


I ARRIVED IN FRANCE ON 8 JULY 2020
 & COULD ONLY FILE MY ASYLUM
 APPLICATION ON 11 FEBRUARY



JRS HELPED ME WITH THIS. I HAD
 CALLED THE OFFICE OF INTEGRATION
 AND IMMIGRATION OVER 300 TIMES.

SINCE MY ARRIVAL, I ALTERNATE
 BETWEEN SLEEPING OUTSIDE
 AND IN 'FOYERS.'



WITH THE CURFEW, IT'S VERY HARD
 TO FIND A PLACE. I OFTEN SLEEP
 ON THE STREET.

BEFORE DECEMBER,
 I SOMETIMES
 ATE ONLY ONCE A DAY.



SOMETIMES PEOPLE WOULD
 GIVE ME MONEY.

I ALSO HAVE HEALTH PROBLEMS,
 AGGRAVATED BY THE FRENCH COLD.



I HAVE DRY HANDS AND FEET,
 ISSUES WITH MY TEETH.
 I COUGH A LOT.

By Ivo de Jager

At JRS Europe we respect everyone who shares its story with us. So while their stories are true, names have been omitted to protect their privacy. Faces and places are the products of the author's imagination.

23 year old Senegalese
 asylum seeker, France

ACCESSING RECEPTION: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN COVID-19 TIMES



A 32 years old Colombian man **asked for protection in November 2019**. Due the shortcomings in the organisation of reception, dating back to long before the pandemic, **he never got a place in a reception centre and had to rent a flat on his own**. When the pandemic broke out, he, as many others in similar situations, he found himself completely **alone in that flat, without permission to go outside due to the lockdown and no contacts at all**. On top of that, **his application was rejected in March 2020**. It was only with the help of JRS that he could file an appeal and receive some food and financial support to pay his rent. **Because of the pandemic, all legal procedures were delayed and it took longer than normal for him to get a new permit as an asylum seeker pending his appeal**. This in turn impacted his ability to renew his health card, access a bank account and obtain financial support. He only finally got a new permit on 18th November 2020

JRS (Centro Astalli)
 Legal Officer, Italy

Accessing reception: from bad to worse

According to EU law, Member States must provide reception to all asylum seekers as soon as they make their application and until the end of their asylum procedure, appeals included. However, in many EU countries, asylum seekers often had to wait days, weeks or months before obtaining a place even before the pandemic. **In many cases**, due to a shortage of reception spaces, **they never did**.

Covid-19 exacerbated existing problems. Remote working made responsible administrations even harder to reach, phonelines to make appointments remained unanswered and the delays in obtaining the necessary documents to access reception grew longer, with many asylum seekers living on the streets during a pandemic as a result.



Need to ensure reception

As long as the context of the pandemic remains unsolved, and beyond, **JRS calls on national governments to:**

1 Ensure sufficient reception places to host all asylum seekers



2 Ensure that asylum seekers are referred to reception as soon as they make an application



3 Ensure that administrations are duly funded, equipped and staffed to guarantee the availability of relevant services within reasonable timeframes at all times

