

Edited by: Anna Górska, Anna Dolińska, Jacek Kucharczyk

NATIONAL INTEGRATION EVALUATION MECHANISMS (NIEM) IN 14 EU MEMBER STATES

PROJECT SUMMARY 2016-2022





National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM)

Project co-financed from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund



EUROPEAN UNION
Asylum, Migration
and Integration Fund

Safe harbour

Project co-financed from the National Programme
of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

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Foundation Institute of Public Affairs
00-031 Warsaw, Szpitalna Str. 5 apt. 22
tel.: (22) 55 64 260, fax: (22) 55 64 262
e-mail: isp@isp.org.pl, www.isp.org.pl

Foreword

Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Institute of Public Affairs, I am pleased to present you with the final publication from the project "National Integration Evaluation Mechanism. Monitoring and improvement of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection" which sums up the research and advocacy activities conducted during the project and offers recommendations which can serve as guidelines for implementing more efficient national and European reception and integration policies.

The Institute of Public Affairs has had the honour but also sometimes challenging duty to lead the NIEM project. The IPA has been working along closely especially with the Migration Policy Group to conduct research on national integration policies targeted at beneficiaries of international protection and persons seeking protection. Its overarching aim was to bring evidence that can be used to improve the integration policies in EU countries and to offer better integration opportunities to beneficiaries of international protection. At this point, I would like to thank all the project partners from 15 EU countries for their contribution to the project. Last but not at least, we also would like to thank the European Commission for the funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund which enabled us to carry out this project.

We started the NIEM project during the period when the European Union as a whole and member states by themselves had to deal with the challenge of a bigger influx of asylum seekers in 2015/2016 through the southern borders of the EU putting into question reception and integration systems and solutions implemented in the EU states, abilities of the states to address integration needs in an adequate way and EU common response to the situation. We are finishing the project, when as a result of the Russian invasion on Ukraine, the EU also has to address the integration of millions of new refugees. Do we – as EU and as individual member states - have better answers now on how to integrate them into societies? Have the EU states figured out how to implement integration measures more effectively and sustainably? Do we have better integration offers? The NIEM project teams observed and checked during three evaluation rounds, carried out every two years, if and how reception and integration policies have developed. The findings that the NIEM project brings to the table give evidence of huge divergence between the EU states participating in the research, and unfortunately, a rather small change regarding challenges that should have been addressed. We hope that while reading this summative report, you will find more specific conclusions that will encourage reflection on further directions for integration policies in different EU member states and for the EU.

The issue that definitely requires more attention in shaping public policies on reception and integration is a collaboration between different stakeholders. Its lack or inefficiency often

seem to be the missing link of a well-designed and implemented integration policy. Special efforts should be also made to involve beneficiaries of international protection from the early process of designing solutions and policies for integration and their ongoing monitoring, since only an inclusive policy will bring the desired integration outcomes.

With this note, I wish you to find interesting reflections in the publication.

Dr Jacek Kucharczyk

President of the Institute of Public Affairs

List of contents:

Introduction	4
About the project	4
Participating organisations and countries	4
Project activities – NIEM in numbers	5
Research methodology	5
Statistics & legal framework	8
National research and data availability – conclusions & recommendations	40
Comparative research summary & conclusions	60
Advocacy & the role of BIPs in advocacy work	62
Perspective of Beneficiaries of International Protection	73
Project photos	76
Final conference & photos	84

Introduction

About the project

The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM) was a six-year international research and advocacy project carried out in 2016–2022. The project was co-financed by the European Union from the National Asylum, Migration and Integration within specific actions. The aim of the project was to improve the situation of asylum seekers, recognised refugees and beneficiaries of other forms of international and national protection in the European Union countries, by providing a standardized research tool for evaluating the existing legal conditions, public policies, the scope and methods of their implementation. The tool is to identify the strengths, partial solutions and shortcomings at the level of central authorities in relation to the requirements imposed on them by international law as well as European Union law and standards. Moreover, the tool is to provide a mechanism for standardized collection, validation, storage, updating and analysis of data necessary to build integration policies based on reliable data and accurate analyses (evidence-based policies). Hence, the project as a whole, and what follows - the tool as one of its elements - are dedicated to:

- central governments of the member states, public administration and all other entities influencing the creation and implementation of integration policies for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of different forms of national and international in the European Union,
- the stakeholders deciding on integration policies at the European Union level, including the creation of budgets and setting priorities in the funds allocated to integration, which are offered to individual countries and allocated directly by the European Commission for international cooperation in this area.

We invite you to read and follow the project results on the website www.forintegration.eu. There, you will find project news, events, specific country reports and information about the situation and integration of recognised refugees and beneficiaries of other forms of international and national protection, thematic analyses and comparative reports on selected aspects of integration policies in the countries participating in the project.

Participating organisations and countries

NIEM was led and coordinated by the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). The Migration Policy Group (MPG) was the coordinating research partner responsible for the development of NIEM indicators, analysis and comprehensive comparative reports.

- ANTIGONE Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non-Violence, Greece
- Center for Public Innovation, Romania
- CIDOB – Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Spain

- Diversity Development Group, Lithuania
- Fondazione ISMU – Initiatives and Studies on Multi-ethnicity, Italy
- France Terre d’Asile, France
- Institute of Public Affairs, Poland
- Maastricht University, Netherlands
- Malmö University, Sweden
- Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants, Hungary
- Migration Policy Group, Belgium
- Multi Kulti Collective & Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants, Bulgaria
- Peace Institute, Slovenia
- People in Need, Czechia
- Providus, Latvia

Project activities – NIEM in numbers

Between 2016–2022:

- over 100 people were involved in the implementation of the project,
- over 200 meetings of national coalitions were held,
- 31 national and international conferences were organised,
- 74 different types of publications (comparative reports, country reports, comparative analyzes, policy briefs, in-depth analyzes) were created and published on the project website.

Research methodology

The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM) established a mechanism for a comprehensive evaluation of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) to provide evidence on gaps in integration standards, identify promising practices and evaluate the effects of legislative and policy changes. NIEM aims to assess how comprehensively the Member States respond to the needs and opportunities that beneficiaries of international protection bring to their new homes. NIEM offers a comparable methodology that allows for the systematic evaluation of how favourable the EU Member States’ policies are to the integration of BIPs.

During the NIEM project, three evaluation rounds were conducted in the countries participating in the research: (1) baseline with data as of the 1st of January 2017, (2) evaluation 1 with data as of the 1st of January 2019 and (3) evaluation 2 with data as of the 1st of January 2021. After each evaluation round results for each member state participating in the NIEM project were presented in a national report prepared by a national partner and comparative results were depicted, analysed and summed up in comparative European reports prepared

by Migration Policy Group, leading the NIEM research process. The designed methodology with its indicators measuring integration policies can be used for further evaluation research.

The NIEM research was conducted in relation to the concrete steps policymakers need to take in order to establish a framework that is in line with the standards required by international and EU law. The normative framework from which indicators are derived comprises:

- EU legal standards, EU policy standards and international legal standards: EU legal standards: Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Qualification Directive, Family Reunification Directive, Reception Conditions Directive;
- EU policy standards: Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy, Commission Communication on guidance for application of the Family Reunification Directive;
- International legal standards: Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, European Convention on Nationality.

With reference to the abovementioned framework, more than 150 indicators were developed in the NIEM project covering different areas and types of expertise, various stakeholders and diverse types of evidence. The NIEM indicators cover four major areas: general conditions, legal integration, socio-economic integration and socio-cultural integration. Each of these areas contains a number of dimensions and each dimension comprises a specific set of indicators. The 13 dimensions assessed were:

- General conditions: Impact of reception on integration, Mainstreaming,
- Legal integration: Residency, Family unity and reunification, Access to citizenship,
- Socio-economic integration: Housing, Employment, Vocational training, Health, Social security,
- Socio-cultural integration: Education, Language learning and social orientation, Building bridges.

The countries included in the research are Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. While not covering the entire EU, the sample of 14 countries participating represents the full scale of experiences and challenges found in the Union concerning refugee integration.

Data gathering and analysis involved desk research, interviews with practitioners and experts from the government institutions and civil society sector. Expert focus groups and surveys were used to gain additional insights into some countries. Data were validated on the national level and for the purpose of comparing European research were processed by Migration Policy Group, and further validated in clarification loops with the national researchers before scoring and comparative analysis. The full questionnaire with indicators as

well as rules of the specific scoring are provided on the NIEM website (www.forintegration.eu). All comparative and national reports presenting more detailed information about methodology and results can be also found there.

Statistics & legal framework

Bulgaria

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	no data	no data	no data	no data	Ministry of Interior
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	no data	no data	no data	no data	Ministry of Interior
Share of BIPs among the whole population	no data	no data	no data	no data	Ministry of Interior

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	National Strategy on Migration of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2025 Ordinance on the terms and procedures for concluding, enforcing and terminating the integration agreement of beneficiaries of international protection	https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/national-strategy-migration-republic-bulgaria-2021-2025_en https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/ordinance-terms-and-procedures-concluding-enforcing-and-terminating-integration_en
Institutions responsible for integration	The Ordinance on the terms and procedures for concluding, enforcing and terminating the integration agreement of beneficiaries of international protection envisions that a Deputy Prime Minister appointed by the Council of Ministers will be responsible for coordinating the integration processes. However, such a Deputy Prime Minister has never been appointed since the adoption of the document in 2017.	https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/ordinance-terms-and-procedures-concluding-enforcing-and-terminating-integration_en

Information on Integration Programmes	<p>Name: Integration agreement of beneficiaries of international protection</p> <p>Duration: 1 year, could be extended once for 1 more year</p> <p>Support offered: Access to education, access to employment, access to vocational training, access to housing, access to health care, access to social assistance and social services</p>	https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/ordinance-terms-and-procedures-concluding-enforcing-and-terminating-integration_en
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Czechia

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	2972	2586s	2220	1923	Czech Statistical Office; 2022 - Department for Asylum and Migration Policy, Ministry of Interior
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	0,60%	0,46%	0,35%	0,29%	Ibid.
Share of BIPs among the whole population	0,03%	0,02%	0,02%	0,02%	Ibid.

