

# QUARTERLY REPORT

## October - December 2025

Startpunt is a field team of Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen that provides **socio-legal information to applicants for international protection on their arrival in Belgium**. The team is present on a daily basis at the registration centre (Belliardstraat 68) and at the interview location of the Immigration Office (IO) (Cube - Pachecolaan 44). At the Legal Helpdesk (LHD), Startpunt, in collaboration with the Brussels Bar Association, provides information to applicants three times a week and facilitates access to legal aid. The team consists mostly of volunteers who speak a wide variety of languages. Startpunt monitors the situation on the ground and gathers **signals** which serve as a basis for the policy work of Vluchtelingenwerk.

This report is based on observations by Startpunt and aims to highlight their work, describe the situation in the field, and outline the challenges faced by applicants of international protection.

### KEY NUMBERS



Startpunt gave advice and referral to legal assistance and social services to around **2500** people at the **registration centre**, primarily single men, and around **637** men, women and family at the **Cube**



The **Legal Helpdesk** received a total of **911 visits**: **763** first-time visits, **158** came to follow up on their case



At the **stage of the interview** with the IO, 52% of people Startpunt talked to had **access to a lawyer**. **15%** of applicants coming to the **LHD** got **access to a lawyer within the first month of their application**



Of the 310 people whose reception needs Startpunt recorded **at the LHD**, **66% were homeless**  
Of the 600 people whose reception needs Startpunt recorded **at the IO**, **15% were homeless**



Top 3 nationalities of **visitors at the LHD**: 20% Afghans; 10% Eritreans; 8.5% Palestinians  
Top 3 nationalities of **applicants for IP (data: CGRS)**: 19% Afghans; 17,8% Eritreans; 9,7% Palestinians

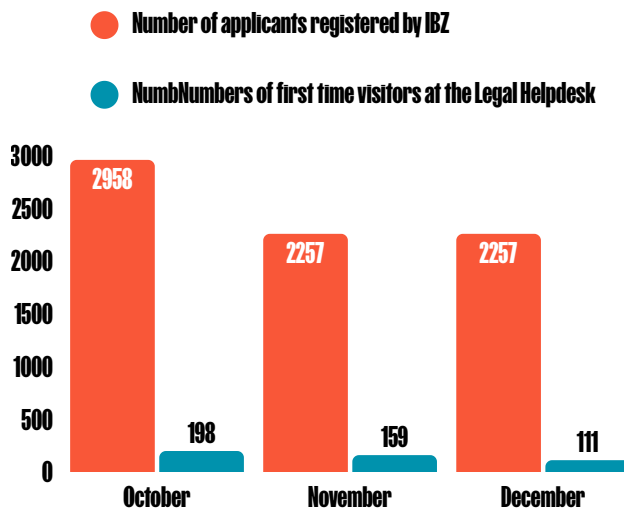


**27 volunteers** joined the Startpunt activities speaking **18 languages** (English, Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Urdu/Hindi, Spanish, Punjab, Italian, Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, Swahili, Dutch, French, German, Tigrinya, Amharic, Russian, Chechen)

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### Overview of applicants at the Registration Centre and the LHD



**6% of the number of applicants who filed an asylum request found their way to the LHD**

## OBSERVATIONS AT THE REGISTRATION CENTRE

Throughout the last quarter of the year, Startpunt continued to observe **a relative decline** in the number of people queuing in the morning to register for international protection. Most registrations took place on Mondays, with the highest number—**333** applicants—recorded on Monday 27 October. This **downward trend** is consistent with the official statistics published by the CGRS - in December, **2,596** people applied for asylum. CGRS data for the last quarter (October to December 2025) confirm this decrease, with a total of **7,811** applications, compared to 9,061 between July and September.<sup>1</sup>

## POLICE PRESENCE

Within the last quarter of this year, Startpunt **did not notice police presence** at the Registration Centre.

