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Ad-Hoc Query on 2023.27 Access to autonomous housing in the context of international protection

Requested by Luxembourg on 10 July 2023

Compilation produced on 15 October 2023

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden plus Serbia (25 in Total)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The Refugee Convention^[1] establishes that State Parties “shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances”.^[2] From this it is derived that refugees are entitled to the most favourable treatment possible, including when accessing housing.

In the EU, the recast Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU^[3] lays down common standards for the reception of applicants for international protection in EU Member States. The provision of housing is included under the definition of material reception conditions that Member States are required to provide to applicants for international protection.^[4] When housing is provided in kind, it can take the form of accommodation centres, private houses, flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants.^[5] For beneficiaries of international protection on the other hand, the Qualification Directive 2011/95/EU,^[6] establishes an obligation for Member States to ensure access of beneficiaries of international protection to accommodation under equivalent conditions as other legally residing third-country nationals.^[7] The Qualification Directive also states that Member States shall seek to implement policies aimed at preventing discrimination of beneficiaries of international protection and at ensuring equal opportunities regarding access to accommodation.^[8] Neither the Reception Conditions Directive nor the Qualification Directive contain any provisions on transition from government-supported accommodation provided in the context of reception conditions to autonomous housing. The recently published EMN inform on “Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection” evidenced that the organisation of outflow to housing and support services for beneficiaries of international protection varies greatly across EMN Member and Observer Countries. In some countries, this is arranged by responsible authorities, while in others it is the individual responsibility of beneficiaries of international protection to arrange, although support services are often provided.^[9] Several EU level studies have reported challenges in accessing autonomous housing for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, including legal and practical obstacles.^[10] The main barriers identified by previous studies in this context include:

- Lack of adequate responses to housing market fluctuations;
- Financial constraints and discrimination, including high rents costs and landlords’ reluctance to rent to the target groups;
- Legal and administrative barriers, including administrative requirements that are difficult to fulfil.^[11]

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Long stays in reception centres because of difficulties in transitioning to autonomous housing also has implications for accommodation capacity. This may increase the risk of destitution for new arrivals, breaching Member States' obligation to provide material reception conditions to applicants for international protection.

This inform aims to collect information that can support policy makers in better supporting applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing and overcoming the abovementioned challenges. The expected output of this inform is a comprehensive overview of how EMN Member and Observer countries organise the provision of support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing. This includes a mapping of national-level policies and measures to support the transition and access to autonomous housing, as well as some examples of policies and measures implemented at regional and/or local level and of EU-funded initiatives with this aim. The inform also aims to identify effective approaches in supporting access to autonomous housing.

The EMN has conducted two previous studies/informs in this area: the EMN inform on "Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection" (2022) and the EMN study "The Organisation of Reception Facilities for Asylum Seekers in different Member States" (2014). This inform will build upon previous research undertaken in the context of the EMN inform on "Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection" which provided a brief overview of the organisation of outflow to housing for beneficiaries of international protection.

[1] Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/28185>, last accessed on 14 May 2023.

[2] Article 21 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

[3] Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast), OJ L 180, p.96, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033>, last accessed on 14 May 2023.

[4] Article 18 (1) of the Reception Conditions Directive.

[5] Article 18(1) of the Reception Conditions Directive

[6] Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast), OJ L 337, p. 9, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32011L0095>, last accessed on 14 May 2023.

[7] Article 32 (1) of the Qualification Directive.

[8] Article 32 (2) of the Qualification Directive.

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[9] European Migration Network Inform (2023). Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN_INFORM_flexible%20housing_010223-final.pdf, last accessed on 14 May 2023.

[10] EUAA, Asylum Report 2022, [Asylum Report 2022 | European Union Agency for Asylum \(europa.eu\)](https://asylumineurope.org/reports/annual/asylum-report-2022), last accessed on 14 May 2023; and AIDA, Housing out of reach? The reception of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, [aida_housing_out_of_reach.pdf \(asylumineurope.org\)](https://aida.europa.eu/aida-housing-out-of-reach.pdf), last accessed on 14 May 2023.

[11] Ibid.

We would like to ask the following questions:

1. Where available, please provide 2022 data for the following categories of data and state the source (e.g. Ministry of Migration and Home Affairs, Ministry of Social Inclusion, local authorities, social services, NGOs etc.)

When providing statistics please use the comment box to introduce the data.

Available choices: Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing;; Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure;; Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing;; None of the above data are collected

2. What are the main barriers/challenges reported by beneficiaries and applicants for international protection in accessing autonomous housing in your country? Please provide 2-3 examples if possible(e.g. discrimination in accessing the housing market, general market housing situation, language barriers, lack of trust from the landlord when it comes to renting, lack of qualification for public housing, lack of information etc.) and indicate how those challenges are reported / how data is collected (e.g. by public bodies, research institutions, civil society organisations, secondary sources etc.).

3. What are the responsible organisations/authorities (at all different administrative levels) supporting access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection in your country?

4. When there is more than one organisation/authority, how do they cooperate and coordinate the provision of support to beneficiaries and applicants of international protection in accessing autonomous housing?

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5. Does your country have in place any preparation / planning process to ease the transition to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection (e.g. provision of information, support from social workers, temporary placement in transitional housing etc.)? If so, please explain.

6. Does your country have any national level policies and/or measures* to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection? (e.g. financial support (such as public/private loans and guarantees), mediation between tenants and landlords, in-kind support, etc.) YES/NO. If yes, please explain in detail the type of support provided.

This question covers both national mainstreaming policies and/or measures to which beneficiaries and applicants for international protection have access as well as targeted policies and/or measures addressing this specific group.

7. Where available, please provide up to 3 examples of regional and/or local level policies and/or measures implemented in your country to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection.

8. Does your country have in place any mechanism to verify whether autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries and applicants of international protection is adequate? If so, please explain.

9. Has your country used any EU Funds to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection? (e.g. AMIF, European Regional Development Fund, NextGeneration Funds, ESF+). If yes, please specify which funds were most used.

10. If yes to Q9, please provide up to 3 examples of EU-funded initiatives (projects or reforms) implemented in your country to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection indicating which type of EU Funds were used.

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11. Have any of the policies and/or measures reported in Q6 and Q7 been evaluated in the last five years? YES/NO. If yes, please briefly summarise the main findings of the evaluations and provide a hyperlink to the source, where available.

12. Which (aspects) of the policies and/or measures reported in Q6 and Q7 can be considered as good practices to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection? Please provide evidence for your assessment (e.g. evaluations, references to research/studies, expert opinions etc.).

We would very much appreciate your responses by **9 October 2023**.

2. RESPONSES

1

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| | | Wider Dissemination² | |
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¹ If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

² A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."

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| = | EMN NCP Austria | Yes | <p>1. It should be noted at the outset that the provision of basic care in Austria follows the principle of shared responsibilities and that the care of aliens in need of assistance and protection is a shared task of the federal provinces and the federal government. The federal government ensures basic care during the so-called admission procedure by providing benefits in kind in specially organized quarters (accommodation, food, care). For the federal government's area of responsibility, it can be stated that accommodation and care are provided exclusively in organized accommodations. Following the admission procedure, the transfer to the basic care of the federal provinces takes place as soon as possible (cf. Art. 6 Federal Basic Care Act 2005) and the legal provisions of the individual federal provinces subsequently apply. Within the framework of basic care of the federal provinces, accommodation can alternatively be provided in organized or private quarters (e.g. by independently concluding a rental contract). In this context, the decision about accommodation in a specific individual case (type of accommodation, time of transfer to private accommodation) is also incumbent on the individual federal provinces. Therefore, no data are available with regard to the target group of asylum seekers. The target group for basic care is defined in Art. 2 para 1 of the Basic Care Agreement pursuant to Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act (Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act). With regard to the target group of persons entitled to asylum, it should be noted that they are only entitled to benefits for a period of up to 4 months after being granted asylum. After that, other social assistance benefits may apply, such as social assistance, which is also the responsibility of the federal provinces.--- Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>2. It should be noted that accommodation in Austria falls within the competence of the individual federal provinces after the admission procedure (see answer to question 1 above). Therefore, no comprehensive answer can be given to the questions. In general - detached from asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection - there are cases in Austria that document discriminatory housing advertisements or racist statements by landlords (see, for example, https://assets.zara.or.at/media/rassismusreport/ZARA-Rassismus_Report_2022.pdf, p. 42f), so that it is reasonable to conclude that asylum seekers/</p> |
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beneficiaries of international protection can also be confronted with such problems. The cases in question are documented by a civil society association.

Source: Ministry of the Interior

3.

Under Austrian law, the federal government and the federal provinces are required to provide basic services to aliens in need of assistance and protection (e.g. asylum seekers), which includes, among other things, accommodation in suitable housing (Art. 2 para 1, Art. 6 para 1 Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act). Within the framework of basic care provided by the provinces, accommodation may alternatively be provided in organized or private quarters (e.g. by independently concluding a rental agreement). The decision on accommodation is the responsibility of the provinces (see question 1 above).

Although displaced persons from Ukraine, as persons with temporary protection status, are not included in the target group of persons entitled to asylum or asylum seekers, it may nevertheless be mentioned that Federal Agency for Reception and

Support Services was also active in arranging private accommodation for the federal provinces, especially in connection with persons from Ukraine in need of assistance and protection.

In addition, there is a large number of civil society and church organizations in Austria that provide support for private accommodation, such as Diakonie, Caritas and Flüchtlinge Willkommen Österreich - Verein für ein solidarisches Miteinander.

Source: Ministry of the Interior

4.

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Particularly in connection with aliens from Ukraine in need of assistance and protection, the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services is working closely with the Ministry of the Interior, the federal provinces, and civil society organizations to coordinate accommodation services (see AT contribution in AHQ 2022.18/Q5).

See answer to questions 1 and 3.

Source: Ministry of the Interior

5. There are no such preparatory/planning processes in the area of federal basic care.

Source: Ministry of the Interior

6. Within the framework of basic care, aliens in need of assistance and protection who are accommodated individually are granted an amount of € 165 (individuals) or € 330 (families of two or more persons) per month for rent in the case of individual accommodation and € 260 (adults) or € 145 (minors) per month for meals. These maximum cost rates are legally standardized in Art. 9 Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act.

Source: Ministry of the Interior

7. See answer to Q6.

Source: Ministry of the Interior


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| | | <p>8. With regard to ensuring minimum standards for the individual accommodation of persons in need of assistance and protection, reference may be made to the responsibility of the federal provinces. Although displaced persons from Ukraine, as persons with temporary protection status, are not included in the target group of persons entitled to asylum or asylum seekers, it should be mentioned that in connection with the individual accommodation of aliens from Ukraine in need of assistance and protection general criteria for the provision of accommodation have been published (https://www.bbu.gv.at/helfen#nachbarschaftsquartier), specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping facilities (a couch in the living room, for example, is not enough) • Sufficient sanitary facilities • Short-term availability • Security of supply (water, hot water, electricity, heating, if possible also internet) • Possibility to prepare meals (if no catering can be offered). <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>9. n/i</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>10. n/i</p> <p>---</p> |
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| | | | <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>11.</p> <p>The maximum cost rates standardized in Art. 9 Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act are amounts that can be offset between the partners of the basic care. In this context, an increase in selected maximum cost rates was agreed last year between the partners in basic care and a supplementary agreement to the existing Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act was concluded in this regard, which entered into force on 1 December 2022 (Federal Law Gazette I 197/2022).</p> <p>In addition, the legal basis for granting a cost-of-living adjustment was created to support accommodation providers in view of the current inflation situation (Federal Law Gazette I 28/2023), in order to further promote the maintenance and creation of additional accommodation places.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>12. See answer to question 11.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Belgium | Yes | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>Fedasil, the Federal Reception Agency for Asylum Seekers, does monitor the period of transition from government-supported accommodation provided in the context of reception conditions to autonomous housing. The transition period starts after obtaining international protection status and gives those</p> |

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concerned two months to find their own housing. After that time, the persons concerned must leave the reception centre or local reception initiative (both part of the reception network). In case the beneficiaries of international protection did not find housing after these two months, Fedasil can extend that period twice with one month. However, in September 2023, the average transition period the period was 158 days (see attachment), necessitating additional extensions of the right to reception in Fedasil's reception network. Fedasil's instruction states that the third extension will be granted automatically if there is a prospect of a move-out date or a rental agreement has been concluded. And the extension is to be considered on a case-by-case basis if there is human dignity at risk, e.g., because of pregnancy, medical issues and vulnerable profiles.

evolution_transition_period_2021-2023_-_fedasil.xlsx

2. In fact, all of the challenges mentioned in the question apply to the situation in Belgium.

For example:

- Insufficient supply of affordable rental housing on the market
- Steadily rising rental prices
- The search for housing is extra difficult for refugees because they do not speak the language or face discrimination by landlords.

Since **Fedasil**, the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, is responsible for the period of transition from government-supported accommodation provided in the context of reception conditions to autonomous housing (as stated in Art. 43 of the Reception Act), the Agency is well aware of the difficulties in accessing autonomous housing.

In 2018, Fedasil launched a national **call for projects** to support beneficiaries of international protection in their search for autonomous housing. In this framework, the non-profit organisation PIN (Partners In Integration) developed a toolkit for social workers who guide beneficiaries of international protection during their transition in finding a home (the toolkit is available in Dutch and French on <https://www.pinvzw.be/toolkit>).

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| | | <p>In 2023, Fedasil is financing two projects: 'Housing 4 Refugees' by Caritas International with the aim of mapping and matching the existing networks of landlords who are open to working with people who have just acquired a status (solidarity owners) and the formation of social services in support of the administrative steps that must be taken when leaving the reception network (e.g. applying for a rental guarantee, contacting the Public Social Welfare Centres, etc.) and the project 'How to begin' of the non-profit organisation Réso with the aim of organising thematic workshops to prepare the residents for their departure from the reception network, including a thematic workshop on housing.</p> <p>In June 2023, Fedasil, drew attention to the shrinking supply of affordable rental properties on the market and the steadily rising prices combined with the fact that the search for their own home for refugees is also made more difficult because they do not speak the language or are confronted with discrimination by landlords. Given the current housing problems and the direct consequences on the outflow from the reception network, which hinder the inflow of newcomers, Fedasil will organise a debate with the various actors involved in the autumn of 2023. In the meantime, Fedasil has already developed tools to support social workers in the reception centers: a manual and animated videos for residents or beneficiaries of international protection who have to leave the reception center or Local Reception Initiative and look for a rental home. The four animated videos about finding a home are available in Dutch, French, English and Arabic on Fedasil's YouTube channel. The videos will also be published in 14 languages on the website www.fedasilinfo.be. These videos give residents in transition access to quick, simple and accessible information and are also an interesting tool for social workers, because they discuss various aspects that deserve the necessary attention during the search for a home. Fedasil's manual 'Finding your own home' helps beneficiaries of international protection and applicants residing in the reception network with the various steps towards their own home: determining your maximum rental price, looking for a home, making an appointment for a visit, concluding a rental agreement. The manual is available in Dutch and French.</p> <p>Furthermore, several civil society organisations and many volunteering groups offer support to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection by helping them to search for a place to stay, such as Convivial and Caritas International who also published a joined brochure on looking for housing for</p> |
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refugees in 2017. These organisations have information on the challenges refugees face on the housing market.

Furthermore, in 2019, **the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities** (*Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten*) conducted a survey among local authorities, which showed that none of these authorities could find a home for beneficiaries of international protection who stayed in a Local Reception Initiative within the transition period of two months. Half of them did find a home after extending the transition period by one or two months and 45% of residents had to stay in the Local Reception Initiative for more than five months before finding their own home.

The **non-profit organisation Orbit** published an article in August 2022 stating that at least 1 600 recognised refugees were stuck in reception centres due to a shortage of housing in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia.

These organisations describe the current situation as a 'housing crisis'. There is not only a shortage in social housing, but there is also a general shortage of qualitative and affordable housing for vulnerable groups. According to them discrimination also plays an important role in the difficulties that beneficiaries of international protection experience in finding affordable housing. Finding affordable and adequate housing is even more problematic for beneficiaries of international protection who reunite with their family. For more information see: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/belgium/content-international....>

The Flemish **Government Agency 'Housing in Flanders'** (*Agentschap Wonen in Vlaanderen*) also reported on the supply of social rental housing. Compared to surrounding countries, the public rental supply in Flanders is rather limited. Despite the fact that Flanders is increasing efforts and resources (and imposing an objective on local authorities to realise a social rental offer), the share of the social rental patrimony stagnates at 6 - 7% of the total housing patrimony. Flanders has a total of 175 000 social housing units (which is an increase of about 25 % in absolute numbers over ten years). All low-income households can apply for social housing, including people with international protection status. However, there is a waiting list of +/- 170 000 prospective social tenants. As a result, in certain regions (often including central cities), the effective waiting time can reach several years.

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3. (**GENERAL REMARK:** Maybe it is interesting to take a look at <https://www.housingeurope.eu/> and its Housing Europe Observatory which provides data on how social and affordable housing is defined in the different countries of Europe, on national housing statistics and market trends per country, and publishes research briefings and publications. EMN Belgium is not aware if the information on this website is up to date.)

As mentioned in Q2, **Fedasil, the Federal Reception Agency for Asylum Seekers**, is responsible for the period of transition from government-supported accommodation provided in the context of reception conditions to autonomous housing (Art. 43 of the Reception Act). In principle, beneficiaries of international protection must leave the reception structure within two months of their recognition. During that period, the staff of the reception structure helps them find suitable housing. If the beneficiary has still not found housing despite great efforts, an extension of the date for leaving the reception network can be requested from Fedasil. And as also mentioned in Q2, **other organisations/authorities also help in the search for housing, even after leaving the reception structure (welfare work, local authorities, non-profit organisations, volunteer groups, etc.)**. As part of the **civic integration programme**, the organising bodies in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia also provide information on housing.

Beneficiaries of international protection who have left the reception structure can receive financial support from the **Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWC)** in Belgium. This is possible from the moment the protection status is granted, they do not have to wait for their residence card to be issued. They are only entitled to PSWC support if they are needy and have no work. This financial support takes the form of social integration (living wage) (note: as long as the beneficiary of international protection is still in a reception facility, s/he not entitled to the living wage, even if the right opens on the day of recognition of the international protection status). The Public Social Welfare Centres can also assist in the search for housing.

If beneficiaries of international protection do not have sufficient means of subsistence to pay the rental guarantee, they can appeal to the Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWC) of the municipality where they usually reside at the time of their request for help. If they leave a reception centre and move into a house, the PSWC of the municipality where the house is located is competent. The PSWCs can also give an

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| | | <p>installation premium. This premium can be used to purchase furniture and household goods or pay for connections (gas, electricity, etc.). For both conditions apply. Municipalities and Public Social Welfare Centres can also rent out communal housing, some of which is subject to social conditions.</p> <p>The Regions in Belgium have developed a sectoral generic framework that aims to support all persons in need of housing. In principle, this generic framework is independent of the capacity of the person (e.g., having an international protection status). The housing need (and the resulting situation in which the person concerned finds himself, e.g., imminent homelessness) is always the decisive criterion for support. Consequently, being able to apply the instruments facilitating the access to housing depends on an objective yardstick, namely the degree of housing need. Regulations on social housing vary from region to region.</p> <p>In Flanders, the Flemish Government Agency 'Housing in Flanders' (<i>Agentschap Wonen in Vlaanderen</i>) is in charge of housing. The Housing Corporations (<i>Woonmaatschappijen</i>), which combine, since the summer of 2023, the activities of the former Social Housing Companies and Social Rental Agencies, rent studios, houses and flats in the Flemish Region to people on modest incomes. The options depend on the family composition and/or the physical condition of the applicants for social housing. From 1 October 2023, there will be a new unified allocation system that all Housing Corporations will have to implement. There are 41 Housing Corporations in Flanders.</p> <p>Those who have been continuously registered on a waiting list for social housing for more than 4 years and have a low income, can get a monthly rent subsidy from the Flemish government Agency 'Housing in Flanders' (<i>Agentschap Wonen in Vlaanderen</i>). The same applies to those who have a low income and move from poor, non-adapted housing to a decent, adapted house which they rent on the private rental market or from a Housing Corporation (social housing). These benefits are available to beneficiaries of international protection, provided they meet the conditions of entitlement, in the same way as Belgian nationals.</p> <p>In Wallonia, the Housing Department of the Walloon Public Service in charge of housing. The department has a service for move and rent allowances (<i>Service Public de Wallonie - Département du Logement - Allocation de déménagement et de loyer</i>). The Housing Department also provides a housing</p> |
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waiting allowance (allocation d'attente logement) which is a monthly financial allowance granted (since 1 January 2023) to households on precarious incomes who hold a private housing lease and have been waiting for social housing for more than 18 months. These benefits/allowances are available to beneficiaries of international protection, provided they meet the conditions of entitlement, in the same way as Belgian nationals.

The **Walloon Housing Society** (*Société Wallonne du Logement*) is the main institutional operator of public housing policy in Wallonia. Working directly with the 62 **Housing Associations** (*Sociétés de logement*), the Walloon Housing Society coordinates the development and rental management of a stock of 103 000 public housing units. The housing associations are responsible for the creation, renovation, management, sale and rental of public housing in Wallonia. They manage and rent out housing to the most disadvantaged and those on average incomes, they inform prospective tenants and offer them social support. The Housing Associations are approved by the Walloon Housing Society and are subject to its supervisory powers. The Walloon Housing Society has administrative, technical and financial oversight of the Housing Associations.

In Brussels, **Brussels Housing of the Brussels Regional Public Service** (*Bruxelles Logement du Service Public Régional de Bruxelles*) is the housing authority of the Brussels-Capital Region, whose mission is to provide access to quality housing for all. **The Brussels-Capital Region Housing Society** is the regional authority responsible for social housing in Brussels and for supervising the **Housing Companies**. Under certain conditions, the 16 Housing Companies in Brussels provide social, moderate or average housing for people and households on low incomes who have difficulty finding accommodation in the 19 Brussels municipalities. These benefits/allowances are available to beneficiaries of international protection, provided they meet the conditions of entitlement, in the same way as Belgian nationals. In Brussels and Wallonia there are **Social Estate Agencies** (*Agences Immobilières Sociales*) which manage the rental of housing, mainly owned by private landlords, and rent it out at a reduced price to low-income households. The Agencies are responsible for finding tenants, drafting leases, carrying out initial and final inventories, and monitoring rental obligations and payments. They can also provide transit accommodations for homeless people. The conditions for admission are the same as those for social

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housing (unless special dispensation is granted). Note (as mentioned above) that in Flanders the Social Rental Agencies and the Social Housing Companies were merged in 2023 into the Housing Corporations which build (and socially rent) social housing and are active on the private rental market to rent homes for further renting to entitled persons.

Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia also have a **Housing Fund** (*Fonds du Logement de Bruxelles-Capitale/ Fond du logement de Wallonie/ Vlaams Woningfonds*), which buys, renovates and rents out homes to the Region's most disadvantaged families at very low rents. In Flanders, apart from the private institutions that issue loans at reduced interest rates, the social housing for sale built by the Housing Corporations is offered at a lower interest rate, and the Flemish Housing Fund guarantees lower interest rates for purchases by people with lower incomes. The Housing Fund also provides rent guarantee loans on the rental market.

4. As stated in question 3, there is the complementary operation between the local and regional levels. The coordination of effective assistance itself lies at the local level. Local governments, housing companies or housing corporations and associations and social services have to implement and shape policy at the local level.

An objective of social housing to be realised is imposed on each local government. For example, in Flanders, specifically to allocate social rental housing, it was recently decided to set up local allocation councils (*toewijzingsraden*) (by an amendment of the Flemish social rental framework). They assess the allocation of individual candidate social tenants (20% allocation to households with the greatest needs) and the specific need of special target groups to reserve for them a (defined) share of social housing. Local authorities have a statutory coordinating task in the field of housing. This includes numerous assignments both to consult and confer with agencies and to control the quality of housing (including on the private rental market). To this end, specific housing services are set up locally, for example, they take up housing guidance (in certain cities). Although the mission is generic (and extends to all persons in housing need), in the guidance of specific target groups such as persons with international protection

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status, local administrations often call on (regional) non-profit organisations (such as the above mentioned non-profit organisation Orbit).

5. Yes, as mentioned in Q2, during the transition period, beneficiaries of international protection are assisted in finding autonomous housing. Social workers/counsellors of the reception centres or the local reception initiatives managed by the **Public Social Welfare Centres** in the municipalities will inform and support beneficiaries in their search for housing during the transition period.

Fedasil also regularly finances **non-profit organisations** to assist beneficiaries in finding housing and developing tools and has also developed a toolkit to assist social workers and beneficiaries (see also Q2). And there are several **non-profit organisations, organisations in charge of implementing civic integration programmes and volunteer groups** who provide information and support during the transition period, but also after this period (see Q2).

Public Social Welfare Centres also have transit housing. These are houses that the Public Social Welfare Centres rent out for a short period to people in an emergency situation. The occupancy contract is concluded for a duration of six months and can be extended once. Staying in transitional housing provides a temporary period of housing security to find a lasting solution to the housing situation.

The **Social Estate Agencies** (see Q3) can also provide transit accommodation for homeless people. In Flanders, the **Centres for general welfare work** can provide temporary housing for those in need. Furthermore, since the end of 2016, it has been possible to use **free spaces in private homes** to temporary house beneficiaries of international protection who have to leave the reception network due to their granting of international protection. Interested parties have to notify their willingness to their **municipality**. In practice, when making a notification, the municipality creates a subordinate address within the home, at which the owner and the tenant can domicile separately. Both the owner and the tenant will thereby be seen as single persons, meaning neither the owner nor the tenant will lose income due to cohabitation. The conditions for making a notification are quite simple:

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- The room which is rented out is part of the home of the owner, so the owner is not allowed to rent out detached garages or outbuildings. A separate bathroom or kitchen are not required, the owner may share the bathroom or kitchen with the tenant.
- The owner may only house one single person, one couple or one family. So, it is not allowed to rent out two free spaces to two separate tenants.
- The free space to be rented out may not exceed one third of the home, not including shared spaces. So, the owner must still have enough space for him/herself.
- To rent out a room, it must obviously conform to the living standards of room rental.

6. Housing in Belgium is an entirely regional competence both in terms of regulation of the social and private rental market and the deployment of all kinds of instruments such as social housing, subsidising income-impaired target groups (rent subsidy and rent subsidy), granting rent guarantee loans, monitoring the quality of housing and so on.

However, the **Public Social Welfare Centres** have measures and instruments to support access to housing in place throughout the country to which beneficiaries of international protection have access. Beneficiaries of international protection who have left the reception structure can receive financial support from the Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWCs) in Belgium if they are needy and have no work. This financial support takes the form of social integration (living wage).

If beneficiaries of international protection do not have sufficient means of subsistence to pay the rental guarantee, they can appeal to the Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWC) of the municipality where they usually reside at the time of their request for help. If they leave a reception centre and move into a house, the PSWC of the municipality where the house is located is competent (conditions apply). The PSWCs can also give an **installation premium**. This premium can be used to purchase furniture and household goods or pay for connections (gas, electricity, etc.). Furthermore, a PSWC can also, in certain cases, intervene in

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the house rent via a rent allowance. This assistance is not an automatic right. The family situation, income and rent, will be examined first.

