

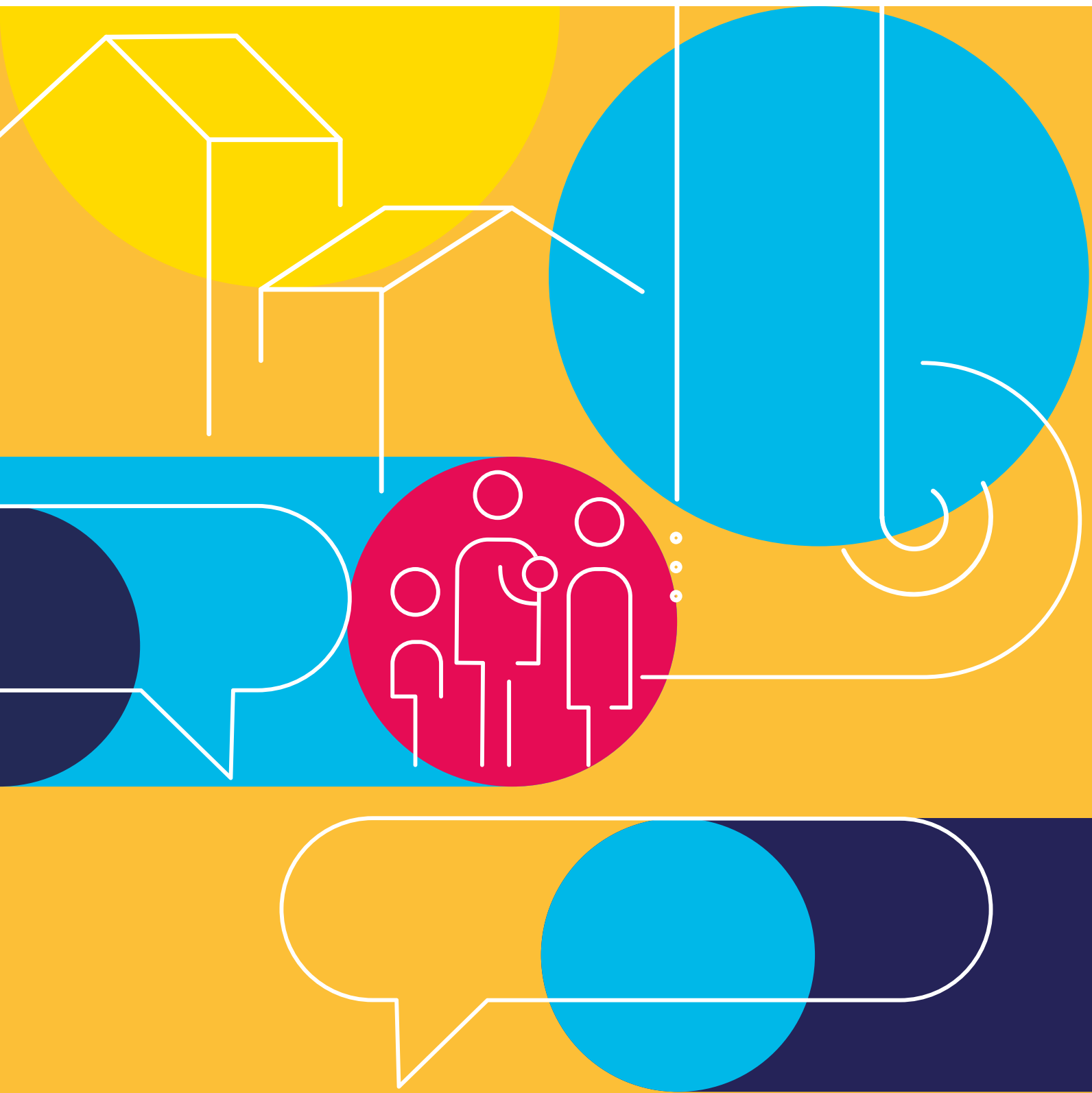
# The European benchmark for refugee integration:

A comparative analysis of the National Integration  
Evaluation Mechanism in 14 EU countries



**NIEM**  
ALL IN FOR INTEGRATION

Baseline Report



ALEXANDER WOLFFHARDT, CARMINE CONTE and THOMAS HUDDLESTON

# **THE EUROPEAN BENCHMARK FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION:**

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF THE NATIONAL  
INTEGRATION EVALUATION  
MECHANISM IN 14 EU  
COUNTRIES



INSTITUTE OF  
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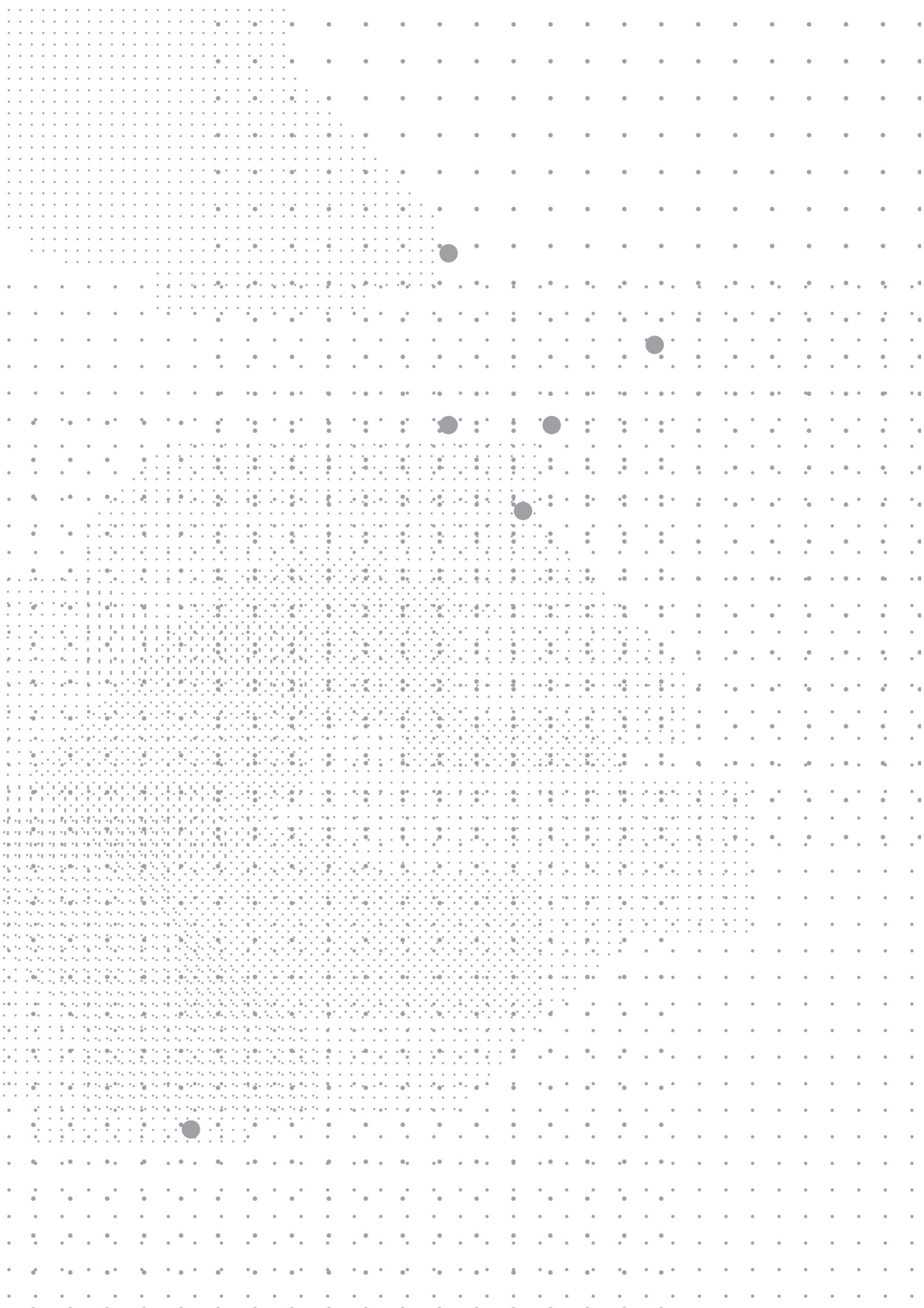


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This report presents a comparative, indicator-based assessment of the refugee integration frameworks in place in 14 EU countries. Analysis is focused on legal indicators, policy indicators and indicators which measure mainstreaming, policy coordination, as well as efforts aimed at participation and involvement of the receiving society. Results are being presented in relation to the concrete steps policymakers need to take in order to establish a refugee integration framework that is in line with the standards required by international and EU law, namely the building blocks “Setting the Legal Framework”, “Building the Policy Framework” and “Implementation & Collaboration”.

Important conclusions can be drawn from the cross-country comparison in the dimensions of legal integration (residency, family unity and reunification, access to citizenship), socio-economic integration (housing, employment, vocational training, health and social security) and socio-cultural integration (education, language learning/social orientation and building bridges). Countries included in the NIEM baseline research are Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Results have been scored on a scale from 0 to 100, ranging from least favourable to most favourable provisions. Analysed data refer to recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs), and to the legal and other provisions in place as of April 2017. Future evaluation rounds of NIEM will strive to overcome data gaps, extend analysis to other groups under international protection, monitor changes over recent years, and by including integration outcome, financial and staff input indicators, will move forward towards building a comprehensive index measuring refugee integration. Key comparative conclusions of the baseline research are:

**The quality of integration policies for beneficiaries of international protection vary widely across European countries, in spite of the standards set by EU and international law.** Europe is far from providing a level playing field, and beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) are not given the same fair and reasonable chance to integrate across the EU. With incomplete and low-quality integration policies in place across the EU, countries create – intendedly or unintendedly – different opportunities for BIPs to achieve a better life in Europe. Crucially, any European debate on responsibility-sharing in the asylum field needs to take into account the blatant discrepancies in what Member States do to support the integration of BIPs.

**All the assessed countries can do better, even those found on a generally higher level of development.** Results for individual countries in

most dimensions hover around scores in the middle ranges, indicating only halfway or slightly favourable conditions. By and large, favourable conditions are the exception to the rule. Out of all aggregated scores that have been assigned to an individual country in a specific dimension, only 17% are equal to or higher than 80, indicating a favourable situation; while 21% are equal to or below 20, representing a situation that is plainly disadvantageous. On a scale from 0 to 100, the median scores of all 14 countries in the three steps are 66.8 (legal framework), 49.4 (policy framework) and 29.0 (implementation and collaboration). All countries assessed need to considerably strengthen their frameworks in place.

**No significant differences exist between different categories of destination countries. Rather, distinct variations exist among countries within these groups.** Among the countries in northern and western Europe, Sweden overall provides more favourable conditions than France and the Netherlands. Among the southern European countries, Greece stands out as providing the least advantageous framework, a position taken among the east-central European countries by Hungary. Results show no significant differences between countries with long and short histories of receiving refugees, or correlations between the countries' region and their position with regard to recent movements. Instead, deliberate policy choices are what makes the difference among countries that find themselves in a similar and comparable situation.

**Across dimensions that represent decisive fields for long-term integration, countries do markedly worse in some areas than in others in terms of their legal and policy frameworks.** Looking both at the legal and policy indicators across dimensions related to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration, on average, health and education are the areas with the most favourable conditions among the assessed countries, with social security trailing somewhat behind. On the other hand, employment, housing and vocational training emerge as the dimensions with the least favourable conditions under the focus of this analysis. Particular weaknesses include the access to targeted short-term housing support and a lack of long-term housing support in several countries. In the employment dimension, the drivers of poor results are a widespread lack of targeted, active labour market support measures in combination with administrative barriers for accessing employment.

**Language learning and social orientation support is not universally provided, and significant quality differences among the assessed countries persist.** Help in the acquisition of the new country's language and in learning about how things work represents key areas for an early and successful start for integration. However, countries are found to provide for very different standards. Half of the assessed countries provide for free language learning courses with no further obligations attached. In the other countries, courses

are mandatory and/or not free and/or attendance is linked to eligibility for benefits. Greece and Hungary basically lack this most fundamental element of a publicly funded integration policy. Findings on social orientation generally trail those on language learning, with the low quality of such measures emerging as a factor for the overall meagre results in this dimension.

**Some countries achieve consistent results across dimensions, while for others, results vary significantly between dimensions. The first case can indicate deliberate policy choices, the latter may be a sign of lacking an overall approach to refugee integration.** Zooming in on the step “Building the Policy Framework”, countries where results across areas relevant for socio-economic and socio-cultural integration are particularly consistent, albeit on different levels, are Czechia, Lithuania, Romania and Sweden. On the other hand, distinctly high variation across policy fields like housing, employment, education or health can be identified in Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. Generally, countries need to balance out, on a high standard, gaps across all relevant policy areas.

**Countries are better in establishing the legal framework than in taking steps to develop and implement policies, indicating a widespread passive approach to refugee integration.** Countries mostly provide favourable conditions with regard to access to rights and entitlements; in particular in housing, health, education, as well as in language learning and social orientation. In contrast to the legal indicators, findings in the context of policy indicators are, on average, less favourable throughout the dimensions referring to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration. Illustrating a widespread lack of positive support, this evidence suggests that in many countries a rather passive attitude to refugee integration prevails, where policies follow a narrow interpretation of the equal treatment principle and fail to take into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of BIPs.

**With regard to legal integration in the residency, family reunification and citizenship dimensions, provisions for reunification with family members are, on average, the least unfavourable. Most of the assessed countries, however, have restrictive laws for obtaining residence permits or acquiring citizenship.** To a large extent, more restrictive provisions for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) as compared to recognised refugees contribute to the overall very mixed result. In the residency dimension, average country results vary widely, with scores ranging from 10.0 (Hungary) to 90.0 (Lithuania) when analysed for recognised refugees, and from 10.0 (Hungary) to 70.0 (Spain) for the same indicators evaluated for BSPs. A stronger alignment among country results exists concerning family reunification, where rather favourable frameworks prevail with the exceptions of Greece, Hungary and Poland. Citizenship emerges as one of the worst-scoring dimensions overall, in which differential treatment of BSPs and recognised refugees only exacerbates generally restrictive frameworks.

**Unreasonably high fees for obtaining permanent/long-term residence, family reunification and acquiring citizenship create additional obstacles.**

Significant differences among the assessed countries exist with regard to the fees for obtaining permanent/long-term residence, family reunification and acquiring citizenship. While fees for the residency procedure do not generally exceed 50% of the minimum monthly social assistance benefit in the country assessed, fees of the family reunification procedures range from zero in four countries to amounts even higher than what is granted as the monthly minimum benefit in Hungary, Latvia and Romania. Fees for naturalisation also diverge strongly, with five countries asking more than 50% of the monthly minimum social assistance.

**While the different treatment of recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection is largely absent concerning access to rights and provision of support measures, it is very pronounced concerning legal integration, leading to unfavourable conditions with regard to residency, family reunification and citizenship.**

With few exceptions, recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) are equalised when it comes to access to rights, entitlements and targeted integration measures. However, in the dimensions that are related to the legal integration of BIPs and their family members (i.e. residency, family reunification, citizenship), with the exceptions of the Netherlands and Spain, all the assessed countries apply differential treatment and provide less favourable conditions for BSPs than for recognised refugees, leading to additional barriers due to the instability and impermanence of their status.

**Obstacles in the form of administrative barriers are widespread, and countries miss out on opportunities to facilitate integration that are mostly easy-to-fix.**

Dedicated indicators assess the prevalence of administrative barriers, such as asking for hard-to-obtain documentation, delays and waiting periods, as well as discretionary decisions. The dimension in which such obstacles are most widespread is housing. In the employment, vocational training, health and education dimensions, the situation is somewhat less alarming, as in each of these areas roughly half of the assessed countries are free of such obstacles. Even in the dimension of language learning and social orientation, only nine countries manage to provide such courses without posing administrative barriers in accessing them. The countries that are the least affected by administrative barriers are Sweden and the Netherlands; while France, Greece, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia are the countries where BIPs most frequently and most persistently are faced with administrative barriers.

**Overall, the step “Implementation and Collaboration” shows the poorest results among the three steps assessed. In particular, countries are weak on mainstreaming refugee integration and lack effective and committed national strategies.** Countries either achieve middle-ranging scores or an

average result so low that it must be considered unfavourable. Most of them thus cannot be considered as developing, coordinating and implementing an all-of-government and all-of-society response to the challenges of refugee integration. Results on mainstreaming show that while the majority of countries have something like a national approach to the integration of BIPs, only Czechia, Italy and Sweden combine a dedicated strategy, supported by a devoted budget, with commitments for various ministries. Within the six dimensions related to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration, indicators assess mechanisms of sectoral mainstreaming. Coordinated multi-stakeholder strategies, it turns out, are equally rare in the housing, employment, vocational training, health, social security and education domains. In each of these dimensions, only three or four countries are identified as fully pursuing such a strategy that commits relevant ministries, institutions, regional/local authorities and NGOs.

**Collaboration and joint policy delivery with civil society and local and regional levels of governments is a missed opportunity in most of the countries assessed.** Across six dimensions, indicators assess whether central governments actively support stakeholders and provide them with means so that they are better able to assist BIPs. Concerning support for the local and regional levels of government, education and social security represent the dimensions where governments are most supportive, with six countries identified as providing means. In the housing, employment, vocational training and health dimensions, the numbers drop to three or four countries each. With regard to NGOs receiving active central government support for the assistance they provide to BIPs, the overall picture is somewhat brighter. In vocational training-, social security- and health-related tasks, nine or ten of the assessed governments support civil society. In the areas of housing, employment and education, four to six countries actively support civil society in their efforts. However, often these means are provided in an on-off manner, and NGOs lack a stable, long-term framework for receiving government support.

**The countries' performance is mediocre at best, and poor in most cases, when it comes to fostering the participation of BIPs, involving the receiving societies in the integration process and acknowledging the two-way character of integration.** The assessed countries widely fail to build the bridges that would help to bring together people benefiting from international protection and the receiving society. Only in Portugal and Sweden do national strategy documents explicitly call for citizens to become actively involved. Six out of the 14 countries have seen publicly funded campaigns aimed at sensitising the public about the situation and needs of refugees. Throughout all the assessed countries, encouragement and support for voluntary initiatives to complement public policies is nearly absent from the side of central governments. From the scores assigned in NIEM indicators

in 14 countries that are rather representative of the entire EU, one can conclude that fostering participation and mutual accommodation with the receiving society is the weakest part of refugee integration policies in Europe.

**Part I**

**Evaluating refugee  
integration & results overview**







### **1.1 In need of targeted integration policies: Beneficiaries of international protection**

Due to their particular situation, beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) face specific obstacles to lasting integration in their new countries. In many cases, they arrive bereaved of their families, possessions and proof of earlier occupations and achievements in life. Coming from zones of war and violence, they may not have known a normal life for years, not pursuing work or missing out on school and education. They have endured violence, hardship and displacement, often followed by a deprived and marginal existence in places where they sought shelter during a flight that may have lasted months or years. They may arrive injured – physically, from violence and the dangers of flight, and mentally, from traumatising experiences. Fundamentally, they arrive after having been forced to flee – to save their lives or preserve their freedom due to conflict and human rights violations, persecution and catastrophes.

The circumstances of their arrival and the need to undergo lengthy asylum procedures often mean periods of inactivity and few opportunities to start integrating into society. After a positive decision to stay, long-term perspectives are still hampered by the limited duration of residence permits, raising the possibility of being sent back due to a changed situation in one's country of origin, but also giving a reason for employers not to hire and invest in people they may soon lose. The same may be true for schools, universities and vocational training institutions if they do not see a need to invest in people who they consider as staying temporarily; or indeed for wide swathes of the institutions and public of receiving countries that may misconceive, against all evidence, refugees as being merely a passing presence.

In short, people who have been recognized to be eligible for international protection – whether as recognized refugees or under subsidiary or another form of humanitarian protection – are set apart from other groups of migrants in several respects. Based on its mandate to provide international protection to refugees and to seek, together with its partner governments, permanent solutions to the challenges they face, UNHCR has also stressed integration as the most relevant durable solution. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (Art. 34) explicitly call on states to facilitate integration and access to citizenship for refugees. It includes a range of social and economic rights, among them, the rights to gainful employment, public

education, housing, social security and public relief, which represent fundamental instruments for the integration of refugees. Therefore, the UN Refugee Agency also strongly calls for disentangling the needs and priorities of refugees from those of migrants in order to ensure their proper protection (Burkin, Huddleston and Chindea 2014, Crisp 2004, Smyth, Stewart and Da Lomba 2010, UNHCR Executive Committee 2005). Building on the provisions established by the 1951 Refugee Convention, the European Union enshrined integration standards for beneficiaries of international protection when creating the stable legal framework of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The Asylum Procedures, Reception Conditions, Qualification and Family Reunification Directives all aim for the full and effective implementation of the Geneva Convention. These binding legislative acts set a series of standards that shape the integration process, starting from the reception phase until full legal, socio-economic and socio-cultural integration, allowing refugees to realise their potential to contribute to society.

That said, and in addition to their specific challenges, beneficiaries of international protection face similar integration opportunities and obstacles as do all other migrants, along complex integration pathways that are gradual and far from linear, affecting all aspects of life. For BIPs, no less than for other groups of the newly arrived, integration is the process of succeeding socially and economically and of becoming an accepted part of society. With their presence, beneficiaries of international protection partake in the far-reaching process of social change commonly referred to as “integration”, with all its interlinked legal, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions and involving the immigrants themselves as much as the receiving society and its institutions (e.g. Castles et al. 2002; Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas 2016, Smyth, Stewart and Da Lomba 2010). The EU and its Member States, likewise, have agreed in their Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, adopted in 2004 and re-affirmed ten years on, to consider integration as a “dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.”

## **1.2 Assessing the quality of refugee integration policies**

NIEM – the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism – aims to assess how comprehensively Member States respond to the needs and opportunities that beneficiaries of international protection bring to their new homes. Its rigorous, comparable methodology allows for the systematic evaluation of how favourable EU Member States’ policies are to the integration of BIPs. By doing so, NIEM fills a gap in indicator-based schemes for assessing integration policies and programmes, as developed and analysed by researchers, policy makers and civil society organisations over the last two decades. Following

a first report of the Council of Europe (CoE 1997), EU institutions played a key role in setting the agenda towards the use of indicators for evaluating immigrant integration. The eleventh Common Basic Principle for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU calls for an evidence-based approach and recommends that states develop indicators and evaluation mechanisms to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and make the exchange of information more effective. The European Commission understands this principle as a “need for tools and yardsticks to enhance [a] government’s capacity to evaluate the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of policies and practices” (Huddleston 2009). The report “Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration” (Huddleston, Niessen and Dag Tjaden 2013) reflected on the different ways in which indicators can be used to understand national contexts, evaluate the outcomes of policies and create targets to improve integration.

Since 2010, common EU indicators for migrant integration (the so-called “Zaragoza indicators”), have been used for comparing the situation of migrants and integration outcomes. Developed by the Commission together with the Member States, recent interest has focused on expanding the common EU indicators based on outcome data to the infra-national level (European Commission and OECD 2015 and 2018, OECD 2018, Eurostat 2018). Starting in 2004, and now in its fourth edition, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) has focused on indicators assessing policies to evaluate and compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in 38 countries, including all EU Member States, creating a reference tool used by policymakers, NGOs, researchers and European and international institutions (Huddleston, Bilgili, Joki and Vankova 2015).

Within the debate on integration indicators, however, only belatedly has attention been paid to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection (EMN 2015, European Commission 2016a, European Parliament 2018, Martin et al. 2016, OECD 2019, Strang and Ager 2010). Despite the wealth of public discourse on the usefulness of integration indicators for policy evaluation, there is still sparse use of accurate and comparable indicators in connection with refugee integration in the EU. If BIPs have distinct characteristics which they bring to their integration process, as arguably they do, this differentiation must have an impact on how refugee integration is conceptualized and measured.

### **1.3 Expanding evaluation across the EU at a time of increased arrivals**

NIEM builds and expands on an IET pilot project that evaluated the integration policies of Bulgaria, Czechia, Poland and Slovakia (Refugee integration and

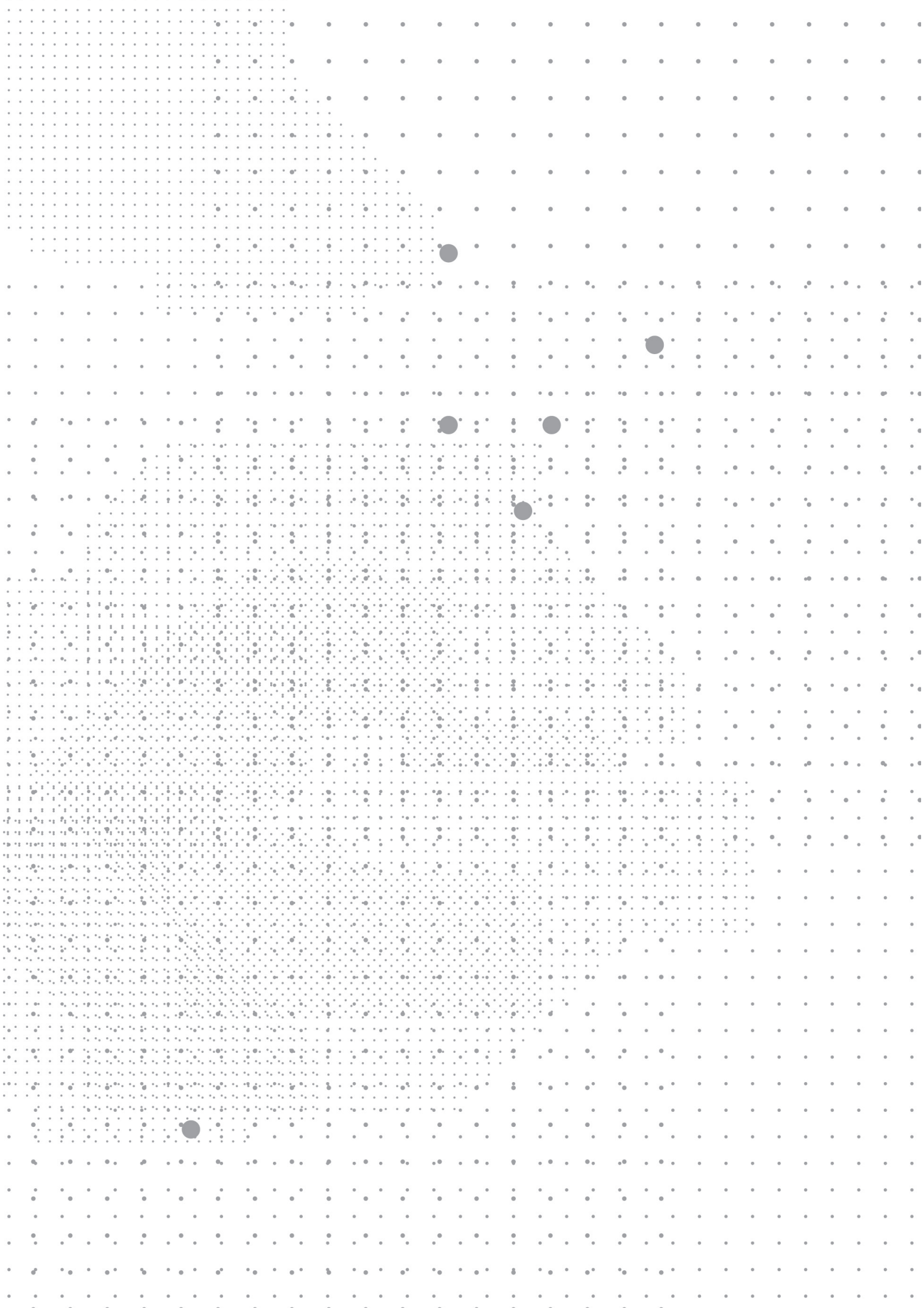
the use of indicators: Evidence from Central Europe; Burkin, Huddleston and Chindea, 2014). As Central European countries have become destination countries, the evaluation served as guidance for the establishment of better integration policies. Data were collected along 118 indicators in total, covering access to education, employment, lifelong learning, housing and family reunification. The pilot project provided fundamental expertise, awareness, training and support to the various ministries and service providers responsible for refugee integration in the region. The parallel RICE project investigated already-used indicators, methods of evaluating integration and factors that influence integration outcomes for refugees, involving France, Sweden, Ireland and Austria (A new beginning. Refugee integration in Europe; UNHCR 2013).

Following the IET experience, the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism aims to prepare key actors in the integration field in 14 EU Member States to better face the current challenges and improve the integration outcomes of beneficiaries of international protection. An ongoing six-year transnational project, NIEM establishes a mechanism for the regular, comprehensive evaluation of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, the identification of promising practices and the analysis of the effects of legislative and policy changes. It allows for indicator-based monitoring of the quality of government policies for the integration of BIPs in EU countries and provides evidence on gaps in integration standards. By developing a comprehensive indicator system and applying it through research across all relevant policy dimensions, NIEM is able to measure progress and change in the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. The 14 countries that have undergone this assessment in the NIEM baseline research phase are:

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| ▶ Czechia   | ▶ Netherlands |
| ▶ France    | ▶ Poland      |
| ▶ Greece    | ▶ Portugal    |
| ▶ Hungary   | ▶ Romania     |
| ▶ Italy     | ▶ Slovenia    |
| ▶ Latvia    | ▶ Spain       |
| ▶ Lithuania | ▶ Sweden      |

NIEM has been developed, and its indicators tested in the baseline phase, against the backdrop of the changing legal and political environments of international protection, both at national and European levels, brought about by the high numbers of new arrivals in recent years. From 2015 to 2017, the 14 EU Member States represented in the project alone afforded international protection to 438,675 applicants (Eurostat, total of first instance and final positive decisions). Conflict research provides evidence that situations of war and violence tend to last ever longer, and it may take one or two decades before refugees fleeing civil wars eventually have a chance

to return to their country of origin, if at all (e.g. Fearon 2004). Hence, the long-term integration of newly arrived beneficiaries of international protection is without alternative and presents an immediate challenge for European societies. NIEM endeavours to provide evidence on some of the most burning issues in this context: Are EU standards on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection well implemented? How are they impacting integration policies? Do policies aimed at BIPs have an impact on successful integration? What are the challenges and good practices, and which policy gaps need to be addressed? Not the least, NIEM's evidence on policy gaps and potential integration capacities can contribute to addressing the fears and reservations of those European citizens who are not against the idea of asylum, but are rather perplexed and doubtful about their country's integration capacity and the possible consequences of the increased numbers of beneficiaries of international protection.





### 2.1 Comprehensive indicators derived from EU and international standards

NIEM makes available a comprehensive, reliable and sustainable system for collecting and analysing data on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. Research conducted along the lines of the NIEM indicators provides evidence that can be used to support the establishment of policies maximising the potential of newly arrived BIPs. Not only can results be used by decision makers to evaluate whether policies are working to achieve their goals, but they can also help build partnerships among the various actors involved in refugee integration and increase their capacity for collaboration.

In total, 173 indicators build on the current EU integration standards to measure policies and developments. In particular, NIEM allows us to analyse the interlinkages between, on the one hand, the accessibility and security of residence status for beneficiaries of international protection and their families and, on the other hand, integration within the different socio-economic and socio-cultural fields. The normative framework from which indicators are derived comprises EU legal standards, EU policy standards and international legal standards:

- ▶ **EU legal standards:** Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Qualification Directive, Family Reunification Directive, Reception Conditions Directive;
- ▶ **EU policy standards:** Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy, Commission Communication on guidance for application of the Family Reunification Directive;
- ▶ **International legal standards:** Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, European Convention on Nationality.

