Reception - Austria

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Austria is bound by the Reception Conditions Directive and has transposed its provisions in the Federal Basic Care Act 2005 Grundversorgungsgesetz – Bund 2005 (short: GVG-Bund)).

National legislation

Reception provisions are regulated by the GVG-B 2005 and the Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care (Grundversorgungsvereinbarung, Article 15a B-VG (short: GVV)). At the provincial level, federal provinces have their own laws governing basic care.

Competent authority and stakeholders

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Authority responsible for reception	At the federal state level, the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) is responsible for providing material reception conditions, including the provision of accommodation, food, everyday goods such as hygiene items, clothing, as well as social, medical and psychological support. The BBU GmbH is 100% owned by the federal government and the Federal Minister of Interior is the shareholder representative. At the provincial level, the respective provincial government is in charge of material reception. Federal provinces report to their respective authorities.
Other actors involved	Facilities at the provincial level are often operated by NGOs or private companies (former hotels, etc.).

Organisational aspects

The reception system follows the principle of shared responsibilities, which means that the tasks are shared between the federal state and the federal provinces.

Upon the lodging of an application, the federal state through the BBU GmbH is responsible for providing material reception conditions, including the provision of accommodation, everyday goods (e.g. food, clothing and personal hygiene items) and social, medical and psychological care. The BBU is also responsible for providing legal advice and legal representation, interpretation and translation services, human rights monitoring, return counselling and return assistance.

According to the GVG-Bund, the federal state provides basic care as long as the authority is examining the admissibility of the application or subsequent application, provided that the federal state had already provided the applicant with basic care upon the conclusion of the previous procedure and as long as the responsibility determination procedure is being conducted, the application is being examined under the accelerated procedure or as long as the application is being examined in the border asylum procedure.

Following the allocation of an applicant to a federal province and their accommodation in a provincial reception facility, the respective federal province

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becomes responsible for providing basic care. They provide both collective and individual accommodation.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

The GVV outlines the legal framework to distribute asylum applicants across federal provinces. The coordination office at the federal level manages the allocation of applicants to the states following a predefined distribution quota. Applicants are allocated among the federal provinces on the basis of an annual overall assessment, taking into account the share of the population in each federal province. Redistribution may occur if one region faces a disproportionate burden, in agreement with the coordination office.

Staff and training

The BBU GmbH offers training to different target groups on various topics. Some examples are: children/child protection, trafficking of human beings, LGBTIQ, etc. The training is undertaken together with the EUAA, UNICEF and other specialised national NGOs. There is mandatory, as well as voluntary, training for staff members, depending on their expertise and field of work (e.g. medical staff, care staff, child protection officers, etc.).

In the implementation of the EU Migration and Asylum Pact, the BBU GmbH and the BFA established joint training material and co-operated closely in certain areas of training.

Reception phases

The entitlement to receive reception conditions is triggered immediately upon lodging an application.

Following the completion of the legislative implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum through the Asylum and Migration Adaptation Act (AMPAG), the national provision no longer provides for a separate admissibility procedure. The admissibility examination is a pre-examination of the application for international protection.

For the duration of the provision of federal basic care (Section 2(1) and (1a) of the Federal Basic Care Act 2005, GVG-B 2005), an applicant is permitted to stay

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only within the administrative district in which the reception facility is assigned (Section 15 Asylum Law).

Applicants are subsequently transferred from a federal reception facility to a smaller provincial facility, where they will stay until the end of the procedure.

When necessary, applicants who are already receiving support in a federal reception facility may be transferred to another federal reception facility.

Following the allocation of an applicant to a federal province and their accommodation in a provincial reception facility, the respective federal province becomes responsible for providing basic care.

The federal state may continue to provide support to applicants in federal reception facilities, to the extent strictly necessary, pending their allocation to a federal province.

Applicants are entitled to material benefits in accordance with the Reception Conditions Directive for up to 4 months after receiving a positive decision. Applicants whose applications have been rejected may continue to receive basic care from the federal state until they leave the territory.