On the regional level, **rent premiums and rent subsidies** can be provided. For example in Flanders, beneficiaries for international protection can make use of a rent subsidy (Agency Housing in Flanders) if they have a low income and they move to a property from a Housing Company, or they move from a poor or unadapted house to a good, adapted rental house, or they were homeless and are now moving into a house. Very low-income families who rent on the private market and have been waiting for 4 years or more for social housing and are renting a private rental property with a lease may be eligible for a monthly rent premium.

For the rent subsidy, there is a semi-automatic entitlement. A potential beneficiary of the housing allowance (who is known because s/he has been on the waiting list for four years for social housing) receives a letter from the Agency Living in Flanders with a form to submit an application. In the case of rent premium, the initiative to apply lies entirely with the tenant.

In Wallonia, the Housing Department of the Walloon Public Service in charge of housing. The department has a service for **move and rent allowances** (Service Public de Wallonie - Département du Logement - Allocation de déménagement et de loyer). The Housing Department also provides a **housing waiting allowance** (allocation d'attente logement) which is a monthly financial allowance granted to households on precarious incomes who hold a private housing lease and have been waiting for social housing for more than 18 months.

See also Q3 for more information on social housing.

Note that **applicants for international protection are not eligible for social housing**. However, they can live in a social rental home of a partner with whom they have a long-term relationship.

7. See Q3 and 6.

8. Yes, but not specifically related to autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries and applicants of international protection beneficiaries.

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In general, a home must be safe and meet certain conditions in terms of comfort. Each region has drawn up its own housing code (Flemish Housing Code (*Vlaamse Wooncode*) - Brussels Housing Code (*Brusselse Huisvestingscode/ Code bruxellois du logement*) - Walloon Housing Code (*Code wallon du logement*)).

A **housing quality policy** has been developed at the regional level, based on two pillars. In the long term, the entire residential portfolio must be upgraded to a sustainable and high-quality standard. The proposed objective (to be achieved by 2050) strives for the highest standards in terms of both energy efficiency and quality standards. In addition, a minimum housing quality policy is being drawn up in which minimum standards are set. All homes must meet the proposed minimum housing quality standards (these standards are also periodically evaluated and raised).

The minimum housing quality policy is accompanied by effective controls on the quality of housing on site, especially in the rental market. This involves checking in each case whether housing quality is adequately guaranteed (after all, it is a fundamental right to be housed in a home of adequate quality). The controls are linked to the basic safety, health and housing quality requirements: surface area of the living areas; the sanitary facilities; safety and heating capabilities; lighting and ventilation options; safety and electricity; safety of gas installations; stability and building physics; accessibility; fire safety; minimal energetic performance and clean drinking water. Anyone (tenant or third party) can request a home inspection and the inspections are carried out by trained (local and regional) officials or by sworn technical (private) inspectors.

If the inspection indicates that the home does not meet the required standards, remedial action is taken (whereby procedures are set up and administrative sanctions such as fines can be imposed). In specific cases, the regional housing inspectorate can even take criminal action. For example, in 2022, the Flemish housing inspectorate - the inspectors have the authority of judicial police officers - drew up an official report following inspections of almost 1 000 properties. These will then be further handled by judicial or administrative law.

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| | | <p>9. No (however, since not every Region in Belgium replied to this question, we cannot be absolutely sure that no EU Funds were used to support access to autonomous housing). A call for projects was launched in May 2023 under AMIF 2021-2027 - AMIF No 101: Integration, in which access to housing plays a role. The actions under this call are aimed at strengthening the social activation of newcomers from third countries. The intention is for the small and medium-sized Public Social Welfare Centres to offer a tailor-made and intensive social activation programme to newcomers from third countries who are too far removed from the labour market and too weak for existing integration programs organised at Community level. This guidance will focus on barriers within various areas of life that hinder the integration of third-country nationals into society. This can range from helping to find affordable childcare, eliminating financial debt, looking for affordable and good housing, looking for a solution for mobility problems, helping with health problems, ... as well as guidance to the existing language and/or training offer. This call will fund projects running between 1 January 2024 and 30 June 2026.</p> <p>10. N/A</p> <p>11. Yes. For example: The Flemish housing policy is structurally supported and guided by the Policy Research Centre Housing (Steunpunt Wonen). The Centre is an interdisciplinary group of researchers from different universities assigned by the Flemish Minister of Housing Policy to pool scientific knowledge that is relevant for preparing housing policy in Flanders. The centre collects and analyses data on supply and demand on the Flemish housing market and conducts ex-ante and ex post evaluations of housing policy instruments. The research topics covered by the Policy Research Centre Housing fit in closely with the objectives of Flemish housing policy: availability, quality and affordability of housing. Based on survey and administrative data sources, the Policy Research Centre observes the developments on the housing market and analyses the differences between regions and groups, while comparing the situation in Flanders with other regions and countries. With ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of policy instruments, the Housing Policy Research Centre aims to contribute towards greater policy efficiency and more effective</p> |
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policy implementation. A wide range of policy instruments is covered, including the typical housing policy instruments (social housing, housing benefits, ...), the fiscal instruments (personal income tax, transaction taxes, ...) and the housing regulation (quality control and enforcement, tenancy law, ...). In this way, several studies are produced yearly on various topics that affect housing policy. The reports are available in Dutch on the website <https://steunpuntwonen.be/publicaties/aflaadbare-rapporten/>. In 2023, research was conducted into why the rental subsidy and rental premium were only poorly received by potential beneficiaries. Based on this research, it was examined how the policy can be functionally optimised. The same evaluative study was conducted into the rental guarantee loan (2023), which subsequently resulted in the improvement of the system and the adjustment of some modalities. A lot of research is also being conducted in the field of social housing. In 2021, research was conducted into how the guidance of social tenants can be improved. This research has in turn led to the adjustment and reworking of the performance indicators in the performance manual (which forms the guideline for Housing Corporations to organise social housing in an orderly manner).

12. Example from Flanders: Various studies (cf. Steunpunt Wonen, see Q11) and evaluations show that the housing policy is efficient and open to continuous improvement. It can also be pointed out that the complementary design with a strong support framework from the Flemish Region on the one hand and operational implementation at local level (coordinated by the local authorities) on the other is a good practice and forms a solid basis for shaping the Flemish housing policy. Moreover, the Flemish government has recently strived to optimise the 'residential landscape' in which the various residential actors were transformed into powerful multifunctional Housing Corporations. The social rental agencies (sociale verhuurkantoren), operating in the private rental market and the social housing companies (sociale huisvestingsmaatschappijen), operating in the public rental market were brought together into Housing Corporations (2023). They must take on an enhanced mission both in the private rental market and the social rental market and in providing guidance to (candidate) social tenants.

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| |  EMN NCP Bulga ria | Yes | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the moment there is not such an information available. 2. There is not such an information available. 3. According to the Article 14 of Ordinance on the conditions and procedure for conclusion, implementation and Termination of the Agreement on the Integration of Foreigners Granted Asylum or International Protection the mayor of the respective municipality that submitted an application for the conclusion of an integration agreement organizes the reception and provides assistance regarding the housing of the foreigner and his family members. 4. N/A 5. No 6. There is not such a policy or measures aimed to support the access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection. 7. In June 2023 within two weeks, 10 foreigners granted international protection in the Republic of Bulgaria concluded an Agreement for the Integration with the Mayor of the Vitosha District i Sofia. Foreigners have come from the reception centers for refugees in the Republic of Cyprus under the voluntary relocation mechanism of a total of 23 applicants for international protection. Persons granted international protection are familiar with the information on the measures for their inclusion in the community. Integration profiles have been prepared for them, and they have also submitted an application stating their desire to conclude an integration agreement. |
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| | | <p>The agreement defines the rights and obligations of the foreigner, as well as the rights and obligations of the mayor of the municipality. A mechanism is created for coordination between the mayor of the municipality and the territorial divisions of the executive authorities in the implementation and control of the integration measures under the agreement, for example a cooperation agreement, in which the specific forms and methods of interaction are determined based on the statutory powers of the municipality and the territorial divisions of executive authorities.</p> <p>8. No</p> <p>9. According to the Article 33 of the Ordinance the sources of funding for integration measures and activities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. funds and programs of the European Union; 2. funds, programs and instruments of other donors; 3. international institutions and organizations; 4. national funds under the budgets falling within the scope of the consolidated fiscal program. <p>Measures and activities for the integration of foreigners granted asylum or international protection after relocation or resettlement are financed under the "Asylum, Migration and Integration" fund. The funds are provided purposefully by the responsible authority for the fund - the "International Projects" Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, according to the order provided for in the national mechanisms for fulfilling the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria on relocation and resettlement.</p> <p>10. There is not such data available.</p> <p>11. N/A</p> <p>12. N/A</p> |
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|  | EMN NCP Croatia | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; For all persons seeking international protection, accommodation and other material reception conditions are provided in reception centres operated by the Mol or, for unaccompanied minors, by the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy social welfare institutions. The state does not provide financial assistance with which international protection seekers could finance autonomous housing. People who have the means (own financial resources, help from associations, friends, etc.) can live outside the reception centre, but they do not receive state aid for this. The Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets provides housing for persons who have been granted international protection in the first two years since the protection was granted. Accommodation is provided in government apartments or by renting apartments on the market. In 2022, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets provided accommodation in 18 apartments for persons with approved international protection, for a total of 32 beneficiaries. Of these, 11 apartments are owned by the state, and 7 apartments are rented from private individuals.</p> <p>2. Lack of financial resources, high apartment rental costs and reluctance of landlords to rent apartments to persons under international protection/seekers of international protection.</p> <p>3. The Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets ensures that for the first two years after the approval of international protection, persons who do not have their own financial resources live in state apartments. If there are no free state apartments, apartments are rented on the market, and the Ministry pays the rental costs and direction</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No</p> |
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| | | | <p>6. See Answer to Q3</p> <p>7. No</p> <p>8. The area (m2) of living space is determined according to the number of family members</p> <p>9. Yes. AMIF</p> <p>10. For arranging and equipping state apartments for accommodation of persons with approved international protection</p> <p>11. N/A</p> <p>12. N/A</p> |
| | EMN NCP Cyprus | Yes | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>2. The Social Welfare Services provide Material Reception Conditions (monthly allowances for basic needs, for electricity, water supply, petty cash expenses and rent) to asylum seekers who cannot be accommodated at a Reception Centre. With effect from June 1st 2019, the Council of Ministers decided to increase the monthly allowance for the material conditions of asylum seekers. Specific criteria for the rent establishments have been introduced, regarding how many people can reside in an establishment, based on the number of rooms. A rent deposit is also provided to asylum seekers.</p> |

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| | | <p>With a Decision dated 7/10/2020, the Council of Ministers approved to cover the living expenses of families of Applicants for International Protection with minor children (regardless of vulnerability) and vulnerable persons, as defined in article 9KG of the Refugee Laws 2000-2020 (e.g. pregnant women, people with disabilities, former children in the care of the Director of SWS), in temporary accommodation (hotels and / or other accommodation) for a period of (1) one to (3) three months (when needed the temporary accommodation is extended), in order to help them, as soon as possible, to find a permanent place of residence in the community.</p> <p>However, applicants for international protection face discrimination in housing. For example, some landlords are hesitant to rent a house to applicants for international protection over concerns about a lack of stable income. Language barriers can also make finding housing difficult and is an added challenge for navigating a new city in which public transportation may be insufficient or inconvenient. Lastly, efforts are made extremely difficult due to the reduced number of available housing units and the amount of rent in relation to the rent allowance as determined by the Council of Ministers Decision no. 28/07/22.</p> <p>3. Applicants of International Protection make their own efforts for accessing autonomous housing. At the same time, Social Welfare Officers provide counselling and support to applicants of International Protection, in order to help them, as soon as possible, to find a permanent place of residence in the community. Also, NGOs support applicants of international protection in accessing autonomous housing.</p> <p>4. There is a close cooperation and coordination with the Asylum Service and NGOs to support beneficiaries, especially vulnerable asylum seekers in accessing autonomous housing</p> <p>5. N/A</p> <p>6. NO</p> |
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| | | | <p>7. N/A</p> <p>8. According to the decision of the Council of Ministers, dated. 28/07/22, "Strategic Management of Migration Flows and the Provision of Reception Materials to Applicants for International Protection", the Social Welfare Officer carries out checks and visits at the place of residence of the applicant/assisted person whenever this is deemed appropriate to confirm and assess the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) criteria for the provision of Reception Materials, b) address of residence and c) living conditions. <p>Additionally, specific criteria for the rent establishments have been introduced, regarding how many people can reside in an establishment, based on the number of rooms.</p> <p>For the purpose of improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries of the Material Reception Conditions, the benefit is suspended or terminated whereas in the cases where there is evidence of absence of decent living conditions or illegal housing in unlicensed premises or in dangerous and unsuitable buildings and the owner refuses to take actions to improve living conditions.</p> <p>Also, applications for the provision of Material Reception Conditions with a residence address in a building, which has been judged, based on a Decree or an official notification by the Competent Authority, to be unsuitable, are not accepted</p> <p>9. Under both AMIF Programming Period 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 no funding was allocated for <u>autonomous</u> housing for beneficiaries/applicants of international protection. However, even though this might not be directly relevant to your question, please be advised that under AMIF Programming Period 2021-2027 there is a provision for the implementation of a project that will run an accommodation Centre</p> |
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| | | | <p>for vulnerable applicants of international protection. No information can be provided for funds other than AMIF.</p> <p>10. N/A</p> <p>11. The above measures have minimized the risk of homelessness and destitution.</p> <p>12. All the policies/measures reported in Q6 and Q7 can be considered as good practices to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection. Specifically, these measures/policies helped asylum seekers to find accommodation with good living conditions.</p> |
|  | <p>EMN NCP Czech Repu blic</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ○ ▪ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on applicants for international protection are not available. • Beneficiaries of international protection face the same problems as other foreigners living in the Czech Republic. • The biggest problem is the high costs connected with obtaining housing, especially high entry fees, e.g. refundable deposit (one to two monthly rents) plus brokerage fees. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High regular payments for the use of the apartment, rent, services, energy, etc. • The distrust of flat owners towards foreigners is particularly evident among clients from other cultural backgrounds, but not only among them. <p>3. Under the State Integration Programme for beneficiaries of international protection, the responsible authority: Ministry of the Interior and the Refugee Facilities Administration in close cooperation with NGOs.</p> <p>4. The Refugee Facilities Administration is an organization established by the Ministry of the Interior and cooperates with NGOs as the General Provider of Integration Services. Coordination takes place in regular meetings and in daily communication. Ministry of the Interior (Department for Asylum and Migration Policy) coordinates the State Integration Programme including methodology.</p> <p>5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ○ ■ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection is implemented under the State Integration Programme. This programme is guaranteed by the Government and implemented under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior according to Asylum Act. • The support is financed from the state budget and includes information and counselling activities and direct social work with clients. • Individual integration plan for each of the (voluntary) participants – a one-year contract outlining all the goals, responsibilities, tasks and resources involved/desired. |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A methodical manual/guideline. <p>6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beneficiaries of international protection can receive assistance under the State Integration Programme, not only in the area of housing. ○ Support is provided in the form of counselling, direct social work and indirect financial and material support. ○ On the national level, beneficiaries enjoy similar rights/responsibilities to CZ citizens, therefore, they are participants of the social security system (thus are entitled to receive namely the housing allowance – state social assistance and/or material hardship benefit fee). <p>7.</p> <p>The main instrument for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection is the State Integration Programme. Although the State Integration Programme is coordinated and implemented at the central level by the Ministry of the Interior and the Refugee Facilities Administration, assistance is provided by the service providers at the regional level through the individual integration plan with the support of the local NGOs. It supports integration in the areas of housing, education, employment, and social and health care.</p> <p>8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <p>Social workers who implement the State Integration Programme consult the selection of suitable housing with clients, participate in apartment inspections (prior to the conclusion of the rental contract) and, with the help of lawyers, review lease agreements before signing.</p> |
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| | | | <p>9. No</p> <p>10. N/A</p> <p>11. No</p> <p>12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ○ ■ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Integration Programme has been operated in the Czech Republic since 1994 and, in its current form, can be considered an example of good practice in the field of integration of beneficiaries of international protections. • We collect all the feedback by the participants of the state integration programme as they finish their participation after 365 days. The feedback is massively positive and inspiring. Housing accessibility is one of the top praised elements and gains. |
| | EMN NCP Estonia | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing;</p> <p>According to the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens an applicant is required to reside at the accommodation centre for applicants for international protection during the proceedings for international protection. With the written permission of the Police and Border Guard Board, an applicant may reside outside the accommodation centre for applicants for international protection if: 1) the accommodation and support of the applicant is ensured by a person legally residing in Estonia; 2) the applicant has sufficient</p> |

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| | | | <p>financial resources to ensure his or her accommodation and support; 3) it is necessary for the applicant to reside outside the accommodation centre for applicants for international protection in order to ensure his or her safety. An applicant is required to provide evidence in proof of the circumstances specified in clauses 1 and 2. There is no support foreseen for autonomous housing to applicants in case they have decided to reside outside the accommodation centre.</p> <p>2. The main challenge is the general market housing situation. This was especially the case due to the influx of war refugees from Ukraine. While the rental market exhibited limited availability in the autumn of 2022, there was a certain resurgence in the first half of 2023. The prospects of finding suitable work is better in the bigger cities, but the rental prices are also higher in the bigger cities. In case of bigger families, it is difficult to find suitable apartments as the average rental apartment is often too small. The data has been collected from public authorities.</p> <p>3. In general, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication is responsible for housing policy in Estonia and the municipality in its administrative territory is responsible for the organisation of housing and communal services. More specifically, the main governmental authority responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries of international protection in the Estonia is the Social Insurance Board. The role of the accommodation center is counseling.</p> <p>4. The main authority responsible for provision of support to beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing is the Social Insurance Board.</p> <p>5. The daily responsibility of the accommodation center is to provide information and advise people staying in the center. There are social workers in the accommodation center who provides counselling, also on the possibilities to find housing in Estonia (e.g real estate portals, house viewings etc). The case worker assesses whether the person might need more assistance or is more independent.</p> |
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| | | | <p>6. Yes, according to the legislation a person is entitled to one-time expenses related to the entering into a rental contract of a dwelling granted for use to a beneficiary of international protection (which is today up 1200 EUR). The aim is to help cover the costs related to signing the agreement (deposit, one month in advance etc).</p> <p>7. On the local government level there is a possibility to apply for the housing provision service, which is a social service organized by local governments with the purpose to ensure the possibility of using housing for a person who, due to his socioeconomic situation, is unable to provide housing that meets the needs of himself and his family. This measure is more about being able to maintain the autonomous housing than accessing it.</p> <p>8. There is no specific mechanism in place. The autonomous housing is found from the free market. Information is provided to the beneficiaries what should be kept in mind when renting an apartment. In case the person needs more assistance, the case worker from the Social Insurance Board can join for the housing viewing. In addition, the SIB and one of the biggest real estate portals in Estonia called Kinnisvara 24 launched a real estate site aimed to match Ukrainian refugees who are looking for accommodation and locals who have accommodation to offer for them. This site is also beneficial for beneficiaries of international protection in finding autonomous housing. The Social Insurance Board also has other tools to assist (e.g internal database).</p> <p>9. No.</p> <p>10. No information available.</p> <p>11. No.</p> |
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| | | | 12. Providing a one-time financial support for housing to the beneficiaries of international protection is a good practice as otherwise it would be more difficult for the beneficiaries to move out from the accommodation center. When signing a lease for an apartment there are considerable fees, which can be too burdensome for the beneficiaries without the support. |
| + | EMN NCP Finland | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; Statistics are only for applicants of international protection who are living in private accommodation. Private accommodation is any accommodation organized by the person themselves outside the reception center. Currently 39% (around 16 800 persons) of those registered in the reception system are living in private accommodation</p> <p>2. Finland does not have this kind of autonomous housing for applicants for international protection. Applicants for international protection may organize private accommodation if they want to, but this is not supported in any way. Private accommodation is any accommodation organized by the person themselves outside the reception center. The person only informs the reception center of the address and whether he/she is sharing the accommodation with someone. Unfortunately, there is no information available on the barriers in accessing autonomous housing.</p> <p>3. <u>Applicants for international protection</u>: Applicants for international protection may organize private accommodation if they want to, but this is not specifically supported in any way. Private accommodation is any accommodation organized by the person themselves outside the reception center. The person only informs the reception center of the address and whether he/she is sharing the accommodation with someone. Reception centres do not support (financially) living in private accommodation, but the person registered to the reception system will still have the right to other reception services (reception allowance, healthcare services etc.).</p> |

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Beneficiaries of international protection: Those who have been granted a residence permit through the asylum procedure can receive a municipal placement or move to a municipality independently or with the assistance of **the reception centre**. Municipal placements help beneficiaries of international protection to have a managed transition to municipalities and a smoother start to integration. The reception centre can submit an application for municipal placement to a **Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment**. When a hosting municipality is found, the Centre assigns the placement to the applicant. The municipality finds a home for the beneficiary of international protection and ensures that they have access to the municipal services.

Many beneficiaries of international protection who have been granted a residence permit through the asylum procedure move from the reception centre to a municipality independently instead of applying for placement. Reception centres also help those who have been granted a residence permit with arranging housing and moving. Overall, only a small percentage of beneficiaries of international protection apply for a municipal placement.

4. The reception centre where the person has stayed, will assist in finding accommodation, in getting a social security number, applying for social security benefits such as housing allowance etc. The reception centre will also contact the municipality's integration services (from which the person will receive integration services). The reception centre cannot assist those who have lived in private accommodation, but these persons may contact the municipality and ask help in finding an apartment.

The reception centre can apply for a municipal placement through the asylum procedure for those who have received a residence permit. The reception centre submits an application for municipal placement to a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. When a hosting municipality is found, the Centre assigns the placement to the applicant. The municipality finds a home for the beneficiary of international protection and ensures that they have access to the municipal services.

Nationally, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for coordinating municipal placements for beneficiaries of international protection. Regional coordination is the responsibility of the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. The Centres also co-operate with

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other operators in their area, such as civil society organisations working with beneficiaries and applicants for international protection. Municipalities may contact their local Centre about municipal placements.

5. For beneficiaries of international protection: The reception centre where the person has stayed, will assist in finding accommodation, in getting a social security number, applying for social security benefits such as housing allowance etc. The reception centre will also contact the municipality's integration services (from which the person will receive integration services).


The reception centre cannot assist those who have lived in private accommodation, but these persons may contact the municipality and ask help in finding an apartment.

Agreements on municipal placements. In order to provide placements, a municipality will sign an agreement with a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment on placement allocation and on promoting the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. When a municipality offers a municipal placement, it undertakes to find a home for the person assigned to the municipality. The municipality and the Centre usually sign a multiannual agreement on refugee allocation that is reviewed once a year. The municipality needs the agreement in order to receive State compensation for hosting beneficiaries of international protection. The municipality that has signed a refugee hosting agreement may also have a plan to promote the integration of persons in need of special support. The plan is included in the municipality's integration programme

6. For beneficiaries of international protection: Agreements on municipal placements. In order to provide placements, a municipality will sign an agreement with a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment on placement allocation and on promoting the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. When a municipality offers a municipal placement, it undertakes to find a home for the person assigned to the municipality. The municipality and the Centre usually sign a multiannual agreement on refugee allocation that is reviewed once a year. The municipality needs the agreement in order to receive State compensation for hosting beneficiaries of international protection. The municipality

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| | | | <p>that has signed a refugee hosting agreement may also have a plan to promote the integration of persons in need of special support. The plan is included in the municipality's integration programme</p> <p>The reception centre where the person has stayed, will assist in finding accommodation, in getting a social security number, applying for social security benefits such as housing allowance etc. The reception centre will also contact the municipality's integration services (from which the person will receive integration services).</p> <p>The reception centre cannot assist those who have lived in private accommodation, but these persons may contact the municipality and ask help in finding an apartment and they can contact the Digital and Population Data Services Agency in order to get a social security number.</p> <p>7. -</p> <p>8. -</p> <p>9. -</p> <p>10. -</p> <p>11. -</p> <p>12. -</p> |
|  | <p>EMN NCP France</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing;; Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure;;</p> |

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| | | | <p>Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing;</p> <p>3.</p> <p>At the interministerial level, ministers in charge of housing and citizenship jointly set the public strategies on access to housing of BIPs.</p> <p>Public policy on refugees' access to housing is rooted within the implementation of the action plan « to guarantee the right to asylum and better control migratory flows” presented in July 2017 (succeeding to the 2015 plan) by the former Prime Minister, and the first five-years plan for the “Housing First and the fight against homelessness”. This public policy constitutes one of the fundamental component of the global program implemented for refugee integration, and relies on a structured intermisterial steering by the General directorate for foreign nationals in France (DGEF), the DIHAL, and the Interministerial directorate for the reception and integration of refugees (DIAIR). Since 2018, an interministerial instruction sets the aims and principles for action to guarantee a natinal mobilisation in favor of access to housing for refugees. At the interministerial level, the DIHAL is in charge of the implementation of the public policy with regard to housing, access to housing and the stay of homeless people or poorly housed people, with the aim of significantly reducing the number of homeless people.</p> <p>Its “Migrants Pole – access to refugee housing” manages the housing component of the BIPs integration policy and coordinates housing and integration stakeholders after the asylum procedure in order to find housing solutions for people.</p> <p>In addition, this center develops and monitors instructions relating to access to housing for BIPs, in particular through the management of specific projects such as the national platform for refugee housing (see question 6), the European resettlement (see question 10), the solidarity cohabitation housing program.</p> |
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4.

See Q3 for the role of the DIHAL.

Within the framework of the national reception scheme of asylum seekers and refugees (SNADR) for 2021-2023, the Ministry of housing, the Ministry of interior, the DIHAL and the Interministerial directorate for the reception and integration of refugees (DIAIR) DIAIR jointly undertake a closer dialogue with decentralized services as well as with concerned associations and operators in order to achieve the numerical objectives set by circular.

A Strategic Steering Committee (COPIL) must meet in each region and department and deal with the issues of newly arrived foreign nationals as a whole (not just BIPs) within the framework of the annual orientations of the foreign nationals' integration policy, including in particular those involved in accommodation and housing (Integrated Reception and Orientation Service (SAIO), social landlords, Action Logement, rental intermediation organizations, managers of social residences).

This COPIL aims to ensure that the territory has a roadmap for the integration of eligible foreign nationals built on an updated diagnosis, which can be based on those carried out within the framework of the AGIR program (see question 10) acting on BIPs, and sets out national priorities by adapting them to the specificities of the territory.

Finally, the Housing and Social Interventions Public Interest Group (GIP HIS) ensures, together with the DIHAL and the General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France, the operational implementation of the national platform for refugee housing. The GIP HIS ensures the operational coordination of the program by matching the available housing with the needs of households applying for national mobility.

5.

1. Temporary housing centers (CPH)

CPH welcome families or persons who obtained the BIP status deprived of housing solutions following their exit of reception centres for asylum seekers (CADA). The reception in CPH is limited to 6 months renewables.

