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4.14.4.2 Employment

Most countries continued with the policy of integration through employment, but several COVID-19-related challenges (see the introduction in Section 4.14) had a major negative impact on the implementation of this approach.

The System of Protection for Beneficiaries of International Protection and Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (SIPROIMI) in Italy changed its name to the System for Reception and Integration (SAI) and can now accommodate asylum applicants as well (see Section 4.7). Still, only beneficiaries of protection can benefit from labour orientation and professional training, such as the project Protezione Unita a Obiettivo Integrazione. This was launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies[1138] and continued in 2020 to provide effective pathways to the labour market for beneficiaries of international protection, persons with humanitarian status or persons who entered the country as unaccompanied minors. The individual trajectories were adapted to balance negative impacts of the pandemic, and the project was also extended to the end of 2021. In addition, Legislative Decree No 130/2020 opened up labour market access to beneficiaries of national forms of protection based on medical reasons or due to natural disasters.

A pilot project was launched for beneficiaries of international protection in Utrecht combining study and work to become COA employees.[1139] In addition, the COA published a new brochure for employers, "Newcomers on their way to work - Guide for employers", providing information to facilitate the employment of beneficiaries of international protection.[1140]

Fedasil published the conclusions of the project, Employer Tailored Chain Cooperation (ETCC), which involved 10 partner organisations from 7 EU Member States and was funded by AMIF. The document presented guidelines for closer cooperation in the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees.[1141]

The National Refugee Employment and Training Programme in Bulgaria was extended for 2020. The programme aimed to increase beneficiaries' chances of employment through language training, vocational training and subsidised employment. It also builds knowledge for staff of transit and reception centres and municipal and regional administrations which work with refugees. So far, only a few refugees could benefit from subsidised work, and language courses were not organised due to a lack of funding.[1142]

The Croatian project, TrAZILica, was concluded at the beginning of 2021, which provided language classes, training and employment support to 50 refugees for labour market integration.[1143] Civil society organisations observed difficulties for beneficiaries of international protection to find

employment matching their skills, for example, in Croatia,[1144] Slovenia[1145] and Spain.[1146] The Croatian Ministry of Science and Education continued to provide translations of diplomas, the Croatian Employment Service offered active employment measures for beneficiaries and, where access criteria applied to certain support measures, beneficiaries continued to benefit from more favourable conditions, as a group considered to be particularly vulnerable.

The Czech Ministry of Labour updated its guidelines and clarified that public employment services may provide special, employment-related language courses to beneficiaries of international protection to improve their employment chances.

In Cyprus, beneficiaries of international protection continued to face challenges in accessing vocational and employment-related training, as most of the courses were offered in Greek and the number of courses significantly dropped as a result of the pandemic. The Cyprus Refugee Council and UNHCR maintained the digital platform launched in 2019, connecting employers and training providers with beneficiaries.[1147]

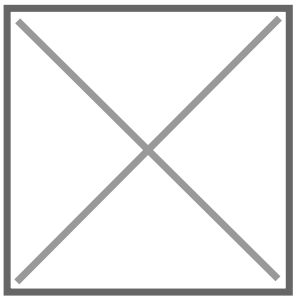
The Slovenian Institute for Social Studies of the Scientific Research Centre Koper won a project, which seeks to encourage beneficiaries of international protection to become entrepreneurs. The project will be implemented by 8 partner and 11 associate partner institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy and Serbia.[1148]

The Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) published a new information package for social workers in local authorities on providing specialised employment support to refugee and migrant women. Women's labour market integration has been a priority in recent years, as data from 2019 showed that 19% of refugee women were working after 3 years of arrival, compared to 60% of refugee men.[1149]

A draft amendment in Switzerland would allow persons with temporary admission to change their assigned canton if they follow a long-term vocational training or are employed in another canton.[1150] The parliamentary process was still ongoing in April 2021 and the amendment was not yet in force, with one chamber of the parliament supporting the draft, while the other not so far. The Swiss State Secretariat for Migration continued with the funding of the Powercoders ICT employment integration programme, following a successful pilot phase which provided training to 148 refugees. The authorities were pleased to see the positive long-term effects of the training, as 22 out of the 33 participants of the first training courses from 2017 found permanent employment or traineeship in the ICT sector.[1151]

The French National Assembly drafted a report evaluating labour market integration policies of applicants and refugees and put forward 15 recommendations, including improving statistical information on refugee employment, strengthening the quality of language support and improving the cooperation between the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII, Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration) and the public employment services.[1152] Efforts for improvement were already underway, for example, the French Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration and the Ministry of the Interior launched a common pilot project, which aims to facilitate the skills validation process for newcomers.[1153]

The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) continued the yearly survey, which has been administered since 2016, with a group of refugees who arrived between 2013 and 2016.[1154] The group's knowledge of the language continued to improve and overall they were satisfied with their lives, but their economic and employment situations kept them concerned. The IAB noted that the group's labour market integration was hasty, and 49% of them were in employment 5 years after their arrival. There was a significant difference between men and women though: 57% of the men were employed, compared to 29% of the women.[1155]



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