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	The Czech Republic has a complex tool for integrating persons granted international protection – The State Integration Program. The programme was last modified in 2017. Additionally, BIPs are mentioned in the broader Policy for the Integration of Foreign Nationals. Both documents are interlinked, although only loosely.	https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/integration-of-foreign-nationals-in-the-territory-of-the-czech-republic.aspx
If there is not one framework	The main feature of the State Integration Program is that it provides	

document, how is integration organized in the legal documents.	a complex set of tools for the integration of BIPs. It is not a strategic document per se. The Policy, on the other hand, covers the BIPs only as a complementary/secondary group of foreigners.	
Institutions responsible for integration	The Ministry of Interior is the main institution responsible. The Refugee Facilities Administration, an organizational section of the Ministry, is responsible for providing services outlined in the State Integration Program. Besides Mol, several other ministries are responsible for the implementation programme: the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Regions (<i>kraje</i>), local administrations, and NGOs are also listed among the institutions responsible.	https://www.suz.cz/en/
Information on Integration Programmes	Integration of BIPs is organized under the State Integration Program. The duration is 12 months. Within the programme, complex assistance is provided in five main areas: housing, employment, education (including language education), social welfare, and health care. The exact type and amount of assistance depend on the specifics of integration plans which are elaborated individually.	https://www.integracniprogram.cz/en/

France

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	228 427 (excluding minors)	278 765 (excluding minors)	455 295 (including minors)	no data	OFPRA Annual report
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	5%	5.7%	8.8%	no data	OFPRA and INSEE (calculation FTDA)
Share of BIPs among the whole population	0.34%	0.41%	0.67%	no data	OFPRA and INSEE (calculation FTDA)

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	National Strategy on Integration, 2018 National scheme for the reception of asylum seekers and the integration of refugees (SNADAR)2021-2023 Entry and Residence and Asylum Code (CESEDA)	https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/une-strategie-nationale/ https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Asile/Schema-national-d-accueil-des-demandeurs-d-asile-et-d-integration-des-refugies-2021-2023 https://refugies.info/fr
Institutions responsible for integration	Ministry of Interior's Directorate General for Foreigners (DGEF) Inter-ministerial Delegation on Reception and Integration of Refugees (DIAIR) French Foreigners' Immigration and Integration Office (OFII)	https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/ministere/etrangers-en-france https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/ https://www.ofii.fr/
Information on Integration Programmes	Refugies.info: online platform centralising information on programmes and legislation related to the integration of refugees Republican Integration Contract (CIR), 100 to 600h of language courses, 24h of civic orientation training, 2 interviews with OFII	Refugies.info https://www.ofii.fr/procedure/accueil-integration/

Greece

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	2016	2018	2020	2021	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	Refugees: 2,457 BSPs*: 250	Refugees: 12,797 BSPs: 4,157	Refugees: 26,819 BSPs: 8,512	Refugees: 13,781 BSPs: 4,668	Greek Asylum Service/Ministry of Migration: https://migration.gov.gr/statistika/ Note: The data refers to granted international protection. There is no official data on the number of BIPs in the country.
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	no data	no data	no data	no data	There is no available statistical data.
Share of BIPs among the whole population	no data	no data	no data	no data	There is no available statistical data. The previous census was held in 2011. The results of the 2021 census concluded in December 2021 have not been published yet on the Hellenic Statistical Authority website.

*BSPs = Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	National Strategy for the social integration of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection (Εθνική στρατηγική για την κοινωνική ένταξη αιτούντων άσυλο και δικαιούχων διεθνούς προστασίας), 2021 National Strategy for integration (all TCNs) (Εθνική Στρατηγική για την ένταξη), 2019	1) Available here 2) Available here

Institutions responsible for integration	The implementation of social integration strategies for third-country nationals (beneficiaries or applicants of international protection, unaccompanied minors, and migrants), is achieved through the collaboration between the Ministry of Migration and Asylum with other Ministries, and local government administrations as well as entities of civil society.	Information available here
Information on Integration Programmes	<p>The action pillars of the national strategy and their corresponding policy actions and measures are described below:</p> <p>Collaboration with the local government administration to promote integration on local level, which involves actions and measures such as: enhancing the collaboration between the central administration and the local government administration, enabling the participation of local administration bodies in integration initiatives, improving reception services offered to applicants of international protection, improving local reception and integration services, offering accommodation services to beneficiaries and applicants of international protection and enhancing the operation of Migrant Integration Centers (M.I.C.).</p> <p>Access to necessary goods and services, which involves actions and measures such as: informing third-country nationals about their access to goods and services, upgrading the operation of immigration services offered by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, upgrading public services and local administration services that cater to third-country nationals and enabling third-country nationals' access to the healthcare system.</p> <p>Promotion of inclusive education, which involves actions such as: supporting the integration of children in the educational system and encouraging the participation of adults in continuing education courses.</p> <p>Promotion of labour market integration, which involves actions and measures such as: identifying and recognizing the skills and qualifications of third-country nationals, enabling their access to the job market, and promoting entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Enhancement of Intercultural Mediation, which involves actions and measures such as: developing and expanding the profession of intercultural mediation and</p>	The National Strategy does not provide information on the duration and support offered for each action.

	<p>encouraging intercultural interaction and dialogue.</p> <p>Encouragement of civic participation, which involves actions such as: enabling third-country nationals' civic and community participation via involvement in community athletic activities and volunteerism.</p> <p>Combatting racism and xenophobia, which involves identifying and monitoring the occurrences of racism and xenophobia and raising awareness with regard to such phenomena.</p> <p>Implementation of targeted integration policies for vulnerable groups such as: promoting the integration of women, the integration of individuals with special needs and the integration of the elderly.</p> <p>Implementation of targeted policies for second-generation citizens to enhance their integration into Greek society.</p>	
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Hungary

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	2016	2018	2020	2021	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	33735 (1833 refugees 1540 BSPs*)	3590 (1658 refugees 1932 BSPs)	3252 (1511 refugees 1741 BSPs)	2956 (1435 refugees 1521 BSPs)	Ministry of Interior of Hungary, National Directorate General for Aliens Policing
Share of BIPs among non-citizens**	1,56%	1,36%	0,91%	0,84%	National Directorate General for Aliens Policing
Share of BIPs among the whole population	0,034%	0,036%	0,033%	0,033%	National Directorate General for Aliens Policing, Ministry of Interior

*BSPs = Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection

**including EEA nationals

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	Act LXXX of 2007 on Asylum, Sections 10, 17 until 2020: Migration Strategy of Hungary (there was a specific chapter on integration in the MS, calling for an Integration Strategy, but the latter has not been adopted yet)	http://belugyalapok.hu/alapok/sites/default/files/Migration%20Strategy%20Hungary.pdf (abridged version)
If there is not one framework document, how is integration organized in the legal documents	The legislation (Asylum Act) provides that refugees – unless otherwise provided for by an act or government decree – enjoy the same rights and are bound by the same conditions as nationals. In addition, several pieces of legislation (e.g. on education, social security, employment, etc.) confirm the equality of rights between	https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a0700080.tv

	BSPs and Hungarian nationals. Besides legislation on equality, there are no legislative, or administrative measures ensuring equity (access to rights guaranteed by the law) or integration.	
Institutions responsible for integration	No such institution	
Information on Integration Programmes	No such programme	

Italy

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs* in the country	66.493	93.886	100.141	no data	Our processing of Eurostat data
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	1,12%	1,57%	1,69%	no data	Our processing of Eurostat, Istat and Ismu Foundation data
Share of BIPs among the whole population	0,11%	0,15%	0,17%	no data	Our processing of Eurostat, Istat and Ismu Foundation data

*By BIPs we only mean refugees and persons with subsidiary protection

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	<p>Art. 29, par. 3 D.lgs 251/2007 foresees a biennial National Plan/Program that provides intervention guidelines to achieve the effective integration of beneficiaries of international protection.</p> <p>The law provides also that the involved national authorities have to guarantee funds, according to the current legislation.</p> <p>On 21 October 2020, the decree-law n.130/2020 was published, converted into law on 18 December 2020, amending the security decrees of 2018, containing urgent provisions in the field of immigration, international and subsidiary protection. In particular, the reception system for applicants for international protection has been reformed. The new Reception and Integration System (SAI) has been created, replacing SIPROIMI, and returning to a system similar to the old SPRAR. First aid or rescue functions are managed in ordinary and extraordinary government centres set up by the Minister of</p>	<p>Art. 29, par. 3 D.lgs 251/2007; Decree-law n.130/2020, converted into law on 18 December 2020; AIDA Country Report: https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/reception-conditions/short-overview-italian-</p>

	<p>the Interior. The next phase of reception is entrusted to local</p> <p>authorities and is divided into two levels of services, according to whether they are applicants for international protection or holders of international protection. In the first case (for applicants) health, social, psychological, and linguistic-cultural mediation services are provided, in the second case (BIPs), integration services are added, including job orientation and vocational training.</p> <p>Even after the reform, the SAI system is still conceived and indicated as primarily intended for beneficiaries of international protection and unaccompanied foreign minors. All the others can access it only in case of additional places available.</p> <p>On 29 January 2021, the Ministry of the Interior updated to Decree-Law 130/2020 the new draft term of reference for the management of Reception Facilities. Among the innovations were: the reintroduction of the psychological assistance service; the provision of Italian language courses; legal assistance and support for moving correctly in the territory.</p> <p>In the Hotspots (first reception facilities to quickly identify, register, photo-identify, and fingerprint migrants) the number of hours of psychological assistance and cultural-linguistic mediation has increased. In the Repatriation Centres, the number of staff members and hours for medical care has increased.</p> <p>The new tender specification schemes were published on 24 February 2021 on the Mol website.</p>	<p>reception-system/ SAI Report: https://www.cittalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Rapporto-SIPROIMI_SAI_leggero.pdf New tender schemes: https://www.interno.gov.it/it/amministrazione-trasparente/bandi-gara-e-contratti/nuovo-schema-capitolato-appalto-fornitura-beni-e-servizi-relativi-alla-gestione-e-funzione-nome-dei-centri</p>
Institutions responsible for integration	<p>a) Ministry of Interior and local authorities are both responsible for reception in the SAI system (ex SIPROIMI EX SPRAR system), where also the integration of beneficiaries of international protection is implemented. In the SPRAR system, there was a "Servizio Centrale" (Central Service) in charge of monitoring the reception and integration of beneficiaries in the local reception facilities. The outcomes were registered in a database. This service would probably be valid also in the SIPROIMI system and in the SAI system.</p> <p>b) Art. 29, par. 3 D. Lgs. n.251/07, as modified by D. Lgs 18/2014, provides the organisation of the called "Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale". It is established within the Minister of the Interior and it has the</p>	

	<p>responsibility to draw up every two years (or in a shorter term if there are special needs) a National Plan to define integration policies and measures for beneficiaries of international protection. It collaborates with the "Conferenza Unificata" (art. 8 D.lgs n. 281/1997), which plans integration.</p> <p>The new decree 130/2020 provides that the beneficiaries of reception measures accepted in the SAI integration projects are initiated by the competent administrations and within the limits of the available resources. Some priority lines of action for the update of the National Integration Plan for Holders of International Protection for 2020-2021 are identified. In this context, the National Coordination Table for Reception and Integration can formulate proposals for the activation of the related initiatives.</p>	
Information on Integration Programmes	<p>Art. 29, par. 3 D. Lgs. n.251/07, as modified by D.Lgs 18/2014, provides the organisation of the called "Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale". It is established within the Minister of the Interior and it has the responsibility to draw up every two years (or in a shorter term if there are special needs) a National Plan to define integration policies and measures for beneficiaries of international protection. It collaborates with the "Conferenza Unificata" (art. 8 D.lgs n. 281/1997), which plans integration.</p> <p>Many authorities are part of Conferenza Unificata and Tavolo di coordinamento nazionale: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of labour and social policy, Regions, "Unione delle province d'Italia" (UPI) and "Associazione nazionale dei comuni italiani" (ANCI). They are integrated with the Ministry of equal opportunities, UNHCR, the National Commission for the asylum right (who decides on asylum applications with the local Commissions), and experts from other authorities and stakeholders according to the subject.</p>	<p>Art. 29, par. 3 D. Lgs. n.251/07; https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/2018_emn_country_factsheet_it_final_en.pdf</p>