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| | | <p>The number of places in CPH has greatly increased in 2018 (136%), 209 (69%), and 9% in 2022 for a total of 9 000 places in the metropolitan territories.</p> <p>Professionals support accommodated people towards permanent housing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness to geographical mobility; supporting them in their housing research, and if necessary, by directly mobilizing housing with private and public landlord, • By supporting the equipment and the moving into the housing • By preparing the management of daily life, in particular by information sessions to raise residents' awareness with regard to housing maintenance, invoices' settlement, budget and fluids management, rights and duties of tenants • By supporting, if necessary, people in their accommodation (change of address, opening of bank accounts, procedures for the maintenance of social rights if they change department, relays with standard law devices). <p>When an accommodation is offered to the beneficiary and it matches their situation and resources, or an alternative housing meeting his needs, he must vacate his CPH housing.</p> <p>In addition to the CPH, there are other accommodation solutions put in place for people in difficulty: centres for housing and social reintegration, social residences, young workers' homes, migrant workers' homes, relay centres, etc. They may also be covered by emergency accommodation in the form of places provided for asylum seekers or places for people without a fixed, French or foreign residence, whether legally or illegally resident.</p> <p>2. The reception center for homeless refugees (Centre d'Accueil pour les Réfugiés Sans Abri - CASRA) CARSA is an experimental project carried out by DIHAL since 2022, which offers a springboard solution for isolated refugee men without a housing solution in Ile-de-France and provides tailored, individualised and intensive support aimed at a rapid exit to independent housing and employment. The experiment with the first centre of 94 places in residence in the department of Essonne will serve as a model and may be adjusted in the context of future facilities in other territories.</p> |
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| | | | <p>Implementation of the project was entrusted to the SOS Solidarity Group, an association involved in the design of arrangements for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees. A member of the social team is specifically responsible for prospecting housing, in order to offer accommodation suitable solutions for their projects, in partnership with public and private housing actors in the Ile de France but also in neighbouring departments.</p> <p>3. Civic accommodation</p> <p>In 2017, the Government launched an experiment aimed at developing projects for the reception of refugees from private individuals or co-location between refugees (mainly isolated) and French citizens for a period of 3 to 12 months. The scheme is based on a citizen's dynamic by supporting an approach that enables solidarity networks to emerge and promotes living together and cultural enrichment. It strengthens all the solutions offered to refugees who cannot directly access independent housing, with avoided costs compared to accommodation places. It is also based on the provision of professional support to relieve host families of follow-up aspects.</p> <p>The results of this experiment were very positive. Between 2017 and 2018, 650 refugees were accommodated, accompanied by 11 associations in 40 departments. The majority of the refugees benefiting from this scheme embarked on a social and professional background at the end of this reception period. They have had access to suitable housing solutions, made considerable progress in their mastery of the French language and their knowledge of French culture. The programme has also helped to strengthen the links between refugees and French society and to change views on the issue of the reception of refugees.</p> <p>In terms of efficiency in terms of public policy, in 2019 the Dihal launched a call for solidarity cohabits. This scheme was subject to an external evaluation by the CMI Strategies consultancy in November 2020, which highlights its high added value: responsiveness to an unmet need for accommodation, a non-institutional framework that promotes the integration and confidence of the BPI, positive indicators of access to employment in housing and French language.</p> <p>4. The Accommodation Orientation Programme (HOPE)</p> |
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| | | <p>The HOPE programme aims to train job seekers with international protection in occupations under tension while at the same time relieving the CADA.</p> <p>This programme provides refugees with temporary accommodation in one of the AFPA training centres and social, legal, medical and housing search support enabling them to start their integration path in the medium term (French learning, finding a job, opening up entitlements) and thus accessing permanent housing.</p> <p>After the 6 months of training, refugees leave the training centre of the National Agency for Vocational Training for Adults (AFPA). They are accompanied in their search for housing by the social workers who followed them throughout the duration of the programme. In most cases, they are directed towards social housing or suitable housing (social residence).</p> <p>In 2020, 84 % of programme participants had accommodation at the end of their journey (10 % before the end of the trip), compared to 65 % in 2018.</p> <p>5. Rental intermediation</p> <p>Some associations (e.g. Refugee Insertion) rent live apartments from private owners as an intermediary between the person and the owner, in the form of a “rolling lease for one year” in the private park. The lease is a general lease with conditions governing the lease. During this year, the association undertakes to accompany the person. At the end of one year, the lease “slides”, i.e. the sub-tenant signs a regular lease with the landlord and becomes the direct tenant.</p> <p>Example in the context of rental intermediation, Insertion Refugiés:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes access to housing by supporting each approach related to entering the premises: furniture, opening of meters, change of address, request for financial assistance if necessary, entitlement to housing, etc. • Promotes retention in the dwelling while securing the owner’s rental risk; • Assistance with the technical management of housing and advises on the maintenance of the housing; • Supports the daily life of housing and the treatment of rental difficulties; • Accompanies budgetary management and monitors the payment of rent and charges; |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the lease by ensuring that the conditions are favourable; • Directs the relevant partners as needed: administrative procedures, health, employment and training, assistance in job search, etc.; • Search for partners who can continue social monitoring if necessary during the lease leases. <p>During the first two months, weekly visits to the dwelling are carried out to ensure that the accommodation is properly settled. Then, depending on the person's autonomy, the visits may then be spaced up. Meetings with the landlord and the tenant will be organised to provide a regular update on ownership of the accommodation. At the end of the year, when the lease changes, if the person is not sufficiently independent to remain in the dwelling, the support may be extended by a further 6 months. The "rolling lease" sub-letting is a very suitable solution for families that have already started their integration process and which seem to be engaged in a positive dynamic. The period of subletting allows them to benefit from social support and to gradually achieve the transition to autonomy.</p> |
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7.

1 ProR, Regional Platform for Refugee Guidance in New Aquitaine

ProR, led by the SGAR in connection with the Infodroits association launched in October 2020 at the request of the prefect of the Nouvelle Aquitaine region, with the main objective of increasing the fluidity of DNA parks.

Info droits has an agreement with SGAR, financed 2/3 by SGAR on P 104, 1/3 by DRETTTS on P177, 147 (city policy on legal permanence tasks) and 163 (AAP Poverty on training issues).

This platform was created in October 2020 as follows: on the one hand, the existence of housing needs for refugees with an undue presence in accommodation facilities and, on the other hand, a supply of housing and vocational integration programmes has emerged as a result of the increase in dedicated appropriations. This platform for coordination, access to rights and housing, which is an operational link at regional level, is responsible for matching needs and solutions. Led by the Secretary-General for Regional

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| | | | <p>Affairs (SGAR), his mission is to propose global pathway solutions: accommodation and training (ideally paid) or employment (longer than six months). A parallel mission of the platform is the training of social workers on access to rights and (social) housing.</p> <p>2 territorial Host and Integration Contracts CTAI</p> <p>The territorial reception and integration contracts (CTAI) are signed jointly by the prefectures and voluntary local authorities in order to meet the needs of BPI people and newcomers identified by means of a shared initial diagnosis, in particular as regards access to housing.</p> <p>The instruction of 25 January 2022 from the Minister for the Interior and the Minister Delegate to the Minister for the Interior, responsible for citizenship, makes it compulsory to mobilise the powers of local authorities in access to 'housing' where the latter is competent.</p> <p>Furthermore, the instruction of 8 February 2023 states that each contract (both existing and new) must cover at least two areas of integration, including 'access to housing, in so far as the signatory authority or inter-municipal authority is competent in this area'. In this context, the signatory parties are called upon to ensure that the CTAI and the other contracts involving the State and local authorities, such as 'Housing First', are properly linked. It is one of the ambitions of the Lyon CTAI that was initially set up in order to speed up the 'Housing First' programme: places in the social park are reserved for the refugee public, with the aim of reaching 60 accessions per year in the social park. This contract also opens up discussions on new projects facilitating access to housing for people leaving CADA.</p> <p>3. Task of integrating French refugees</p> <p>The Prefecture of the Ile-de-France region, for which the relocation of refugees is a priority, given the high number of beneficiaries unduly accommodated in the DNA (more than 10 %), entrusted the GIP HIS with a mission to integrate French refugees, which takes the form of three actions: diagnosis of the situation of refugees hosted in DNA, supporting them in housing and training DNA social workers in accessing housing.</p> |
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| | | <p>As of 30 September 2020, the GIP had carried out the administrative and socio-professional diagnosis of approximately 3 700 beneficiaries of international protection (BPI), accompanied by more than 1 000 BPI to housing (with one third positive exits to housing) and formed over 120 social workers</p> <p>8. YES</p> <p>within the framework of the PNLR, the departmental coordinator has a central role in this system: it identifies the dwellings eligible for the national platform and the local structures (association or CCAS) responsible for providing social support to people rehoused in mobility.</p> <p>In order to ensure continuity in the integration pathway for refugees rehoused in geographical mobility, housing returned to the platform must necessarily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Be located in municipalities served by public transport, have adequate facilities and be accessible to the main public services (Pôle Emploi, CAF, health services, OFII courses, schools, etc.) — Be furnished and equipped by the association operator before the household arrives (the associative operators will be responsible for equipping the accommodation with a view to welcoming households and anticipating the opening of meters (fluids)) — Be located in an area less tense in terms of housing supply <p>The support must be adapted to the situation of the household and may therefore vary in intensity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the arrival (relay to social security, change of address to the various social and family benefit institutions, emergency payment in the event of temporary interruption due to the transfer/opening of social entitlements; where appropriate, anticipate the schooling of children; where appropriate, anticipate links with the care structures of the sector) • Support in administrative procedures (residence permits, bank account, access to health care, all local social organisations (prefecture, city hall, CAF, employment centre, lessor's premises, bank, school, etc.); • Support in housing (opening up of rights linked to housing (APL rights, home help, etc.); underwriting of housing contracts (fluids, insurance, etc.). |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for socio-professional integration procedures • Organise the end of the support (organise it with the general law in case of identified needs; Ensure that the household's situation in the dwelling is permanent (tenant in respect of his dwelling)). <p>9. Yes</p> <p>AMIF is often used for housing IPOs, with the exception of projects funded by the 177 programme (Hosting, pathways to housing and inclusion of vulnerable people) which are not AMIF funded.</p> <p>10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AGIR programme (co-financed by the EU – AMIF fund) <p>The DGEF, in conjunction with DIAIR, the General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP) and DIHAL is deploying the AGIR programme (Global and individualised support for refugees) to systematise support towards employment and housing for the BPI. It consists of a departmental one-stop-shop for the integration of refugees to ensure a seamless integration pathway for refugees. This support is offered for 24 months and enables everyone to facilitate access to rights (residence rights, social and family benefits, access to health, particularly mental health, support for parenthood, access to a bank account, exchange of driving licences, etc.), to be accompanied to housing adapted to their personal and family circumstances, and to employment and training.</p> <p>The operator offers support tailored to the needs of the household by organising regular interviews within the structure, at his or her place of life (accommodation, temporary accommodation) or in another place (day-care, CCAS, SPADA, etc.). During the first interview, the latter must make a diagnosis of access to housing with the household, draw up the housing access project with the household, accompany the household in finding accommodation, help settle in the dwelling, help keep in the dwelling.</p> <p>Support starts without waiting for the effective opening of rights and aims to encourage successful exits from accommodation and temporary accommodation facilities and restore fluidity to the entire</p> |
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accommodation facility; ensure access to and sustainable maintenance of households in their places of life and in their environment; preventing evictions of tenants.

The ultimate goal is the autonomy of the household in their sustainable housing. Where the household is oriented towards a temporary or accommodation solution, the operator AGIR must continue to support the household until it is permanently and autonomously rehoused in the public or private park.

The household is considered self-contained in the dwelling when it is able to comply with the rules of community living and maintain its dwelling; pay rent and charges; to carry out on a regular basis the administrative procedures enabling him to obtain the assistance to which he is entitled, knows and defends his rights as an occupant and to integrate himself permanently in his home and in his environment;

- The resettlement programme (funded by the EU, AMIF fund)

The resettlement programme managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) allowing refugees who have fled their country of origin to reach French territory in a lawful and secure manner, is co-piloted in France by the DGEF, DIAIR and DIHAL. Between 2015 and 2020, more than 15 000 refugees benefited from the resettlement programme. France has pledged to resettle 10 400 out of the 2020-2021 and 5000 refugees in 2022. In 2020, France hosted 1340 resettled refugees, 1935 in 2021 and 3200 in 2022 1

Refugees hosted by means of resettlement benefit from a one-year global support provided by one of the operators selected in response to calls for projects launched by the State.

The Resettlement Programme is part of the AMIF Solidarity Specific Objective and is fully financed from its lump sum appropriations. Under the 2023 resettlement programme, support projects for persons hosted under these programmes are financed by European funds from the AMIF, which are delegated on the basis of an annual lump sum of EUR 7 000 per person covered by the scheme.

The care of refugees resettled on arrival in France is provided by an operator who organises access to permanent housing and comprehensive support for 12 months to enable them to integrate into their host territories on a long-term basis.


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| | | <p>The prefectures are responsible for designating a 'resettlement correspondent' and launching a call for projects in each region and department in order to identify the voluntary structures (public or private bodies) for the care of these persons. A decision putting local actors at the forefront, the aim being, as for asylum seekers, to 'distribute' refugees outside major cities where the housing market is more tense. After the phase of allocation of refugee households to the decentralised service, the GIP HIS continues to provide technical support to the regional coordinator by recording and consolidating data on the monitoring of the resettled public, in particular as regards access to independent housing. To this end, the GIP-HIS is specifically called upon to alert the regional coordinator of the lack of identified housing solutions for refugees with a sufficiently early arrival date to enable the decentralised services to identify temporary accommodation solutions to be mobilised.</p> <p>During 2022, the GIP HIS followed the arrivals of 3 047 people to 76 departments in metropolitan France. 64 % of those hosted in 2022 immediately accessed permanent housing, compared with 36 % passing through a programme-specific accommodation phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reloref (Refugee Employment and Housing Network) project is supported by the European Union (Asylum Migration and Integration Fund) and the Ministry of Interior and Overseas Territories <p>The Network for Employment and Housing of Refugees (RELOREF) is a national project working to raise the skills of integration actors and promote networking in support of beneficiaries of international protection (BPI). It now acts as a resource centre for social workers and produces different resources and benefits.</p> <p>11. see above the external evaluation of the joint housing system in 2020</p> <p>12. to be completed later on</p> |
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|  | EMN NCP Germ any | Yes | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>2. Accommodation of the applicants or beneficiaries of international protection in Germany is dealt by the federal states. There are no statistics available in the sense of the question. The distribution among the municipalities does not show how the accommodation is provided, e.g. whether persons are accommodated in municipal or self-rented accommodation, or how many persons move to self-selected accommodation after being accommodated in municipal housing.</p> <p>Persons who are entitled to international protection in Germany are entitled to 'Bürgergeld' (citizen's income) or benefits under the German Social Code (Book XII), if they are unable to support themselves through gainful employment or property. The entitlement to benefits depends on the residence status, as does the obligation to stay in a communal temporary accommodation (e.g. shared accommodation). No statistics are kept on the type of accommodation in which recognised beneficiaries of protection with an appropriate residence permit live. However, it is true that people who have been granted international protection are no longer obliged to live in temporary accommodation and can theoretically apply for independent housing.</p> <p>To give an example, the Brandenburg State Office for Social Affairs and Provision keeps so-called occupancy statistics, which show how many people who are no longer obliged to live in shared accommodation are nevertheless accommodated in such facilities as so-called 'false occupants'. Between 2017 and 2021, the proportion of people from other legal groups in these facilities nationwide fell steadily to around 12%. With the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 and the rapid transition of Ukrainian refugees to 'Bürgergeld' or social benefits, the proportion in facilities increased again because Ukrainian refugees cannot always rent their own flat quickly and sometimes still live in collective accommodation. As of 31.12.2022, 5,485 persons were accommodated in municipal facilities in Brandenburg who were not obliged to do so. This corresponds to about 24.6% of total occupants.</p> |
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The distribution of persons from central to decentralised accommodation takes place in the majority of cases before international protection is granted. As an example, in Saarland in 2022, a total of 193 persons (7.79%) were relocated after recognition and 2,284 persons (92.21%) during the asylum procedure. Municipalities are responsible for accommodation after distribution. However, when providing private accommodation, care is taken to ensure that the principle of adequate housing as laid down in the German Social Code is also applied during the period in which benefits are granted under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (AsylbLG), so that no relocation is necessary at the time of recognition. Accommodation is mostly in single flats, in some cases in shared or transitional accommodation. In some cases, single persons are accommodated in shared flats with several other persons. However, the statistics do not record the type of accommodation provided in each case.

There are no statistical evaluations, surveys or similar available on the subject of barriers/challenges in accessing autonomous housing. The following information is based on the numerous exchanges with the municipal housing authorities, landlords/housing cooperatives, migration social work bureaus (named First of all, it should be noted that people who have applied for international protection and are still in the ongoing procedure in Germany is in principle obliged to live in a central reception centre of the federal state according to § 47 of the Asylum Act (AsylG) - for a maximum of 18 months, for families with minor children up to 6 months. In the following, therefore, the replies refer mainly to beneficiaries of international protection, as applicants are in principle not entitled to look for accommodation on their own during the asylum procedure.

The main challenges for the beneficiaries of international protection are (1) the general housing market situation, (2) language barriers, (3) discrimination in access to the housing market and lack of trust on side of the landlord when renting property and (4) lack of information and counselling.

- The housing market is generally tight in many metropolitan areas. This is less the case in some rural areas. With Section 12a of the Residence Act, the legislature is trying to address this situation. However, urban areas are the areas/regions to which many refugees want to move, also because these are usually the places of arrival and where larger diaspora communities live. The federal state of Berlin for instance reports a significant lack of affordable housing in general. Also the federal state of Brandenburg

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experiences a general lack of availability in social housing. In an area like Brandenburg with Berlin in its centre, there is also the challenge that the social infrastructure is better in the area close to Berlin than in the remote, rural regions. In Berlin's periphery, however, there are far fewer free and affordable flats available than in the countryside, where in turn access to public transport and labour market is particularly difficult. The problems associated with the lack of housing are further exacerbated by rising construction prices and the temporary shortage of emergency accommodation (e.g. containers). The shortages in the supply and delivery of furniture and furnishings made the situation even more difficult in some federal states.

- Beneficiaries of international protection often face language barriers, which are a major obstacle to finding accommodation. There is therefore a need for support services.
- In practice, landlords (both individual landlords and housing associations) are sometimes reluctant to rent their property to people receiving social benefits; this applies not only to refugees but also to the local population. Some report on the reluctance of the landlords to rent their property to migrants because of their past negative experiences. In addition, there are several reports from the field that many private rental offers are still made to beneficiaries of protection under Directive 2001/55/EC (displaced persons from Ukraine), but not to applicants for international protection.
- There is not always sufficient capacity to provide counselling to people who have been granted international protection. Some federal states report that the high to unrealistic de-mands and a lack of initiative on the part of beneficiaries of protection, which may be explained by insufficient capacity to provide counselling to these people. In this point it should also be indicated that some landlords too expect a continuous social support as well as available social workers as contact person when renting out their property to the applicants/beneficiaries of international protection.

differently in federal states; offices that support refugees and migrants in various areas including finding housing) or own social workers of the federal states, also working in communal shelters. There is not enough data available to make generally valid statements on the transition to autonomous housing.

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| | | <p>3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social offices • Housing offices • Migration specific social support and counselling (Counselling for refugees is also very often outsourced to independent organisations and welfare associations in Germany.) <p>These might be located under the local authorities (such as districts, cities and municipalities) and the ministries of the federal states as well as their subordinate authorities. The migration counselling services, which the federal government provides in the form of staff positions in the federal states, are currently experiencing a significant reduction in positions as part of budget planning.</p> <p>There are also a number of special programmes as well as specific regulations of the federal states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Housing for Refugees” programme of the Berlin State Office for Refugee Affairs • The “Integration Management Programme” of Baden-Württemberg. With this programme the municipalities of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg are supported in their task of integrating refugees, particularly in finding subsequent accommodation. This funding makes a comprehensive, low-threshold, culturally and diversity-aware social counselling tailored to the needs of the individual possible; on all issues of everyday life, including prospects in Baden-Württemberg, with the aim of finding one's way independently in social structures. The counselling topics of integration management also include the search for accommodation. Integration management is aimed at all refugees in subsequent accommodation, i.e. regardless of their prospects of remaining in Germany, as well as displaced persons from Ukraine. • In the federal state of Brandenburg, in addition to numerous voluntary structures, the host municipalities are legally obliged to provide social support for refugees through migration social work. This includes individual integration support and assistance, support for a self-determined way of life from the outset, assistance with moving out when changing to subsequent accommodation, and support in entering into and fulfilling contractual obligations in the tenancy relationship and in |
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dealing with neighbourhood rules and conflicts. The necessary personnel and material costs are reimbursed by the Land Brandenburg. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs funds - currently until 2024 - additional integration projects in the municipalities (so-called "integration budget"), some of which are also used to help people find their own housing.

- The State Reception Act of Rhineland-Palatinate provides for the obligation to receive and accommodate. This obligation continues to exist even after international protection has been granted. The obligation of the municipalities to provide reception and accommodation under Rhineland-Palatinate law therefore also applies to persons who have already been granted international protection prior to distribution, but only locally in the area of the municipality to which the person has been distributed. In the case of a move to another municipality, only the costs of accommodation are reimbursed within the framework of the German Social Code, i.e. the person entitled to protection must make their own efforts to find housing.

In principle, people who are entitled to move out of temporary accommodation facilities (including shared accommodation) on the basis of their residence status (change from the legislative responsibility of the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act to the German Social Code), are responsible for moving out themselves.

4.

- Regular working meetings between the relevant offices/departments/administrations, including the municipal housing associations to avoid duplication of responsibilities and to create synergies.
- Roundtables on refugee assistance, addressing specific issues also besides access to housing, involving the administration (municipal level and in special cases - e.g. the 2015/2016 influx - also higher levels of administration (regional councils)), independent voluntary and welfare organisations and civil society.

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In general, there are no known fixed procedures or established structures to assist with finding housing specifically designed for this purpose.

5.

- Specific coordination on information provision activities regarding the transition to own housing with independent providers of the migration social work.
- Provision of information by social workers of the social welfare office itself; within the framework of transition management, actively seek out the aforementioned group of people and work towards their departure from the shared accommodation facilities. The social workers work closely with the staff of the local foreigners' authorities. They are involved in the process in terms of empowerment and/or support in searching and finding accommodation autonomously on the housing market. However, a timely move-out is only possible to a limited extent. Until a flat of their own is found, the persons remain in the shared accommodation or in transitional homes in some federal states, which are operated by the districts themselves.
- Some federal states support projects to make the housing market more accessible to migrants and to enable people with a permanent right of residence and an increased need for integration to acquire housing. In this context, the general principle of integration "help for self-help" applies - also from the point of view of equal treatment. One example is the project "Tenant qualification "Fit for your own flat" - Neusässer Concept" in Bavaria. As a measure to help people help themselves, this project is aimed at all those looking for housing, both local residents and those who have the right to stay. Future tenants are trained on how to behave as tenants and what rights and obligations they have under a tenancy agreement.
- There are a number of projects funded by the federal state of Berlin (or its districts) to help people participate in the housing market. The main aim is to help people understand the principles of the housing market and the possibilities offered by the social welfare system, and to accompany them,

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| | | <p>if necessary, on visits to flats and rental processes, as well as to support them when they move into their own flats.</p> <p>The federal state of Thuringia provides a total of 12.5 million euros through the Thuringian Housing Promotion Guideline to promote structural investments by housing companies to prepare currently unused decentralised housing for future accommodation, primarily for persons changing legal status under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG) and secondarily for persons under section 1 of the Thuringian Refugee Reception Act.</p> <p>6.</p> <p>7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baden-Württemberg has a three-stage reception system for refugees. After initial reception and temporary accommodation, follow-up accommodation is the responsibility of the municipalities. The aim is always to move on to independent accommodation. Within the framework of the "Housing for Refugees" funding programme, the state of Baden-Württemberg supports municipalities in the creation of housing for the purpose of municipal follow-up accommodation of refugees. The funding is limited to investment and is granted for measures that result in new, additional housing for follow-up accommodation and enable it to be used on a permanent basis. Additionally, the state strategy "Quartier 2030" (Neighbourhood Development) provides funding also for projects that have a to integration and support of refugees. Integration is not the focus of this strategy but it is a field of action. Neighbourhood development is also a way of indirectly providing access to independent housing for refugees. • In addition to the above-mentioned legal obligation to provide social workers in the municipalities, the Brandenburg Integration Commissioner's Advisory Office has been in existence since December 2019. Its task is to improve the situation of refugees and migrants in Brandenburg. It provides support in the areas of asylum, residence, benefits for asylum seekers and social law. The |
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counselling centre offers individual counselling in particularly complex cases where, for various reasons, no solution can be found locally. It mediates between the various actors and provides assistance in solving problems. In this way it also serves to strengthen the ombudsman function already exercised by the State Integration Commissioner. Possible enquiries range from issues such as asylum procedures and residence, to schooling and childcare, to social benefits and housing. Requests come from people seeking advice themselves, counselling centres, volunteers, authorities and other local actors from all over Brandenburg. In addition, some of the independent cities in Brandenburg have contractual agreements with housing associations. These provide a certain number of social housing units for the accommodation of refugees, which they can later take over after recognition of international protection by means of their own tenancy agreement.

- With the "WoFA - Housing for All" project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, the Free State of Bavaria is supporting a Bavaria-wide project that also supports people with a migration background in finding their own home and removing obstacles in the search for housing by training people with a migration background to become competent actors in the housing market, promoting the further development of landlord networks and stabilising existing tenancies.

8. The adequacy of housing is determined by the legal requirements for benefits and mainly understood in terms of costs and space. For the persons who receive social benefits (irrelevant of migration background), the intended housing offer must be submitted to the competent benefit provider (local social welfare agencies) for approval before renting. Some districts have guidelines on benefits for accommodation and heating according to the German Social Code, Books II and XII (Guideline on Accommodation and Heating Costs). Cost coverage is usually only possible for housing that is in line with regional housing costs. The adequacy values for space can vary regionally, so that a generally valid answer cannot be given. The following standard values apply to the appropriate flat size within the framework of 'Bürgergeld': 45 square metres are appropriate for one person, 60 square metres for two persons. Each additional person living in the flat can claim an additional living space of 15 sqm; however, this does not apply to children of baby age. The competent benefit authorities are responsible for the

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adequacy check. A minimum size as adequacy value for own flats is not specified - neither for refugees nor for people without migration history. The appropriateness of the housing offers submitted by the applicant is examined on the basis of the various comparison areas defined in such guidelines.

9. The NCP DE is only aware of one AMIF-funded project in the federal state of Brandenburg.

10. The project "Improving reception conditions for persons seeking protection, beneficiaries of protection and persons granted temporary protection in Brandenburg" (AMIF) aims, among other things, to improve accommodation, initial orientation and social counselling. The project is co-financed by the Ministry of Integration. In addition to the co-financing by the state, the project is co-financed by other partners. The planned total expenditure for the three-year project period is around 5.6 million euros. Among other things, regional support structures are to help accommodate refugees in decentralised housing. Moving out of shared accommodation and changing housing will also be promoted.