Indicators were defined and selected as being indicative of the quality of policies and the state of development. The goal of the indicators is not to accomplish a complete mapping of an area, but to measure along benchmarks which, by embodying the essence of a problem, are able to reveal an overall situation. NIEM indicators are defined to be clearly delineated, mutually consistent and



of proportionate weight with a comparable degree of importance. The range of indicators is balanced across the different dimensions, making sure that all areas of concern are covered while maintaining manageability. They have been developed to be transparent, accessible and easy to understand, and are formulated on a level of abstraction that make them practically applicable throughout the various national contexts. In addition, NIEM indicators follow the principle of “mainstreaming where possible, targeting where necessary”. Mainstreaming is operationalized in terms of the degree of equal treatment and opportunity with nationals. Targeting is operationalized in terms of addressing special needs (e.g. single or pregnant women, unaccompanied minors or victims of torture, rape and other forms of trauma).

Crucially, NIEM assesses national policy frameworks, i.e. the integration policies for beneficiaries of international protection put in place by central governments. Measures developed and implemented on local or regional levels of government or by civil society on their own means are not included in the evaluation. Only in those cases where local/regional and civil society actors implement measures on behalf of a government policy and receive adequate funding for it are such activities considered part of the national policy framework assessed by NIEM. EU-supported measures (mostly AMIF-funded) are regarded as part of government policies if the EU programme is co-funding a public authority or service, and/or the measure is co-funded from the state budget and/or the measure is not an ad-hoc or pilot project and reaches a higher number of BIPs. However, to do justice to all efforts made in the Member States, local/regional and NGO-led activities that do not fulfil these criteria – and consequently are not subject to the evaluation – have been mentioned in the report throughout.

Together, the NIEM indicators cover four major areas labelled general conditions, legal integration, socio-economic integration and socio-cultural integration (Burkin, Huddleston and Chindea, 2014). Each of these areas contains a series of dimensions, in some cases reflecting sectoral policy areas, and each dimension comprises a specific set of indicators. The 13 dimensions assessed are:

#### General conditions

- ▶ Impact of reception on integration
- ▶ Mainstreaming

#### Legal integration

- ▶ Residency
- ▶ Family unity and reunification
- ▶ Access to citizenship

### Socio-economic integration

- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Vocational training and employment-related education
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Social security

### Socio-cultural integration

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Language learning and social orientation
- ▶ Building bridges

Moreover, indicators cover different areas and types of expertise, various stakeholders and diverse types of evidence. Data sources comprise national laws and legal provisions, policy documents, official annual reporting in various policy domains, state budgets and spending evidence, official data about staff working in refugee integration, independent evaluation as well as quantitative and qualitative research on integration outcomes. Data gathering also calls for the participation of different stakeholders, including governments, local authorities, social partners and NGOs, as well as the beneficiaries of international protection themselves. Ultimately, the variety of data sources and indicator types into which data feed can answer the key questions that are driving the research:

- ▶ Are laws and policies in place to implement integration principles?
- ▶ Has the government invested in the infrastructure to implement these policies and services in partnership with all relevant stakeholders (local authorities, social partners, NGOs)?
- ▶ Does the government commit sufficient national resources and effectively use EU financial support?
- ▶ Are all the data available that are necessary to plan policies and evaluate their success?
- ▶ Do beneficiaries of international protection who access and use these services demonstrate greater participation and well-being in society?

As they respond to these questions, the different types of NIEM indicators offer a unique combination of various inputs, ranging from legal and policy indicators to the administrative input in terms of investments and efforts at policy coordination as well as integration outcomes. Interlinked and requiring a joined-up approach to data gathering, they allow for anticipation and identification of the most pressing obstacles to integration, as well as evaluation from the policies on paper to the outcomes in practice. Part II of this report, dedicated to results across the different dimensions of analysis, lists the indicators for each dimension.

### **Methodology: assessment and scoring**

To achieve a valid and robust evaluation of results that allows for cross-country comparison, NIEM applies a standardised questionnaire and assessment based on a scoring system. Each indicator is formulated as a specific question relating to a different aspect of refugee integration. For most indicators, there are a number of alternative answer options reflecting different policy options. The first option is based on favourable terms, while the successive options generally represent less favourable or unfavourable provisions. Points are assigned to each policy option, with 100 points awarded to the most favourable and 0 to the least favourable options. Depending on the number of alternative answer options, scores are assigned along a scale from 0 to 100 (for example, when there are three options, scores of 0, 50 or 100 are assigned, while when there are five options / six scores (0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100). For the remaining indicators analysed in the baseline research (mostly asking for absolute figures or percentages), special scoring rules have been developed based on the available data and benchmarks set against the normative framework in use. The specific scoring rules for each indicator are provided, together with the full questionnaire used for the baseline research, on the NIEM website ([www.forintegration.eu](http://www.forintegration.eu)). In addition, the NIEM questionnaire differentiates between the various sub-groups of beneficiaries of international protection. This allows for a fine-grained analysis and comparison of the protections and integration framework in place for

- ▶ recognised refugees
- ▶ beneficiaries of subsidiary protection
- ▶ resettled refugees
- ▶ persons under temporary protection
- ▶ persons under humanitarian protection

For a score to be assigned (to an indicator) and eventually aggregated (for a dimension), simple averages are used. For instance, if a country provides favourable provisions to recognized refugees (score: 100), but only in a limited way to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (score: 50), the overall score for that indicator is 75. For aggregated scores per dimension, the indicator scores are averaged together. The scoring of indicators is presented as part of the analysis of baseline results in Part II of this report, introducing thematic chapters per dimension.

Data gathering involves practitioner interviews in the government and civil society realms, desk research and analysis. Expert focus groups and surveys are used to gain additional insights, in particular, concerning the outcome indicators. After validation and verification on the national level, the data are submitted via an online tool and processed by NIEM's transnational research partner. Data are screened from a comparative point of view and further validated in clarification loops with the national researchers before scoring and comparative analysis.

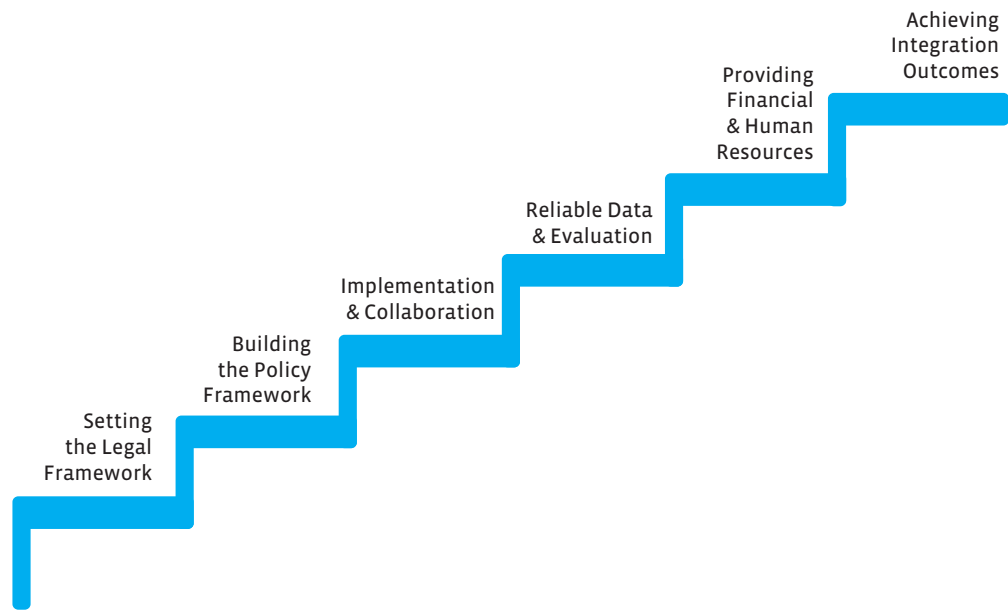
## 2.2 From Analysis to action: fostering the comprehensive NIEM integration model

### **Stepstones of building a comprehensive integration policy**

Developing and putting in place a comprehensive integration framework that effectively supports beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) requires a multitude of efforts. Establishing legal provisions that ensure equal access to rights and benefits is only the first step in a complex and sustained process. Decision makers are called upon to design targeted policies to support BIPs in the early stages of their integration and to enable BIPs to participate and do well in society in the long run. They must win the support of the receiving society and coordinate their response across all relevant policy areas, levels of government and with partners in civil society. To be able and competent to deal with the challenges of refugee integration, governments must invest in public infrastructures, services and the people working there. A sufficient knowledge base must be built to allow for properly planned policies, ongoing evaluation of measures and the assessment of their quality. All these efforts need to be effective and make a real impact in that beneficiaries of international protection achieve better and faster outcomes in their integration pathways.

NIEM conceives the different types of indicators measuring the elements of this sustained effort as the building blocks of a comprehensive refugee integration policy and presents results according to the distinct steps to be taken by governments.

Each of these steps requires a different set of actions and instruments by decision makers. Indeed, countries may not score equally well on each of the steps, and governments may need to concentrate efforts where the most significant gaps are. By highlighting country results for each of these building blocks in each of the thematic dimensions, the strengths and weaknesses of the individual national integration frameworks become visible in a cross-country comparative way. Government actors, integration stakeholders, experts and practitioners, beneficiaries of integration protection themselves and the wider public can use this evaluation to inform policy debates about refugee integration.



*Stepstones of a comprehensive integration policy for beneficiaries of international protection*

### Depiction of results: comparing countries

Comparative depiction of results also takes into account the different types of countries providing international protection. While not covering the entire EU, the sample of 14 countries participating in the NIEM baseline research represents the full scale of experiences and challenges found in the Union with regard to refugee integration. To facilitate comparison between Member States with similar location, frame conditions and starting points, countries are colour coded in the charts used in this report. The visualisation is applied both to show comparative results for the different dimensions as well as to depict results of individual indicators:



Countries in the north and west of Europe that have a longstanding tradition of receiving refugees. Asylum policies and integration frameworks tend to be well established, accepting of a long-term integration perspective and rooted in domestic policy traditions of dealing with immigration. In the flows of recent years, these Member States primarily figured as countries of final destination

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Countries in southern Europe that have more recently developed into destinations for people seeking international protection, while also retaining the position of transit countries. Asylum and integration policy frameworks have become more comprehensive over the last decades. In recent years, these countries have mostly found themselves in a first line position dealing with arrivals to EU territory.

LV PL LT CZ

East-central European countries with rather recent asylum systems adopted in the context of joining the EU and with weaker linkages to longer-term integration frameworks. EU legal provisions and support has often been instrumental in the development of policies. Neither frequent destination countries nor in a transit position during recent refugee flows, the numbers of beneficiaries in these countries are small.

RO HU SL

Countries in central/south-eastern Europe that share most features with the other east-central European countries assessed. Some of them differ in that they have been exposed to significant movements of persons seeking protection in the EU during recent years, leading to challenges for their reception systems. Nevertheless, the numbers of beneficiaries of international protection in these countries have remained comparatively small.

### **From results to impact: Alliances for better refugee integration**

More than just providing analysis, NIEM creates new fora for pursuing evidence-based policy development. The creation of a baseline will be followed by two rounds of evaluation research that are due to expand the scope and depth of analysis. In particular, the upcoming evaluations will allow the monitoring of reforms and changes in integration policies towards beneficiaries of international protection over a time span of two years, thus capturing the direction of policy trends. Through this cyclical evaluation process, NIEM establishes a framework that can contribute to the shaping of both national and European policy solutions.

For Member State authorities and integration stakeholders, these results provide an opportunity to identify the “menu” of policies available and to prioritise specific areas for improvement. To turn the results and evidence of NIEM into tangible and concrete change in the participating countries, project partners have established national coalitions. These platforms promote NIEM and its outcomes and advocate for improvements based on its findings. Involving representatives of public institutions, academia, NGOs, migrant organisations and the beneficiaries themselves, they are intended to tighten relations between key stakeholders, experts and practitioners and to monitor the uptake of recommendations.

To facilitate a reasoned, objective dialogue on refugee integration across borders and interest groups in the EU, a transnational NIEM platform involving key European stakeholders complements the national coalitions. It aims to set the agenda for the improvement of integration policies for BIPs on the EU level and to help European institutions to stimulate and monitor Member States' policies.



### 3.1 Baseline accomplishments, data situation and current limits for evaluation

Key objectives of the baseline research have been to develop the comprehensive indicator system in collaboration with all project partners in order to implement and test the evaluation tool and to create a first body of evidence. Referring to the legal and policy framework in place as of April 2017 (and 2016 statistical data), research was conducted and completed in 14 countries by their national NIEM partners. The baseline evaluation, the results of which are presented in detail in Part II of this report, was conducted for the following two crucial groups: recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs).

A major insight gained from the baseline research and evaluation concerns wide-ranging data gaps and discrepancies in data availability among the assessed countries. In particular, these gaps exist with regard to public spending on refugee integration, staff resources and detailed statistics that would disentangle beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) from other migrant groups. Data collection systems are fragmented and efficiency assessments of policies, as well as monitoring the progress of integration programmes and funding, are widely lacking.

Through their pervasive character, the current data gaps render a systematic and meaningful comparison across countries with regard to a large number of indicators impossible. Given the limited access to and availability of data, currently, only three out of the six building blocks of a comprehensive approach can be comparatively assessed:

**Step: Setting the Legal Framework.** This building block of a comprehensive approach to the integration of BIPs refers to the legal standards which a country needs to comply with to ensure the most supportive frame conditions. Across the various dimensions, the step includes indicators on

- ▶ types and duration of residence permits
- ▶ conditions for obtaining long-term residence, family reunification and citizenship
- ▶ access to rights, services, benefits and entitlements across different policy areas/dimensions



**Step: Building the Policy Framework.** This stepstone refers to the policies, rules and arrangements that a country needs to put in place to support the integration of beneficiaries in all relevant policy areas. Across the various dimensions, the step includes indicators on

- ▶ availability, scope and duration of targeted provisions and services
- ▶ provisions for special needs groups and needs-based criteria for the allocation of goods and services
- ▶ administrative barriers
- ▶ fees for long-term residence, family reunification and citizenship
- ▶ awareness-raising/information for stakeholders and beneficiaries

**Step: Implementation & Collaboration.** This element of a comprehensive approach to the integration of BIPs refers to the efforts towards developing, coordinating and implementing an all-of-government and all-of-society response. It implies the existence of an overall strategic approach, cooperation within government and with social actors, the fostering of participation and the recognition that integration is also a challenge for the receiving society. Across the various dimensions, the step includes indicators on

- ▶ the existence and implementation of an overall refugee integration policy/strategy
- ▶ mainstreaming across all relevant policy fields
- ▶ multi-level and multi-sectoral c n with local and regional authorities, social partners and civil society
- ▶ acknowledgment of integration as a two-way process and support for an active role on the part of the receiving society
- ▶ encouragement of the participation of BIPs in society and integration policy making

Part II of this report specifies in each thematic chapter the indicators that can be assessed in a given dimension and those where data gaps did not allow for comparative assessment. Generally, comparative assessment is not possible for the following stepstones:

- ▶ Reliable Data & Evaluation,
- ▶ Providing Financial & Human Resources, and
- ▶ Achieving Integration Outcomes.

It is important to note that the availability of only partial data means that an overall evaluation of a country's refugee integration framework is still not possible. Without reliable and accurate data on financial inputs, evaluation statistics and integration outcomes, in particular, the analysis remains blind in key areas that determine the quality of the framework in place. No all-out index that would evaluate – and also rank – countries based on results for the complete set of indicators can be shown as yet.

Therefore, the NIEM baseline abstains from any aggregation of results beyond the levels of the legal and policy frameworks and implementation/collaboration stepstones across the different dimensions, and, instead, concentrates on the wealth of comparative insights provided on the level of the individual indicators. For NIEM advocacy in the national and European contexts, this means that better data, significantly increased data transparency and policy evaluation need to be high on the agenda. The two upcoming NIEM evaluations will provide important occasions for governments to react to the gaps identified and a to foster a broader knowledge base.

### 3.2 Key comparative results

**The quality of integration policies for beneficiaries of international protection vary widely across European countries, in spite of the standards set by EU and international law.**

Looking at the legal and policy frameworks and the countries' efforts at implementing a collaborative response to the challenges of refugee integration, Europe is far from providing a level playing field. In view of the huge differences among countries identified in this report, beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) are not given the same fair and reasonable chance to integrate across the EU. Put simply, persons benefiting from international protection may find the best conditions and support for employment in countries which are only partially the same as those countries that would best support their children's education, or as those countries that best take care of their housing needs. Simultaneously, in other countries, BIPs may suffer from the near absence of integration policies in such key areas. With incomplete and low-quality integration policies in place across the EU, countries create – intendedly or unintendedly – different opportunities for BIPs to achieve a better life in Europe. The danger for social cohesion in countries with incomplete integration policies is that BIPs are at risk of marginalisation and pauperisation, and that they could end up in apathy and resignation rather than in a position where they would be able to confidently strive for a better future. Crucially, any European debate on responsibility-sharing in the asylum field needs to take into account the blatant discrepancies in what Member States do to support the integration of BIPs and the differences in the outlook for BIPs across the EU caused by the dissimilar performance of Member State refugee integration policies.

**All the assessed countries can do better, even those found on a generally higher level of development.**

Results for individual countries in most dimensions hover around scores in the middle ranges, indicating only halfway or slightly favourable conditions. By and large, favourable conditions are the exception to the rule. Out of all aggregated scores that have been assigned to an individual country in a specific dimension (as seen in the comparable charts in Part II), only 17% are equal to or higher than 80, indicating a favourable

situation. For scores related to the step “Setting the Legal Framework”, this share is 31%, for the step “Building the Policy Framework”, it is 12% and for the step “Implementation & Collaboration”, it drops to a mere 1%. Unfavourable conditions, on the other hand, are widespread. Out of all aggregated scores assigned to an individual country in a specific dimension, 21% are equal to or below 20, representing a situation that is plainly disadvantageous. For scores related to the step “Setting the Legal Framework”, this negative share is 6%, for the step “Building the Policy Framework”, it is 19% and for the step “Implementation & Collaboration”, it rises to no less than 50%. Notably, even the countries with the highest results still have room for further improvements. For the indicators assessed under the step “Setting the Legal Framework”, the three best-scoring countries (on average across all dimensions) are Spain, Sweden and Czechia, achieving scores in the range between 76.1 and 81.5. In the step “Building the Policy Framework”, the three best-scoring countries are Sweden, Spain and Italy (scoring between 60.0 and 79.8), while in the step “Implementation & Collaboration”, Sweden, Portugal and Italy (scoring between 44.0 and 51.6) achieve the comparatively highest scores. The median scores of all 14 countries in the three steps are 66.8 (legal framework), 49.4 (policy framework) and 29.0 (implementation and collaboration). No matter on what level of development, and irrespective of future results on the (data-, resource- and outcome-related) steps that are still missing in the evaluation, it is safe to say that all countries assessed need to considerably strengthen their legal, policy and collaboration/implementation frameworks.

**No significant differences exist between different categories of destination countries. Rather, distinct variations exist among countries within these groups.** Diverse migration experiences and the countries’ histories regarding asylum are not a sufficient explanation for the variations. Results show no significant differences between countries with long and short histories of receiving refugees, or correlations between the countries’ region and their position with regard to recent movements. Rather, distinct variations exist among the types of destination countries depicted in the results. Among the countries in northern and western Europe that have a longstanding tradition of receiving refugees, for example, Sweden overall provides more favourable conditions than France and the Netherlands. Among the southern European countries, Greece stands out as providing the least advantageous framework, a position taken among the east-central European countries by Hungary. In other words, the frame conditions defined by geography and exposure to flows or institutional and legal legacies are not decisive for the quality of the integration framework in place. Instead, deliberate policy choices are what makes the difference among countries that find themselves in a similar and comparable situation.

**Across dimensions that represent decisive fields for long-term integration, countries do markedly worse in some areas than in others in terms of their legal and policy frameworks.**

Looking both at the legal and policy indicators across dimensions related to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration, on average, health and education are the areas with the most favourable conditions among the assessed countries, with social security trailing somewhat behind. For example, health results are quite positive in almost all countries, as comprehensive access to a system of health care coverage on a basis equal to national citizens and health care for special needs groups is widely provided. In the dimension of education, comparatively higher results are driven by widely assured and obstacle-free access to different levels of education on an equal basis with nationals, as well as by the relatively widespread support for pupils to learn the host language and the quality and duration of these measures in a number of countries (and notwithstanding that in seven countries, targeted education measures for BIPs are not provided in a regular and systematic way). Likewise, in the social security dimension, half of the countries assessed apply the same general conditions as for nationals to BIPs (which also can be met by newcomers) for access to major provisions such as minimum income support, unemployment and family support. It is also the case that the level of social security benefits for BIPs is generally equal to nationals. On the other hand, employment, housing and vocational training emerge as the dimensions with the least favourable conditions under the focus of this analysis. Particular weaknesses that contribute to low scores in these areas include e.g. all-too-common conditions and waiting periods for accessing targeted short-term housing support (or even the absence of targeted housing support in three countries) and a lack of long-term housing support in several countries. In the employment dimension, the drivers of poor results are a widespread lack of targeted, active labour market support measures for BIPs – only two countries have them – in combination with administrative barriers for accessing employment in the majority of countries. The universally assured right to recognition of formal degrees (and to skills validation in at least ten countries) is thwarted by incomplete application of this right, with only up to eight countries in each case providing nation-wide criteria to assess professional education and skills, foreseeing alternative procedures when original documentation is unavailable or providing any form of assistance to complete the procedure. As regards vocational training and employment-related education, a majority of the assessed countries do not ensure effective access for groups of special concern and lack measures targeted to increase the participation of BIPs.

**Language learning and social orientation support is not universally provided, and significant quality differences among the assessed countries persist.** Among the socio-economic and socio-cultural integration dimensions, language learning and social orientation stand out, as they represent key

areas for an early and successful start for integration. Furthermore, these policies genuinely target migrants. If nothing else in terms of long-term and mainstreamed integration support, governments may be assumed to help at least in the acquisition of the new country's language and in learning about how things work. However, results on average are not significantly better in this dimension than for areas like housing, education or employment, and countries are found to provide for very different standards. Half of the assessed countries provide for free language learning courses with no further obligations attached. In the other countries, courses are mandatory and/or not free and/or attendance is linked to eligibility for benefits. Greece and Hungary basically lack this most fundamental element of a publicly funded integration policy. The duration and quality of language courses vary strongly across the countries, with only four countries allowing attendance until a proficient level of language knowledge is achieved, based on individual assessment of needs. While nearly all countries, with the exception of Greece, Hungary and Poland, apply some sort of quality criteria to their publicly funded language learning schemes, only two countries provide for the whole spectrum of measures ensuring high-quality host language tuition (including course placement after assessing existing knowledge, targeted curricula, trained and certified teachers, regular evaluation, different formats for different target groups). Regarding translation and interpretation assistance, six countries support BIPs when dealing with the authorities and public and social services. Findings on social orientation generally trail those on language learning, with the low quality of such measures emerging as a factor for the overall meagre results in this dimension. Whereas eleven countries systematically foresee social orientation courses, only six implement them by fulfilling at least some quality criteria (standardised curricula, encouragement of interaction with the receiving society, regular evaluation according to uniform quality standards, supplementary information material). Four countries make an effort to provide social orientation courses adapted to at least one special needs group (such as unaccompanied minors, parents, the elderly or semi-literate/illiterate).

**Some countries achieve consistent results across dimensions, while for others, results vary significantly between dimensions. The first case can indicate deliberate policy choices, the latter may be a sign of lacking an overall approach to refugee integration.** A number of countries tend to score consistently across the various dimensions, suggesting that the framework in place reflects deliberate decisions and past attempts to implement a specific approach across different policy areas. Zooming in on the step “Building the Policy Framework” and the areas relevant for socio-economic and socio-cultural integration, countries where the variation of results across dimensions are particularly low are Czechia, Lithuania, Romania and Sweden. While Latvia exhibits a highly consistent pattern, with the exception of the

(lower-scoring) housing and employment dimensions, France shows a similar pattern, with employment and vocational training as outliers in an otherwise consistent range. On the other hand, distinctly high variation across the dimensions can be identified in Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. Such findings of variously favourable provisions in policy fields like housing, employment, education or health, despite measuring the same indicator types in each of these areas, suggest an absence of comprehensive policy approaches. Be it due to the neglect of refugee integration as an objective for policy making in itself or resulting from patched-up and sporadic policy development in the past, these countries are faced with a need to balance out, on a high standard, gaps across all relevant policy areas.

**Countries are better in establishing the legal framework than in taking steps to develop and implement policies, indicating a widespread passive approach to refugee integration.** Generally, beneficial conditions exist with regard to access to rights, services, benefits and entitlements (i.e. the legal indicators across sectoral policy areas, while putting aside results for legal integration in the dimensions of residency, family reunification and citizenship). In particular, in the areas of housing, health and education, as well as in language learning and social orientation, countries mostly provide favourable conditions for BIPs to access their rights and accelerate their integration process. Not the least, this overall positive picture results from obligations to comply with EU and international laws requiring countries to provide access on a basis equal to that of national citizens. But even here, gaps are found, mainly related to restrictions stemming from conditions that newcomers cannot meet, as have been identified in access to housing and housing benefits (five countries) or access to vocational training and employment-related education (five countries). Concerning access to social security, seven countries either impose conditions that are difficult to fulfill for the newly arrived or exclude BIPs from certain benefits. Access to upper-secondary and/or tertiary education is inhibited in four countries. In contrast to the legal indicators, findings in the context of building the policy framework are, on average, less favourable throughout the dimensions referring to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration. Illustrating a widespread lack of positive support, the evidence of lower-scoring policy indicators suggests that in many countries a rather passive attitude to refugee integration prevails, where policies follow a narrow interpretation of the equal treatment principle and fail to take into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of BIPs. Symptomatic for this rather passive approach are the mostly disappointing results on efforts to raise awareness, which are quite indicative of whether a pro-active and supportive spirit prevails. Only Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden appear as countries where the authorities in more than at least one dimension (such as housing, education, health or social security) actively

provide information about the specific needs and entitlements of BIPs, and institutions dealing with BIPs are called upon to sensitise and inform their staff.

**With regard to legal integration in the residency, family reunification and citizenship dimensions, provisions for reunification with family members are, on average, the least unfavourable. Most of the assessed countries, however, have restrictive laws for obtaining residence permits or acquiring citizenship.** Legal indicators related to residency, family reunification and citizenship – i.e. the legal dimension of integration – on average, show less favourable results than the legal indicators on access to rights across the dimensions related to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration. To a large extent, more restrictive provisions for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) as compared to recognised refugees (e.g. to obtain residence permits) contribute to the overall very mixed result. Remarkably, in view of the common EU legal framework, average country results vary widely in the residency dimension, with scores ranging from 10.0 (Hungary) to 90.0 (Lithuania) for the legal indicators when analysed for recognised refugees, and from 10.0 (Hungary) to 70.0 (Spain) for the same indicators evaluated for BSPs. A stronger alignment among country results exists concerning family reunification. In compliance with the EU *acquis*, rather favourable frameworks prevail in this dimension with the notable exceptions of Greece, Hungary and Poland, where major obstacles have been found. On the other side, Portugal and Romania enshrine the most inclusive legal provisions on family reunification without imposing any restrictive requirements (on both recognised refugees and BSPs) to apply for family reunification. Citizenship emerges as one of the worst-scoring dimensions overall, in which differential treatment of BSPs and recognised refugees only exacerbates generally restrictive frameworks. Particularly, the economic, integration and criminal record requirements to apply for citizenship are frequently the same for BIPs as for ordinary third country nationals.

**Unreasonably high fees for obtaining permanent/long-term residence, family reunification and acquiring citizenship create additional obstacles.** While most indicators to evaluate legal integration (related to residency, family reunification and citizenship) fall under the step “Setting the Legal Framework”, another set of indicators assess fees and costs, administrative barriers and family tracking services that belong to the step “Building the Policy Framework”. Only in the residency dimension, do these types of indicators, on average, score better than the indicators of a legal nature. A main driver of variation between countries are the fees for obtaining permanent/long-term residence, family reunification and acquiring citizenship measured against the benchmark of the minimum monthly social assistance benefit in the country assessed. While fees for the residency procedure do not



generally exceed 50% of this amount (and four countries even exempt BIPs from these fees), fees of the family reunification procedures for BIPs range from zero (in the four countries that waive them for BIPs) to amounts even higher than what is granted as the monthly minimum benefit (in Hungary, Latvia and Romania). Fees for naturalisation also diverge strongly, with Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Romania asking more than 50% of the monthly minimum social assistance.

**While the different treatment of recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection is largely absent concerning access to rights and provision of support measures, it is very pronounced concerning legal integration, leading to unfavourable conditions with regard to residency, family reunification and citizenship.**

With few exceptions, recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) are equalised when it comes to access to rights, entitlements and targeted integration measures. However, in the dimensions that are related to the legal integration of BIPs and their family members, with the exceptions of the Netherlands and Spain, all the assessed countries apply differential treatment and provide less favourable conditions for BSPs than for recognised refugees, leading to additional barriers due to the instability and impermanence of their status. In most countries, the state provides a residence permit valid for at least five years for recognised refugees, while for BSPs it is merely valid for less than three years. BSPs must renew their residence permit more often, and countries usually do not waive, as for recognised refugees, conditions for acquiring permanent/long-term residence (i.e. economic resources, language knowledge, housing, integration, fees etc.). With the few exceptions of Italy, Spain and Sweden, BSPs also receive, in most cases, less favourable treatment in comparison with recognised refugees concerning access to citizenship. The number of years' residence required for naturalisation, often reduced for recognised refugees, is usually the same for BSPs as for other third country nationals. In addition, it is common practice that BSPs are eligible for solely a temporary residence permit and can apply for permanent residence only after five years. This legal framework implies that the time period for naturalisation for persons under subsidiary protection is twice as long as for recognised refugees. Overcoming this hurdle requires at least counting the time period for which a temporary residence permit was granted towards the residence requirements of naturalisation.

**Obstacles posed by administrative barriers are widespread, and countries miss out on opportunities to facilitate integration that are mostly easy to fix.** Administrative barriers can create particular obstacles to integration. Dedicated indicators assess their prevalence across dimensions, such as systematically asking for hard-to-obtain documentation, excessive delays and waiting periods, as well as discretionary decisions. The dimension in which



such obstacles are most widespread among the assessed countries is housing, where all countries in which social housing plays a role in accommodating BIPs pose barriers of some sort. In the employment, vocational training, health and education dimensions, the situation is somewhat less alarming, as in each of these areas, at least six to eight, i.e. roughly half, of the assessed countries are free of such obstacles. Also, regarding residency – the one dimension of legal integration where administrative barriers are evaluated – only six of the countries emerge as obstacle-free. Even in the dimensions of language learning and social orientation, where policies are genuinely designed to address BIPs, only nine countries manage to provide such courses without posing administrative barriers to accessing them. The countries that are the least affected by administrative barriers across the seven dimensions in which indicators assess their existence are Sweden and the Netherlands, with six obstacle-free dimensions each, followed by Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Poland, with five such dimensions each. On the other hand, France, Greece, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia are countries where, at the most, two of the dimensions are identified as barrier-free, rendering them the countries where BIPs most frequently and most persistently are faced with delays, discretionary procedures and problems related to availability of documentation. Governments should take note that here is an opportunity to facilitate integration through measures that, in many cases, would involve administrative simplification and streamlining, and which could be achieved at relatively low costs.

