

Reception - Austria

Reception System

Overview

Relevant EU legislation

Austria is bound by the recast Reception Condition Directive and has transposed its provisions in the [Federal Act to regulate the basic care of asylum seekers in the admission procedure and certain other foreigners](#) of 2005.

National legislation

Reception provisions are regulated by the [Federal Basic Care Act](#) (*Grundversorgungsgesetz* – Bund 2005, GVG-B 2005) as well as the [Basic Welfare Support Agreement](#), Article 15a B-VG (*Grundversorgungsvereinbarung*).

Competent authority and stakeholders

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. At the provincial level, the respective provincial government is in charge of material reception.
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.

During the admission procedure, the federal state through the state-owned company BBU GmbH is responsible for providing material reception conditions, including the provision of accommodation, everyday goods (e.g. hygiene items and clothing) 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.

Following the admission procedure, the federal provinces become responsible. They provide collective and individual housing.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within their territory

The [Basic Welfare Support Agreement](#) outlines the legal framework for distributing asylum applicants across Austria's federal states. A coordination office is established at the federal level to manage the allocation of asylum seekers to the states following a predefined distribution quota. According to Article 1(4), asylum seekers are allocated based on the proportion of the population in each federal state; redistribution can occur if one region faces a disproportionate burden, in agreement with the coordination office.

Staff and training

Training is provided to specific case officers handling minor applicants, in particular taking into account age, maturity, cultural differences and experiences. Advanced training is provided to staff of reception centres, basic care facilities and police detention centres on the risk of human trafficking of unaccompanied minors.

Reception phases

The reception conditions are triggered immediately upon making an application.

During the initial interview of the asylum seeker by the public security officer (at the beginning of the admissibility procedure), the applicant is still within the responsibility of the police and is obliged to reside at the Initial Reception Centre (EASt or VQ).

Once the admission phase is concluded, applicants are transferred from the federal distribution centre to a smaller provincial facility, where they will stay until the end of the procedure.

Applicants are entitled to material benefits in accordance with the Reception Conditions Directive for an additional 4 months after receiving a positive decision. Rejected applicants are entitled to material reception conditions, provided that they cooperate with the competent authority on their departure.

Contingency planning

Under the Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care, Article 15a B-VG (*Grundversorgungsvereinbarung*), the federal government is responsible for ensuring that sufficient accommodation facilities are available if needed. For this purpose, some facilities were temporarily shut down and not completely closed.

Furthermore, the federal reception system uses tents and containers as temporary emergency accommodation as a last resort measure.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

Reception facilities at the federal state level include:

- **EASt:** Initial Reception Centres (*Erstaufnahmestellen*) during the admissibility procedure.

- **VQ:** Distribution Centres (*Verteilerquartiere*) set up in five federal provinces for asylum seekers during the admissibility procedure.
- **BS:** Federal reception centres (*Betreuungsstellen*) for asylum seekers during/after the admissibility procedure and before their stay in Provincial Reception Centres for people whose admissibility was declined.
- **SBS:** Specialised reception centres (*Sonderbetreuungstellen*) for asylum seekers in need of specialised medical care and for unaccompanied minors.
- **RÜBE:** Return advice centres (*Rückkehrberatungseinrichtungen*) for people with a final return decision after a negative asylum decision until their departure.

After the admissibility procedure (within the competence of the federal provinces):

- **Federal Provincial Reception Centres** (*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	Airport procedure for arrivals requesting international protection at the airport (Austrian Asylum Act AsylG 2005, Article 31-33)
Number of centres	1 centre
Capacity	information currently not available
Location of the centres within the country	Vienna International Airport Schwechat

