



**NO EMN OPEN SUMMARY LIMITED AHQ ON ALLOWANCES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS
(BELGIUM, DENMARK, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, HUNGARY, NETHERLANDS, SWEDEN, UNITED KINGDOM
PLUS NORWAY)**

Requested by NO EMN NCP 04.07.16
Compilation and summary produced 11.08.16

Responses from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway
(10 in Total)

Disclaimer: The following summary has been based on the responses which were provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among EMN NCPs in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided, to the best of their knowledge, information that is up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.

Background Information and Description:

DE sent out an EMN AHQ on asylum seekers allowances 25.08.15; an adapted closed compilation with a limited number of MS, is attached. In 2015 there were almost 32 000 persons who sought asylum in Norway, while the numbers for the first 5 months in 2016 (Jan-May) had fallen dramatically (1407). The Norwegian government is currently reviewing different parts of the system for processing asylum claims including the system of allowances for asylum seekers. The purpose is among other things, achieving greater harmonization, particularly between the Norwegian system of allowances for asylum seekers with the systems in other EU countries, in order to avoid a pull factor effect due to great differences.

On behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration would like to find out about the current practices related to allowances paid in other (Member) States and would like an update of some of the information gathered from the DE AHQ on same from 2015.

In an effort to obtain information that can be compared, we ask that the MS fill in the attached spreadsheet as well as possible. We ask that you allow for some variation in how each country breaks down payments, such as with age groupings for children and additional support for mothers and babies. Also, some MS operate with concrete cash amounts, while others operate with ranges of payments. Due to differences in cost of living in the various MS, the information/data will not be 100% comparable under any circumstances, but a rough picture of practices will be useful all the same. The "fit" will not be perfect. For this reason, we have made general age groupings to make comparisons a bit easier and we have included a space for additional comments. We have calculated all figures for monthly payments in Euro (exchange rate from Aug. 2015).

Questions

1. Have the previously reported amounts of in-cash and in-kind allowances for asylum seekers changed since you answered the DE AHQ of 25 th August 2015, and compilation produced 23rd November 2015? YES/NO
If Yes, please comment briefly.
2. Please specify what in-kind allowances include. Please indicate on attached excel worksheet/ list.
3. Please note any changes in in-kind support since 2015 here:
 - (a) The following items have been added:
 - (b) The following items are no longer covered:
4. Please indicate the amounts of in-cash allowances for asylum seekers per June 2016? Please fill out attached excel worksheet. If at all possible, please calculate allowances on a monthly basis, in Euro.
5. Do asylum seekers have the right to work while their application is being handled?

IMPORTANT Note: this AHQ analyzes reception and allowance practices for asylum applicants whose cases will be reviewed for asylum and who have been moved out of initial, temporary, reception facilities. All figures in excel spreadsheets are approximate *and simplified* and much of reported in-kind support actually has contingencies. Please request individual responses if further detail is of interest. *Hopefully the findings will provide some useful indicators.*

CONCLUSIONS:

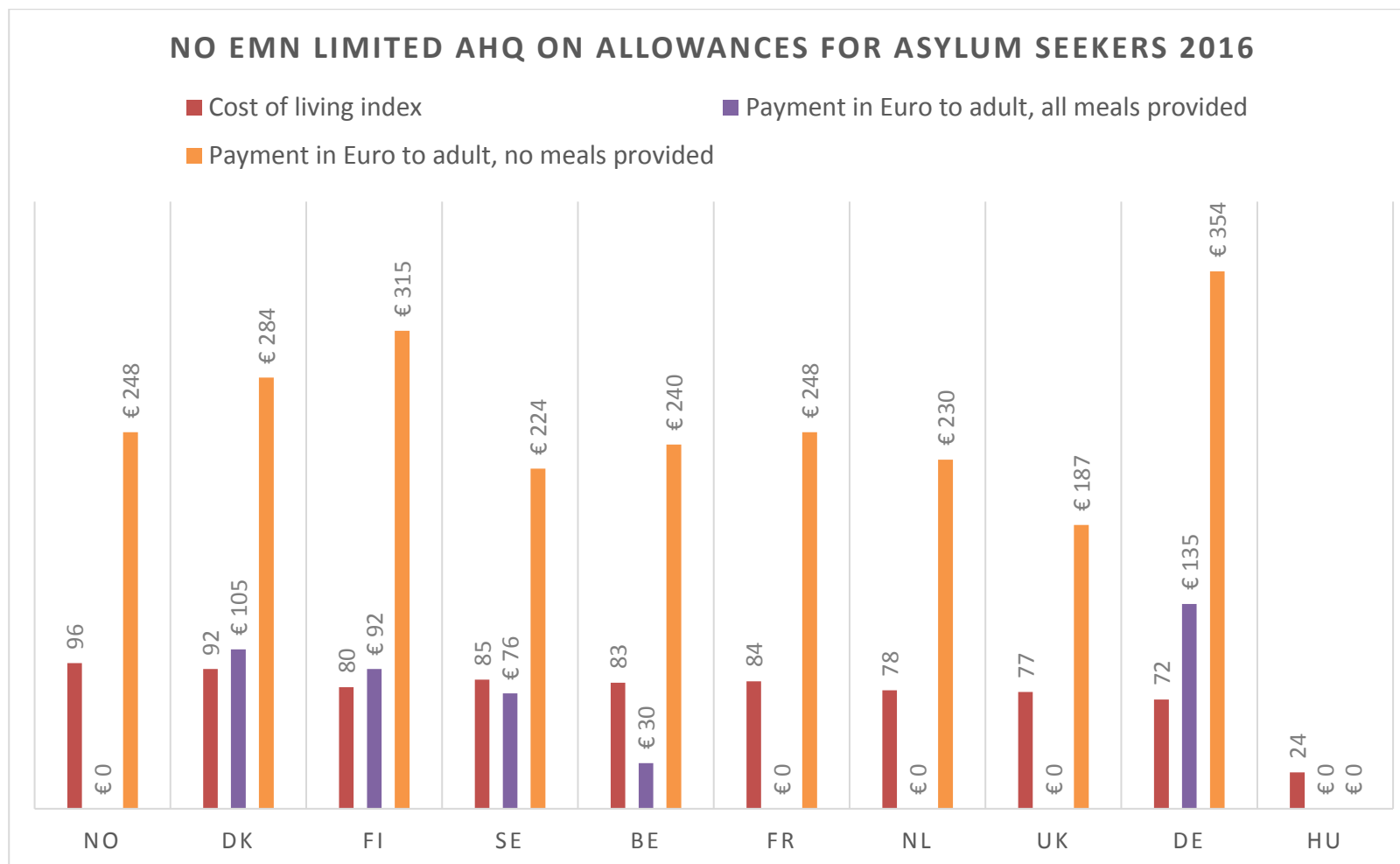
Only Norway, France and Hungary have changed their cash-allowance practices since the fall of 2015. Hungary dropped all cash support to asylum seekers; as of 1 June 2016 asylum-seekers are not entitled to *any* in-cash allowances except for reimbursement of the costs of schooling and education, travel allowance and allowance facilitating final departure from the country. They have not changed their practices with in-kind support. Norway also does not provide any in-cash payments to anyone choosing to live outside the reception center system.

In Sweden, the allowances have not changed, but the time limit for the allowances has. Since the 1 of June 2016, the right to financial support is lost (including housing) if (i) an applicant has received a negative decision and that he/she will be deported and this decision is in force, or (ii) when the period for voluntary departure has ended. This applies to adults not living together with children under 18 years who the applicant is responsible for. Previously, the allowances for this group could be reduced but not altogether cancelled.

In-kind support appears to be preferred over cash payments. MS report on similar patterns of in-kind support provided – no changes since the fall of 2015 have been reported. Reporting MS follow similar basic principals regarding cash payments; if meals are provided - lower cash payments are given; if no meals are provided - higher cash payments are made; and the larger the family unit, the less cash support provided to each person/child. (This AHQ has only considered minimum payments though some MS operate with ranges; see individual reports for further details.).