**Overall, the step “Implementation and Collaboration” shows the poorest results among the three steps assessed. In particular, countries are weak on mainstreaming refugee integration and lack effective and committed national strategies.** With regard to collaboration in the development and implementation of policies, the overall governance of refugee integration and involvement of the receiving society, all the assessed countries, without exception, do worse than in the steps related to the legal and policy frameworks. In the step “Implementation and Collaboration”, countries either achieve middle-ranging scores or an average result so low that it must be considered unfavourable. Thus, most countries assessed have a very long way to go before they can be considered as developing, coordinating and implementing an all-of-government and all-of-society response to the challenges of refugee integration. Results on mainstreaming are particularly revealing. The notion of mainstreaming refugee integration is, first of all, assessed in terms of a dedicated dimension, looking into the existence of national strategies and binding commitments for relevant ministries and stakeholders, as well as monitoring and review mechanisms. While the majority of countries have something like a national approach to the integration of BIPs, it is remarkable how fragmented these frameworks often are. Only Czechia, Italy and Sweden combine a dedicated strategy, supported

by a devoted budget, with commitments for various ministries. Other countries may not link strategies to a specific budget, operate with a patchwork of sectoral documents or assign responsibilities to various government portfolios in the absence of an overall strategy. Hungary, France (at the time of baseline data gathering), Poland and Slovenia come out as particularly weak, with no such governance elements in place at all. In addition, within the six dimensions related to socio-economic and socio-cultural integration, indicators assess mechanisms of sectoral mainstreaming. Coordinated multi-stakeholder strategies to facilitate integration in a specific area, it turns out, are equally rare in the housing, employment, vocational training, health, social security and education domains. In each of these dimensions, only three or four countries are identified as fully pursuing such a strategy that commits relevant ministries, institutions, regional/local authorities and NGOs. This concerns only a limited group of countries, with Italy, Latvia and Sweden each having such mechanisms in place in four or five dimensions, and France, the Netherlands and Portugal in up to three dimensions.

**Collaboration and joint policy delivery with civil society and local and regional levels of governments is a missed opportunity in most of the countries assessed.** Stakeholder cooperation in the implementation of integration measures holds the promise of better focused policies, more clearly responding to the needs and perspectives of target groups. With greater legitimacy stemming from broader participation, and more civil society and local/regional actors assuming a role, policies can also become more sustainable and achieve a stronger impact. Across the housing, employment, vocational training, health, social security and education dimensions, indicators, therefore, assess whether partnerships are in place in which central governments actively support stakeholders and provide them with means so that they are better able to assist BIPs. Concerning support for the local and regional levels of government, such active support is rather rare among the assessed countries. If anything, education and social security represent the dimensions where central governments are most supportive, with six countries identified as providing means. In the housing, employment, vocational training and health dimensions, the numbers drop to three or four countries each. The Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden show a semblance of a systematic approach, as in each of these countries, four or even five (in Sweden) dimensions see this sort of government assistance for sub-national governments. In Czechia, Greece, Italy, Latvia and Lithuania, this is the case only in one or two policy fields. With regard to NGOs receiving active central government support for the assistance they provide to BIPs, the overall picture is somewhat brighter. In vocational training-, social security- and health-related tasks, nine or ten of the assessed governments support civil society. In the areas of housing, employment and education, four to six countries actively support civil society in their efforts. In Czechia, France,

Italy, Romania and Slovenia, this takes place in three or four out of the six policy fields, while in Greece, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, there is civil society support in at least in one or two dimensions. However, often these means are provided in an on-off manner, and NGOs lack a stable, long-term framework for receiving government support. In particular, in the areas of vocational training, health and social security (poverty relief), government means for civil society are mostly provided only on ad hoc basis.

**The countries' performance is mediocre at best, and poor in most cases, when it comes to fostering the participation of BIPs, involving the receiving societies in the integration process and acknowledging the two-way character of integration.** The assessed countries widely fail to build the bridges that would help to bring together people benefiting from international protection and the receiving society. Only in Portugal and Sweden do national strategy documents explicitly call for citizens to become actively involved, with the strategies of a further four countries taking pains to, at least, ask for tolerance and acceptance on the part of their own citizens. Six out of the 14 countries have seen, at a minimum on an ad hoc basis, publicly funded campaigns aimed at sensitising the public about the situation and needs of refugees. Throughout all the assessed countries, encouragement and support for voluntary initiatives to complement public policies is nearly absent from the side of central governments and provided, if at all, on a local level or through ad hoc projects. None of the assessed countries would consider volunteerism a major avenue to support faster integration, worthy of being supported with resources or made part of the country's overall approach to the integration of BIPs. The involvement of refugees in civic activities, strengthening their participation in society, is not much supported, either. Only the Netherlands and Sweden can be seen as systematically encouraging BIPs to join civic activities and/or volunteer work, while in another six countries, support for such initiatives hinges on civil society or the local level. Consultation with BIPs in matters of their integration and the policies aimed at their integration is nearly unheard of, with refugee integration, at best, being made an additional topic for general migrant integration consultative bodies. From the scores assigned in NIEM indicators in 14 countries that are rather representative of the entire EU, one can conclude that fostering participation and mutual accommodation with the receiving society is the weakest part of refugee integration policies in Europe.

### **Impact of reception on integration**

NIEM evaluates the framework in place for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection after status recognition. The asylum procedure, its conditions and provisions are generally outside the scope of the research. Nevertheless, what happens (or does not happen) while asylum seekers await their decision has important consequences for the integration process. A set of dedicated indicators, therefore, inquire about the impact of reception on integration, including the duration of asylum procedures and the existence of procedures to identify applicants with special reception needs.

Referring to 2016 statistics, in all the countries where data are available, the average **duration of the asylum procedure** to reach a final decision was less than six months or, at least, up to one year. Nine countries, including France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, were found to be in accordance with the provisions of Art. 31(3) EU Procedure Directive which requires that the overall average duration of an asylum procedure should be below six months, even considering that high-quality decisions in protracted cases will regularly involve longer durations. In Czechia, Italy, Spain and Sweden, the average duration of the asylum procedure has been between six and twelve months, while data were missing for Portugal. Data on the shares of final decisions taken either in the first six months or in three-month periods thereafter were not available in Latvia, Portugal and Spain, and in Italy, only as informed estimates.

Concerning procedures to **identify asylum applicants with special reception needs**, the majority of the assessed countries have adopted the legal obligation to carry out an individual assessment, leading to more favourable procedural rules. This is the case in Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. While in Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, such special needs assessments exist without leading to more favourable procedures, only in Italy does this obligation not apply at all.

Beyond these indicators, NIEM operationalises the impact of reception on integration through inquiry into the conditions for asylum seekers in selected indicators across five dimensions: employment, vocational training and employment-related education, education, health, as well as language learning and social orientation. The first update evaluation of NIEM is due to include further analyses in this regard.



**Part II**

**Results in the NIEM  
integration dimensions**



## 4 Mainstreaming



Mainstreaming is the development, coordination and implementation of an all-of-government response to the task of integrating beneficiaries of international protection. It starts with the acknowledgment of a special needs group in mainstream legislation and a mandate in all relevant ministries and agencies to make protection and integration part of their work. A national strategy can guide policies and actions implemented across policy fields and commit not only national authorities but also local and regional authorities, social partners and civil society actors. Policies need to be continuously assessed, revised and further developed in a process open to the expertise of integration stakeholders.

### 4.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration



#### What EU and international law require

EU soft law addresses mainstreaming in the framework of the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, agreed by all Member States. According to the sixth principle, access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration. Moreover, principle ten sets out that mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public-policy formation and implementation.



## 4.2 NIEM indicators in the mainstreaming dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration

- o National strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection
- o Commitments in the national strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection
- o Monitoring and review of policies for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

## 4.3 Main results

### Step: Implementation & Collaboration

#### National strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

Due to the peculiar context of their arrival, what they likely have had to endure and their specific legal status, the integration of beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) comes with needs and challenges that set them apart from other groups of migrants. To address these needs and challenges in a comprehensive way, governments require a national strategy to guide policies and actions implemented across all policy fields relevant for refugee integration. Such a strategy can be either a policy document dedicated to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection or it can be a dedicated part of a broader national strategy on migrant integration clearly addressing BIPs. In any case, to be effective, the strategy should be linked to specific national budgets allowing for support on an ongoing basis, and which go beyond funding provided by the EU or other international bodies.

Against this benchmark, among the assessed countries, only Czechia, Italy, Romania, Spain and Sweden had a national strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection as of early 2017 (with France adopting a strategy in 2018). Of these, Czechia and Spain have refugee integration frameworks that are highly distinct from the policies in place for other third country nationals and entail specific institutional frameworks for implementation. In Spain, the comprehensive integration strategy addressed to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, however, suffers in practice from the fact that it predominantly covers asylum seekers rather than BIPs due to a time-cap on the provision of integration services. Latvia is the example of a country where a national strategy does exist (in the guise of an action plan for persons under international protection), but where policies and implementation are fully dependant on EU co-funding. Romania,

on the other hand, has a general migration strategy with chapters on asylum and integration, while in Hungary a migration strategy from 2013 called for the development of a refugee integration strategy, which, however, has not materialised. Of the countries that lack a formally adopted national integration strategy specific to the needs of beneficiaries of international protection, France, Greece and the Netherlands have general policies addressing the integration of third country nationals which are also applied to BIPs. While these frameworks may foresee specific provisions or facilitations for persons under international protection, they fall short of a dedicated, needs-based national strategy for refugee integration.



**National strategy on the integration of BIPs with a specific national budget**

*FR: introduced 2018;  
LT, PT: dispersed provisions short of strategy*



**National strategy on the integration of BIPs lacking a specific national budget**

In another group of countries, dispersed provisions and partial regulations govern efforts at refugee integration but cannot make up for a comprehensive national strategy. In Lithuania, this concerns a multi-stakeholder strategic document developed in the context of an AMIF-funded project informing subsequent integration programmes and a set of rules committing ministries and municipalities. In Portugal, a Cooperation Protocol from 2012 has provided strategic guidance overseen by the ministries for social affairs, education and the interior. It committed the social security and employment support agencies, the foreigners service, municipalities, charities, the High Commissioner for Migration and the Portuguese Refugee Council to jointly implement integration measures for BIPs. In addition, Portugal has a specific strategy for resettled persons as well as an inter-institutional working group on the European Agenda for Migration, also dealing with persons relocated from other EU Member States. In Poland and Slovenia, no overarching strategies exist whatsoever, and provisions regarding people who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection are included in sectoral legislation, such as on social assistance, education and employment.

**Commitments in the national strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection**

The quality of a national strategy for the integration of BIPs can be judged by the extent to which it commits all relevant ministries and defines the responsibilities of local/regional authorities and social partners as well. Among the assessed countries, Czechia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Sweden have national frameworks that assign specific responsibilities

to ministries (such as education, employment or housing) in addition to the ministry with primary or coordinating responsibility in the integration field. In Portugal, binding commitments of ministries are found only within the limited scope of the national strategy for resettled persons and the working group related to the European Agenda for Migration. In Spain, relevant government authorities are part of the governance structure of the integration strategy, which, nevertheless, lacks plain and clear provisions on the role of the different ministries. The Netherlands, on the other hand, exemplify a case where in the absence of a clear national strategy for the integration of BIPs, relevant ministries are, nevertheless, involved in their specific area (with specific provisions and measures implemented e.g. in health, education and housing).



**Strategy commits relevant ministries**  
(e.g. education, employment, housing, interior, justice, etc)

*NL, PT: commitment of ministries in absence of national strategy*



**Strategy commits local and regional authorities**

*NL, PT: commitment of ministries in absence of national strategy*



**Strategy commits social partners**  
(trade unions, employer and professional associations, etc)

Local and regional authorities are assigned a role in the national strategies of Czechia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden. In Sweden, even major responsibilities for refugee integration are assigned to municipalities, a notion which also holds true in Italy, as far the SPRAR reception system under joint national/local government control is concerned. In the Netherlands, likewise, local authorities have a central role in the implementation of BIP-specific integration policies, but again operate in the absence of a comprehensive and formalised national policy framework. In Portugal's patchy governance of refugee integration, the local level has been assigned responsibilities mostly in the context of the multi-stakeholder cooperation protocol that included the national association of municipalities and brought about coordination among local councils and regional state authorities, also leading to additional regional protocols being established in some areas.

A specific role for social partners, such as trade unions, employers' organisations and professional associations, is formalised only in the national strategies of Italy and Sweden. In Italy, this takes the form of participation

in a national coordination round table bringing together the relevant ministries, local and regional governments and other stakeholders to define overall integration strategies. A tripartite labour commission in Spain, involving different ministries, sub-state actors and social partners, has been dealing with migration-related issues in general, but not in the context of the national strategy for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees.

### **Monitoring and review of policies for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection**

To be effective and have a sustainable, long-term impact, policies need to be continuously revised and further developed in a process covering the entire policy cycle. Governments should assess the outcomes and impact of policies, monitor how they are implemented and be open to the advice of relevant stakeholders based on their expertise. Although normal procedure in contemporary public policy making, when it comes to refugee integration, the assessed countries widely fail to achieve this benchmark. Only in Czechia, Italy, Latvia, Romania and Sweden is a regular mechanism foreseen that would allow the ministry responsible for the integration of BIPs to monitor integration outcomes. But while, for example, in Sweden, relevant authorities are responsible for monitoring integration outcomes and reporting them to the government, in Romania, monitoring of the migration strategy's implementation is more of an intention than a reality. Though stipulated in the strategy, a full-scale evaluation and review is yet to be implemented.

Italy and Latvia are the only countries where the mechanism to review the implementation of the integration strategy involves a wider range of partners, such as NGOs, trade unions, research institutions, professional associations etc. Every two years, a coordination round table reviews and defines the objectives of the national plan for integration in Italy. Concerning the SPRAR reception system, this review draws on a database and monitoring of beneficiaries in local reception facilities. Latvia's review mechanism, developed in the context of the 2014 action plan, includes a particularly broad governance framework. Overseen by the Ministry of Welfare, working groups discussing the implementation of the action plan meet every three months with the tasks defined in the action plan serving as the framework for evaluating the progress made by each of the responsible institutions. Local and regional authorities and NGOs are involved in the monitoring process, as well as in developing new services and activities, both in ad hoc working groups and in the framework of the quarterly working group.



Regular mechanism to monitor integration outcomes of BIPs

*RO: to be implemented*

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Regular mechanism to review the implementation of the integration strategy in coordination with relevant partners (ministries, NGOs, social partners, research institutions, etc.)

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Government duty to respond to the advice and recommendations of regional and local authorities and expert NGOs

While in eight of the assessed countries no monitoring or review mechanisms for refugee integration policies exist whatsoever, the Netherlands and Portugal should be mentioned as countries where national monitoring frameworks on migrant integration exist, but do not specifically focus on beneficiaries of international protection. Here, assessment of refugees' integration outcomes may be carried out on an ad hoc basis, limited to specific areas like employment and be conducted by research institutions or NGOs.

## 5 Residency

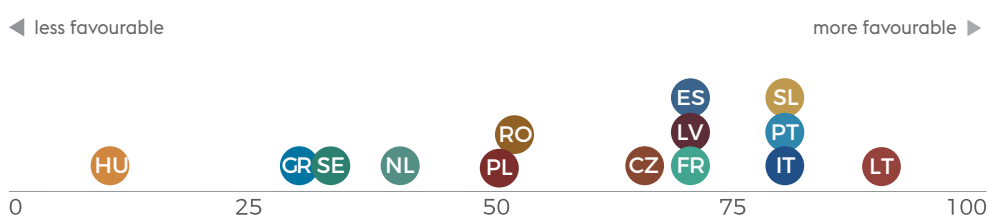


Secure residence status is a precondition for successful integration in all areas of life, as it provides beneficiaries of international protection with stability in the new country and ensures rights and treatment equal to those of national citizens. Acquiring long-term residence further secures status and additional rights, including the right to free movement within the EU. Where there is a long-term perspective, employers, national and local actors are encouraged to devote time and money to the integration process, and beneficiaries of international protection will be more likely to be hired and trained and will be better protected from exploitation and poor housing. Having a secure or long-term permit plays a role in a surprising number of services and transactions, such as opening a bank account, seeking a business loan or acquiring complementary health insurance.

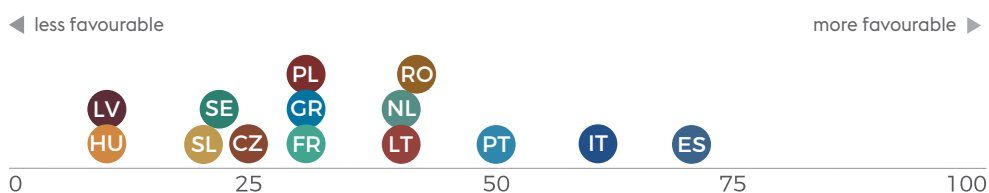
### 5.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

##### Recognised Refugees

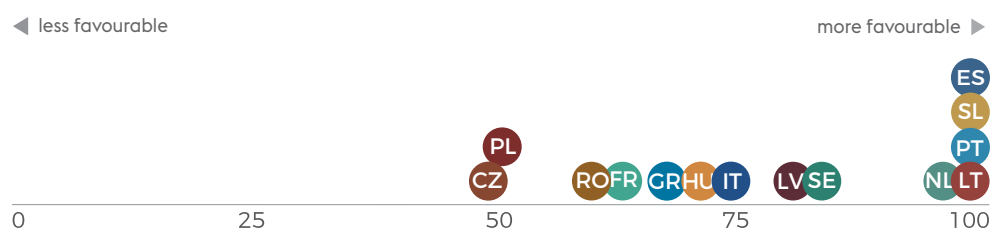


##### Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection

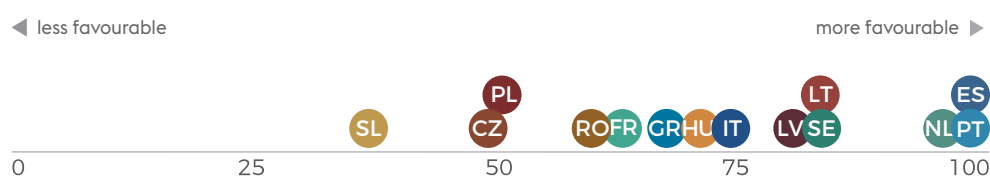


## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Recognised Refugees



### Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection



#### What EU and international law require

Under EU law, beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) have a long-term perspective that is relatively secure and improves quickly over time. Upon recognition, refugees obtain a renewable residence permit of at least three years according to Art. 24 of the Qualification Directive. Less favourable conditions apply to their family members and to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs). Family members can be given a renewable residence for a shorter period, while beneficiaries of subsidiary protection can benefit from an initial one-year residence permit that should be extended to two years upon renewal. Long-term EU residence comes as an entitlement after five years of legal residence if beneficiaries of international protection can meet realistic economic, insurance and eventual integration conditions under the Long-Term Residents Directive. Following the Court of European Justice's (CJEU) *P and S* judgement, these conditions cannot be set as disproportionate and cannot simply be an obstacle to becoming long-term residents. The requirements must promote migrants' integration in practice and cannot have any discouraging objectives or effects. Beneficiaries of international protection must be guaranteed effective access to free courses and learning materials. Their specific individual circumstances (age, literacy, education level) must be taken into account in the procedure. For example, they cannot be required to pay excessive fees, prove disproportionately high levels of language or civic knowledge, take obligatory and costly classes or pay high fines, as all of these requirements restrict rather than encourage opportunities for

beneficiaries of international protection to prove their willingness to participate in their new society. Although the Geneva Convention does not explicitly mention refugees' right to residence, contracting States are obliged under Art. 34 to facilitate the "assimilation" of refugees, in particular, to expedite their naturalisation and to reduce the costs of naturalisation. Therefore, the obligation to protect refugees includes the obligation to facilitate all steps of the integration and naturalisation process.

## 5.2 NIEM indicators in the residency dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

- o Type and duration of residence permit upon recognition
- o Renewal of residence permit
- o Residency requirements for granting permanent/long-term residence
- o Facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residence
- o Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for permanent/long-term residence

#### Step: Building the Policy Framework

- o Administrative barriers to permanent/long-term residence
- o Fees and costs for obtaining permanent/long term residence

### Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment

#### Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation

- o Acceptance rate for permanent/long-term residence
- o Reasons for rejection of permanent/long-term residence

#### Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources

- o Legal assistance and support budgets

## 5.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

#### Type and duration of residence permit upon recognition

The type of residence permit provided to beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) at the national level significantly differs between refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs). In almost all countries, the state provides refugees residence permits that are valid for at least five years,



while beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive residence permits valid for only three years or less. By contrast, in the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, the law sets forth the same treatment for both categories and recognises a residence permit of five years. It is worth noting that residence permits valid for less than three years for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are stipulated under the legal frameworks of Czechia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden. In Sweden, according to the temporary law entered into force in 2016, refugees only receive a three-year temporary residence permit, while prior to this legislative change, all beneficiaries of international protection could obtain a permanent residence permit.

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



At least 5 years residence permit for beneficiaries of international protection

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



At least 3 years residence permit for beneficiaries of international protection

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Residence permit valid for less than 3 years

### Renewal of residence permit

In all assessed countries, it is necessary to expressly renew the residence permits of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs). In Czechia, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia, the residence permit is renewed automatically only for refugees, while for BSPs, the permit is renewed upon application when additional requirements are met. In Slovenia, for instance, the application

for a residence permit can be very burdensome for BSPs. They must apply for renewal or prolongation at least 30 days before the temporary residence permit expires and must also meet additional requirements. During the procedure, the authorities conduct a personal interview with the person and verify the existence of grounds to extend subsidiary protection for an additional two years, otherwise they will reject the request for an extension. Similarly, in Czechia, the residence permit for BSPs is renewed for two years if the reasons for international protection persist, or it is renewed for only one year if there is a reasonable danger that the person might threaten public order. It is worth noting that Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden have the least favourable conditions, as they apply restrictive provisions to all beneficiaries of international protection and require that the permit is renewed upon application if additional requirements are met. However, in Sweden, BIPs who do not meet the requirements receive a new temporary permit, and once economic and housing requirements are met, BIPs can receive a permanent residence permit.

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

Automatic renewal  
of residence permit

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Renewal of residence permit  
upon simple application

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



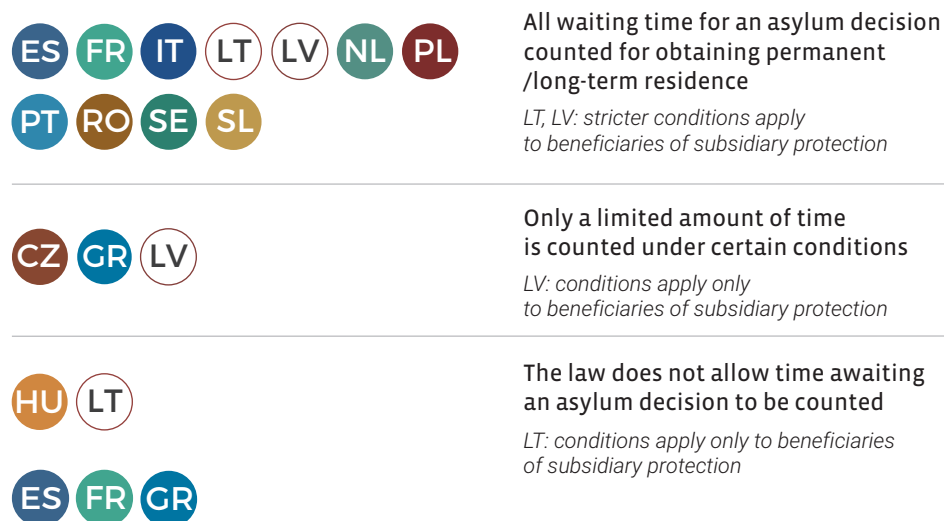
The permit is renewed upon  
application if additional  
requirements are met

### **Residency requirements for granting permanent/long-term residence**

According to EU law, individuals who have held a temporary residence permit for a long period should be able to apply for permanent residence after a maximum of five years. The residency requirement to obtain a permanent residence permit can be a major obstacle for beneficiaries of international protection who are given temporary residence permits upon recognition.

However, in the majority of countries, permanent/long-term residence is granted automatically upon recognition, or the entire waiting period for an asylum decision is counted towards the requirements for permanent/long-term residence acquisition. This legal framework applies to both BIPs and BSPs in almost all countries. For instance, in Italy, in order to acquire permanent residence, the time of residence is counted from the date an application for international protection is lodged.

By contrast, Hungary is the only country where the law does not allow the waiting time for an asylum decision to be counted at all. In Czechia and Greece, only a limited amount of time is instead counted for granting permanent residence under certain conditions. To give an example of these restrictive requirements, in Czechia the period counted towards the required five years for a residence permit is different in two cases: i) if the asylum claiming period lasts longer than 18 months, the entire period is considered; ii) if instead, the asylum claiming period lasts less than 18 months, only half of this period is counted. In practice, in Czechia, refugees rarely apply for permanent residence, because it does not bring any significant advantages in comparison to refugee status. On the other hand, BSPs prefer to apply for permanent residence permits, because subsidiary protection status is merely issued for a limited period and is thus very unsecure. It is also worth noting that beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are subjected to differential treatment in Latvia and Lithuania. In Latvia, the law does not allow the time awaiting an asylum decision to be counted, while in Lithuania, only a limited amount of the time is counted under certain conditions.



### Facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residence

Normally, third country nationals (TCNs) must meet several conditions (i.e. economic resources, language knowledge, housing, integration, fees, etc.) in order to obtain permanent and long-term residence permits, while BIPs

should enjoy more favourable requirements. However, only in Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain are the normal conditions for acquiring permanent/long-term residence for TCNs waived or reduced for both categories of beneficiaries of international protection. Portugal grants a valid residence authorisation (for five and three years, respectively), renewable for recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection which is not extended to other TCNs. The treatment of recognised refugees and BSPs is differentiated in Czechia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia, where refugees enjoy more favourable conditions than beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (with France introducing facilitations for BSPs in 2018). By contrast, in Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden, there are no facilitated conditions for permanent or long-term residence for any beneficiaries of international protection.

Recognised refugees



Facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residence permit; requirements are waived or reduced

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



### Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for permanent/long-term residence

Czechia, Italy, Romania and Sweden are the only countries that recognise some facilitated conditions for acquiring permanent/long-term residence to vulnerable groups (such as unaccompanied minors, disabled persons, elderly persons, single parents, women and victims of torture, rape, other forms of trauma) among BIPs. To give a positive example, in Romania, unaccompanied minors are exempted from the residence, financial, health insurance, housing and language knowledge requirements. In Italy, there is a favourable rule concerning residency and the economic resources requirements, according to which, temporary shelter (for example provided by charity organisations) can be counted towards the economic resources necessary to apply for the residence permit.



Facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residency to vulnerable groups



No facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residence

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Administrative barriers to permanent/long-term residence

A few countries, such as Czechia, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain, do not impose any administrative requirements for persons benefiting from international protection to obtain permanent/long-term residence. By contrast, in some national contexts, as in France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Sweden, administrative requirements pose barriers for obtaining permanent/long-term residence. The required documentation may be very hard to obtain, the procedure may be subject to discretionary decisions with uncertain outcome or there may be excessive administrative delays and waiting periods to obtain the residence permit. Moreover, in Lithuania and Slovenia, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection encounter more administrative obstacles in comparison with refugees and are subject to excessive waiting periods.



No administrative barriers to permanent/long-term residence



No obstacles posed by hard-to-obtain documentation



No obstacles posed by excessive waiting periods

*LT, SL: obstacles apply to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection*



No obstacles posed by discretionary decisions

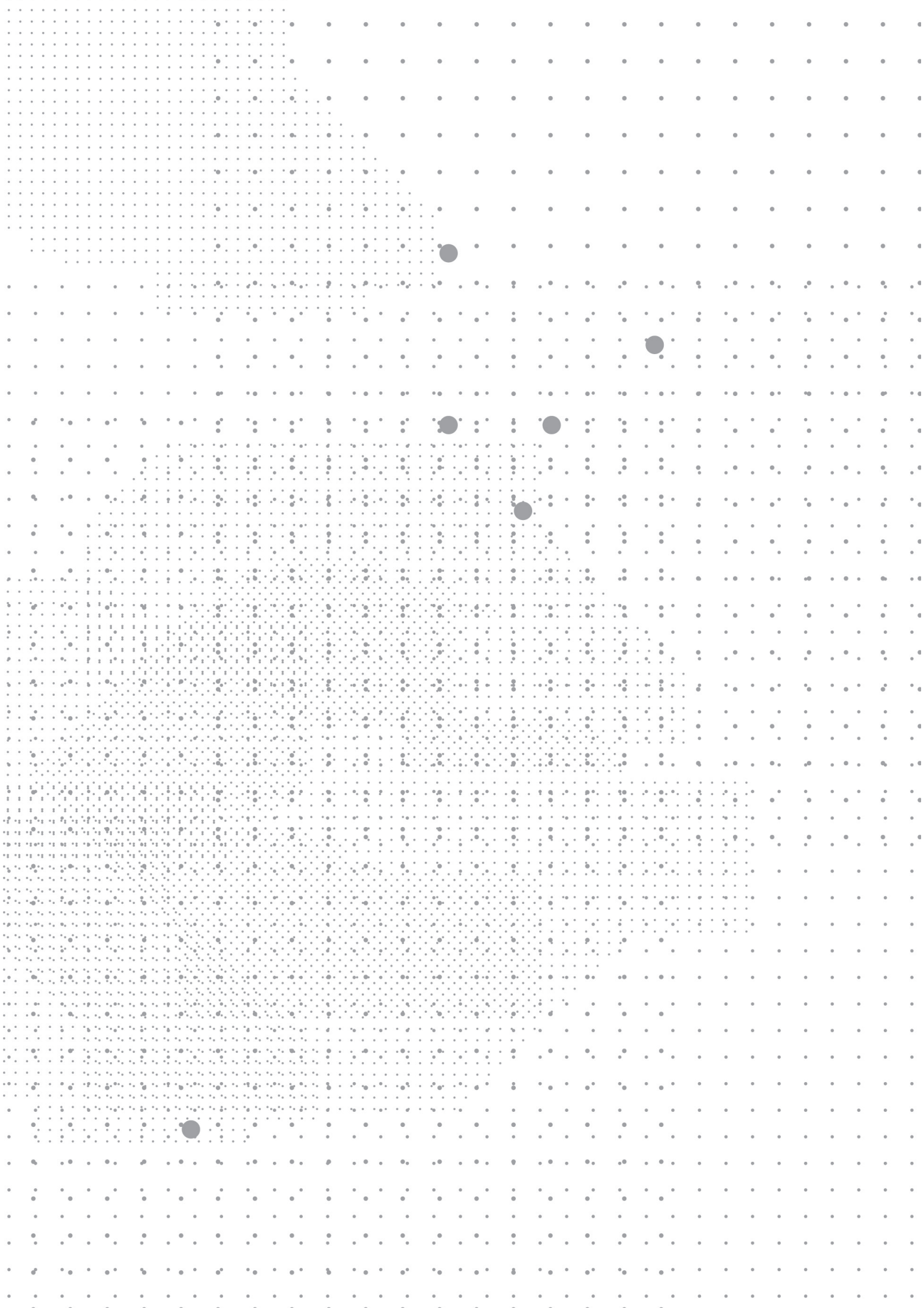
### Fees and costs for obtaining permanent/long-term residence

The average fees (required by administration) and costs (i.e. medical, language, etc.) for obtaining a permanent/long-term residence permit are the same for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection in almost all assessed countries, although they vary widely across the assessed countries. Slovenia is the only country that treats BSPs differently from refugees by imposing more expensive fees to become permanent/long-term residents. Positive practices are seen in Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden, where BIPs are exempted from the payment of any fees and costs, or their amount

is significantly lower than the minimum social assistance allowance. By contrast, Poland represents the country with the least favourable conditions, applying high fees and costs which constitute burdensome obstacles for BIPs given the very low level of social assistance benefits. BIPs are subject to costs of issuing a residence permit and initiating a procedure for permanent/long-term residence that are higher than 50% of the minimum amount of the monthly social assistance benefit.



