



SUMMARY limited EMN AHQ ON allowances 2017.1148

Requested by NO EMN NCP March 15, 2017
Compilation produced April 20, 2017

**Responses from [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Netherlands](#), [Sweden](#), [United Kingdom](#)
plus [Norway](#) (10 in Total) and [Denmark](#)**

Norway sent out an EMN AHQ on allowances for asylum seekers on behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security in July of 2016 and again in March of 2017. This time, we received responses from 8 EMN member states as well as Denmark who received a separate request from us. The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security has approved a retroactive increase from January 2017, but not yet calculated and implemented the individual allowance rate changes for asylum seekers. The said rates in this document are the ones in effect until the new rates become effective later this year.

The general conclusion from the responses we received is that Norway's allowance amounts prior to the 2017 planned increases are already higher than any of the other reporting countries, except Finland who consistently has significantly higher payments with the exception of allowances to children; where Norway pays the highest amounts. In order to make a comparison of costs across countries we have adjusted reported amounts by making calculations using the Purchase Power Parity (PPP) adjusted costs. See table 10 and 11 for details.¹

¹ To make a comparison of prices across countries that holds any type of meaning, a wide range of goods and services must be considered. The amount of data that must be collected, and the complexity of drawing comparisons makes this process difficult. To facilitate this, the International Comparisons Program (ICP) was established in 1968 by the University of Pennsylvania and the [United Nations](#). Purchasing power parities generated by the ICP are based on a worldwide price survey that compares the prices of hundreds of various goods. This data, in turn, helps international macroeconomists come up with estimates of global productivity and growth. This report has used the most recent Eurostat figures

Highlights:

- NO has considerably higher comparative price levels which could possibly explain why they have higher allowances than in the other countries; with the exception of FI that has consistently higher allowances.
- NO lowers the allowance after the final negative decision has been made. BE, DK, DE, FI, and NL do not differentiate their allowance payments in this way. (UK, AT and FR did not report on this issue) Sweden completely discontinues any cash payments except for families with children. In June of 2016, SE dropped paying any allowances for asylum seekers who have received a final, negative decision. *ALL reporting MS only provide room and board for a very limited period of time following a final negative decision.*
- NO, SE, DK, DE, FI, decrease the allowance per person if there is a couple.
- BE, FR and NL pay the same amount per person regardless of marital status.
- Few countries pay supplementary allowance to single parents, but of the countries (DK, BE, NO) that do, Norway pays the least.
- NL and BE generally pay the same rate per person for any person 15 years old and older under most circumstances.
- In the past 8 months, Finland has reduced the allowance for a child while NO anticipates a further increase. (using the PPP levels)
- Only FR stipulates that proof of having filed an asylum application, being in possession of a valid ID and valid travel documents are a requirement to receiving allowances.
- BE, DK, FI, FR, SE, UK provide a limited grace period with some form of room and board after a final negative decision has been made.
- BE reported that failed asylum seekers cannot stay in the reception facilities, but can go to the 'open return places' (located in 'regular' reception centres managed by Fedasil) where they receive the same material aid as during the asylum procedure and receive intensive return counselling. NL has a similar practice with removal to other facilities.

Changes in the past 8 months:

- DK, and NO are the only countries that have a ceiling on payments to large families. This represents a tightening of the allowance budget in 2017 even though NO is increasing other allowances to asylum seekers. (NO still pays a greater allowance than DK for this category of applicant.)
- Only BE has made changes in regards to issuing vouchers/ bankcards in lieu of cash.
- Only FI has reduced the amount of allowances the past 8 months.
- DK has reported increased amounts for all allowances in all questioned categories.
- NO intends to increase allowances.

- SE has reduced the allowance for couples without children.
- DK reported in 2016 that they had special routines and accommodation procedures for manifestly unfounded applicants. This entails not only an expedited version of the manifestly unfounded procedure, but also applicants from the countries on the list used by the Danish authorities are moved from ordinary reception centers directly to a deportation centre when their application has been rejected. These rejected applicants do not live in accommodation centres like other applicants. The practice has changed during the last 8 months though, in that previously, families with children had not been living in deportation centres. Since December 2016, one of DK's two deportation centres has had facilities for families with children. No further changes are planned.