Latvia

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	308	647	621	673	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, OCMA
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	0,003%	0,006%	0,006%	0,006%	OCMA
Share of BIPs among the whole population	0,0001%	0,0003%	0,0003%	0,0003%	OCMA

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	<p>Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection</p> <p>Guidelines for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society 2021-2027</p> <p>Plan for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society 2022- 2023</p>	<p>https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/278257</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/guidelines-development-cohesive-and-civically-active-society-2021-2027_en</p> <p>Par Saliedētas un pilsoniski aktīvas sabiedrības attīstības pamatnostādņēm 2021.–2027. gadam (likumi.lv)</p> <p>https://likumi.lv/ta/id/329302-par-saliedetas-un-pilsoniski-aktivas-sabiedribas-attistibas-planu-2022-2023-gadam</p>
Institutions responsible for integration	<p>Ministry of Interior (early reception phase)</p> <p>Ministry of Welfare</p> <p>Ministry of Culture</p> <p>Ministry of Health</p> <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>Ministry of Justice</p> <p>Ministry of Economics</p> <p>Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development</p> <p>Municipalities</p>	<p>https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/278257</p>

Information on Integration Programmes	<p><u>Promoting diversity</u> Duration: 04.01.2016–31.12.2023</p> <p>Support offered: - Social services</p> <p>- Career consultations - Legal assistance - Psychological support - Social mentor services</p> <p><u>Integration of refugees and persons with subsidiary protection status into the labour market of Latvia</u> 01.01.2016–31.12.2020 (continued in 2021-2022) Support offered: - Informative lectures for BIPs about employment possibilities in Latvia - Individual consultations for BIPs about employment - Support for acquiring or renewing skills</p> <p><u>Support measures for persons with the Status of International Protection I, II, III</u> 27.06.2016–31.12.2022. Support offered: - Training courses - Tailored information on rights and obligations</p> <p><u>Information centre for newcomers I, II</u> 18.05.2016.–31.12.2022 Support offered: - Information and consultations for TCNs - Training on cross-cultural issues - Interpreting services - Registration and dissemination of information on NGO and volunteer support to BIPs and TCNs</p> <p><u>Latvian language courses to promote the inclusion of TCNs into the labour market I, II, III</u> 15.11.2016–30.09.2022</p> <p>Support offered: - Latvian language courses to meet the needs of daily communication, further education and employment</p>	<p>https://www.sif.gov.lv/lv/projekts/dazadibas-veicinasana</p> <p>https://www.sif.gov.lv/lv/begliem-patveruma-mekletajiem-un-personam-ar-alternativo-statusu</p> <p>https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/projekts/projekts-beglu-un-alternativo-statusu-ieguvuso-personu-integracija-latvijas-darba-tirgu</p> <p>https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/media/14564/download (for all courses listed below) https://patverums-dm.lv/en/the-support-actions-for-persons-under-international-protection https://patverums-dm.lv/en/the-support-actions-for-persons-under-international-protection-ii https://patverums-dm.lv/en/the-support-actions-for-persons-under-international-protection-iii</p> <p>https://patverums-dm.lv/en/information-centre-for-newcomers-ii https://patverums-dm.lv/en/information-centre-for-newcomers https://patverums-dm.lv/en/information-centre-for-immigrants</p> <p>https://valoda.lv/projekti/starptautiskie-projekti/mes-istenojam-eiropas-treso-valstu-valstspiederigo-integracijas-fonda-lidzfinansetu-projektu/</p> <p>https://www.iac.edu.lv/projekti-en-us/istenotie-projekti-en-us/dzivoju-latvija-macos-latviesu</p>
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	<p><u>Living in Latvia: Learning Latvian language I, II, III</u> 15.11.2016–30.09.2022 Support offered: -Latvian language courses for education, and employment needs</p> <p><u>Learning the Latvian language with pleasure! I, II</u> 1.01.2019– 30.09.2022 Support offered: Latvian language courses for TCNs</p> <p><u>Latvia, my home</u> 15.11.2016–31.12.2018 Support offered: - Latvian language courses to increase the knowledge by one grading level</p> <p><u>Integration ABC 2017, III, IV</u> 16.05.2017.–30.09.2022. Support offered: - Integration courses - Educational programmes</p> <p><u>Bridge of integration</u> 01.07.2019–31.12.2020 Support offered: -Integration activities for TCNs -Integration courses -Inter-cultural activities with the host communities</p> <p><u>We in Latvia</u> 1.07.2017–31.12.2020 Support offered: - Integration courses for TCNs - Cross-cultural socialisation events for TCNs and the local population</p> <p><u>Welcome, century Latvia!</u> 1.06.2017–31.12.2018 Support offered: - Integration courses for TCNs</p>	<p>valodu-en-us/ https://www.iac.edu.lv/projekti-en-us/istenotie-projekti-en-us/new-project-page-3-en-us/ https://www.iac.edu.lv/projekti-en-us/aktualie-projekti-en-us/new-project-page-en-us/</p> <p>https://inovacijucentrs.lv/en/lv-arprieku.php</p> <p>http://lat.grani.lv/daugavpils/16400-du-realizeja-dazadas-integracijas-programmas.html</p> <p>https://patverums-dm.lv/en/integracijas-abc---3</p> <p>https://intelektaparks.lv/eng/projects/2019-2020-integration-bridge-2/</p> <p>https://inovacijucentrs.lv/en/mes-latvija2.php</p> <p>https://intelektaparks.lv/eng/projects/2017-2018-welcome-century-latvia/</p>
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Lithuania

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs* in the country	no data	no data	no data	no data	
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	no data	no data	no data	no data	
Share of BIPs among the whole population	no data	no data	no data	no data	

* There is no official data how many BIPs are in the country, only how many of them received status.

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	<p>There is no formally adopted national integration strategy specific to beneficiaries of international protection. However, two legal acts could be ascribed to the national strategy for the integration of BIPs.</p> <p>Integration of persons who have been granted asylum in Lithuania and their family members (in case of family reunification) is done in line with the Decree on State Support of the Procedure for the Integration of Foreigners Granted Asylum (relevant amendments to the Decree were endorsed on 15 October 2020)¹. The document regulates the grounds for, organisation and implementation of the provision of state support for the integration of persons who have been granted asylum, the terms of support for integration at the Refugees Reception Centre and in the territory of a municipality, payment of cash benefits and allowances, education and employment, the grounds for the termination and renewal of support for integration, and raising public</p>	https://socmin.lrv.lt/en/activities/social-integration/integration-of-foreigners#asylum

¹ Government of the Republic of Lithuania (2016). Decree on State Support of the Procedure for the Integration of Foreigners Granted Asylum, No. 998, 5 October 2016, valid version from 15 October 2020, available at: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/34e8bf81913d11e68adcda1bb2f432d1/xOvaArnpSa>

	<p>awareness of the integration of persons who have been granted asylum.</p> <p>The Action Plan 2018-2020 on the Integration of Foreigners into the Lithuanian Society was adopted on December 21, 2018 (extended to 2021, effective as of February 19, 2021)². It is important to note that unlike in the previous Action Plan, the target group of the Action Plan 2018-2020 covers both non-EU national migrants and beneficiaries of international protection. This Action Plan seeks to further improve the implementation of integration measures for the foreign citizens in Lithuania and to ensure their successful integration into society.</p> <p>The implementation measures of the Action Plan are funded by appropriations from the state budget for the ministries and other stakeholders participating in the implementation of the Action Plan, and with money from the EU funds. However, the State budget funds constitute only a small part of all budgets foreseen for the Action Plan implementation.</p>	
If there is not one framework document, how is integration organized in the legal documents	<p>Integration of BIPs is divided into two stages: Integration at the Refugee Reception Centre (for up to 3 months, with a possibility to extend it to vulnerable groups for up to 6 months). BIP is provided with free accommodation, social and psychological services, on-site healthcare services and, where necessary, the to receive services at healthcare institutions conditions are created; evaluation of personal qualities and qualifications required for the job is organised; a monthly benefit for food and other necessities is paid; a benefit for school-aged children for the acquisition of essential school supplies is paid; a monthly compensation for the expenses of children's education according to the pre-school and/or pre-primary education curricula is paid; free-of-charge Lithuanian language and culture courses are organised; persons are provided with basic necessities, clothing, footwear, and bedclothes.</p> <p>Integration in the municipality (for 12 months, with a possibility to extend it to vulnerable groups for up to 36 months), in which a person chooses to reside. At this stage, non-governmental and other organisations provide</p>	https://socmin.lrv.lt/en/activities/social-integration/integration-of-foreigners#asylum

² Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Order on the Approval of the Action Plan 2018-2021 on the Integration of Foreigners into Lithuanian Society, no. A1-755, 21 December 2018, valid version from 19 February 2021, available at: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/31d148100a1911e98a758703636ea610/asr>

	mentoring services to BIPs who are participating in the integration process. Currently, mentoring services are provided by Caritas of Vilnius Archdiocese and the Lithuanian Red Cross.	
Institutions responsible for integration	Ministry of Social Security and Labour	

Netherlands

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	101 744	101 837	78 911	not available	Vluchtelingen in Getallen 2018, 2019, 2021
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	3 862 753 2,63%	4 086 138 2,49%	4 305 908 1,83%	4 442 184 not available	Statistics on the Dutch population
Share of BIPs among the whole population	17 081 507 0,60%	17 282 163 0,59%	17 475 415 0,45%	17 591 394 not available	Statistics on the Dutch population

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	Wet inburgering 2021 (The law on integration 2021) provides for the new legislative framework, applicable from 1 January 2022, on integration in the Netherlands. It strengthened the role played by the Dutch municipalities and shifted the emphasis from self-reliance to a collective effort of society.	Wet inburgering 2021, available at: https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0044770/2022-01-01
Institutions responsible for integration	Municipalities are the main institutions responsible for integration. They are supported by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment, DUO (Education Implementation Service), Divosa and VNG (Union of Dutch Municipalities).	