Exemption from the payment  
of any fees or costs



## 6 Family reunification

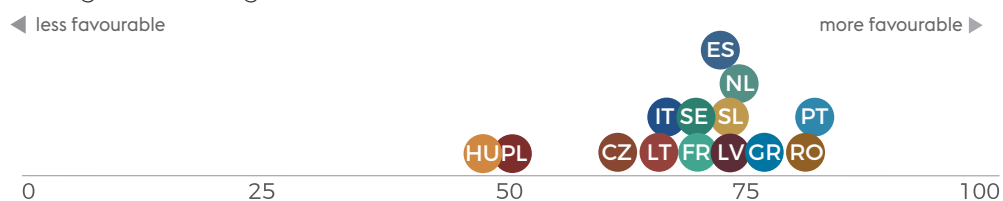


For beneficiaries of international protection forcibly separated from their families, rapid family reunification and a stable family life are fundamental preconditions to the rebuilding of their lives. Facilitated requirements and procedures for family reunification are likely to lead to less irregular migration and smuggling, as refugees are no longer forced to turn to unsafe channels to restore family unity. Family reunification is Europe's only major channel for the legal migration of families and children in need of international protection, entailing fewer risks for vulnerable groups, such as women, children and elderly. It is also in governments' best interest to keep families, authorities and local receiving communities better informed and prepared for their arrival.

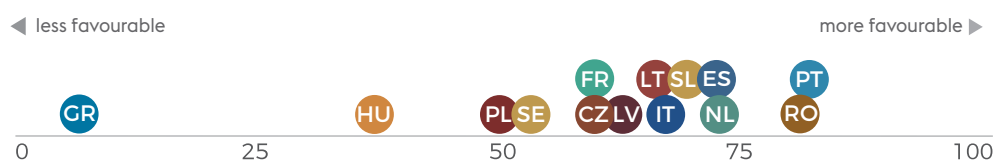
### 6.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

##### Recognised Refugees



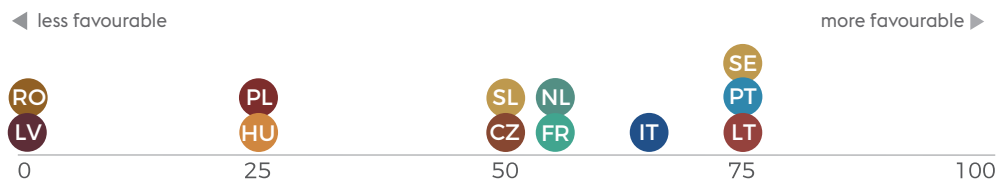
##### Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection



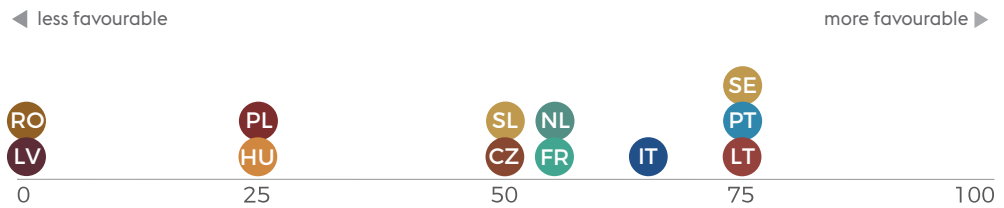


## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Recognised Refugees



### Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection



ES GR incomplete data

### What EU and international law require

Under EU law, the Family Reunification Directive sets out common rules for exercising the right to family reunification in 25 EU Member States and recognises the key role of family unity in the integration process of vulnerable migrant groups. Since the adoption of this Directive, family reunification is now a right for all third country nationals who meet its conditions and is significantly easier for refugees. The Directive provides a general exemption from the waiting period and an exemption from the housing, health insurance and economic requirements if the request is submitted within a specific period after obtaining refugee status. This specific period cannot be shorter than three months (Art. 12). The European Commission Guidelines on the Family Reunification Directive acknowledge that this time limit can be a practical barrier to family reunification and therefore suggest Member States not to use this time limitation. Member States should also promptly provide clear information for refugees on the family reunification procedure. When time limits are applied, their length should take into account the barriers refugees might face in lodging their request for family reunification. As refugees might often lack the necessary documents to prove family ties, the application can be made on the basis of alternative documentary evidence and it cannot be rejected solely on the basis of lack of documentation (Art. 11).

Among the various requirements, integration measures can only be applied for refugees and their family members once family reunification has been granted, meaning that, for example, family members cannot be required to take integration or language tests prior to their arrival. Specific attention should be given to refugees' individual circumstances to assess if they can be exempted from taking language or civic integration tests. This assessment should take into account their age, education level, economic situation and health. The European Commission Guidelines on the Family Reunification Directive stipulate that the purpose of these measures is to verify the willingness of family members to integrate. A disproportionate level of integration measures is considered to be a barrier to this purpose. Language and integration courses should be offered in an accessible manner in several places, for free or for an affordable price, and be tailored to individual needs, taking into account, for example, the vulnerability of the refugees.

Under international law, the right to family life is secured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 16) and the European Convention on Human Rights (Art. 8), establishing a positive obligation on states to render this right effective. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child protects family unity and prescribes that a child cannot be separated from his or her parents against their will (Art. 9). The Convention requires States to deal with family reunification requests in a positive, humane and expeditious manner (Art. 10). The Geneva Convention underlines that family unity is an essential right of refugees and makes recommendations for respecting the principle of family unity (Final Act of the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons).

## 6.2 NIEM indicators in the family reunification dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

- o Definition of family unit for family reunification
- o Family unity and legal status of family members (derivative status)
- o Residency requirement for family reunification
- o Economic resource requirement for family reunification
- o Housing requirement for family reunification
- o Health insurance requirement for family reunification
- o Language assessment for family reunification
- o Requirement to comply with integration measures for family reunification

- o Time limit for facilitated requirements for family reunification
  - o Documents from country of origin to verify family links
  - o DNA/age tests to verify family links
  - o Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for family reunification
  - o Expedited length of procedure for family reunification
  - o Status of family members
  - o Autonomous residence permits for family members
  - o Access to services for family members
- Step: Building the Policy Framework**
- o Family tracing services
  - o Fees and costs for family reunification

**Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment**

**Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation**

- o Acceptance rate for family reunification
- o Average duration of family reunification procedures
- o Use of family tracing
- o Reasons for rejection for family reunification

**Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources**

- o Travel/family assistance budgets for family reunification

## 6.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

**Definition of family unit for family reunification**

The legal framework concerning the categories of family members who are eligible to join the sponsor under family reunification is very patchy. However, the legal provisions are the same for both recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) in almost all countries, with the exception of Greece, which expressly excludes BSPs from family reunification rights.

Only Hungary and Slovenia include minor children, spouse/partner, dependents who are adult children or members of the ascending line (i.e. parents or grandparents) as well as other dependant relatives in a broad definition of family members. On the other hand, in Czechia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain, only minor children, the spouse/partner and dependents who are adult children or a member of the ascending line qualify for family reunification. Poland and Portugal further limit family reunification rights for members of the ascending line to parents

of minor children. For instance, Portuguese law defines the concept of family as including “the spouse or partner; minor children (including adopted) or disabled dependents of one of the spouses or partners; if the beneficiary of international protection (BIP) is a minor, the ascendants in straight line and first degree or the adult responsible for the unaccompanied minor are also considered.” Restrictive legal provisions have been found in France, Latvia, the Netherlands and Sweden, where only minor children and the spouse/partner can apply for family reunification. In the Netherlands, family reunification with dependents who are adult children is only possible if there are “more than normal emotional ties” between the adult child and parents.



Minor children, spouse or partner and close relatives qualify



Minor children, spouse or partner and dependents who are adult children or members of the ascending line qualify

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification; PL, PT: only parents of minors*



Minor children and spouse or partner qualify

### Family unity and legal status of family members (derivative status)

In cases where family members of a BIP do not individually qualify for protection, those persons may receive a comparable legal status and benefits under the principle of family unity. The majority of countries, including France, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Sweden, recognise only “spouses or partners” and “minor children” as family members of a beneficiary of protection who can receive such derivative status. By contrast, Czechia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain extend the derivative status to close relatives who are wholly or mainly dependent on the beneficiary.



Minor children, spouses or partners and close relatives who are wholly or mainly dependent on the beneficiary qualify for derivative status

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Minor children and spouses or partners qualify for derivative status

*FR: some criteria apply to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection*

## Residency, economic, housing, health insurance, language & integration requirements for family reunification

In all the countries covered by this report, there is no minimum time of **residence** for foreigners to apply for family reunification. However, some issues can be found in relation to the treatment of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. In Greece, BSPs are not entitled to family reunification at all. In Sweden, they must have permanent residence and meet economic and housing requirements. In Latvia, BSPs must reside in the country for at least two months before applying for family reunification. In Lithuania, there is no obligatory period to live in the country for persons granted refugee status or subsidiary protection in order to reunite with their family members. However, if the family members apply for a temporary residence permit on the ground of family reunification within three months from the date of granting refugee status or subsidiary protection, they are subject to more favourable procedures for issuing a residence permit in Lithuania.



No residency requirement to apply for family reunification

*GR, LT, SE: only recognised refugees enjoy more favourable conditions*

In most of the assessed countries, there are no **economic** requirements to apply for family reunification. In Poland, they are waived for BIPs for the first six months after granting protection status, while in Greece and the Netherlands, there is no economic resource requirement only if a request for family reunification is submitted within three months. In Hungary and Slovenia, the requirements for beneficiaries of international protection are merely reduced in comparison with other third country nationals (TCNs). In Slovenia, recognised refugees, resettled refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection can apply for family reunification under reduced requirements within 90 days after their recognition; otherwise, they can still apply later, but under the same requirements as other TCNs. In Sweden and Hungary, limitations concern beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, as the law requires the same economic requirements for them as for ordinary TCNs.



No economic requirements to apply for family reunification (partly only for limited time)

*GR, SE: only recognised refugees enjoy more favourable conditions*

The majority of countries do not impose any **housing** requirements for BIPs. However, Hungary and Sweden negatively require the same housing requirements for BSPs as for other TCNs. A similar legal framework concerns **health care** requirements, with the only difference being that Latvia, along with Hungary, requires the same requirements for BSPs as for TCNs.

(Poland exempts refugees from the health/social insurance requirement if the application is submitted within a period of three months after status recognition.) Sweden does not demand any health care requirement to apply for family reunification. It is worth noting that **language** requirements are not imposed by the law to lodge a family reunification application in any of the countries covered by the report. To the same extent, no **integration** measures are required by the 14 assessed countries.



No housing requirements to apply for family reunification

*GR, SE: only recognised refugees enjoy more favourable conditions*



No language requirements to apply for family reunification

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



No integration requirements to apply for family reunification

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



No health care requirements to apply for family reunification

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification, PL: only recognised refugees*

### Time limit for facilitated requirements for family reunification

From the moment of their recognition, beneficiaries of international protection can enjoy facilitated requirements for family reunification, compared to ordinary third country nationals, without any time limit in six countries: France, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Spain. By contrast, in Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden, there is a limit of three months to enjoy facilitated requirements. It is worth noting that among all the countries with a time limit, Poland applies the most favorable limit – six months – for facilitated requirements for family reunification.



Facilitated requirements for family reunification without any time limit



Three months' limit for facilitated requirements for family reunification

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Six months' limit for facilitated requirements for family reunification

### Documents from country of origin & DNA/age test to verify family links

In the vast majority of the countries assessed, the law only provides for exemptions from the documentation requirement in defined circumstances or alternative methods where documents are not available. For instance, in Portugal, proof of family ties, proof of the eligibility for family reunification and authenticated copies of travel documents must be presented. However, in absence of official documents proving family ties, other kinds of evidence may be accepted for refugees. The lack of official documents to prove family ties cannot be the sole reason to deny family reunification to a refugee. Only in Greece and the Netherlands, are both exemptions from the documentation requirement and alternative methods where documents are not available allowed under national law to verify family links for refugees. A restrictive legal framework can be instead found in Poland and in Czechia, where the absence of documents is a reason to refuse an application for family reunification. There is no obligatory DNA/age test requirement in most of the countries to assess family links. In Hungary, Lithuania and Spain, the law specifies that DNA/age tests are used only as a last resort to verify family ties.



Exemptions from the documentation requirement or alternative methods where documents are not available

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



There is no obligatory DNA/age test requirement

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



The law specifies that DNA/age test requirement is used only as a last resort to verify family ties

### Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for family reunification

Due to their vulnerability, some groups of beneficiaries of international protection should benefit from facilitated requirements concerning family reunification. In reality, however, vulnerable categories such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, women and victims of torture, rape and other forms of trauma are widely excluded from such legal provisions. Only for unaccompanied minors is the right to exercise family reunification granted upon recognition, and the conditions waived or reduced in a number of countries. Latvia is the only country that, in addition, proscribes reduced conditions in applying for family reunifications for victims of torture, rape

and other forms of trauma, while in France, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Poland, Hungary and Czechia, there is a general lack of facilitated conditions for all the main categories of vulnerable individuals.



**Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for family reunification**

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

**Expedited length of procedure for family reunification**

The legal framework of most of the countries sets out a maximum length of time for the family reunification procedure. Only in France, Poland, Sweden and Spain, is there no requirement on the length of the procedure that could negatively undermine the right to family reunification of beneficiaries of international protection. In none of the assessed countries does the law require applications to be treated as soon as possible, prioritizing BIPs.



**The law sets a maximum time length for the family reunification procedure**

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

**Status of family members**

The permit for family members entitles the family members of beneficiaries of international protection to the same legal status as their sponsor in Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. On the other hand, in Italy, Hungary and Poland, the law merely recognises a temporary residence status which restricts the rights of holders to be joined by their families. Specific issues affect beneficiaries of subsidiary protection who are treated differently from refugees in France and Latvia, and are granted only a temporary status (e.g. in France, family members of BSPs receive the same residence permit as BSPs, which lasts only one year). A peculiar law applies in Lithuania, where a temporary residence permit (issued for one year and extended for two years) is issued for family members of recognised refugees, while family members of BSPs, while also receiving a temporary residence permit, enjoy the same legal status as their sponsor.

Recognised refugees



**The permit entitles family members to the same protection status as their sponsor**

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection





Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



The permit entitles family members to an alternative status that is durable

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



The permit entitles family members to temporary residence status

### Autonomous residence permits for family members

The only countries that allow all family members to obtain a residence permit which is autonomous of their sponsor within three years are Sweden and Portugal. On the negative end of the spectrum, in Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland and Spain, family members can acquire an autonomous residence permit only after at least five years. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection face several obstacles in France, Romania and Slovenia, where a differential treatment is applied in comparison with refugees, who enjoy more favourable conditions. For instance, French law sets out that both categories immediately receive the same residence permit as their sponsor. However, refugees are immediately given permanent residency while BSPs must wait for five years before being able to apply for permanent residency.

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Partners or spouses can obtain autonomous residence permit in less than 3 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Partners or spouses can obtain autonomous residence permit in between 3 and 5 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Partners or spouses can obtain autonomous residence permit after 5 years

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Children reaching the age of majority can obtain autonomous residence permit in less than 3 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Children reaching the age of majority can obtain autonomous residence permit in between 3 and 5 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Children reaching the age of majority can obtain autonomous residence permit after 5 years

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Other dependants can obtain autonomous residence permit in less than 3 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Other dependants can obtain autonomous residence permit in between 3 and 5 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection



Other dependants can obtain autonomous residence permit after 5 years

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

## Access to services for family members

With the exception of Hungary, family members of BIPs in all the assessed countries are guaranteed the same legal right to access services as their sponsors. Hungary only provides for access to education and vocational training and excludes crucial areas such as integration and language programmes, health care, employment and self-employment, social security and assistance.



Equal access as for sponsor to integration programmes

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Equal access as for sponsor to language programmes

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Equal access as for sponsor to education and vocational training

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Equal access as for sponsor to employment and self-employment

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Equal access as for sponsor to social security

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*



Equal access as for nationals to health care

*GR: only recognised refugees have the right to family reunification*

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Family tracing services

In the majority of countries, family tracing services are directly provided and financed by NGOs or international institutions (with some indirect state funding for NGOs in Poland). Only in Spain are these services financed by the government and implemented in practice by NGOs or international institutions. By contrast, in Czechia, Latvia and Romania, family tracing services are not provided at all.

ES

Family tracing services  
financed by the State and  
implemented by NGOs

FR GR HU IT LT

NL PL PT SE SL

Family tracing services  
provided by NGOs

*GR: only recognised refugees  
have the right to family reunification*

CZ LV RO

No family tracing services  
provided

### Fees and costs for family reunification

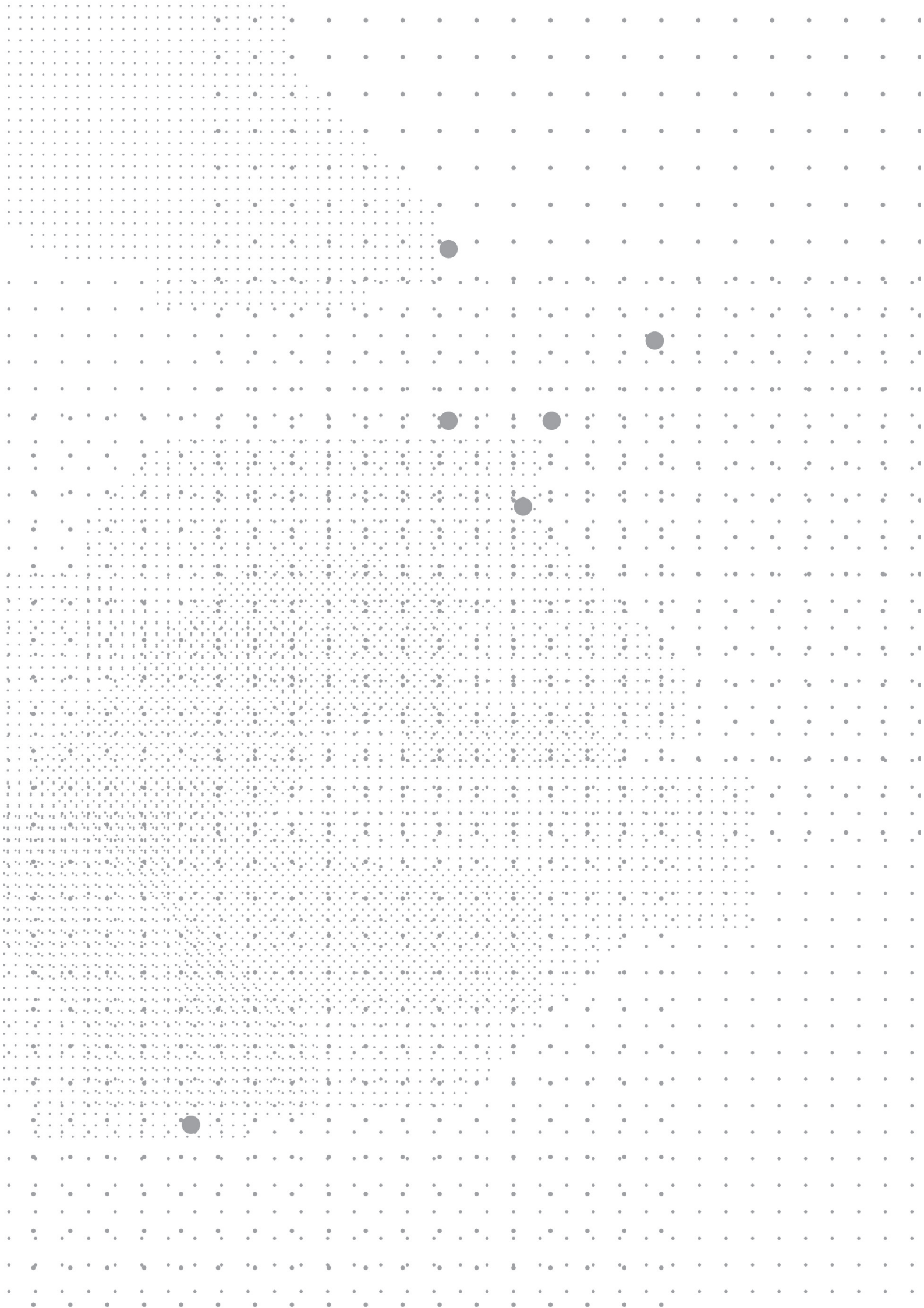
In Hungary, Latvia and Romania, the fees and costs for the family reunification procedure are higher than the minimum amount of the social assistance provided by the state. On the other hand, Czechia, Lithuania, Portugal and Sweden provide the most advantageous conditions, as families of beneficiaries of international protection are exempted from paying any fees.

HU LV RO

Fees for family reunification  
are higher than the minimum  
amount of the social assistance

CZ LT PT SE

Families of beneficiaries of  
international protection are  
exempted from paying any fees



## 7 Citizenship

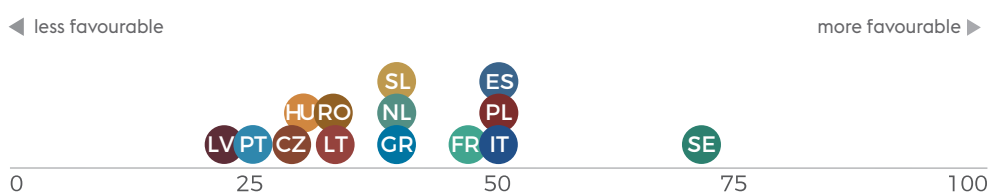


Access to citizenship enables migrants and beneficiaries of international protection to become full and equal members of society. It confers specific legal rights and duties, such as the right to reside without restriction in the territory of the state of citizenship, the right to vote in elections and the right to hold public office or be employed in public sector jobs. Citizenship represents a fundamental prerequisite for exercising political rights, and for developing a sense of identity and belonging to a country. The access to citizenship must not be hindered by discretionary and costly procedures which deter rather than encourage beneficiaries of international protection to apply and succeed as new citizens.

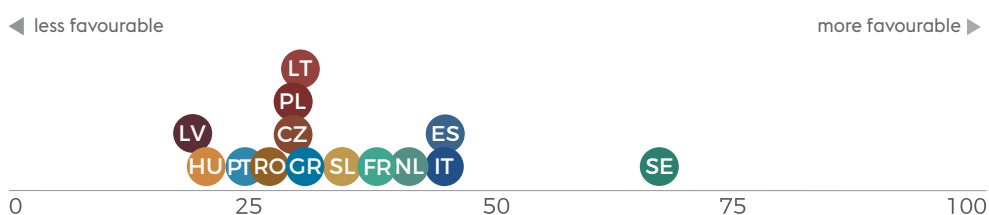
### 7.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

Recognised Refugees

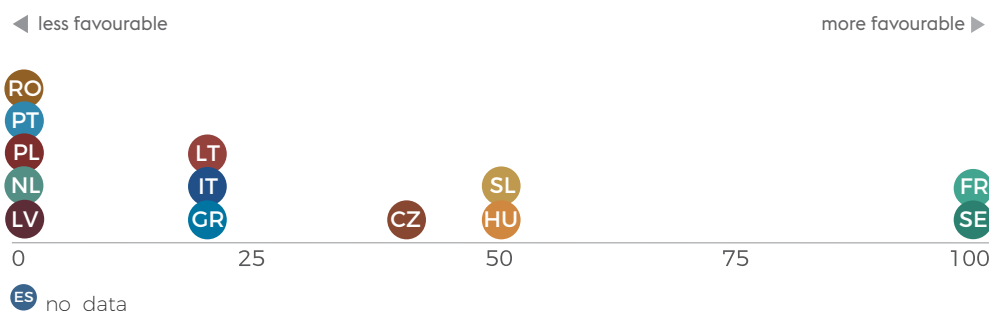


Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection



#### Step: Building the Policy Framework

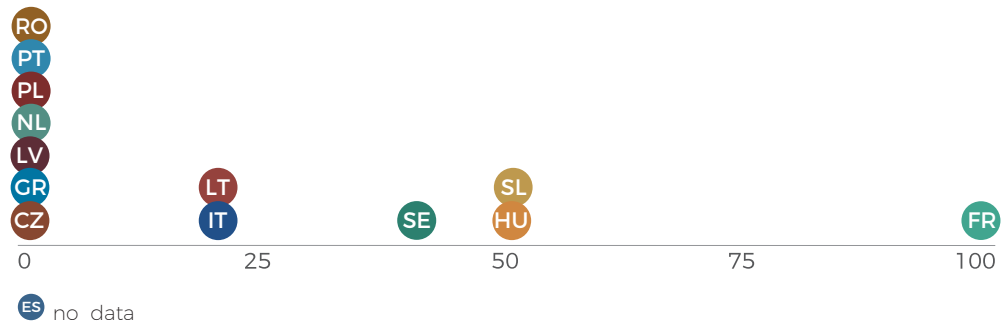
Recognised Refugees



## Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection

◀ less favorable

more favorable ▶



### What EU and international law require

The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Art. 34) and the European Convention on Nationality (Art. 6.4 in conjunction with Art. 16) require states to provide for special acquisition procedures or facilitated naturalisation for recognised refugees. In the EU, every country has the ultimate competence to establish the conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality. Member States, therefore, retain full control over who can be recognised as a citizen. However, any person who holds the nationality of any EU country is automatically also an EU citizen, and EU citizenship is conferred directly on every EU citizen by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. EU citizenship is additional to and does not replace national citizenship. It also confers a number of additional rights and privileges. For instance, citizens of the Union have a primary and individual right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to the limitations and conditions laid down in the Treaty and to the measures adopted to give it effect.

## 7.2 NIEM indicators in the citizenship dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

- o Facilitated residence requirement for naturalisation
- o Period of residence required for naturalisation
- o Economic resource requirement for naturalisation
- o Language requirement for naturalisation
- o Integration requirement for naturalisation
- o Criminal record requirement for naturalisation

- o Documents from country of origin for naturalisation
- o Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for naturalisation
- o Naturalisation by entitlement for second generation
- o Expedited length of procedure

**Step: Building the Policy Framework**

- o Fees and costs for naturalisation

**Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment**

**Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation**

- o Acceptance rate for naturalisation and access to nationality
- o Reasons for rejection for access to nationality
- o Average duration of naturalisation procedures

## 7.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

#### Facilitated residence requirement for naturalisation

In order to be eligible for naturalisation, the majority of the assessed states provide a differential treatment between recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) with regard to the residence requirement. In France, Greece and Hungary, refugees enjoy very favourable conditions as the number of years' residence required to be naturalised is equal to or less than three years, while the residence requirement for BSPs is the same as for ordinary third country nationals (TCNs) and longer than three years. A similar legal framework has been found in Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Slovenia, where the number of years' residence required is reduced only for refugees compared to ordinary third country nationals and BSPs. For instance, in Romania four years' residence is required for refugees to be eligible for naturalisation, compared to eight years for ordinary TCNs and BSPs. Similarly, according to Italian legislation, a refugee must legally reside in the country for at least five years to be eligible for naturalisation, while for other TCNs and BSPs the requirement is ten years. In Poland, recognised refugees who have held a permanent residence permit for five years need to reside in the country for another two years to be eligible for naturalisation, while other categories need to demonstrate a period of three years. In practice, the law requires a total period of seven years of residence for refugees to acquire Polish citizenship. The most restrictive requirements apply in Czechia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Portugal, where the residence requirement for both refugees and BSPs is the same



as for ordinary third country nationals and it is longer than three years. To give an example, refugees in Czechia need to demonstrate at least five years of asylum status (regardless of the number of years before granting asylum), while five years of residence are required for BSPs to obtain permanent residence and an additional five years of permanent residence are required to be eligible for naturalisation.

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

Number of years' residence required to be naturalised is equal to or less than 3 years

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

The number of years' residence is reduced for this group compared to ordinary TCNs

*PL: reduced but de facto 7 years*

Recognised refugees



Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

The residence requirement is the same as for ordinary TCNs and longer than 3 years



### Period of residence required for naturalisation

Half of the assessed countries recognise three different periods as valid years that can be counted towards the residence requirement: the years as a permanent/long-term resident, the years as a recognised beneficiary of international protection, and the years of legal stay awaiting an asylum decision. Six countries, namely Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Poland, exclude the years of legal stay awaiting an asylum decision from the relevant years counted towards the residence requirement. Latvia, with the least advantageous conditions, merely counts the years as a permanent/long-term resident in order to be eligible for naturalisation



Years as a permanent/long-term resident, as a recognised BIP and of legal stay awaiting an asylum decision are all counted towards the residence requirement



Years as a permanent/long-term resident and years as a recognised BIP are counted towards the residence requirement



Only years as a permanent/long-term resident are counted towards the residence requirements

### Economic resource, language & integration requirements for naturalisation

Positive legal practices have been identified in the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, where there is no **economic** resource requirement for naturalisation in relation to both refugees and BSPs. Poland recognises more favourable conditions only with regard to refugees, while BSPs have to meet the same economic requirements as ordinary TCNs. However, the majority of the countries impose highly restrictive economic requirements for all beneficiaries of international protections, as well as for ordinary TCNs.



No economic requirement applies for naturalisation

*PL: BIPs have to meet the same economic requirements as ordinary TCNs*

The **language** assessment requirement for beneficiaries of international protection is the same as for ordinary TCNs in almost all of the countries analysed, with the exception of Sweden and Italy, where no language requirement applies for citizenship.



No language requirement applies for naturalisation

An **integration** requirement is not expressly demanded for beneficiaries of international protection in Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden, as in all these countries such integration tests generally do not exist for TCNs. By contrast, in all the other countries, an integration requirement exists and is the same as for ordinary TCNs. For instance, in Hungary, the “exam in basic constitutional studies” is considered an “integration”/citizenship assessment requirement, although certain categories of individuals are exempted from passing the exam (persons with no or limited legal capacity, graduates in the Hungarian language from an educational institution, persons over 60 years of age, persons not capable of passing the exam due to lasting and irreversible deterioration of health).



No integration requirement applies for naturalisation

## Criminal record requirement & Documents from country of origin for naturalisation

Very few countries offer reduced the **criminal record** requirements for beneficiaries of international protection in order to be eligible for naturalisation. The vast majority of countries apply the same requirement as for ordinary TCNs. Italy and Latvia require information or documentation from the country of origin which can be highly difficult to obtain for beneficiaries of international protection and can impose burdensome barriers to acquiring national citizenship. France, on the other hand, provides an exemption for refugees and requires certification for BSPs stating that they are not in a position to provide such documents for legitimate reasons.



Same criminal record requirement for naturalisation as for ordinary TCNs

Where **documents are not available** in order to apply for citizenship, only France, Greece, Spain and Sweden provide for both exemptions from the documentation requirement in defined circumstances and alternative methods. By contrast, Portugal does not apply any exemptions, and the lack of documents is a reason to refuse an application. Here, the law makes it compulsory that applicants must not have a criminal record for a crime that would incur a prison sentence of over three years under Portuguese law. This documentation must be presented to the national authority, and the law does not allow any exemptions.



Exemptions from the documentation requirement and alternative methods where documents are not available



Exemptions from the documentation requirement or alternative methods

*LT: the absence of documents is a reason to refuse an application for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection*



Absence of documents reason to refuse an application

## Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for naturalisation

Lithuania stands out as the only country that provides for waived conditions to apply for naturalisation for vulnerable categories of individuals such as the

elderly and persons with disabilities. Documentation is not required from persons who have reached 65 years of age, persons whose capacity for work has been rated at 0 to 55 percent, persons who have reached pensionable age or have been assessed in accordance with the procedures laid down by legal acts as having high or moderate special needs, as well as persons with serious chronic mental disorders. By contrast, in Czechia, France, Latvia, Romania and Sweden, the conditions are reduced for certain groups of beneficiaries of international protection, such as the elderly, disabled and unaccompanied minors. However, the majority of countries lack any special measures to facilitate the application for naturalisation for vulnerable groups and apply the same conditions as for other beneficiaries of international protection.

LT

Conditions waived for vulnerable groups

CZ FR LV RO SE

Conditions reduced for vulnerable groups

*LV: the conditions for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are the same as for TCNs*

ES GR HU IT NL PL  
PT SL

Conditions the same for vulnerable groups as for ordinary BIPs

### Naturalisation by entitlement for second generation

In the assessed countries, the legal framework with regard to the naturalisation of second-generation beneficiaries of international protection is very patchy. The second generation is automatically entitled to naturalisation either at birth or after birth in Italy, Spain and Sweden. In Sweden, children born in the country or children under 18 can receive citizenship after three years of residency, or two years, if the child is stateless, with a simple notification to the relevant authority and without the obligation to meet any specific requirements. In Spain, naturalisation can be obtained after one year of residence for those children who are born in the country. In Italy, children of beneficiaries of international protection who were born in the country are entitled to naturalisation at birth, as are children born in Italy to stateless persons, to which refugees are comparable according to the law.