[1] In this context, the CGRS further notes that the number of applicants registered in November (2,257 persons) was the lowest recorded since April 2023, confirming a significantly lower influx towards the end of the year compared to the last months of 2024. See [ASYLUM STATISTICS: OVERVIEW 2025](#)

### REGISTRATION CAPACITY

If the number of applicants exceeds the registration capacity of the IO (for which there is no officially communicated number), appointments are given, inviting applicants to come back on the same day or one of the following days. Within the last quarter, Startpunt witnessed appointments being given only on two occasions. These were the days with high numbers of applicants counted in line to register, namely the 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of October. On these **two days**, the number of people counted by Startpunt exceeded 225. Notably, the highest number of applicants that were admitted before appointments were given was **281**. Overall, **65 appointments** were given **within the legal timeframe of 10 working days**,<sup>2</sup> and all of them were for the same day at 1 pm. We have thus observed a significant decrease in the number of appointments given compared to the third quarter of 2025 (65 compared to 166). **The practice of giving appointments beyond the legal timeframe of 10 working days has not been observed by Startpunt since early January of this year.**

### PROCEDURES

**No new procedural changes were observed** during this quarter regarding access to the registration process. Startpunt continues to observe that families may face longer waiting times due to specific practices at entry, including questioning prior to access and requirements related to the presence of family members. These observations remain consistent with those documented in the previous quarter.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Despite the stabilisation of the registration system and the consistent presence of metal barriers, **confusion around where and how to queue remained a structural issue**. Applicants for international protection (IP), including both single men and families, continued to wrongly queue in the Temporary Protection (TP) line, as the **TP entrance remained the only clearly visible and illuminated access point**, especially during dark morning hours.

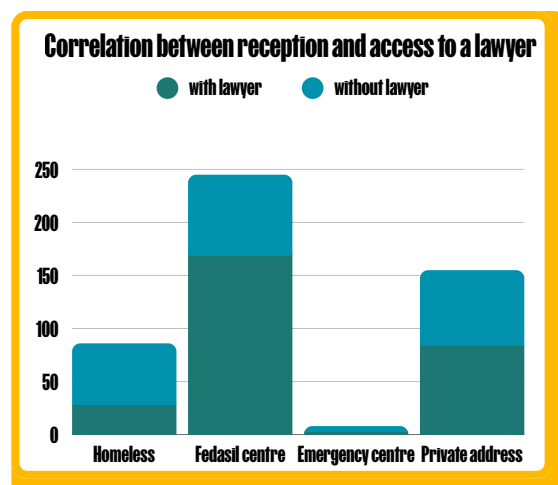
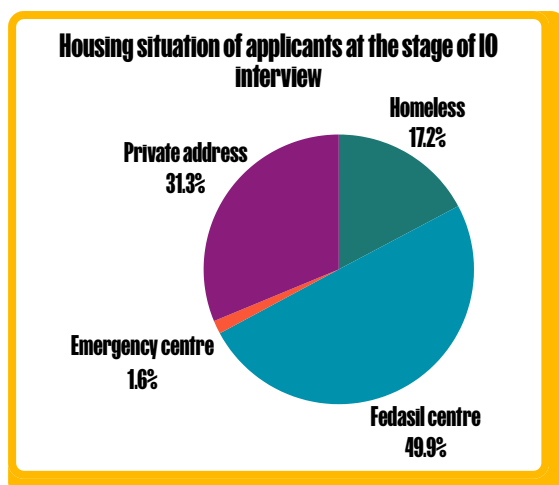
**Spatial constraints** continued to affect the accessibility and safety of the registration centre. Limited space for the three main queues (Temporary Protection, single men, and families) remained a structural issue, particularly on busy days, contributing to **parallel lines, crowding** near the entrance and on the bike lane.

[2] In accordance with Article 50, §2 of the Aliens Act a person's request to apply for international protection has to be registered within the three working days following the request. In case of a large number of people applying simultaneously rendering the three days difficult to meet in practice, the deadline of three days can be extended to ten working days.

The constant presence of metal barriers did not fully address these challenges, notably in cases of reduced entrance visibility during early morning hours. The **bike lane** continued to pose safety risks for both applicants and the team, as cyclists and scooter users generally did not reduce their speed, and applicants frequently had to stand on the bike lane due to limited space. Compared to the previous quarter, **the use of wearable lights** by coordinators and volunteers was introduced, which slightly improved visibility and the perceived sense of safety, but did not eliminate the underlying risks. While the entry system became more efficient and waiting times generally decreased (partly due to lower numbers of TP applicants) the **TP entrance** remained the primary point of congestion and confusion, reflecting a continuity with **patterns observed from August**, following **the relocation of the TP registration centre** to Belliardstraat 68 in July.