According to the reports received in this AHQ; Norway, Sweden, Belgium and France appear to provide a similar amount of in-cash support to the category “*single, no meals provided*” and can appear to have somewhat lower cash-payments for this category than Denmark and Finland. In terms of the category, “*single, all meals provided*” Denmark provides a higher in-cash amount than Finland and Sweden. Norway only provides a small in-cash payment to temporary transit dwellers and this has not been included here. Although Germany has a significantly lower cost of living index, they provide a higher in-cash payment for both categories; Euro 135/mo. when meals are provided in a reception center and Euro 345/mo. when meals are not provided in housing outside a center. Norway is nr. 4 on one international cost of living index scale, while Hungary is nr. 76 on the same index.

Please see graph below as well as attached spreadsheets. http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/rankings_by_country.jsp



NOTE: Cost of living code – 100 is highest – 1 is lowest. NO does not normally provide collective catering in reception centers. Allowances in Euro/monthly payments; FR, NL and UK do not normally provide collective catering nor accommodation in reception centers. Germany provides for accommodation in centers with catering and in decentralized housing without catering. Transit center practices not included.

All reporting MS except the UK indicate that given certain circumstances, requirements, and approvals, it is *in principal* possible for an asylum seeker to get paid work after living legally in the country for a period of 3- 12 months (it varies from country to country).

Observed general rules of thumb/practices:

- This key principal permeates practices: Is the support essential? Reporting indicates practical, humane approach within a limited economic framework. The preferred means of support seems to be providing housing as well as other In-kind benefits and in-cash payments to primarily cover meals.
- Awareness of “economies of size” benefits: all reporting MS practice sliding scales for singles, couples, families with several children, or many children. Most have sliding scales for children’s age groups as well.
- The MS differentiate the amount of support provided for applicants (i) considered unlikely asylum seekers (2-day process, Dublin II, unfounded, etc), (ii) during the period before the case has started to be handled, and (iii) during and (iv) after a decision has been reached.
- Support practices often change for applicants who have received a negative decision: pocket money dropped, support is often (not always) reduced.
- Mainstream services provided by the government to the general public, such as acute medical assistance, psychological assistance, schooling, and necessary transportation to such activities are also provided to asylum seekers as “in-kind” support.
- Several MS that provide dispersal/ private accommodation provide little or no “in-kind” support, cash provided is meant to cover basic needs.
- Necessary interpretation/translation almost always provided.
- There is a prevailing willingness to look for solutions to exceptional cases even if outside the normal routines and practices: cheapest reasonable solution.
- Unaccompanied minors are sometimes placed in youth welfare institutions or foster care who receive reimbursement. (DE, NO, UK, + others?) incomplete reporting. Many UAM receive adult allowances. Some MS provide staggered allowances, according to age.

- Some reporting MS indicate free legal aid can be provided under certain circumstances, but is not necessarily freely available.
- Almost all reporting MS, indicated that asylum seekers are not entitled to social welfare benefits while waiting for decision or if given a negative decision, but UK and FI indicate if destitute, asylum seekers are entitled to accommodation and a weekly cash allowance to cover subsistence. In FR refugees are entitled to social welfare benefits, not asylum seekers.

Good Practices

BE

- Beneficiaries of international protection can opt to not make use of the transition period of two months after their recognition/granting of SB:

After a **positive decision**: Art 43 of the Belgian Reception Act foresees a transition period between material aid in the reception facilities and social integration and assistance by the Public Centers of Social Welfare. It is foreseen that a Royal Decree determines the modalities, but this Royal Decree is not yet established. So in practice, after the recognition as refugee or after being granted subsidiary protection the person concerned has another to **2 months** to stay in the reception facility. The allowances in cash or in kind differ depending the stay in a collective or individual reception facility. With other words, during 2 months the beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to the same material aid and allowances as asylum seekers in the collective or individual reception facilities.

