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4.7.2.3. Employment

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To facilitate employment opportunities for applicants, Ireland and Latvia reduced the waiting period to legally work. In Ireland, the waiting period to apply for a work permit was reduced from 9 months to 6 months, with an extended validity from 6 months to 12 months.749 In Latvia, the waiting period was shortened from 6 months to 3 months.750

Malta amended its employment policy so applicants from a safe country of origin or in the Dublin procedure can access the labour market after 9 months from the lodging of their application for international protection, while other applicants are able to work legally as soon as their asylum application is confirmed. The Malta Refugee Council published a statement, endorsed by 28 civil society organisations, expressing their concern with this policy and noting its potential negative impact on an applicant's livelihood, mental health and their general labour conditions.751

The changes came after a judgment from the CJEU, where the court held that applicants in the Dublin procedure should have access to the labour market under the same conditions as any other applicant under the recast Reception Conditions Directive *(see Section 2.4).*

Legislative amendments on the provision of the Greek health care number (PAAYPA) aimed to facilitate access to the labour market, but civil society organisations observed many remaining administrative barriers in the process which prevented several applicants from legally engaging in employment *(see Section 4.7.2.5).*

The registration of job seekers in Cyprus and the renewal of their unemployment period moved online, including for asylum applicants.752 The Cyprus Refugee Council observed that applicants with poor English or Greek language knowledge had difficulties in accessing and using the online system.753 The Ministry of Labour aimed to further facilitate the employment process with new orders issued in October 2021, allowing applicants to start working before a formal decision is made on the work permit application.754

The Dutch Advisory Council on Migration published a document "From asylum seeker to carer", putting forward recommendations to facilitate an applicant's access to the care sector.755 The outgoing State Secretary for Justice and Security welcomed these recommendations but noted that the new government should follow up.756

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