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	• EASt: Initial Reception Centres (<i>Erstaufnahmestellen</i>) • VQ: Distribution Centres (<i>Verteilerquartiere</i>) • BS: Federal reception centres (<i>Betreuungsstellen</i>) • SBS: Specialised reception centres (<i>Sonderbetreuungsstellen</i>) • RÜBE: Return advice centres (<i>Rückkehrberatungseinrichtungen</i>)
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) Bundesagentur für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen 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 centre. The initial reception centres in Traiskirchen and Thalham are for people in the admissibility procedure and unaccompanied minors until they are transferred to a reception facility of a federal province. There are separate facilities/areas for unaccompanied minors, single women and mothers with small children, families, LGBTIQ+ applicants as well as people with special needs (Sonderbetreuungsstelle) or in need of specialised medical care.
Number of centres	• EASt: 4 • VQ: 2 • BS: 13 • SBS: 2 • RÜBE: 12

Capacity	• EAST: Approximately 2,500 places • VQ: Approximately 1,200 places • BS: Approximately 10,000 places • SBS: Approximately 200 places • RÜBE: Information not available
Location of the centres within the country	• EAST: ◦ Traiskirchen (Lower Austria): 1,500 places ◦ Thalham (Upper Austria): 400 places ◦ Klagenfurt (Carinthia): 400 places ◦ Braunau (Upper Austria): 200 places • VQ: ◦ Wien (Vienna): 800 places ◦ Linz (Upper Austria): 400 places • BS: Federal care facilities are located in: ◦ Wien (Vienna): 3 facilities ◦ Niederösterreich (Lower Austria): 3 facilities ◦ Oberösterreich (Upper Austria): 2 facilities ◦ Steiermark (Styria): 2 facilities ◦ Kärnten (Carinthia): 1 facility ◦ Salzburg (Salzburg): 1 facility ◦ Tirol (Tyrol): 1 facility • SBS: ◦ Wien (Vienna) ◦ Graz (Styria) • RÜBE: Various locations throughout Austria, including: ◦ Wien (Vienna): 2 facilities ◦ Niederösterreich (Lower Austria): 2 facilities ◦ Oberösterreich (Upper Austria): 2 facilities ◦ Steiermark (Styria): 2 facilities ◦ Kärnten (Carinthia): 1 facility ◦ Salzburg (Salzburg): 1 facility ◦ Tirol (Tyrol): 1 facility ◦ Vorarlberg (Vorarlberg): 1 facility

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Federal Provincial Reception Centres (<i>Landesgrundversorgung</i>)
Regime	Open
Management	At the provincial state 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 Basic Welfare Support Agreement, Article 15a B-VG (<i>Grundversorgungsvereinbarung</i>) after being transferred to a federal provincial reception centre.
Number of centres	9
Capacity	Approximately 11,500 places

Location of the centres within the country	Burgenland • Capacity: Approximately 1,500 places • Location: Eisenstadt Kärnten • Capacity: approximately 1,200 places • Location: Klagenfurt Niederösterreich • Capacity: Approximately 2,000 places • Location: Traiskirchen Oberösterreich • Capacity: Approximately 1,800 places • Location: Wels Salzburg • Capacity: Approximately 1,000 places • Location: Salzburg Steiermark • Capacity: Approximately 1,500 places • Location: Graz Tirol • Capacity: Approximately 1,000 places • Location: Innsbruck Vorarlberg • Capacity: Approximately 800 places • Location: Feldkirch Wien • Capacity: Approximately 1,200 places • Location: Wien (Vienna)
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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
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 specific facilities within a federal reception centre or in a specialised reception centre in the provinces. Housing placement is arranged on an individual basis depending on the needs assessment.

Reception centres for unaccompanied children (*Jugendwohnheime*) are managed by the Ministry of the Interior at the federal level, e.g. 1 reception centre is a separate facility for unaccompanied children in the Federal Reception Centre EAST in Traiskirchen (initial reception centre).

The Child and Youth Agency is responsible for providing adequate care. The Ministry of the Interior and the competent department of the federal provinces agreed on a quota system for unaccompanied children in basic care facilities. Some federal provinces also offer the possibility for unaccompanied minors to live with families.

The initial reception centre of Traiskirchen accommodates single women, who are accommodated in a separate building. There are special facilities in some federal provinces for single women and mothers. NGOs also offer facilities for single women.

