

# ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND EDUCATION



Refugee Rights Europe has documented a striking absence of accessible information available to refugees and displaced people on their rights and opportunities, as well as information on European asylum law. This lack of information risks leading to a situation in which rumour spreads and may cause refugees to jeopardise their claim or take life-threatening journeys. It may also increase the length of time spent in harmful environments.

## PARIS, FRANCE

Research conducted in January 2018:

- A whole 66.2% of respondents were lacking access to information about their rights and opportunities, while 66.9% said they were unable to access information about European immigration and asylum rules.
- Only 9.1% of minors had access to information regarding European immigration law.

## CALAIS, FRANCE

Research conducted in October 2017 :

- 88.5% of respondents said they were unable to access clear information about their rights and opportunities to change their current situation.
- 82.4% of minors did not have access to information about their rights and opportunities to change their situation, while only 8.9% had to access to information about European asylum rules.

## CHIOS, GREECE

Research conducted in May 2017 :

- 86% of respondents did not have access to information about their rights and opportunities, while only 16% had access to information about European asylum law.
- Only 16.7% of minors had access to information about their rights and opportunities. When asked if they had applied for asylum in Greece, an alarming 65.5% said they hadn't yet done so, while 10.3% didn't know whether they had or not.
- At the time of research, the Greek Government had not taken any measures to incorporate refugee children into the official education system in Chios, where 56.7% of child respondents had no access to any form of education.

## VENTIMIGLIA, ITALY

Research conducted in August 2017:

- 92.1% of respondents did not have access to information about their rights, while only 13.1% had access to information on European asylum law and immigration rules. As few as 3.7% said they had access to legal representation.
- Strikingly, 92% of minors had no access to information about their rights and opportunities, while only 4.2% said they had access to legal representation.
- Most of the documents given by the authorities to displaced people in Ventimiglia appear to be available in Italian only.

## Policy recommendations:

States, with the support of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), must provide transparent and clear guidance on asylum policy and procedures to enable people to make timely asylum claims that are fair and transparent, helping to reduce the length of time trapped in unhealthy environments. This must be done in languages and formats that are accessible to displaced people. In line with Article 14 of the 2013/33/EU Directive, all European governments, through their local authorities, must ensure that minors in displacement are given access to education in schools while their claims are being processed.

The European Commission, through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and other relevant funding mechanisms, should ensure that sufficient resources are made available to front-line civil society organisations working to disseminate essential information quickly and effectively through translators and interpreters, including female-only interpreters where required.