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4.14.3.4. Evaluation of integration plans and support

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Different actors, national authorities, academia, think tanks and civil society organisations continued to evaluate the different components of integration programmes throughout 2021 in support of evidence-based policymaking.

Some evaluations looked into women's integration process and outcomes. The EMN French National Contact Point published a national report analysing the integration of migrant women, including those benefitting from international protection. The report provides a panorama of the different projects undertaken in various thematic areas and underlines the importance of ongoing projects to establish a network of childcare facilities, allowing women to participate in training and be supported in their search for employment.1179

The German BAMF published an analysis on the social integration of refugee women. The report points out that refugee women have different prerequisites for integration than refugee men: they often have lower education levels, less likely to be employed and have little knowledge of the German language. They are more involved in household activities and participate less in sports or cultural events. They often have fewer contacts with German citizens. However, having children turned out to be a positive factor to establish contacts within the host society.1180

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection published the results of a research project that looked into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants from the Western Balkans, Turkey and beneficiaries of international protection from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria living in Vienna and its surroundings. Among findings on the use of communication channels, employment and education, the report observes that rules on COVID-19-related curfews were not clear for beneficiaries of international protection.1181

The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy published a report with suggestions for a more pro-active government policy on migrant integration, taking into account the changing character of migration flows.1182 The report underlines the key role local authorities play in the integration process, an element that was already taken up by the Dutch government *(see Section 4.14.3.2)*. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research assessed the role that policy has

played in the integration of Syrian beneficiaries of international protection in particular.[1183] For this group, a short asylum procedure, limited number of transfers between reception facilities, rapid housing and family reunification seemed to have reduced health risks. Good access to care, early detection and targeted prevention were important factors in preventing health issues. In turn, better health and good knowledge of the Dutch language strengthened their position on the labour market. Passing the civic integration exam also increased their chances of finding a job. In addition, doing voluntary work during the reception phase contributed to a smoother integration process even after beneficiaries left the reception location. The report pointed out that it was possible to make better matches between beneficiaries and labour market regions, for example, by using big data and algorithms.

In Finland, a government study examined the impact of amendments to the Aliens Act on applicants between May 2015 and June 2019 and found that the focus was on streamlining the asylum procedure instead of the fundamental rights of applicants. During this period, the number of appeals increased and rejected applicants were left in limbo, without a legal right to stay but without the possibility to return to their country of origin.[1184]

The Swedish Institute for the Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy analysed the impact of the length of the asylum procedure on integration and concluded that longer processing times impacted labour market outcomes. It found that recognised beneficiaries who had waited longer for their final decision had lower earnings. The study also underlined that longer processing periods did not seem to have a negative impact on mental and physical health.[1185]

In Greece, the IOM evaluated the accommodation and education components of the HELIOS programme, funded through AMIF to support the integration of beneficiaries of international protection to increase their self-reliance. 68% of persons who regularly attend integration courses confirmed that they acquired language skills and knowledge of Greek society, which facilitated their interaction with the host community. 41% of beneficiaries who received rent support stated that they intended to continue leasing the apartment they found through the programme, even after financial support from the programme ends.[1186]

In order to evaluate the funding of integration measures, the Czech Ministry of Regional Development requested the Consortium of Migrant Assisting Organisations to map integration projects funded by the EU between 2014-2020. The mapping found that systematic integration support was mainly financed through AMIF, while ESF projects were mainly one-offs and lacked follow-up.[1187]

The research programme Coming of Age in Exile (CAGE) looked into the health and socioeconomic situation of young refugees in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden[1188] and observed that Denmark had the lowest integration outcomes.[1189]

The privately-established Danish Knowledge Centre on Integration closed due to a lack of funding after 2 years of existence.[1190] The centre still published insightful analysis throughout 2021, finding that 74% of Danes surveyed believed that the results of integration were significantly worse than in reality.[1191]

The civil society initiative Fremde werden Freunde analysed the political participation of refugees in Vienna and observed that many of them participated in non-institutionalised, low-profile activities related to personal concerns. Often coming from undemocratic, repressive regimes, refugees appreciated democracy in their host society.1192

France Terre d'Asile dedicated an issue of its periodic bulletin to the societal engagement and political participation of beneficiaries of international protection and how they impacted the overall integration path.1193 In Cyprus, another civil society initiative provided insights to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on applicants, beneficiaries of international protection and migrants. The first two studies observed a disproportionately larger impact on women's life and integration1194 and substantial delays in the delivery of residence permits and other official documents, which delayed access to education, health care and employment.1195

Through a project funded by the municipality of Sofia in partnership with UNHCR, the Bulgarian Council for Refugees and Migrants and the Multi Kulti Collective continued to publish issues of the Bulgarian academic bulletin "Refugees: Today and Tomorrow". The issues addressed myths about and among refugees,1196 financial difficulties for civil society organisations which support refugee integration in Bulgaria,1197 and the integration of refugee children1198 and women. 1999

Prepared in the framework of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM), ten policy briefs examined various aspects of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in Hungary. The briefs addressed data gaps, the role of grassroots organisations, social attitudes towards refugees, as well as health, education and housing.1200

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