There also some places in facilities of the state or run by NGOs for applicants with disabilities and special health needs, e.g. Special Care Centre (*Sonderbetreuungsstelle*) in Graz Andritz or persons with special needs accommodated in separate rooms in the Federal Reception Centre in Traiskirchen during the admissibility procedure.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

Material reception conditions are defined in the Basic Care Act 2005 ([Grundversorgungsgesetz – Bund 2005](#)), Article 6. They include suitable

accommodation with respect for human dignity and family unity, provision of adequate food, a monthly allowance for people in an accommodation, healthcare, information, advice and social support, transport costs, benefits in kind or in cash to obtain the necessary clothing, and counselling on returns.

Material reception conditions provided in kind

Type and purpose	• Housing • Food Health insurance • Transport and school supplies for school-age children • Necessary transport (e.g. regarding the asylum procedure) • Clothing (may be provided through financial allowance) • Information, advice and social support • Provision of return counselling
Duration and recurrence	Information not available

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	• Pocket money (in organised accommodation) • Clothing: If not provided in kind • Leisure activities (in organised accommodation) • School materials for children • Rent subsidy (in private accommodation) • Food/daily necessities (in private accommodation)
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Duration and recurrence	• Pocket money: EUR 40/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; EUR 145/month per child • Rent subsidy (in private accommodation): EUR 165/month for a single person; EUR 330/month for a family Applicants are entitled to material benefits in accordance with the recast Reception Conditions Directive for an additional 4 months after receiving a positive decision. Rejected applicants are entitled to material reception conditions provided that they cooperate with the competent authority on their departure. This specific group may be subject to an individual examination.
Calculation and amount	• Pocket money: EUR 40/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 within the first 4 months after the decision; • People with a negative decision who cannot be deported for legal or practical reasons.
Modalities of provision	information not available

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

GVG-B 2005, Article 2(1) states that special attention should be given to vulnerable persons with special reception needs when an asylum seeker is registered in the Reception System (in practice, the Federal Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Health developed an anamnesis sheet for applicants, which is the basis for the subsequent initial medical examination). Material reception conditions should at least safeguard human dignity.

Unaccompanied minors: Unaccompanied minors are accommodated within special reception structures, as well as families. Minors who are younger than 14 years are provided care in socio-pedagogic institutions of the federal provinces. Since 1 December 2020, the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) is responsible for the care of unaccompanied children. Unaccompanied minors have the same rights to specialised health care/psychological support as Austrian children. Guidance and care for unaccompanied minors is managed by the Youth Welfare Agency (Children and Youth Assistance).

Applicants with special needs: There are places in facilities of the state (e.g. *Traiskirchen*) or facilities run by NGOs for applicants with disabilities and special health needs. The Special Care Centres (*Sonderbetreuungsstellen*) take care of applicants with special health needs. The Specialised Care Centre Graz Andritz offers medical care for patients with regular or special care and treatment needs (e.g. cancer patients, persons with cardiovascular diseases, epileptics, diabetics, patients in the drug replacement programme, etc.).

In order to address gender-related needs, specialised, separate buildings for single women and mothers are foreseen: "*Frauenhaus*" *Traiskirchen* only have female social workers and security staff. NGOs also offer facilities for single women.

Rights and obligations during reception

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. Furthermore, there are information desks in every federal reception facility and social workers can be contacted at any time. In the federal provinces this depends very much on the type and size of the facility. Either information is given by the social workers responsible for the facility or the responsible office in the provincial governments.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	Since 1 January 2021, the newly-established Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) is in charge of providing legal advice and legal representation.
House rules	Reception centres provide information on house rules , duties and possible sanctions. They are posted in the most common languages (e.g. English, Russian, French, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Serbian) or available on a paper with brief written instructions.

