



## Questions and Answers: UNHCR Accommodation Scheme (Hotels & Apartments)

March 2017

### **1. Why am I in a hotel or a building and not in an apartment?**

There are three types of UNHCR supported accommodation:

- Apartments
- Hotels
- Communal centres, or 'buildings'

The aim is to accommodate as many people as possible in apartments, depending on daily availability and taking into consideration your specific accommodation needs, such as health status, age, gender and family size. As spaces become available, you will be moved into apartments. Where possible, UNHCR and partners prioritise accommodation for you in apartments within the city centres, as they become available. Currently, there are not enough places for everyone in apartments.

### **2. Why have I not been accommodated in Athens?**

You will be accommodated where spaces are available.

All notifications of relocation decisions take place in Athens, therefore relocation candidates, after notification of the decision, are accommodated closer to Athens in order for them to attend appointments and undertake necessary procedures such as health checks and cultural orientation. However, there may be a delay in your movement to Athens, due to the lack of available spaces.

### **3. Why is my hotel or apartment situated so far from the city centre?**

We aim to secure accommodation options for everyone closer to the city centre, to reduce extra costs for transportation and other services and for convenience. However, while we are trying to increase the occupancy rate, availability is still limited. Also, we take into consideration your specific accommodation needs, such as health status, age, gender and family size.

### **4. I know a person who can give me an accommodation closer to the city. Can I live there?**

If you have an accommodation arranged for you somewhere else, you are free to move out of UNHCR supported accommodation. Please notify the organization providing support in your current accommodation of your decision.

If you choose to move, you **may** be able to access financial support for your daily needs, if you can present yourself for verification to the organisation providing cash assistance in your location.

If you leave the accommodation provided by UNHCR and other organisations, your place will be given to someone else.



#### **5. *Is transportation provided while I am in UNHCR supported accommodation?***

UNHCR and the partners do not provide transportation for personal reasons. This should be covered by the cash assistance you have been provided.

- **If you are in a hotel or apartment in Athens or Thessaloniki**, and your official appointments **do not require long distance travel**, UNHCR does not provide tickets for transportation to and from official appointments with the Asylum Service. Your local transportation needs should be covered by you, from your monthly cash assistance.
- **If you are in hotel or apartment outside Athens or Thessaloniki**, and your official appointments with the Asylum Service, an Embassy, or medical facility **requires long distance travel**, UNHCR through its respective partner who manages the accommodation facility, will assist you with transportation. You should approach your case manager or social worker for more information.
- If you have been notified by the Asylum Service with a decision on the basis of which **you will be relocated to another country under the Relocation Scheme**, assistance for your departure to the country of relocation will be provided by IOM.
- If you have been notified by the Asylum Service with a decision on the basis of which **you will be reunited with family members in another country**, (under Dublin regulations), UNHCR may be able to assist with your transportation to that country, if you are scheduled to depart by the Asylum Service.

#### **6. *What is the relationship between the organisation providing accommodation services and UNHCR? Can I change to another accommodation service provider?***

UNHCR requested a number of organisations to provide assistance to accommodate and provide services to asylum seekers in Greece in urban, 'non-site' settings. All these organisations deliver services and manage the accommodation on behalf of UNHCR. Organisations are equally expected to deliver these services and they all collaborate with UNHCR on agreed standards and policies of the UNCHR accommodation scheme. While spaces and availability are limited, you will not be able to be accommodated by another service provider.

#### **7. *Can I return to the site I was living in previously?***

Spaces may be available in some accommodation facilities but the Greek authorities and site management are the competent authorities to decide on the occupation of available spaces in sites at any time. Site Managers are requested to consult with KEPOM before admitting anyone into a State operated accommodation facility. Independent and spontaneous movement between sites is discouraged by Greek authorities, as access to sites may not be granted and accommodation cannot be guaranteed. If you would prefer to return to the site, you should approach your case manager or social worker for more information, who can provide you with more information. Also please note that your place will not be secured for return, if you choose to leave it.



**8. I don't like the food in the hotel. Can I cook for myself?**

**If you are in a hotel where meals are provided by the management, then you cannot prepare meals in your own room.** However, there is a constant effort to improve conditions related to food and accommodation. Apartments with cooking facilities will be provided when and as they become available.

Please note, persons who are not licensed under the Greek regulations may not take part in preparing food for the public, nor install cooking facilities in hotel rooms due to health and safety reasons.

**9. The wi-fi is not strong enough or it is not working. Can you fix it?**

It is not the responsibility of the hotel or apartment owner, nor the organisation providing accommodation to provide you with wi-fi in the building. However, UNHCR and its partners will make an effort to provide or improve access to internet in hotels and buildings that have been contracted by UNHCR. In the meantime, the cash assistance provided is expected to be used to cover your basic communication needs.

**10. The medical costs are too high for me to afford within my cash assistance. Can I receive further assistance?**

Your cash card should cover basic medical needs. It does not cover exceptional medical treatment, such as costly medicines and regular checks for chronic and long term conditions or acute diseases or disabilities, surgical interventions, and child birth. If you are experiencing exceptional medical circumstances leading to extreme financial burden, you **may** be eligible for further assistance. For those situations, you are requested to approach UNHCR staff or the agency providing accommodation in your location, to find out if any support can be provided.

**11. The cash provided is too little for my family. Can I be given more?**

UNHCR, the Ministry of Migration Policy and partners are working together to ensure the provision of services both in sites and accommodation and are constantly trying to move people into better living conditions. The ongoing cash programs are intended for residents of open sites and urban accommodation settings and the cash grant amounts are calculated based on family size and the meal services offered in those locations. They must not exceed the amounts of social solidarity income, the safety net income program provided to the Greek population by the Greek state. While the amounts do not differ, different agencies provide cash assistance in different locations and accommodation programs.

**12. The apartment is too small or big, or too far away from my friends and family. Can you change it for me?**

While providing you with accommodation, we take into consideration your specific needs, depending on your nationality, gender, family size and so on. The space you have been provided is the best accommodation we can currently offer you.