During consultations conducted pursuant to the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR), applicants may, with the agreement of the competent authority of the respective federal province, be accommodated in and provided with basic care at reception facilities of the respective federal province.

Contingency planning

Under the GVG-Bund, the federal state is responsible for ensuring that sufficient reception facilities are available. For this purpose, some facilities were temporarily shut down and not completely closed.

The federal reception system uses tents and containers as temporary emergency accommodation as a last resort measure. Military barracks may be designated as federal reception facilities by regulation.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

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Reception facilities at the federal state level include:

- **EAST**: Initial reception facility (*Erstaufnahmestellen*))
- **BBE**: Federal reception facility (*Bundesbetreuungseinrichtungen*))
- **BBR**: Return advice facility (*Rückkehrberatungseinrichtungen*)) for people with a final return decision after a negative asylum decision until their departure.

After the transfer of responsibility to the federal province:

- **Federal provincial reception facilities** (*Landesgrundversorgung*): for applicants under the regular procedure. This includes organised as well as individual housing.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	An initial reception centre (EAST) operates at the Vienna International Airport Schwechat
Access description	Closed
Management	Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU)
Type of applicants accommodated	Arrivals who request international protection at a border crossing point at the external border or immediately after crossing an external border (Asylum Act | AsylG 2005, Article 31-33)
Number of centres	1
Capacity	Information currently not available
Location of the centres within the country	Vienna International Airport Schwechat

Initial reception centres

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Name of the reception facility	• **BBE**: Federal reception facility (*Bundesbetreuungseinrichtungen*) • **EAST**: Initial reception facility (*Erstaufnahmestellen*) • **BBR**: Return advice facility (*Rückkehrberatungseinrichtungen*)
Regime	Open (asylum seekers are allowed to leave the district for medical treatment or to appear in court)
Management	The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) is responsible on an operational level for the provision of material reception conditions at the federal level.
Type of applicants accommodated	All applicants, until they are transferred to a federal provincial reception facility. There are separate facilities/areas for unaccompanied minors, single women and mothers with small children, families, LGBTIQ+ applicants and people with special needs or in need of specialised medical care. Applicants with a negative decision are accommodated in the return facilities until their (voluntary) departure.
Number of centres	• BBE: 8 + 1 (airport facility)
Capacity	• BBE: Approximately 2,100 places

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Location of the centres within the country	• BBE: ◦ Lower Austria: 3 facilities ◦ Carinthia: 1 facility ◦ Styria: 1 facility ◦ Upper Austria: 2 facilities ◦ Salzburg: 1 facility ◦ Tirol: 1 facility

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Federal provincial reception facilities (*Landesgrundversorgung*)
Regime	Open
Management	At the provincial level, relevant offices in the governments of the nine federal provinces (in collaboration with NGOs, private companies, etc.).
Type of applicants accommodated	All applicants within the target group of the GVV after being transferred to a federal provincial reception centre.
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Individual accommodation centres (such as private houses, flats, hotels)

Name of the reception facility	n/a
Regime	n/a
Management	n/a
Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a

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Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

Name of the reception facility	n/a
Regime	n/a
Management	n/a
Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Depending on the profile and the stage of their application, vulnerable applicants may be accommodated in a specific area within a federal reception facility or in a specialised reception facility in a province. Housing placement is arranged on an individual basis depending on the needs assessment of the vulnerable applicant.

Unaccompanied minors are accommodated separately from adults and with specialised staff at the federal level, only if the Child and Youth Welfare Service cannot provide immediate accommodation. The Child and Youth Welfare Service is responsible for providing adequate care, irrespective of the stage of the asylum procedure.

The federal reception facility of Traiskirchen accommodates single women and mothers with small children in a separate building and with only female staff members.

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Applicants with special medical needs are accommodated in separate rooms (e.g. wheelchair accessible) and only in federal reception facilities, with medical staff on site.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

Material reception conditions are defined in the GVV. They include suitable accommodation, adequate food, a monthly allowance for people accommodated in a federal reception facility, healthcare, information, advice and social support, transportation and school supplies, benefits in kind or in cash to obtain necessary clothing, and return counselling.

