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EU+ countries continued to focus on initiatives to support education among beneficiaries of temporary protection, while some new programmes expanded their scope to include refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Countries also invested in language programmes, recognising the importance of knowing the national language in effective integration into the society. Despite the efforts, civil society organisations continued to report on a lack of support in integration in many countries.

Several initiatives to provide support for education in Slovakia were launched during 2023. In July 2023, UNHCR's Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (the DAFI scholarship programme) offered refugees and beneficiaries of temporary protection scholarships for undergraduate degrees in Slovak universities. The allowances cover accommodation, food, local transportation and study materials. In some cases, registration, tuition and study fees can also be covered.916UNICEF and UNHCR also launched the programme “Cash for child development and education” which covers costs for education and childcare for refugees, temporary protection beneficiaries, applicants for international protection and stateless persons who are parents or guardians.917

The European Network for Migrant Women continued to report about challenges related to children’s education in many EU+ countries. Issues related to enrolment in educational institutions, adaptation to the new curricula, learning methods, language instructions and communication difficulties with the schools.918

Knowledge of the national language is a key component of integration policies and strategies, closely linked with employment opportunities and full integration into local communities. In 2023 changes to national laws were introduced to set new requirements. The Flemish region of Belgium introduced an obligatory, standardised Dutch language test for newcomers, including beneficiaries of international protection, as part of civic integration courses. The evaluation focuses on writing and readings skills at A2 level.919

The Ministry of Culture published a draft regulation which outlines the conditions for Estonian language courses for beneficiaries of international protection. The regulation states that beneficiaries of international protection who fail to fulfil the commitments made when registering for language courses must assume the costs.920The Estonian Refugee Council expressed concerns about the lack of free language courses provided by the government since

the end of 2023.921

In a similar context, the Dutch Administrative Jurisdiction of the Council of State addressed the CJEU for a preliminary ruling on a measure in the new Civic Integration Law, which came into force in January 2022, and its compatibility with the recast QD. The measure states that the minister can impose a civic integration obligation for beneficiaries of refugee status and impose a fine in the case of non-compliance.922

Beneficiaries of international protection, applicants and other third-country nationals have been given the legal right to apply for the Overall Language Programme of the German federal state. The programme consists of integration courses, language courses that include knowledge of the legal system, German culture and history, and vocational language courses to improve chances of integration into the labour market.923

Despite continued and new initiatives, civil society organisations cited the lack of language courses and insufficient support were the main barriers for beneficiaries of international protection in accessing administrative procedures, employment and healthcare.924The European Network for Migrant Women further reported that certifying language knowledge was a challenge, referring to Afghan women living in Italy who highlighted that private language courses may not hold the same level of recognition as certificates obtained from public institutions.925

Child beneficiaries of international protection in Greece can now access the e-learning language platform, Akelius, which was launched by the Akelius Foundation and UNICEF. The platform supports language development and builds self-confidence through a variety of games.926

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