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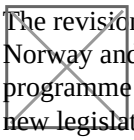

The revision of integration acts was underway in several countries throughout 2020. A new Integration Act was adopted in Norway and entered into force in January 2021. The changes put more emphasis on training participants in the introduction programme (mostly refugees) on the skills required by Norwegian employers or needed to qualify for further education. The new legislation made the mapping of skills and career guidance mandatory before beginning the introduction programme and changed the provision of language support from required hours to a required level. The previous standard 2-year programme was replaced by a wider range of programmes from 3 months to 3 years.[1072]

The re-shaping of the Spanish reception system (see Section 4.7) had a major impact on the integration process of beneficiaries. The new instructions from the State Secretary for Migration underlined that only recognised beneficiaries of international protection who have already been within the reception system, who are resettled refugees or family members of these categories have access to second-line reception and integration support. Fundación Cepaim noted in assessing the potential impact of the instructions for the future that this risks leaving out people who had enough financial means when they entered the country but their economic situation deteriorated afterwards, or people who did not know about or could not enter the first-line reception system.[1073]

The reform of the Integration Act is foreseen in Luxembourg and the Minister for Families and Integration launched a public consultation.[1074] The consultation was assessed to be a large success, with 58 opinions published.[1075] The process continued at the beginning of 2021 with the organisation of focus group discussions.

The entry into force of the new Dutch Civic Integration Act was postponed to 1 January 2022 partially due to the pandemic. According to the new act, municipalities would take over the supervision of newcomers and their integration.[1076]

The Flemish government in Belgium adopted a new integration path for newcomers which includes four components (language learning, economic autonomy, social orientation and sponsorship by a Flemish ‘buddy’) and will conclude with an exam. Participants will have to pay EUR 90 twice and must register with the Flemish public employment service. Changes are planned to enter into force in 2022, if the Belgian Council of State approves the legislation.[1077]

In 2019, the Finnish Integration Expertise Centre of the Ministry of Employment published its comprehensive integration review of the previous 4 years,[1078] which was followed in the beginning of 2020 by the launching of the Integration Indicators Database to monitor the implementation of the policy.[1079] The government’s integration report for 2020 was postponed until 2021 and the draft was presented for public consultation in February 2021.[1080] This document aims to present ideas for the reform of integration policy and was developed by the Ministry of Employment and Economy, in cooperation with other key stakeholders.[1081] The government is expected to present the report and the reform initiatives to the parliament in spring 2021.

New methodological norms were published in Romania for the implementation of the 2019 amendments of the Integration Act. The amendments clarify issues around language training, cultural orientation, the scope and components of the governmental integration programme for refugees and underlines the importance of horizontal cooperation among the different ministries and governmental agencies.[1082]

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