11.

- The Integration management Programme of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg was evaluated in the years 2018 to 2020. However, a data-based impact analysis of the integration management was not possible as planned due to partly missing and partly only conditionally evaluable data. Supplementary data collection was used to try to make up for the shortfalls, so that a data-based evaluation could be presented that came close to meeting the knowledge interests of an impact evaluation. The main findings on the residential integration of the target group of integration management (see question 2) are as follows:
 - It can be shown that the correlation between the introduction of integration management and the labour market and residential integration of the target group is slightly positive, but not statistically significant.
 - A correlation between the focus of the work of the integration managers and the labour market and housing integration of the target group cannot be established due to the chosen

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survey method. A possible reason for this could be that the issues discussed in the interviews are primarily the result of the concrete problems of the refugees and are less controlled by the integration managers.

The final report is available at

<http://www.institut-fuer-mittelstandsforschung.de/kos/WNetz?art=Project.show&id=250>.

- The strategy "Quartier 2030 - Gemeinsam.Gestalten." (Neighbourhood Development) of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg was evaluated in 2021. Since 2017, the strategy has supported cities, municipalities and districts as well as civil society actors in age- and generation-appropriate neighbourhood development. The aim is to create vibrant neighbourhoods for all generations - neighbourhoods, districts and villages where people get involved, take responsibility and support each other. Neighbourhood development is to be understood holistically and goes beyond urban development measures to include participation, involvement and involvement, housing, mobility and climate, care and health, family, generations and communities, inclusion, integration and diversity, economy and local supply, and digitalisation. This includes needs-based housing and local services and advice close to home, meeting places, a sustainable social infrastructure, a health-promoting living environment and an appreciative social environment supported by civic engagement. In this context, the above-mentioned national strategy also indirectly contributes to the integration of refugees and their access to the housing market and housing.

See also: https://www.quartier2030-bw.de/medias/quartier2030-abschlussbericht-quartiersentwicklungsatlas-2021_2241a092e197d00d9e0de8551a33ff7c.pdf

- As part of the funding procedure, the provision of a technical report including statistics and numerical evidence was an obligation to prove that the funding for the WoFA project in Bavaria has

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been used for the intended purpose. From 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022, more than 690 flats were placed with 2,223 clients. During this period, 5,498 counselling cases occurred and 650 prospective tenants were trained.

- In Brandenburg, the predecessor of the current “Integration Budget” was evaluated by the administration with the following results:
 - - At the centre of the federal state's integration policy are the districts, cities and municipalities, where integration policy has played an important role especially since the high number of arriving refugees in 2015 and 2016 and now also since 2022. In order to harness the potential of immigration - not least against the backdrop of demographic change - social conditions are needed that enable people to stay, in addition to education, employment and housing opportunities. Municipal efforts to promote social cohesion must, on the one hand, be geared towards strengthening the acceptance, which is undoubtedly present, of people from different backgrounds. On the other hand, however, it is also necessary to counteract existing fears and anxieties, according to which immigration is perceived as a threat rather than an enrichment.
 - To accomplish this task, it is also necessary to provide the districts and municipalities with financial resources that go beyond the current statutory reimbursement payments from the state. With the integration allowance and the funds for social work with refugees entitled to stay, instruments have been created which enable the districts, cities and municipalities to implement integration measures at local level. The extent to which the districts, cities and municipalities succeed in creating the conditions for the successful integration of people of other origins and in creating the conditions for immigrants to remain in the respective regions in the long term will be decisive for the positive development of the Brandenburg region. This

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| | | | <p>requires comprehensive and differentiated measures at the municipal and local level, aimed in particular at the social integration and participation of immigrants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of the data collection, the municipalities surveyed had the option of classifying the projects carried out with the help of the integration lump sum in one of six areas or alternatively in the category 'other' (i.e. a total of seven categories). Overall, there is a wide variety of projects, even within municipalities. Among other things, a variety of low-threshold support approaches for integration into the training and labour market and for housing were funded. The main criticism of the funding measures is that long-term projects cannot be planned because they are limited in time. Integration is a lengthy process that cannot be completed within a few years; a longer time horizon is also necessary for municipal integration services. <p>12. With regard to the strategy "Quartier 2030 - Gemeinsam.Gestalten." of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, it is important to state that the encounters between immigrants and local population can take place, even if it initially moderated. Social proximity promotes emotional closeness and empathy on both sides. Encounters and relationships can thus be transferred to formal settings and contribute to successful business relationships.</p> <p>See also as an example here: https://www.quartier2030-bw.de/medias/mi-zivilgesellschaftliche-akteure-und-die-betreuung-gefluechteter-menschen-2016_aff842e54816e48aa21fbe3febbb02e8.pdf</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Greece | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure;</p> |

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| | | <p>Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; Please see file attached for more details on the EL's reply to question 1. clarification_to_question_1.docx</p> <p>2. According to the reply sent by IOM to SID of MoMA, the main barriers / challenges reported by beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing in Greece are the following: - General market housing situation: high cost of monthly rent and guarantee insurance, few available houses for rent -especially in the big cities-, very few available houses for rent in touristic and agricultural areas (where there are more employment opportunities for beneficiaries of international protection)*. * The abovementioned point derives from contacts made by IOM with homeowners and real estate agents, as well as with the beneficiaries of the HELIOS programme.</p> <p>3. The responsible central authority for the support of beneficiaries of international protection (BIP's) to have access to autonomous housing is MoMA, through the Secretariat General for Migration Policy and, more precisely, through SID. Supporting the access to autonomous housing of the overall population falls under the competence also of the Ministry for Social Cohesion and Family, as well as through the Organization of Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity- OPEKA (includes benefits for third country nationals and beneficiaries of international protection) and under the competences of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (through the Public Employment Service- DYPA). Last, at the regional and local level, regional and local authorities may also take relevant initiatives and proceed to the design and the implementation of projects aiming at the access to autonomous housing.</p> <p>4.</p> |
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Until now, there are no more than one (central) authority (beyond the Ministry of Migration and Asylum) implementing project(s) to support the access of beneficiaries of international protection in particular to autonomous housing. Cooperation and coordination between different (central) authorities (such as the Ministry for Social Cohesion and Family and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security mentioned above) or between central, regional or/and local authorities could possibly be achieved through various types of documents and mechanisms, such as Programmatic Agreements, Memoranda of Cooperation, Inter-Ministerial Committees etc.

5.

The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (established through ar. 5 of PD 77/2023, GG A' 130, former Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors of ar. 39 of PD 106/2020, OGG' A' 106) is the competent authority for the protection of unaccompanied and separated minors, among other vulnerable third country nationals or stateless persons, in Greece. In this context and pending the enhanced establishment plan covering the rest vulnerabilities, the General Secretariat designs and implements policies and actions to ensure the protection and overall well-being of unaccompanied minors, coordinates the actions of other competent authorities or actors, designs and monitors the National strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied minors in Greece, and is responsible for the accommodation, guardianship, quality service provision and integration of UAMs. With regards to the accommodation framework for unaccompanied minors, apart from emergency accommodation, it consists of long-term accommodation facilities such as accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors and supervised apartments of semi-independent living (SIL apartments) for unaccompanied minors over sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) years of age.

The latter constitutes an alternative form of housing, that significantly enhances integration, contributes to the deinstitutionalization of the child protection framework, and eases the transition to autonomous housing. According to their Standard Operating Procedures, established under the Ministerial Decision No 138529/17.03.2023 (OGG B' 1615), unaccompanied minors over 16 years of age are entitled to

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accommodation and support services under the scope of their gradual independence focusing on empowerment, building resilience, strengthening self-efficiency, abilities, and skills. In fact, the aforementioned ministerial decision provides for the minor's gradual departure process from the apartment toward the transition to autonomy. This process, apart from the participation of the minor, entails detailed planning of actions and the time frame required for the smooth transition to adult life, provision of updated information regarding the availability and access of supportive services beyond the protection framework for UAMs, connection to employability support services, proper closure and handover of the minor's casefile concerning representation, legal status, vulnerability assessment, health issues, education or vocational training, and referral to the supportive framework for the autonomous living of adults, in case of availability and in case the prerequisites in terms of admissibility are met.

Moreover, and according to the Social Integration Directorate, in the case of Greece, support for the access to autonomous housing (in apartments rented on their name) is provided to beneficiaries of international and temporary protection in the framework of the programme "HELIOS", along with other provided services (integration courses, employability support, integration monitoring and sensitization of the host community). The accommodation support includes contributions to rental and move-in costs, but also support to the beneficiaries while looking for an apartment, such as: accommodation workshops; access to the HELIOS apartment pool (a database with available apartments); interpretation and translation support (by intercultural mediators) for the issuance of an AFM number/passkey and for the opening of a bank account (both necessary to rent an apartment); interpretation and translation support during the initial contact with a property owner/real estate agent and during house visits; and matchmaking sessions (for the beneficiaries looking for a roommate). All beneficiaries are entitled to receive a total of twelve (12) months of rental subsidies.

6.

Regarding the national level policies in Greece, according to the latest "National Integration Strategy for third country nationals" (announced on-line in 2021 by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, see:


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| | | | <p>https://migration.gov.gr/en/migration-policy/integration/politiki-entaxis-seethniko-epipedo/ethniki-stratigiki/), one of the –several goals and– objectives for the Social Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection is to “Create housing opportunities” (Objective 5), through Action 1 “Linking housing opportunities to seasonal employment opportunities in tourism sector or agricultural sector” and Action 2 “Creating incentives for homeowners to lease real estate to beneficiaries of international protection” (p. 14). Regarding the national level measures, please see answer to question no. 5 and the detailed description of the HELIOS programme.</p> <p>7. -</p> <p>8. According to the reply sent by IOM to SID of MoMA, in the framework of the HELIOS programme, special attention is being given to the verification of the adequacy of the houses rented by the beneficiaries. Criteria for the adequacy of the houses are the existence of the following: title of ownership; an energy performance certificate; a certificate of the suitability of the electrical system; a shower/tub; hot water; toilet; adequate number of sockets, electrical connection; adequate hygiene standards (fresh air, natural ventilation, natural light); accessibility to services; access for persons with limited mobility; and also the ratio between the size (sqft) and the number of occupants. The adequacy is evaluated in two stages. Firstly, the project’s staff finds houses which could be rented to the beneficiaries and visits some of those houses, in order to evaluate their adequacy, according to the abovementioned criteria. Then, the Apartment Verification Department verifies the adequacy of all the houses, in person or -usually- through videocalls.</p> <p>9.</p> |
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| | | | <p>As already mentioned, the HELIOS programme is being implemented since June 2019, initially funded by the EMAS of AMIF (until the end of 2021 then through the National Budget), while it is planned to be integrated and funded by the ESF+ in the framework of the current programming period 2021-2027.</p> <p>10. The example given is the HELIOS programme.</p> <p>11. In the framework of the implementation of the HELIOS programme, IOM publishes on a monthly basis informational factsheets including various basic elements about the programme (see https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/), which however constitute rather a basic monitoring than a systematic evaluation of the programme.</p> <p>12. Given the fact that a report about the programme HELIOS is expected in 2024, it will be soon possible to proceed to such an assessment.</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Ireland | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing;</p> <p>2. Re data above: Beneficiaries: 733 people with Status progressed from IPAS accommodation into the community in 2022.[1]</p> <p><u>Accommodation crisis</u></p> |

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The overriding challenge and primary barrier for beneficiaries of international protection accessing autonomous housing in Ireland is the prevailing accommodation crisis in Ireland,[1] with a lack of available and affordable accommodation.[2]

Housing supply is a major challenge, with Ireland currently experiencing a situation where there is significantly more demand for housing than supply, resulting in large increases in rent (with national average standardised rents almost doubling 2014-2023)[3] and house prices now higher than their peak during the 2007 boom (having increased by 129.5% since their lowest point in 2013).[4] During Q1 2023, there were fewer than 1,000 properties available to rent nationwide, representing one of the lowest totals seen in Ireland since 2005.[5] There is also insufficient supply of social housing, with 22.3% of households on social housing lists waiting for more than 7 years in 2022.[6] This has led to large increases in homelessness, with a 20% increase year-on-year in the number of individuals accessing emergency accommodation. The Monthly Homeless Report for March 2023[7] shows that 11,988 individuals accessed emergency accommodation, with 5,823 single adults and 1,639 families accessing emergency accommodation in the month.

These mainstream problems are a challenge to many people trying to access housing in Ireland, but lead to particular challenges for beneficiaries of international protection, who face additional barriers (see below) and must compete for housing in a highly competitive market. The Irish Refugee Council described the private rental market as 'currently defunct' for this population.[8]

This barrier may be getting worse rather than better, with UNHCR Ireland noting that higher than anticipated inward migration in 2022 means that housing need and demand assessments would have been based on lower migration figures than actually occurred.[9] The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Ireland also noted a failure to meet national social housing targets.[10]

Adequacy of supports

While there are significant government programmes and supports to help people to access housing (see question 6 below), there are some challenges around the adequacy of these supports in the current housing

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market. NGOs consulted have highlighted that the mainstream Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and Homeless HAP (see question 6 for details) are often lower than market rents, which mean persons transitioning from Irish reception centres (Direct Provision) have to fund the shortfall.[11] In March 2023, Simon Communities (an NGO) found that just 29 properties were available to rent across the main urban centres and suburbs within HAP limits, a 97% decrease from two years earlier, when there were 1,055.[12]

Psychological issues

Difficulties in accessing autonomous housing has resulted in international protection beneficiaries remaining in IPAS centres for months or years.[13] Extensive research has found that refugees have a high prevalence of psychological issues due to traumatic experiences and post-migration stressors such as insecure residency.[14] In addition, living in the Direct Provision system has negative psychological impacts, reducing personal autonomy and self-esteem,[15] and increasing dependency[16] which can then be a further challenge for those trying to find autonomous housing.

The 'local connection' test

There are in theory extensive social housing supports that beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to (see question 6), provided by local authorities. However, it is only possible to apply to one local authority for these supports. This should be the local authority in which the household 'normally resides' or with which the individual or family has a 'local connection'. If they do not have a local connection in the area they want to apply, it is at the discretion of the local authority to conduct a social housing assessment.[17] The application of this 'local connection' test by some local authorities has been identified as a challenge for those seeking to transition out of IPAS accommodation centres.[18]

Discrimination

Discrimination has been identified as a barrier to accessing autonomous housing in Ireland. Although the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 prohibits discrimination of prospective tenants based on their welfare status, research indicates that discrimination based on welfare status (in receipt of Housing

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Assistance Payments (HAP)) remains an issue .[19] It has been found that beneficiaries of international protection may also experience discrimination for multiple reasons, such as their race, nationality, employment status, as private and social housing renters, and legal status.[20] Beneficiaries of international protection who have access to HAP have also been found to be at risk of discrimination in accessing emergency homeless accommodation.[21]

Language barriers, access to information, social networks

Those seeking to transition from IPAS accommodation may face language difficulties[22] which can lead to challenges in advocating for themselves in regards to their housing rights as well, communication barriers in interactions with the social welfare system as well as landlords or agencies, which can create difficulties in accessing autonomous housing.[23]

Other challenges which can serve to limit access to autonomous housing include a lack of knowledge and understanding about local housing markets[24] and the social protection system.[25] A lack of information provision for those living in IPAS accommodation has also been reported by NGOs.[26] Limited social networks in the country also means that international protection beneficiaries have less access to housing information.[27] A lack of access to IT (computers, internet) and the relevant skills also make it difficult for beneficiaries to find housing, which are often advertised through online databases, which NGOs have commented are not optimised for translation.[28] Additionally, while there are programmes of targeted supports to help people to transition from Direct Provision and there is increasing funding going into this (see question 5), research has found that supports can be limited and inconsistent, with discrepancies depending on geographical location, although DCEDIY contracting of two NGOs to provide supports may reduce these discrepancies (see below for further information).[29]

Access to the labour market

Beneficiaries residing in IPAS accommodation centres may face challenges accessing the labour market for example, due to the remoteness of certain reception centres, which become barriers to accessing autonomous housing, in particular when HAP supports need to be topped up to access housing (see above).[30]

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NGO capacity

The limited surge capacity among many NGOs to provide supports emerged as a challenge^[31] during 2022 with the arrival of 67,000 Ukrainians and a large increase in arrivals of other international protection applicants to Ireland.^[32] This, in addition to the accommodation crisis and the scale of people trying to transition out of Direct Provision, has led to major challenges with NGO capacity to provide supports.^[33] Challenges with housing supply also impact this, with some NGOs deeming support transitioning into independent accommodation a poor use of resources because of very poor outcomes.^[34] These are major challenges because NGOs are the principal providers of targeted supports (see question 5 below).

Remaining in autonomous housing

One NGO consulted indicated challenges around increased risks of homelessness for beneficiaries of international protection once they enter into autonomous housing, as they risk losing it for various reasons.^[35]

^[1] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023; comments from Crosscare Refugee Service, October 2023.

^[2] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023.

^[3] Residential Tenancies Board (2021) 'The RTB Rent Index Q3 2021'; Residential Tenancies Board (2023) 'Rent Index Q1 2023'.

^[4] CSO (2023) 'Residential Property Price Index January 2023' (CSO statistical publication)

^[5] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2023) 'March 2023 Monthly Homeless Report and Homeless Quarterly Progress Report Quarter 1 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/255729/e97d8fe8-6446-...>

^[6] <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/862a4-summary-of-social-housing-assess...>

^[7] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2023) 'March 2023 Monthly Homeless Report and Homeless Quarterly Progress Report Quarter 1 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/255729/e97d8fe8-6446-...>

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[8] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

[9] Comment from UNHCR Ireland, October 2023; The assumptions for net international migration were of +30,000 in 2020 and estimations of remaining constant thereafter (Bergin and Garcia-Rodriguez, 2020, p. 18. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/111492/e624f191-92e2-4ac1-9aa1-272b48552094.pdf>). However, apart from 2021, the flows were significantly higher at 77600 to April 2023, and 51700 to April 2022.

[10] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023.

[11] David Carroll cited in K. Holland (2022) 'Almost 4,000 people trapped in direct provision due to housing crisis' (Irish Times, 15 July) ; Hearne, R. and M. MURPHY (2017). Investing in the right to a home: Housing, HAPs and hubs, Maynooth, Ireland, Maynooth University.

[12] Simon Communities of Ireland (2023). Locked Out of the Market. Available at: <https://www.simon.ie/e-publication/locked-out-of-the-market-march-2023/>

[13] See Murphy, K. and A. Sheridan (2022) 'Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2021: Ireland' p. 52 for statistics.

[14] See O'Connell, M., R. Duffy & N. Crumlish (2016) 'Refugees, the asylum system and mental healthcare in Ireland' BJPsych Int 13(2): 35-37; Stewart, R. (2006) 'The Mental Health Promotion Needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A Qualitative Study in Direct Provision Centres and Private Accommodation in Galway City', available at www.lenus.ie

[15] Crosscare Refugee Service (2018). Submission to the Minister for Justice and Equality; Foreman, M. and M. Ní Raghallaigh (2015) 'Submission to the Working Group on the Protection System', available at www.researchrepository.ucd.ie; College of Psychiatrists of Ireland (2017) 'The Mental Health Service Requirements in Ireland for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants from Conflict Zones' (Position Paper EAP/01/17); Stewart, R. (2006) 'The Mental Health Promotion Needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A Qualitative Study in Direct Provision Centres and Private Accommodation in Galway City', available at www.lenus.ie.

[16] Ní Raghallaigh, M., M. Foreman, M. Feeley, S. Moyo, G.W. Mendes, and C. Bairéad. (2016). Transition: from Direct Provision to life in the community. Irish Refugee Council.

[17] S.I. No. 84/2011 - Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 s.5

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[18] Interview with the Local Government Management Authority, September 2023

[19] Bieri, C. (forthcoming). Navigating the Transition from Direct Provision to Housing: A Qualitative Study of Refugees' Housing Journeys in Ireland. Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland). School of Social Work and Social Policy; Finn, M. and P. Mayock (2021). 'The housing experiences of immigrants in a 'new immigrant gateway': an exploration of process in an era of 'superdiversity', International Journal of Housing Policy, 1-20.; Hearne, R. and M. MURPHY (2017). Investing in the right to a home: Housing, HAPs and hubs, Maynooth, Ireland, Maynooth University.

(Hearne and Murphy, 2017, Finn and Mayock, 2021, Hearne and Murphy, 2018)

[20] McGinnity, F., I. Privalko, H. Russell, S. Curristan, A. Stapleton, A., and J. Laurence (2022). Origin and integration: Housing and family among migrants in the 2016 Irish Census. (Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Research Series); Finn, F. (2015). 'Immigrants in 'investment houses' : A qualitative study of immigrant life in the private rented sector in a rural Irish town'. Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland). School of Social Work and Social Policy.

[21] IHREC (2019). 'Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Ireland's Combined 5th to 9th Report'. Dublin: IHREC.

[22] Crosscare Refugee Service (2018). Submission to the Minister for Justice and Equality.

[23] Comments from Doras, September 2023.

[24] McGinnity, F., I. Privalko, H. Russell, S. Curristan, A. Stapleton, A., and J. Laurence (2022). Origin and integration: Housing and family among migrants in the 2016 Irish Census. (Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Research Series).

[25] Crosscare Refugee Service (2018). Submission to the Minister for Justice and Equality.

[26] Crosscare Refugee Service (2018). Submission to the Minister for Justice and Equality.

[27] Finn, M. and P. Mayock (2021). 'The housing experiences of immigrants in a 'new immigrant gateway': an exploration of process in an era of 'superdiversity', International Journal of Housing Policy, 1-20.

[28] Comments from Doras, September 2023.

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[29] Ní Raghallaigh, M., M. Foreman, M. Feeley, S. Moyo, G.W. Mendes, and C. Bairéad. (2016). Transition: from Direct Provision to life in the community. Irish Refugee Council; comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023; comments from DCEDIY, October 2023.

[30] Doras (2021). Getting Right to Work - Access to Employment and Decent Work for International Protection Applicants in Ireland. Doras; McGinnity, F. I. Privalo, E. Fahey, S. Enright and D. O'Brien. 2020. Origin and Integration: A Study of Migrants in the 2016 Irish Census; O'Connell, M., R. Duffy, and N. Crumlish (2016). Refugees, the asylum system and mental healthcare in Ireland. BJPsych international, 13, 35-37; Bieri, C. (forthcoming). Navigating the Transition from Direct Provision to Housing: A Qualitative Study of Refugees' Housing Journeys in Ireland. Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland). School of Social Work and Social Policy.

[31] LGMA interview, September 2023.

[32] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023.

[33] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

[34] Comments from Crosscare Refugee Service, October 2023.

[35] Comments from Crosscare Refugee Service, October 2023.

[1] Correspondence with DCEDIY, September 2023.

3.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) is responsible for housing applicants for international protection and refugee integration, meaning that they play a crucial role in the transition of beneficiaries to autonomous housing. They also are the main funder of integration programmes/projects by NGOs to provide supports to access autonomous housing. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) is responsible for housing planning and delivery, and therefore also has a role in defining overall housing policy, strategy and governance.

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Local authorities also play a key role, as they administer social housing and housing support programmes, including HAP and Homeless HAP (see question 6).[1]

NGOs or community groups often provide both formal and informal supports to beneficiaries to access autonomous housing, in particular information provision and support with applications (see below for more details). During the relevant period, DePaul Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust had contracts for services specifically aimed at assisting persons with status/permission to remain to transition from IPAS accommodation into independent living, funded by DCEDIY.[2]

[1] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023.

[2] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023; Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

4.

Local authorities are primarily responsible for the provision of social housing to international protection beneficiaries who are eligible for social housing (based on income limits). However, DCEDIY is responsible for the integration of migrants in general as well as the reception and integration of international protection applicants and beneficiaries, and therefore provide additional support for access to autonomous housing (see question 5 below). There is one person seconded to DCEDIY from a local authority to support with the coordination of this work.[1]

In addition, DCEDIY is now funding four positions in each local authority to coordinate the integration of migrants, including international protection beneficiaries.[2]

NGOs who are providing support (many funded by DCEDIY) work independently of local authorities but usually coordinate with local authorities to ensure that they are not competing for the same properties, for example.[3]

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- There are fora that enable the coordination between different local authorities on this issue, for example:
- The Local Government Management Authority (LGMA) has a unit that supports the coordination of social housing delivery across local authorities;
 - The LGMA Ukrainian/migrant unit has a single point of contact in each local authority;
 - There are monthly meetings of the Chief Executives of the 31 local authorities, with 7 functional committees, some of which are relevant to the provision of autonomous housing;
 - Approved Housing Body Forum – this forum is run by the Housing Agency (a government body working with the Department of Housing) and has two representatives from local authorities;
 - The Chair of the County and City Management Association meets with the Department of Housing and DCEDIY on a weekly basis;[4]
 - Mechanisms in place to allow local authorities to coordinate on the provision of HAP properties;[5]
 - DCEDIY communicates the numbers of people granted status to local authorities.[6]

[1] LGMA interview, September 2023.

[2] LGMA interview, September 2023.

[3] LGMA interview, September 2023.

[4] LGMA interview, September 2023

[5] Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2017) 'Inter-Authority Movement of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme Applicants' (Circular: housing 15/2017)

[6] LGMA interview, September 2023.

5.

Ireland generally takes a mainstreaming approach towards migrant integration, meaning that beneficiaries of international protection can access mainstream housing support services (see question 6 below).

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However, considering the additional barriers to access faced by beneficiaries of international protection (see question 2 above), programmes have been put in place to support their transition to autonomous housing.

DCEDIY has a specific team in the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) who work in collaboration with Depaul Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust (both homelessness NGOs), officials in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the County and City Management Association (which is an association of the chief executives of the county and city councils) to collectively support residents with status, or a permission to remain, to access housing options.[1] Depaul and the Peter McVerry Trust have case workers who provide services that include:

- Housing assessment to identify needs and requirements;
- Assistance with registering with relevant Local Authority for social housing supports;
- Identifying suitable properties;
- Arranging, attending and following up with property viewings when required;
- Practical assistance, i.e., assisting with the start of tenancy agreements, utilities, setting up direct debits/standing orders.[2]

Once people receive their status, IPAS writes to them with the contact details of their support worker in either Depaul or the Peter McVerry Trust (depending on their geographic location).[3] In addition to assisting with housing applications, both DePaul Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust support the person's integration into the community as fully as possible. This includes providing information about vocational and training courses, such as suitability, locations and eligibility, CV preparation and aid with medical issues, should they arise.[4]

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Ireland also run the 'Connecting Communities' project that aims to enhance the long-term integration prospects of persons granted status or permission to remain who are

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trying to exit IPAS accommodation - and reduce the associated impacts of social exclusion – through the provision of comprehensive integration supports (immigration, welfare, employment, psychosocial and links to the community) throughout the transition process and after they move into communities nationwide. This project is designed to complement the projects by Depaul and Peter McVerry Trust mentioned above.[5]
Activities delivered included:

1. Outreach: Coordination of dedicated Transition Clinics nationwide – both onsite and remote - to identify and support persons granted status/permission to remain seeking to exit IPAS accommodation.
2. Transition: Comprehensive assessment and provision of supports to meet the immigration, welfare, employment, psychosocial and community links needs of project participants in liaison with designated housing bodies supporting transition to private accommodation.
3. Integration: Provision of wraparound integration supports to persons granted status/permission to remain after they move into communities nationwide and facilitated links to local services, amenities, and communities to foster long term integration and independent living.