Material reception conditions provided in kind

Type and purpose	• Accommodation • Food • Health insurance • Transportation and school supplies for school-age children • Necessary transport (e.g. related to the asylum procedure) • Clothing (may be provided through financial allowance) • Information, advice and social support • Personal hygiene items • Return counselling

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Duration and recurrence	Material reception conditions provided in kind are available as long as the person remains entitled to basic care. Applicants are entitled to material benefits in accordance with the Reception Conditions Directive for an additional 4 months after receiving a positive decision.

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	• Pocket money (in organised accommodation) • Clothing, if not provided in kind • Leisure activities (in organised accommodation) • School material for children • Rent subsidy (in private accommodation) • Food/daily necessities (in private accommodation)
Duration and recurrence	Organised accommodation: • Monthly basis: pocket money + leisure activities Private accommodation: • Monthly basis: rent subsidy + food/daily necessities Additionally: • Yearly basis: clothing + school materials (for children)

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Calculation and amount	• Pocket money: EUR 20/month (in organised accommodation) • Clothing: EUR 150/year (if not provided in kind) • Leisure activities: EUR 10/month (in organised accommodation) • School materials: EUR 200/year per child • Food/daily necessities (in private accommodation): EUR 260/month per adult; EU 145/month per child • Rent subsidy (in private accommodation): EUR 165/month for a single person; EUR 330/month for a family
Applicants granted allowance	Material reception conditions are provided for people belonging to the target group of the GVV (Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care) who do not have sufficient means (financially) or live with family/friends. This includes: • Applicants for international protection; • Beneficiaries of temporary protection; • Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection; • Beneficiaries of international protection during the first 4 months following the granting of protection; • People with a negative decision who cannot be removed for legal or practical reasons.
Modalities of provision	At the federal level, the majority of material reception provisions are provided in kind, only pocket money is paid out through a payment card. At the provincial level, each province has a different system in place.

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

The GVG-Bund states that special consideration is given throughout the duration of basic care to the specific situation of applicants with special needs, existing

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family relationships, ethnic particularities and the best interests of the child, including an adequate standard of living for the child's development. The authority carries out an assessment within 30 days of lodging an application for international protection to determine whether the applicant has special needs. The assessment takes into account whether the applicant is an accompanied or unaccompanied minor, person with disabilities, elderly person, pregnant woman, homosexual, bisexual, intersex or transgender person, single parent with minor children, victim of trafficking in human beings, person with serious illnesses, person with a mental disorder including post-traumatic stress disorder, or victim of forced marriages, child marriages, torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, in particular gender-based violence.

The assessment is carried out based on visible external physical characteristics, statements or behaviour of the applicant, and statements made by parents or the legal representative. The results of the screening checks are also considered when assessing special needs.

If special needs are identified, they are regularly reviewed during the provision of material reception conditions and adjusted when necessary. The assessment outcome is communicated to the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the applicant.

Unaccompanied minors: Unaccompanied minors are accommodated separately from adults and with specialised staff at the federal level, only if the Child and Youth Welfare Service cannot provide immediate accommodation. The Child and Youth Welfare Service is responsible for providing adequate care, irrespective of the stage of the asylum procedure. Unaccompanied minors have the same rights to specialised healthcare and psychological support as Austrian children.

Applicants with special needs: Applicants with special medical needs are accommodated in a separate room (e.g. wheelchair accessible) and only in federal reception facilities with medical staff on site. At the provincial level, special needs are also taken care of and adequate care is provided.

The federal reception facility of Traiskirchen accommodates single women and mothers with small children in a separate building and with only female staff members.