DK

- If the asylum seeker is over 18, he/she is required to make an agreement – a contract – with his/her asylum centre. The contract specifies the tasks the asylum seeker is required to carry out at the asylum centre and the asylum seekers participation in education and other activities.
- Monetary benefit rates for asylum seekers etc. are adjusted annually. The benefit rates for 2016 are:
 - Clothing package: DKK 1,669.94
 - Hygiene package: DKK 134.61
 - Baby package: DKK 3,339.88
 - Children's clothing: DKK 784.95 (per child every sixth month)
 - Children's package: DKK 150.05 (every 14 days)

<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming-to-dk/asylum/conditions-for-asylum-applicants/cash-allowances.htm>

- If the asylum seeker complies with the contract with the asylum center, he/she will be eligible to receive a supplementary allowance. <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming-to-dk/asylum/conditions-for-asylum-applicants/education-and-other-activities.htm>
- Caregiver allowances: not for more than 4 children.
- Newly arrived asylum seekers are required to participate in an introductory course at the reception centre. This introductory course provides an introduction to Danish language, culture and society. The course will describe the Danish labour market, education system and housing in Denmark to equip the asylum seeker to use the programs that provide access to the labour market and to move out of the centers if it later decided that his/her application is to be processed in Denmark.
- Special conditions for asylum seekers from countries with a low risk for persecution. (unfounded applications)
- These applicants will normally be housed at a center with a cafeteria and receive no form of cash-payments.

DE

- A number of legislative and organisational administrative measures have been taken in order to be able to adequately process the particularly large number of asylum applications received in the second half of 2015.
- Unaccompanied minors receive a staggered - by age - allowance determined by social legislation.
- EMA will not receive asylum services, but they are subject to the same rules as for native German children and juveniles who are taken into care.
- Once a positive decision has been reached with regard to the asylum application, the person in question receives benefits for job-seekers or social assistance, as required, in accordance with the provisions of social law which apply to all natives. If the asylum application is turned down, those concerned as a matter of principle receive benefits in accordance with the Asylum-Seekers Benefits Act until they leave the country. If they however do not leave in good time, and the foreigner is responsible for the reason, benefits are only paid to the extent which is dictated by the circumstances of the individual case.

FR

- An additional daily rate of 4, 20€ is paid to every adult asylum-seeker who has accepted a place in an asylum-seeker reception centre and to whom no dedicated place could be offered.
- In practice, the administrative and social support are provided by service providers selected based on tender bids.
- (NGOs) associations providing food aid supplies and clothing may help in emergency conditions – and on an exceptional basis, with (vouchers or food packages can be provided): otherwise not provided as part of support.

SE

- The daily allowance can be reduced if the asylum seeker:
 - does not cooperate in proving his/her identity
 - hinders the investigation of the application for asylum by going into hiding
 - does not cooperate in measures necessary for the carrying out of his/her refusal of entry or expulsion.
- When an applicant seeks asylum s/he must tell the Migration Agency how much money or other resources s/he has. If not enough resources daily compensation will be provided to cover very basic expenses. If financial situation changes, the Migration Agency must be informed.
- The right to financial support is lost if an applicant has received a negative decision and advised that they will be deported, or when the period for voluntary departure has ended. This applies to adults who do not live together with their children under 18 years.

NL

- NL pocket money dropped after case has been handled.

UK

- Allowances are paid until 28 days after a decision on their asylum application has been made. From the date of the decision, recipients of international protection will be able to work and be eligible for the same benefits as UK nationals.
- If the applicant is refused, support continues until appeals are completed and ceases 21 days after that decision has been reached.
- While asylum seekers are waiting for a decision on their application for support they may be temporarily housed in one of six Initial Accommodation (IA) centres around the UK. They may spend 2-3 weeks here, or more dependent upon the availability of appropriate housing.
- Cash allowance is not payable for applicants who are accommodated in initial accommodation centres as they will be provided with food and toiletries etc.
- The majority of asylum seekers are provided with accommodation in properties in the community as a whole, rather than in open reception centres.
- Pregnant women, babies and children aged 1 – 3 receive an extra supplement per week.
- One-off maternity payments when baby is due in less than 8 weeks. (Euro 350)

NO

- 48 hr. procedure different and stricter than for other asylum seekers
- Legal Aid only for EMN and for those applicants who have received a negative decision
- Any acute medical expenses/psychiatrist related expenses covered in full