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icon on evaluation of integration

To support evidence-based policymaking, various stakeholders, including national authorities, academia, think tanks and civil society organisations, continued to evaluate components of integration programmes throughout 2022. Lessons learnt through efforts to integrate beneficiaries of temporary protection will provide further insights on the impact of different approaches in the future.

Finalising the 6-year transnational project to establish a mechanism for a biennial, comprehensive evaluation of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism project delivered the second set of national evaluation reports for Bulgaria,1161 Czechia,1162 France,1163 Greece,1164 Hungary,1165 Italy,1166 Latvia,1167 Lithuania,1168 the Netherlands,1169 Poland,1170 Slovenia,1171 Spain 1172 and Sweden.1173 The summary presents the achievements and recommendations of the project.1174 Thematic outputs in 2022 addressed the participation of beneficiaries of international protection in the public sphere,1175 the impact of underdeveloped integration policies for beneficiaries of international protection,1176 the challenge to integrate persons in need of temporary protection, the response of Latvia and Lithuania on the influx of irregular migrants from Belarus,1177 a refugees' perspectives on integration policies in Czechia,1178 and data gaps in refugee integration in Europe.1179

In Croatia, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities published a report on the social inclusion of persons granted international protection, evaluating integration policies using different indicators.1180

The German BAMF published an analysis of the internal mobility of persons with a protection status who have entered the country between 2015 and 2019. Married, displaced women between 30 and 49 years were particularly immobile and not likely to move from one place to another. Persons over 49 years (for both sexes) were also considered to be very immobile. Urban areas remained the most attractive for beneficiaries of international protection, even though these areas had a relatively high level of unemployment.1181

The French Scientific Committee for the Evaluation of the Plan for Investing in Skills evaluated the inclusion of labour market integration measures in local policies for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. The assessment involved eight departments on policies which were implemented during 2018-2021. The report found that coordination was progressing among the various measures but some fragmentation remained. Labour market measures seemed to be particularly impacted by the lack of accommodation, thus the committee suggested to involve stakeholders implementing social housing measures.1182

The Swedish Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy researched the impact of the length of the asylum procedure on integration and found that beneficiaries who had to wait longer for their final decision had lower earnings.1183

The Council of Europe published a report assessing integration policies in Cyprus, looking also into the specific challenges of beneficiaries of international protection.1184

Researcher in Greece evaluated refugee integration measures which were adopted after an assessment of court decisions and integration indicators in the field of housing, health care, social services, education and employment. The authors acknowledged the challenge to integrate continuous flows of refugees from different countries and cultures, and argued that more human and financial resources were necessary to be able to establish accessible, good quality services for integration.1185

The Rockwool Foundation and University College London analysed Danish integration policies over 40 years and found that reduced social benefits and early job training improved the employment rate of beneficiaries of international protection in short run. But early job training may not have long-term consequences, the participants will be less likely to learn the necessary language skills to find higher-paying jobs. In contrast, targeted placement and language courses have a positive long-term effect on the salaries and employment opportunities of beneficiaries. Restricting criteria or permanent residence may hinder the integration of less-resourceful groups, which may discouraged by strict criteria.1186

The Danish Institute of Human Rights focused on the impact of changes in the rules for a beneficiary to obtain a residence permit and noted several legal uncertainties in the process of withdrawing international protection.1187 Civil society organisations published a joint position paper arguing to re-introduce more stable permits and to count periods of education as work experience for the purpose of the permit.1188

Aditus foundation and the Jesuit Refugee Service Malta investigated the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection and concluded that they had little chance to emerge from poverty and social exclusion. The report notes that the lack of language and vocational training during the reception phase were missed opportunities that could support prospective beneficiaries towards self-sufficiency. The organisations urged policymakers to revise legislation and allow beneficiaries of international protection to vote in national elections and hold public positions.

In addition, the organisations requested the government to tackle racism in a firm manner.1189 Indeed, aditus foundation issued a press statement expressing its concerns over violence

against and exploitation of migrants, including beneficiaries of international protection.1190 Following reports of police violence against black people,1191 the Malta Refugee Council welcomed the swift action and the zero tolerance approach of the Malta Police Force to investigate the serious allegations.1192

The Bulgarian Red Cross commissioned a study on public attitudes towards refugees, which showed a positive change in the attitudes of citizens, with 62% having a positive or rather positive opinion. In 2022, 49% indicated they felt empathy towards refugees, a number which was only 3% in 2017.1193

Lithuanian NGOs came to similar conclusions and observed that hostility towards refugees decreased in 2022 and the share of residents supporting integration measures also increased. However, the survey in Lithuania also found that the majority of people still considered the impact of beneficiaries of international protection as a negative one on the host society.1194

A publication from the think tank ODI examined public attitudes towards refugees in Poland and noted a dichotomy in perceptions between 'not real' and 'genuine' refugees, depending on the country of origin. While those arriving from Ukraine were seen as in need of support, the report warns that the positive narrative might change in the long term with concerns about rising living costs.1195 Researchers presented selected integration practices at the local level in Warsaw, which could inspire policies in other cities which are less experienced with migrant and refugee integration.1196 Another paper focused on the integration experiences of Ukrainian refugees in Krakow.1197

In Croatia, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, as part of the Intersectoral Cooperation in the Empowerment of the Third-Country Nationals (INCLuDE) project, analysed media coverage in 2018 and 2019 of migrants in the country, especially beneficiaries of international protection and resettled refugees. The analysis will help to formulate guidelines and recommendations for media reporting.1198

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