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National initiatives in 2023 aimed to facilitate administrative procedures that beneficiaries of international protection face every day in their new countries. Focusing on long-term perspectives, ECRE analysed the Long-Term Residence Directive and its proposed recast, and it welcomed the inclusion of the asylum procedure’s period in the calculation of the length of residency required to obtain the long-term resident status for beneficiaries of international protection.[901]

In Czechia, administrative fees for a residence card or replacing a damaged, lost or stolen card were reduced for beneficiaries of international protection.[902]Legislative amendments clarified that refugees are entitled to a travel document, while beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or humanitarian asylum (a national form of protection) can be issued a foreigner’s passport.[903]

In France, a task force was created to facilitate administrative procedures for newly-recognised beneficiaries of international protection. Interministerial meetings were organised to sensitise administrations to the specific challenges that beneficiaries of international protection may encounter in their integration pathways.

The Austrian Constitutional Court declared that, when assessing a request for a foreign passport, the authorities need to examine if the rejection would be proportionate with regard to the person’s freedom to leave the country. If the assessment finds that the issuance of the passport is required by fundamental rights, it should also be considered to be in the interest of the country.[904]The court also ruled on the requirement to ascertain identity for the naturalisation of a beneficiary of international protection.

The Irish government decided to extend the suspension of the Council of Europe’s Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Refugees for an additional 12 months. The original decision came in 2022, after an increase in the number of applicants who had already been granted international protection in another EU Member State.[905]

A new helpdesk for social integration for beneficiaries of international protection was launched by the Directorate of Social Integration of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The service will respond to requests about rights and obligations, such as access to Greek language courses, job counselling, housing, tax identification number and social security number.[906]In

addition, a new guide proving essential information about life in Greece and the first steps after the granting of protection, work, housing, education and healthcare was published by the Greek Department of Socioeconomic Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in collaboration with UNHCR.907

In Romania, around 1,500 people participated in national integration programmes in 2023. Information sessions on financial rights and psycho-social counselling were organised for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.908

A programme for newly arrived mothers, including applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, was launched in Denmark. The 'Kringlebakken' programme includes aspects related to heath, such as access to free healthcare and the assistance of nurses, and social orientation support, such as group-based activities to develop a social network.909

The Foundation of the National Bank of Slovakia launched a call for short-term projects to increase the level of financial literacy and the quality of financial education among vulnerable groups, including beneficiaries of international protection.910

Challenges raised by civil society organisations

Civil society organisations raised concern about administrative barriers that affected the access of beneficiaries of international protection to social benefits. For example, the European Network for Migrant Women expressed that there was confusion about which services can be accessed by female beneficiaries and there was a need to improve information provision, raise awareness of rights and promote existing support systems.911

CEAR cited administrative barriers, such as unjustifiable bank commissions and requirement for additional documentation by Spanish administrations, as impediments to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection from accessing their basic rights, such as opening a bank account.912The complaint of requiring additional documentation was voiced by several organisations in different countries.913

Refugee Support Aegean and ProAsyl documented barriers for beneficiaries of international protection to access their socio-economic rights in Greece, due to lengthy and bureaucratic procedures before they can start to receive benefits in practice.914

The Romanian CNRR raised concerns about the challenges faced by applicants and beneficiaries of international protection to access the national public health programme, social benefits, school enrolment and other public services. Onerous bureaucratic procedures and the lack of guidance and support from public servants formed part of the obstacles.915

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No 326/1999 Coll., on the residence of foreigners in the territory of the Czech Republic and amending certain laws, as amended, and others related law], June 21, 2023.

- 903Zákon č. 173/2023 Sb. Zákon, kterým se mění zákon č. 325/1999 Sb., o azylu, ve znění pozdějších předpisů, zákon č. 326/1999 Sb., o pobytu cizinců na území České republiky a o změně některých zákonů, ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a další související zákony [Act No 173/2023 Coll. Act amending Act No 325/1999 Coll., on asylum, as amended, Act No 326/1999 Coll., on the residence of foreigners in the territory of the Czech Republic and amending certain laws, as amended, and others related law], June 21, 2023.

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