Rights and obligations during reception

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Provision of information and counselling

Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	At the federal level, several information sessions are organised during the first intake into the reception system. Additionally, there are information desks in every federal reception facility and staff members can be contacted at any time. In federal provinces, this depends on the type and size of the facility. Either information is given by the staff members responsible for the facility or the responsible office in the provincial governments. In June 2026, Austria launched a multilingual website, Asylum in Austria, as a central information platform to inform applicants about the new regulations introduced under the Pact on Migration and Asylum. On the website, applicants can find information about the asylum procedure in Austria, including the rights and duties during reception. For more information: Asylum in Austria. The website also directs users to EUAA information brochures on the rights and obligations in reception for different target groups.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) provides legal advice and legal representation.
House rules	Reception facilities provide information on house rules, duties and possible sanctions. They are posted in the most common languages (e.g. English, Russian, French, Arabic and Farsi) and available in hard copy.

Freedom of movement within the territory

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Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	The authorities may decide that an applicant must stay in a specific geographical area because of the availability of places in reception facilities or a risk of absconding. Applicants are able to move freely within this area. If the applicant has to leave the area for a short period and for justified reasons, they must ask the authorities for permission.
Reporting obligations	Applicants have the obligation to ask for permission to leave the geographic area or specific place in which they must stay and report the reason. Their presence in that specific reception facility is checked regularly.

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	3 months after the asylum application is registered, access to the labour market is granted, including self-employment, provided the application is not examined in an accelerated procedure. Furthermore, community service work for the federal state, provinces or municipalities (such as engagement in charitable activities, e.g. landscape preservation and gardening, servicing of sports facilities and parks, etc.) can be carried out immediately after arriving in a reception facility. While being in the reception system, the income limit is EUR 110 per month for a single person and additionally EUR 80 per family member.

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Criteria to access the labour market	Access to the job market lies within the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. The assessment and effective access are processed by the Public Employment Service Austria. Employers can apply for an employment permit for an asylum applicant through the regional Public Employment Service (PES) office located within the district of the place of employment. A labour market assessment (Ersatzkraftverfahren) must be done to examine if the vacancy can be filled by an Austrian citizen, a citizen of the EU or a legally-residing, third-country national with access to the labour market (Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, AuslBG). There are no costs to be covered by the asylum applicant. A work permit is issued for a certain period of time, up to a maximum of 1 year (Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, Article 7(1)) or for a shorter time period (6 weeks or 6 months) for seasonal and harvest workers (Regulation on the temporary employment of foreigners in tourism and in agriculture and forestry in 2020, Article 4). Asylum applicants can carry out different tasks, including in non-profit work for the federal government, provinces, municipalities and public sector organisations, as well as work for companies. Possible areas of work include the maintenance of green spaces in communities, support services in care homes, homeless facilities, libraries. Asylum applicants are also required to carry out work in federal reception facilities, such as serving food, maintaining green spaces or working in the storerooms.
Employment support for applicants	No information available

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Adults' access to vocational training	Asylum seekers are allowed to complete practical experience and internships within the framework of their training in vocational schools or secondary schools. However, asylum seekers are not registered at the Public Employment Service as unemployed persons, so they are not entitled to vocational training provided by the service.
Access to tertiary education	To access tertiary education, certain criteria must be fulfilled, which can vary between universities. If an asylum applicant wants to be admitted to a degree programme, evidence of school certificates must be provided.

Healthcare

Medical screening	Upon arrival at a federal reception facility, a medical check is carried out. The medical check consists of an assessment of special needs and a medical assessment with a doctor, including a lung X-ray for TBC screening. Medical tests, including a tuberculosis test, are obligatory at reception.
Level of healthcare	Beneficiaries of material reception conditions are covered by health insurance. They are entitled to the same medical care as Austrian citizens. Emergency care and essential treatment are always granted, also for applicants whose material reception conditions have been withdrawn.
Access to healthcare	Beneficiaries of material reception conditions are covered by health insurance. A decision to withdraw or reduce material reception conditions cannot restrict access to essential medical care.

Education for minors

Access to the regular public education system is provided in accordance with national provisions. Compulsory schooling generally begins at the age of 6 and lasts for nine school years. Parents have the obligation to send their children to

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school. In principle, children participate in regular classes as extraordinary pupils.

German language courses and bridge classes (school classes in selected reception facilities) are available to children. These focus on German language acquisition and include classes on Austrian society, values, history, geography, politics, sports, etc. There are also informative workshops and mandatory courses on the rules of living in Austria.