By contrast, in Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Portugal, naturalisation conditions for the second generation are only facilitated. To give an example, the second generation born in the Netherlands has an optional right to acquire Dutch nationality that can be exercised after having reached the age of majority (18 years). Negative practices are represented by the legal contexts in Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, where the procedure for the second generation is the same as for the first

generation, unless they would otherwise be stateless at birth. In Romania, children under 18 years of age who are born from foreign citizens or stateless persons acquire Romanian citizenship only at the date his/her parents are naturalised.



Second generation automatically entitled (either at birth or after birth)



Naturalisation conditions facilitated for second generation



Procedure for second generation same as for the first generation



Procedure for second generation same as for the first generation

### Expedited length of procedure

Legal provisions which expressly require processing naturalisation applications as soon as possible and prioritising BIPs exist in none of the assessed countries. However, most of the countries impose a maximum length of time for the procedure. In the Netherlands, the authorities must render a decision on the application within one year, but they can extend this period by six months two times. In Romania, although there is no time limit for the entire procedure, there is a legal time limit for verifying the citizenship application of five months from the date it was filed and another time limit of a maximum of six months to schedule the interview for the accepted applications. These time limits are mandatory for every applicant. In Slovenia, administrative decisions have to be issued within two months of an application's submission, with a similar provision in the code of administrative procedure in Poland. In Lithuania, the law sets a maximum time length of six months for the naturalisation procedure. In Spain, the law sets a limit of one year for the resolution to be notified. By contrast, in Hungary and Sweden, there is no requirement on the length of the procedures which may negatively affect the right to naturalisation of beneficiaries of international protection.



Maximum length of procedure provided by law

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Fees and costs for naturalisation

France is the only country where the average fees and costs for naturalisation for both recognised refugees and BSPs represent less than 10% of the minimum monthly social assistance provided by the state. In Sweden, refugees are exempted from paying any fees to apply for the citizenship, whereas BSPs have to pay a fee that represents 30%-40% of the minimum social assistance benefits. By contrast, in the Netherlands, Romania, Poland, Latvia and Portugal, the overall costs and fees for obtaining citizenship can be considered burdensome for beneficiaries of international protection, as they amount to more than 50% of the minimum monthly social assistance benefit.

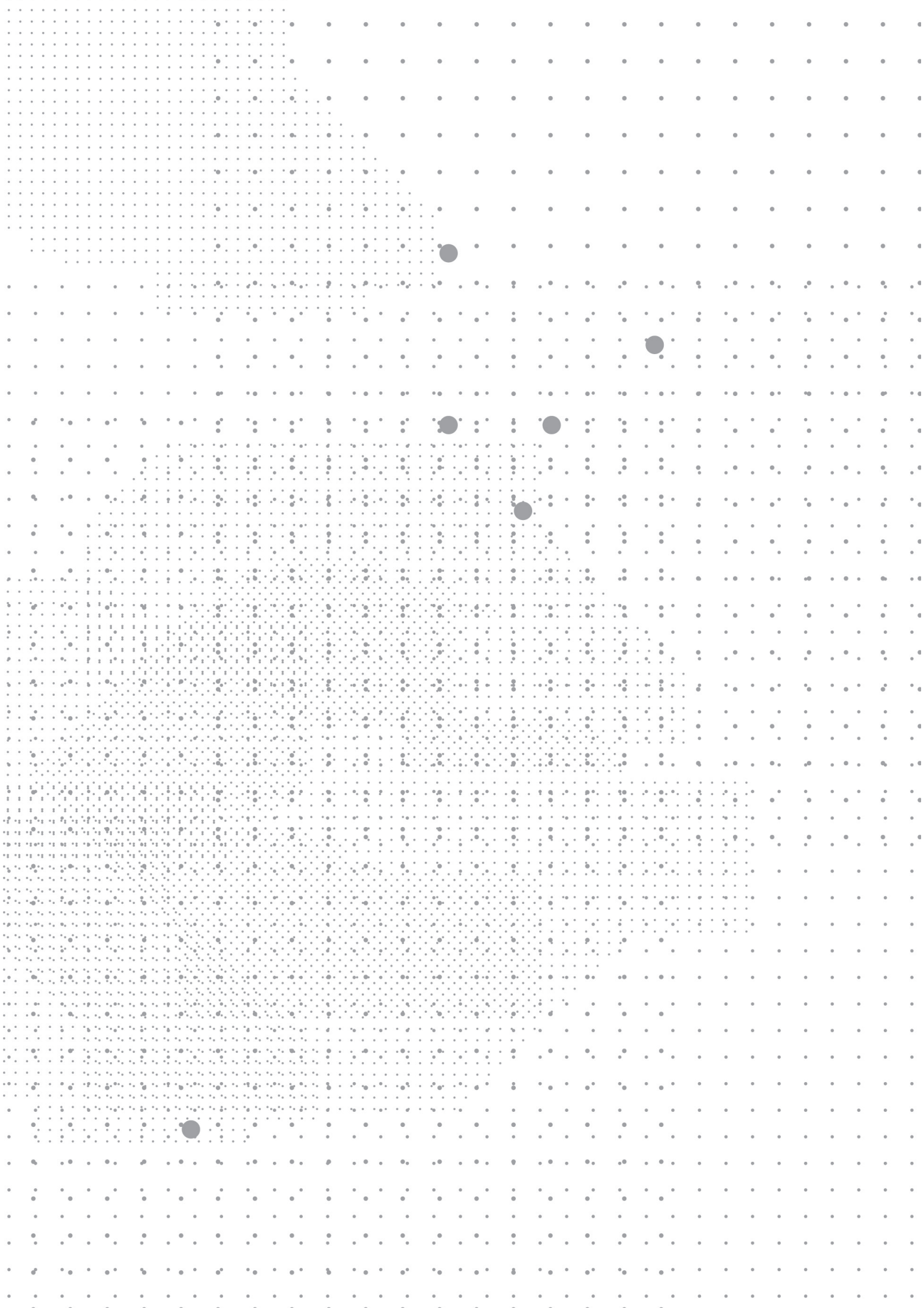


Exemption from naturalisation fee or average fee and cost for naturalisation less than 10% of monthly minimum social assistance

*SE: only recognised refugees*



Average fee and cost for naturalisation more than 50% of monthly minimum social assistance



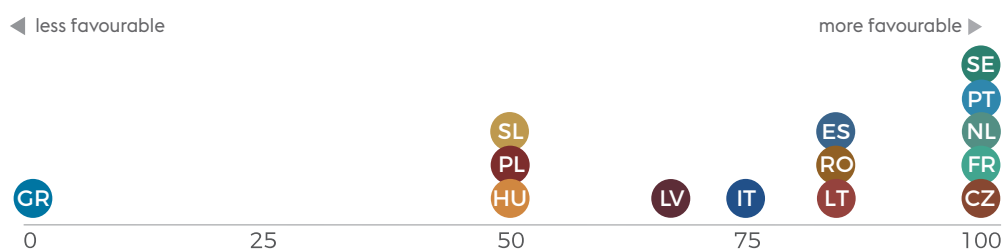
## 8 Housing



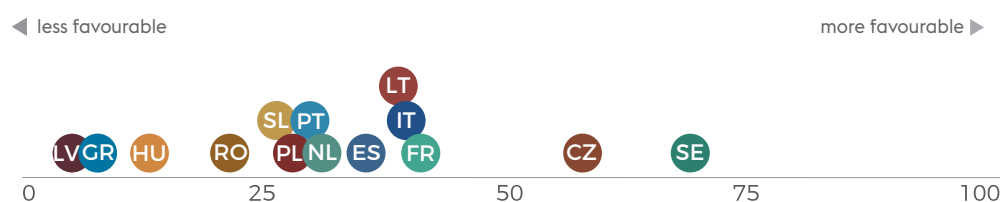
Quality housing is a basic condition for a decent living. Housing offers not merely a shelter, but also a space for personal development and family, a local community and the opportunity for enhanced interaction with locals. Too often, a limited income and lack of knowledge of local circumstances, combined with disproportionate rents and deposits, push beneficiaries of international protection to marginalised areas wanting in employment opportunities, schools, hospitals and medical centres or integration services. Targeted housing support increases the self-sufficiency of beneficiaries of international protection, especially for vulnerable groups, who tend to face more obstacles to becoming financially independent.

### 8.1 Overview of scored results

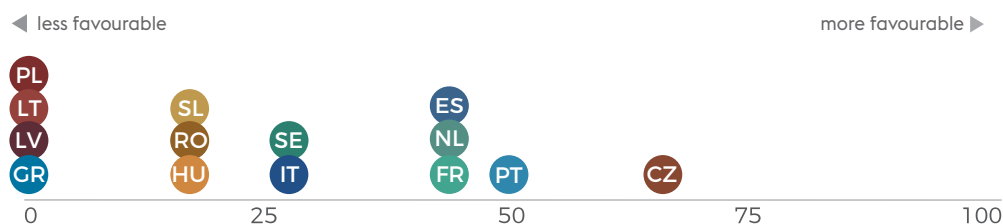
#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework



#### Step: Building the Policy Framework



#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration





### What EU and international law require

Under EU law, beneficiaries of international protection are only brought into the mainstream housing support system once they are recognised. Before recognition, the main rule of the Reception Conditions Directive is to guarantee freedom of movement for asylum seekers, although Member States are allowed to decide on asylum seekers' place of residence for reasons of public interest or public order or for the swift processing of the asylum application. Member States can also link the provision of material reception conditions to an assigned residence (Art. 7). Beneficiaries of international protection receive access to housing equal to that of national citizens and can enjoy free movement within the country after recognition (Art. 32 Qualification Directive). As the CJEU confirmed in *Alo & Osso*, this right can only be limited in specific circumstances, for example, by the use of dispersal policies when, compared to other third country nationals, beneficiaries of international protection face greater integration difficulties. The sixth EU Common Basic Principle for Immigrant Integration, calling for access to public and private goods and services on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way, also applies to the housing area.

## 8.2 NIEM indicators in the housing dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

- o Free movement and choice of residence within the country
- o Access to housing and housing benefits
- o Access to property rights

#### Step: Building the Policy Framework

- o Access to housing for vulnerable persons
- o Provision of targeted temporary housing support
- o Provision of long-term housing support
- o Administrative barriers to accessing public housing
- o Housing quality assessment when allocating in-kind support
- o Targeted housing advice, counselling, representation
- o Raising awareness about the specific challenges of BIPs on the housing market

#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration

- o Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into housing policies
- o Coordination with regional and local authorities on housing for BIPs
- o Partnership on housing with expert NGOs

## Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment

### Step: Building the Policy Framework

- o Period of targeted housing support

### Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation

- o Number of BIPs using targeted public accommodation
- o Length of the use of targeted public accommodation
- o Targeted in-cash housing benefits after status recognition
- o Housing security of BIPs

### Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources

- o Budget for the housing market integration of BIPs

### Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes

- o Share of BIPs living in the area of their choice
- o Housing disadvantage

## 8.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

#### Free movement and choice of residence within the country

Free movement and free choice of residence within the country is, in principle, assured in all Member States assessed. In Greece, however, beneficiaries are not fully free to choose the city and region where they want to live due to settlement restrictions for reasons of national security, public order or public health, which in practice refer to border areas. In Spain, the general rule is that asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection are expected to complete the reception and integration paths in the same province. Take-it-or-leave-it social housing offers, such as one finds in the Netherlands, can also have a strong constraining effect on freedom of settlement.



Same right for free movement  
and residence as nationals

#### Access to housing and housing benefits

Equal treatment with nationals in housing and housing benefits (e.g. rent subsidies, public housing, housing financing schemes) is provided in a majority of the assessed countries. However, in Hungary, Italy and Poland, varying rules on a regional or local level may impose barriers that newcomers cannot meet, such as previous residency or employment and education ties with the municipality. In Slovenia, only nationals have access to the public housing sector. In Greece, equal treatment restrictions apply, inter alia, with respect

to third country nationals who are not in employment, and housing-related benefits may be provided only to Greek nationals and EU citizens.



Equal treatment with nationals in housing and housing benefits



Equal treatment with nationals in housing and housing benefits, inhibited by conditions that newcomers cannot meet or additional restrictions

### Access to property rights

Equal treatment in property rights (including the acquisition, revenue, sale and lease of property and real estate) is restricted for beneficiaries of international protection in a number of countries. In Slovenia, only nationals and other EU citizens can buy real estate. In Poland, foreigners can buy a flat, but the acquisition of land for third country nationals is dependent on a ministerial permit. Greece and Latvia inhibit third country nationals' purchase of land in border areas. In Lithuania, no real estate ownership is possible for holders of a temporary residence permit, which includes persons under subsidiary protection. The same limitations as for all categories of third country nationals apply in Romania, where more favourable provisions for refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are not offered.



Equal treatment with nationals in property rights

*LT: only recognised refugees*



Equal treatment with nationals in property rights inhibited by conditions that newcomers cannot meet or additional restrictions

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Access to housing for vulnerable persons

Housing policy and services must take into account vulnerable groups in most of the assessed countries, although there are differences in the scope of groups defined as eligible for either facilitated access to mainstream housing benefits (Czechia, France, Poland, Portugal, Sweden) or targeted support, such as special homes or special counselling services (Czechia, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden). Some countries, such as the Netherlands, extend this support to only a few groups (typically, unaccompanied minors

and victims of violence and abuse). Other countries have more comprehensive approaches, also providing support to, for example, the elderly, families with children (Italy, Sweden) or designate BIPs as a whole as a vulnerable group (Poland, Lithuania; in the future, also Romania).



Identification of vulnerable groups in eligibility for mainstream housing benefits

*LT, PL: BIPs in general identified as eligible*



Targeted housing support for BIPs belonging to vulnerable group

### Provision of targeted temporary housing support

A form of temporary, targeted housing support for BIPs exists in all countries, with the exceptions of Greece, Hungary and Latvia. These support systems can be in-kind provisions like housing centres, shared homes or other accommodation, as found in Czechia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain. Where housing support is provided on the local level, this normally also takes the form of in-kind support. For example, in Poland, some initiatives are undertaken independently, such as in Warsaw, where a municipal programme for BIPs makes five flats available each year. In-cash support to facilitate private rentals is provided in Czechia, Lithuania, Romania (here, only limited to specific AMIF-funded projects on an ad hoc basis) and Slovenia. While in most countries this takes the form of rent subsidies, in Lithuania, BIPs receive a one-time settlement allowance after moving to a municipality. In Poland and Portugal, in-cash support is provided as part of mainstream rent subsidies provided under social assistance legislation. In the Netherlands and Sweden, in-cash support goes along with access to the social/non-profit housing sector. The Spanish support system is mixed, with a state accommodation programme available for up to 18 months for BIPs, and for 24 months for vulnerable groups. Support is staggered, with in-kind accommodation in reception centres in the first six months, rent support in the following six months and reduced rent support in the final phase. However, due to long procedures, most BIPs cannot benefit from the programme after recognition. In countries without any housing support, sometimes sporadic AMIF-funded projects (e.g. Hungary) ameliorate the situation. In Greece, it is unclear to what extent the UNHCR-led emergency accommodation scheme for asylum seekers also benefits BIPs after recognition. Only in Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden does the provision of targeted housing support come without further conditions as are found in other countries. Such additional conditions refer to, amongst others, a limitation in practice to most vulnerable groups (France), income criteria (e.g. Netherlands, Portugal) and entering individual integration plans (Czechia). In Italy, provisions are regulated and vary at the regional level.

Elsewhere, targeted support stops after 12 months (Romania, France for most temporary accommodation centres), 18 to 24 months (Spain, with support for vulnerable groups lasting two years, although only in theory, as the above-mentioned limitations due to long procedures apply) and 36 months (Czechia, Slovenia).



Temporary, targeted housing support provided without further eligibility rules



Temporary, targeted housing support provided but linked to either wait periods or eligibility rules

*ES: most BIPs not covered,  
HU: some EU-funded projects*

### Provision of long-term housing support

In the longer term, targeted housing support for BIPs generally peters out, and support is provided through mainstream social housing and social assistance/rent subsidy systems. This means that whatever problems exist in general in the availability of accommodation and access to these systems will also affect BIPs, who will possibly have to face these problems with no support despite their particularly weak position. Only in the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Sweden can housing support be considered unlimited in principle. While in the Netherlands and Sweden, the state ensures an accommodation option in the publicly controlled housing sector, in Poland and Portugal, rent subsidies are provided. In Italy, some targeted solutions offered through regional and local authorities are not time-limited, although only a share of BIPs benefit from those options.



Long-term housing support without time limit

*IT: partially*

### Administrative barriers to accessing public housing

Given the weak income situation of most BIPs which can last for a long time after recognition, access to social housing is a major instrument for housing integration. However, obstacles to social housing, such as hard-to-obtain documentation, excessive waiting periods or discretionary decisions are reported from all countries assessed. Documentation requirements that can lead to exclusion are reported in Hungary, France, Poland and Romania and could include, for example, proof of the financial situation of the applicant's partner even though she/he is still abroad (France). Long wait periods generally emerge as the major obstacle across the assessed countries. Very long wait periods are due to the fact that in systems with a general undersupply of social housing, BIPs are often not defined as a special needs group (e.g. Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain). In Slovenia, dedicated, but temporary, housing for

BIPs is available, although the mainstream social housing sector is practically closed and, moreover, suffers from a lack of capacity. Local level discretion and rules set by local and regional housing authorities create barriers depending on the regions in Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania. In a number of countries, such as Czechia, Greece, Lithuania and Portugal, social housing plays a very subordinate role in the provision of housing to beneficiaries of international protection.



**No obstacles posed by hard-to-obtain documentation**

*CZ, GR, PT, SL: only subordinate role of public housing for housing of BIPs*



**No obstacles posed by excessive waiting periods**

*CZ, GR: only subordinate role of public housing for housing of BIPs*









**No obstacles posed by discretionary decisions**

*CZ, GR, PT, SL: only subordinate role of public housing for housing of BIPs*

**Housing quality assessment when allocating in-kind support**



Regulations to ensure that persons under international protection settle in places with decent accommodation standards where they can find advantageous conditions for their further integration are generally lacking or incomplete. While criteria to assess the quality of housing before BIPs are allocated to an area or accommodation exist at least in about half of the countries, they may refer to very different aspects. Whether housing is adequate in size and standards is considered only in Czechia, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Sweden. In three of these countries, plus France, security of tenure is a criterium for placing persons and families in certain estates. Affordability of housing in the context of the income situation, often determined by social benefits and housing support, is taken into account in Czechia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Sweden. Accessibility of key services and facilities, including e.g. public transport, schools, language learning or training facilities is considered in even fewer countries – i.e. Czechia, France and Sweden – and in the same vein, availability of employment opportunities is a factor in Czechia and Sweden alone. These are also the only countries where the actual preferences of the people concerned are taken into account in any way, which could include the desire to live close to relatives, friends and social networks of co-nationals. It is worth noting that the countries with the most comprehensive systems achieve this through either an integration programme based on individual plans

(Czechia) or an allocation system of BIPs to municipalities where numbers are calculated based on all these criteria (as introduced in Sweden in 2016). The picture becomes even more blurred when one considers the fact that in some countries, systems do not cover all BIPs (SPRAR in Italy and also the SIP in Czechia); or may be so decentralised on the local level that no robust assessment is possible (Hungary).

	Security of tenure taken into account
	Adequacy of the accommodation taken into account
	Affordability of the accommodation taken into account
	Accessibility of key services taken into account
	Availability of employment opportunities taken into account
	Beneficiaries' preference taken into account

### Targeted housing advice, counselling and representation

Support from organisations familiar with the specific legal and social position of beneficiaries of international protection on the housing market is systematically provided only in Czechia, Italy and Sweden. Of these, the same qualification as regarding other housing indicators applies in Czechia and Italy, namely that the regular system may not capture all BIPs. In most other countries, advice, counselling or representation when dealing with landlords is provided only on an ad hoc basis in the context of projects and initiatives often not even publicly funded or made possible through EU funding. Strikingly, in some countries, housing advice is systematically provided for asylum seekers only in the reception phase before recognition, such as in the Netherlands, Slovenia and in Greece (provided through the UNHCR-led emergency housing operation).

	Legal expert advice systematically provided
	Legal expert advice available on ad hoc basis <i>HU, LT, PL, SL: sporadic and/or small NGO-led projects</i>

## Awareness raising

Promoting a better understanding of the specific challenges faced by beneficiaries of international protection on the housing market and informing relevant actors about their rights and entitlements is not on the agenda in most countries. Only in France is a publicly funded and country-wide campaign to sensitise private housing actors reported, encouraging home owners to rent their property through a state-guaranteed intermediation system (which allows the rental of property to a housing association for low-income families, including refugees, in designated areas). There are also workshops of the inter-ministerial coordination body on housing (“Dihal”) with public housing corporations, although these are not focused only on BIPs. In Greece, informing owners has been an important and systematic part of the UNHCR-led emergency housing scheme, which, however, was neither a government policy nor focused on beneficiaries of protection. In Hungary and Italy, such activities exist but are project- and civil society-driven. Concerning the public housing sector, awareness-raising activities are also very rare. Public housing entities are informed about the entitlements, specific needs and limitations of BIPs only in the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden. In Spain, state-funded NGOs have taken on this task, albeit without being able to provide it in a systematic manner.



**Authorities inform public housing bodies about entitlements and needs of BIPs**

*ES: partially through publicly funded NGOs*



**Housing bodies must regularly inform their staff about entitlements and needs of BIPs**



**Country-wide campaigns to sensitize private housing actors about the situation of BIPs and target prejudices**

*HU, IT: some NGO-led projects*

## Step: Implementation & Collaboration

### Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into housing policies

Only a handful of countries have adopted a formal strategy, involving all relevant actors, to facilitate integration in the housing field. In France, a dedicated inter-ministerial initiative working on accommodation and access to housing exists with “Dihal”, bringing together all relevant government authorities and stakeholders. Refugee housing is mainstreamed into an overall policy targeting homelessness and housing poverty. In Italy and the



Netherlands, coordination mechanisms on integration deal with housing issues together with other policy domains. The Italian “Round Table” bringing together two ministries and the umbrella organisation of municipalities and regions is to coordinate the National Integration Plan addressed to migrants, including BIPs, with provisions made also for housing. The Dutch cross-sectoral policy response to the increased inflow of asylum seekers and refugees in 2015, including the ministry of housing, has led to multi-level committees overseeing the settlement of BIPs on local level. This came in addition to the platform “Home Again” which since 2014 coordinates among ministries, the asylum authority as well as the umbrella organisations of municipalities, provinces and housing corporations to assist BIPs in finding accommodation. In Portugal, a cross-governmental working group was set up in 2015 to implement the European Agenda for Migration, although it is not pursuing a uniform strategy to facilitate housing integration, leaving this task to be managed (in different ways) by municipalities and NGOs. In Romania, by contrast, an inter-ministerial committee formed in 2015 to facilitate the integration of BIPs, including the improvement of housing conditions, has led to no significant changes due to political instability. Among the assessed countries, Sweden is the only state to combine a formal housing strategy for BIPs with at least a partial, ad hoc monitoring of the uptake of housing policies and services and of housing outcomes. A review mechanism to assess and further develop housing legislation, practices, services and outcomes for BIPs does not exist in any of the 14 countries.



**Multi-stakeholder strategy to facilitate integration in the housing area**



**Mechanism to monitor housing policies and services as well as housing outcomes**

*ES: some NGO-led evaluation*

### **Coordination with regional and local authorities on housing for BIPs**

Support for sub-national levels in providing housing for BIPs was only provided in Czechia, the Netherlands and Sweden at the time of data gathering (with France introducing key measures in late 2017/2018 aimed at quantitative and qualitative objectives for BIP housing across all French regions). The “support teams” for local authorities coordinated through the Dutch municipal umbrella organisation in the period 2015 to 2017 were good examples, linked to the comprehensive policy response to the peak in arrivals at the time. They combined a help-desk function for municipalities in regulatory questions with active support in managing the interlinked challenges of receiving BIPs, including the deployment of supporting experts. Financial support for municipalities for “integration and participation” (calculated according to the

number of BIPs taken in) may be used to facilitate housing as well. In Czechia, so long as the beneficiaries of international protection are covered by the State Integration Programme (SIP), municipalities are fully involved and receive financial support for developing the necessary social infrastructures. In Greece, as is generally the case in the housing area, all coordination and multi-stakeholder support efforts have been focused on the UNHCR-led programme for asylum seekers.



Government support for local /regional authorities assisting BIPs to find housing (e.g. staff trainings, guidelines, etc.)



Government means for local /regional activities to address the housing needs of BIPs (e.g. additional expert staff, funding, etc.)

### Partnership on housing with expert NGOs

Structured, regular involvement of civil society in the provision of housing to beneficiaries of international protection exists in Czechia, France and Spain. While the Czech SIP creates a framework under which specialised NGOs are sub-contracted to deliver counselling services, the Spanish programme, on the other hand, is inadequate to reach BIPs in a comprehensive way due to its limitation to the first 18 months (24 months for vulnerable groups) after application. In the other countries, government funding for specialised NGOs in the housing domain is provided only on an ad hoc basis. This spectrum ranges from France and Italy, where initiatives to support refugees being privately accommodated are more large-scale and frequent, to countries like Hungary, Romania and Slovenia, where only a small number of AMIF-funded projects are seen. In Sweden, involvement of civil society in refugee housing efforts exists on the local level but varies across the country.



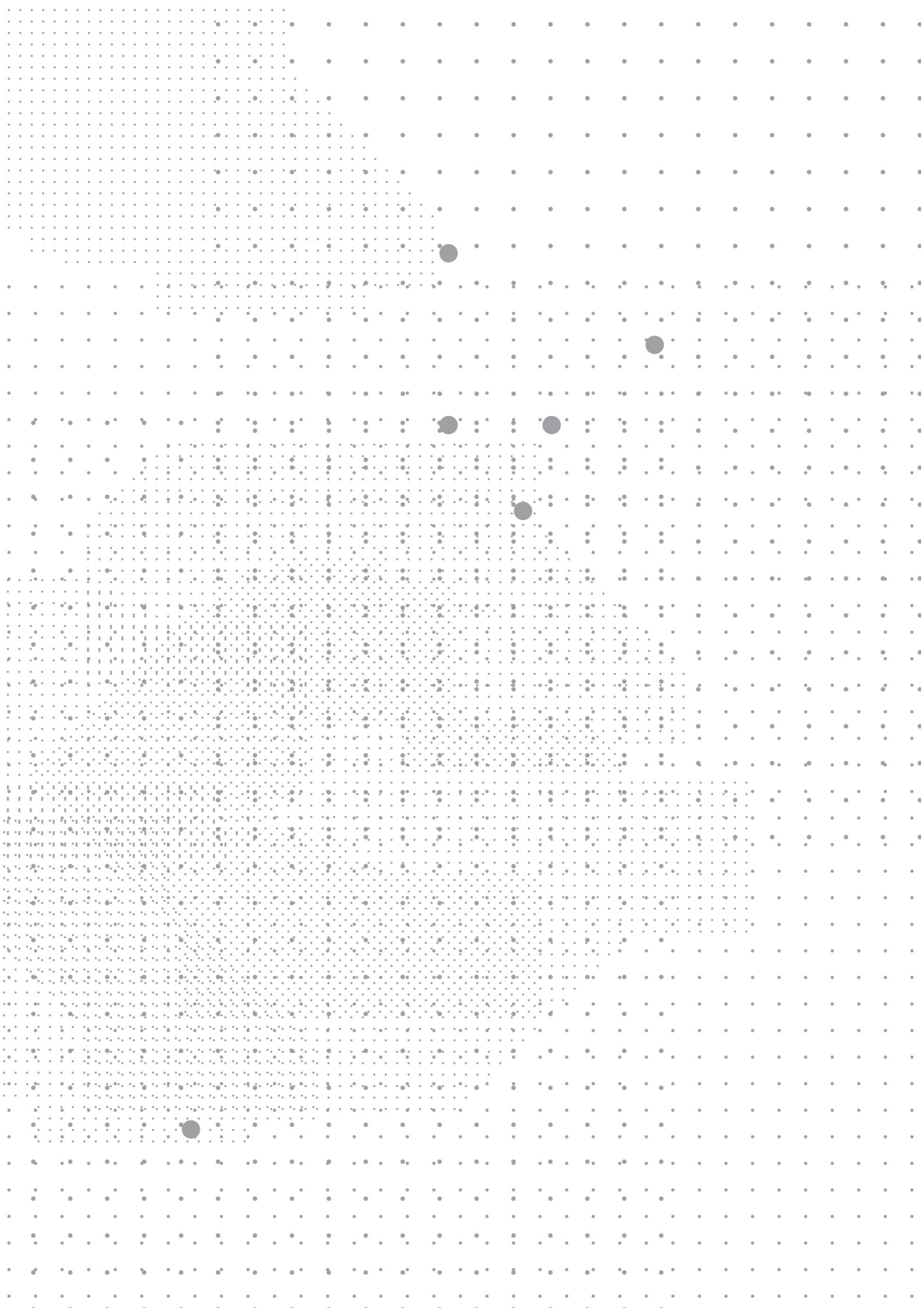
Continuously provided government means for NGOs which help BIPs to find housing

*ES: most BIPs not covered*



Ad hoc government means for NGOs which help BIPs to find housing

*HU, RO, SL: some EU-funded projects, SE: partially on local level*



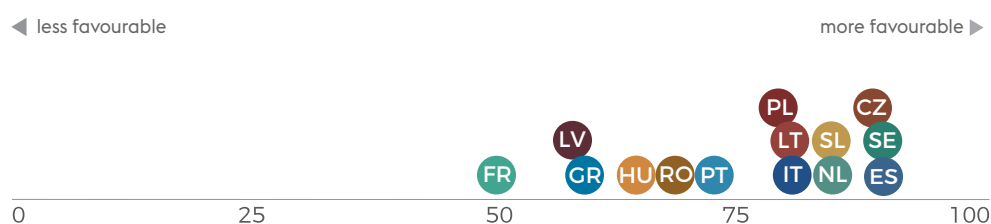
## 9 Employment



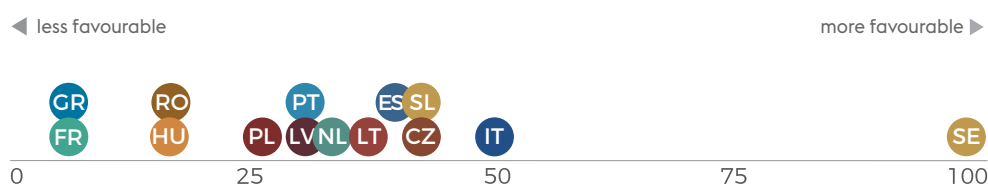
Employment is a key path to a secure income, self-sufficiency and, in some cases, eligibility for long-term residence and citizenship. It allows beneficiaries of international protection to contribute to the economy and add to the prosperity of the receiving society with their skills and qualifications. Parental employment increases family incomes and enables refugee children to attain higher levels of education. Support for the recognition of professional and academic qualifications and alternative assessment methods offer beneficiaries of international protection a better chance of gaining employment in line with their skill level.

### 9.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework



#### Step: Building the Policy Framework



#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration



### **What EU and international law require**

Under EU law, access to the labour market remains limited until recognition, after which the Qualification Directive guarantees the equal treatment of beneficiaries of international protection and national citizens in terms of access to the labour market, vocational training, employment-related education recognition and assessment procedures of foreign qualifications (Art. 26). When relevant documents are missing, beneficiaries of international protection can benefit from alternative assessment methods (Art. 28). Before recognition, the Reception Conditions Directive stipulates a maximum waiting period for labour market access of nine months for asylum-seekers (Art. 15). The Directive calls for Member States to decide on conditions for labour market access that ensure effective access and avoid procedural obstacles. However, the Directive remains silent on the recognition of asylum seekers' qualifications (Art. 16). The third EU Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration stipulates that employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants and the contributions they make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.