Freedom of movement within the territory

Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	Admissibility procedure: After requesting asylum at the police, asylum seekers are apprehended for up to 48 hours, until the BFA branch office decides whether the asylum seeker should be transferred or advised to go to an initial reception centre or to a distribution centre. While the applicant is in the admissibility procedure, they receive a green card with a limited freedom of movement. Asylum seekers are allowed to leave the district for necessary medical treatment or to appear in court. Regular procedure: Asylum seekers whose application is admitted to the regular procedure receive the white card, which is valid until the final decision on the application and allows free movement in the entire territory of Austria.
Reporting obligations	Information not available

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	3 months after the asylum application is admitted to the regular procedure, limited access to the labour market is granted, including self-employment. Furthermore, community service work for the federal state, provinces or municipalities (engagement in charitable activities, e.g. landscape preservation and gardening, servicing of sports facilities and parks, etc) can be carried out. 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 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 (<i>Ersatzkraftverfahren</i>) 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 workers 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 or volunteer with the fire brigade. Asylum applicants are also required to carry out work in federal basic welfare centres, such as serving food, maintaining green spaces or working in the storerooms. Those who do not perform community service will have their allowance reduced from EUR 40 to EUR 20.
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Employment support for applicants	No available information
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. Until 12 September 2018, a work permit as an apprentice in professions where there was a shortage of workers and which gave access to vocational training, could be issued under facilitated conditions to applicants under 25 years of age.
Access to tertiary education	Information not available

Healthcare

Medical screening	Upon arrival at a federal reception facility a full medical assessment including lung X-ray (for TBC screening) is carried out.
Level of healthcare	Beneficiaries of material reception conditions are covered by health insurance. They are entitled to the same medical care as any other Austrian citizen. Emergency care and essential treatment are always granted, also for applicants whose Basic Care has been withdrawn.
Access to healthcare	Beneficiaries of material reception conditions are covered by health insurance. Hyperlink to the Special needs in reception page

Education for minors

Access to the regular state education system is given according to national provisions. Generally, school is mandatory for all children between the ages of 6 and 15 years. In principle, children will participate in regular classes as (extraordinary) pupils.

Language courses and “bridge classes” (school classes in selected reception centres) are available for children, with a focus on the German language, classes on social values, Austria (history, geography, politics, etc.), sports, handicrafts, etc.

School attendance is compulsory for all children who have a permanent residence (without distinction between Austrian children and regardless of the permanent residence status).

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Applicants in federal basic care facilities are required to take part in mandatory training courses which focus primarily on teaching culture, language and customs, as well as raising awareness about anti-Semitism. Allowances are reduced for unexcused absences.
Language classes	Applicants in federal basic care facilities are required to take part in mandatory training courses which focus primarily on teaching culture, language and customs, as well as raising awareness about anti-Semitism. Allowances are reduced for unexcused absences

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

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

information currently not available

Sufficient means test

information currently not available

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

Material reception conditions may be withdrawn or reduced when the asylum seeker:

- Repeatedly violates the house rules or his/her behaviour endangers public order and the security of other inhabitants;
- Has submitted a subsequent application;
- Has been convicted by a court of a crime on a ground that may exclude him/her from refugee status according to the Refugee Convention, Article 1F (not applied or relevant in practice); or
- Leaves the designated reception facility for longer than 3 consecutive days, which results in material reception conditions no longer being provided.

Material reception conditions can be reduced when the asylum applicant is working and has an income or items of value or receives support from a third party.

Possible sanctions and procedure

Material reception conditions may be withdrawn or reduced when the asylum seeker:

- Repeatedly violates the house rules and/or his or her behaviour endangers public order and the security of other inhabitants;
- Has submitted a subsequent application;
- Has been convicted by a court for a crime on a ground that may exclude him/her from refugee status according to the Refugee Convention, Article 1F (not applied or relevant in practice); or
- Leaves the designated reception facility for longer than 3 consecutive days, which results in material reception conditions no longer being provided.

Material reception conditions can be reduced when the asylum applicant is working and has an income or items of value or receives support from a third party.

Review of the sanction decision

There is a legal remedy in the Basic Care Act of the Federal State foreseen in case material reception conditions are withdrawn. Such decisions to withdraw or reduce basic care provision can be appealed at the Administrative Court and free legal assistance is provided in the law and implemented in all federal provinces.