<p>Information on Integration Programmes</p>	<p>The Wet inburgering 2021 has introduced three integration paths, depending on the personal situation and circumstances of the BIP; the B1 path, the education path and the self-reliance path. The B1 path is aimed at learning the Dutch language and finding a job within three years. Participants are allowed to start working or volunteering during the process. The education path is especially aimed at the younger generation. They will also learn the Dutch language at B1 level, or even higher, and get prepared for going to secondary or even tertiary education in the Netherlands. Finally, the self-reliance path is for those who are not able to participate in any of the other paths. They learn the Dutch language at A1 level and are in a simple way prepared to participate in Dutch society. Everyone still has to take the exam testing their knowledge of Dutch society and sign the participation statement. What changed is that only those participating in the B1 and self-reliance paths have to complete a module on the Dutch labour market. Those participating in the education path receive academic counselling instead.</p>	<p>Articles 7, 8 and 9 of the Wet inburgering 2021, available at: https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0044770/2022-01-01</p>
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Poland

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	258	3328	2789	2155	Office for Foreigners
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	no data	no data	no data	no data	
Share of BIPs among the whole population	no data	no data	no data	no data	

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	None	
If there is not one framework document, how is integration organized in the legal documents	<p>In the absence of an overarching strategic document, integration activities are dispersed in separate normative acts and implemented by various entities of the public sector. The basic form of social assistance intended for beneficiaries of international protection is the individual integration program (IIP), defined in the Act of March 12, 2004 on social assistance (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 64, item 59) and in the Act on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 128, item 1176).</p> <p>During the project, some work was undertaken to develop a migration policy for Poland, including an integration policy, but the work was not completed by the time the project had finished.</p> <p>Elements of the integration policy also appear in the scope of activities and competencies of public administration bodies in the areas of education (Ministry of Education and Science), social security (Ministry of Family and Social Policy), access to the labour market (Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology) etc.</p>	
Institutions responsible for integration	<p>The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy</p> <p>*Pre-integration activities during the asylum procedure the Office for Foreigners, which is</p>	

	accountable to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration	
Information on Integration Programmes	<p>Individual Integration Programme Duration: 12 months Support offered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) social benefits intended for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) maintenance, in particular, to cover expenses for food, clothing, footwear, personal hygiene products and housing, b) covering expenses related to learning the Polish language; 2) covering of the health insurance; 3) social work; 4) specialist support, including legal, psychological and family counselling; 5) providing information and support in contact with other institutions, in particular with labour market institutions, the local community and NGOs; 6) other activities supporting the process of integration 	<p>Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20210002268&SessionID=746A115558A4310C2C3FE967457420099574ECEC</p>

Romania

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country*	3,924	4,312	3,597	3,842	General Inspectorate for Immigration
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	0,06%	0,06%	0,06%	0,06%	National Statistics Institute
Share of BIPs among the whole population	less than 0,01%	less than 0,01%	less than 0,01%	less than 0,01%	National Statistics Institute

*Recognized beneficiaries only (not including asylum seekers still in the asylum procedure)

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	<p>Romania adopted in 2021 the National Strategy on Immigration 2021-2025, the main policy document in this sector.</p> <p>The previous National Strategy covered the period of 2015-2018, thus more than two years were not covered.</p>	National Strategy on Immigration 2021-2025 (Romanian)
If there is not one framework document, how is integration organized in the legal documents	The main legal document regulating the integration programmes is the Government Ordinance no. 44/2004 on the social integration of foreigners who have been granted international protection or a right of residence in Romania, as well as citizens of the Member States of the Union, the European Economic Area and citizens of the Swiss Confederation.	Government Ordinance no. 44/2004 (Romanian)
Institutions responsible for integration	<p>The main institution responsible for immigration, including the integration aspects, is the General Immigration Inspectorate (GII), a structure of the</p> <p>Romanian Police, under the Ministry of Interior Affairs. GII coordinates the inter-ministerial work, and it implements the integration programmes.</p>	

	Other institutions are responsible for specific components of the integration programmes, for example, the Ministry of Education (and subordinated structures) with access to education.	
Information on Integration Programmes	<p>The beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) in Romania have the option to enrol in the integration programme - a set of measures and services provided by the Romanian state, through GII, to facilitate inclusion into society.</p> <p>The Integration Programme includes the following instruments (listed in brief), for the duration of the programme, up to 12 months: Accommodation in the Regional Reception Centres (some conditions apply), or rent, if the Centres reached 90 % full capacity; Romanian language courses; Counselling and social assistance; Psychological and medical support; Limited financial non-reimbursable benefits (up to 9 months); Support for accessing the labour market; Access to education; Limited child care services.</p> <p>After the completion of the Programme, the BIPs can receive some support to rent a house on the free market, for up to one year.</p>	

Slovenia

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	395	539	787	796	OSIM (UOIM)
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	0.345 %	0.390 %	0.466 %	0.461 %	Calculated from data by SURS
Share of BIPs among the whole population	0.019 %	0.025 %	0.037 %	0.038 % 2.107.180	Calculated from data by SURS

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	<p>International Protection Act - provides the legal basis for asylum seekers and BIPs</p> <p>Foreigners Act – provides a certain additional legal basis for BIPs</p> <p>Strategy in the field of migration – it is a general strategy, which includes a section on the integration of migrants, where (in short) also BIPs are included</p>	<p>International Protection Act</p> <p>Foreigners Act</p> <p>Strategy in the field of migration</p>
If there is not one framework document, how is integration organized in the legal documents	There is not one comprehensive framework document on BIPs' integration. However, BIPs are included in the section on the integration of migrants in Slovenia in the Strategy in the field of migration (very briefly). Otherwise, International Protection Act contains all the rights and obligations of BIPs which constitute the foundation for integration.	<p>Strategy in the field of migration</p> <p>International Protection Act</p>
Institutions responsible for integration	The Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants (in Slovenian: Urad Vlade za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov)	Website: https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/vladne-sluzbe/urad-vlade-za-oskrbo-in-integracijo-migrantov/
Information on Integration Programmes	BIPs are entitled to integration	NGOs providing direct support with integration:

	<p>support for two years upon their status recognition. They are assigned an integration consultant, who prepares (together with BIPs) an individualised integration plan. BIPs are to sign an integration contract with The Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants in order to get access to all the rights provided by the International Protection Act. BIPs (who sign the contract) are entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accommodation in an integration house or other OSIM accommodation facilities (however, a large majority of BIPs have to search for housing on their own), or financial assistance for private accommodation (12 months + conditionally 12 months), -Social orientation course on getting to know Slovenian society (lasting 2 months, implemented by an NGO), -Slovene language course (in the scope of 400 hours), -One-time free of charge Slovene language test (for basic level), -Covering other costs related to education, -Covering costs of translations related to the recognition and evaluation of education based on relevant evidence, -Covering costs related to the recognition and evaluation of education when BIPs cannot prove their formal education with documents. 	<p>Slovene Philanthropy Društvo Odnos Društvo Mozaik Slovenian Red Cross</p> <p>Also, many other NGOs and associations are running various projects or activities through which they (directly or indirectly) support BIPs.</p> <p>In addition to NGOs, also some informal groups of activists are providing support to BIPs</p>
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Spain

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country*	6.855 (during 2016)	2.895 (during 2018)	5.758 (during 2020) (40.726 permits of humanitarian protection were issued, mainly to Venezuelans)	7.371 (during 2021) (12.983 permits of humanitarian protection were issued, mainly to Venezuelans)	Eurostat and Ministry of Interior
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	no data	no data	no data	no data	
Share of BIPs among the whole population	no data	no data	no data	no data	

*No data on BIPs' stock is available. The figures provided refer to the number of persons who have been recognized for international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) over the year before (e.g. 2016 in the first column).

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	<p>Law 12/2009 of 30 October 2009, regulating the law of asylum and subsidiary protection. Official Gazette No 263, 31 October 2009</p> <p>Organic Law 4/2000 of 11 January 2000 on rights and liberties of aliens in Spain and their social integration. Official Gazette No 10, 12 January 2000</p> <p>Organic Law 4/2015 of 30 March on the protection of citizen security. Official Gazette n° 77, 31 March 2015</p> <p>Organic Law 39/2015 of 1st October on the Administrative Procedure of Public</p>	

	<p>Administrations</p> <p>Royal Decree 1325/2003 of 24 October 2003 approving the Regulation on a regime of temporary protection in case of a mass influx of displaced persons. Official Gazette No 256, 25 October 2003</p> <p>Royal Decree 203/1995 of 10 February 1995 approving the Regulation implementing Law 5/1984 of 26 March 1984, regulating the law of asylum and criteria for refugee status, as amended by Law 9/1994 of 19 May 1994. Modified by Royal Decree 865/2001 of 20 July 2001, Royal Decree 1325/2003 of 24 October 2003 and Royal Decree 2393/2004 of 30 December 2004</p> <p>Royal Decree 557/2011 of 20 April 2011 proving the regulation implementing Law 4/2000 on rights and liberties of aliens in Spain and their social integration</p> <p>Royal Decree 139/2020 of 28 January 2020 establishing the basic organisational structures of ministerial departments</p> <p>Royal Decree 164/2014 of 14 March 2014 on the regulation and functioning of internal rules of the CIE. Official Gazette No 64, 15 March 2014</p> <p>Framework Protocol for the protection of victims of human trafficking, adopted by agreement between the Ministers of Justice, Home Affairs, Employment and Social Security, Health, Social Services and Equality, the Office of the Attorney General and the State Judicial Council on 28 October 2011</p> <p>Resolution of 13 October 2014 on the Framework Protocol on actions relating to foreign unaccompanied minors. Official Gazette No 251, 16 October 2014</p> <p>Royal Decree 497/2020 of 28 April establishing the organic structure of the Minister of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration</p>	
If there is not one framework document, how is integration organized in the legal documents	<p>The organization and functioning of the reception and integration system for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection is contained and detailed in the “Reception Handbook” (Sistema de acogida e integración para solicitantes y beneficiarios de protección internacional - Manual de</p>	

	gestion) issued by the Directorate General of International Protection Programmes and Humanitarian Assistance.	
Institutions responsible for integration	The design, management and funding of the reception and integration system for asylum seekers and BIPs fall under the responsibility of the State Secretary for Migration (the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration), through the Directorate General of International Protection programmes and Humanitarian Assistance. It is implemented by 20 NGOs involved in the national reception and integration system.	
Information on Integration Programmes	<p>The reception and integration system is organized along an "itinerary of integration" (itinierario de integration) which lasts 18 months (but can reach a maximum of 24 months for vulnerable cases). The condition to be admitted to the system is the lack of sufficient resources. This means that only asylum seekers who declare to lack sufficient economic resources to provide for their subsistence are admitted.</p> <p>The reception and integration system consists of three phases: phase-0 of "assessment and referral" (max 30 days); phase-1 of "reception"; phase-2 of "preparation for autonomy".</p> <p>Since January 2021 only BIPs can access the last phase, while asylum seekers complete the full itinerary in the phase-1.</p> <p>During 18-months, asylum seekers and BIPs are granted accommodation - and in phase-2, BIPs are given economic support for renting accommodation on the private market, assistance (legal, psychological, social, language, vocational, etc.) and financial support.</p>	

Sweden

1. Statistics regarding Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)

	1 st of January 2017	1 st of January 2019	1 st of January 2021	1 st of January 2022	Source
Number of BIPs in the country	579013	579013	585820	594169	Asked for specific statistics from Statistics Sweden. The category BIP includes those who received residency permit on the grounds of protection, and exclude those who came to/reunited in Sweden as a family member.
Share of BIPs among non-citizens	23.7% (Total foreign citizens: 897336/total BIPs without Swedish citizenship: 212910)	21.7% (Total foreign citizens: 940580/total BIPs without Swedish citizenship: 204178)	20.7% (Total foreign citizens: 905323/total BIPs without Swedish citizenship: 187330)	19.2% (Total foreign citizens: 880826/total BIPs without Swedish citizenship: 168925)	
Share of BIPs among the whole population	5.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.7%	

2. Legal framework for BIPs' integration

	Information about the situation in the country	Useful links
Crucial documents	Bill: Newly arrived immigrants labour market integration (Prop. 2009/10:60) https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2009/11/prop.-20091060/	