## **9.2 NIEM indicators in the employment dimension**

### **Indicators assessed in the baseline**

#### **Step: Setting the Legal Framework**

- o Access to employment
- o Access to self-employment
- o Right to recognition of formal degrees and right to skills validation for BIPs
- o Right to same recognition procedures as nationals
- o Support in the recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates and other formal qualifications

#### **Step: Building the Policy Framework**

- o Job-seeking counselling and positive action
- o Access to employment for groups of special concern
- o Assessment of professional education and skills
- o Administrative barriers to accessing employment
- o Raising awareness about the specific situation of BIPs on the labour market
- o Targeted support for entrepreneurs

**Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

- o Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into employment policies
- o Coordination with regional and local authorities on employment for BIPs
- o Partnership on employment with expert NGOs or non-profit employment support organisations

**Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment****Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation**

- o Legal employment and self-employment of asylum seekers and BIPs
- o Educational attainment level of working-age asylum seekers and BIPs
- o Acceptance rate for recognition of skills/qualifications

**Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources**

- o Budget for the labour market integration of BIPs

**Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes**

- o Number of BIPs overqualified for their current main job

## 9.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

**Access to employment**

In principle, access to employment equal to that of nationals is provided to beneficiaries of international protection in all of the countries. In practice, however, access is restricted through additional legal barriers in Greece, France and Romania. In these countries, further requirements such as domestic licences or permits to enter certain sectors inhibit labour market access. Conditions that newcomers cannot meet may include inscription rules in regulated professions or specific qualifications in the wider public sector (such as the areas of health and education). In Latvia, the formal requirement of proven language skills also limits access to employment in parts of the private sector. Even where fewer formal barriers on the labour markets are observed, in practice, high barriers may exist through de-facto language requirements by employers. Concerning employment in the core administration of the state (i.e. where state authority is exercised, such as in the judiciary, police, or in regulatory functions), notably, only Spain provides some access for BIPs, as this country allows foreign citizens to work as contracted employees in these sectors (but not as civil servants).



Equal access as for nationals to private-sector employment



Equal access as for nationals to employment in wider public sector



Equal access as for nationals to employment in core administration

*ES: only contracted employees*

### Access to self-employment

Access to self-employment equal to that of nationals is provided in all the countries except for Latvia. Here, strict requirements of the language law can impact on the ability to start a business with customer interaction, such as a restaurant or a shop, if the position requires communication with clients. Requirements in the liberal professions can pose barriers in all countries, but in Czechia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, they are extensive and frequent in many professions, amounting to conditions that newcomers cannot meet. In Slovenia, some professions like lawyers and notaries require citizenship, and in Romania, even professional translators do. In France as well, a number of professions are restricted to EU nationals.



Equal access as nationals to self-employment



Access to liberal professions without conditions that newcomers cannot meet

### Right to recognition of formal degrees and right to skills validation; Right to same recognition procedures as nationals; Support in the recognition procedures

A right to the recognition of formal degrees and professional qualifications obtained outside the new country (i.e. nostrification, equivalence procedures) exists in all the assessed states. The procedure is the same as for nationals who want non-EU diplomas recognised in all the countries with the exceptions of France and Greece. If documents from the country of origin are unavailable, the procedure accepts alternative documents or methods of assessments in eight countries, but not in Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and



Spain. Only in Czechia, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden is financial or other assistance to complete the procedure provided. When it comes to the validation of skills and accreditation of prior learning, however, in France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Romania, there are no legal obligations of the state to provide such qualification assessment procedures.

**CZ ES FR GR HU IT LT**  
**LV NL PL PT RO SE SL**

Right to recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates, and other evidence of formal qualifications

**CZ ES IT LT HU LV**  
**NL PL PT RO SE SL**

Right to same procedures as for nationals seeking recognition of formal degrees

**CZ ES GR IT LT**  
**LV PL PT SE SL**

Right to validation of skills and accreditation of prior learning

**CZ FR GR IT**  
**NL PL RO SE**

Alternative documents and assessment procedures if original documentation unavailable

**CZ ES NL SE SL**

Financial or other assistance provided to complete the procedure

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Job-seeking counselling and positive action

Despite the key importance of labour market integration, targeted support for BIPs to find a job is rare. In Czechia, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain, specialised staff for counselling job-seeking BIPs are provided through dedicated organisations outside the public employment services, with all beneficiaries not always covered (e.g. Spain, Italy). France introduced such measures after the cut-off date of this report. Targeted positive actions, such as subsidies for employers, on-the-job trainings and other active labour market measures, exist in France, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia, either as pilot programmes and/or as EU-funded projects. Among the assessed countries, only Sweden, where the public employment service is coordinating the introduction programme, has a system where specialised staff is available in the mainstream employment system and several forms of subsidized employment are in place for beneficiaries of international protection.





#### Specialised staff for counselling job-seeking BIPs

*ES, IT: not all BIPs covered through NGO-based services*



#### Targeted positive actions for BIPs (e.g. subsidies for employers, on-the-job trainings and other active labour market measures)

*FR, HU, LV, PL, SL: some NGO-led projects*

### Access to employment for groups of special concern

Targeted support for persons belonging to a vulnerable group in seeking employment is largely absent across the assessed countries. If at all, mainly unaccompanied minors (of working age), the elderly, disabled and victims of violence and abuse are identified as special needs groups in mainstream employment policies (as is the case for one or more of these groups in Italy, Poland and Spain). Dutch policies explicitly avoid the definition of “target groups”. Sweden has a targeted employment support programme for BIPs that is specifically adapted for these groups (with the exception of the elderly) as part of its introduction and establishment policy. In Italy, disabled BIPs can access special job seekers’ lists and unaccompanied minors who are 15 years old can access targeted apprenticeship contracts.



#### Identification of vulnerable groups as having special support needs



#### Targeted employment support for BIPs belonging to vulnerable groups

### Assessment of professional education and skills

Nation-wide criteria to assess levels of professional education and skills exist (sometimes in the context of mainstream frameworks for third country nationals) in Czechia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden. Assessment guidelines for cases where documentary evidence from the country of origin is unavailable are provided in Czechia, Italy, Latvia and Sweden. Assessments with translations or in the first language of the beneficiary can take place in Czechia, Slovenia and Sweden. In Sweden, validation of the newcomers’ education, work experience and skills is the first step for those who are enrolled in the introduction programme.



#### Nation-wide criteria to assess professional education and skills



#### Assessments with appropriate translation or in the first language of the client



Guidelines in case documentary evidence from the country of origin is unavailable

### Administrative barriers to accessing employment

Procedural obstacles to employment, such as hard-to-obtain documentation, excessive waiting periods or discretionary decisions, are identified in about half of the 14 countries assessed. In Portugal, Romania and Slovenia, documentation requirements proving professions or education pose a particular barrier. Discretionary practices are reported in France (job placement efforts deferred until language improvement) and the Netherlands (local level differences in assistance received). In Latvia, the legal requirement to know the state language is open to interpretation with regards to a job being related to the “public interest” even in the private sector, and is sometimes interpreted more strictly than formally set out in the law.



No obstacles posed by hard-to-obtain documentation (e.g. proving education/profession)



No obstacles posed by excessive waiting periods (e.g. for employment support)



No obstacles posed by discretionary decisions (e.g. in public employment services)

### Raising awareness about the specific labour market situation of BIPs

Among the assessed countries, measures to raise awareness of the specific labour market challenges faced by persons seeking or benefiting from international protection are common only in the Netherlands and Sweden (and were only recently introduced in France). The Dutch government “Task Force for the Employment and Integration of Refugees” sends municipalities information about employment and voluntary work for refugees. The employer umbrella organisation disseminates this information to the business community. In some cities, job fairs have been organised to bring together employers and refugees. In Sweden, the employment services are the coordinators of the targeted introduction programme and thus have the necessary information and specially trained staff to tailor individual programmes to specific needs. The Swedish government has run campaigns for employers such as the “100 club” campaign and measures for large

employers and regional conferences. In other countries, however, systematic information for public employment services about entitlements and the specific challenges of persons seeking or benefiting from international protection, further awareness raising for their staff and publicly financed campaigns to sensitise private employment actors (companies, human resource management, small and medium-sized enterprises, etc.) are either lacking or cannot be identified. In Spain, NGOs are funded by the state to provide employment-related information rather than the public employment services, but in an unsystematic and inadequate manner. Similarly, in Italy and Romania, ad hoc projects or interventions such as campaigns carried out by NGOs have been publicly funded through national AMIF programmes.



**Authorities inform public employment services about the entitlements and needs of BIPs**

*ES: some state-funded NGO activities*



**Country-wide campaigns to sensitize private employment actors about the situation of BIPs and target prejudices**

*IT, RO: some EU-supported NGO-led campaigns*

### Targeted support for entrepreneurs

Support for entrepreneurship and starting a business remains a blind spot in most of the refugee integration policies assessed. In Italy, beneficiaries of international protection can receive, through the SPRAR system, support in developing a business plan and contacting relevant local authorities, as well as initial financial support. In Sweden, introduction plans for newcomers can include support for starting a business. The government further encourages entrepreneurship through a targeted “fast-track” programme for small businesses together with 20 local business development centres. In Lithuania, BIPs are eligible for additional labour market support, including support for job creation and setting up one’s own business, as for example, through social business initiatives. In all other countries assessed, no such targeted policies exist for BIPs besides the occasional NGO-led initiative typically funded by the EU or IOM.



**Advice, business plan support and other information services**

*FR, PT, SL: some NGO-led projects*



**Financial and other support (e.g. trainings) for starting/running a business**

*FR, PT, SL: some NGO-led projects*

## Step: Implementation & Collaboration

### Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into employment policies

Few countries have a dedicated, well-developed policy on refugee labour market integration. Formal strategies to facilitate the integration of BIPs through employment, developed by the responsible ministries in consultation with relevant stakeholders, exist in France, the Netherlands and Sweden. While the Dutch “Task Force for the Employment and Integration of Refugees” (established in 2015) and the Swedish coordination structure (which is led by a dedicated government portfolio for refugee integration) are highly comprehensive and include various social partners, stakeholder organisations, state agencies and NGOs, the French framework agreement adopted in 2016 at least brought together the asylum office, the public employment service and two ministries (and was later replaced by a comprehensive national strategy in 2018). In Italy, the ad hoc multi-stakeholder coordination platform for implementing the National Integration Plan deals with employment policies as only one of several topics, as is the case with the National Integration Strategy of Romania. In the Portuguese context as well, some procedures have been established for stakeholder coordination around employment initiatives but fall short of a fully-fledged mainstreaming mechanism.

Only in Sweden does policy coordination also include an element of monitoring in the form of regular evaluations of the introduction programme through the employment service, including reporting to the government about the content and results of the employment measures. Among the other assessed countries, only Spain has some sort of evaluation, which is carried out by NGOs which implement the integration services commissioned by the state. A review mechanism to further develop employment legislation, practices and services, with a view on the employment outcomes of beneficiaries of international protection and in coordination with relevant stakeholders, is absent in all NIEM countries.



**Multi-stakeholder strategy to facilitate integration through employment**

*IT, PT: some ad hoc-coordination*



**Mechanism to monitor employment policies/services and employment outcomes**

*ES: some NGO-led evaluation*

**Multi-stakeholder mechanism to review employment legislation, practices, services and outcomes**

### **Coordination with regional and local authorities on employment for BIPs**

With regard to multi-level coordination in labour market integration and central government support at the local/regional levels, the situation broadly mirrors the overall picture on mainstreaming efforts in the employment area. Governments in the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden support sub-national authorities and employment bodies to support BIPs on the labour market. Notably, in all three countries, the local/regional levels are not only supported through policy guidance, but also through the provision of additional material resources. In Sweden, where the issue is regionally coordinated through the employment agencies, the municipalities are regularly involved in the employment-related parts of the introduction programme, such as specific language trainings. In Portugal, a cooperation protocol assumed with the National Association of Municipalities has led to employment measures under various municipal immigrant integration plans. In the Netherlands, where labour market support generally is decentralised and municipalities receive lump sums to support job seekers, regional branches of the public employment services are provided with specialist staff to serve beneficiaries of international protection.



Government support for local/regional authorities and employment bodies assisting BIPs to find employment (e.g. staff trainings, guidelines, etc.)



Government means for local/regional activities to address specific labour market needs of BIPs (e.g. additional expert staff, local qualification assessment schemes, etc.)

### **Partnership on employment with expert NGOs or non-profit employment support organisations**

The involvement of expert NGOs or specialised non-profit organisations in refugee-specific labour market integration measures is rather rare. Means for NGOs are provided continuously and within an established framework in Czechia (where they act as subcontractors of the “general provider” agency, e.g. for counselling services) and in Portugal (through a role for the Refugee Council in assisting BIPs to find employment). In Spain, the government commissions NGOs to provide support services in the first 18 to 24 months after application, which mostly benefits asylum seekers and not beneficiaries, while failing to ensure comprehensive support. In Sweden, provision of individual support through NGO-based integration coaches commissioned by the employment service was abandoned in 2015, thus ending any larger role for the non-profit sector in labour market integration. On an ad hoc basis, in the form of projects often co-financed from EU funds, partnerships with

implementing NGOs are found in France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.



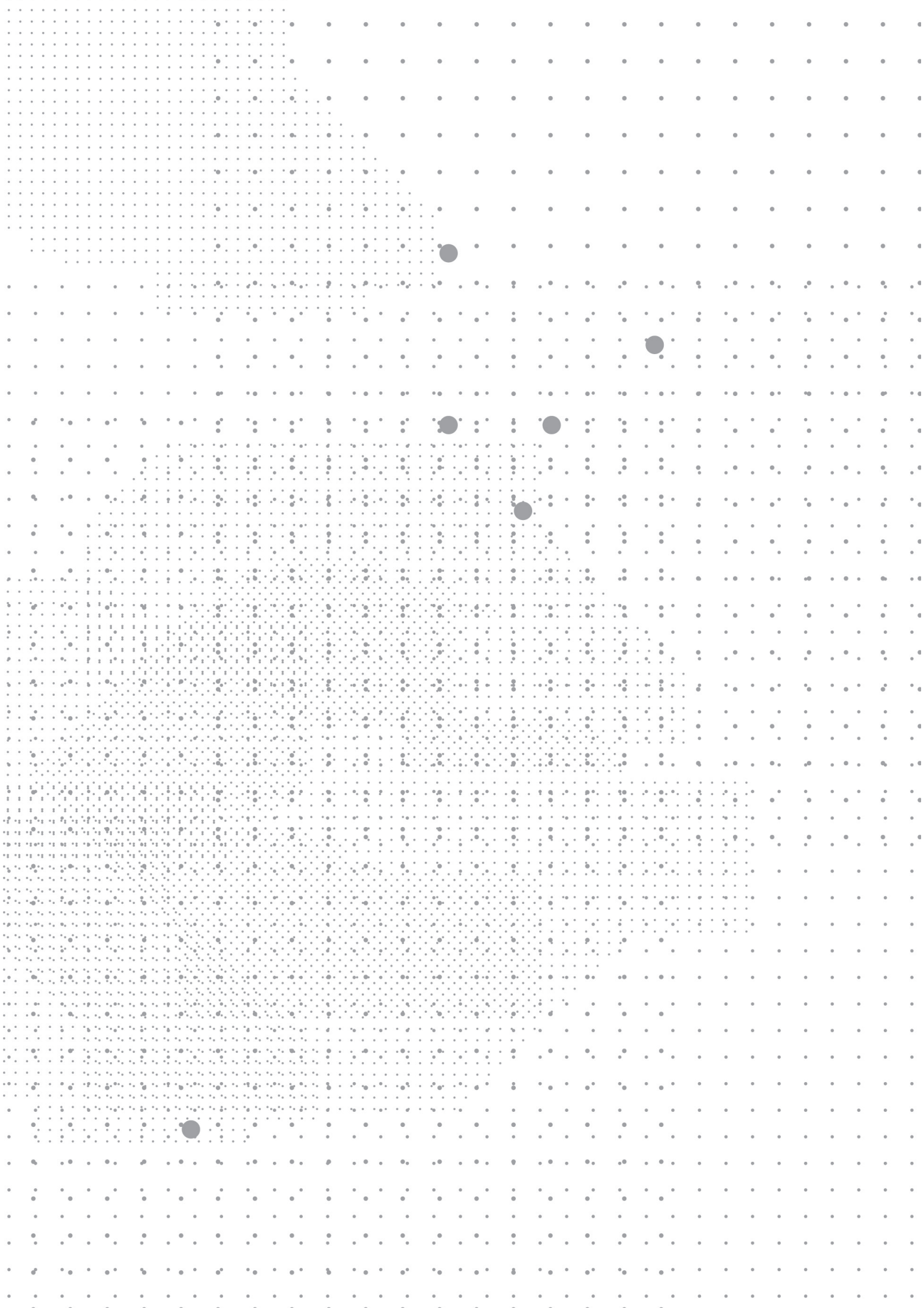
**Continuously provided government means for NGOs which help BIPs to find employment**

*ES: most BIPs not covered*



**Ad hoc government means for NGOs which help BIPs to find employment**

*HU, RO: only EU co-funded projects*



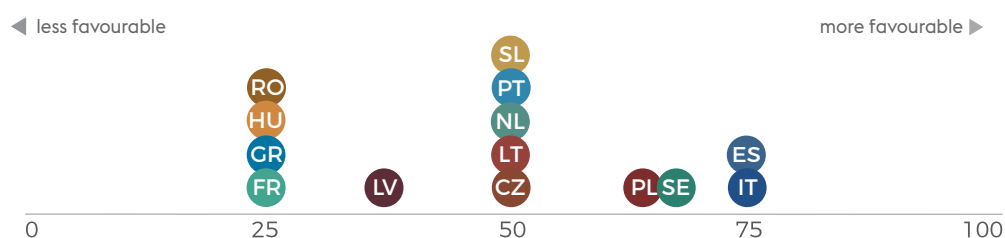
## 10 Vocational training and employment-related education



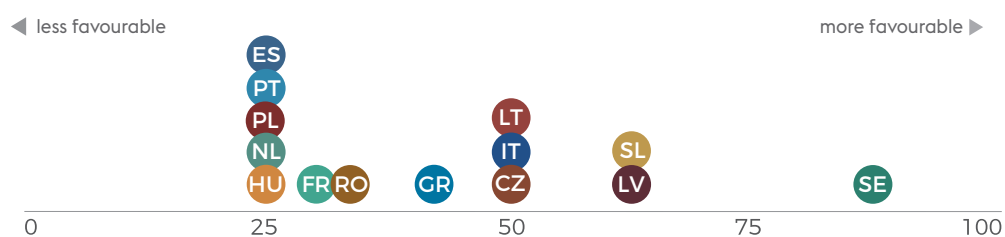
Quality vocational education and training equips individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies required to access the job market. The provision of relevant skills can be a highly effective way of empowering beneficiaries of international protection to take advantage of employment opportunities or preparing them for self-employment. Chances to gain employment at skill level early on are increased by targeted vocational training programmes and alternative assessment methods for the recognition of professional and academic qualifications.

### 10.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Building the Legal Framework



#### Step: Building the Policy Framework



#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration





## What EU and international law require

Under EU law and, to some extent, the Geneva Convention, beneficiaries of international protection are guaranteed the same treatment as national citizens and access to targeted support to address their specific needs. For access to vocational training, the Geneva Convention requires states to grant refugees at least the most favourable treatment granted to foreign citizens. The Geneva Convention establishes a general obligation to facilitate integration (Art. 34), and this duty is spelled out in the more concrete obligations under the recast Qualification Directive. Under EU law, access to vocational training remains limited until recognition, after which the recast Qualification Directive guarantees the equal treatment of beneficiaries of international protection and national citizens in terms of access to the labour market, vocational training, employment-related education, recognition and assessment procedures of foreign qualifications (Art. 26). When relevant documents are missing, beneficiaries of international protection can benefit from alternative assessment methods (Art. 28). Before recognition, the Reception Conditions Directive stipulates asylum seekers a maximum waiting period of nine months for labour market access (Art. 15). The directive calls for Member States to decide on conditions for labour market access that ensure effective access and avoid procedural obstacles. However, Member States are not obliged to open vocational training possibilities to asylum seekers, and the directive remains silent on the recognition of qualifications (Art. 16).

## 10.2 NIEM indicators in the vocational training dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

- o Access to mainstream vocational training and employment-related education

#### Step: Building the Policy Framework

- o Access to vocational training and employment-related education for groups of special concern
- o Administrative barriers to accessing vocational training
- o Raising awareness about the specific situation of BIPs regarding vocational training
- o Accessibility of vocational training and other employment-related education measures
- o Length of targeted vocational training and employment education

### **Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

- o Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into vocational training and employment-related education policies
- o Coordination with regional and local authorities on vocational training for BIPs
- o Partnership on vocational training and employment-related education with expert NGOs and non-profit adult education organisations

### **Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment**

#### **Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources**

- o Budgets for the vocational training of BIPs

## **10.3 Main results**

### **Step: Setting the Legal Framework**

#### **Access to mainstream vocational training and employment-related education**

The legal framework in the majority of countries affords beneficiaries of international protection the same access as nationals to mainstream vocational training and employment-related education. In France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia and Romania, however, beneficiaries of international protection have the same access as nationals, but with conditions that cannot be met by newcomers. For instance, in Hungary vocational training is only available in Hungarian, and non-Hungarian-language trainings are not granted by law, thus undermining access to vocational training for BIPs. Similarly, in Latvia, where vocational training through the state employment agency is accessible after registering as unemployed or as a job seeker, it is provided only in Latvian in accordance with the Official Language Law, and newcomers often do not possess sufficient language knowledge to take part in this training. In a similar case, registration as unemployed/job seeker is mandatory in Romania as well, while the training available is mostly in Romanian. In Greece, conditions that BIPs cannot meet as newcomers include the requirement of a valid certificate for inscription in professional associations or for attendance of vocational training programmes, skill validation and accreditation of prior learning (which also holds true e.g. for Romania) and language skills, due to a lack of funded language courses and integration programmes. In France, the poor quality of language courses, both in terms of their duration and methodology, creates an obstacle for many BIPs to achieve a level sufficient to access vocational training on the same basis as nationals.



BIPs have the same access as nationals, with general conditions that can be met by newcomers



BIPs have the same access as nationals, but with general conditions that cannot be met by newcomers



The law does not take into account the specific situation of vulnerable persons

### Step: building the policy framework

#### Access to vocational training and employment-related education for groups of special concern

Most of the countries do not consider the specific situation of vulnerable persons receiving international protection. Some legal provisions have been adopted in Czechia, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Spain and Sweden for facilitating the access to vocational training for single parents, women, persons with disabilities, victims of violence, torture and other forms of trauma, minors arriving above the age of compulsory schooling and persons over 50 years of age. In all these countries, persons with disabilities are either identified as a group which needs special attention in the mainstream vocational and employment training and education system, or there are specifically targeted programmes for them which cover several years. In Sweden, the employment service and adult education institutions (organised by the municipalities) offer different educational tracks and vocational training programs that are tailored to the specific needs of BIPs. In Czechia, all vulnerable groups have access to vocational training and employment-related education by means of the State Integration Programme and have their own individual plan.



The law does not take into account the specific situation of vulnerable persons

#### Administrative barriers to accessing vocational training

BIPs face no administrative obstacles when accessing vocational training in eight of the assessed countries – Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Sweden. Obstacles can be identified in France, Greece, Latvia, Slovenia, Spain and Romania, where required documentation can be hard to obtain, administrative delays and waiting periods can be excessive and/or the procedure may be subject to discretionary decisions with uncertain outcome.



No administrative barriers to vocational training

### **Raising awareness about the specific situation of BIPs regarding vocational training**

Sweden is the only country that implements a range of measures to raise awareness about the specific situation of BIPs regarding vocational training. While public employment services are regularly informed about the vocational training entitlements and limitations of BIPs, they are also obliged to regularly inform their staff of these entitlements and limitations. In addition, publicly financed campaigns sensitise private training providers about the situation of BIPs in Sweden and target the prejudices and perceptions surrounding them. In Slovenia, as well, public employment services are regularly informed about the vocational training entitlements and limitations of BIPs and are obliged to inform their staff. In Latvia, public employment services are obliged to regularly inform their staff of the entitlements and limitations of BIPs. By contrast, in all the other countries, no specific measures are adopted to raise awareness about the specific conditions of BIPs regarding vocational training.



Authorities inform Public Employment Services about entitlements and needs of BIPs



Public Employment Services must regularly inform their staff about entitlements and needs of BIPs



Country-wide campaigns to sensitise private training providers about the situation of BIPs and target prejudices

### **Accessibility of vocational training and other employment-related education measures**

Latvia is the only country which both foresees measures to increase the participation of BIPs in vocational training and/or employment-related education and encourages employers to provide specific courses for BIPs. Czechia, Spain and Sweden have only adopted measures targeted to increase BIPs' participation in vocational training and employment related education, while France and Slovenia have measures that encourage employers to increase the number of courses for BIPs. It is worth noting that the majority of countries, including Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Romania, do not implement any policies to foster the accessibility of vocational training and employment-related education for BIPs.



Measures to increase the participation of BIPs in vocational training



Measures to encourage employers to provide and increase the number of vocational training programmes

### **Length of targeted vocational training and employment education**

In five countries – Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden – the length of targeted vocational training is determined after an individual assessment or there is no general time limit. In Czechia, Latvia and Spain, targeted vocational training and employment education is provided for a fixed number of hours or for a fixed term without individual assessment. For instance, in Czechia, recognised refugees are entitled to use the assistance service in securing vocational training and employment-related education for twelve months. After this period, they can benefit from vocational training as an applicant for employment registered at the labour office. In Latvia, the length of these measures is the same as for other residents receiving support for vocational training and employment services: a maximum of 360 hours of Latvian language courses per year and a maximum of 960 hours of other vocational trainings per year. In Spain, the length of targeted vocational trainings and employment education for BIPs is 24 months maximum. Otherwise, in most of the countries, BIPs cannot benefit from publicly funded support for targeted vocational training and employment-related education.



Length is determined after an individual assessment or there is no general time limit



Fixed number of hours or fixed term without individual assessment

## **Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

### **Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into vocational training and employment-related education policies**

Most of the countries do not implement any mechanism to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into vocational training and employment-related education policies. Sweden is the only country that has adopted a formal strategy involving all relevant partners to facilitate the integration of BIPs through vocational training and a mechanism to monitor vocational training policies and outcomes. Italy and Latvia have a formal

strategy that includes all relevant partners to facilitate the integration of BIPs through vocational training, but without a monitoring mechanism. In Spain, there is only a mechanism to monitor vocational training policies and outcomes for beneficiaries of international protection.

It is worth noting that none of the assessed countries has a mechanism in place to review vocational training legislation, programmes, practices and outcomes for BIPs in coordination with relevant partners (such as government ministries, trade unions, research institutions, professional associations and NGOs).



Multi-stakeholder strategy to facilitate the integration of BIPs through adequate vocational training



Mechanism to monitor vocational training policies and outcomes of BIP

Multi-stakeholder mechanism to review vocational training legislation, practices, services and outcomes for BIPs

### **Coordination with regional and local employment authorities on vocational training and employment-related education**

The wide majority of countries lack any coordination mechanisms with regional and local employment authorities on vocational training and employment-related education. Portugal and Sweden are the only countries that support these authorities in providing orientation to BIPs to enrol in vocational training and, moreover, allocate resources to build partnerships with local employers and encourage them to invest in the training of BIPs. In Sweden, the employment service deals with the newcomers and encourages them to enrol in vocational education. It has financial funds and an infrastructure with local businesses to promote internships and vocational trainings for BIPs. On the other hand, Latvia supports BIPs to enrol in vocational training and employment-related education without providing additional means to build partnership with local employers. Regional branches of the Latvian employment agency are prepared to support BIPs and their potential employers at the local level. However, this has not yet been implemented in practice, as all members of the target groups have registered in the central Riga branch.



Government support for local and regional employment authorities assisting BIPs to enrol in and complete vocational training and employment-related education



Government means for local /regional activities to build partnerships with employers and encourage them to invest in the training of BIPs

### **Partnership on vocational training and employment-related education with expert NGOs and non-profit adult education organisations**

The Netherlands, Spain and Sweden are countries that provide means for expert NGOs and non-profit adult education organisations, within an established framework, to help BIPs receive adequate support for vocational education. In Spain, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security sets the guidelines and annually funds NGOs which implement the vocational training programmes. This partnership is limited to 18 months for BIPs and to 24 months for vulnerable persons. In the Netherlands, the Foundation for Refugee Students UAF (partly funded by the Ministry of Education) supports students in vocational/mid-level as well as higher education. In Sweden, while there is rather sporadic funding for NGOs implementing specific projects in the context of a publicly funded vocational education sector, employment services regularly cooperate with non-profit educational organisations on activities that might help BIPs get closer to the labour market. Also, there are many partnerships with adult education centres (folk-high schools), non-profit interest organisations for liberal professions and non-profit adult education institutes. In six countries, including Czechia, France, Greece, Italy, Romania and Slovenia, the state provides means only on an ad hoc basis. By contrast, in Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Portugal, there are no partnerships on vocational training and employment-related education with expert NGOs and non-profit adult education organisations.



Continuously provided government means for NGOs that help BIPs receive adequate vocational education support



Ad hoc government means for NGOs that help BIPs receive adequate vocational education support

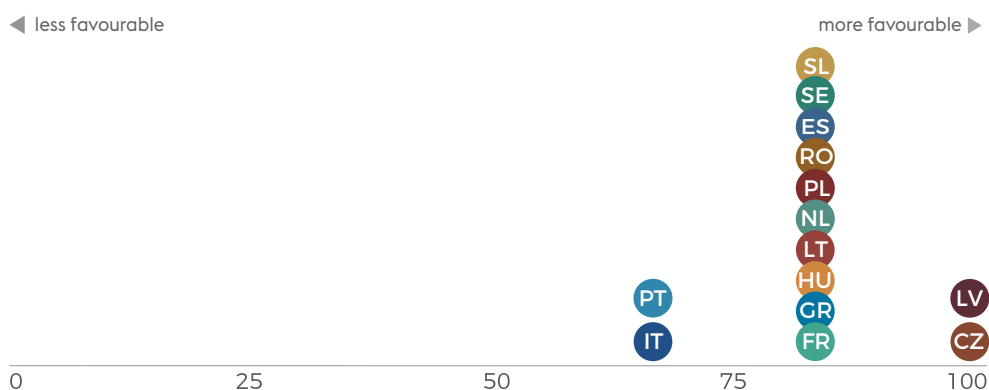
# 11 Health



Health and integration are mutually reinforcing, as good health is both a precondition and a consequence of full participation in society. Beneficiaries of international protection in many cases can only live up to their full potential if the physical and psychological scars caused by persecution and flight can start to heal. Early detection and intervention by health workers are crucial in order to prevent the reemergence of trauma and social isolation. After arrival, deteriorating health and stress can also be an indicator of poor reception and integration conditions, caused by inadequate living and working conditions.

## 11.1 Overview of scored results

### Step: Building the Legal Framework



### Step: Building the Policy Framework



### Step: Implementation & Collaboration





### **What EU and international law require**

Under EU law, asylum seekers must receive necessary and adapted medical assistance from the moment of their arrival, although they will be able to enjoy access to health care without restriction only after recognition. According to the Reception Conditions Directive (Art. 19), during the reception phase, asylum seekers must receive necessary health care, which should at least include emergency care and essential treatment of illnesses and serious mental disorders. Asylum seekers with special protection needs, such as minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of violence, must receive adapted medical assistance. Under the Qualification Directive (Art. 30.1), beneficiaries of international protection have the same access to health care services as national citizens. Vulnerable groups of beneficiaries of international protection can benefit from adapted health care services beyond mainstream access to health care (Art. 30.2).

