a one-off benefit. In one MS persons granted asylum have to sign an integration contract which can make them eligible for (decreasing) integration support for a maximum of 24 months. In another there exists a monthly “integration income”.

In case of a negative decision

Answers to allowances after a negative decision differ: In some cases the allowances granted hitherto are granted also for a short transitional phase, e.g. during the period the person has to leave the MS. In some cases there is a transitional phase until the non-appealability of the decision. In other MS allowances end immediately. In one MS financial allowances end if the person does not go into a return centre. In another MS basic needs are covered as long as a deportation is not feasible. Some MS indicate that there are reduced allowances for irrefutable necessary needs (partly under the condition that a person cannot be deported).