Access to labour market:

In 2016, all reporting MS except the UK indicated that given certain circumstances, requirements, and approvals, it is *in principal* possible for an asylum seeker to get paid work after living legally in the country for a period of 3- 12 months (it varies from country to country). Of the reporting MS in this follow-up query, only DE has changed their practice recently, in regards to allowing asylum seekers access to the labour market, as a result in a change in the Integration Act. In this matter DE has clearly tried to lay the groundwork for quick employment of asylum seekers considered likely to be granted asylum. The primary concern is that there is a validated ID and high probability that asylum will be granted. The program is not unlike the Introduction Program that NO administers through the Directorate of Immigration and Diversity (IMDi), for asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit. The difference being that in DE, an applicant can participate in this training program prior to having received a decision on their application. Otherwise, DK has had a practice in place for quite some time that enables highly qualified/skilled applicants to change their application from one of an asylum seeker to that of a highly qualified labor immigrant. The primary concern before granting a work permit, is that there is a validated ID and high probability that asylum will be granted.

Motivation to cooperate:

- Although the reporting MS have not described practices or routines that would motivate applicants to cooperate in the asylum process, it is clear that reporting MS expect cooperation including providing valid ID and travel documents. Some MS report that they can exercise sanctions such as reducing or suspending allowances (DK, BE, FR, DE, NL, SE, and NO) though NL and NO indicate that this is not normally exercised. SE further stipulates that the daily in-cash compensation may be reduced if the person: •does not cooperate in establishing his/her identity, •hinders the investigation of the asylum request by hiding away, •does not cooperate in organizing the trip back home if he/she has received a decision rejecting his/her request or that he/she will be deported. Only FR stipulates that proof of having filed an asylum application, being in possession of a valid ID, and valid travel documents are a requirement to receiving allowances. In addition to reducing or suspending allowances, BE can withdraw daily allowances for 4 weeks and exclude applicants from reception center facilities.

Room and board and allowance practices after final negative decision:

When questioned about losing financial support and change of housing if the asylum seeker gets a final negative decision and notice of deportation and/or when the period of voluntary departure has ended:

- SE reported that failed asylum seekers lose in-cash support after a final, negative decision. In keeping with most of the other reporting MS, room and board are only provided for a limited number of weeks, unless there are children in the household (since 2016).²
- In DK the authorities aim to effectuate a removal of the failed applicants within 15 days of a final, negative decision; asylum seekers have access to room and board during this time.
- AT reported that failed asylum seekers do not lose room and board as long as they cooperate in their voluntary return/AVR.
- NO reported that no one loses room and board even after a final negative decision.
- The UK responded that generally, failed asylum seekers are given 21 days and are then removed from the country (exceptions are made if there are children in the household) asylum seekers get room and board during that time.
- BE reported that failed asylum seekers cannot stay in the reception facilities, but can go to the ‘open return places’ (located in ‘regular’ reception centres managed by Fedasil) where they receive the same material aid as during the asylum procedure and receive intensive return counselling for a maximum period of 30 days, after which support is normally not provided.
- NL has a similar practice to BE, where failed asylum seekers are moved to a “Restricted location” or “Family location” where they receive room and board and children receive some pocket money.
- Since June of 2015 FI has provided a grace period of 30 days for failed asylum seekers to apply for AVR, and if the return process has not been initiated within this period of time, then room and board are no longer provided.
- FR also provides a grace period of 30 days before stopping allowances. (FR did not specify practice with room and board).
- The UK does not have a defined period for voluntary departure, but most failed asylum seekers lose room and board after the 21-day grace period.

Special Country Notes about allowances:

- In the UK in-cash allowances are *not* provided for asylum seekers accommodated in the initial accommodation centres. Cash allowances are only paid to people accommodated outside reception centres (which asylum seekers generally are). For asylum seekers accommodated in the community, a cash allowance of £36.95 per week is paid per person (including children) for food, toiletries etc. As far as organized housing is provided, the maximum unit cost rate of € 21 (= accommodation + full board) applies to each applicant equally (except unaccompanied minors and applicants with special reception needs). *The detailed breakdown of these costs is not*

² In Sweden, the allowances have not changed, but the time limit for the allowances has. Since the 1 of June 2016, the right to financial support is lost (including housing) if (i) an applicant has received a negative decision and that he/she will be deported and this decision is in force, or (ii) when the period for voluntary departure has ended. This applies to adults not living together with children under 18 years who the applicant is responsible for. Previously, the allowances for this group could be reduced but not altogether cancelled.

possible.

- *Austria was also unable to provide a breakdown in costs for boarding.* The amount of in-cash allowances for applicants living in reception centers varies within the Austrian territory. Considering the agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces it is up to each contractual partner to determine the amount of in-cash allowances within the agreed framework. Because of this, a uniform statement on the calculated costs is not possible. On the Federal State level only organized housing is provided to applicants. On Provincial State level different forms of housing are provided, such as individual accommodation.

Links:

"Organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers" from 2013

<http://www.emnsweden.se/toppmeny/publikationer/nationellarapporter.4.2869c2de141e036182310ee.html> where all this information can be found.