## **11.2 NIEM indicators in the health dimension**

### **Indicators assessed in the baseline**

#### **Step: Setting the Legal Framework**

- o Procedure to identify special health-related reception needs
- o Inclusion in a system of health care coverage
- o Extent of health coverage

#### **Step: Building the Policy Framework**

- o Access to health care for special needs
- o Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to health care
- o Information for health care providers about entitlements
- o Information concerning entitlements and the use of health services
- o Availability of free interpretation services

#### **Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

- o Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of BIPs into health care
- o Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or health bodies on health care for BIPs
- o Partnership on health care with expert NGOs

## Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment

### Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources

- o Budgets for health care services

### Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes

- o Unmet medical needs of persons seeking or benefiting from international protection

## 11.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

#### Procedure to identify special health-related reception needs

The majority of countries provide for an individual assessment to identify special health-related needs in the reception phase. This, however, does not necessarily lead to regularly monitored and evaluated health care support throughout this period. In Romania, for example, despite the fact that the national asylum law specifically states that vulnerable cases must benefit from special reception conditions and support, in practice, such practices are rarely identified and there is no monitoring of implementation. Only in Czechia and Latvia does the law establish an individual assessment that leads to regularly monitored and evaluated health care support for asylum seekers with special health-related needs. The Czech Ministry of Interior identifies whether the asylum seeker is a vulnerable person and provides support on the basis of his/her reception needs. In Latvia, special reception needs, including health care needs, are assessed upon arrival and are to be taken into account during the entire asylum process. Access to healthcare services is facilitated by the assistance of social mentors and social workers. By contrast, in Italy, Portugal and Poland, no individual assessment is established by law.



Individual assessment leading to regularly monitored and evaluated health care support in the reception phase



Individual assessment, but not leading to regularly monitored and evaluated health care support in the reception phase

#### Inclusion in a system of health care coverage; extent of health coverage

In all assessed countries, beneficiaries of international protection have access to health care coverage under the same general conditions as nationals, which reasonably can be met as newcomers. Likewise, in all NIEM countries, the extent of health coverage for persons benefiting from international protection is the same as for nationals, without any restrictions in terms

of services covered. In Greece, a law adopted in 2016 improved the situation by ensuring free access to public health services for persons without social insurance and vulnerable individuals. Among others, asylum seekers and members of their families are considered as persons belonging to vulnerable groups and thus entitled to free access. However, it is worth noting that hospitals are struggling to respond to the needs of both local people and migrants. In practice, access to health care for persons seeking or benefiting from international protection in Greece is widely jeopardised by the general lack of capacity and the lack of financial and human resources in the country.



Same conditions as for nationals,  
which can be met as newcomers



Extent of health coverage  
same as for nationals

### Step: Building the policy framework

#### Access to health care for special needs groups

Most of the countries – Czechia, Italy, France, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain – provide for all the fundamental health care services for special needs groups: paediatric care for minors, care for minors who have been victims of abuse or trauma, care relating to pregnancy and childbirth, care for persons with disabilities, nursing care for elderly persons and psychiatric care for victims of violence. Notably, nursing care for elderly persons is not provided in Greece, Hungary and Poland. In Hungary, three main health care entitlements are included in the coverage for beneficiaries of international protection, namely care relating to pregnancy and childbirth, paediatric care for minors and psychiatric care for victims of violence. The most disadvantageous practice was found in Romania, where only emergency medical services for adults and paediatric care for minors is guaranteed, reflecting the conditions in place for nationals as well. While, for example, childbirth is covered, care related to pregnancy is not and requires a wide set of documents that rarely can be provided by newcomers.



Paediatric care for minors



Care for minors who have been victims of any form of abuse or trauma



Care relating to pregnancy and childbirth  
*RO: only childbirth*



Care for physically or mentally handicapped persons



Nursing care for elderly persons



Psychiatric and psychosocial care for victims of torture, rape or other forms of trauma

### Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to health care

Only in Czechia, Greece, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden are there are no administrative requirements that can pose a barrier for BIPs to receive health care. In all other countries, obstacles are found. In France, Hungary, Latvia and Romania, excessive administrative delays and waiting periods represent the main obstacles to obtaining entitlement to health care. In Italy and Slovenia, the procedure to access the health care system is subject to discretionary decisions with uncertain outcome, while administrative delays and waiting periods are also excessive. In Poland and Spain, the required documentation is very hard to obtain, and there are long administrative delays and waiting periods to obtaining entitlement to health care.



No administrative barriers to health care

### Information for health care providers about entitlements

In most of the countries, no systematic measures are taken in the health systems to raise awareness for the specific health care needs of persons benefiting from international protection. Only in Italy and Sweden do health care providers regularly receive information on the entitlements and limitations of BIPs and inform their staff about their entitlements and specific limitations. In the Netherlands, health care providers only receive regular

information on the entitlements and limitations of beneficiaries, without regularly informing their staff. In the other countries there are either no regular measures to raise awareness in the healthcare services or they are limited to sporadic measures, such as a circular letter distributed to healthcare services and practitioners in Portugal.



Authorities inform health care providers about the entitlements and specific limitations of BIPs



Health care providers must regularly inform their staff about the entitlements and specific limitations of BIPs

### Information concerning entitlements and the use of health care services

In six countries – Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia and Spain – BIPs receive information on health care entitlements and the use of services in the context of systematically provided individualised face-to-face counselling. Czechia, Italy, Poland and Portugal provide information on health care entitlements and the use of services in other ways (e.g. website, brochure etc.). France, Greece, Lithuania and Romania lack any systematic provision of information on entitlements and the use of health care services.



Systematic provision of individualised information on health care entitlements and use of service



Systematic provision of information on health care entitlements and use of services in another manner

### Availability of free interpretation services

Access to interpretation services in the health system is widely guaranteed across the system (at least in major destination areas) in only four countries – Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. By contrast, in Czechia, France, Greece, Latvia and Romania, access to interpretation service is merely ensured on a smaller, pilot or ad hoc basis. To give an example, in Latvia, interpretation services are provided under an agreement concluded between the Ministry of Culture and an NGO in order to implement certain public administration tasks for the integration of third country nationals, including beneficiaries of international protection. However, this practice is not guaranteed across the entire system, as interpreters must be requested for their services on an ad hoc basis and might not always be available. In Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia, access to interpretation in the health care system is not available at all.



Interpretaton services are guaranteed on a smaller, pilot or ad hoc basis

### Step: Implementation & Collaboration

#### Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into health policies

The vast majority of countries do not provide for any mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the health care system. Only France, Italy, Latvia and Sweden have adopted a formal strategy involving all the relevant partners – government ministries, health care providers, regional and local authorities, NGOs – to facilitate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection through adequate health policies. For example, in Latvia, the Action Plan for Movement and Admission of Persons who Need International Protection emphasises the need to provide health care to beneficiaries of international protection. In Portugal, the Six-Party Cooperation Protocol reviews all integration policies taking place in the country, however, without the direct involvement of the Ministry of Health. In Italy, the ad hoc coordination platform to draw up and implement the National Integration Plan addressed to migrants, including asylum seekers and BIPs, also refers to the health care sector. While Spain is the sole example among the assessed Member States that has a mechanism to monitor the use of health care services and the health outcomes for BIPs, no NIEM country has a fully-fledged mechanism to review and further develop policies and the legal framework with the relevant stakeholders.



Multi-stakeholder strategy to facilitate the integration of BIPs through adequate health care policies



Mechanism to monitor the use of health care services and the health outcomes of BIPs

Multi-stakeholder mechanism to review health care legislation, practices, services and outcomes for BIPs

#### Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or health bodies on health care for beneficiaries of international protection

Most of the countries lack any coordination mechanisms with regional or local authorities and health bodies to facilitate the access of beneficiaries of international protection to the health care system. Only in Sweden does the national government support both sub-national authorities and health bodies in dealing with the health needs of BIPs and, moreover, provides

means to adequately address these needs. Here, the government affords each county and municipality with financial support proportionate to the number of accommodated BIPs. In Greece and the Netherlands, the national government only supports regional and local authorities in dealing with health needs of BIPs, without providing material assistance, while in Latvia, the opposite is the case, with material means not accompanied by further support. Unfavourable practices have been identified in Czechia, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain, where there is no coordination between the central government and regional and local authorities or health bodies to improve access to the health care system.



Government support for local /regional authorities and/or health bodies to deal with the health needs of BIPs (e.g. staff trainings, guidelines, etc.)



Government means for local/regional activities to address the health needs of BIPs (e.g. additional expert staff, etc.)

### Partnership on health care with expert NGOs

The Netherlands is the only country assessed that provides means for expert NGOs on a continuous basis and within an established framework, while in several countries, including Czechia, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, the state provides means for expert NGOs only on an ad hoc basis. For instance, in Italy, projects are carried out by civil society organisations through a National Fund to promote access to health care for beneficiaries of international protection. Similarly, in Romania, some AMIF-funded NGOs are offering medical services to BIPs and other third country nationals. By contrast, in five countries – Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Spain and Sweden – there is no partnership on health care with expert NGOs. In Sweden, this needs to be seen in the context of a health care system that generally prizes its accessibility and sees many efforts at mainstreaming services to address special needs, including e.g. interpreters.



Continuously provided government means for NGOs which help BIPs receive adequate health care



Ad hoc government means for NGOs which help BIPs receive adequate health care

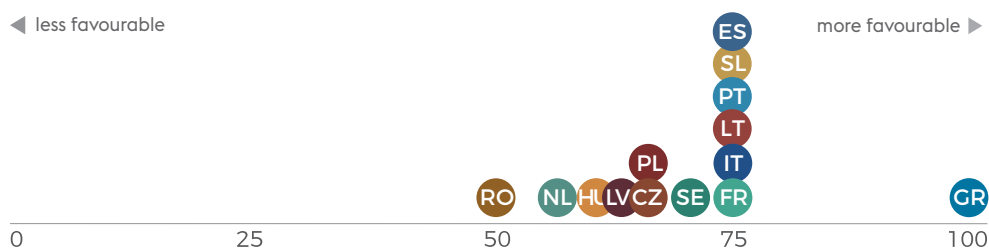
## 12 Social Security



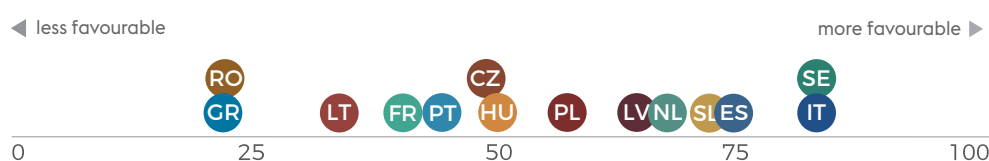
Social security is not a privilege, but a necessity for beneficiaries of international protection to rebuild their lives in a new country. Refugees usually lose all of their income and savings, as well as their essential social and family support. They must start a new life with hardly any financial safety net or help from family and friends. Effective protection requires not only support to meet basic needs in the early reception phase, but also access to the full range of social security provisions to underpin integration pathways in the long run. Benefits help refugees, especially women, obtain a basic degree of financial independence for the duration of the process of socio-economic integration.

### 12.1 Overview of scored results

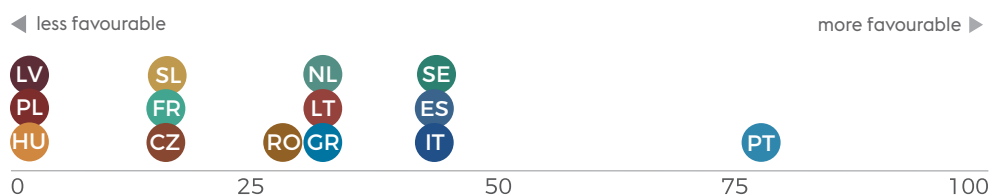
#### Step: Building the Legal Framework



#### Step: Building the Policy Framework



#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration





### **What EU and international law require**

Under EU law, asylum seekers remain dependent on the provision of material reception conditions and are not guaranteed targeted measures to support their transition after recognition. The Reception Conditions Directive ensures asylum seekers an adequate standard of living guaranteeing their subsistence and protecting their physical and mental health but does not specify the level of this support (Art. 17). After recognition, the recast Qualification Directive gives refugees access to social assistance under the same conditions as national citizens, but beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are only guaranteed access to core benefits (Art. 29). Member States who use this derogation have to show that such derogations are not discretionary, serve a legitimate aim and are proportional to fulfil that aim, and the level of the core benefits is defined in compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. Both Directives are silent on the use of targeted measures that could address the specific financial difficulties of beneficiaries of international protection transitioning from reception centres to their new lives without any savings and social support.

## **12.2 NIEM indicators in the social security dimension**

### **Indicators assessed in the baseline**

#### **Step: Setting the Legal Framework**

- o Inclusion in a system of social security
- o Extent of entitlement to social benefits

#### **Step: Building the Policy Framework**

- o Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to social benefits
- o Information for social welfare offices about entitlements
- o Information concerning entitlements and the use of social services

#### **Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

- o Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) into the social security system
- o Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or welfare bodies on social security for BIPs
- o Partnership on poverty relief with expert NGOs

### **Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment**

#### **Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes**

- o Beneficiaries of international protection living in poverty

## 12.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

#### Inclusion in a system of social security

The inclusion in a comprehensive system of social security entails the possibility for beneficiaries of international protection to access, on an equal basis with nationals, different forms of financial support, such as social assistance/minimum income support, unemployment benefits, sickness and disability benefits, family- and child-related benefits, old age and survivor (widow/widower) pensions. Seven countries – France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Slovenia and Portugal – ensure that beneficiaries of international protection are fully included in the state social security system under the same conditions as nationals. By contrast, in Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania, Poland and Sweden, the law excludes beneficiaries of international protection from eligibility for certain benefits, or requires conditions that are impossible, or at least very difficult, for newcomers to meet. In Romania, non-nationals and non-EU citizens are generally not eligible for old age pensions, with only a few exceptions based on bilateral agreements and treaties. In Sweden, where unemployment or sickness and disability benefits are based on previous income, newcomers are not able to receive full benefits but only other types of (minimum level) allowances. In the Netherlands and Hungary, BIPs have access only to minimum income support and family- and child-related benefits according to the same general conditions as for nationals. Latvia provides more favourable conditions for refugees in comparison with beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (BSPs) in access to sickness and disability benefits, family- and child-related benefits and old age and survivors (widow/widower) pensions. Lithuania, only in 2017, equalized the rights of BSPs and recognised refugees.



Same conditions as for nationals to access social security, which can be met as newcomers



BIPs excluded from certain benefits or required to meet conditions which cannot be met as newcomers

*LV: refugees enjoy more favorable conditions than beneficiaries of subsidiary protection*

#### Extent of entitlement to social benefits

In Czechia, Greece, Poland, Romania and Sweden, the same level of benefits is ensured for beneficiaries of international protection as for nationals, in combination with targeted benefits for BIPs in some specific areas.

In Latvia, this applies only to recognised refugees and not to BSPs. For instance, in Czechia, beneficiaries of international protection have the same access to social support as national citizens and are also entitled to additional assistance for six months in the fields of the labour market and education. In Greece, however, the national administration is very reluctant in applying the principle of equal treatment to third country nationals or citizens of non-Greek descent in relation to social security issues. By contrast, all other assessed countries do not provide for targeted benefits, but only guarantee the same level of benefits as for nationals. However, countries may still provide targeted benefits to persons arriving as resettled refugees or relocated asylum seekers, as is the case in Portugal.



Same level of benefits for BIPs as for nationals, plus targeted benefits

*LV: refugees enjoy more favorable conditions than beneficiaries of subsidiary protection*



Level of benefits equal to nationals, without targeted benefits

## Step: Building the policy framework

### Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to social benefits

Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden are the only countries without any administrative barriers for beneficiaries of international protection to obtain entitlement to social benefits. In Czechia and Latvia, only a few administrative barriers are encountered. In Czechia, BIPs face barriers to access old age and survivor pensions because the required documentation is very hard to obtain, while in Latvia, the procedure to obtain minimum income support is subject to discretionary decisions with uncertain outcome. In the other countries, several barriers contribute to jeopardising BIPs' access to social benefits: hard-to-obtain documentation, excessive administrative delays, long waiting periods and discretionary decisions with uncertain outcomes. In Portugal, BIPs encounter several administrative barriers to access unemployment benefits and minimum income support.



No administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to social benefits

### Information for social welfare offices about entitlements

Italy and Sweden are the only assessed countries where systematic efforts are made within the social welfare system to raise awareness of the specific entitlements applicable to beneficiaries of international protection. In these countries, social welfare offices regularly receive information on the entitlements and specific limitations of BIPs, and, moreover, systematically inform their staff about these entitlements and limitations. In Italy, social welfare offices are incorporated in local authorities. They are informed on the entitlements of BIPs and themselves provide information to their staff. On the other hand, in Spain and Slovenia, only some measures are implemented. In Spain, social welfare offices merely receive information on the entitlements and limitations of BIPs, while in Slovenia these offices inform their staff without receiving any regular information from the relevant ministry or the state. All other assessed countries do not provide regular information to social welfare offices about BIPs' entitlements and limitations. In Greece, social welfare offices are mostly informed by ministerial circulars on an ad hoc basis.



Authorities inform social welfare offices about the entitlements and limitations of BIPs



Social welfare offices must regularly inform their staff about the entitlements and limitations of BIPs

### Information concerning entitlements and the use of social services

Individualised, face-to-face information on social security entitlements and the use of services is systematically provided in five countries – Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Spain. Six countries – Czechia, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Sweden – offer systematic information through other means (e.g. websites, brochures). Negative policies have been found in Greece, Lithuania and Romania, which lack any systematic provision of information on social security entitlements and the use of services.



Systematic provision of individualised face-to-face information on social security entitlements and use of services



Systematic provision of information on social security entitlements and use of services in another manner

## Step: Implementation & Collaboration

### **Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the social security system**

The vast majority of NIEM countries do not provide any mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into social security. Italy, Portugal, Romania and Sweden, however, have adopted formal strategies involving the relevant partners (government ministries, regional and local authorities, NGOs) to facilitate BIPs' integration through comprehensive income support. To give a few positive examples, the Italian ad hoc coordination platform has also been concerned with access to social security in the context of the National Integration Plan for migrants, including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. Similarly, the Portuguese working group for the European Agenda for Migration includes social security in its action plan and reports on activities carried out. That the sheer adoption of a formal strategy is not sufficient is exemplified by the Romanian case, where the National Immigration Strategy adopted by various ministries mentions social security as one of the main directions of action. Commitments in the strategy, however, have yet to be translated into implementation of relevant measures. Spain is the only country which has implemented a mechanism to monitor the use of income support and its outcomes for beneficiaries of international protection. In Sweden, reports monitoring the integration processes are commissioned by the government to relevant authorities or initiated by relevant regional and local authorities on an ad hoc basis. A mechanism to review social security legislation, practices, services and outcomes in coordination with all relevant ministries, regional/local authorities and NGOs does not exist in any of the NIEM countries.



Multi-stakeholder strategy to facilitate the integration of BIPs through comprehensive income support



Mechanism to monitor the use of income support and its outcomes for BIPs

Multi-stakeholder mechanism to review social security legislation, practices, services and outcomes

### **Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or welfare bodies**

Most of the countries assessed do not provide for any coordination mechanism with regional or local authorities and welfare bodies to foster the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the social security system.

The Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden are the only countries that both support local authorities and welfare bodies in dealing with the social security concerns of BIPs and provide additional means to adequately address their needs. By contrast, Greece, Italy and Lithuania only support local authorities and welfare bodies in dealing with the social security needs of beneficiaries of international protection without ensuring additional means. For instance, the Italian Ministry of Health adopted guidelines on the treatment and rehabilitation of mental disorders of persons under international protection who suffered torture, rape or other psychological and physical abuse. Also training for social care professionals is foreseen and a specific multilevel coordination body has been put in place by the Ministry of Interior.



Government support for local /regional authorities to deal with the social security needs of BIPs (e.g. staff trainings, guidelines, information on entitlements, etc.)



Government means for local /regional activities to deal with the social security needs of BIPs (e.g. additional expert staff, etc.)

### Partnership on poverty relief with expert NGOs

Portugal and Spain are the only countries in the NIEM sample that provide means for expert NGOs within an established framework in order to assist beneficiaries of international protection in accessing income support and poverty relief. In Spain, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security annually fund NGOs which implement the poverty relief programme. However, the lack of sufficient human and economic resources seems to jeopardise the effectiveness of the whole system. Seven countries, including Czechia, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Slovenia and Romania, also provide means for expert NGOs, but only on an ad hoc basis. For instance, in France, the EU co-funded “Reloref” project supports refugee access to income support and poverty relief measures by offering counselling on how to access social rights (as well as accommodation, employment, etc). By contrast, five countries – Hungary, the Netherlands, Latvia, Poland and Sweden – do not support expert NGOs in this field to facilitate the access of BIPs to the social security system. This, however, should be seen in context. While in some countries, such NGO-provided advice and assistance can be essential for accessing benefits from welfare bureaucracies that are not geared towards providing services to migrants, in Sweden, all persons granted international protection are made aware of how to access social allowances by the municipalities which are the providers of social welfare.

ES PT

Continuously provided government means for NGOs that help BIPs access income support and poverty relief

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CZ FR GR IT LT RO SL

Ad hoc government means for NGOs that help BIPs access income support and poverty relief

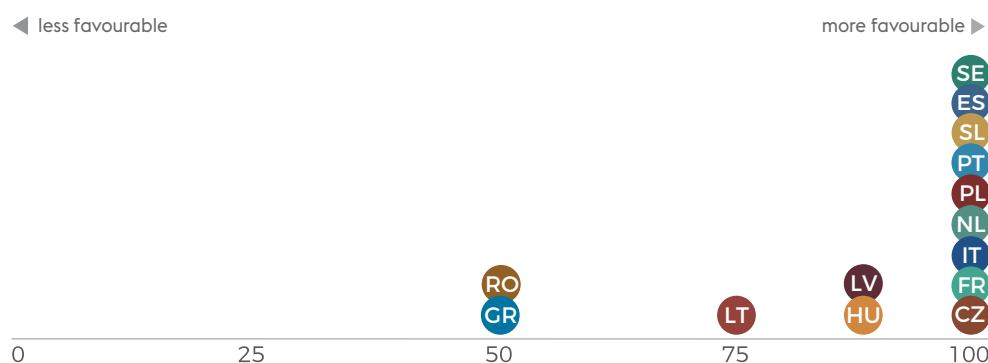
# 13 Education



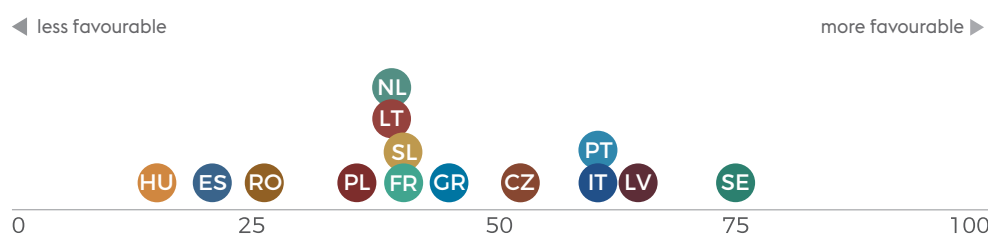
Education endows children with a perspective for personal development, social mobility, better employment prospects and a new social network. It is key to social inclusion and better integration outcomes. Schools should be places of interaction between beneficiaries of international protection and the local community for fostering mutual understanding and reaching out to stay-at-home parents. Teachers are the first in line to see and react to integration issues, such as physical and mental health distress, risk of dropping out due to legal or financial instability or bullying and discrimination. It is the responsibility of educational systems to counteract xenophobia and promote multilingualism, citizenship and social skills for all pupils.

## 13.1 Overview of scored results

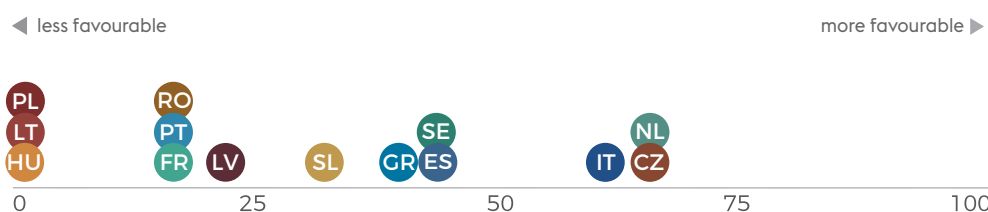
### Step: Building the Legal Framework



### Step: Building the Policy Framework



### Step: Implementation & Collaboration





### **What EU and international law require**

Under EU law, asylum seekers must have access to education, although it may be organised separately from the mainstream curriculum and classes until recognition, when minor beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) gain full access to the mainstream school system. According to the Reception Conditions Directive (Art. 14), minor asylum seekers should enjoy access to education under similar conditions as national citizens within three months of lodging their application. The same article stipulates that minor children should have access to preparatory and language classes to facilitate their participation in the education system but does not provide any further guidance on the organisation or quality of these classes. Member States need to provide for alternative educational arrangements if access to the national education system is not possible due to the specific situation of the minor. Children recognised as beneficiaries of international protection have secure and full access to education under the Qualification Directive (Art. 27). In order to facilitate the integration process at school, these standards go beyond the Geneva Convention's limited guarantees that only ensure equal access to elementary education, while other forms of education are offered on terms as favourable as possible, guaranteeing at least equal treatment with foreign citizens. The fifth EU Common Basic Principle for Immigrant Integration is dedicated to education, stressing that efforts are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.

## **13.2 NIEM indicators in the education dimension**

### **Indicators assessed in the baseline research**

#### **Step: Setting the Legal Framework**

- o Access to education

#### **Step: Building the Policy Framework**

- o Access to education for groups of special concern
- o Administrative barriers to education
- o Placement in the compulsory school system
- o Regularity of orientation and language programmes and targeted education measures
- o Length of language support
- o Raising awareness about the specific situation of BIPs regarding education

**Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

- o Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of children and youth under international protection into education policies
- o Coordination with regional and/or local education authorities and school boards on education for children and youth under international protection
- o Partnership on education with expert NGOs

**Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment****Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation**

- o Enrolment in education of refugee children and youth
- o Average time between an asylum application and the enrolment of children in primary/secondary/preparatory educational programmes

**Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources**

- o Budgets for targeted educational measures for minor beneficiaries of international protection
- o Education staff for minor beneficiaries of international protection

**Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes**

- o Participation in targeted education

## 13.3 Main results

### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

**Access to education**

Legally speaking, all countries provide the same access to schooling for beneficiaries of international protection as nationals up to the upper secondary education level. On the upper secondary level (i.e. education past the compulsory school age), a less favourable situation in Romania stems from the fact that access is not clearly defined in the law. In practice, this leads to referral of pupils in this age group to so-called “recovery educational programs”, i.e. catch-up schooling programmes below the level of specialised upper secondary schools for which BIPs may be qualified. In Greece, access to education is hindered in practice by language barriers and the fact that the school system is widely unprepared for the education of pupils seeking or benefiting from international protection. A significant gap remains in the actual provision of pre-school, upper secondary and higher education. On post-secondary and tertiary (university, higher college) levels, formally the same access as for nationals is provided in all countries except Romania (for the above-mentioned reason) and Lithuania, where conditions for BIPs are only

the same as for third country nationals. In spite of the far-reaching equality in law, the reality of many countries is marked by numerous administrative obstacles (see below). Significantly reducing the actual access to education, especially on secondary and tertiary levels, these rules mostly relate to issues of language proficiency, recognition of previously attained education (e.g. in Hungary and Latvia) and a general lack of preparedness of education systems to deal with refugee pupils.



Equal access as for nationals to pre-school education

*GR: restrictions inhibiting access*



Equal access as for nationals to primary/lower secondary education

*GR: restrictions inhibiting access*



Equal access as for nationals to upper secondary education

*GR: restrictions inhibiting access*



Equal access as for nationals to post-secondary and tertiary education

*GR, HU, LV: restrictions inhibiting access*

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Access to education for groups of special concern

Legal provisions to ensure access to education for vulnerable groups are rather rare, with many countries only having some policies and practices in place. Only Italy and Latvia have targeted education programmes for unaccompanied minors that are founded in law, with Swedish and Greek legislations at least identifying unaccompanied minors as a group which needs special attention. School-age victims of violence, torture, abuse and other forms of trauma must legally be able to benefit from targeted education programmes in Italy, the Netherlands and Poland. In Sweden, although there is no law in place, a support system exists for migrant newcomers up until secondary education. Mostly through the Swedish National Agency for Education, the state contributes with pedagogical support, advice, additional funding for schools and guidelines for, e.g., disabled pupils.



One or more vulnerable groups identified in education legislation as in need of special support



Education law foresees targeted programmes for children and youth under international protection

### Administrative barriers to education

Obstacles to lower levels of schooling resulting from hard-to-obtain documentation from the country of origin are identified in Romania. In Lithuania and Slovenia, on the other hand, barriers resulting from discretionary decisions exist. Here, schools sometimes are considered full or refuse to enrol children with protection status as they regard themselves “not ready” to integrate foreign pupils or can otherwise decide not to accept pupils. Barriers that negatively impact on access to the higher (upper secondary, postsecondary/tertiary) levels of education are more widespread and exist in Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal and Slovenia. Mostly, they relate to proving previous stages of educational attainment without authorities regulating the equivalence procedures or proceedings in the absence of proper documentation. Diverging practices among schools and universities result from this governance deficit. Latvia is the outstanding example of a country where all state-run higher education has to be provided in the official language; thus, if a BIP wishes to study in a publicly funded tertiary education programme, language knowledge easily becomes a hurdle.



No administrative barriers to access primary & lower secondary education



No administrative barriers to access upper secondary education



No administrative barriers to access post-secondary /tertiary education

### Placement in the compulsory school system

How countries place pupils seeking or benefiting from international protection in schools emerges as a major weakness across the assessed

countries. Nation-wide criteria to assess the level of education and prior learning exist only in France, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Sweden. Assessments with adequate translation or in the first language of the child are even rarer but are found in Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. Latvia, Portugal and Sweden are also the only countries that monitor the possible placement of refugee children in “special needs” schools intended for children with learning disabilities. A slight majority of the countries have assessment guidelines in place only in regard to procedures in case documentary evidence from the country of origin is unavailable. In Sweden, where the system is most comprehensive, new legislation for more uniform standards for newly arrived students was introduced in 2016, to add to the National Agency for Education’s “soft” steering which provides toolkits for assessing prior skills, information and support in many languages. Under the new law, every newly arrived student’s level of knowledge is identified, not only as a basis for placement decisions but also for planning individual instruction in various subjects. In addition, the Swedish government has given the agency a mission to support the schools in the mandatory mapping of newly arrived students’ knowledge. Remarkably, only in Latvia does the state foresee measures to keep children from having to change their place of schooling during the asylum procedure, thus, in the best interest of the child, avoiding another disruption of education pathways and the need to re-start in a new school environment.



Nation-wide criteria to assess level of education and prior learning



Assessments with adequate translation or in the first language of the child



Mechanism to monitor the placement in schools intended for children with learning disabilities



Guidelines for assessments where documentary evidence from the country of origin is unavailable



Measures to avoid making children have to change their place of schooling during the asylum procedure

### **Regularity of orientation and language programmes and targeted education measures; Length of language support**

Concerning support for learning the host language, pupils in Czechia, France, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden can benefit from needs-assessed language

instruction until proficiency is achieved. Depending on discretionary decisions at the school level, Italy and Portugal also offer open-ended language support. Four countries make language support available for a fixed number of hours or a fixed term, but these provisions vary considerably. While in Latvia, only 120 hours of instruction are offered at one location country-wide through an AMIF-funded project, in Romania, language learning support is compulsory for up to one school year. In Slovenia, after initial tuition of up to 20 hours per week, it is up to the individual schools to decide how long language support continues. In the Netherlands and Poland, preparatory classes focused on language acquisition exist, with enrolment lasting up to two years. In Greece, extracurricular formats were introduced but lack common practice and systematic funding. Hungary and Spain do not provide any language learning support for refugee children entering their school systems whatsoever, although the Spanish state at least subsidises, in a non-systematic manner, NGOs active in language support. In Romania, language tuition for refugee pupils may not take place due to small numbers or a lack of teachers. In France and Poland, pupils under international protection benefit from the in-school language support in place for all newly arriving non-native speakers (in Poland, this goes beyond language support, with so-called “multicultural assistants” knowledgeable in the pupils’ language introducing them to Polish society for twelve months).