	<p>Bill: A new regulatory framework for newly arrived immigrants' integration in the labour market and society. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2017/04/prop-201617175/</p> <p>Bill: A common responsibility for receiving newly arrived (Prop. 2015/16:54) https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2015/11/prop-20151654/?msckid=44546ffec61a11ec880c3626a27f5381</p>	
Institutions responsible for integration	<p>Ministry of Employment Ministry of Justice Swedish Public Employment Service The County Administrative Boards Local municipalities</p>	
Information on Integration Programmes	<p>Etableringsprogrammet (The introduction Programme) 24 months Provision of necessary training and education to learn Swedish and find employment.</p>	<p>https://arbetsformedlingen.se/other-languages/english-engelska/extra-stod/stod-a-o/etableringsprogrammet</p>

National research and data availability – conclusions & recommendations

Bulgaria

In the period 2016-2021, Bulgaria did not manage to develop an effective integration system for beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs). It developed targeted policies (Ordinance on the terms and procedures for concluding, enforcing and terminating the integration agreement of beneficiaries of international protection). However, it did not appoint a responsible coordination body, it did not secure funding for the planned measures, it did not develop capacity at the local level (as local level authorities are responsible for implementing this policy), and it did not implement a national- or local-level communication campaign to prepare the local communities to support the two-way integration process. As a result, most BIPs' integration activities in the country have been organized by civil society organizations with EU and international funding. In the reported period, there have not been many legal or policy changes and the situation remained almost the same. Although a negative step with a national significance has been adopting the latest National Strategy of Migration 2021-2025. The previous document was titled National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (2015-2020), however, the word "Integration" has been deleted from the title of the new document.

Recommendations:

- [\[mainstreaming\]](#) Assign a national coordinating body responsible for the implementation of the Ordinance on the terms and procedures for concluding, enforcing and terminating the integration agreement of beneficiaries of international protection.
- [\[mainstreaming\]](#) Provide financial resources for the programme implementation.
- [\[mainstreaming\]](#) Create a transparent monitoring system of the whole process.
- [\[building bridges\]](#) Train and motivate the local authorities to implement this policy at the local level, possibly with the support of experienced civil society organizations.
- [\[building bridges\]](#) Develop national- and local-level communication campaigns to promote the two-way integration process, counter discrimination, xenophobia and hate speech.

Data availability & recommendations:

Data related to BIPs' integration in Bulgaria is either difficult to obtain or non-existent. They all needed to be specifically requested from various institutions in accordance with the Access to Public Information Act which envisions extensive waiting periods (14 days + additional 10 days in cases "the information requested is in large quantity and additional time

is needed for its preparation”). In many cases, the response was that the respective institution does not collect such information.

- All relevant institutions should collect various data related to BIPs and their integration, use it and make it available for further analysis, policy recommendations and eventually policy development,
- Include this data in relevant annual state reports to illustrate the progress made.

Czechia

In general, the situation in the field of BIPs’ reception and integration was largely static in the monitored period. There have been several changes and adjustments which certainly deserve to be mentioned, although none of them constitute a major change. Alternatively, it is still too early to assess how effective and successful these changes have been. For example, since 2021, there has been a new system of language education for the children of foreigners, based on intense courses provided by schools designated by the regional administrations. Besides language education, there has been progress in the area of social orientation courses (new framework, new study materials), although, at the moment, BIPs’ awareness of the programme’s availability remains questionable. As for the strongest dimensions, we assess that social area/welfare should be mentioned – the financial help provided to the BIPs in the first stages after the reception is generally adequate, enables decent living conditions and makes a solid foundation for people’s progress towards future independence in terms of accommodation, work etc. At least in the context of Central Europe, the extent of Czech language courses provided under the Integration Program is also relatively generous. Although there are no systemic gaps, language learning needs further improvements. More attention should be paid to psychological help for the BIPs, especially shortly after the reception.

Recommendations:

- The new version of the Policy for the Integration of Foreign Nationals – the only truly strategic document in the area of foreigners’ integration – should elevate the category of BIPs, as currently this group is included only additionally.

As concerns specific areas of reception and integration:

- living conditions in the residential centres must be improved,
- the availability of psychological and psychotherapeutic help/assistance, especially in the reception and residential centres, should be improved significantly,
- the processes of qualification and education recognition should be more transparent; situations where decisions depend on individual officials must be eliminated,

- the government should pay more attention to the level of knowledge about BIPs' rights among both administrative workers (labour office etc.), and private employers.

Data availability & recommendations:

Unfortunately, only the most basic data from the Ministry of Interior are publicly accessible; in most other cases, they are accessible on special request only. Success then depends on the willingness of individual officials to provide them. Another problem is that the data are usually only available in a disaggregated form and obtaining the aggregated version is very difficult and/or expensive. This job is often provided by a third party only. In several areas (education, entrepreneurship, building bridges), relevant data are virtually nonexistent. Last but not least, data are neither collected nor analyzed systematically under the State Integration Program. As a result, very little is known about the clients after they leave the programme.

- the process of providing data by the ministries should become more transparent
- much more data should be collected and analyzed under SIP

France

Integration policy for BIPs has seen positive developments over the last six years. For many years, efforts focused on the asylum procedure but following the election of President Macron, there was a new impetus on refugee integration, mostly at the policy level. These led to improvements in terms of residency, more targeted integration programmes, more reception places for asylum seekers and BIPs as well as increased funding, including for NGO projects. It is to be noted, however, that other measures mostly targeted at asylum seekers had a negative effect.

Progress has led to rather efficient piloting of refugee integration policies and improved mainstreaming. While more mainstreaming is needed in the asylum field, the inter-ministerial approach has enabled more multi-stakeholder cooperation and the development of innovative programmes. France also strengthened residency rights for BIPs, including subsidiary protection holders.

On the other end of the spectrum, progress still needs to be made to strengthen BIPs' access to employment. This dimension is closely linked to language learning and professional training: pilot projects boasting an integrated approach have demonstrated a positive impact. Another important gap relates to the difference in assistance and services provided to asylum seekers and BIPs who benefit from state-funded housing and those who do not.

Recommendations:

- **Starting integration from day 1:** integration measures should be designed to start as soon foreigners arrive in the country so as not to delay autonomy and finding a job once people receive their protection status. It means, among others, providing language courses and access to new technologies during the asylum procedure.
- **Establish inter-ministerial piloting of asylum and integration policies:** mainstreaming should be strengthened by transferring the management of these policies under the Prime Minister's office rather than the Ministry of Interior.
- **Facilitate access to employment:** asylum seekers should have access to the labour market, and obstacles to accessing jobs could be reduced by improving the recognition of skills and qualifications.
- **Lifting unnecessary administrative barriers:** to ensure effective access to rights, it is necessary to harmonise local practices and better inform agents.

Data availability & recommendations:

Specific data on refugees are not available or scarce in France. Once asylum seekers are granted protection status, they fall, for most issues, under policies developed for all third-country nationals or the general population. While some statistics are available on third-country nationals, disaggregated data on BIPs/non-BIPs rarely exist and hardly any data makes the distinction between the different forms of protection. The main issue relates more to the type of data being compiled than its access.

Administrative institutions providing services to BIPs should collect specific data on them, even if they provide services to a larger population.

It would be useful to develop data and indicators related to BIPs and other foreigners' integration, which would be used by public administration to produce more regularly publications based on those indicators. Data on BIPs could also be shared more regularly and easily with civil society actors.

Greece

The EU-Turkey Agreement (2016) which formalised the closing of the Balkan Route, trapping 55000 refugees in Greece, has been the event that marked the background of Greek integration strategies of the last years. The reception capacities of Greece have generally proved insufficient to handle the inflow of migrants and refugees. In terms of integration policies, it was the same. The fact that Greece did not have a comprehensive national integration strategy until 2022 (the previous government's 2019 plan did not come into force because of the change of the government) perfectly reflects the bumpy road that Greece has been transiting during these years.

Therefore, Greece may have had a positive evolution in some key areas such as housing, but this was accomplished through a succession of programmes (ESTIA, ESTIA 2 and HELIOS) implemented thanks to the funding and efforts of the EU and UNHCR. The same can be said when it comes to access to employment, which remains a complicated matter. As of late 2021, less than 33% of the refugee resident adult population (approx. 16,099 out of 28,356) had managed to obtain a tax number, and even fewer of the residents above 15 years old had managed to obtain an unemployment card from the Greek Manpower Agency - OAED (10.57%) in Greece. In fact, it is often easier for refugees to open small businesses as a means of income than to find a job. Greece has experienced some improvements in the area of education, especially in the area of enrolment but COVID complicated this positive line. There has been some improvement as well in the protection of the rights of the infants in the so-called hotspots in the Aegean islands and the living conditions of the refugees in these centres. Still, a clear integration "path" remains to be drawn in Greece.

Recommendations:

- [\[maintreaming\]](#) Implement the recently adopted National Integration Strategy to encompass all the spheres of integration. Apart from having been underfinanced, they have suffered from a lack of a consistent plan that could draw a horizon for integration for migrants and refugees that has been absent until now.
- [\[Housing\]](#) [Residency] Urgently improve access to housing and residency as fundamental problems for integration - the lack of a basic consistent material ground for integration relates especially to housing conditions and the access to residency permits necessary to access any sort of social benefit.
- [\[Employment\]](#) Implement a specific policy of labour market integration for BIPs. Even though the general labour precarity in Greece does not help - BIPs' path to the Greek labour market, it is almost an entelechy starting by the access to the tax number.

Data availability & recommendations:

In Greece, there is very little data available. Statistical data is aggregated and limited only to the number of decisions on granted international protection but not on the population residing in Greece as such (statistical data concerning international protection is published by the Ministry of Migration on its website). The National Statistical Authority does not publish any data on BIPs. There is no available data on the results/effectiveness of integration policies.

The lack of data could be rectified through the drafting and publication of evaluation reports (both for each project implemented as well as evaluation based on the opinion of BIPs themselves).

On the other hand, the Ministry through a collaboration with the municipal authorities can proceed to a mapping of BIPs in each area and the publication of progress reports on all projects being implemented on the local level.

Hungary

In 2015, the government declared a crisis caused by mass immigration, which has since been extended every six months. A border fence was built on the southern borders of Hungary, and the so-called transit zones were set up, where asylum seekers had to apply for asylum. Public opinion was tuned against refugees by billboard campaigns, referendums, and the so-called Stop Soros Act. The integration agreement was abolished and NGOs were cut off from EU funds. In 2020, following a ruling by the European Court of Justice, the government closed the transit zones and made it virtually impossible to apply for asylum in Hungary.

Hungary adopted a Migration Strategy in 2013 but its provisions have been disregarded since 2016. The aims included intercultural education, support for the higher and adult education of refugees, provision of Hungarian language training and recognition of their qualifications obtained abroad. It called for special programmes to help refugees integrate into the labour market and support their housing. Unfortunately, almost nothing has been achieved for these purposes. The objectives of the 2013 Migration Strategy are therefore still relevant and would still be much needed to implement.

The two most crucial policy areas are labour market integration and housing.