### OBSERVATIONS AT PACHECO 44

In total, the team recorded the data of **637 applicants** (which include single men, women, and families). Of those cases, **340** were for the first interview, **54** were for the interview for the subsequent procedure, **111** were Dublin cases, **18** cases were recorded for M-status interviews, **17** interviews for Temporary Protection, and **5** ICAM coaching appointments. Throughout the quarter, access to the Immigration Office at the Cube remained appointment-based, with the gate generally opening around **8:30** and applicants admitted shortly before their scheduled time, while those with later appointments were required to wait outside. Startpunt consistently encountered individuals seeking to **extend or correct their Annex 26** who were unaware that an appointment is required for these procedures, resulting in regular redirection. **Referrals to the registration centre at Belliard** continued to be a recurring practice, including cases where applicants had been incorrectly directed to the Cube. In line with trends observed in previous months, the number of applicants attending **Temporary Protection interviews** further **decreased**.





**89** referrals to the  
**Registration centre**



**11** referrals to  
**CGRS** for the second  
interview

At the stage of the interview with the IO, **26.5%** of the applicants Startpunt spoke to **had a place in a Fedasil centre and access to a lawyer**. By contrast, among applicants outside the reception network and without a private address (**66%** of the total), access to a lawyer remained limited, with only **32% of homeless applicants having legal assistance**. In this context, the presence of Startpunt is particularly important for individuals in this group, as the team can refer them to the **legal helpdesk** for the assignment of a lawyer and to other humanitarian services, such as the **Humanitarian HUB**, where they can access clothing, food, and shelter options.

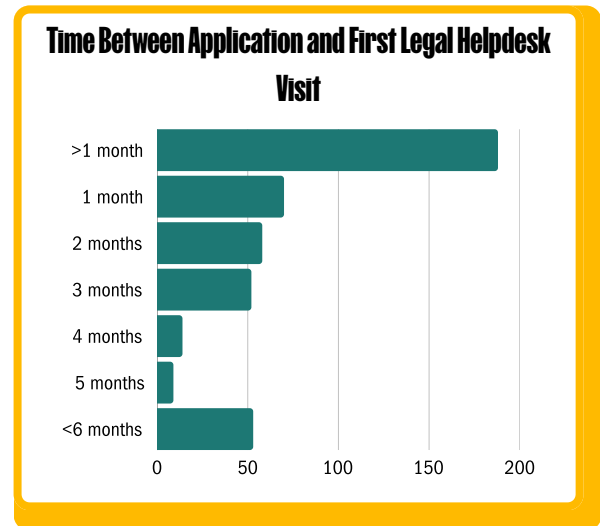
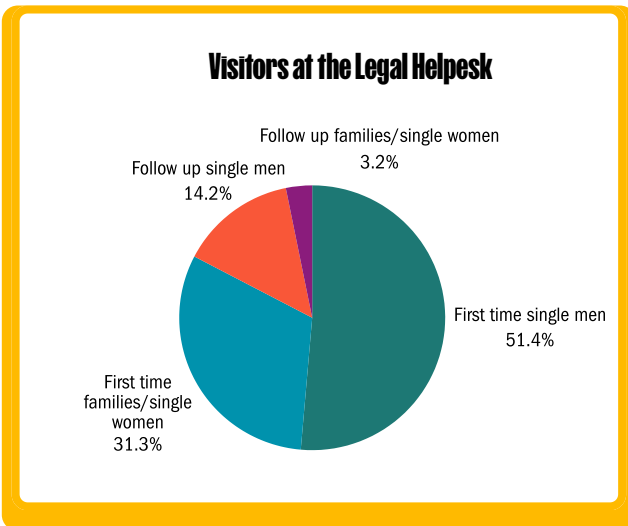
### TRENDS AT THE LEGAL HELPDESK

Between October and December, the number of visitors at the Legal Helpdesk showed **a slight decrease** compared to the number of visitors of the third quarter of the year<sup>3</sup>. During the last quarter, the team reached **105 less people** than in the previous quarter. On average, the LHD had **27 visitors per shift**, with a peak of visitors on October 1<sup>st</sup> (**45 visitors**).

