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7.12.11 Language instruction

Most initiatives around language learning continued to target third country nationals in general. However, an important exception was Austria, where the Integration Act was amended to require the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs to provide German courses to a minimum B1 level to beneficiaries of international protection over the age of 15 years, as of 1 January 2020. The previous required level was A2.

Following the recommendations of the Inter-ministerial Integration Committee in France,[657] the number of hours for state-financed language support was increased from 200 to 400 hours since 1 March 2019. In addition, a specific module of 600 hours was created for illiterate people. Moreover, online teaching and learning have been enhanced. The Ministry of the Interior supported the development of digital projects, including Massive Open Online Courses, which offer French language classes and civic training classes.

The Swedish government proposed new funding for Swedish language training for persons on parental leave, to be implemented as of 2020. It also continued with substantial funding to train teachers of Swedish as a second language. This change is particularly beneficial for vulnerable groups, such as newly-arrived women who stay at home.

The first Estonian Language Houses opened in Tallinn and Narva in 2019, offering language courses and facilitating integration. The amended Citizenship Act came into force in 2019, providing substantial language support for persons eligible for Estonian citizenship: they become entitled to free language courses up to the required B1 level and to paid study leave from work. A new e-learning course is also available for free.

The Ministry of Culture in Latvia launched language clubs, co-funded by AMIF, in five cities. The Latvian Language Agency developed new e-learning material (*e-Laipa*) for A1 and A2 levels.

Regional Integration Centres in Czechia continued with language courses also for beneficiaries of international protection and organised special classes for women with small children.

Beneficiaries of international protection were granted 280 hours of state-provided language courses in Croatia,[lx] but civil society organisations pointed out that the lesson schedule often clashes with working hours and lessons are only organised in localities where there is a specified number of participants[658] During 2019, Croatian language courses were organised in Kutina, Sisak and Karlovac for persons who arrived in Croatia within the European Resettlement

Programme (98 persons) and in Zadar, Zagreb and Slavonski Brod for persons already residing in Croatia (34 persons).

[lx] The Croatian Language, History and Culture Learning Programme offers language courses to asylum seekers and persons under subsidiary protection (Official Gazette no.: 154/2014) lasting 280 hours (70 + 210 hours).

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657 EASO. (2019). *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2018*. /sites/default/files/easo-annual-report-2018-web.pdf

658 AIDA Croatia. (2020). *Country Report: Croatia - 2019 Update*. Edited by ECRE. Written by Croatian Law Centre. https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_hr_2019update.pdf

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