The Connecting Communities Project is running from December 2020 - November 2023 and was awarded funding as part of the DCEDIY 2020 National Integration Funding (NIF) Open Call. The human resource funded was 1 support worker 3 days a week.

To free up space in reception centres for new arrivals, those with status for the greatest length of time have recently been offered a transfer to alternative emergency accommodation. As of the end of June 2023, those offered this transfer have had status for at least 18 months.[6]

In 2021, the Irish Government published the White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a New International Protection Support Service, which outlined a new model for reception of international protection applicants. The model was based on the principle of integration from day one and proposed ending long-term institutional accommodation for international protection applicants. Under this model, applicants would be housed in purpose-built reception centres for four months, where they would receive vulnerability

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assessments and a range of orientation and integration supports before being moved into own-door accommodation in the community. This model would likely support the transition to autonomous housing significantly, as applicants will get to experience independent living and be able to establish social networks more easily, reducing the psychological impacts of the reception system. However, the White Paper, which was due to be implemented by the end of 2024, was delayed due to the significant increase in international protection applicants that Ireland experienced in 2022 and the subsequent strain on the Department from this and arrivals from Ukraine, who they are also responsible for housing.[7] As a result, the timelines and deliverables of the White Paper were under review in 2023, to update them in line with the new context, as the Paper's objectives and deliverables were based on a much lower number of international protection applicants. The Department continues to implement parts of the paper, including the acquisition of properties for supported accommodation for vulnerable applicants, increasing state-owned accommodation capacity, the development of an integration programme, and commissioning NGOs to provide targeted supports.[8]

[1] DCEDIY (9 March 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 12133/23'. Available at: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-03-09/295/>

[2] DCEDIY (18 April 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 17589/23'. Available at: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-04-18/1260/>

[3] DCEDIY (28 June 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 31547/23'. Available at: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2023-06-28a.342>

[4] DCEDIY (7 March 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 11447/23'. Available at: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2023-03-07a.1144>

[5] UNHCR (n.d.) 'Housing Support' (Help Ireland page) <https://help.unhcr.org/ireland/where-to-seek-help/housing-support/>

[6] DCEDIY (28 June 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 31547/23'. Available at: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2023-06-28a.342>

[7] DCEDIY (18 April 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 17371/23'. Available at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-04-18/1249/>

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[8] DCEDIY (18 April 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 17371/23'. Available at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-04-18/1249/>

6.

YES (for beneficiaries)

International protection applicants who are granted international protection status or permission to remain have the same access to housing supports and services as Irish and EEA nationals.[1]

Social housing supports

Social housing support is housing provided by a local authority or an approved housing body[2] to people who are unable to afford housing from their own resources. Income limits differ depending on the local authority.[3] Local authorities are the main providers of social housing support in Ireland. Social housing supports are provided in a number of ways:

1. A rented tenancy in a property owned and managed by the local authority,
2. A rented tenancy leased (long term leasing) for 10-20 years by the local authority or approved housing body,
3. Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) where a local authority will make a monthly payment to a private landlord, subject to terms and conditions including rent limits, on a HAP tenant's behalf (with the tenant then paying a rent to the local authority, determined based on their income),
4. Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) tenancy where the local authority arranges leases with private landlords for homes,
5. A rented tenancy in homes owned and managed by an approved housing body,
6. Specific accommodation for homeless people, older people, and Travellers,
7. Grants to increase accessibility in private homes for people with disabilities and special needs.[4]

It should be noted, however, that there are often long delays in accessing social housing. In 2022, 22.3% of all households on social housing waiting lists were waiting for more than 7 years.[5] Only 38.6% of households were on the list for less than two years in 2022.[6] Social housing lists work on a queue basis, as well as based on individual local authorities' schemes of letting priorities, which are adopted and updated

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regularly by each local authority.[7] People can also apply for medical priority, although NGOs commented that meeting the criteria for approval is challenging and there are long waiting lists.[8]

A person can only apply to one local authority for social housing support. This should be the local authority in which the household 'normally resides' or with which the individual or family has a 'local connection'. If they have neither, it is at the discretion of the local authority to grant support or to conduct a social housing assessment.[9] The local connection test is based on whether:

1. A household member resided for a continuous 5-year period at any time in the area concerned, or
2. The place of employment of a household member is in the area concerned or is located within 15 kilometres of the area, or
3. A household member is in full-time education in any university, college, school, or other educational establishment in the area concerned, or
4. A household member with an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment is attending a medical or residential establishment in the area concerned that has facilities or services specifically related to such impairment, or
5. A relative of a household member resides in the area concerned and has resided there for a minimum period of 2 years.[10]

While a 2019 Department of Housing position paper indicated that households transitioning from protection accommodation do not need to prove a link to a local authority area in order to be assessed by that local authority, this clarification does not replace the legislation specifying the local connection test,[11] and stakeholders indicated that this test can mean that international protection beneficiaries are deprioritised on social housing lists.[12] However, there is a system to enable collaboration between local authorities on the provision of HAP between counties. This enables local authorities who are responsible for an individual to provide HAP for properties in another local authority area, and also enables that person to remain on the transfer list in their origin county (which is a list of those who are looking to transition from HAP into other types of social housing, e.g. housing owned by the local authority).[13]

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While international protection beneficiaries living in IPAS accommodation centres are no longer entitled to material reception conditions, in recognition of the time needed to secure alternative accommodation, the Department extends accommodation provision for a period of up to 12 months.[14]

Although persons living in IPAS accommodation are not recorded in national homelessness figures,[15] 'Homeless HAP' is available to those with status in IPAS accommodation.[16] Tools included in this are:

- Deposit
- Increased HAP limits
- Rent in advance.[17]

However, NGOs have noted that the effectiveness of these supports is limited by the severe lack of supply of rental stock.[18]

In addition, the following schemes are available to international protection beneficiaries, but are less likely to be relevant to those moving out of institutional housing:

- - - - Help to Buy scheme,
 - Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme,
 - First Home Scheme,
 - Local Authority Home Loan Scheme (low incomes),
 - Cost Rental (targeted at middle-income households with incomes above social housing limits). Rents targeted at 25% below private market rents in the area.[19]

Social welfare payments

Beneficiaries of international protection are also entitled to apply for the mainstream 'Additional Needs Payment', which is available to people on a low income or in receipt of social welfare payments.[20] This

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payment helps with an expense that cannot be paid from someone's weekly income. When someone applies for an Additional Needs Payment, the application is assessed by a Community Welfare Officer. A range of things can be covered by this payment, including deposits for private rented accommodation and bedding and cooking utensils when moving to your first home.[21] This payment is flexible, with no set rate. The amount is set based on the circumstances and needs.

[1] Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2012) 'Housing Circular 41/2012'; DCEDIY (9 March 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 12133/23'. Available at: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-03-09/295/>

[2] Approved housing bodies (AHBs) are independent, not-for-profit organisations. They provide affordable rented housing for people who cannot afford to pay private sector rents or buy their own homes. Some AHBs provide housing specifically for particular groups of people, such as older people or homeless people; see <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/local-authority-and-social...>

[3] Income limits vary between €30,000-€40,000 per year. Citizens Information (2023) 'Apply for local authority/social housing' <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/local-authority-and-social...>

[4] The Housing Agency (n.d.) 'Social Housing Support Overview', see <https://www.housingagency.ie/housing-information/social-housing-support-...>

[5] The Housing Agency (2023) 'Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2022: Key Findings'. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/862a4-summary-of-social-housing-assess...>

[6] Ibid

[7] LGMA, interview September 2023; The Housing Agency (2022) 'Housing Options: a guide to housing options available through local authorities'

[8] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

[9] S.I. No. 84/2011 - Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 s.5

[10] S.I. No. 84/2011 - Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 s.6

[11] County and City Management Association (2020) 'CCMA Submission to Advisory Group on Those with Status'. Available at www.gov.ie.

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- [12] LGMA, Interview September 2023.
 [13] Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2017) 'Inter-Authority Movement of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme Applicants' (Circular: Housing 15/2017)
 [14] Communication with DCEDIY, October 2023.
 [15] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023; Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.
 [16] Interview with LGMA, September 2023; DCEDIY (9 March 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 12133/23'. Available at: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-03-09/295/>
 [17] DCEDIY (9 March 2023) 'Response to parliamentary question 12133/23'. Available at: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-03-09/295/>
 [18] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.
 [19] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2023) 'Housing for All – Available Supports'. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5568b-housing-for-all-available-supports/>
 [20] Citizens Information (2023) 'Additional Needs Payment', see <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/social-welfare-paym...>
 [21] Ibid

7.

Several NGOs provide supports to ease the transition to autonomous housing, due to difficulties accessing mainstreaming supports. Many of these are funded or partially funded by the government. These are usually only available locally, where the NGO is based, although some have greater geographic coverage than others.

National level support: Irish Refugee Council

The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) works on housing across two areas. The main area of their housing work is casework and advocacy, providing workshops and one-to-one support for people living in IPAS or homeless accommodation. An extremely busy service, working with approximately over 250 people per

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quarter, support provided ranges from housing applications, information on HAP and tenancy finding, to homeless advocacy and support for families that arrive through family reunification. [1]
 The IRC also have a Housing programme that focuses on assisting people transitioning out of IPAS accommodation. The Housing Programme provides direct housing support and accommodation. The IRC own 17 properties which have been donated and which they sub-lease to individuals and families coming out of IPAS accommodation. The people who live in these accommodations are generally well established and would not need to attend any of the workshops (described above) or need advocacy or casework support. [2] Most people have been in these properties for four or more years. The properties were donated by congregations and tenants pay rent, so it is a self-funding project. It was intended to be transitional, but given the ongoing housing crisis, people have not been able to move out. [3] At the same time, these people receive integration supports including English language training, education and employment, to put them in a better position to move independently into the private rental market.[4]

Supports provided under this programme include:

- Weekly 'Housing Application Morning' group workshop, in which they explain the current housing situation in Ireland, help people to fill in housing application forms and to prepare the necessary documents, and assist people submitting their applications to the local authority.
- Weekly HAP/tenancy finding group workshop, in which they help individuals to understand how HAP (including homeless HAP) works, how to search for private rental accommodation, how to communicate with landlords, their rights and responsibilities as a tenant, and how to navigate reference letters.[5]
- Individual casework and support, with 631 people provided with information and advice in 2021.[6]

Regional level support

Several other NGOs work regionally to provide casework and supports for individuals transitioning out of IPAS accommodation centres, often through their existing casework support including: Doras (Limerick)[7], Crosscare Refugee Service (Dublin),[8] and Nasc (Cork).[9]

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Doras, for instance, provides individual casework support to people ready to transition out of Direct Provision. Oftentimes this is filling out the local authority housing application form to ensure HAP eligibility. Doras use their contacts in the local HAP place finder offices at the local authority and try to link up suitable candidates with available properties. Doras have reported that although this worked well over the past 24 months, it has proven more difficult recently with the severity of the accommodation crisis.[10]

[1] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

[2] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

[3] Comments from the Irish Refugee Council, September 2023.

[4] Irish Refugee Council (n.d.) 'A place to call home', see <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/Listing/Category/housing>

[5] Irish Refugee Council (n.d.) 'Housing', see <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/housingservice>

[6] Irish Refugee Council (2023) 'Impact Report 2022'. Available

at: <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=b96297ac-...>

[7] Doras (n.d.) 'Moving out of direct provision', see <http://doras.org/transition-from-direct-provision/>

[8] Comments from Crosscare Refugee Service, October 2023.

[9] Nasc (n.d.) 'Advocacy Service', see <https://nascireland.org/advocacy-service>

[10] Comments from Doras, September 2023.

8.

Indicators of adequate housing in Ireland have been reported by Eurostat. While there is no mechanism to assess adequacy of autonomous housing specific to international protection applicants, all rented properties are legally obligated to meet the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. Under the HAP scheme (see question 6 above), which many international protection applicants may use, the local authority must inspect the property within 8 months of the start of the HAP payments, if the property was not already inspected within the previous 12 months, to ensure that it meets the required standards. If this inspection finds that it does not meet the standards, the local authority will write to the landlord giving a clearly stated

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time by which listed improvements or repairs must be completed. If the landlord fails to fix the problems by the date given, then all HAP payments will stop.[1]

While the Guide to Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation sets out the criteria rental properties in general must fulfil, most of the rental accommodation does not fulfil this standard. For example, in 2018, 80% of dwellings did not meet these requirements.[2] While there is limited data on the adequacy of autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries and applicants of international protection, research has found that migrants are more likely to live in poor-quality housing and experience overcrowding.[3]

[1] Housing Assistance Payment (n.d.) 'HAP Scheme – Landlord Terms and Conditions' Available at <https://www.hap.ie/landlords/terms/#:~:text=Under%20the%20HAP%20scheme%2....>

[2] Bieri, C. (forthcoming). Navigating the Transition from Direct Provision to Housing: A Qualitative Study of Refugees' Housing Journeys in Ireland. Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland). School of Social Work and Social Policy.

[3] Russell, H. et al. (2021) 'Monitoring Adequate Housing in Ireland' (IHREC Research Series); Grotti, R., H. Russell, E. Fahey and B. Maître (2018). Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland. Dublin: ESRI/IHREC.

9.

AMIF funding has been used to fund integration projects working with international protection applicants in IPAS accommodation centres. While these projects are not necessarily focused on autonomous housing specifically, they have tackled challenges facing international protection applicants and beneficiaries accessing housing, for example, improving information flows and building social relationships within local communities.

AMIF funding has also been used (through Calls for Proposals in 2016, 2019 and 2022) by NGO's to provide a range of reception and integration support for TCNs.

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|--|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | <p>10.</p> <p><u>The Bridge Project</u></p> <p>While not housing specific, the Bridge Project[1] seeks to promote the effective delivery of reception and integration supports (including advocacy and capacity building interventions) to asylum seekers and third country nationals living in Galway City and County. The project is coordinated by Galway City Partnership, funded under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Initiated in 2017, the Bridge project has funding until December 2023.</p> <p>This project tackles several challenges faced by international protection beneficiaries regarding access to autonomous housing, including by capacity building to access employment, training and language supports, and increased access to information and community supports. For example, the Bridge projects introduced THRESHOLD, an independent advice and advocacy organisation for those experiencing problems related to the Irish rental market to international protection applicants during their housing workshops.[2]</p> <p>The project is also currently developing an Intercultural and Anti-Racism Strategy for Galway city that seeks to ensure there is an appropriate response given to Intercultural issues and challenge racism and contains recommendations on housing and accommodation such as monitoring the impact of housing policies on discrimination and segregation in Galway.[3]</p> <p>[1] https://gcp.ie/programmes-supports/support-for-communities/asylum-migrat...</p> <p>[2] Comments from Galway City Partnership, September 2023.</p> <p>[3] Comments from Galway City Partnership, September 2023.</p> <p>11. No information available.</p> <p>12.</p> |
|--|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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In the absence of significantly increased and adequate housing supply, the JRS Ireland has cautioned that good practices identified below will be undermined, and that to solve the problem, international protection must be considered in national housing plans and budgets,[1] and appropriate resources allocated to sourcing suitable accommodation for persons granted status.

Housing support payments

The top-up Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), "Homeless HAP" has been welcomed for supporting beneficiaries of international protection to compete for private rental accommodation.[2] Bieri (forthcoming) considers that granting international protection beneficiaries access to Homeless HAP as a mainstreaming measure rather than a targeted measure may be beneficial as it avoids creating disparities between different lower socio-economic groups on the housing market.[3]

NGO housing services

The provision of dedicated supports by the two NGOs, De Paul and the Peter McVerry Trust was considered by UNHCR Ireland to be a positive development towards providing targeted supports at a national scale.[4] However, despite the benefit of these supports, the Crosscare Refugee Service remarked that due to the limited housing stock available, there may be limitations in the impact of such initiatives.[5]

Flexibility in moving out of reception centres

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UNHCR Ireland commended the extra time given to beneficiaries of international protection to look for new accommodation and the flexibility given to allow them to continue living in IPAS accommodation centres in the same location during their search. [6]

Community Response Forums

Community Response Forums that were developed for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic initially were repurposed or reestablished first for supporting Ukrainian BOTPs,[7] but recently agreement has been reached that they would be expanded to support the integration of international protection applicants.[8] These forums bring together all public, community and voluntary organisations that provide support locally along with the Cathaoirleach (Chair) or Mayor of each local authority, and enable a coordinated civil society and local governance response to challenges.[9]

White Paper to End Direct Provision

The 'White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a new International Protection Support Service' was commended by a range of stakeholders, including academics, refugee organisations, NGOs and political parties.[10] As part of the proposed new reception system, the White Paper anticipates ending long-term institutionalised housing and instead introducing community-based, mixed tenure type accommodation for those in the reception system which may assist in facilitating easier access to autonomous housing.

The implementation of the White Paper has been delayed following the need for DCEDIY to significantly upscale its housing capacity in 2022 and 2023, however, some housing stock was acquired by DCEDIY in 2022 to be managed by NGOs for vulnerable applicants.[11] Additionally, a Programme Board for International Protection was appointed in 2021 by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the White Paper to End Direct

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Provision. There are three Non-Governmental Members (UNHCR Ireland, the Irish Refugee Council and Children's Rights Alliance)[12] in the Programme Board which has drafted review reports on implementation of the White Paper.[13]

[1] Also noted by the Irish Refugee Council in comments, September 2023.

[2] Hearne, R. and M. Murphy (2018). An absence of rights: Homeless families and social housing marketisation in Ireland. Administration, 66, 9-31.

[3] Bieri, C. (forthcoming). Navigating the Transition from Direct Provision to Housing: A Qualitative Study of Refugees' Housing Journeys in Ireland. Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland). School of Social Work and Social Policy.

[4] Comments from UNHCR, August 2023.

[5] Comments from Crosscare Refugee Service, October 2023.

[6] Comments from UNHCR, August 2023.

[7] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Department of Rural and Community Development (2022) 'Community Response Forum in each area to coordinate local measures welcoming Ukrainians'

[8] LGMA Interview, September 2023.

[9] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Department of Rural and Community Development (2022) 'Community Response Forum in each area to coordinate local measures welcoming Ukrainians'

[10] Coakley, L., and P. MacEinri (2022). Ireland's White Paper to End Direct Provision (2021): Migrant Accommodation and Control. International Migration Review, 56(4), 1030-1039.


[11] <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-04-18/1249/>

[12] Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2021).

[13] Comments from the Jesuit Refugee Service Ireland, September 2023. Minister O'Gorman announces Membership of the Programme Board overseeing the end of Direct Provision – as set out in the White Paper. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/edef3-minister-ogorman-announces-mem...>

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|  | EMN NCP Italy | Yes | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>2. Italian regulations state that “access to housing benefits is allowed for holders of refugee and subsidiary protection status, on equal terms with Italian citizens”. Italian law protects foreign nationals with regular residence status against any discrimination in accessing housing. The law stipulates that “anyone illegitimately imposing disadvantageous conditions or refusing access to employment, housing, education, training, and social and social assistance services to a foreign national with regular residence in Italy solely based on their foreign status or belonging to a specific race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality” commits discrimination. Therefore, access to housing support measures is one of those rights for which our legal system recognizes refugees to be treated equally to Italian citizens.</p> <p>Despite regulations protect access to housing, there are many obstacles to achieving housing autonomy for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection hosted in the Italian reception system.</p> <p>The first significant factor is the share of public residential construction, which has consistently represented between 5% and 6% of the overall housing market in the last thirty years. Moreover, in many cases, the allocation criteria for public housing disadvantage immigrants, even when they earn very low incomes, by requiring a minimum length of residence, a criteria that can exclude all those with international protection status who have resided in Italy for a shorter time.</p> <p>UNAR (National Office against Racial Discrimination of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers) has issued an opinion on access to public residential construction housing regarding discriminatory criteria (Guidelines on access to public residential construction housing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possession of a residence permit of at least two years; • some regions require the criteria of several years of residence (the Constitutional Court, with judgment No. 44/2020, declared the requirement of 5 years provided by the Lombardy regional law |

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as illegitimate, while other regional laws, such as Liguria, are currently under review by the Constitutional Court; Tuscany has eliminated the requirement);

- some municipalities require certification attesting to the absence of property ownership in the home country (but the Constitutional Court declared this requirement provided by the Abruzzo regional law illegitimate with judgment No. 9/2021; consequently, almost all municipalities and regions are modifying announcements and regulations and no longer require these documents).

Given the difficulty of buying property for economic reasons and the complications in accessing public residential construction housing, refugees often find themselves forced to seek housing in the private market. However, the scarcity of rental housing (properties for rent account for only 10% of the total available accommodations in the national territory) and the need to approach a large number of contacts are factors that disadvantage them significantly, as they generally have limited financial means and difficulties in linguistic interaction with private individuals and housing agencies.

Another critical issue mentioned in the “National Integration Plan” concerns those who, after the reception period, are forced to resort to precarious and informal solutions. Since they cannot legitimately prove residence in the property, they often fail to obtain registration in the civil registry and, consequently, the associated rights and services. It is significant to underline that registration in the civil registry is one of the necessary prerequisites for starting and continuing any social inclusion process. Rights and services derived from residence include social assistance, subsidies provided at the municipal level, registration on lists for the allocation of public residential construction housing, the issuance of identity cards and other necessary registry certificates, such as for obtaining a driving license or family reunification and opening a bank account.

Regarding activities to support the housing integration of beneficiaries of the reception system, several obstacles have been identified over the years, which may have taken on different characteristics depending on the territories, contexts, and historical periods. In particular, the success of finding housing solutions after reception is mainly related to employment insecurity, which is an issue common to former beneficiaries of the SAI (Special Reception Centers) with other socially vulnerable categories, and a widespread reluctance to rent to migrants.

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Finally, local authorities face difficulties in finding housing on the real estate market for migrant individuals, primarily due to property owners choosing to use their properties for other purposes, such as lodging facilities. Furthermore, an additional challenge arises from the demand for guarantees regarding the legal status of the beneficiary and their ability to fulfil financial commitments.

3. The organizations that support access to housing include:

- The Ministry of the Interior through the Central Service managed by ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities);
- Local authorities (Regions, Provinces, Municipalities);
- UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) through a practical guide on housing autonomy for beneficiaries of international protection (link: https://www.unhcr.org/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2020/07/Guida_pratica_rifugiati.pdf);
- UNAR (National Office against Racial Discrimination - Presidency of the Council of Ministers).
- Some third-sector organizations (associations, foundations, non-governmental organizations).

4. Through the establishment of a territorial network, the reception and integration system can refer individuals to the municipal services responsible for placement on public housing waiting lists.

5.

YES. At the national level, initiatives to ensure access to housing for migrants are part of a broader strategy on integration and asylum defined by the National Coordination Table. This table defines the multi-year strategy for the governance of migrant reception and integration services.

In 2017, the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration

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(IOM), the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), Regions, Local Authorities, and the Third Sector, developed the “National Integration Plan”. This plan identifies access to housing as one of its priority interventions.

The plan specifies that regions and municipalities should include the following in their emergency housing plans:

1. Accompaniment programs for protection status holders transitioning from reception, including the possibility of including them in public housing and rental support initiatives.
2. Programs to assist individuals in transitioning from informal settlements in urban areas, which may involve identifying unused public buildings for social housing.

Actions aimed at the social integration, including housing integration, of protection status holders are implemented at the local level by organizations participating in the reception system. For example, there may be one-time financial assistance provided upon exiting the reception system to facilitate the signing of rental contracts.

Regarding public housing, access procedures are governed by regional regulations and administrative acts of municipalities, which apply uniformly to Italian citizens as well.

UNAR (the office for promoting equal treatment and the removal of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin) intervenes in cases where the right to equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their ethnic or racial origin, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, is not guaranteed. Therefore, if a refugee faces discrimination in their housing rights, they can turn to UNAR to protect their rights. In 2021, UNAR and FIAIP (Italian Federation of Professional Real Estate Agents) signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at preventing and combating all forms of discrimination in the real estate sector.

Regarding second reception, within reception and integration projects, orientation and support for housing integration are services that the local authorities must provide to each beneficiary in accordance with the guidelines. These services start as soon as the beneficiary enters the reception project. Starting from a comparison with the customs and traditions of their home-country, the project informs beneficiaries about key housing rules, responsible use of energy and utilities, waste separation, good neighborliness, tc.. In

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addition, the project liaises with real estate agencies, municipal services, sector organizations, private property owners, and their associations, presenting the reception project as a whole and the characteristics of the individuals accommodated. Informative brochures are also prepared for presentation and can be sent or delivered personally at face-to-face meetings. Local authorities may also organize public presentations specifically targeting various local stakeholders. At the same time, beneficiaries are informed about the functioning and opportunities of the housing market, including:

- Different types of rental contracts.
- The possibility of accessing micro-loans for rental access (advance/deposit).
- Bureaucratic procedures.
- Minimum housing standards (electrical systems, furnishings, etc.).
- Utilities (changing utility providers, subleasing, condominium expenses, etc.).

6.

YEYES. The National Integration Plan stipulates that local authorities should assist individuals transitioning out of reception centers with housing autonomy support. This support may include selecting property advertisements, renting rooms in flats with fellow nationals, or providing financial assistance for rent. Furthermore, the plan encourages the initiation of cohabitation initiatives (shared rentals, supportive condominiums) as well as the experimentation of good neighborly practices starting from the late reception phases.

Access to the private housing market within the context of second reception - Second reception projects aim to facilitate access to the private housing market through various actions, including promotion, support, and potential mediation between the beneficiary and the landlord during lease negotiations. These actions include:

- Monitoring rental offers, also through specialized newspapers and local advertisements.
- Establishing agreements with real estate agencies to introduce the territorial project and the specifics of international protection.

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- Providing support in interactions with agencies and property owners.
- Organizing meetings with tenants' associations or housing agencies or local housing experts to explain the rights and duties of tenants.

The territorial reception project may also collaborate with other public or private services in the area that specialize in real estate mediation and housing solutions, such as housing agencies, real estate agencies, third-sector organizations with specific projects, information centers managed by tenant unions, and more.

Housing Contributions within the Context of Second Reception - The housing contribution consists of financial support granted to beneficiaries leaving the reception project to facilitate their socio-economic and housing integration. This contribution is intended to cover various expenses, including security deposits, agency fees, contract registration fees, initial rent payments (even partially), initial condominium fees, and initial utility costs (especially for utility connections). To account for the housing contribution related to monthly rent payments, it is necessary to provide the lease agreement along with a possible declaration of stable residence from the municipality and the receipt, signed by the landlord, of the rent payments made. For other incurred expenses, the corresponding payment receipts must be provided. As mentioned earlier, housing rental contributions are among the tools to support public housing. All relevant information can be obtained from the public relations office of the municipality or from municipal or district housing offices. Each year, based on the allocations provided in the annual budget law, municipalities determine the amount of contributions, the disbursement procedures, and select beneficiaries through public announcements.

