



Република Македонија
НАРОДЕН ПРАВОБРАНИТЕЛ

Republika e Maqedonisë
AVOKATI I POPULLIT

O M B U D S M A N
Republic of Macedonia

The Ombudsman as National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), within its mandate and competencies arising from the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the Law on the Ombudsman carried out a visit to the Reception Center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo on 17.05.2016.

This was the fourth visit by the NPM team, after the visits previously conducted on the following dates 14.12.2011, 20.03.2013 and 23.06.2015.

The objective of the visit was to examine and monitor the conditions and the treatment of persons applying for asylum at the outbreak of the current refugee crisis, to assess the current situation and the capacity of the accommodation facilities as well as the number of the asylum seekers currently staying there.

During the visit the NPM team spoke with the management of the Center for asylum seekers, took a tour inside the three buildings of the Center, from which the first is an administrative building and the two other buildings are accommodation facilities. NPM staff also spoke with some of the migrants whose asylum applications are still pending.

The following amenities were examined as well: the kitchen, room for education, kindergarten, the ambulance department, the accommodation facilities and the warehouse.

During the examination of the Center facilities, the NPM team found that only the first building is used as an accommodation facility, whereas the second building is undergoing renovation. The current number of asylum seekers was 52 people, including 21 men, 11 women and 20 children. The accommodation capacity of the Center is 150 people, so at the time of the visit there were no overcrowding problems.

When it comes to the health and medical care delivered to the asylum seekers the NPM team spoke with the general physician being at work at the time of the visit, who provides a range of non-surgical health care, twice a week, 2 or 3 hours per day, with possibility of staying longer if necessary.

Some of the migrants placed in the Center for asylum seekers complained on the quality and quantity of food and the meals they get during their stay. The food is delivered by a private company "Uni Merkant" based upon the agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy as diligent and responsible ministry for managing the Center for asylum seekers, whereby the private company is responsible for providing and supplying food at the Center as catering. Despite that, the international organization JRS is sharing them croissants, dairy products and other nutritional supplements.

However, migrants reported to be dissatisfied with the quality of food they are getting, noting that it's not tasty and they don't like it. They mentioned they are not happy with the amount of food as it is not enough for one meal.

In terms of the monthly package that is provided and contains personal care products, they said that it doesn't meet their basic needs nor is enough for one month.

The NPM team once again stated that the accommodating facilities for asylum seekers are in proper condition, the toilets are clean, the sheets are changed regularly and there is also a washing machine and dryer at their disposal.

NPM stands by the same conclusion that the Center meets the basic minimum standards and criteria for accommodation of asylum seekers.