

Section 8. Rights of beneficiaries of international protection for inclusion and integration

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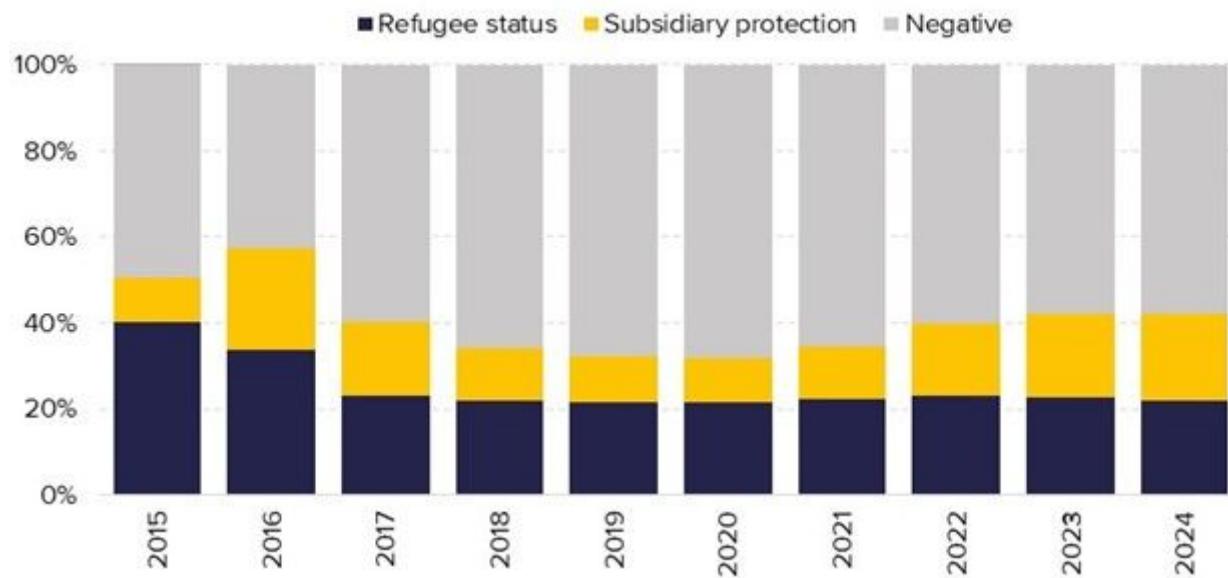


Recognised refugees are granted certain rights and obligations, as outlined by the Geneva Convention. The recast QD outlines the content of international protection to harmonise what a recognised beneficiary of international protection can expect under national policies. Its provisions shape the integration of beneficiaries of international protection through standards on residence permits, employment, education, social welfare and healthcare. Relevant articles of the directive also outline the criteria for the renewal, cessation and revocation of international protection.

The objective of the new Qualification Regulation is to ensure a common set of rights for all beneficiaries of international protection in all EU Member States. The further harmonisation of the content of protection is expected to limit secondary movements of recognised beneficiaries. The regulation clarifies the information that national authorities must provide to beneficiaries of international protection on the content of protection and it sets a clear deadline for delivering residence permits. Social assistance may now be conditional on participation in integration activities. The grounds when international protection must be withdrawn are expanded.

In 2024, the recognition rate remained stable at 42% (see *Figure 15*). However, this aggregate percentage masks variations across two dimensions. Among positive decisions, the share of decisions granting subsidiary protection has been increasing over the past 2 years. In addition, significant variations in positive decisions are noted across nationalities. Recognition rates at first instance were the highest for Palestinians (91%), Syrians (90%), Burkinabe (85%), Malians (84%), Eritreans (82%) and Ukrainians (80%).