Contribution for the Purchase of Furniture within the Context of Second Reception - This contribution is intended for the purchase of furniture, appliances, and other items for setting up a residence by international protection status holders moving into independent housing. Territorial projects are allowed to account for a maximum expenditure of 2,000 euros by producing specific supporting documents, including the lease agreement and purchase receipts for the furniture in the name of the beneficiary of the contribution. Exceptions to these conditions are permitted only with authorization from the Central Service and under exceptionally justified circumstances.

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7.

Support for public housing.

This involves public housing units and rental assistance provided to the most vulnerable segments of the population and allocated by municipalities each year based on a ranking list. To apply for "public housing" (and thus enter the ranking list) or rental assistance, one must submit an application to the municipality of residence. The requirements for submitting an application are as follows:

- legal residence or primary employment activity in the municipality where the application is made;
- no other suitable housing available to meet the family's needs;
- no previous receipt of assistance for public housing;
- total annual income of the household not exceeding the limit set in the current regulations for access to public housing (usually, the income limit is specified in the application form).

The allocation, management, and determination of the rent for these housing units, calculated based on the economic situation and the number of members in the assigned family unit, are regulated by Regional laws. The allocation of public housing units is carried out through the issuance of public announcements on a semi-annual basis. Upon the closure of the announcement's deadline, the relevant municipal offices compile a ranking list for the allocation of housing units and promptly make it public.

The operational manual for the management of reception and integration projects promotes some practices aimed at stimulating the territory through housing experiments facilitated by the projects. There are various tools to support housing integration paths, which are highly flexible and adaptable to specific territorial contexts and the needs of individuals. The following are some of the most common or interesting ones to experiment with:

- Searching for housing opportunities through direct collaboration with real estate mediation services available in the area, such as real estate agencies.

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a guarantee fund for lease contracts to cover security deposits or initial rent payments. • Providing guarantees or mediation directly by the local authority, including temporary first-time leasing to the local authority, followed by tenant substitution. • Exploring new experimental housing forms such as co-housing, which is not particularly common in Italy. Co-housing involves creating cohabitation groups in response to various needs, with support in household formation. This may include elderly native individuals living together with young refugees and Italians, students, or precarious workers. Co-housing requires careful planning, tenant group selection, and support. • Another form of co-housing is "social condominiums," where individual apartments are leased, at controlled or social rents, to people, such as families or cohabitating groups, facing economic precarity, such as retirees, students, young couples, or minimum wage workers. In this case as well, it is necessary to intervene under the guidance of the local authority or a private entity managing the social condominium, possibly through socialization tools, self-help, and communal spaces made available to residents and, potentially, to the community for solidarity and cultural initiatives. • Experimenting with "social concierge" models, where an apartment is made available for a cohabitation community (primarily young adults, migrants, and natives) that, in exchange for reduced rent, dedicates a few hours each week voluntarily to provide services to the condominium and its residents. This may include mediating conflicts between neighbors, accompanying residents to social or healthcare services in cases of vulnerability, providing small services in situations of difficulty (running errands for those who cannot move or are not self-sufficient, emergency babysitting, key-holding during absences, etc.). In addition to necessary community formation and selection, adequate basic training for the social concierge group is required, as well as appropriate support and guidance services. • Self-construction and self-renovation involve the direct involvement of individuals who will inhabit the house and who will be either owners or tenants at reduced or controlled rents. Both formulas |
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| | | <p>require significant planning and organization efforts, as well as the involvement of individuals with basic knowledge of construction, manual skills, and familiarity with tools. These tools can immediately be used to address housing difficulties for all vulnerable segments of the local community, both native and migrants. With this approach, reception and integration efforts can become a driving force for strengthening territorial services for the entire population.</p> <p>8. YES. Residential structures are subject to national, regional, and local regulations. In general, to enter into rental agreements, it is essential that the property meets all the required standards for health, structural stability, and energy performance certification.</p> <p>9. Yes, within the scope of the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) for the 2014-2020 period, there is a specific line of intervention aimed at strengthening the first and second reception systems. This includes specific measures to promote the autonomy of refugees, including housing, employment, and social integration interventions. Funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) for 2014-2020 has also been used for these purposes. Similarly, also for the new AMIF 2021-2027 programming, intervention is foreseen to promote the social and economic autonomy of refugees, also through housing support. On 16 June 2023, the Italian Ministry of the Interior published an AMIF notice for the presentation of project proposals aimed at promoting the social and economic autonomy of holders of international protection and newly-arrived adults, coming out of the Reception System, with particular regard to the issue of access to housing. Link: https://www.interno.gov.it/it/amministrazione-trasparente/bandi-gara-e-c...</p> <p>10. 1. LGNetEA "Local Government Network for Rapid Response and Fast Track Inclusion Services in Disadvantaged Urban Area" 1 and 2. Through the AMIF 14-20, the LGNetEA project was funded to counteract social risk phenomena associated with the massive presence of migrants in situations of</p> |
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| | | | <p>severe marginalization. The project was promoted by the Ministry of the Interior, in partnership with a network of sixteen medium and large-sized municipalities. Among the many project activities, urban initiatives for fast track housing inclusion were implemented. At the end of the project there were 1,150 beds activated in emergency housing solutions, and 1,602 beneficiaries of emergency housing inclusion pathways. The project started in January 2020 and ended on April 30 2022. In light of the results achieved, the Responsible Authority decided to introduce the LGNet2 project within the framework of ordinary AMIF. The project started on October 15 2022, and will have a total duration of 19 months.</p> <p>2. Notice "Promotion of the autonomy of beneficiaries of international protection and their exit from the reception system, through the implementation of individual socio-economic integration pathways." The Responsible Authority for AMIF published a notice to provide support to municipalities participating in the Reception and Integration System (SAI) for the promotion of autonomy paths for beneficiaries of international protection upon exit. The notice financed 42 projects to ensure the social inclusion of refugees at the end of their stay in reception facilities. The notice, which started in July 2019, ended in April 2023. Within these projects, customised housing integration pathways were provided for the beneficiaries, including housing support. In total, housing integration support services were provided to 3,607 beneficiaries of international protection, of which 1,321 signed rental contracts, found housing solutions through housing or co-housing arrangements, or secured stable housing accommodations. Within the framework of the 2'21-2'27 National Program, in continuity with the previous Notice, a new notice for the promotion of autonomy was published on June 16 2023, expiring on October 31 next.</p> <p>3. Notice "Support for Local Authorities and their Social Welfare Services." Furthermore, under AMIF 14-20, 25 projects have been financed within the Notice "Support for Local Authorities". The interventions aim to enhance the social welfare services system and offer local authorities organizational and operational support for testing models aimed at addressing the needs and difficulties of third-country nationals, primarily single-parent households with minors or family</p> |
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| | | | <p>households with minors, in conditions of particular hardship, who are no longer eligible for reception.</p> <p>4. ESF 2014-2020 - P.I.U. Su.Pr.Eme. (Individualized Pathways for Exiting Exploitation). The project aims to implement an interregional system action by introducing measures aimed at the socio-economic integration of migrants as a prevention and counteraction to labour exploitation in agriculture. Among all the activities, it includes housing support through the creation of a social housing intermediation agency, experimenting with shared housing solutions, and granting contributions for rent payments.</p> <p>11. The Central Service conducts monitoring using data related to orientation and housing integration services among the total projects which it publishes in the annual report called the "Atlas of the Reception and Integration System." Link: https://www.retesai.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Atlante-SAI-2021-online.pdf</p> <p>12. NA</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Latvia | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing;</p> <p>Applicants of international protection who have not acquired refugee or alternative status reside in the Accommodation Centre "Mucenieki". As regards persons with refugee or alternative status, in 2022 NGO "Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem" ("I want to help refugees") when implementing the project of the Julia Taft Refugee Fund had the opportunity to find housing and provide it for up to 6 months for 20 people: 9 adults and 11 children. In addition, several families (15 people) received help with the housing deposit payment. The project was carried out in cooperation with organisation "Caritas Latvija", which provides the services of a social worker and social mentor to asylum seekers and persons holding refugee or alternative status. Also, temporary financial housing support from donations was provided to 3 adult refugees from Syria</p> |

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returned for the second time by renting a place in a hostel, then finding a place in a social centre. The organization found autonomous housing for one person when the person started employment. The NGO "Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem" ("I want to help refugees") has reported, that often at first beneficiaries of international protection in crisis situations come to an agreement with shelters or social centres and are accommodated there while independent housing is found. Since to a large extent they work directly with beneficiaries of international protection, who are either refugees returned for the second time from other EU countries or those who for some reason failed to fulfil the social inclusion plan of the state mentoring program, it is difficult to answer about deadlines. For the most part, their experience shows that finding an independent residence takes at least several months.

2. According to the information provided by the NGO "Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem" ("I want to help refugees") the biggest challenges in finding independent housing for a prolonged period of time are the landlords' unwillingness to rent housing to refugees due to cultural differences and also insufficient financial resources for the down payment and the deposit. Families with small children face even more difficulties due to the above mentioned reasons, as well as the need for a larger living space. Another obstacle is the fact that a tenancy agreement has to be signed before applying to Social Services for a benefit and only in rare cases the landlord agrees to wait for the Social Services to grant the benefit. The information on challenges is summarized by the NGO "Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem" ("I want to help refugees") and it was provided by the beneficiaries and applicants of international protection and the employees of the NGO who work with them.

3. There is no separate organisation or authority responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing specifically for beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection in Latvia. On the whole, the responsible authorities supporting access to housing in Latvia are the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and municipalities. However, beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection as such are not marked as a priority group in any legislation regarding access to autonomous housing.

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The coordinating institution in the field of socio-economic inclusion of persons in need of international protection is Society Integration Foundation. Society Integration Foundation has signed a cooperation agreement with the foundation "Caritas Latvija", which provides the services of social workers and social mentors to asylum seekers and persons with refugee or alternative status in Latvia as of 1 February 2022. These services cover all aspects of socio-economic inclusion; therefore, social workers and social mentors can provide help in the search of a dwelling from available resources, facilitate communication with landlords, help to conclude a lease agreement, etc.

4. There is no separate organisation or authority responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing specifically for beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection in Latvia. On the whole, the responsible authorities supporting access to housing in Latvia are the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and municipalities. However, beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection as such are not marked as a priority group in any legislation regarding access to autonomous housing.

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5. Social worker and social mentor services: the service is provided to promote the full socio-economic inclusion of asylum seekers, refugees and persons with alternative status in Latvia, ensure the availability of psycho-emotional and economic support, coordinate the availability of various services, help and support, as well as to ensure resolution of crisis situations (<https://caritas.lv/dienas-aprupes-centrs-berniem-1-2-3/#>)


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| | | <p>6. There is no national policy to support access to autonomous housing that targets beneficiaries and applicants of international protection. If a refugee or a person who has acquired alternative status does not have sufficient resources, he or she has the right to receive: single financial support and benefit for covering the subsistence costs (Asylum Law, Clause 53, https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/278986-asylum-law), but this financial support is intended for all living expenses, it is not targeted for autonomous housing specifically.</p> <p>On 1 January 2022, amendments to Law on Assistance in Solving Apartment Matters (Clause 4, https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/56812-law-on-assistance-in-solving-apartme...) came into force that allowed persons who have been granted refugee or alternative status to receive assistance from municipality regarding residential space matters without their place of residence being declared in the municipality in question, which significantly improves access to municipal social assistance.</p> <p>7. Project of the Julia Taft Refugee Fund implemented by NGO “Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem” (“I want to help refugees”) in cooperation with foundation “Caritas Latvija”</p> <p>8. No.</p> <p>9. No.</p> <p>10. No.</p> <p>11. No.</p> <p>12. Project of the Julia Taft Refugee Fund implemented by NGO “Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem” (“I want to help refugees”) in cooperation with foundation “Caritas Latvija” has been reported as successful by an expert from the NGO, as beneficiaries of international protection were able to access targeted help with respect</p> |
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| | | | to housing – within the framework of the project housing could be provided for up to 6 months for 20 people (9 adults and 11 children) and several families (15 people) received help with the housing deposit payment. |
|  | EMN NCP Lithu ania | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; According to the Refugee Reception Centre, 731 beneficiaries of international protection, who are receiving integration support, lived in autonomous (self-rented) accommodation in 2022. ---It should be mentioned, that no financial support is provided for autonomous housing for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are usually accommodated in reception centers during the asylum procedure. By decision of the Migration Department, asylum seekers can also live in an independent dwelling of their choice. However, this is usually the case of individuals with savings or relatives who can support them as for the first 6 months asylum seekers do not have the right to work. ---According to the Refugee Reception Centre and the Migration Department, the number of asylum seekers living in Lithuania in their chosen accommodation increased in 2022, as most of them were Belarusian citizens with a strong, supporting, diaspora. Unfortunately, data on how many asylum seekers lived in their chosen accommodation (autonomous housing) unavailable, as the Migration Department does not collect it.</p> <p>2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the main reasons why it is difficult for refugees to find and rent adequate housing in Lithuania <u>is the attitude of landlords</u>. According to the 2021 report of the Institute for Ethnic Research, there has been an increase in the social distancing of the Lithuanian population towards refugees compared to 2020. In 2021, 47 % of the surveyed stated that they would not be willing to live with refugees as their neighbours (compared to 27 % in 2020) and 48 % would be discouraged from renting to refugees (27 % in 2020). For this reason, even if the landlord agrees to rent the accommodation, the rental contract is usually short-term or unregistered, which prevents declaring |

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| | | <p>residence and receiving support in the municipality. (Source: http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Visuomen%C4%97s-nuostat%C5%...).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, the general housing market situation is also challenging for beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) in Lithuania. In major cities with the most employment opportunities, rent prices have increased significantly over the past several years. This has created a vicious circle where cities with the most employment opportunities are too expensive to rent and live in, while towns with more affordable rent prices offer fewer opportunities. • There is no institution in the country that coordinates the accommodation of beneficiaries of international protection in municipalities, providing support to regional/municipal authorities, offering measures to help meet the housing needs of asylum recipients and ensuring that they live in an environment suitable for integration. (Source: diversitygroup.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NIEM_Evaluation-II_National-report_LT_final4.pdf) • The forth important reason why BIPs face obstacles in finding housing – language barriers (home rental/sales advertisements are mostly in Lithuanian, and prospective landlords are not always inclined to communicate in a language other than Lithuanian). This problem is partly addressed by the Refugee Reception Centre together with non-governmental organisations through mediation services. <p>3. The Refugee Reception Center (RRC - an institution under to the Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania) - organizes and implements the integration of refugees in the reception centers, administers integration funds. RRC signs agreements on the provision of support for integration with recipients of international protection and institutions supporting the integration. Such agreements specify the provision of support for integration, payment of benefits and allowances, conditions of service provision, deadlines, rights and obligations of the parties. RRC is also responsible for allocating funds for integration to the institution implementing the integration.</p> |
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| | | <p>A foreigner, who has received international protection, after receiving a residence permit, applies to the Refugee Reception Center with which he signs an integration agreement. A person in the Refugee Reception Center has the right to live and receive initial integration services for up to 3 months (sometimes integration in the municipal territory starts earlier or immediately, if the person who has received international protection has already found a job and/or housing and/or his children are already attending education institutions). RRC selects the institution implementing integration on the territory of the municipality according to the municipality chosen by the beneficiary of international protection (in most cases, a non-governmental organization - the provider of integration services selected through public procurement), which signs a contract for the provision of services with the recipient of international protection and provides assistance in the territory of the municipality (mediation and financial support), including finding and maintaining autonomous housing.</p> <p>In addition, the recipient of international protection (both during the integration period and after it has ended) has the right to apply to the municipality in whose territory he lives for the allocation of social housing or compensation for part of the housing rent, heating, drinking water costs, under the same conditions as Lithuanian citizens.</p> <p><u>As noted in the answer to Q1 and applicable to further questions, no financial support is provided for autonomous housing for asylum seekers. Data on how many asylum seekers lived in autonomous housing unavailable, as it is not collected.</u></p> <p>4. A beneficiary of international protection, who has signed a contract with the institution implementing integration in the territory of the municipality regarding the provision of state support for integration, receives an assigned curator (mentor) who together with the recipient of international protection prepares an individual integration plan, monitors and together with the beneficiary evaluates the results of the implementation of the individual integration plan and integration progress, updates this plan, organizes the provision of social, legal, health, education and other services to the recipient of international protection (also provides assistance in finding housing and settling in it).</p> |
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| | | <p>The institution implementing the integration, not less often than every six months, provides the Refugee Reception Center with conclusions and proposals regarding the provision, extension, renewal or termination of support for integration, in writing or by electronic means of communication. In addition, the Refugee Reception Center has access to the 'Social Support for the Family' information system used by municipal administrations and can check whether the recipient of international protection receives other housing compensations from the funds of the municipality in whose territory they live. If they do - the compensation provided by the state is no longer allocated.</p> <p>5. As mentioned earlier, a recipient of international protection, participating in the state support program for integration, can receive help in finding housing from the institution implementing integration in the municipal territory or the Refugee Reception Center. Occasionally, when the search for housing takes longer, the Refugee Reception Center rents a temporary place of accommodation, but only until self-rented housing is found.</p> <p>6. YES (for beneficiaries of international protection) After receiving international protection, foreigners can live in the Refugee Reception Center for up to 3 months. In exceptional cases, this period can be extended up to 6 months. Throughout this period, the BIP is encouraged to find housing and work. A social worker working with a beneficiary of international protection helps to prepare an individual integration plan - assesses the potential, vulnerabilities and risks, discusses wishes, introduces opportunities in various municipalities (employment, children's education, etc.) and sets goals. One of them is to find housing. Most often, housing is sought in the municipality where the job is found. After finding housing and signing a contract with the owner, the recipient of international protection is paid a one-time settlement allowance for the purchase of basic necessities or paying the deposit. The recipient of international protection is also compensated for part of the housing rent. In addition, low-income recipients of international protection, even after the end of the integration period, have the right to apply to the municipality where they live for the provision of social housing or</p> |
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compensation for part of the housing rent, heating, drinking water compensation with equal rights with citizens of Lithuania.

7.

- During state support for integration (which usually lasts 12 months and can be extended for vulnerable persons, but not longer than up to 36 months), recipients of international protection can receive:

- 1) mediation in finding and renting housing (with the help of a mentor and a real estate broker);
- 2) settling-in payment, which is usually used as a deposit requested by the home owner;
- 3) compensation of part of the house rent.

- Low-income BIPs (even after the end of the state-supported integration period) can apply to the municipality in whose territory they live for social housing or housing rent compensation, with equal rights to Lithuanian citizens.
- On the initiative of the municipality of Jonava district, the issue of social housing was solved by buying 5 dwellings and allocating them to recipients of international protection living in Jonava, giving priority to refugee families who are numerous and have greater difficulties in finding a suitable place to live. The municipality received funds for the purchase of housing from the European Bank.

8. There is no special mechanism; however, the social worker appointed by the institution implementing the integration, while communicating with the client, assesses his household conditions, the improvement of which, as well as the search for better housing, can be included in the individual integration plan. In addition, if there are children in the family of the recipient of international protection, and their living conditions would not ensure their interests, the State Child Rights and Adoption Service would take measures to ensure their interests are ensured.

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9. Given the fact that foreigners who have received international protection need mediation and translation services when finding housing not only at the initial stage of integration but also later, these services are provided by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, as needed. As mentioned earlier, one municipality received support from the Council of Europe Development Bank for the purchase of social housing for refugees. A total of 5 apartments were bought.

10.

- 3 integration centers in major Lithuanian cities, where social workers provide information, mediation, assistance in finding housing and other services. Financed by the funds of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Source: <https://www.pmif.lt/projektai/skirtas-finansavimas>
- Council of Europe Development Bank support for 5 apartments in Jonava district. Source: <https://www.jonava.lt/gyventojams/naujienos/29/jonava-pasidalijo-migrant...>

11. YES.

The national report prepared by the researchers of the international project NIEM (National Integration Evaluation Mechanism. Source: https://www.diversitygroup.lt/fwp_portfolio/refugee-integration/), which reviews the integration policy and its implementation indicators of BIPs in the Republic of Lithuania, also evaluates housing indicators.

The report states that, despite the positive developments, when assessing the indicators of the implementation of the housing policy, the fact that there is no institution in the country that coordinates the accommodation of beneficiaries of international protection in municipalities, providing support to regional/municipal authorities so that beneficiaries live in an environment promising for integration, remains an issue. It was also negatively assessed that state institutions, with the exception of the Refugee Reception Center, do not participate in finding housing for BIPs, leaving this issue to be decided by NGOs or the beneficiaries themselves.

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The results of the conducted anonymous survey reveal that recipients of international protection have had complaints about: high costs for rent (69%), improper (low-quality) living conditions and infrastructure (34.5%), as well as low participation in community activities (20.7%). Another 10.3 percent of respondents identified living in overcrowded housing conditions.


The beneficiaries of international protection who participated in the focus groups and gave individual interviews stated that the biggest challenge they had to face when looking for housing was related to the prejudices of the Lithuanian population towards refugees (especially Muslims), which became worse with the increase in the number of asylum seekers in Lithuania. Asylum recipients mentioned that they also face negative attitudes from neighbors and bullying of children in the neighborhood. In addition, due to the lack of Lithuanian language skills, difficulties are faced not only in finding a suitable apartment but also in communicating with the owners of the apartment. Beneficiaries of international protection also cited the lack of a strategy for finding housing as the number of foreigners seeking housing increases.

The report is available here: https://www.diversitygroup.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NIEM_Evaluation...

12. The national report prepared by the researchers of the international project NIEM (National Integration Evaluation Mechanism), which reviews the integration policy of beneficiaries of international protection in the Republic of Lithuania and its implementation indicators, found that among the positively evaluated indicators is the fact that asylum recipients have the right to receive social support for lower-income residents (social allowance and compensation for housing heating, drinking water and hot water costs). Within the framework of the project "Increasing the competences of municipalities by providing services to citizens of third countries", a comprehensive study of 6 municipalities was conducted, the reports of which were presented. In the report of the municipality of Jonava district, 5 social housing units purchased from the Council of Europe Development Bank for refugees were also evaluated as good practice. <https://www.diversitygroup.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Jonava-district...>

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|  | EMN NCP Luxembourg | Yes | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>In Luxembourg, in accordance with article 64 of the amended law of 18 December 2015 on international protection and temporary protection (Asylum Law), the beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) have access to autonomous housing in the same conditions as third country nationals legally residing in the territory. The policy of the Luxembourgish authorities is to avoid any stigmatisation of BIPs, so they have access to the housing market in the same conditions as legally residing third country national. Nevertheless, the authorities do not keep any statistics on the beneficiaries of international protection that access autonomous housing, as it does not do with legally residing third country nationals. As for applicants for international protection (AIPs), they are almost always housed in temporary housing structures. An AIP can choose to live at a private address, with family or friends. They receive the same support as an IPA living in an ONA (National Reception Office) accommodation facility. In this case, material assistance includes: help with the purchase of foodstuffs; a monthly allowance; clothing and hygiene products; basic medical care; cover for your children's school fees and school equipment. After the final decision on the application for international protection :If the decision is positive, the BIP can continue to live at the current private address or look for other accommodation, but cannot join an ONA structure. If the decision is negative, the person concerned must organise her/his voluntary return within 30 days and work with the Return Department of the Immigration Office. In general, the status of BIP is not recorded, moreover the Draft Law on Affordable Housing voted on 21 July 2023 by the Chamber of Deputies did not provide for the collection of this data. It is therefore impossible for the authorities to identify what proportion of beneficiaries of affordable housing are BIPs.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>A. The main challenge is that there is a housing crisis in Luxembourg which is a structural problem that affects not only beneficiaries of international protection but legally residing third country nationals, EU citizens and Luxembourgish nationals.^[i] This situation threatens the social cohesion in the country, especially the vulnerable households.^[ii]</p> |
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In order to confront this issue, the government is now focusing on expanding the stock of public rental housing, with a sustainability perspective. To do so, the government wants to increase the supply of affordable public rental housing remaining in the hands of the State or municipalities. In 2020, 53% of public housing were for rental purposes and only 47% for sale. Also, the obligation to make subsidised rental housing affordable has been extended from 20 years to 40 years, and affordable housing intended for sale is being put up for sale exclusively with a long lease and a 99-year right of repurchase.^[iii] Nevertheless, the problem subsists and in accordance with the Observatoire de l'Habitat of the Ministry of Housing the average price of an apartment at the national level is of 892.375 EUR (fluctuating between 498.354 EUR in Weiswampach and 1.606.404 in the municipality of Niederanven).^[iv] In the case of renting an apartment the situation is the same. The average rent at the national level is of 1.608 EUR per month going from 1.066 EUR in Esch-sur-Alzette to 2.2026 EUR in Niederanven.^[v] So, it is obvious that the offer of housing regarding apartments is limited with a high level of demand which generates that the prices are very high (even though the prices are being reduced due to the economic situation triggered by the inflation). This situation makes almost impossible for beneficiaries of international protection to access autonomous housing. One of the persistent problems remains the accommodation of beneficiaries of international protection (BPI), who have difficulty finding housing on the Luxembourg property. They represent more than 51.3% of the people housed at the structures for temporary housing for applicants for international protection.^[vi]

B. The second main challenge, besides the shortage in housing is the fact that most landowners required that the individual who wants to rent has a permanent job and must provide a guarantee of minimum three months of rent to guarantee damages and other aspects.

In the case of beneficiaries of temporary protection, most of them are not employed and are benefiting from the REVIS (minimum guaranteed income) that it is 80% of the monthly minimum social salary^[vii] for a single individual (which will amount to 2.006,59 EUR) or they do not have a permanent position. There is the possibility that the applicant can apply for a rental deposit back by the government (Ministry of Housing). However, the applicant must fulfil the following conditions:

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- is of legal age on the date the application is submitted;
- is legally resident in Luxembourg;
- is not be the owner, co-owner or usufructuary of, or the holder of an emphyteutic right or right of superficies on any other property, whether in Luxembourg or abroad;
- has entered into a lease agreement for a dwelling on the private real estate market. The dwelling must be located in Luxembourg and be the tenant's main and permanent residence.
- the income of the applicant's household is lower than the following amounts (index value 871.66), which are set by law:
 - EUR 3,181.56 for a single person;
 - EUR 4,772.34 for 2 people without children;
 - EUR 5,726.81 for a household with 1 child;
 - EUR 6,681.28 for a household with 2 children;
 - EUR 7,635.75 for a household with 3 children;
 - EUR 8,590.21 for a household with 4 children;
 - EUR 9,544.68 for a household with 5 children;
 - EUR 10,499.15 for a household with 6 children;
 - plus an additional EUR 954.47 per child after the 6th child;
- under no circumstances may the tenant's monthly rent exceed 40 % of the household's net income.^[viii]

The amount of the monthly aid is based on income and composition of the domestic community. These conditions are difficult to met for a BIP and are almost never applicable despite the increase from 30% to 40% of the household's income.