Information is also provided on the webpage of the Swedish Migration Agency: <http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/While-you-are-waiting-for-a-decision/Accommodation.html>

EMN Questionnaire of the 2016 EMN Study "RETURNING REJECTED ASYLUM SEEKERS: CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES IN BELGIUM (Rights and services available to rejected asylum seekers. Table 1 : Rights and services available to rejected asylum seekers required to return).

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/02_belgium_rejected_asylum_seekers_en.pdf

http://www.migri.fi/asylum_in_finland/reception_activities/the_reception_allowance

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/vluchtelingen-werk-en-integratie/vraag-en-antwoord/mogen-asielzoekers-werken>

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/vluchtelingen-werk-en-integratie/vraag-en-antwoord/mogen-asielzoekers-vrijwilligerswerk-doen>

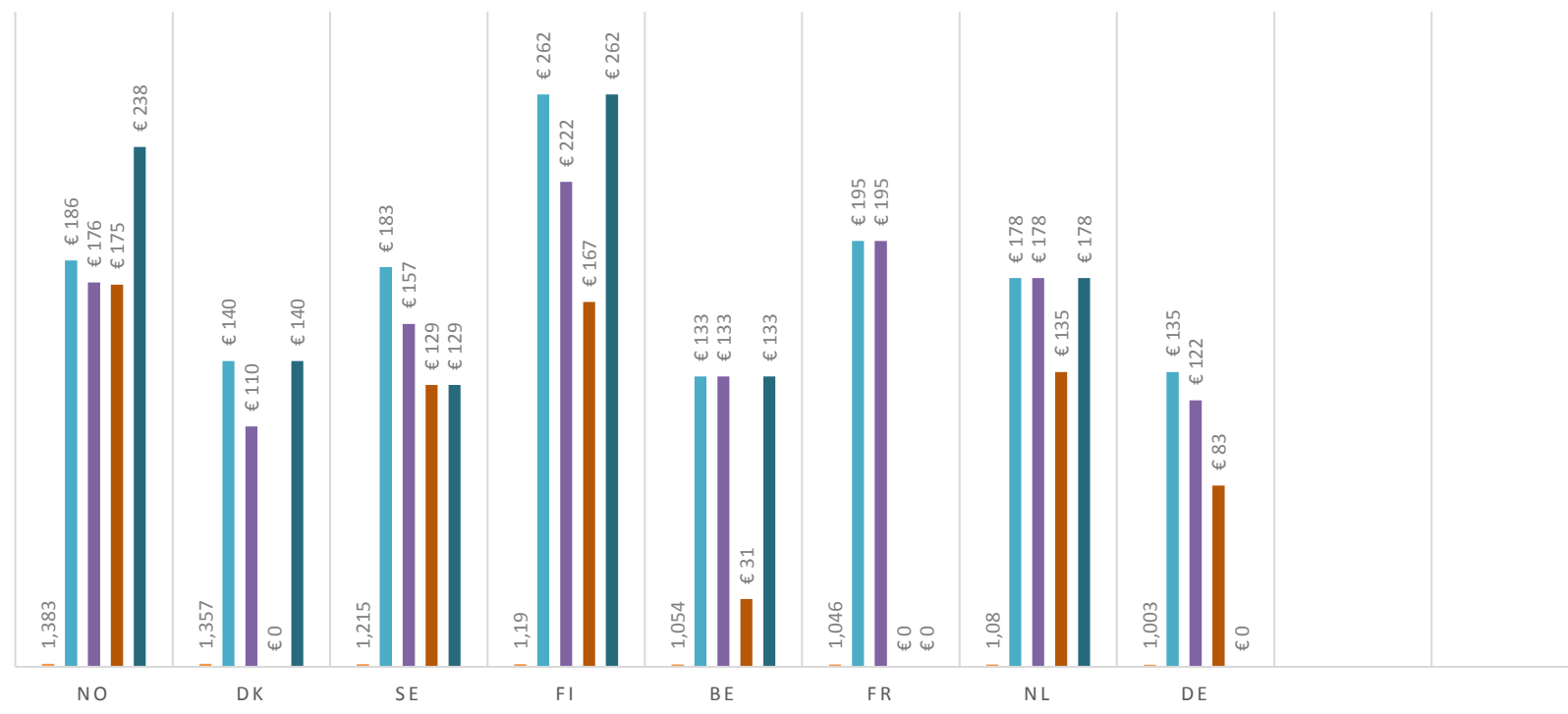
<https://www.coa.nl/nl/actueel/veelgestelde-vragen/wonen-in-een-azc#werken>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299415/Permission_to_Work_Asy_v6_0.pdf

