4.7.3.4. Employment

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Relatively few initiatives were reported in 2022 that aimed to facilitate applicants' access to the labour market. The majority of initiatives catered to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, as showcased in the EUAA's Who is Who: Temporary Protection for Displaced Persons from Ukraine and the EMN Inform on Access to services for beneficiaries of temporary protection.

The waiting period for applicants to access the labour market was shortened from 9 to 6 months in Slovakia.[666]

Fedasil concluded a cooperation agreement with the construction sector to orient asylum applicants towards employment in construction, which is a sector lacking approximately 20,000 workers in Belgium. Several pilot projects were launched, including job days, information sessions, company visits and the evaluation of potential candidates' motivation, language skills and work experience. The agreement includes an ethics charter, ensuring that applicants have the same working conditions as other employees. Fedasil planned to conclude similar framework agreements with other employment sectors.[667]

The Jesuit Refugee Service Malta and the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) observed that current policies established a framework where it is difficult for applicants to find regular legal employment. As a result, many applicants ended up working without a work contract in unsafe conditions.[668]

Amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners entered into force in Lithuania. It grants applicants who enter Lithuania from Belarus during a state of emergency the right to work after being registered in the Migration Information System (MIGRIS) for at least 12 months.[669] The Lithuanian Red Cross released a thematic monitoring report on access to the labour market for applicants who were living in foreigners' centres. The report observed that the majority of residents were informed about the right to work but lacked information on further steps to work in practice.[670]

An amendment to the Asylum Act enacted in 2022 in Portugal determines that asylum seekers are entitled to the right to work from the moment of the application for international protection. Furthermore, asylum seekers are entitled to receive support measures and attend programmes in the area of employment and vocational training under specific conditions determined by the competent ministries. There are no limitations attached to the right of asylum seekers to employment, such as labour market tests or

prioritisation of nationals and legally-residing third-country nationals. The issuance and renewal of provisional residence permits by SEF, which clearly state the right to employment, are free of charge. The only restriction on employment enshrined in the law consists of limiting access to certain categories of the public sector for all third-country nationals.671

666 Zákon ?. 124/2022 Z. z. ktorým sa mení a dop??a zákon ?. 480/2002 Z. z. o azyle a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov [Act No 124/2022 amending Act No 480/2002 on asylum and amending certain acts, as amended], March 17, 2022. https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/124/20220601.html; Slovak Humanitarian Council | Slovenská Humanitná Rada. (2023). Input to the Asylum Report 2023. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-02/slovak_humanitarian_council.pdf

667 Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2022, June 3). Collaboration avec le secteur de la construction [Cooperation with the construction sector]. https://www.fedasil.be/fr/actualites/accueil-des-demandeurs-dasile/collaboration-avec-le-secteur-de-la-construction

668 Jesuit Refugee Service Malta. (2022, August 18). Investing time in people for safe, legal and dignified work. https://jrsmalta.org/investing-time-in-people-for-safe-legal-and-dignified-work; Migrant Offshore Aid Station. (2023). Input to the Asylum Report 2023. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-02/moas_migrant_offshore_aid_station.pdf

669 European Website on Integration. (2022, August 1). Lithuania: Amendments to the law on the legal status of foreigners. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/lithuania-amendments-law-legal-status-foreigners_en

670 Lithuanian Red Cross | Lietuvos Raudonasis Kryžius. (December 2022). Monitoring Report 2022. https://redcross.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/LRC-Monitoring-Report-2022.pdf

671 European Council on Refugees and Exiles. (2023). Input to the Asylum Report 2023. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-03/european_council_on_refugees_and_exiles_ecre.pdf

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