Concerning the labour market, there are no state programmes to help refugees find employment. Three areas have emerged that could contribute in general to a more successful integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the labour market:

- organizing targeted, state-supported Hungarian language courses,
- providing the opportunity to participate in some form of training or retraining,
- the possibility of recognizing skills and competencies (not only formal, documented qualifications should be recognized, but their existing skills should be recognized or qualified under an accelerated procedure).

Concerning housing, there are no state programmes either. It would be necessary for the central and/or the local government to provide financial support through housing programmes to those in need. These subsidies should primarily finance the social acquisition of property by assisting organizations and local governments, as well as the implementation of the housing lease organized by the organizations.

The findings and recommendations of the NIEM project are based on the status quo before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The integration of refugees arriving from Ukraine to Hungary, and their specific needs must be assessed and, if different from what the NIEM research identified, should be articulated properly by advocacy groups and NGOs.

Recommendations:

The objectives of the 2013 Migration Strategy are still relevant and would still be much needed to implement. In specific:

- [mainstreaming] elaborate and adopt a national Integration Strategy,
- [education] [language learning] provide intercultural education and complex support of public, higher and adult education of refugees, including Hungarian language training,
- [vocational training] facilitate the recognition of refugees' qualifications obtained abroad,
- [housing] [employment] design and implement special programmes to help refugees integrate into the labour market and support their housing,
- [building bridges] monitor public attitude towards BIPs and research the reasons for xenophobia in more detail.

Data availability & recommendations:

In Hungary, approx. a quarter of the 168 NIEM indicators are unavailable. There is particularly little data related to family reunification and citizenship procedures, employment, housing and health.

There is no data because:

- certain data types are not registered at all,
- low sample size (due to protection against disclosure, data will not be published so that individuals cannot be identified),
- a lot of data is put on paper during the legal procedure, but then is only stored in the public administration subsystems without being processed.

If we want to better understand the situation of BIPs in Hungary, it would be necessary to:

- examine the topic through targeted research projects involving the relevant municipalities,
- collect, analyze and publish the existing but unprocessed data by government agencies,
- establish a statistical population register, taking into account the specific characteristics of beneficiaries of international protection.

Italy

The main normative changes regard asylum seekers. Indeed, while they were excluded from reception facilities in 2019, they are now accommodated in the same facilities addressed to BIPs, depending on their availability and with limited access to the integration services. In addition, changes occurred regarding the recognition of protection for those who do not have the requirements to obtain international protection. Before 2018 they were addressed with humanitarian protection, but this status has been cancelled. In 2020 a new law provided new statuses able to give protection also to people excluded by the asylum system but, somehow, in danger of their lives.

Even if there are many challenges to face, the strongest dimensions of integration in Italy regard access to the labour market and access to the health system. Indeed, people hosting in the reception facilities are supported in finding a job also through training courses, if necessary. The effort in aiming the goal is on the operators' shoulders. It would be necessary to increase interventions to increase the linkage with the labour market systems. Often, the employment paths offered to BIPs are not planned on the specific know-how or the expectations of BIPs. Relating to health rights, in Italy, all migrants besides their statuses receive primary care. Nonetheless, there are issues to solve specifically as far as the BIPs' mental state is concerned.

Recommendations:

- Involving also Italian citizens and other migrants in BIPs' integration paths
- Involving more the employers in planning integration of BIPs in the labour market
- Supporting new ways for increasing the match between the labour market needs and BIPs know-how and expectations.
- Improving the presence of cultural mediators in hospitals, even more in case of psychological or psychiatric issues
- Focusing on improving the concrete autonomy of BIPs during their stay in the reception facilities

Data availability & recommendations:

On the source of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, Eurostat makes available the data on the flow of asylum seekers in Italy every month and distinguished by sex, age group and citizenship. It is crucial to underline that there is a gap of about 4 months back between the available data and the current situation. The results of the asylum applications, always distinguished by sex, age group and citizenship, are provided annually also distinguishing between refugee status, subsidiary protection status, humanitarian or special protection status, and denial. The total number of asylum applications for each year differs from the subsequent outcomes of these requests because each application needs time to be examined

by the Territorial Commissions. Therefore the outcome is deferred in time relating to the date of the application. Until a few months ago, monthly data on asylum applications were easily available and accessible free of charge on a dashboard of the Ministry of the Interior, where now there are only annual summaries with all the subdivisions by sex, age group, citizenship and outcome: <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/documentazione/statistica/i-numeri-dellasilolo>. Now they are no longer present there, but the Ministry of the Interior still communicates the data to Eurostat, which makes them available within its very large data warehouse freely accessible <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>, with English language definitions and having to more laboriously select "Tables by themes" -> "Population and social conditions" -> "Migration" -> "Asylum", where various tables of data are located. Knowing the URLs, for example on monthly requests <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00189/default/table?lang=en> or on the results <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00193/default/table?lang=en>, and the respective codes, other tables of data can be directly viewed by simply changing the last three digits of the code "tps00193".

However, all these data are flow data (monthly or annual) and they do not provide stock information on the actual presence of BIPs at a given date, since in the meantime each legal-administrative condition changes over time and the migrants themselves may no longer be present in Italy. Stocks at a certain annual date (e.g. 1 January) are estimated on the basis of the flows of applications, the waiting periods of the outcomes and durations of the different types of permits (refugees, subsidiary, humanitarian) once they are obtained, and also of a portion of migrants who leave Italy or are no longer BIPs for a modification of the residence permit.

All valid permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship on 31 December of each year are given with a longer delay (almost two years) by Eurostat data, with distinction by reason, length of validity and citizenship (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_RES_VALID_custom_2631414/default/table?lang=en).

Ministry of the Interior counts data adding month by month, year by year the asylum applications or the outcomes by sex, age group, citizenship and outcome. Therefore, in this way, the results that derive are necessarily flow results (monthly or annual). To have stock data it would be necessary to store on a matrix of data the personal data of each migrant within the record track the significant dates: date of the asylum request, date of the outcome of the asylum request with the possible transformation of the legal-administrative status into a refugee, subsidiary protection, humanitarian protection and consequent expiry of the permit (six months for humanitarian protection, etc.), etc. In this way, by extrapolating the data to a certain date, it would be possible to have the punctual data (net of unreported emigration, status changes or deaths) of the BIPs divided by the personal data of the same

migrants registered within the matrix. (We still have these results from Eurostat but with a delay of almost two years.)

A simpler recommendation would be to provide within the national dashboard, in addition to synthetic data, also data as present in the Eurostat format, therefore with the possibility of queries and custom tables in output.

Latvia

There was some progress in the development of the BIP integration system in 2016-2019, exemplified by the adoption of the Action Plan for Movement and Admission in Latvia of Persons who Need International Protection serving as a basis for BIP integration. Yet the period of the second evaluation, 2019-2021, was one of stagnation, followed by important changes introduced in 2021–2022. These include the establishment of a national coordinating institution for socioeconomic inclusion of BIPs, the elimination of inequality between RRs and BSPs in terms of their eligibility for state social support, and a half-shorter period (3 months) before asylum seekers can start working while still awaiting decisions on their asylum applications. NIEM advocacy had an impact on all of these developments.

Currently, the strongest points of the integration system are 1) assistance of social workers and social mentors to asylum seekers for 3 months and to BIPs for 12 months after receiving the status of international protection; 2) targeted job-seeking support to BIPs.

Among the dimensions requiring most intervention are housing, building bridges, and mainstreaming. In addition, immediate steps should be taken to improve the assessment of special reception needs and introduce support measures to vulnerable BIPs, to untie social assistance from the requirement for a registered place of residence, to remove hurdles in the recognition of non-EU education and qualifications, and to widen language-learning opportunities for BIPs.

Recommendations:

- Improve the mainstreaming of integration activities across the relevant policy fields and different sectors of government and enhance the coordination of integration activities with the help of the new national coordinating institution (Society Integration Foundation).
- Develop targeted housing support to BIPs by recognising them as one of the target groups in the National Housing Strategy, possibly introducing a specific initial housing benefit to BIPs, setting up a state/municipal guarantee fund for property-owners renting out their properties to BIPs, and developing social housing and other intermediate housing solutions.
- Cancel the requirement for a registered place of residence as a precondition for all types of social support.

- Transfer the social mentorship service offered to BIPs to municipalities so as to mainstream the integration support at the municipal level.
- Extend the duration of the social mentor's service from 12 months to 24 months, making the provision of the mentor's support in the latter 12 months subject to an assessment by a social worker.

Data availability & recommendations:

Data are available on all NIEM dimensions, yet they are incomplete. E.g. there are data on the number of BIPs –RRs and BSPs– in the country, yet information is lacking on some age groups. Considering intense secondary movement, no data are available on the number of BIPs *actually* living in the country.

There are insufficient data on how many BIPs complete the language and integration courses provided for TCNs, as the course providers do not gather information on the legal status of participants. Insufficient data are available on the results of language exams taken by BIPs upon the completion of language courses.

Data gathering is done by several government bodies, with data mostly available upon request to the institutions.

- Consolidate the data gathering under one body and in a unified database;
- Refine data on different age groups and categories of BIPs residing in the country over a longer period of time, and on the results of integration support measures (language and integration courses, educational and employment support etc.).

Lithuania

The NIEM results show that Lithuania has an adequate legal base for BIPs' integration, yet still faces difficulty in enforcing the integration policies, with most of the challenges observed in the field of implementing the strategic (long-term) objectives of BIPs' integration and making an effort aimed at participation and involvement of the receiving society.

The problem remains that integration measures are being implemented within the framework of different projects. This does not provide flexibility in adapting the foreseen integration measures to the individual needs of BIPs, as well as to the unplanned external factors (e.g. COVID-19). It also does not ensure their continuity. In addition, there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the foreseen integration measures.

Regarding the developments in the legal framework of the integration of BIPs, the key changes are related to the legal harmonisation of the rights of persons who were granted refugee status and subsidiary protection in the Republic of Lithuania. Until 2017, foreign

nationals under subsidiary protection were in a much more vulnerable position due to temporary residence permit in the RL and they had been denied certain social guarantees.

In addition, on January 1, 2020, amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens entered into force granting asylum seekers the right to work if within 6 months from the date of submitting the application for asylum, the Migration Department failed to make a decision to grant him/her asylum in the Republic of Lithuania, through no fault of the asylum seeker.

Recommendations:

- Develop implementation of the strategic (long-term) objectives of BIPs' integration and monitoring of how the foreseen measures are being implemented in practice.
- Improve BIPs civic and political participation by implementing regular and formal consultations at the local and national levels. Take into account their needs and interests and support the establishment of migrant communities and NGOs and their advocacy activities.
- Improve BIPs access to healthcare by providing information about their entitlements in different languages; improve the provision of culturally sensitive mental healthcare services by increasing availability in different languages and/or offering professional interpretation services.
- Improve language learning programmes adjusted to the individual capacities and needs of BIPs.
- Take steps to eliminate prejudice towards migrants and refugees: organise state-funded awareness campaigns, provide educational programmes, launch mass media projects, allocate sufficient funding, etc.