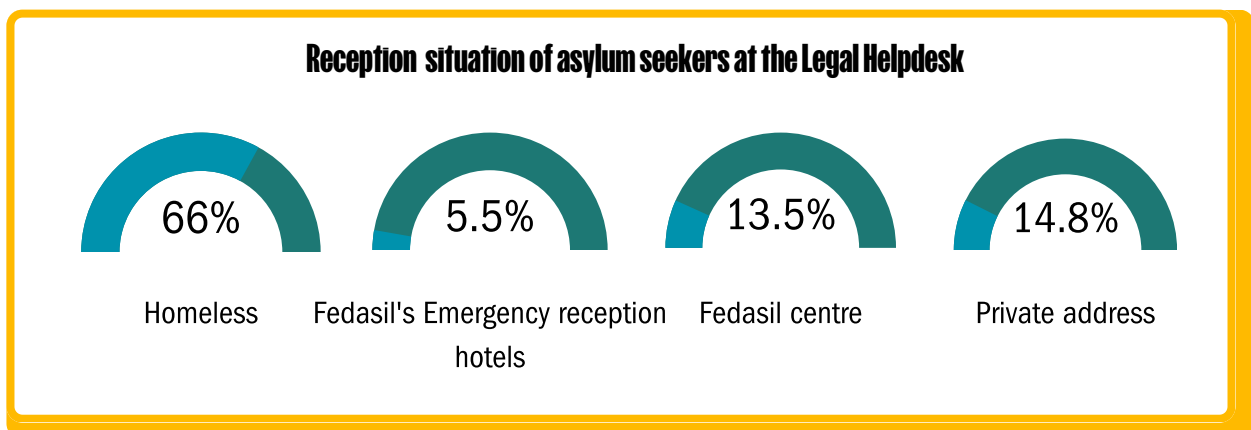
Legal Helpdesk – 4th Quarter 2025					
Month	First time		Follow-up		Total
	Single men	Families & women	Single men	Families & women	
October	198	77	95	12	385
November	159	117	17	9	326
December	111	91	17	8	227
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>911</b>

[3] The Legal Helpdesk was closed on 17, 24, 26, 29, and 31 December.

The team was continues to reach the greatest share of people **within the first month after their registration**, ensuring timely access to legal advice and a lawyer.



Throughout the last quarter of the year, **reception** continued to be the main challenge for the majority of applicants approaching the Legal Helpdesk. As observed in the previous quarter, **access to the reception network remained limited**, with waiting times for a place in a Fedasil centre stabilising at approximately **four months** from the date of application. As a result, Startpunt continued to encounter a significant number of applicants in a **homeless condition**, including **families and individuals with vulnerabilities**, and regularly redirected them to emergency and temporary shelter solutions<sup>4</sup>.



[4] This situation occurred in a context marked by the gradual closure of Fedasil's Emergency reception hotels, completed by the end of the year. At the same time, the increase in families without reception may be linked to other factors, such as the exclusion from reception of specific categories of applicants (e.g. individuals with M-status).

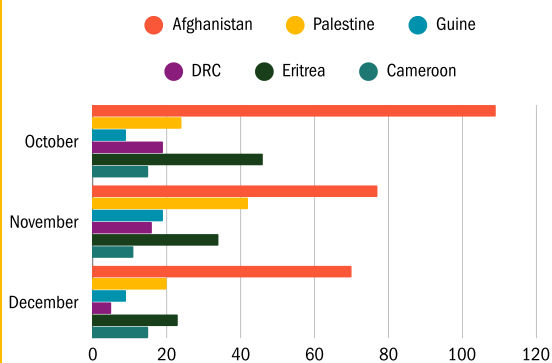
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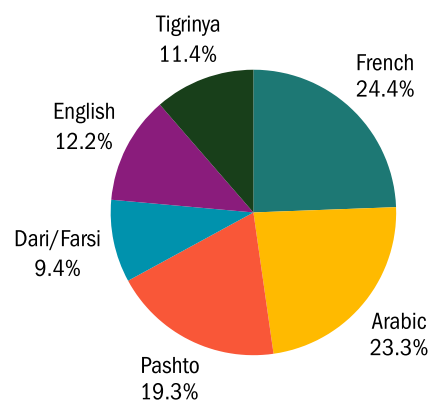
Within this context, **M-status cases** - first-time applicants who have protection in another EU Member state -, while representing a relatively smaller proportion of the overall population encountered, were recurrently observed and remained particularly affected by **exclusion from the reception network**. These situations were generally associated with vulnerability, often exacerbated by unstable accommodation conditions, and in some cases linked to complex medical circumstances. Startpunt's support in such cases kept focusing on the legal dimension, ensuring that applicants were referred as quickly as possible to appropriate legal assistance in order to **appeal Fedasil decisions** related to exclusion from reception, while also supporting access to social services, in particular temporary shelter solutions.