Figure 15. Recognition rates at first instance by decision outcome, 2015-2024

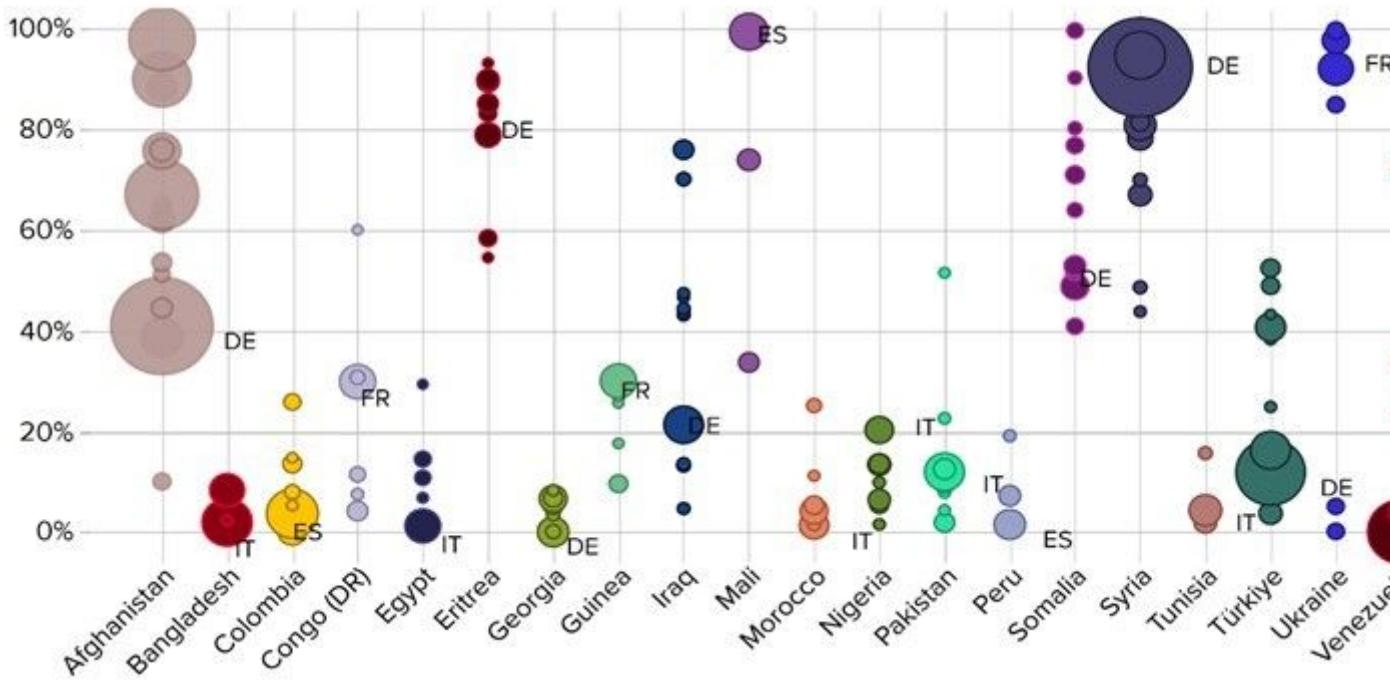


Source: EUAA EPS data as of 3 February 2025.

Compared to 2023, there was an increase in the share of applicants from various citizenships who were not likely to receive international protection. For over one-quarter of the citizenships which were issued the most decisions in 2024, the recognition rates were 5% or below. Their share accounted for one-fifth in 2023. When looking at the threshold of 20% or less recognition rate, three-fifths of citizenships accounted for this group, compared to just over one-half in 2023.

Figure 16 illustrates recognition rates across EU+ countries for various citizenships. In each column, individual circles of the same colour represent different issuing countries, with the size of each circle reflecting the number of decisions issued, and their placement on the vertical axis indicating the corresponding recognition rate - the percentage of decisions that granted refugee status or subsidiary protection.

Figure 16. Recognition rates for the main citizenships across EU+ countries, 2024



Source: EUAA EPS data as of 3 February 2025.

Besides the EU-regulated forms of international protection and temporary protection, EU+ countries may also grant a national form of protection. Among negative decisions, around 23% granted some form of national protection. As in the past, such national forms were mostly issued in Spain and Germany, followed by Italy. In recent years, there have been several legislative and policy developments in this field, for example, allowing a stay based on humanitarian considerations or advanced integration of a person due to residing for an extended period in the country.³⁴¹ In 2024, only a few clarifications were added to existing legislation and policies by national authorities³⁴² or the courts.³⁴³ The CJEU held that Member States had no obligation to provide a right to stay on humanitarian grounds for people who cannot be returned.³⁴⁴

The political debate in many national contexts continued to focus on aspects related to the length of residence permits for beneficiaries of international protection, the perspectives for acquiring long-term residence or citizenship, and the grounds for the renewal or withdrawal of international protection. For example, the Citizenship Act was amended in Germany to facilitate naturalisation at the beginning of 2024, aiming to reward special integration efforts with earlier qualification for naturalisation. The amendments also allow the original citizenship to be retained upon naturalisation, which has been a long-debated issue in the country.³⁴⁵ However, in response to a terrorist attack in Solingen in August 2024, two draft laws were adopted by the federal government, including a new ground for revoking international protection, when a beneficiary of international protection travels to the country of origin and this travel is not deemed to be “morally essential” by the authorities.³⁴⁶