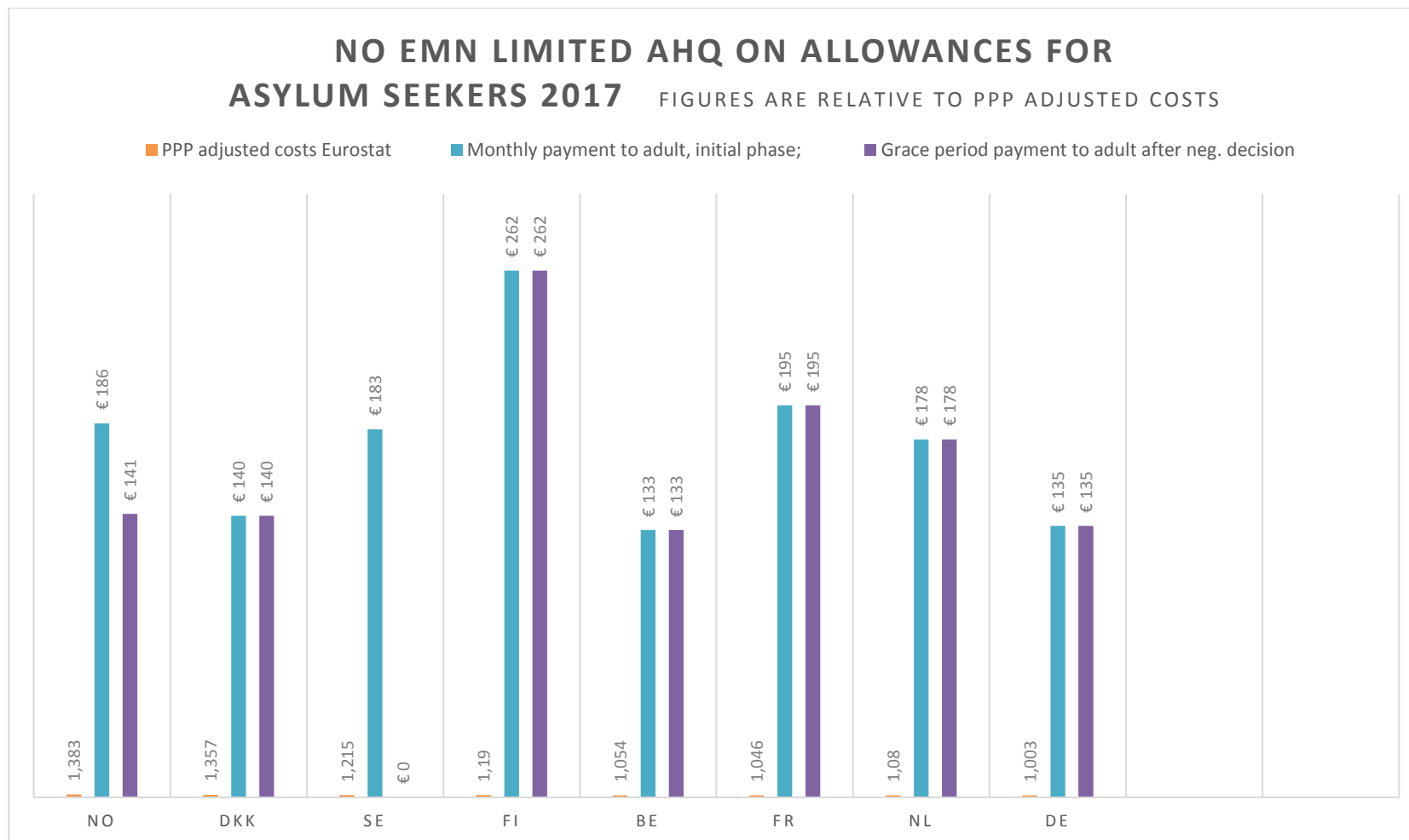
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FIGURES ARE RELATIVE TO PPP ADJUSTED COSTS

■ PPP adjusted costs Eurostat
 ■ Payment to adult, no meals
 ■ Payment pp couple no children, no meals
■ Payment to child
 ■ In-cash payment UAM 15-18 y.o.



These relative figures indicate allowances paid by the reporting member states after correcting for differences in cost of living. Norway has the highest PPP adjusted costs and yet does not have the highest allowance rates. Denmark's allowance payments are lower than NO, FI, FR and to a certain extent, SE. DE cannot provide standard costs for UAM.



These relative figures indicate allowances paid by the reporting member states after correcting for differences in cost of living. In this table we are looking at allowances at different stages in the asylum process. NO lowers the allowance after the final negative decision has been made. SE drops allowances at that point in time. As a general rule, all reporting countries provide room and board for a very limited grace period of maximum 21 days – some weeks. All MS strive to return asylum seekers with final negative decisions as soon as possible, DKK notably striving to do so within maximum 15 days.