Startpunt continued to support applicants in accessing **homelessness accommodation** through **Samusocial**, while also increasingly relying on alternative short-term options available on specific days of the week, such as Foyer Georges Motte, a temporary shelter located near the Legal Helpdesk where the team often accompanies applicants directly. Registration with Samusocial nevertheless remained challenging for individuals without a phone or SIM card, requiring additional support and follow-up from the team. **The team was not always able to find temporary solutions through homelessness accommodation**—particularly for **single men, including first-time applicants**. In parallel, Startpunt continued to provide essential assistance to applicants - mainly single men- who were not yet registered on the Fedasil reception waiting list, by carrying out the registration process directly at the Helpdesk to ensure access to the reception system.

### Top countries of origin of visitors per month



### Languages most spoken by visitors with the team



### 2025 IN REVIEW: Evolving Registration and Reception Dynamics

In **January**, the earlier opening time of the Registration Centre (**7:05am** instead of 8:20-8:45am) marked a structural shift in the organisation of admissions. The extended entry window reduced long queues and significantly decreased the systematic use of appointments compared to late 2024. This resulted in a **less stressful setting** for the IO personnel, which led to a calmer working environment.

While the **relocation to Belliardstraat 68** continued to pose spatial and safety challenges, particularly in August due to roadworks affecting the queuing area, the office capacity stabilised at approximately 220 applicants per day, with **priority given to vulnerable individuals** on busy mornings.

In the **second quarter of 2025**, Startpunt resumed its presence at the Immigration Office (**Cube, Pachecolaan 44**). This return responded to a clear need: many applicants, particularly those outside the reception network or living in precarious conditions, were arriving at interviews without adequate procedural information. Maintaining a presence at both the Registration Centre and the Immigration Office strengthened continuity of support and allowed for more structured distribution of attention between newly arriving applicants and those already engaged in the procedure. The separation of locations clarified Startpunt's monitoring role across different stages of the procedure and reinforced its capacity to provide timely socio-legal guidance.



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In the **third quarter of 2025**, the **Temporary Protection (TP)** registration office was relocated to **Belliardstraat 68**, merging TP and asylum registration at the same site. This shift significantly affected queue organisation and overall flow management, especially during the initial weeks. Applicants frequently **joined the wrong line**, and limited coordination capacity created uncertainty in the admission process. Although a **more structured entry system was gradually introduced**, confusion persisted due to limited space, low visibility of the entrance, inconsistent use of metal barriers following road works, and ongoing safety concerns related to the adjacent bike lane. The relocation required continuous redirection and monitoring by Startpunt and temporarily intensified organisational challenges at the Registration Centre.



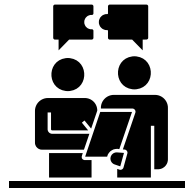
In **August 2025**, new federal legislation enabled Fedasil to **refuse reception to first-time applicants who had previously obtained protection in another EU Member State (M-status)**. In practice, this resulted in the systematic exclusion of many applicants, including families with children, from the reception network, subject to a **restrictive vulnerability assessment**. Throughout the quarter, Startpunt observed an increasing number of M-status applicants **facing homelessness and material deprivation**. The **Legal Helpdesk** focused on assigning specialised lawyers, supporting **appeals against reception refusals**, and assisting affected individuals in accessing temporary shelter solutions. The measure also led to ongoing legal challenges before labour tribunals and the Constitutional Court, reflecting the broader structural implications of the policy change.



## STARTPUNT 2025 – KEY FIGURES



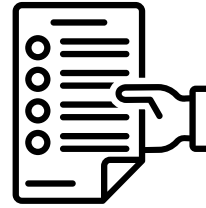
**11.300 people** counted at the **Registration Centre** in Belliardstraat 68



**1.791 people** supported at the stage of their interview at the **Immigration Office** in Pachecolaan 44



**4.036 visitors** at the Legal Helpdesk



**1.875 legal aid designation forms** filled out at the Legal helpdesk



**88 people with M-status**, excluded from reception, assisted



**75 volunteers** who joined the shifts



**+20 languages** spoken by the volunteers and coordinators