

Multipurpose Reception and Identification Centres (MPRICs) – guiding principles

Following consultations with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and with reference to the EASO Reception Standards, the Commission sets out below some complementary guiding principles for the design and operation of the new MPRICs on the Greek islands.

1. Constraints of the MPRIC location

The MPRIC location will have an impact on the planning and design of a number of essential aspects, such as the availability of necessary **infrastructure** (e.g. sufficient water supply, sewage connections and reliable internet); **environmental or health hazards** (land slides, risk of fires, pollution); adequate **terrain** to allow people with reduced mobility to reach all services; **accessibility** of services located outside the centre – which impacts what has to be provided within the MPRIC (see below). Adequate infrastructure should ensure that access and transportation to and from the facility are safe and sufficient in size for smooth handling of pedestrian and traffic flows. These aspects will be specific to each MPRIC.

2. Fencing and overall perception – open facilities

With the exception of the pre-removal/detention sections, and notwithstanding the “closed controlled centres” appellation, the MPRICs are and will remain open reception facilities. Considering the necessity to monitor entry/exits, adequate external security fencing and protected entrances should be foreseen (in addition to necessary emergency exits). The MPRICs should however **not be perceived as detention centres**, which is the case of reception centres surrounded by multiple fences, walls, and barbed wire. In addition, fences are not considered necessary between different sections within the MPRIC (with the exception of the pre-removal facilities, safe zones and other critical facilities).

3. Sufficient space for all facilities and services

In addition to the **effective minimum bedroom space** of 4m² per person and the minimum number of **WASH facilities** as per the EASO Reception Standards, the design of the MPRICs should provide for **sufficient space** for all the relevant facilities and activities that need to be included in the MPRIC.

Without being exhaustive, this applies to the surface/number of classrooms for formal/informal education; health and mental health facilities; shops; common kitchens; laundry facilities; common areas; play and sportsgrounds; administrative offices; counselling offices (legal, health, information, protection services with private spaces), storage, prayer room, etc.

Several of these facilities will have to be **replicated in different areas** of the MPRIC, and their number/surface may also be dependent on the remoteness of the MPRIC.

In particular, the surface/number of facilities dedicated to **class rooms** should take into account whether mandatory education for minors is to be offered in public schools (and therefore specific transportation organised) or within the MPRIC. Non formal education activities, as well as kindergarten services, should be provided in the vicinity of the MPRIC.

4. Design and placement of facilities

The design and placement of facilities should take into account the required **procedural guarantees** (e.g. vulnerability assessments, individual counselling and health checks, procedural needs of vulnerable persons, confidentiality), **different steps** of the asylum procedure (screening, pre-

registration, registration; interviews), and resulting flows of third country nationals throughout the MPRICs.

As indicated above, certain services need to be provided in different areas of the MPRIC, rather than in one central location, in order to allow proximity, and avoid concentrations in one location.

5. Energy provision and consumption, waste management, recycling and other aspects in relation to circular economy and greening considerations

The objective should be that the MPRIC functions with the lowest possible **waste** and **environmental impact**. Consideration should be given to designing the facilities and equipment for multiple use cycles and for disassembly of units and recovery of materials. Also to the extent possible during the use phase, the product life should be extended as a priority, by maintaining, repairing and renovating. At the end of life, products should be refurbished and repurposed, as well as mined for reuse and recycling. Waste should be minimised, and its handling, collection and transportation should be planned. Alternatives to landfill should be promoted, including composting, and private companies should be encouraged to participate in resource management.

Renewable sources, such as solar or geo-thermal energy, should be used for the provision of energy (hot water, temperature control and electricity) and creation of surplus production. Sealing and insulation, energy efficient appliances, as well as optimal design for temperature control will help minimize inefficiencies. **State-of-the art low energy installations** should be used to promote energy conservation and energy efficiency.

6. Specific concerns for vulnerable persons

Vulnerable persons may have specific needs in terms of **access** to some facilities, need for **privacy**, **safety** (e.g. disabled access to sleeping facilities, WASH, common areas, etc) and **protection**.

In general, safety and security issues should be minimized by providing sufficient locks, lighting, and planning of the access of vulnerable persons to WASH and other necessary facilities.

Safe Zones should be provided for unaccompanied minors, as well as for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) victims and single women.

7. Catering and common kitchens

The Commission considers that it is best practice to allow beneficiaries to cook for themselves. This is also a more economical solution. Collective reception centres throughout Europe changed their practices from central catering services into self-cooking facilities wherever possible and especially when renovation works are conducted. When designing new reception facilities, it is a mistake not to foresee self-cooking facilities as it is entirely part of daily life of families and individuals and will give them responsibility and autonomy. Given the stay in MPRICs should be limited in time, a compromise approach would be to foresee a sufficient number of **communal kitchens**, with proper cooking facilities (rather than just for heating food and drinks). Sufficient **shopping facilities** (for fresh food in particular) should be provided within or in close vicinity of the MPRIC.

8. Type of facilities

In order to ensure the sustainability and cost efficiency of the facilities medium to long term, **solid constructions** for some of the facilities should be envisaged, rather than relying exclusively on containers. This is particularly the case for common kitchens, school rooms, prayer room and other

common areas. Moreover, rubhalls are not deemed adequate for quarantine areas (due to possible propagation of Covid).

9. Participation of communities in the operation

It is key that the operation of the MPRIC foresees the **involvement of the communities**, in particular in terms of exchange of information and decision making where possible, volunteer teams for various tasks, including e.g. information on hygiene, greening of the MPRIC, common gardens, cleaning, etcetera. This also implies a sufficient number of common areas to allow for community activities. An effective mechanism for complaints (feedback mechanism) and for information dissemination should be established.

10. Operation of the facilities

At this stage, preliminary points include:

- Daily cleaning of the facilities and the common areas. Community sponsorship could be encouraged (community members to undertake the cleaning task along with regular staff. This gives incentives for better integration to the society and supports their independent living).
- Ensure swift repairs of communal facilities, in particular WASH and kitchen facilities.
- Provide regular daily transportation services to the closest towns (access to shops, health facilities, employment, ATMs/banks), and for minors going to public schools.
- Provide sufficient equipment, NFIs and hygiene items.
- Provide reliable and strong internet throughout the MPRIC.
- Sufficient staff, including security staff (including female officers), reception assistants, social workers/protection services, legal assistance, NGOs.
- Promote the integration with surrounding communities and staff working in the MPRIC through promotion of service offers inside and outside the MPRIC, such as for example through shops, bars, rest and waiting areas, etc.
- Effective fire protection system need to be in place to be activated in emergencies (especially when there are communal kitchens).