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icon for social orientation

The Global Refugee-Led Network, the European Coalition of Migrants and Refugees, and New Women Connectors published a briefing paper with recommendations on operationalising the concept of ‘meaningful refugee participation’ in decision-making processes that impact refugees’ lives.1199

In 2022, the majority of initiatives were targeted towards beneficiaries of temporary protection to support them in adjusting quickly to the daily life in their host country.1200

Among legislative changes on establishing rules for orientation courses for beneficiaries of international protection, new rules entered into force in Austria on 1 January 2022, and the obligatory orientation course was extended from 8 to 24 hours (from 1 to 3 days) to include modules on gender equality, antisemitism and the importance of voluntary work.1201

In Belgium, integration programmes for newcomers became mandatory in Brussels as of April 2022, including for beneficiaries of international protection.1202 These programmes were already mandatory in Flanders and Wallonia. Plans were delayed to include a list of Flemish cultural, historical and scientific reference points in the integration of programme of Flanders. The independent expert committee was to finalise the list by October 2022, but the deadline was postponed to spring 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.1203

In Latvia, the Society Integration Fund took over the information centre for newcomers,1204 and it launched a one-stop shop to provide information, support and services to beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals.1205

A new AMIF-funded pilot project in Greece offers intercultural tours of Athens for beneficiaries of international protection to better understand Greek culture and history.1206

In France, the Ministry of the Interior signed a partnership agreement with the centre of national monuments that allows the beneficiaries of international protection who signed the *contrat d’intégration républicaine* (CIR, republican integration contract) to visit monuments in the country for free.

In Poland, integration centres for foreigners were opened in two provinces in March 2022 as part of the project implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy and co-financed by the AMIF fund, “Building structures for the integration of foreigners in Poland – Stage II – Piloting Foreigner Integration Centres”. In the Opolskie Voivodeship, the centre is operated by the Voivodeship Labour Office, and in the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, by the Regional Centre for Social Policy. In Wielkopolska, five centres were established, each in a different city. The aim of the pilot is to shape and improve the way Foreigner Integration Centres should work. Third-country nationals can benefit from services offered at the integration centres, for example Polish language courses, adaptation courses, and legal and psychological support. National authorities have highlighted that the one-stop shop approach offers comprehensive services and helps to expand services with additional modules. The pilot project runs until the end of September 2023.

Many initiatives focused on offering social orientation more rapidly to persons with temporary protection,[1207] building on experiences with social orientation for beneficiaries of international protection. For example, in Sweden, special digital social introduction programmes were launched for beneficiaries of temporary protection.[1208] The programme has been in place for beneficiaries of international protection since 2021, but it is delivered through in-person information sessions.

Beneficiaries of international protection may be faced with several administrative challenges when re-establishing themselves in a new country. For example, in Bulgaria, a beneficiary of subsidiary protection tried to open a bank account, but the bank did not provide a reply on his request. The Supreme Administrative Court confirmed the lower court’s assessment that the bank had a legal obligation to provide a written reasoned decision when refusing to open a bank account. The law provides an exhaustive list of refusal grounds in this case, and the refusal can only be based on one of these grounds.

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