Another possibility will be asking for a rental subsidy. This subsidy is granted by the Ministry of Housing helps low-income families to rent decent accommodation. The person has to be of age and legally residing in Luxembourg and has to have an income below the statutory limits and has to have rented a dwelling or is about to and this dwelling must serve as the main and permanent residence for the beneficiary.^[ix]

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| | | <p>The property must be located in Luxembourg, not rented out by a public body (private rental housing) and comply with Luxembourgish health and safety regulations. The applicant—whether a single person or several people living together in the same dwelling—must satisfy several conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they must not have another dwelling whether in Luxembourg or abroad; • the income of the domestic community must not exceed a certain limit; • the amount of monthly rent must exceed 25 % of the domestic community's income; • applicants must have a regular income in order to benefit from a rent subsidy. <p>The income of the domestic community which is used as the basis for the calculation is the sum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all net income used to determine the amount of income tax (for example: salary, pension, annuity), minus social security contributions and tax paid; • maternity or sick leave allowances; • the parental leave allowance; • maintenance payments received; • accident annuities; • income paid by the National Solidarity Fund (e.g.: Revis, allowance for severely disabled persons); • gross earnings allocated for overtime hours. <p>The combined income of all people living in the dwelling rented by the applicant and who are registered residents at this place (for example: parents, the applicant's children or any other person), is taken into account.^[x]</p> <p>Alongside these government schemes, private organisations and some local authorities have developed a system of rental assistance for specific groups.^[xi]</p> <p>This system of complementary guarantees aims to remove the barriers linked to discrimination against certain groups of vulnerable people (see answer to question 6).</p> <p>C. Regarding AIPs as they do not have the right to reside (only a right to remain on the territory) they do not have access to housing except accommodation in reception facilities.</p> |
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| | | <p>[i] Ministry of Housing, Stratégie nationale du Logement abordable, Juin 2022. URL : https://logement.public.lu/fr/politique/strategie-logement-abordable.html#:~:text=Nous%20vivons%20une%20crise%20du%20logement%2C%20dans%20un,touchant%20tout%20particulier%20les%20m%C3%A9nages%20les%20plus%20vuln%C3%A9rables.</p> <p>[ii] Ibid.</p> <p>[iii] Ibid.</p> <p>[iv] Ministry of Housing, Observatoire de l'Habitat, Offres et prix annoncés pour la vente d'appartements entre le 1er avril 2022 et le 31 mars 2023. URL : https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fdownload.data.public.lu%2Fresources%2Fprix-annonces-des-logements-par-commune%2F20230627-113926%2Fvente-appartement-2022-23.xls&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK</p> <p>[v] Ministry of Housing, Observatoire de l'Habitat, Offres et prix annoncés pour la location d'appartements entre le 1er avril 2022 et le 31 mars 2023. URL : https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fdownload.data.public.lu%2Fresources%2Floyers-annonces-des-logements-par-commune%2F20230627-114115%2Flocation-appartement-2022-23.xls&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK</p> <p>[vi] Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Bilan de l'année 2022 en matière d'asile, d'immigration et d'accueil, April 2023, p. 39. URL : https://maee.gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/directions/d8/publications/bilan/bilan-de-lanne-2022-en-matiere-dasile-dimmigration-et-daccueil.pdf</p> <p>[vii] The monthly minimum social salary is 2.508,24 EUR. Ministry of Social Security, General Inspectorate of Social Security, Social Parameters, valid on 1st April 2023. URL: https://igss.gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/publications/param%C3%A8tres-sociaux/2023/par-soc-202304.pdf</p> <p>[viii] Guichet.lu, Applying for government aid to finance a rental deposit. URL: https://guichet.public.lu/en/citoyens/logement/location/aides-au-logement/garantie-locative.html</p> |
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[ix] Guichet.lu, Applying for a rent subsidy. URL:
<https://guichet.public.lu/en/citoyens/logement/location/aides-au-logement/subvention-loyer.html>

[x] Ibid.

[xi] LISKO- Luxembourg Red Cross, 28 July 2023.

3.

There were provisions for housing BIPs that are part of the package of measures adopted by the Government to support municipalities in their efforts to receive and integrate BPI (Ministry of the Interior Circular 3324 of 24 November 2015).

By ministerial circular no. 4152 of 15 June 2021, local authorities were informed that the provisions set out in circular no. 3324 of 24 November 2015 would no longer be renewed. Since then, the Ministry of the Interior has not concluded any new agreement for the provision of accommodation to the BIP.

Local authorities can provide BPI with accommodation that they either own or rent from private landlords. Proposals for such accommodation have to be sent to the Department of Communal Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior until early 2022. Since 2022, the Ministry of Housing has signed agreements with local authorities on social rental management.

In return for making one or more dwellings available to the BIP, or to people eligible for rental housing subsidies who are looking for accommodation, the local authorities benefit from a package of measures, the details of which are described in answer to question 6.

The accommodation is made available equally to BPI and to people eligible for rental housing subsidies who are looking for accommodation.

Another important actor is the National Solidarity Fund (FNS) in the context of the Social Inclusion Income and the accommodation of the BIP by a private person (see answer to question 6).

There is also :

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- the LSKO (Lëtzebuurger Integratiouns- a Sozialkohäsiounscenter) of the Red Cross, which is a psycho-social counselling and support service, under agreement with the Ministry for the Family, Integration and the Greater Region;
- and the programme of the service Housing for Social inclusion (Logement pour l'inclusion sociale – LogIS) agreed by the Ministry for the Family, Integration and the Greater Region and managed by Caritas Luxembourg (see also answer to question 6).

Outside of these possibilities, there are not specific support mechanisms for BIPs to access autonomous housing, but the Ministry of Housing has mainstreamed support mechanisms to any legal resident in Luxembourg to access housing including the BIP.

Regarding public bodies: The Housing Fund (Fonds du Logement)^[i], National Low-Cost Housing Administration (Société Nationale des Habitations à Bon Marché – SNHBM^[ii] and the municipalities. Another scheme that currently works very well is the system of social rental management (Gestion locative sociale – GLS^[iii]) where 39 partners are involved, including 3 municipalities, 9 social welfare offices, 5 foundations and 21 associations and other bodies. Within this system any foundation, not-for-profit association or social impact company whose corporate purpose is to promote housing, or any local authority or association of local authorities, as well as public developers, can sign a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Housing. They then rent out homes belonging to private owners to people experiencing housing difficulties (often low-income households).

As it was mentioned before, the measures are applicable to all legally resident individuals in Luxembourg independent from their nationality.

^[i] [Fondsdulogement.lu, Fonds du Logement. URL : https://fondsdulogement.lu/fr/nos-biens](https://fondsdulogement.lu/fr/nos-biens)

^[ii] [Snhbm.lu, Société Nationale des Habitations à Bon Marché. URL : https://snhbm.lu/location/](https://snhbm.lu/location/)

^[iii] https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/communiques/2023/03-mars/27-gestion-locative-sociale.html

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4.

The package of measures mentioned above was transposed by an agreement between the State and the municipalities. Among other things, the package contains financial and administrative assistance to facilitate access to housing for people eligible for rental housing subsidies in accordance with the legislation in force.

As mentioned in answer to question 3, the system of social rental management which does not specifically concern BIPs involves different private or public actors as well as the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration.

5. No other measures are planned in addition to those already in place.

Caritas organises a training for beneficiaries of international protection under the title: "Realities of the housing market" which aims to help beneficiaries residing in accommodation centers to search more efficiently for accommodation on the private market.[i]

[i] Caritas, 28 July 2023.

6.

Yes.

According to the package of measures mentioned above the following financial support was foreseen to facilitate access to housing for people eligible for rental housing subsidies in accordance with the legislation in force:

For housing rented by municipalities from private landlords, the State covers the difference between the rent paid by the municipality to the landlord and the rent received by the municipality from the BPI. The ceiling on the amount of rent subsidised by the State is determined on the basis of the average rent paid in

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the municipality for this type of accommodation, in principle according to the price indicator published by the Observatoire de l'Habitat. It will be 100% of the average advertised rental prices per municipality. Similarly, the State will contribute to the management costs of housing rented from private landlords, up to a fixed amount of €1,200 per year per housing unit managed.

In the context of the Social Inclusion Income (REVIS), in general, all persons living in a common household, who must be assumed to have a common budget and who cannot provide material proof that they reside elsewhere, are presumed to form a domestic community. However, the National Solidarity Fund (FNS) may consider a BIP, accommodated directly after leaving an accommodation facility, free of charge, in a private household where the REVIS is not due or not claimed, as forming a single domestic community for a maximum period of twelve months.

After the expiry of this period, the FNS will take into account the income and assets of all members of the domestic community (i.e. the income of the BIP, the host family and any other person residing at the same address) when determining resources. Where appropriate, the REVIS payment will be withdrawn if the income ceiling is exceeded.^[i]

The aim of the LSKO is the social integration of BIPs.^[ii] It focusses in the most vulnerable BIPs (psycho-social fragility, delicate health, handicap, young migrants without income and monoparental families).^[iii]

There exists a support for access to housing with a guarantee system for landlords to encourage access to private housing. Since 2023, this system is no longer located at LSKO, but at the CLES department of the Luxemburg Red Cross, which took over the housing activities: Landlords can benefit from a specific guarantee, covering up to 2 months' rent in the event of non-payment (refundable and by activating voluntary budget management) and as well as from an advance payment of up to €3,000 for any material damage that is not covered by the rental deposit. These guarantees are offered to the BIP when certain administrative and financial criteria are met.^[iv]

The programme of the LogIS targets BIPs who are housed in the reception facilities managed by Caritas or that are followed by the social reception service.^[v] In this programme, LogIS grants housing to a family or individual who is going to be followed by a social worker in order to guarantee a real social inclusion in society and in the municipality.^[vi]

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| | | <p>Different from LSKO, LogIS has a property portfolio that it has rented from private owners in the framework of the social rental management (gestion locative sociale – GLS). This way, Caritas offers certain guarantees to landlords (rental deposit, housing control and fiscal exoneration).^[vii] In addition, LogIS manages around twenty properties that belong to municipalities.</p> <p>Outside of these possibilities, as it was mentioned in point B of the answer to Q.2, there are main streaming support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries of international protection such as the rental guarantee or deposit and the rental subsidy, or the social rental management.</p> <p>A landlord has also the possibility of renting her/his property to organisations as part of a social rental management (see also answer to question 3). From the owner, via the approved body, to the occupant, social rental management involves simple and effective procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners wishing to rent out their property contact the approved body of their choice. The body offers to rent the property below market rates, while offering a range of attractive benefits in return. • The owner and the subsidised organisation sign the lease contract. Next, the tenant's task is to select an occupant according to various criteria. • The partner fulfils its obligations as a tenant and looks after the occupant, as well as carrying out minor maintenance work on the property. • Renting out your property in collaboration with an approved partner is not only a social act, it also offers a number of advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guaranteed rent: By signing a lease with an approved partner, the rent is guaranteed to be paid every month without fail, even if the property is not occupied. ○ Tax exemption: An owner can benefit from a 75% tax exemption on net rental income (2017 tax reform - Art. 115/22a L.I.R.), substantially offsetting the fact that the owners are renting their property for around 30 to 40% less than on the private market. • |
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- Supervision of the occupier: The occupant of the property is supervised by a team of professionals in the social field, who provide support throughout the term of the contract and intervene if necessary.
- Availability of the property: The property remains available to the owner and her/his family. In the event of personal need, the property will be returned to you quickly. The occupants of the property will be rehoused by the partner.
- Maintenance of the property: The contracted partners have technical teams on hand to monitor and carry out minor maintenance work on the property.

The Foundation for Access to Housing uses the “Ethos” (European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion) criteria to prioritize applicants for social housing. BPIs living in structures therefore acquire a certain priority.^[viii]

Other possibilities are obtaining affordable housing are proposed by the Housing Fund and the National Low-Cost Housing Administration as well as the municipalities.

The Ministry of Housing may provide a financial participation of up to 100% of the cost of construction of housing destined for AIPs, as per Article 12 of the recently voted law from 21st July 2023^[ix]. This was already possible in the previous law of 25th February 1979. However, the project has to be initiated and followed up by a non-profit organisation. Hence, the number of such projects are rather restricted, since organisations generally target housing projects not restricted to a specific population. In the 2022 report of the “Fonds special de soutien au développement du logement », this specific sub-section accounts for three projects totaling 10 accommodations.^[x]

^[i] National Solidarity Fund, 19 July 2023.

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| | | <p>[ii] National Reception Office - Office national de l'accueil, Tout savoir sur l'accueil des demandeurs et bénéficiaires de protection internationale (DPI/BPI) dans les communes, Luxembourg, 2021, p. 47. URL : https://ona.gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/pdf/guide-tout-savoir-DPI-BPI-communes-FR.pdf</p> <p>[iii] Ibid.</p> <p>[iv] LISKO- Luxembourg Red Cross, 28 July 2023.</p> <p>[v] Ibid., p. 48. See also, Caritas.lu, Logement. URL: https://www.caritas.lu/refugies-migrants/services/logement</p> <p>[vi] Ibid.</p> <p>[vii] Ibid.</p> <p>[viii] https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homeless....</p> <p>[ix] Draft Law n°7937 voted on 21 July 2023 by the Chamber of Deputies, https://www.chd.lu/fr/dossier/7937.</p> <p>[x] Ministry of Housing- Department Brick aid, 18 September.</p> <p>7. N/A. See answer to question 6.</p> <p>8. No. In principle the control is done before the guarantees are given not a posteriori. In the case of accommodation made available under the social rental guarantee scheme, the standards of suitable accommodation are checked when the lease contract is signed between the owner and the approved body. The applicant is offered suitable accommodation.</p> <p>9. No.</p> |
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| | | | <p>10. N/A.</p> <p>11. There have been only partial evaluations of certain measures. A particular challenge remains the high proportion of BIPs accommodated in the AIPs accommodation network (41.7% of all people accommodated there at the end of December 2022), with an average duration that continues to increase. The BIP, including the BIP residing in the hostel, may be joined by family members without having to provide proof of independent accommodation, if the application for family reunification is submitted within 3 months of the granting of status. According to different stakeholders, there are various obstacles to accessing the private property market as a BPI: the housing crisis in general, which already complicates access to property for local people, the low rate of employability partly due to a lack of command of the country's languages or complications linked to childcare facilities, especially for women accessing employment, lack of permanent contracts, lack of financial resources to acquire housing, especially for large families, ...[i] It should be noted that in the ministerial circular no. 4152 of 15 June 2022, the Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Housing state that the package of measures put in place in 2015 providing for financial and administrative support to facilitate access to housing for people eligible for rental housing subsidies, under agreements signed between local authorities and the State, has not been as successful as expected: between 2015 and the beginning of 2022, 30 homes were made available to BIPs on the basis of around twenty agreements for the provision of housing by the local authority (either its own housing or housing rented by the local authority to private individuals) signed between the Ministry of the Interior and local authorities.[ii] In the above-mentioned circular, local authorities were informed that the provisions set out in circular no. 3324 of 24 November 2015 would no longer be renewed. The Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Housing have recommended that local authorities adopt a more appropriate approach by signing a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Housing as part of the social rental management scheme.[iii]</p> |
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| | | <p>Since then, the Ministry of the Interior has not concluded any new agreement for the provision of accommodation to the BIP.[iv]</p> <p>The targeted population of BIPs is granted benefits pursuant to article 4(3) of the modified law of July, 28th 2018 relating to a Social Inclusion Income. This article is encompassing other groups of population who aren't separately listed. It is impossible to extract reliable data to quantify and evaluate this specific measure.[v]</p> <p>[i] Housing Access Foundation- Social Housing Agency, 17 August 2023, National Reception Office, 14 August 2023</p> <p>[ii] Ministry of Interior- Department of local affairs, 18 July 2023.</p> <p>[iii] Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Housing, Circular 4152 social rental management, 15 June 2022.</p> <p>[iv] Ministry of Interior- Department of local affairs, 18 July 2023.</p> <p>[v] National Solidarity Fund, 19 July 2023.</p> <p>12. It turned out that the system of social rental guarantees and the system of social rental management (GLS) has a greater impact than the agreements signed between the State and the municipalities for the provision of housing to BIPs.</p> <p>The "Ethos" criteria to prioritize applicants for social housing.[i]</p> <p>Concerning the response to question 6, paying Social Inclusion Income to BIP living for free in a common household with non-beneficiaries is boosting the economic situation of the targeted population for a twelve month period and helping to create better conditions to access autonomous housing later on allowing them to create a small amount of savings.[ii]</p> <p>[i] Housing Access Foundation- Social Housing Agency, 17 August 2023.</p> |
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| | | | [ii] National Solidarity Fund, 19 July 2023 |
| |  EMN NCP Malta | No | |
| |  EMN NCP Netherlands | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure; Data for Q1 q1_nl_contribution_inform_autonomous_housing.docx</p> <p>2. The municipalities in the Netherlands provide housing for beneficiaries of international protection. Some of the main challenges municipalities experience are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ▪ • The general housing shortage (also in social housing); Municipalities are dependent on housing associations for providing and building social housing. This can lead to a shortage of social housing in certain municipalities and thus lead to a delay in the allocation of housing to beneficiaries of international protection.[1] • Mismatches in type of housing available (family houses) vs. household size of beneficiaries (1 or 2-persons);[2] |

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- Concentration of beneficiaries and vulnerable households in the same buildings and neighbourhoods.[3] Choosing the locations to house beneficiaries of international protection sometimes comes with societal tension within the municipalities. This can also delay the process of allocating houses to beneficiaries.[4]
- Meeting the quotas set by the Ministry of Justice and Security (see Q3); There is a backlog in meeting the quota for the housing of beneficiaries. This backlog is mainly caused by the aforementioned reasons, but is in itself also a reason for the delay in housing beneficiaries.[5] Bigger municipalities have more difficulty in housing beneficiaries due to relatively high land and house prices, a relatively large group that need housing assistance and therefore competition for social housing.[6]

[1] Information provided by Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) on 3 August 2023.

[2] Information provided by Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023.

[3] Information provided by Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023.

[4] Information provided by Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) on 3 August 2023.

[5] Rijksoverheid, 'Huisvesting statushouder',

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/asielbeleid/huisvesting-asielzoekers-met-verblijfsvergunning>,

last accessed on 7 September 2023.

[6] Information provided by Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 4 September 2023.

3.

COA: The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers - COA) provides shelter for applicants of international protection. After they have received a status, the COA matches them to a municipality. Every half year, the central government determines the number of

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beneficiaries of international protection a municipality must house: the municipal task. The COA matches the beneficiary by looking at where they have the best opportunities to build a new life and contribute to society. The COA conducts a screening interview with the refugee. This interview serves to gather information regarding their educational background, professional experience within the country of origin, vocational aspirations, and social connections. Furthermore, factors such as the presence of immediate family members, medical specifics, and ongoing educational or occupational pursuits within the Netherlands are taken into account. Subsequent to the screening interview, an evaluation is undertaken to determine the most fitting reception centre for the designated beneficiary of international protection. These reception centres are a temporary location and the COA tries to accommodate the beneficiary close to the place where they will be living and working later. Within a span of 2 weeks, the responsible overseer undertakes the task of matching the beneficiary with a municipality, optimizing their prospects for integration.[1]

Because of the shortage in housing, municipalities usually don't have a home readily available after beneficiaries of international protection are matched. In those cases, they will remain in the reception centre longer, or make use of the COA's hosting scheme.[2]

The Municipalities: The municipalities in the Netherlands provide housing for beneficiaries of international protection. This means that beneficiaries do not autonomously access housing. They do not choose the municipality where they're going to live themselves, they are matched. On the basis of data in the Task Monitoring System (TVS), municipalities appoint housing. This is almost always housing via a housing association, which fits the definition of adequate housing. [3] This is enforced by quota from the Minister for Migration, through the Housing Law 2014.[4] Provinces are responsible for supervising that municipalities meet their quota. Beneficiaries of international protection are not required to accept housing offered by the municipality, but refusing housing that is adequate ends their right for shelter and means they need to provide in their own housing. In rare cases beneficiaries of international protection proactively find housing themselves, for example through relatives or an employer.[5]

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Regional level: Provinces play a supervising role when it comes to the placement of beneficiaries of international protection within the municipalities.[6]

National level: Both the Ministry for public housing and spatial planning and the Ministry Justice and Security support the process in various ways (knowledge, information, occasional subsidies for specific housing solutions). [7] The Ministry of Justice and Security determines every six months how many beneficiaries of international protection municipalities must provide housing for. This number is outlined in the allocation quota for accommodating residence to beneficiaries of international protection (De taakstelling voor huisvesting vergunninghouders). The distribution among municipalities is based on their population. Larger municipalities are required to offer housing to more beneficiaries than smaller municipalities.[8]

[1] COA, 'Housing of status holders', <https://www.coa.nl/en/housing-status-holders>, last accessed on 13 July 2023.

[2] COA, 'Housing of status holders', <https://www.coa.nl/en/housing-status-holders>, last accessed on 13 July 2023.

[3] COA, 'Housing of status holders', <https://www.coa.nl/en/housing-status-holders>, last accessed on 13 July 2023.

[4] Housing Act 2014 (Huisvestingswet 2014), Article 28-29.

[5] Information provided by Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023.

[6] Information provided by Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 4 September 2023.

[7] Information provided by Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023.

[8] Rijksoverheid, 'Huisvesting statushouder', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/asielbeleid/huisvesting-asielzoekers-met-verblijfsvergunning>, last accessed on 25 August 2023.

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4. Collaboration and information exchange between the COA and the respective municipalities plays a pivotal role in ensuring the trajectory of civic integration, spanning from the reception centre to the municipality. Information transfer from the COA to the designated municipality happens through the client profile, managed within the digital Task Monitoring System (TVS).[1]

[1] COA, 'Housing of status holders', <https://www.coa.nl/en/housing-status-holders>, last accessed on 13 July 2023.

5. Yes, in the "Pre-Integration" program, beneficiaries of international protection are provided with practical information about independent living in the Netherlands. The COA encourages beneficiaries of international protection to participate in the program and prepare for their future. Participation is not mandatory, but it is expected. The course prepares beneficiaries of international protection for their initial months in the municipality where they are provided housing. Through interactive activities and assignments, participants acquire practical skills and knowledge for living in the Netherlands.[1]

[1] COA, 'Programma Voorbereiding op inburgering', <https://www.coa.nl/nl/programma-voorbereiding-op-inburgering>, last accessed on 13 July 2023.

6. The municipalities in the Netherlands provide housing for beneficiaries of international protection. [1] While doing so they are supported by the following national policies;

- The Acceleration Temporary Housing Taskforce; in May 2022 this taskforce was established to support municipalities, provinces, and other parties in the field of public housing. The Taskforce

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collaborates with various stakeholders, such as RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency), Aedes^[2], VNG (The Association of Netherlands Municipalities), provincial governments, umbrella organizations, and knowledge institutions. The Taskforce assists in various aspects including legal procedures, developing a business case for creating additional public housing, identifying suitable locations for flexible housing units and/or buildings for transformation, and promoting collaboration between municipalities, housing associations, and other involved parties. ^[3]

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- Financing social housing projects: Municipalities can apply for financial assistance via the Housing Focus Groups (RHA) scheme to build social housing for certain groups, which includes beneficiaries of international protection. Municipalities can receive up to 2.000.000 euro per year for building projects from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, with a maximum of 34.705.000 for all municipalities per year.^[4]

^[1] COA, 'Housing of status holders', <https://www.coa.nl/en/housing-status-holders>, last accessed on 13 July 2023.

^[2] Aedes is the umbrella organization representing housing corporations.

^[3] Rijksoverheid, 'Taskforce Versnelling Tijdelijke Huisvesting', <https://www.volkshuisvestingnederland.nl/onderwerpen/versnellen-tijdelijke-huisvesting/taskforce-versnelling-tijdelijke-huisvesting>, last accessed on 25 August 2023.

^[4] RVO, 'Regeling huisvesting aandachtsgroepen (RHA)', <https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-financiering/rha#wie-zijn-de-aandachtsgroepen%3F>, last accessed on 25 August 2023.

7.

The following regional/local policies and measures are available to support the access to housing for beneficiaries of international protection;

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ○ ▪ • About half of municipalities have a local ordinance that make beneficiaries of international protection a preferential group for the allocation of social housing. Usually such an ordinance offers multiple groups with such preferential treatment, other examples of such groups are vulnerable households or persons that need to move because of urban renewal projects.[1] • Most municipalities provide a furnishing budget (loan or gift) to beneficiaries. [2] • Municipalities will also provide information and practical support, typically through a for this purpose contracted (volunteer) organisation like the Dutch Council for Refugees (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland - VWN).[3] <p>[1] Information provided by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023. [2] Information provided by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023. [3] Information provided by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on 31 July 2023.</p> <p>8. Municipalities themselves have some leeway in what they consider adequate housing. Housing that is provided is almost always social housing, which means that the costs are by definition affordable and which always have to adhere to building codes. In very rare cases the provided housing is deemed unsuitable because of size or a medical condition of the beneficiary. In cases where the beneficiary has complaints about the suitability of the housing they have already accepted, these complaints are initially processed by the housing cooperation that provides the housing. In some cases the municipality also gets involved during this process. In instances where the conflict cannot be resolved, a judge will take a decision.[1]</p> |
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Beneficiaries of International protection can reject housing that is assigned to them. They then have to explain why the housing provided is unsuitable to the COA. If they have rejected the house with a good reason, the municipality will offer another house. If the house has been rejected without good reason, the COA will advise them to accept the house and then to start looking for another house themselves once moved in. If they do not accept the house anyway, the COA will stop providing for them and will start a legal proceeding. In these cases a judge takes a decision.[2]

[1] Information provided by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) on 3 September 2023.

[2] COA, 'Rejecting the house offered by the municipality', <https://www.mycoa.nl/en/content/rejecting-house-offered-municipality>, last accessed on 25 August 2023.

9.
Not Applicable.

10.
Not Applicable.

11.
No, most of the policies mentioned in Q 6 have been recently enacted and have not been evaluated. Policies mentioned in Q7 have not been evaluated recently either. However, the Advisory Council on Migration (ACVZ) has recently published an advisory report on bottlenecks in the housing of beneficiaries of international protection in municipalities. The report identified that the following combination of circumstances poses a significant challenge to the timely housing of beneficiaries of international protection in municipalities; the housing crisis, the asylum system crisis and several challenges in the execution and implementation of migration policies at the local level.[1]

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| | | | <p>[1] ACVZ, <u>Adviesrapport Een huis voor statushouders</u>, 2022.</p> <p>12. The measures mentioned in Q6 have been introduced very recently and have not been evaluated yet. Therefore no information is available at this moment. Policies mentioned in Q7 vary broadly on a local level, general information about their effectiveness is not available at this moment.</p> |
| | EMN NCP Poland | Yes | <p>1. Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure; Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; Not available. □ Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure; N/I. □ Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; 01.01.2022 – 482930.06.2022 – 376431.12.2023 - 2963 Source of data: collected by the Office for Foreigners.x Other, please specify*</p> <p>2. - Lack of trust from the landlord. - Insufficient amount of money to rent a flat. Barriers and challenges are reported by foreigners directly to an employee of the Office for Foreigners or employees of non-governmental organisations that the Office cooperates with. Reports are made orally or in writing. The Office for Foreigners keeps applications from foreigners in their personal files.</p> |

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3. The Office for Foreigners supports applicants for international protection in accordance with the Act on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland by social assistance provided to them outside the center in the form of monthly allowance.