**Targeted language and orientation programmes are offered in a systematic manner**

*FR, NL, PL: support for all non-native speaker pupils, NL, PL: preparatory classes, IT: only partially, PT: unstable funding*



**Pupils receive language support for a fixed number of hours or for a fixed term**

*GR: some extracurricular support; NL, PL: preparatory classes*



**Pupils receive language support based on individual assessment until proficiency is attained**

*IT, PT: partially, based on individual school decisions*

### **Raising awareness about the specific situation of beneficiaries of international protection regarding education**

Few countries try to ensure, through their legal regulations, a sufficient level of awareness about the educational entitlements and specific limitations of students seeking or benefiting from international protection. In Greece, Latvia, the Netherlands and Portugal, authorities have to provide schools and universities with such information. Out of these countries, Latvia and Portugal go one step further with an obligation for educational institutions to inform

their staff about these issues. Examples of initiatives and practices to raise awareness among teachers (outside the scope of legal requirements) can be found, for example, in the Netherlands, where foundations help schools to introduce play-therapy and teachers to deal with children suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. Likewise in Sweden, schools and municipalities can receive support and information from the National Agency for Education. Campaigns to sensitise pupils about the situation of beneficiaries of international protection and to target prejudices were identified in Greece, Portugal and Slovenia, but largely on an ad hoc basis and in the form of small-scale projects.



**Schools and universities are regularly informed about education entitlements and the specific situation of students benefiting from international protection**

*SE: information and support not legally required but provided through initiatives and practices*



**Schools and universities regularly inform their staff about education entitlements and the specific situation of students benefiting from international protection**

*SE: staff information not legally required but provided through initiatives and practices*



**Country-wide campaigns to sensitise about the situation of pupils under international protection and to target prejudices**

*GR, PT, SL: ad hoc and small-scale projects*

## Step: Implementation & Collaboration

### **Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of children and youth under international protection into education policies**

Multi-stakeholder development and the adoption of a formal education strategy for children and youth under international protection has taken place in Latvia, Italy, Portugal and Sweden. In Latvia, the recent “Action Plan on Persons who Need International Protection” has led to a coordination role of the Ministry of Education, including regular communication with schools, internal standard operation procedures and a progress-monitoring strategy focusing on individual study plans. In Italy, education is one of the various dimensions on which the overall coordination mechanism on integration (“Round Table”) focuses in implementing the National Integration Plan. In Sweden, a key role is given to the National Agency for Education to implement government strategy and to control, support and evaluate municipalities and schools with the aim of improving the quality and results of education. A monitoring system exists but does not distinguish between

different categories of migrant newcomers. In the Netherlands, coordination efforts are seen only in the tertiary education sector (“Refugees in Higher Education Task Force”). In Greece, activities are related to cooperation with IOM aimed at improving the schooling situation of refugee children. None of the assessed countries has a fully-fledged multi-stakeholder mechanism in place to review and further develop education legislation, programmes, practices and outcomes for children and youth under international protection.



**Multi-stakeholder strategy to facilitate integration in the area of education**

*GR, NL: partial efforts*



**Mechanism to monitor education policies and outcomes for children and youth under international protection**

*ES, GR: some NGO/IGO efforts, SE: for all migrant pupils*

**Multi-stakeholder mechanism to review education legislation, practices, services and outcomes**

### **Coordination with regional and/or local education authorities and school boards on education for children and youth under international protection**

A similarly patchy picture emerges concerning multi-level coordination in the area of education. Only in six countries – Czechia, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden – does the national government support regional education authorities and school boards in dealing with the educational needs of children and youth under international protection, for example, through guidelines and trainings. The most comprehensive structures are found in the Netherlands and in Sweden. The Dutch LOWAN, a state-funded network organisation, acts as a helpdesk and knowledge broker for schools and school boards involved in newcomer education as well as with local authorities. The extensive support provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education was further strengthened through a 2016 bill creating a more compulsory framework for schools. In Czechia and Italy, government support is provided to local education actors but limited to specific institutional frameworks and the BIPs covered thereunder (SIP in Czechia, SPRAR in Italy). In all of these four countries, government support to local level education actors is associated with the provision of additional material means to adequately address the needs. In the Netherlands, for example, schools receive extra funding for pupils who have been in the country for less than a year. The Czech education ministry’s support programme for foreigners in schools is designed to provide



additional means for pupils in compulsory preschool and primary education. In Portugal, many municipalities draft policy directed to BIPs resulting from local level involvement in the working group for the European Agenda for Migration. While this may include the area of education, there is no reliable evidence on the scope of central government support (immaterial or material) received on the local level. In Greece, coordination with the local level is very limited, with circulars directed to schools including instructions on how to assess the needs of students. Nevertheless, this is still more than is seen in the eight other countries with no multi-level coordination in the field of education whatsoever.



**Government support for local/regional authorities and school boards to address specific education needs of pupils under international protection**  
(e.g. staff trainings, guidelines, etc.)



**Government means for local/regional and school board activities to address specific education needs of pupils under international protection**  
(e.g. additional expert staff, funding, etc.)

### **Partnership on education with expert NGOs**

Support for expert NGOs that help children and youth under international protection to receive adequate educational support is continuously provided in Czechia, the Netherlands and Spain. In the framework of the Czech State Integration Programme, NGOs are subcontracted by the so-called General Provider (currently a state body). In the Netherlands, a number of important service providers, including the key LOWAN platform to assess educational levels and support schools, as well as organisations supporting refugee students in vocational/higher education and dealing with traumatised pupils, are organised as non-profit foundations. In Spain, NGOs are annually funded through the Ministry of Employment and Social Security to provide services, but neither the scope nor the duration of the support is adequate. Support for NGOs is provided in France, Italy, Romania and Slovenia on an ad hoc basis, outside an established framework. No state support for dedicated expert NGOs in the field of education is available in Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and, notably, Sweden.



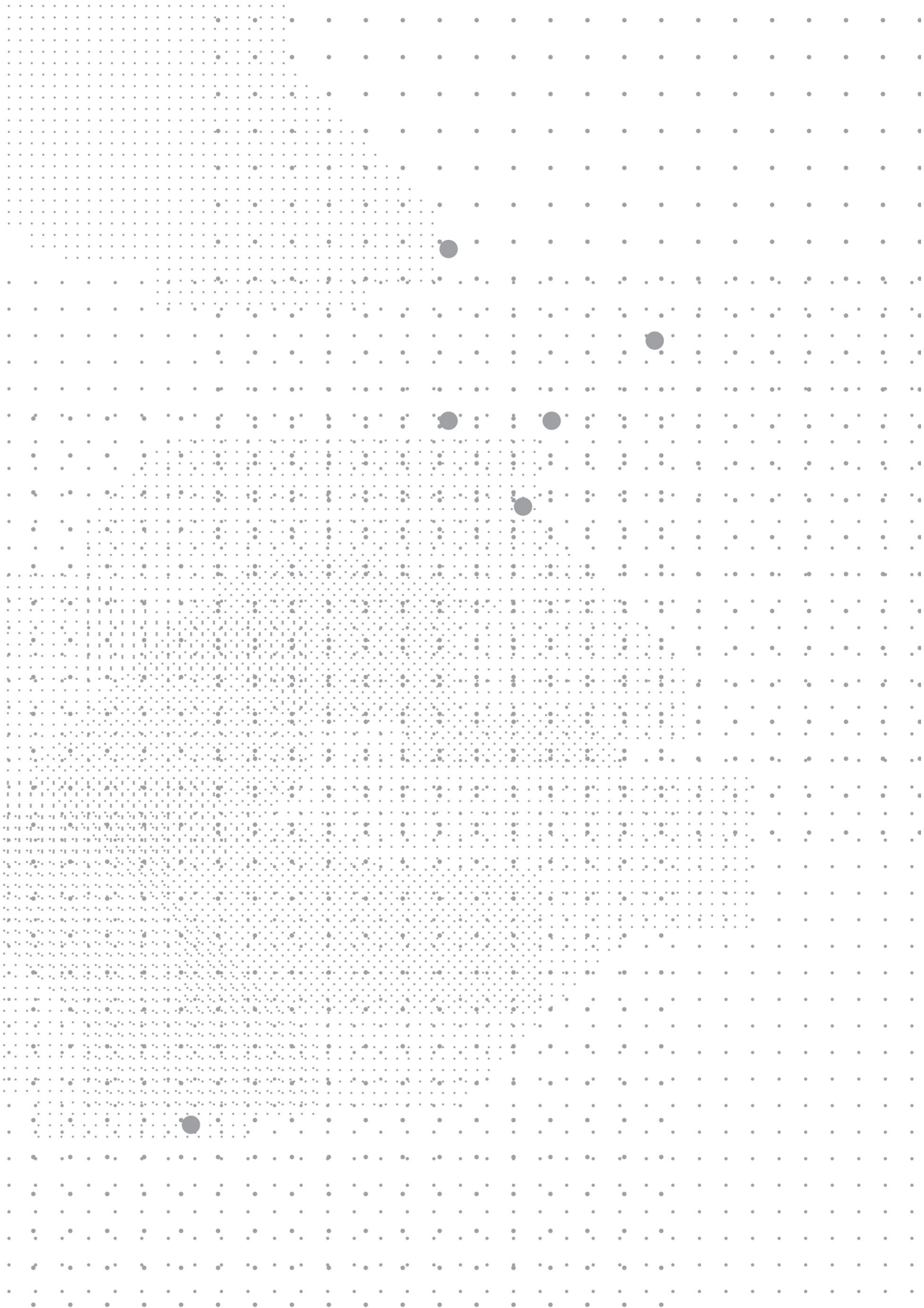
Continuously provided government means for NGOs that help children and youth under international protection receive adequate education support

*ES: most BIPs not covered*

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Ad hoc government means for NGOs that help children and youth under international protection receive adequate education support



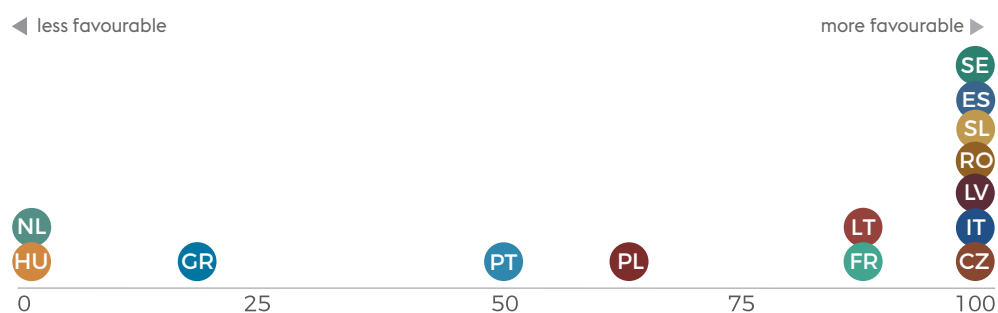
## 14 Language learning and social orientation



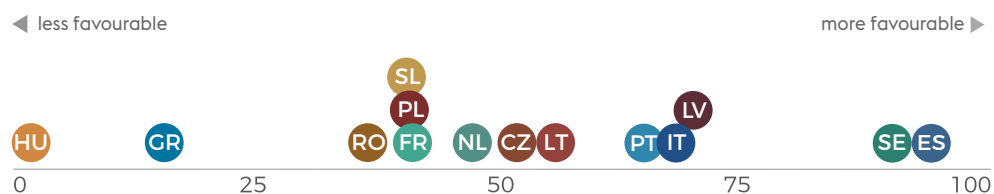
Social orientation and language learning provide the skills and practical knowledge beneficiaries of international protection need to get by in daily life. Sufficient knowledge of the receiving country's language, institutions, administration and social norms opens up greater possibilities in public life – from greater involvement in social activities to access to the housing and labour market, health and social systems, training and education. Not least, it facilitates access to long-term residence and citizenship.

### 14.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework



#### Step: Building the Policy Framework



### What EU and international law require

Under EU law, while the Reception Conditions Directive does not mention any specific forms of integration support to asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection become entitled to integration support under the Qualification Directive (Art. 34). The directive specifies that this support needs to take into account their specific needs. The provision implements the general obligation that can be derived from the Geneva Convention's article on naturalization, which is interpreted to facilitate the integration process until its legal end point. Within the EU policy framework, the fourth Common Basic Principle for Immigrant Integration Policy underlines that basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration. Enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.

## 14.2 NIEM indicators in the language learning and social orientation dimension

### Indicators assessed in the baseline

#### Step: Setting the Legal Framework

- o Access to publicly funded host language learning
- o Access to publicly funded social orientation

#### Step: Building the Policy Framework

- o Quality of language courses
- o Duration of host language learning
- o Administrative barriers to host language learning
- o Duration of translation and interpretation assistance
- o Quality of social orientation courses
- o Provision of social orientation for groups of special concern
- o Administrative barriers to social orientation

### Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment

#### Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation

- o Enrolment in host language courses
- o Average time between an asylum application and the enrolment in a host language learning programme
- o Completion of host language courses
- o Completion of social orientation courses

#### Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources

- o Host language learning budgets

- o Host language learning staff
- o Social orientation budgets
- o Social orientation staff

#### **Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes**

- o Impact of language courses
- o Impact of social orientation programmes

## **14.3 Main results**

### **Step: Setting the Legal Framework**

#### **Access to publicly funded host language learning**

Access to publicly funded, free language courses is ensured in the majority of the countries assessed, including Czechia, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Often these courses are open ended, and no further obligations are imposed on participants. Some countries, however, foresee obligations for considerable shares of beneficiaries. In Spain, participation in language courses is obligatory for recipients of social benefits/ social assistance (with Romania currently introducing similar legislation). In France, as part of the Republican Integration Contract, language classes are mandatory for all newly arrived third country nationals, including BIPs who, when tested, scored less than level A1 of the European Reference Framework for Languages. BIPs who hope to become naturalised or who are under 25 years old can continue their training to reach level B1. An obligation to attend the (otherwise free) courses also exists in Lithuania, where participants must attend at least 40% of the classes in order to retain their integration benefits. In Poland, in the framework of their individual integration programme (lasting 12 months), BIPs are obliged to learn Polish and receive a certain amount to cover the costs of language tuition. It then is up to the beneficiaries to find an appropriate course among providers, with only few cost-free classes available for BIPs from NGOs. While in Poland, too, integration benefits might be revoked in case of not attending a course, there is no obligation to achieve a certain level of language proficiency. In the Dutch system, which similarly requires BIPs to pay for their courses, participants by contrast are obliged to attend until they achieve a specified level of proficiency. With this, BIPs are subject to the same civic integration policy that is in place for all newcomer third country nationals (similarly to France, where, however, such courses are free). A loan for this purpose is offered by the Dutch government, which does not need to be paid back if participants successfully take the civic integration test within three years.

In countries without a system of publicly funded language courses for beneficiaries of international protection, the limited offer in place cannot

match the needs. In Greece, a few NGOs offer free Greek language courses for refugees and immigrants, and the only university-run language programme charges a fee. In Hungary, only NGOs ensure this service through AMIF-funded projects.



**Free language courses with no further obligations attached**

*ES: mandatory for recipients of social benefits;  
FR: mandatory for beginners;  
GR, HU: only few courses provided by NGOs*



**Free language courses and participants obliged to attend until proficiency level required for long-term residence is achieved**



**Language courses not free and participants obliged to attend until specified level of proficiency is achieved**

*PL: no obligation to achieve specified proficiency level*

**Access to publicly funded social orientation**

In almost all the countries, free and publicly funded social orientation courses are available for beneficiaries of international protection. The frameworks in place, however, differ significantly. In Latvia, for instance, BIPs receive social orientation through various projects carried out by NGOs, funded by the state or Riga municipality. Employment-specific orientation is provided for job-seekers registered as unemployed with the public employment service. In Slovenia, the right to integration assistance is provided for three years after the date of acquisition of refugee status or subsidiary protection. The implementation of a so-called personal integration plan includes social orientation, with classes on the country's history, culture and constitutional system of up to 30 hours, in addition to language courses. Polish regulations, in contrast, do not foresee courses, and the form of social orientation depends on individual cases, although social orientation is a duty of the social workers implementing the individual integration programmes.

In France, cost-free social orientation is offered as part of the mandatory integration framework in place for all newly arrived third country nationals. In the Netherlands, too, social orientation is part of the civic integration policy targeting all newcomer third country nationals. In line with the situation concerning language courses, however, there is no free access to social orientation, with participants being obliged to attend courses in preparation for the civic integration exam. Hungary, Greece and Romania are countries where social orientation is only provided through NGOs. In the Hungarian and

Romanian cases, this at least covers all target groups and is (partly) financed through EU co-funding.



Free social orientation courses with no further obligations attached

*GR, HU, RO: only few courses provided by NGOs*



Social orientation courses not free and obligation to attend

## Step: Building the Policy Framework

### Quality of language courses

Overall, there is a lack of attention to quality criteria in language courses. Only Latvia and Sweden provide for an entire spectrum of measures ensuring high quality host language tuition. These range from needs-assessed placement in courses to targeted curricula for newcomers, as well as teaching by trained and certified professionals, regular evaluation according to country-wide quality standards and different formats for different target groups. However, even where generally high-quality language courses are provided, such as in Sweden and Netherlands, implementation problems are still reported at the local level or with service providers. In the case of France, while teachers are certified and courses are evaluated, the language courses on offer are inadequate due to heterogenous groups mixing different levels and needs, the low number of hours and the absence of e.g. specific courses for illiterate refugees. Poland and Romania are countries which fail to implement most or all of the criteria to ensure high quality host language instruction for BIPs. In the Greek case, high standards apply, but to a very limited supply of language courses which, moreover, are not state-funded.



Placement in courses after assessment of existing knowledge of the host language

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*



Curricula are targeted and take into account the specific communication needs of newcomers

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*



Teaching provided by trained and certified second-language teachers

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*





Courses regularly evaluated in the light of country-wide quality standards

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*



Different formats to facilitate language learning for different target groups

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*

### Duration of host language learning

Only in Italy, Lithuania, Spain and Sweden is the duration of host language learning based on individual assessment, and are courses provided until a proficient level of language knowledge is attained or without a general time limit. By contrast, in Czechia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Latvia, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia, a fixed number of hours or period of time is applied after the orientation phase. To give a few examples, in Czechia, there is a limit of 400 hours, while in Slovenia, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to 300 hours of Slovenian language courses and can attend an additional 100 hours. In France, 200 hours (as of 2017) have proven insufficient for a very high percentage of students to attain the intended level. In Romania the length of host language learning is limited to an orientation phase of one year maximum, but due to poor implementation of the policy, BIPs in most cases cannot attend these courses in their first year. In Latvia, asylum seekers receive 120 hours of instruction while waiting for their status.



Based on individual assessment until proficiency is attained or without a general time limit



Fixed number of hours/period after orientation phase

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*



Limited to an orientation phase

### Administrative barriers to publicly funded host language learning

In most of the countries, beneficiaries can access language courses without any barriers, namely in Czechia, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Excessive administrative delays and waiting periods, however, can jeopardise access to publicly funded host language learning classes in France, Latvia, Slovenia and Romania. For instance,

in France, beneficiaries of international protection often have to wait for up to six months from the moment their protection status is recognised for their enrolment in the Republican Integration Contract and the language courses. In Latvia, comprehensive language courses are available only for job-seeking BIPs when they are registered as unemployed, while the courses that asylum seekers receive are far less extensive. In Romania, the law imposes a minimum number of people to be enrolled in order for a course to start, which sometimes takes several months to be reached.



No administrative barriers to host language learning classes

### Duration of translation and interpretation assistance

Until proficiency in the language of the new country is achieved, beneficiaries of international protection depend on translation and interpretation assistance in many situations. Particularly, when dealing with public and social services, such as immigration authorities, employment services, schools, education authorities, hospitals and housing bodies, such language support can be essential to access rights and benefits. Only in Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Spain and Sweden is the provision of translation and interpretation assistance based on an individual assessment of needs and available until proficiency is attained without any general time limit. In Czechia, beneficiaries are entitled to interpretation assistance and legal and social counselling for twelve months from their entry into the integration programme. By contrast, Greece, France, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Slovenia fail to provide any publicly funded translation and interpretation services for beneficiaries of international protection.



Translation and interpretation assistance based on individual assessment and provided without a general time limit



Translation and interpretation assistance provided without individual assessment for a fixed number of hours or for a fixed term

### Quality of social orientation courses

Sweden is the only country adopting a full scope of measures that can ensure high quality social orientation. Here, courses are taught according to a country-wide standardised curriculum; they encourage interaction with the receiving society, are regularly evaluated in the light of country-wide quality standards and are complemented by additional information material. It is worth noting that even in this best practice, social orientation is not always

provided in reality because of the limited capacity and resources available in the introduction programme. At least one of these quality criteria is fulfilled in only five other countries. In Latvia and Spain, courses encouraging interaction with the receiving society are implemented and complemented by additional information materials. In France, courses are only taught according to a country-wide standardised curriculum. Social orientation courses are given in French regardless of the language level of BIPs and they are highly complex for most newcomers. Lithuania and Romania merely provide for courses that encourage interaction with the receiving society. In Czechia, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain, no measures are taken to ensure high quality social orientation.



Social orientation courses are taught according to a country-wide standardised curriculum



Social orientation courses encourage interaction with the receiving society



Social orientation courses are regularly evaluated in the light of country-wide quality standards



Social orientation courses are complemented by additional informational material

### Provision of social orientation for groups of special concern

Groups of special concern, such as unaccompanied minors, parents with children, women, the elderly, victims of violence and torture, illiterate or semi-literate persons, need specific information tailored to their needs, although only Spain and Sweden provide tailored social orientation courses, taking into account all these groups. Portugal and Romania have a few needs-adapted courses, with Romania's offer being provided by specialised NGOs and usually taking into account the situation of parents with children, women and the elderly. Portugal provides targeted social orientation for unaccompanied minors. On the other hand, Czechia, France, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia do not provide any social orientation courses that are adapted to these groups' specific needs and concerns.



Social orientation courses adapted to unaccompanied minors



Social orientation courses adapted to parents with children



Social orientation courses adapted to women



Social orientation courses adapted to the elderly



Social orientation courses adapted to victims of violence, torture, abuse and other forms of trauma



Social orientation courses adapted to illiterate or semi-literate persons

### Administrative barriers to social orientation

In the majority of countries – including Czechia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden – there are no administrative requirements that could pose a barrier to accessing publicly funded social orientation. In France, Slovenia and Romania, however, excessive administrative delays and waiting periods risk obstructing the access of persons under international protection to social orientation. For example, in France several weeks or months separate the time beneficiaries are accorded protection status from signing the Republican Integration Contract and effectively taking part in social orientation. In Romania, the waiting periods are usually months, as orientation programmes are not continuously offered and depend on AMIF funding and the limited capacities of NGOs.



No administrative barriers to social orientation

*GR: courses provided by NGOs and universities*



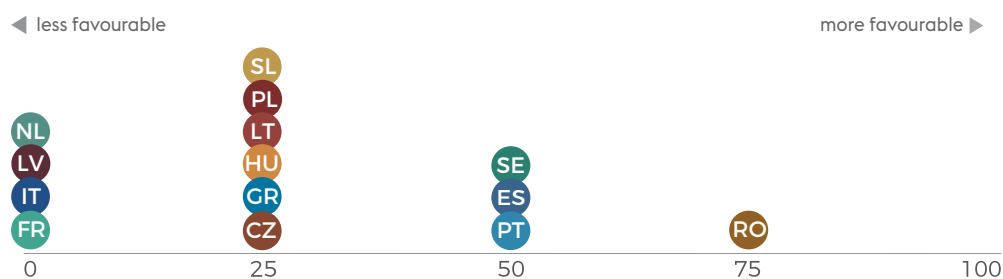
## 15 Building bridges



Integration is a two-way process that demands efforts both on the part of migrants and on the part of the receiving society. Integration policies should foresee a role and responsibilities for native citizens, encourage civic initiatives and foster a welcoming social climate that is free of xenophobia and discrimination. Enabling beneficiaries of international protection to participate strengthens social cohesion and fosters their active citizenship. When able to contribute to the making of policies designed for their integration, they are not only empowered but can help to improve the quality and effectiveness of integration measures.

### 15.1 Overview of scored results

#### Step: Building the Policy Framework



#### Step: Implementation & Collaboration



### **What EU and international law require**

According to the first Common Basic Principle for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States. In addition, the seventh Common Basic Principle underlines that frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is fundamental for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens. The ninth Common Basic Principle also sets out that the participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration. Likewise, the UNHCR Executive Committee in 2005 stipulated that the integration of refugees is a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process which requires the efforts of all concerned parties, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the receiving society without having to forego their own cultural identity and a corresponding readiness on the part of the receiving communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse community.

## **15.2 NIEM indicators in the bridge building dimension**

### **Indicators assessed in the baseline**

#### **Step: Building the Policy Framework**

- o Expectations of mutual accommodation by BIPs and host society members
- o Raising awareness of the specific situation of BIPs

#### **Step: Implementation & Collaboration**

- o Coordination with regional and local authorities on social cohesion
- o Encouragement of voluntary initiatives to complement public policies
- o Support for the involvement of BIPs in civic activities
- o Involvement in national consultation processes
- o Involvement in local consultation processes

## Indicators with data gaps not allowing for comparative assessment

### Step: Reliable Data & Evaluation

- o Number of BIPs receiving one-to-one mentorship
- o Number of legal guardians for unaccompanied minors
- o Number of NGOs in the country run by BIPs

### Step: Providing Financial & Human Resources

- o Funding for associations working on the socio-cultural participation of BIPs

### Step: Achieving Integration Outcomes

- o Number of BIPs in civic activities

## 15.3 Main results

### Step: Building the Policy Framework

#### Expectations of mutual accommodation by beneficiaries of international protection and host society members

Looking at national strategies and other policy documents on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, only in Portugal and Sweden do they contain provisions which expect the receiving society to be actively involved in the process and to accommodate beneficiaries. While in Czechia and Sweden, this is part of a fully-fledged national framework for the integration of BIPs, in Portugal, these objectives are set out in a general strategic plan for migration. Language that is more passive and at least obliges the receiving society to be tolerant and accepting of refugees is found in Czechia's integration strategy and in Lithuania, where measures are foreseen to inform society about the integration of persons granted asylum in order to promote tolerance and prevent segregation and xenophobia. Similarly, in Romania, the migration strategy assigns an information role to the local level and calls on the media to cover integration in an honest way. In Hungary, the general migration strategy from 2013 calls for the creation of a tolerant Hungarian host society and fostering of intercultural dialogues (albeit, not specifically referring to BIPs). In all other assessed countries, the roles of the receiving society are not defined in government policies.



Strategy expects the receiving society to be actively involved and to accommodate BIPs



Strategy expects the receiving society to be tolerant and accepting of BIPs



## Raising awareness of the specific situation of beneficiaries of international protection

Concerning the actual practice of publicly funded campaigns to sensitise society about the situation of persons under international protection, only in Spain do such campaigns targeting prejudices and perceptions take place on a regular basis, carried out by NGOs and funded by the central government. Publicly funded campaigns have been implemented on an ad hoc basis in Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, mainly drawing on EU funding through the AMIF programme and less often in the recent past (Poland) or only on a very small scale (Slovenia). Of the eight countries where national authorities abstain from funding public campaigns, in France, a campaign was pursued on the local level with IOM support, while in Portugal, the High Commissioner for Migration is committed to awareness-raising activities short of full-scale campaigns.

ES

Regular publicly funded campaigns to sensitise society about the situation of BIPs

GR IT PL RO SL

Ad-hoc publicly funded campaigns to sensitise society about the situation of BIPs

## Step: Implementation & Collaboration

### Coordination with regional and local authorities on social cohesion

Regional and local authorities have a key role to play in improving interactions between the receiving society and beneficiaries of international protection. A proactive role on the part of the central government, asking regional and local levels to set up related strategies, is found in the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. In Portugal, this has taken the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the foreigner service and the national association of municipalities, encouraging municipalities to establish local plans for the reception of refugees. Greece, the Netherlands and Sweden are countries where the state provides material and/or immaterial means for sub-national authorities to implement measures aimed at social cohesion and interaction among refugees and the receiving society (with Greece only using EU programme means for this purpose).

NL PT SE

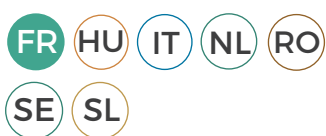
Government requires regional and local authorities to set up strategies referring to the interaction of the receiving society with BIPs

GR NL SE

Government provides means to regional and local authorities for the implementation of such strategies

## Encouragement of voluntary initiatives to complement public policies

By mobilising citizens for refugee integration, voluntary initiatives can complement government integration policies in important ways. Although the state has a role in encouraging and supporting voluntary initiatives, possibly even making volunteers' contributions a part of standard integration programmes, this scarcely happens in practice. In France, within the framework of the *service civique* aimed at encouraging citizenship engagement among young people, projects increasingly concern voluntary initiatives for refugees. This amounts to the only example among the assessed countries of sustained support of any sort provided by a national government. In the other countries, if at all, the contribution of voluntary initiatives has been supported only on the local level or in the context of on-off (EU-funded) projects, such as in Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden.



Government funds national, regional or local coordination of voluntary initiatives

*HU, IT, NL, RO, SE, SL: ad hoc projects and/or on local level only*

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Government provides guidelines, training, evaluation and other support to voluntary initiatives

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Voluntary work is made part of the standard integration offers for BIPs

## Support for the involvement of beneficiaries of international protection in civic activities

Participation in civic activities creates a significant opportunity for beneficiaries of international protection to get in touch with and more quickly integrate into the receiving society. Governments can support and foster such engagement through various measures. Among the assessed countries, targeted information campaigns on the rights and possibilities of BIPs to join civic activities are found only in the Netherlands as a policy originating from the national level. Here, the government encourages status-holders (and asylum seekers) to carry out volunteer work as an introduction into Dutch society and as a possible first step towards paid employment. In Sweden, local-level discretion decides on the possibility of BIPs' joining civic activities, with volunteering often offered as part of the individual introduction programme (which ultimately is state-funded). In other countries, efforts are non-systematic and either pursued by local authorities (Greece) or in the context of civil society-led, and possibly EU-funded, projects (Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain).



Targeted information on the rights and possibilities of BIPs to join civic activities



Support for initiatives which encourage BIPs to join civic activities



ES, GR, IT, PL, RO, SL: only civil-society or local-level led projects

### Involvement in national and local consultation processes

To enhance both the legitimacy and effectiveness of integration policies, beneficiaries of international protection should have a say in the development and implementation of measures. A dedicated body to consult with BIPs on issues concerning their situation, having at least one refugee association or one elected representative as a permanent member, exists among the assessed countries, as of 2017, only in Greece. The Greek Forum of Refugees participates as a permanent (but alternate) representative of the Racist Violence Recording Network in the National Council against Racism and Intolerance. In Czechia and Portugal, advisory bodies with a mandate for the overall migrant population also deal with refugee integration. Involving beneficiaries in decision making shouldn't only be a responsibility on the national level; governments can also encourage and support the establishment of consultative bodies on regional and/or local levels. While municipal advisory councils are frequently found throughout the assessed countries (e.g. Greece), or local platforms may be carried by civil society (e.g. Hungary), only in Portugal does a limited form of central government support exist. Here, a technical support office for immigrant associations provides capacity-building measures, thus, at least indirectly, fostering capable consultation structures on the local level.



National consultative body including an association of BIPs or an elected representative

CZ, PT: general migrant advisory bodies dealing with refugee integration; FR: introduced 2018



Government support for the inclusion BIPs in regional and/or local consultations processes

PT: only capacity-building for migrant associations



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