Data availability & recommendations:

Migration data collection practices in the country are still limited to the national immigration figures based on the legal status of the arriving persons and their countries of origin. There is a lack of information on the BIPs educational qualifications, employment and family status, age, socioeconomic status, etc. There is also no mechanism that would allow to trace and systematically process data on BIPs integration through longitudinal research.

- Develop a systematic tool that would provide comprehensive statistical data on socio-demographic characteristics of BIPs living in the country (there is already quite a good example of the statistical data on refugees from Ukraine <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/ukraine-dashboards>),
- Implement longitudinal research on BIPs integration.

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, there have not been many developments throughout the research conducted as part of the NIEM project. The major developments actually occurred either prior to conducting the research or after the conclusion of the research. In that sense, most importantly, a new legal framework for integration has been adopted in the Netherlands. It changes the narrative on integration from an individual effort of the BIP to a collective effort of the society. By reinforcing the role played by the municipality, BIPs should be better guided throughout the integration trajectory. By amending the integration trajectories, and encouraging BIPs to start working from the outset, they should be able to at least partially close the gap in the Dutch labour market.

The Netherlands score moderately well in most dimensions. The few dimensions that stand out are residency, housing and health. Some dimensions where the Netherlands score poorly are citizenship, language learning and social orientation.

Recommendations:

The three main issues that were identified in the research are:

- the integration approach of the Dutch government, which heavily relies on the own responsibility and self-reliance of BIPs, does not seem to be working in practice.
- the second challenge, which is connected to the first, is that many BIPs have difficulties finding their way within the complex integration system.
- [\[employment\]](#) a great distance to the labour market for BIPs.

These challenges are addressed, and will hopefully be remedied, by the introduction of the Wet inburgering 2021. Instead of emphasising the own responsibility of the BIP, the role played by the municipality is enhanced to guide the BIP through the integration procedure better.

Data availability & recommendations:

The Netherlands in general collects a lot of data that is publicly available and easily accessible online. This data is collected and made available by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). This data includes, for example, the number of foreigners living in the Netherlands, the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in the Netherlands, the number of residence permits issued, etc.

However, the Netherlands does not differentiate its data in close detail. For example, it does not differentiate between the residence permits that foreigners have residing in the Netherlands. This makes it impossible to assess how many refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or family members live in the Netherlands in total.

A major recommendation would be to differentiate the data based on the residence permit. This would allow for a more detailed analysis of the already available data that now is, unfortunately, too generic.

Poland

During the NIEM project period, no major developments were observed in the reception and integration policies in Poland, nor in the situation of BIPs. There is still no strategic approach towards integration policy, defined, for example, in a specific document, based on an appropriate diagnosis and including the mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation of proposed solutions, using among other things, information gathered from civil society actors and BIPs themselves. Such a strategy could be the result of intersectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation with a necessary representation of BIPs – which is currently greatly missing in designing policies for integration.

BIPs are mostly not perceived and distinguished as a specific group in most areas of state policy, being treated mostly as other citizens or, having been granted protection, as a broad group of migrants (e.g. in the field of education, citizenship). Without targeted support, this means seemingly equal opportunities in accessing different social services. With such an approach, the state is not able to track and evaluate the introduced solutions in the integration policy.

In Poland, the legal framework is relatively well developed (especially in the field of education, access to health or vocational training). However, the intersectoral cooperation and collaboration led by the state actors require major improvements.

Individual Integration Programme that covers different dimensions of the NIEM research (including social security, housing, language learning and social orientation, housing, employment) lasts only 12 months and needs to be revised – the offered resources (time, financial, staff) are not enough to support BIPs effectively in the first period of integration.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a strategic document that will define and set integration goals
- Change the approach into a more collaborative and inclusive debate on the integration policies, inviting different stakeholders of integration policies to the table, including representation of BIPs.
- Take into consideration the feedback from the group that integration policies concern, including BIPs.
- Revise the framework of Individual Integration Programme in the law, and at least a) the current period of 12 months should be prolonged and be rather be result-oriented b) the offered services and support (including financial mechanism) should enable BIPs to better integrate in the access to housing and language learning.

- Better organize language learning as a system at least for BIPs (integrating different actions that are provided at local levels with a centrally designed framework).

Data availability & recommendations:

- Polish government has not introduced a holistic and systemic national mechanism to gather and monitor data on integration. Data collection systems are fragmented among public institutions and most of the data are available upon a request submitted to them.
- Relatively detailed data can be obtained for people applying for international protection from the Office for Foreigners. After being granted protection, BIPs are treated in many areas as all other members of society and different categories of protection are not distinguished in the data collecting systems, which means that their integration process cannot be tracked. The exceptions are public services targeted to BIPs such as Individual Integration Programme. In this case, data are gathered but not as individual cases but aggregated for the whole group. Thus, data are often too general to monitor a given integration measure.
- It is recommendable to consider regulating data collecting at the legal level with distinguished special categories for beneficiaries of different types of protections and other data needs (introduced by law or directive).

Romania

Romania offers "equality on paper" for the beneficiaries of international protection. The general legislative framework is very generous. The refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection enjoy the same rights as Romanian citizens, except for electoral rights. On paper, the integration programme of up to 12 months is designed to facilitate smooth integration, including support for vocational education and access to the labour market.

In practice, the integration programme is rarely able to ensure the transition towards independent living, unless backed by the efforts of NGOs. The accommodation in the Reception Centres is minimal; the financial benefits are laughable, and the education and counselling services lack consistency.

The permanent structured dialogue is one of the missing ingredients for successful integration. The authorities see beneficiaries as subjects rather than as active participants in their own integration efforts.

Setting the legal framework is a strong point of the integration process. The implementation & collaboration step remains weak, and unfortunately, it became weaker during the implementation of the NIEM project. A stronger vision, improved cooperation, and more resources are needed to build solid content on a good legal framework.

Recommendations:

- Improved coordination. The institution responsible for the overall coordination of the immigration policies, and the implementation of the integration programme, is the General Immigration Inspectorate (GII), a structure of the Police. It is a secondary institution, lacking the vision and the influence needed for effectively involving other ministries and agencies. The coordination of the national policies on immigration should move to the centre of the government.
- Increased responsibilities for relevant ministries and agencies. Each component of the integration process requires the direct involvement of the specialized ministry, agency, or a local public authority. The NIEM research shows that the weakest dimensions of integration are those where the relevant institutions are not properly participating. Their responsibilities should be better defined and monitored.
- Structured dialogue. Migrants do not have any forms of permanent representation, for example, a Migrant Council or other forms of permanent structured dialogue. Human rights organizations are rarely consulted on issues related to migrant integration. Steps are needed to improve the permanent structured dialogue and to involve the beneficiaries in all decisions related to their future.

Data availability & recommendations:

The NIEM research has shown that Romania is facing significant data gaps related to migration, including the situation of BIPs. The authorities collect limited data. There is no regular effort to collect disaggregated data, not even on the main socio-demographics dimensions (gender, age, country of origin, cultural group etc.). Data on vulnerable persons is missing entirely.

The existing data is not published regularly, and it is only accessible through requests based on the FOI legislation. The data is not accessible in open formats.

No single institution is responsible for collecting and centralizing data from various sectors (such as education, labour market, health etc.). Researchers need to approach various institutions, and then attempt to understand and link the data received from these institutions.

The lack of data, or the data gaps, is one of the crucial obstacles to understanding the area of migration, and it is negatively affecting the state's capacity to design a sound policy in this area. Significant improvements are needed, starting with a better vision of what data can and should be collected, and continuing with the adoption of internal procedures to identify, collect, use, and publish relevant data.

Slovenia

In the last six years, most of the legislative changes have brought negative consequences in the area of integration - stricter conditions, more limitations and curtailed rights. One positive change concerns family reunification. The 2021, an amendment to the International Protection Act added another family member to the list: "a minor sibling of the applicant, if unmarried" (Art. 2). Before this change, unaccompanied children could only start the family reunification procedure for their parents and not their minor siblings.

The asylum procedure is too long; several asylum seekers in Slovenia have been in the procedure for more than six years.

Issues in the field of integration of BIPs in Slovenia are: housing (too expensive, discrimination, racism etc.), health care (insufficient doctors, long waiting queues), employment (BIPs report getting the same job offers, regardless of their education or experience) and language barrier (BIPs are entitled to 400-hour free language course, but the results are rather bad). However, the main issue is that integration in Slovenian policy as well as society is not perceived as a two-way process but as the assimilation of an individual. There is a gap between the legislation and policies in place on the one hand, and the implementation and cooperation of relevant stakeholders on the other. Integration is still very centralised and the local level is not included.

We noticed improvements in the integration support provided by the NGOs, however, good practices are short-term and project-based and thus not systemic solutions. One of the most positive sides of integration we could point to is education, especially the enrolment of BIP children in public kindergartens and primary schools very soon upon their arrival in Slovenia.

Recommendations:

- The integration support to BIPs should be prolonged from the current 2 years to at least 5 years.
- Local authorities and institutions should be actively included in the integration.
- [\[mainstreaming\]](#) A systemic solution for the interpretation of the needs of BIPs and other immigrants in different public services on a national and local level is needed.
- [\[language learning and social orientation\]](#) [\[reception\]](#) The state should fully include asylum seekers in the social orientation and the Slovene language programme. It would be beneficial not only for asylum seekers but also for the host society and the state as such.
- [\[language learning\]](#) Language courses should be tailor-made, illiterate persons should first attend a literacy course; groups of learners should be created based on their pre-knowledge; vulnerable groups should be identified, their potential difficulties in learning should be addressed, etc. Special attention should be given to women who

are mainly tasked with taking care of children and the household and consequently often miss out on language courses.

Data availability & recommendations:

Some data was easily available (number of asylum seekers and BIPs, positive and negative decisions etc.). However, most data on BIPs are very dispersed and not published. We had to contact various state institutions, NGOs, researchers etc. to obtain the data. And even though we contacted a wide spectrum of stakeholders, we were not able to gather all the requested data for the purpose of the NIEM research. Very often the response was that a certain institution does not collect data on BIPs or not in such details as requested.

It would be very helpful if the Office for Support and Integration of Migrants collected all the relevant data on BIPs (on their education, employment, living conditions, socio-economic situation, etc.) – while respecting the privacy of BIPs, of course.

Establish a data collection methodology to create research and analysis-based policies and legislative changes.

Establish a centralised data collection mechanism, with all the responsible institutions reporting the aggregated data they collect to OSIM.

Spain

Since 2017, the Spanish reception and integration system for asylum seekers and BIPs has gone through substantial changes to adapt its capacity to the increase in asylum applicants. This adjustment has been marked by a strong character of “emergency”: in part, due to the crises that the system had to face (e.g. in Ceuta and the Canary Islands), but also – and foremost – due to the approach of the policymaker.

At the end of 2021, the need for a change of the approach is even more evident. The new migratory dynamics call for a medium-long term approach that recognizes migration, and its component related to international protection, as structural dimensions of Spanish society. Despite an open legal framework, ensuring asylum seekers and BIPs a wide spectrum of rights and opportunities (i.e. the strongest dimension identified in the NIEM analysis), the Spanish reception system shows critical limits and gaps, including i) insufficient material and immaterial resources; ii) the lack of coordination and collaboration mechanisms with regional and local actors; iii) short-term funding for NGOs; iv) lack of monitoring and control mechanisms.