Foreigners organise their stay outside the centers on their own although in particular cases they receive support from the Office employees and NGOs.

Foreigners who have obtained refugee status in Poland, subsidiary protection or a temporary residence permit granted in connection with the circumstances referred to in Article 159 section 1 point 1 letter c or d of the Act of 12 December 2013 on foreigners (i.e. they stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland in order to reunite with their family and are family members of a foreigner residing in the territory of the Republic of Poland in connection with granting him refugee status or subsidiary protection) are entitled to integration assistance in the form of an Individual Integration Program (in Polish: Indywidualny Program Integracji -IPI). Assistance for a foreigner also covers a minor child for the duration of the implementation of an individual integration program by his or her legal representative.

As part of the implementation of IPI, beneficiaries of international protection receive various types of support, including: monthly cash benefits intended to cover living costs, in particular covering expenses for food, clothing, footwear, personal hygiene products and housing fees.

Assistance is provided for a period not longer than 12 months, depending on the justified, individual needs of the foreigner. IPI is agreed between the district family support center (PCPR) and the foreigner. A social worker of PCPR carries out the so-called background interview with the foreigner and his family, and then constructs the IPI together with him. The program specifies the amount, scope and forms of integration assistance as well as the mutual obligations of the foreigner and PCPR. For example the indicated authority is obliged to provide assistance in obtaining housing, including in the assisted living facility if the foreigner meets the conditions for granting this type of support.

4.

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The Office for Foreigners cooperates with non-governmental organizations that support foreigners in looking for a place to live on the free housing market. The cooperation consists of providing foreigners with information about NGOs and providing assistance in establishing contact with them.

5.

As part of orientation courses for foreigners applying for international protection conducted in the centers, the Office for Foreigners familiarises foreigners with the rules of life outside the center and with the basic Polish norms and customs, the knowledge of which is necessary to find oneself in Polish society. Courses include also information on the housing market in Poland and the possibilities to access it.

There are also Polish language courses to reduce the language barrier between foreigners and landlords. Foreigners have access to information brochures, leaflets in a language they understand, prepared by the Office for Foreigners.

6.

Foreigners applying for international protection in accordance with the Act on granting protection within the territory of the Republic of Poland can benefit from social assistance provided at a centre for foreigners or outside a centre in the form of monthly allowance to cover costs of living on their own. Monthly amounts of cash allowance for the costs of subsistence in Poland are as follow (per family members) 1 person in a family – 750 PLN a month per person; 2 persons in a family – 600 PLN a month per person; 3 persons in a family – 450 PLN a month per person; 4 persons in a family – 375 PLN a month per person.

7.

Foreigners applying for international protection and foreigners who have received a positive decision but are still receiving social assistance from the Office for Foreigners, a social worker at the center for foreigners provides assistance in finding accommodation by:


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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing contacts with NGOs that provide housing programmes, e.g. occasional rentals of flats for up to 30 days, housing subsidies, non-refundable aid for foreigners, furnishing of flats with the necessary furniture and household appliances, - Establishing contacts with the City and Municipality Authorities in order to allocate social or communal housing to a foreigner, - Providing assistance in establishing direct contact with the landlord, assistance in translation <p>8. Yes, employees of the Department for Social Assistance of the Office for Foreigners carry out visits to applicants receiving cash benefits to cover the costs of their stay in Poland in order to verify housing conditions. In connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, visits have not been implemented in recent years. They are implemented now. Employees check the material conditions in which applicants live, their access to medical care, and – in case of children – the implementation of compulsory vaccinations and compulsory schooling. Families with children have been selected for visits this year, and special attention is focused on the situation of single parents. In cases where poor housing conditions are identified, a return to the center is recommended. During visits to applicants' flats in previous years, no large number of poor housing conditions were identified. At least two cases of poor conditions in which foreigners lived were identified in 2018.</p> <p>9. No</p> <p>10. N/a</p> <p>11.</p> |
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| | | | <p>In the case of foreigners applying for international protection who receive assistance outside the centre, employees of the Office for Foreigners visit them regularly, after informing about the planned visit. One of the elements of the visits is to verify the housing conditions and if necessary and possible provide support, in particular to vulnerable applicants such as disabled or elderly people, persons with serious illnesses, pregnant women, single parents with minor children. The visits are summarised with a report. The reports provide a view of how foreigners cope with living outside the center – do they require support in social assistance, medical care or access to the education system in Poland.</p> <p>12. Good practices: Regular monitoring by the employees of the Office for Foreigners the conditions in flats rented by foreigners receiving social assistance outside of the centre. In this way, it is possible to identify a vulnerable group, with special needs or living in poor conditions and provide them with additional assistance. Good practices include a possibility to provide support in terms of living of applicants for international protection outside a center (in Poland in the form of monthly allowance). Current trends (80% of people live outside the centres) show that this solution significantly reduces the burden on the centers in the scope of providing accommodation.</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Portu gal | Yes | <p>1. N/A</p> <p>2. The main barriers and challenges reported by beneficiaries and applicants for international protection in Portugal are:a) Housing costs and lack of affordable housing: in recent years, rental prices in Portugal increased, making it difficult for many individuals and families to afford autonomous housing. There's also a shortage of affordable housing, which often leads to long waiting lists for public or subsidized housing. Beneficiaries and applicants for international protection find it challenging to secure housing at a</p> |

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| | | <p>reasonable cost.b) Documentation and bureaucracy: understanding and navigating the legal requirements for renting a property, or benefit from governmental support, can be a barrier as well. Beneficiaries and applicants for international protection often don't have all the documentation requested, for example the IRS from the previous years, work contracts, or a guarantors. c) Language barriers and lack of social networks: for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection, language barriers can also thwart the process of finding and securing housing, as well as the absence of connections or networks where information on housing might emerge. d) Discrimination: beneficiaries and applicants for international protection often feel discrimination when seeking housing, especially discrimination based on nationality, repeatedly reading that landlords prefer nationals over foreigners. This creates additional challenges for this population.</p> <p>3. a) The Institute of Housing and Urban Rehabilitation, I.P. (IHRU, IP) is a public institute which ensure the implementation of the policy defined by the Government for the areas of housing and urban rehabilitation, in conjunction with municipality's policies.b) Municipalities - It should be the municipalities to define the housing strategyc) Non-governmental organizations welcoming beneficiaries and applicants for international protection.</p> <p>4. Cooperation and coordination of support to beneficiaries and applicants of international protection, including access to autonomous housing is secured by the Grupo Operativo Único (GOU) Single Operating Group, coordinated by the High Commission for Migrations, the SEF (Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service) and the Social Security Institute.</p> <p>5. The Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR) provides information and support from social workers in the transition from the collective reception centres to autonomous housing, including sessions on sustainability, including financial.</p> |
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| | | <p>6. YES In principle, the following programs are also available for beneficiaries of international protection, but as mentioned earlier, understanding and navigating the requirements can be a barrier as well. There are also non-governmental organizations that have been working to improve access to housing, including initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing and protect tenants' rights. However, the effectiveness of these measures can vary by region and over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROGRAMA DE ARRENDAMENTO ACESSÍVEL (AFFORDABLE RENTAL PROGRAM) The Renda Acessível Program (PAA) affordable income seeks to promote an extended lease offer at prices compatible with household income. It is a government initiative to try to meet the needs of people whose income level does not allow access to adequate housing on the market. • CONCURSO POR SORTEIO (DRAWING COMPETITION) The Portuguese Government's Housing and Urban Rehabilitation Institute (IHRU) provides part of its assets to expand the offer of affordable housing. The properties are allocated by lot. For each competition, the agency publishes an opening notice with the eligibility conditions and the necessary requirements for those interested. • CHAVE NA MÃO (KEY IN HAND) Chave na Mão – Housing Mobility Program for Territorial Cohesion allows families residing in territories under strong urban pressure, who have their own housing and want to move their residence to territories with low housing density, to make their homes available in affordable rental. • 1º DIREITO (FIRST RIGHT) The 1º Direito – Support Program for Access to Housing aims to support people who live in unworthy housing conditions and who do not have the financial capacity to bear the cost of access to adequate housing. The dynamics of the program are mainly directed towards the rehabilitation of buildings and leasing, promoting social and territorial inclusion. • RENDA APOIADA (SUPPORTED INCOME) Any person or household that lives in undignified conditions, has no housing alternative and is in a financial need can apply for help. You must complete the form on the electronic platform of the Supported Lease. If an entity has available housing or other support to respond to the request, the applicant will be informed. • PORTA 65 – JOVEM (YOUNG – 65 DOOR) The Porta 65 – JOVEM Program is a financial aid system for young people. It supports the rental of residential houses, attributing a percentage of the rent as a monthly subsidy. It aims to boost the market and encourage a more autonomous lifestyle by young people alone, in family or in cohabitation. • PORTA DE ENTRADA (GATEWAY) The PORTA DE ENTRADA applies to situations of urgent need |
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| | | <p>for accommodation for people who, as a result of an unpredictable or exceptional event, are temporarily or permanently deprived of the place where they maintained their permanent residence or who are at risk imminent to be in that condition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RENDA SEGURA (SECURE INCOME) (Lisbon City Council) At Renda Segura, Lisbon City Council, taking advantage of the tax exemptions in the State Budget, will lease houses to owners of local accommodation, vacant properties or free buildings and sublet them at affordable prices through the Accessible Income program. <p>7. • CONCURSO POR SORTEIO (DRAWING COMPETITION) The Portuguese Government's Housing and Urban Rehabilitation Institute (IHRU) provides part of its assets to expand the offer of affordable housing. The properties are allocated by lot. For each competition, the agency publishes an opening notice with the eligibility conditions and the necessary requirements for those interested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PORTA DE ENTRADA (GATEWAY) The PORTA DE ENTRADA applies to situations of urgent need for accommodation for people who, as a result of an unpredictable or exceptional event, are temporarily or permanently deprived of the place where they maintained their permanent residence or who are at risk imminent to be in that condition. • MUNICIPALITIES PROGRAMS (e.g. the Municipality of Castelo Branco) <p>8. In principle, the Grupo Operativo Único (GOU) Single Operating Group, coordinated by the High Commission for Migrations, the SEF and the Social Security Institute, whose mission is to monitor and accompany all applicants or beneficiaries of international protection, should also verify whether autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries and applicants of international protection is adequate, when situations are signalled by the by the participants of this group.</p> <p>9. Yes (AMIF and NextGeneration Funds, via PRR)</p> <p>10. AMIF (National project FAMI) supports access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants of international protection; NextGeneration Funds, via PRR - By 2026, the Government's objective is to</p> |
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| | | | <p>guarantee decent housing for 26 thousand families, via the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR), a Next Generation EU Fund.</p> <p>11. N/A</p> <p>12. • MUNICIPALITIES PROGRAMS (e.g. the Municipality of Castelo Branco) Although the State is responsible for creating instruments that enable the implementation of municipal strategies, is up to municipalities to define the housing strategy. The municipalities' programs have the advantage of allowing beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection to remain in the same city, maintaining close contact not only with local staff, but also with the community. Social contacts and networks remain of extreme importance to beneficiaries and/or applicants of international protection. • CONCURSO POR SORTEIO (DRAWING COMPETITION) This Housing and Urban Rehabilitation Institute (IHRU) program constitutes a good practise because it expands the offer of affordable housing.</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Slova kia | Yes | <p>1. None of the above data are collected</p> <p>2. Both Migration Office's (of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic – as the body responsible for asylum procedure in the Slovak Republic) and helping NGO's (NGO which is contracted by the Migration Office to implement supporting activities in relation to applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection) employees are trying to flexibly respond to given situations and learn from past challenging issues. The main challenges are as follows: A) There is not sufficient number of suitable and affordable accommodation (various forms), e.g. public/social housing (where the condition of 5 years lasting permanent residency in the town must be fulfilled for the application to be accepted by the municipality). B) Commercial housing is mostly not accessible because of the high rental price and there is lack of trust from landlords C) Insufficient capacity of the boarding schools for students, D) Getting a loan to secure their own property is unrealistic for most clients because of their status in the most common case</p> |

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| | | <p>subsidiary protection, where the bank has no guarantee what will happen with the person with subsidiary protection after two years, E) Insufficient income of the loan applicant, i.e. applicant for/beneficiary of the international protection.</p> <p>The Slovak Republic does not collect data on these challenges.</p> <p>3. Mainly: Slovak Humanitarian Council (SHR) – a local NGO providing all sorts of client-oriented services (contracted by the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior for a specific time period to provide these type of services and funded mostly by AMIF); Also: Migration Office (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic) – especially additional intermediation, counseling, and support. If it concerns asylum applicants, they declare to have sufficient means to cover the cost in order to live independently (either by themselves or by the help of their own network). And the municipality (or Office of the self-governing region) .</p> <p>4. The cooperation between the above-mentioned NGO's and the state representatives of the Migration Office occurs on daily basis. In case of families, the SHR as well as respective integration managers of the Migration Office help to find adequate accommodation in apartments provided for rental housing. The cooperation rests both in active communication as well as application of mutually accorded measures.</p> <p>5. The asylum applicants use the option of staying in reception and accommodation centers until they are granted asylum or provided with subsidiary protection. (If they want to live independently, they declare to have enough means covering the necessary costs.) They are provided with useful information regarding the options of collective or individual housing already on the spot. The applicants as well as beneficiaries are also encouraged to search for their independent housing by respective social workers at the accommodation facility (when they find the job demanding to travel for a longer distance from the facility, e.g.), or later on by the NGO social workers as well as the integration managers of the Migration Office.</p> <p>6. We don't have any specific national policy and/or measure aimed at supporting access to autonomous housing as such. In the Act on Asylum it is mentioned that the aim of the primary integration is the</p> |
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| | | <p>inclusion in the society, <u>finding suitable accommodation</u>, employment and acquisition of the Slovak language.</p> <p>Mediation between tenants and landlords is provided by social workers and integration managers. City Councils of selected Slovak cities provide a few integration apartments for the applicants. As for the asylum applicants, it is an independent process as stated above. They (or somebody from their connections in the community) declare they have sufficient means to cover the cost for their independent living outside of the asylum facility.</p> <p>7. Management of apartments available to be rented by the beneficiaries of international protection (see the answer to question no. 6).</p> <p>8. Not applicable. No systematic mechanism is in place except the regular contact with the beneficiaries of international protection.</p> <p>9. One of the goals of the AMIF funded project (called <u>Rifugio</u>, implemented by SHR) is to find autonomous housing as one of the offered services within integration process. Regarding asylum applicants, it is on case by case basis. Support may be provided in the form of counseling (within the social work competency), e.g., explanation of advantages as well as risks to be aware of. The applicants usually find the independent accommodation e.g. when the traveling between the work and accommodation facility becomes time consuming and complicated. It is either provided by the employer or financed from the salary of the applicant.</p> <p>10. Not applicable. No specific project aimed at this measure only.</p> <p>11. No.</p> <p>12. NA</p> |
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| | | | |
|  | EMN NCP Slove nia | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; On 31 December 2022, there were 788 beneficiaries of international protection, who have accessed autonomous housing.</p> <p>2. Beneficiaries and applicants for international protection face many challenges accessing autonomous housing in Slovenia. They are facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discrimination in accessing housing market (majority of landlords will prioritize Slovenian citizens over foreigners, lack of trust, some of them stating this condition already in the ads), • General market housing situation (Slovenia lack housing policy, which is the reason that renting market is not regulated, resulting in high prices on private renting market and lack of social and public housing possibilities). High prices and guarantees (2-3 months deposit) demands also limit access to housing to beneficiaries of international protection and applicants. • Small rent market in Slovenia (there is very limited number of apartments to rent on the market in Slovenia due to the past state policies, which enabled the citizens to be in 90% owners of their apartments). <p>3. An NGO as implementing partner of Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants is officially the only one responsible to give support in searching for housing on the rental market in Slovenia to beneficiaries of international protection. There are however other organizations that do this on voluntary basis.</p> <p>4. NGOs cooperate with the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants.</p> |


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| | | <p>5. There are plans to enable access to social and public housing to beneficiaries of international protection (changing the current criteria).</p> <p>6. Beneficiaries of international protection can get financial support for autonomous housing if they do not have their own means of financing. Financial support can last for maximum of two years if a person under international protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has concluded a contract on integration activities, • attends Slovenian language course including learning about Slovenian society at least 80% and • come to interview on monthly basis. <p>NGOs can help in searching private accommodation and be the mediator between tenants and landlords, if the integration contract is signed.</p> <p>Moreover, beneficiaries of international protection can stay in accommodation facilities of the office - integration house (in Ljubljana or Maribor), until one year. It is also possible to expand the stay for 6 months.</p> <p>7. /</p> <p>8. No.</p> <p>9. AMIF as mentioned in the project implementation and financial support for rent and utilities costs for beneficiaries of international protection in first 2 years (75 % EU funds).</p> <p>10. See reply to previous question.</p> |
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| | | | <p>11. They have been evaluated within the project.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is necessary to establish measures to increase access to rental housing; - it is necessary to establish programs that would fight against racism and xenophobia in the society. <p>12. /</p> |
|  | EMN NCP Spain | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing;</p> <p>2. 1. The intervention with the recipients of the International and Temporary Protection Reception System will be carried out through an itinerary that will involve an assessment, intervention and accompaniment adapted to each situation. These itineraries are oriented towards the gradual acquisition of autonomy and are divided into phases. The itinerary of the Reception System begins with an evaluation and referral phase (Phase E. and D.), in which the profile and needs of the applicants are assessed for referral to the most appropriate resource. Once this assessment is completed, the Reception phase (1st phase) begins and then the preparation phase for autonomy (2nd phase). In the evaluation and referral and reception phase, the reception will be provided through hostels, hotels, centres and housing and in phase 2 of autonomy an economic aid is provided to be able to rent a house in the free market. The duration of stay in the System is 18 months and 24 months for vulnerable persons. The transition to the autonomy phase will only be carried out by those with the favorable resolution of international protection.</p> <p>FASE E. Y D. PRIMERA FASE SEGUNDA FASE 1ª Acogida Acogida en Centro Preparación para la autonomía</p> |

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The 2022 data are then provided, referring to the number of beneficiaries and applicants for international protection who have accessed each of the phases of the Reception System, in particular Phase 2 (autonomous housing), as well as the average length of stay at that stage (in days).

| | People served | Average Time Stay |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Phase 0 (Initial Valuation) | 47.652 | 138 |
| Phase 1 (Reception) | 30.823 | 294 |
| Phase 2 (Preparation Autonomy) | 11.382 | 386 |

2. The main obstacle and challenge is the price of housing in the free market. In Spain, the free market for housing rentals has become more expensive since January 2022, which is causing a real problem for the access of nationals and beneficiaries of international protection.

Also, the lack of confidence of the owner with regard to the rental, due to the lack of knowledge of the documentation and legal form without any problems having been reported as regards the purchase of the house in these aspects.

The problems are communicated to us from the reception system by the reception centres of direct management CAR and the social entities that support us in the management of the reception system, since they are the ones competent to support the beneficiaries of International Protection in the search for housing for their transition to the autonomous phase of the program of the Reception System.

3. As we have mentioned the Reception System is composed of three phases, the first two the attention to people is provided in kind (centers, hostels, housing, etc.) and in the autonomy phase it is carried out through economic aid for access to the rent of housing in the free market.

In the three phases of which the reception system is composed, the authority responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing is the Secretary of State for Migration through the Directorate-General for

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Management of the International and Temporary Protection System DGGAPIT, and it is through its four direct management centres CAR and the 23 social entities collaborating in the management of the system, which directly support applicants and beneficiaries of International and temporary protection so that they can access the rental of a house, including mediation and support for access to housing.

4. In the case of the Reception System, each person is assigned to a directly managed social entity or centre, CAR, and they are responsible for supporting applicants and beneficiaries in accessing housing, through the financing provided by the Secretary of State for Migration managed through DGGAPIT.

5. Yes. There is always a process of preparation and prior planning to facilitate the transition from a center to a common home in the autonomous phase, in which they will have an autonomous house, rented in the free market. These supports are varied and range from the provision of information (about the housing market in Spain, rental contracts, tax information, etc.) to accompanying the search and in the visit to possible housing. This support is mainly provided through social workers and housing mediators.

6. This question covers both national mainstreaming policies and/or measures to which beneficiaries and applicants for international protection have access as well as targeted policies and/or measures addressing this specific group.

Yes, through financial support. As long as the person is within the reception system of International and Temporary Protection, and has not finished their time of stay within the system, beneficiaries of international protection will receive financial support directed among others, to rent a home, and this support will not only be for a rental amount, but also include other concepts such as bail, housing rental insurance or agency management.

As we have mentioned, there is support for the preparation of the purchase of a rental home, as well as a mediation between tenants and landlords.


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| | | | <p>7. —The “TECHO Platform” was launched in October 2022, which aims to channel in an orderly manner the offers of buildings by individuals, organisations or associations, among others, aimed at individuals or families integrated into the Reception System and, preferably, for those displaced from the crisis in Ukraine. The users of the “TECHO Platform” will be the entities authorised by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration to attend the Reception System, which will have the role of intermediaries between those interested in offering their properties and the recipients of said properties under a lease or assignment of free use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">—Financial support that includes housing rental, bonds and housing rental insurance.—Preparation for the search and exit of a dwelling.—Support of mediators and social workers in the search for access to autonomous housing. <p>8. In the case of the Reception System if there is a verification of the type of housing due to the fact that, as we mentioned in your search, social workers and housing mediators participate so that there are legal and adequate requirements.</p> <p>9. No. In recent years, all the financing necessary for access to self-catering housing has shifted to the Spanish state.</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11. NO</p> <p>12. As we have pointed out, a formal assessment has not been carried out, although it has been possible to see positive aspects of the support measure provided by social workers and housing mediators who have been operating in recent years.</p> |
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|  | <p>EMN NCP Sweden</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; Average number of days/months until beneficiaries and applicants of international protection have access to autonomous housing since they are admitted to the international protection procedure; Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; 2. No information available. 3. No information available. 4. No information available. 5. No information available. 6. No information available. 7. No information available. 8. For housing provided by the Swedish Migration Agency for applicants of international protection the Agency carries out quality controls to ensure adequate housing. 9. No information available. 10. N/A. 11. No information available. |
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| | | | 12. No information available. |
|  | EMN NCP Serbia | Yes | <p>1. Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing; Number of beneficiaries and applicants of international protection who received financial / or in-kind support to access autonomous housing; Based on the Commissariat's for Refugee and Migration data, in 2022, 29 beneficiaries out of 30 applicants who were granted international protection have accessed autonomous housing while one person have to be accommodated in collective accommodation due the special needs. Based on the Asylum Office's data, in 2022, 58 applicants for international protection were residing at private addresses During 2022, ten beneficiaries of international protection started to receive financial support for autonomous housing. Other beneficiaries of international protection were not eligible for financial support (i.e. have income above prescribed threshold) or did not apply. (Source: Commissariat for Refugees and Migration)</p> <p>2. The main challenges for individuals when moving to a private address are high rental prices of apartments in Belgrade, the Serbian capital, since almost all beneficiaries want to live there due various reasons (social connections, job opportunities, etc.). Apart to price, language barriers are often reported as obstacle for renting desirable housing space. Information about the challenges is collected by the Commissariat for refugees and Migration, which is the state authority responsible for material reception conditions and integration. Also, an integration case worker conducts interviews with every beneficiary of international protection to assist in creating a thorough integration plan and to address challenges the individual may be facing. Additionally, together with UNHCR, focus groups are organizing periodically, in order to identify challenges and obstacles in integration process.</p> |

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| | | <p>3. Existing legal framework does not foresee support for autonomous housing for applicants for international protection. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is the competent state authority for the integration process of beneficiaries of international protection. Integration support includes housing support that, depending of individual circumstances of beneficiary, may be in the form of financial assistance. In this regard, the Commissariat grants monthly financial assistance for housing for a duration of one year after international protection approval.</p> <p>4. Apart to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, UNHCR is organisation that provides different support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. In order to coordinate activities with responsible state authority, joint team was established. The Team has regular meetings and exchange all relevant information in order to avoid overlapping and misused of support. In addition, specific cases may occur in the cases of trafficking or domestic violence, where special shelters for the victims may be provided. Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, as responsible authority, established cooperation with all service provider in order to ensure timely exchange of relevant information on all beneficiaries of international protection.</p> <p>5. Information sessions are organized for applicants of international protection in the centres in order to facilitate their transition from centre to local community. Sessions include different topics like housing, employment, health system, education and other relevant topics. Topic on housing covers information on apartment prices in different cities, specifics of local life, procedure related to address changing, etc. For beneficiaries of international protection, an integration counsellor conducts individual interviews that involve assessing accommodation needs and providing necessary information regarding the possibility of applying for monthly financial housing support offered by the Commiss. An interpreter may be engaged to</p> |
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| | | | <p>support beneficiary in different procedures (i.e. opening bank account, conducting conversation with landlords)</p> <p>In the case of vulnerable categories, accommodation needs assessment is conducted in collaboration with other relevant authorities (Social Welfare Center, Ministry of Health, Center for Human Trafficking Protection, etc.).</p> <p>6. Yes. There is financial support for the beneficiaries of international protection. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration provides monthly financial assistance for housing (for a period of one year). This is regulated by the Regulation on criteria for financial support for housing to the beneficiaries of international protection.</p> <p>7. Each local self-government unit is obligated to develop its own local plan for migration that covers various categories of migrants (applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, returnees under readmission agreements, IDPs, refugees from the region, diaspora etc.). Municipalities define the challenges they face and propose measures to improve the situation based on the analysis of the specific situation on their territory. Taking into consideration small number of beneficiaries of international protection, there is no local self-government that identified housing for beneficiaries of international protection as problem/challenge for which special measures are needed.</p> <p>8. In the Republic of Serbia, there is no formal mechanism for systematically verifying whether private accommodation meets adequate standards. However, an integration counsellor can conduct visits to the accommodation if the beneficiary of international protection receives a monthly financial allowance for housing to ensure that the allowance is being used for adequate housing.</p> |
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| | | <p>9. No, all the funds allocated for the integration support are provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia.</p> <p>10. N/A</p> <p>11. The structured evaluation of the national integration program was not conducted. However, in 2019 Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and UNHCR jointly conducted research on obstacles in integration process among beneficiaries of international protection in the Republic of Serbia. Part of research report was dedicated to statistics. The added value of research was its methodology that includes all beneficiaries of international protection that received positive decision from 2008, when state took asylum procedure from UNHCR. Out of 54 interviewed individuals who received asylum between 2008 and 2019, a total of 34 of them requested and received monthly financial housing support from the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. Furthermore, in 2019, out of the 35 individuals granted asylum, 27 of them sought and received financial housing support. Thus, it was concluded that this is essential support for transition from organized to autonomous housing. Link to the study: https://kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/lzazovi_u_integraciji_2019.pdf</p> <p>12. In addition to financial support as mentioned in Q11, early provision of information to applicants for international protection is recognised as a good practice. Sessions facilitate inclusion in local community by introducing to applicants different procedures, practices and relevant information on housing, apartment</p> |
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| | | | prices, available support, employment opportunities, education, health service, local tradition and other relevant topics. |
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