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4.9.2. Information on everyday life, rights and obligations

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icon for information on life, rights and obligations of applicants

EU+ countries also put effort into informing applicants and beneficiaries of international protection about life in the host country and services which are available. In 2021, some EU+ countries improved ways to provide adequate information on applicants' rights and obligations in the context of everyday life and integration. These included in-person information sessions, new information points, online information platforms, guides, videos and mobile applications. Some initiatives focused on residents in reception facilities, while others targeted a broader group, including people living in the community. For example, reception centres in Cyprus and the Netherlands produced information material for newcomers and residents of the centres. In Cyprus, an information leaflet on the daily operations of the Limnes accommodation centre was made available.877 The Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers developed simplified information material for illiterate persons and for persons who cannot read and write in the Latin alphabet.878

An amendment to Article 42(2) of the International Protection Act in Slovenia foresees that information on the consequences of arbitrarily leaving the Asylum Centre's admission facility is now provided by the police during preliminary proceedings.879

A number of initiatives undertaken in 2021 focused on integration-related matters. In Bulgaria, the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) organised activities in reception centres on several topics, such as language, culture, and sports for both adults and minors.880 In Cyprus, online tools were launched to promote civic education through the Erasmus+KA2 project, IEUME.881In Romania, a new regional integration centre was opened through a collaborative effort by three NGOs to provide information and support the social inclusion of beneficiaries of international protection and other third-country nationals in several counties in the south-eastern part of the country.882 In Croatia, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities produced a video to raise awareness about the importance of integrating beneficiaries of international protection. 883

In addition to giving information on registration and the asylum procedure *(see Section 4.9.1.)*, information points in Czechia and Poland provided information on other aspects of everyday life as well. For example, the Client Centre for Providing Information to Foreigners in Czechia, which was launched in February 2021 and funded by AMIF, provides information on the rights and obligations of foreigners – including applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. Similarly in Poland, an information point for third-country nationals arriving at Silesia was created to provide information in four languages on employment, access to health care, language courses and culture.

In Croatia, a new application called "(Re)Settle in Croatia" was made available for beneficiaries of international protection with information on their rights, services available, important phone numbers, guides on managing everyday situations and challenges, and an audio dictionary with useful everyday phrases.884

In Portugal, a new information portal for migrants who reside in Lisbon, lisboaacolhe.pt, was launched, gathering all relevant information in one single information channel. Financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the Hungarian version of the transnational information platform for residents in the Danube region, danubecompass.org, was updated and translated into additional languages. The platform provides information on several areas, such as international protection, access to health care and education, and language learning.885 International and civil society organisations played an important role in many countries in relaying information on employment, housing and other aspects of everyday life. For example, in Italy, UNHCR, the Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI) and the Italian housing union SUNIA published a guide on housing autonomy for beneficiaries of international protection.

Built in collaboration with several civil society organisations, a free, multilingual application, RefAid, was launched in Malta in 2021 to provide refugees and migrants reliable information on available services, such as assistance with work and food provision by non-profit organisations.886

UNHCR, in collaboration with JobsPlus and the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations in Malta, organised an information session for refugees and asylum seekers which focussed on employment and working conditions. In addition, JRS Malta published a set of videos in seven languages on the fundamental rights of all workers, with information on contracts and probationary periods.887

As the pandemic persisted throughout 2021, EU+ countries continued to provide information related to COVID-19. In Bulgaria, information talks on COVID-19 were organised on a regular basis by SAR to counter disinformation and provide accurate and up-to-date facts.888 In Portugal, a leaflet on awareness-raising and prevention of spreading the virus was translated into four additional languages.889 In Germany, a social media campaign was launched for a 27-day period, as part of an IOM study on the advantages, cost and effectiveness of targeted information provision for asylum applicants.890

In Belgium, information material on the COVID-19 booster vaccine was distributed in reception centres prior to the launch of the vaccination campaign.[891] In Croatia, leaflets with instructions from the Croatian Institute of Public Health were translated into several languages and were distributed to all applicants and posted in visible places in reception centres. In France, the Minister of Health and Solidarity and the Minister Delegate to the Minister of the Interior in charge of citizenship issued a joint instruction to stress the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations for migrants, notably asylum applicants. In all regions, vaccination operations and information sessions against misinformation were held so that all eligible asylum applicants had the opportunity to be vaccinated. Although difficult to measure because of the turnover, the vaccination rate in asylum housing facilities was very satisfactory overall (with often more than 80% of adults vaccinated).

While EU+ countries made great strides to provide information on everyday life, rights and obligations, civil society organisations raised concerns about adequate or sufficient information being made available to asylum applicants.[892] For example, Asylex in Switzerland noted a lack of information on rights and obligations during the asylum procedure even though there was information provision on other topics, such as returns. [893]

Box 4.3. COVID-19 vaccination campaigns

Vaccination campaigns were rolled out in late 2020, and EU+ countries prioritised vaccinating the general population, including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, throughout 2021.

In all responding countries to an EUAA survey, COVID-19 vaccinations were free of charge and on a voluntary basis. As reported in Situational Update No 2, “Follow-up: COVID-19 vaccination for applications and beneficiaries of international protection”, vaccination campaigns were launched across the region, with a number of campaigns designed specifically for asylum seekers *(see Table 4.3).*

Table 4.4. COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in EU+ countries, 2021

map with eu countries implementing vaccination campaigns in 2021

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[894] Cyprus

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