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4.14.3.1. Developing and updating integration strategies

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The arrival of persons in need of temporary protection prompted many countries to quickly establish dedicated integration programmes and make additional funding available. This was seen in particular in Member States near Ukraine, such as Czechia,1119 Poland,1120 Slovakia 1121 and Romania.1122

A dedicated, new strategy for the integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection was published for consultation in Greece in January 2022.1123 Several organisations provided their comments, including recommendations to speed up the delivery of necessary documentation *(see Section 4.14.2.3)* and facilitating children's access to education *(see Section 4.14.4.2)*.1124

A new ministerial instruction defined the priorities of the integration policy for 2022 in France. The instruction re-confirmed that integration through employment was a priority.1125 To this end, the *Accompagnement global et individualisé des réfugiés* (AGIR) programme was launched, proposing an individualised and comprehensive maximum 24-month integration pathway to all beneficiaries of international protection. Focusing on access to long-term housing, training and employment, the government deemed that this a significant enhancement of the public efforts in supporting refugees with their professional integration. The programme was rolled out in 26 departments in 2022, while 26 departments are planned to follow in 2023, with the complete implementation throughout France planned for 2024.1126

The Icelandic parliament adopted a resolution for the implementation of an action plan for immigration issues for 2022-2025. One of the main objectives of the plan is to implement a long-term integration strategy.1127 Based on the resolution, a steering group was established to formulate a comprehensive integration strategy, with a focus on labour market integration.1128

The European Commission launched a joint project with the IOM to support the Portuguese High Commission for Migration in improving its capacity to address the evolving integration needs of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection. The project focuses especially on ensuring access to housing, education, employment, health services and related legal counselling.1129

The Swedish SMA proposed that the government covers 8,200 beneficiaries of international protection in its new instruction for municipalities for 2023, including 5,000 resettled refugees *(see Section 4.15)*. This represents the number of persons who are distributed across the country's municipalities for whom municipal authorities must arrange housing.[1130] In addition, since 1 July 2022, municipalities were assigned the task to arrange for the accommodation of 23,500 persons with temporary protection. 16,400 were accommodated in 2022, and 7,100 is foreseen for 2023. Municipalities receive SEK 10,000 per person.[1131]

A new financing system in the asylum sector entered into force in Switzerland in January 2023, intended to coordinate the tasks of care, social assistance and integration support for refugees, provisionally admitted persons and persons in need of protection. The cantons receive a lump sum of approximately EUR 18,000/year for each person in these three categories aged 18 to 25 years if they are in vocational training or gainful employment. This provides additional incentives for vocational training for youth and young adults. A correction factor for low incomes was introduced for the 25-60-year age group in order to avoid undesirable disincentives to vocational training or part-time employment. SEM underlined that the new financing system is implemented in a cost-neutral manner. It intends to achieve the rapid and sustainable integration of these persons and to reduce their dependency on social assistance.[1132]

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) noted that national integration programmes for beneficiaries of international protection were discontinued in Bulgaria, and initiatives at the local level did not adequately fill the gap.[1133] Thus, civil society organisations, Multi Kulti Collective and the Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants, together with UNHCR, drafted a Manifesto on Refugee Integration, proposing that the National Programme for Refugees' Integration is restored, a new institutional structure for integration is set up with an increased role for the State Agency for Refugees and a comprehensive integration process is developed.[1134] The document was developed as part of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM) project, co-funded by AMIF, and it builds on the results of the comprehensive monitoring report.[1135]

Researchers analysed Poland's rapid transition from transit to host country for beneficiaries of international protection and summarised the opportunities and limitations in the integration process.[1136]

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