Reception and integration of asylum seekers in Catalonia
Figures of Catalonia 2016

- 32,108 km²
- 7,516,254 inhabitants
- 948 municipalities / 42 counties
- 5 administrative levels
- 70% of the population live in 63 municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants
- 14.1% of the population are non-nationals

Source: Idescat, Municat, Ministry of Home Affairs, Asil.cat
Division of powers

- **Spanish State**: exclusive competence on recognition of refugee status. Also competences on reception and integration.

- **Catalan Government**: competences on reception and integration of all foreigners:
  - Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, approved on 19 July 2006.

- **Lack of coordination**, on reception and integration, between the Catalan Government and the Spanish State.
Low number of asylum seekers

- Reception places in Catalonia (only in Barcelona) **2014**: 28 + 19 victims of trafficking

- Reception places in Catalonia (several municipalities) **2015**: 245 + 19 victims of trafficking

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**Asylum applicants. 2015**

Source: Eurostat
Plan for International Protection in Catalonia

Since January 2014, the Catalan Government has a plan including a strategy and actions: the Plan for International Protection in Catalonia.

Main actions:
1. Law: improvement of the legal system
2. Public employees: training and information
3. Asylum seekers: resources
4. The public: to support civil society initiatives, information campaigns, etc.
How are asylum seekers received?

1st RECEPTION (NGOs)
- 6 to 9 months: places of reception
- 6 to 18 months: vocational training, language courses, interpreter, psychologist, etc.
- Census (Municipalities)

INTEGRATION
- Schooling (Catalan Government and municipalities)
- Employment services: vocational training, job offers, etc. (Catalan Government and municipalities)
- Recognition of qualifications (Catalan and Spanish Government)
- Social Services (Municipalities)
- Healthcare (Catalan Government)
Almost all asylum seekers who do not eventually get international protection remain in the country in an irregular situation.

Basic rights: The legal framework provides the right to education, to healthcare and to social services for people in an irregular situation.

Asylum seekers whose application is rejected can obtain a residence permit based (partially) on special bonds: the linguistic and vocational training of the applicant could be validated.
2015. Catalan Government executive action to tackle the humanitarian crisis (1)

Organised in working groups
- Resources
- Awareness
- Reception
- Children
  - Older people
  - Employment
  - Health

Reception Committee for Refugees in Catalonia

Functions
- Advise the Catalan Government
- Coordinate public administration and entities’ actions
- Monitor the implementation of reception plans and programmes
- Make proposals and recommendations to improve reception
- Become a forum for consensus among all stakeholders

80 social and institutional stakeholders
- Provincial councils
- Catalan Development Cooperation Fund
- Municipal entities (ACM and FMC)
- Barcelona City Council
- Catalan Advocacy Council
- Specialised NGOs
2015. Catalan Government executive action to tackle the humanitarian crisis (2)

- The Committee promotes the participation of refugees: people who have previously engaged with NGOs, first as refugees, and then as volunteers or as professionals.

- The Committee aims to ensure the coordination of all public and private organizations in Catalonia regarding problems of reception/integration.

- The Catalan Government has announced its commitment to receive 4,500 people in two years (2016 – 2017).

- The public administrations and civil society have agreed on a political paper:

  “SHARED POSITION ON RECEPTION OF REFUGEES”
2015. Catalan Government executive action to tackle the humanitarian crisis (and 3)

- **Resource Bank**, online since January 2016. Individuals, enterprises and administrations channel their offers.

- **Reception center**: a building in Barcelona has been made available for reception by NGOs (200 places).

- **Refugee.gencat.cat**: Information source for refugees and professionals.
Challenges

- Increasing the number of applicants for international protection and the number of people who are granted refugee status (resettlement – relocation – asylum applications).
- Speed up the procedures
- Improving the coordination between the Spanish State and the Catalan Government.
- Keeping the consensus between public administrations and civil society.
- Efficient management of the Reception Committee team, as a tool that fosters participation and consensus.
- Achieving other actions of the Plan for International Protection in Catalonia: improvement of the legal system, training public employees, information campaigns, etc.
http://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/