As another example, the Finnish government proposed to shorten the length of residence permits for beneficiaries of international protection to the minimum length allowed by the recast QD, instead of the previous long-term approach. Grounds for revoking or terminating international protection were also expanded, for example, to include circumstances when the person is a danger to national security or to the society or commits an aggravated offence.³⁴⁷

In 2024, national courts deliberated on the impact of providing false information or committing a crime and the possibility to revoke international protection.³⁴⁸ The CJEU held that a Member State may not extradite a person to a third country while this person has still international protection in another Member State.³⁴⁹

The conflict between national security considerations based on classified data and a person’s right to know the reasons for the revocation or cessation of the international protection status gave rise to several court

cases in recent years.³⁵⁰ The Hungarian Helsinki Committee coordinated the drafting of comparative research on the application of European standards in 25 EU countries, noting that only six countries complied fully with these standards.³⁵¹ The findings are particularly significant as the new QR makes it obligatory for national authorities to withdraw international protection when the person can be regarded as a danger to the Member State's security.

The Greek Council of State delivered a ruling underlining that a travel document may only be refused for a refugee after the Asylum Service performs an individual assessment on the specific public order and national security reasons.³⁵²

While many beneficiaries of international protection from previous waves of arrivals began to qualify for long-term residence permits, courts were more often faced with unclarities around the starting date for counting the years to qualify for a new permit.³⁵³

Following trends from previous years, several EU+ countries aimed to tighten the rules for family reunification.³⁵⁴ Some exceptions included Belgium, where the parents of an accompanied minor with international protection now also have the right to reunite with their child and stateless persons are now entitled to the same rights as beneficiaries of international protection in terms of family reunification. Other amendments were triggered by recent CJEU judgments.³⁵⁵ The Swiss Federal Council launched the process to reduce the waiting period for family reunification for people with temporary admission, following a ECtHR judgment in 2021.³⁵⁶ The Danish Immigration Service drew the attention of the municipalities again to a change based on a court judgment from 2020, as it emerged that several municipalities were still not aware that a child's maintenance obligation for parents over 60 years ceases when the parent is granted a permanent residence permit.³⁵⁷ UNHCR published its guidelines on international legal standards for family reunification, noting that this is often the only safe pathway to international protection.³⁵⁸

The CJEU ruled on unaccompanied children's rights to family reunification, concluding that the beneficiary should be considered as a child, even when reaching majority during the family reunification procedure. In the specific case, one conclusion highlighted that the child must be reunited with the adult sister as well since the sister was fully dependent on the parents.³⁵⁹ The court received a new referral for a preliminary ruling, asking for clarifications on the counting of the 3-month period during which refugees may apply for family reunification under facilitated conditions.³⁶⁰

Once granted international protection, beneficiaries continued to face challenges in their successful integration. A main area of concern remained the transition from a reception facility to the mainstream housing market.³⁶¹ As the joint inform by the European Migration Network (EMN) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) observes, only 12 Member States cover the issue of housing as part of the civic orientation training curriculum.³⁶² The topics of the training remain the norms, values and obligations in a country (including on gender equality and the prevention of violence) and labour market integration.³⁶³ Many of the integration initiatives for beneficiaries of international protection presented on the European Website on Integration (EWSI) for 2024 continued to focus on facilitating and speeding up their employment.³⁶⁴ Some of these programmes already start in reception and continue once protection has been granted (*see Section 5*). An EWSI analysis from 2024 highlighted good practices from Czechia, Denmark and the Netherlands on bridging courses which allow refugees to complement their qualifications acquired prior to arrival and supporting them in finding jobs which match their education and skills.

Municipalities are increasingly at the forefront of the implementation of national integration strategies. For example, communal pacts and a municipal commission are two of the pillars for the application of the new law on intercultural living in Luxembourg, which came into force in 2024.³⁶⁵ In Finland, municipalities have a leading role in the provision of integration services, following the reform of the Integration Act in January 2025.³⁶⁶

Services delivered by civil society organisations remain key, and they often fill gaps in support services. Input by civil society organisations to the EUAA’s Asylum Report 2025 showcases the wide range of services these organisations covered in 2024, while the EUAA’s Who is Who in International Protection in the EU+ presents an up-to-date overview of self-reported organisations directly delivering services within asylum and reception systems, whether on behalf of national authorities or independently.³⁶⁷

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