Compulsory schooling applies to all children who reside in Austria, irrespective of their nationality or residence status.

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Applicants in a federal reception facility are required to take part in mandatory orientation courses which focus primarily on culture, language and customs, and raising awareness about anti-Semitism. Allowances can be reduced for unexcused absences.
Language classes	Applicants in reception can attend language courses and vocational training to learn new skills.

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Upon arrival and during the stay in the reception system, asylum applicants are asked about their financial means and possessions. People with sufficient means are excluded from the provision of material reception conditions. The information, whether an applicant has an income from employment in Austria, can be accessed in the system of the Austrian Health Insurance.

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

Applicants who received material reception conditions but were able to support themselves from their own resources at the same time are required by the competent authority to reimburse the necessary costs. When deciding to reduce or withdraw material reception conditions, the authority takes due account of the principle of proportionality and the applicant's special needs.

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Sufficient means test

Upon arrival and during the stay in the reception system, asylum applicants are asked about their financial means and possessions. People with sufficient means are excluded from the provision of material reception conditions. The information, whether an applicant has an income from employment in Austria, can be accessed in the system of the Austrian Health Insurance.

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

Basic care may only be reduced or withdrawn by the BFA for persons for are under federal basic care. Under no circumstances, however, may this result in a restriction of access to emergency medical care.

The legal basis can be found in:

- Section 3 of the Federal Basic Care Act (GVG-Bund);
- the House Rules for Federal Reception Facilities, which must be issued for each federal reception facility pursuant to Section 5(3) of the Federal Basic Care Act (GVG-Bund).

With regard to the reduction or withdrawal, a distinction is made between an **allowance** to cover daily expenses and **material benefits** provided within the framework of basic care.

- **Allowance to cover daily expenses:** An allowance is provided within the framework of basic care and made available to applicants on a regular basis as a monetary amount, in the form of vouchers, benefits in kind or a combination thereof, where such an allowance includes a monetary amount, in order to enable them to maintain a minimum degree of autonomy in their daily lives.
- **Material benefits provided within the framework of basic care**: Benefits are provided within the framework of basic care, including accommodation, food, clothing and personal hygiene products, provided in

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kind, as financial benefits or vouchers, or as a combination thereof, as well as allowances to cover daily expenses (e.g. reduced accommodation standards, restricted structured daily activities or recreational activities).

Allowances covering daily needs, with exception of appropriate food provision, may be withdrawn or reduced if the applicant:

i. Fails to cooperate in the determination of their identity or their need for assistance, despite being requested to do so;
ii. Has submitted a subsequent application;
iii. Fails to cooperate in establishing the necessary facts for the asylum procedure;
iv. Leaves for another reception facility or the area of the district without approval;
v. Failed to disclose that they are able to support themselves from their own resources and have thereby unlawfully obtained material reception conditions;
vi. Serious or repeated violations of the house rules of the reception facilities;
vii. Is removed from the reception facility pursuant to Section 38a of the Security Police Act (SPG); or
viii. Has committed a dangerous attack against life, health or freedom within the reception facility and it is assumed that they will commit another such attack.

Material benefits provided within the framework of basic care may be reduced and may only be withdrawn in the cases referred to in paras vi-viii.

Possible sanctions and procedure

The decision to withdraw or reduce material reception conditions must not restrict access to essential medical care and must take due account of the principle of proportionality, the special needs of the applicant and the need to ensure an adequate standard of living. Before a decision is taken to reduce or withdraw material reception conditions, the applicant is invited to submit a written statement and is informed which support the authority will reduce or cancel.

Applicants who received material reception conditions but were able to support themselves from their own resources at the same time are required by the competent authority to reimburse the necessary costs.

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Review of the sanction decision

Decisions of the BFA to withdraw, reduce or exclude material reception conditions can be appealed before the Federal Administrative Court and free legal assistance is provided in the law and implemented in all federal provinces (Section 52 BFA-VG). The BFA must inform the foreign national or applicant in writing that they are entitled to free legal advice for the appeal proceedings.

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