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7.12.14 Access to accommodation

The AIDA comparative report on the accommodation of applicants and beneficiaries *(see also Section 7.7)* provides an overview of the challenges and support measures available in 23 countries and analyses, in particular, the effects of long stays in reception facilities even after recognition.[668] The issue of over-stayers was of concern, for example, in Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Spain.

In response, the Ministry of the Interior in France published an instruction aiming to accelerate the re-housing of beneficiaries of international protection by securing 16 000 places in transitional accommodation and encouraging closer cooperation among all national and regional stakeholders
(FR LEG 1). The government in Luxembourg increased the threshold of subsidies for municipalities from 80 % to 100 % of the rental prices announced by the Housing Observatory to encourage rentals for beneficiaries of international protection and other people eligible for housing subsidies. Beneficiaries may also continue to live in reception facilities for a small fee, due to the lack of affordable housing.

The legislative amendments in Romania allowed beneficiaries of international protection without adequate financial means to stay in the reception facility for 12 months (previously it was 6 months), extendable for another 6 months. In certain regions they may remain for free for 3 months (previously it was 2 months), after which a fee must be paid.[669] Only vulnerable beneficiaries may continue to stay for free and if accommodation in reception facilities is not available, the beneficiary can receive a financial allowance from the government to cover rent for private apartment.

The draft plan on accommodation of persons granted international protection expired in 2019 in Croatia. The plan foresaw the redistribution of beneficiaries to specific regions of the country based on available housing. Relocation criteria were defined through accommodation and housing, labour and employment, social service availability and capacity in the local community. [lxi]

A small, temporary accommodation was set up in Cyprus for homeless third country nationals, while NGOs continued efforts to find more permanent housing solutions. Beneficiaries of international protection continued to face significant administrative hurdles to rent an accommodation in Bulgaria. They need to provide valid identification to sign a rental contract, but a domicile is needed to obtain an identification card.[670]

Civil society organisations in Cyprus,[671] Greece,[672] Poland[673] and Spain[674] highlighted that recognised beneficiaries are still at an increased risk of homelessness and inadequate living conditions. NGOs in Spain tried to mediate between private renters and beneficiaries to mitigate the effects of discrimination, but beneficiaries of international protection were still at a disadvantage due to a lack of financial resources and strict rental contract requirements.[675] Some territorial administrations continued to require a city or census registration before they gave access to local social benefits, such as access to social housing, a condition which is challenging to fulfil for newly-arrived beneficiaries of international protection.[676]

[lxi] In 2018, Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities coordinated the creation of the Draft Relocation Plan through the work of the Working Group for the Operative Implementation of the Tasks of the Permanent Commission for Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian society and, more precisely, a specialised working group composed of representatives of state administration bodies in sectors involved in integration measures (Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Science and Education and the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing; the Croatian Employment Service, as well as representatives of local self-government units (City of Zadar) and academia (Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Faculty of Law of University of Zagreb). For the purpose of drawing up the Draft Relocation Plan, a wide participatory process of consultation with representatives of local and regional self-government units was carried out.

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670 AIDA Bulgaria. (2020). *Country Report: Bulgaria - 2019 Update*. Edited by ECRE. Written by Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_bg_2019update.pdf

671 AIDA Cyprus. (2020). *Country Report: Cyprus - 2019 Update*. Edited by ECRE. Written by Cyprus Refugee Council. https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_cy_2019update.pdf

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676 Spanish Commission for Refugees - CEAR. (2020). *Input to "EASO Asylum Report 2020: Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union"*. /sites/default/files/easo-annual-report-2019-Spanish-Commission-for-Refugees-CEAR-contribution.pdf

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