Recommendations:

- [mainstreaming] [building bridges] An effective model of governance of reception and integration, targeted at the needs of asylum seekers and BIPs requires:
- An updated, effective, and organic regulatory framework, including all EU directives relevant in the field of asylum, capable of linking the reception and integration of asylum seekers and BIPs to both migrant integration policies and the broader frame of public policies.
- Adequate material and immaterial resources (e.g. staff training) to deal with the diversity of backgrounds and needs of asylum seekers and BIPs; and better adapt the services, accordingly.
- The inclusion of regional and municipal actors in a wider multi-level governance model of reception and integration, based on a systematic mechanism of cooperation and planning.
- New medium and long-term funding mechanisms capable of ensuring better and more sustainable activities of NGOs.
- Monitoring and control mechanisms based on empirical evidence to protect the strengths of a system while addressing (and solving) its weaknesses.

Data availability & recommendations:

The only data systematically updated and publicly accessible are those regarding asylum applications (and the related socio-demographic characteristics of the applicants), provided by the Asylum and Refugee Office (Ministry of Interior). These also include details regarding different BIPs' categories. This said, crucial data gaps are observed regarding all the core dimensions of integration as well as regarding the functioning and efficacy of the national reception and integration system. This is particularly striking if we consider the relevance of the phenomenon of asylum in Spain over the last five years. The lack of data and empirical evidence on the state of the reception and integration system, its strengths and weaknesses, the degree of efficiency of its processes and the impact of the actions carried out, prevent the improvement of the system and its adjustment to BIPs' needs.

An effective reception and integration system inevitably requires reliable and updated data along with monitoring and control mechanisms, based on empirical evidence.

Sweden

In Sweden the NIEM researchers observed no significant negative or positive differences in the scoring between the period 2017 and 2021 except for a couple of changes.

The focus and strength of the Swedish integration policies for BIPs are in the areas of employment, through substantial investments in the BIPs' human capital. In addition to targeted support, the strategy is mainstreaming. Integration policies cover all areas of social development and are incorporated as part of all policy areas.

The area that Sweden needs to pay attention to is the gap between policy provisions and the potential outcome. Despite all the policies in place, and having prerequisites for successful integration, Sweden experiences an increasing gap between native-born and foreign-born population (where more than 50% are BIPs and their families) in the unemployment rate, and disparities in health, housing and educational inequality, to name a few. The lack of interaction between the host society and BIPs was pointed out by both BIPs and stakeholders as an area that requires urgent intervention.

Recommendations:

- [building bridges] Civil society organizations play an important role in bridge-building between the host society and refugees.
- [building bridges] Well-functioning regional and local collaboration that includes civil society organizations is crucial in filling the gap between policy implementation and the desired outcomes.
- [mainstreaming] A more systematic monitoring system should be established to improve the implementation of policy initiatives.

Data availability & recommendations:

Sweden has a very detailed data register, however, the access is limited (you would need to ask/purchase specific datasets from Statistics Sweden and the latest up-to-date statistics are not always delivered).

Other state organizations central to BIPs' integration do offer different kinds of statistics but they are never divided into the different statuses of BIPs, oftentimes only into the countries of birth. Moreover, it is not possible to combine these different sources of statistics. The statistics are also divided per year and not always available in terms of stock.

Comparative research summary & conclusions

NIEM evaluations prove that the quality of integration policies for beneficiaries of international protection vary widely across European countries, despite the standards set by the EU and international law. As the comparative report *The European benchmark for refugee integration. Evaluation 2: Comprehensive report* indicates: “2021 NIEM comparative results confirm previous findings since 2017 of countries offering very different levels of support to beneficiaries of international protection. Across all the 12 dimensions measured, the average distance between the highest and the lowest-scoring country is 59.4 points on a 0-100 scale. The widest margin is found in language learning and social orientation with 92.7 points separating the countries on the top and the bottom end of the results. Even in family reunification, the dimension with the smallest spread, 37.8 points lie between the highest and the lowest-scoring country.³” Even countries from one region e.g. the Visegrad countries with seemingly similar migration trajectory in 2015/16 and similar history of reception and integration policies of BIPs differ a lot between each other. A huge divergence among European countries regarding the integration of BIPs persists and is still valid. It cannot be overlooked, especially in the debates on standardizing asylum systems, that the Common European Asylum System which often focuses on reception, allocation of asylum seekers, solidarity and sharing responsibility, is missing the integration aspect. Integration should be also an important part of this debate as well as it should be perceived as a part of this system.

Another important conclusion is that over the past years, there was not a lot of real change in terms of policy reform in the countries participating in the research. Some positive and some negative development can be observed, however, cannot be perceived as a major change. Basically, it also means that not much has changed after the arrivals in 2015 and 2016, which creates a context for the situation and integration of people fleeing Ukraine after the Russian invasion on the 24th of February 2022. The EU countries cannot feel much better prepared for hosting new refugees (even with temporary protection status) than they were in the period of a big influx of asylum seekers in 2015/16. Most importantly, neglecting the lessons learnt will still affect the newcomers.

The NIEM project highlights not only the gaps but also the promising practices. Some positive developments could have been found due to different factors. One is the context, e.g. high numbers of beneficiaries of international protection which requires working on solutions and ideas for a change also from governments. Another factor is whether there is already a consultation framework in place. If governments do have the space to speak in a structured way with civil society or with local authorities, if there is a multilevel governance framework – it makes it possible to undertake common efforts for positive changes in reception and integration policies.

³ Wolffhardt A, Conte C, Yilmaz S, [The European benchmark for refugee integration. A comparative analysis of National Integration Evaluation Mechanism in 14 EU countries. Evaluation 2: Comprehensive report.](#) p. 18.

Among the assessed dimensions, building bridges - understood as the participation of BIPs in the receiving society - requires special attention, since it is assessed as the weakest for all. Different reasons can account for that, but it is important to understand that the challenge lies in the approach of the whole society's, not in creating integration policy mechanisms, putting in place a legal framework in the labour market field etc. The NIEM understands that whole society responds to the integration challenge or is responsible for the integration process. This means there is the need to open the space to see refugees not only as a target group but also as actors and co-creators of policies which affect them. That also requires the openness to take seriously the feedback from refugees and implement it into the evaluation mechanisms.

Looking at different types of indicators, those referring to collaboration and implementation show the weakest results in comparison to the legal policy indicators. That is also where it can be checked if governments take integration seriously, since this is about the commitment and making an effort to work together with other stakeholders especially local authorities and, as mentioned above, the representations of BIPs.

With complex data sets required for analysis, the NIEM brings also conclusions on data on integration. Concerning the availability of data, the difference in data availability between countries can be surprising, also regarding what data governments collect, how they administrate them, and what is being published or not published. Some countries are quite open to inquiries about data on integration while in others, it is impossible due to different reasons. In some cases data are not collected at all, thus even governments do not have them available, in other cases, governments do have data but are extremely reluctant to share them. Data availability works well e.g. in Sweden and the Netherlands. But this also depends on data collecting tradition and register systems – whether they are well integrated or dispersed. Therefore data traditions in different countries and what concerns the openness of governments to be transparent are the main factors of availability of data on integration.

Regarding further challenges on data, different categories of beneficiaries of international protection are often not distinguished in the data system so data cannot be aggregated separately for a given status of protection (e.g. recognized refugees, persons with subsidiary protection, persons with humanitarian protection, etc.). This affects the possibility of tracking potential differences in the integration of these different groups and makes it impossible to evaluate how specific integration instruments are used by the groups with specific legal access (e.g. in the case of language courses).

Finally, there are some important aspects of integration that cannot be tracked and analysed though are crucial for the integration system work, such as resources – especially financial, but also staff. It seems to be particularly difficult to estimate such information, which means that most EU states do not know how much they invest in the integration of beneficiaries of international protection within different spheres of social life.

Advocacy & the role of BIPs in advocacy work

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the NIEM coalition-building process established a structure in the coalitions in strategic and essential areas for the integration of refugees. It extended the domain of stakeholders and operational partners on national and local levels. The NIEM advocacy established a people-centric approach for cooperation amongst stakeholders from different fields to create a supportive environment for refugee integration.

The NIEM advocacy experience contributed to:

- **Sensitizing the local authorities** to the opportunities for refugee integration on a local level. This emphasizes the chances for growth and benefits from cooperation and partnership with NGOs. The main results include projects for refugee integration developed and implemented jointly by municipalities and NGOs.
- **Creating a network of NGOs** that are directly or potentially involved in the process of refugee integration. The results included creating and implementing refugee integration initiatives, activities and mainstreaming refugees in the relevant projects and programmes managed by NGOs.
- The NIEM collation development process resulted in the formation of the Association of Teachers of Bulgarian as a Foreign Language.
- **Reinforcing the cooperation with refugee-led structures** by inviting them to participate efficiently in the different thematic coalitions.
- **Establishing strategic cooperation with academic institutions** for the preparation of the next generation of experts working in the field of refugee protection and integration.

The NIEM advocacy process included the representative participation of refugee NGOs, refugee-led structures and refugee leaders. The NIEM advocacy method adopted and used an inclusive approach to stimulate refugees to express their opinion, be proactive and self-initiate advocacy.

- The NIEM advocacy interventions outlined and mapped the refugee-led initiatives countrywide and created a bridge for cooperation between the different entities and activities.
- The NIEM advocacy process, through the Refugee Advisory Board, developed the capacity of the refugee-led initiatives for more efficient and result-oriented advocacy.
- The NIEM advocacy practice outlined to stakeholders the importance and benefits of refugee participation in the refugee integration decision-making process.

Czechia

With hindsight, building and maintaining the coalition in the form of stakeholders' meetings must in itself be considered a success. In the course of the project's duration, over 40 experts, representing 20 different institutions participated in regular round-table events, discussing the issue of BIPs' integration from multiple angles. While bringing together representatives from NGOs, municipalities and academia is not a big problem as such, persuading higher-level state officials to share their perspective can be more difficult as their attitude towards specifically the NGO sector is wary at best. In this manner, NIEM meetings have helped to bridge, at least partially, a long-term and harmful gap, which exists in the national debate about the BIPs' integration. Crucially, over the years, a basic level of trust seems to have been built between several of the state and non-state actors – at least in terms of communication, if not direct cooperation – and there is a broad consensus that the meetings can, and should continue in the near future. If there is a lesson learned, it is that the success of the meetings depends on how professionally they are prepared, and which format is chosen. In Czechia, facilitated round tables, using the Chatham House Rule, appear to have been a good choice.

The BIPs' perspective was introduced indirectly, but consistently, through inputs from stakeholders working with refugees on a daily basis. In this way, the BIPs' voices were amplified by several NGOs, integrated under the umbrella of the so-called Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations, representatives of several municipalities, and an organizational section of the Ministry of the Interior, responsible for providing integration services for the BIPs.

France

NIEM-related advocacy work was integrated into France Terre d'Asile's general advocacy on integration. FTDA has contributed to putting integration issues on the political agenda in France, as this has been one of the main activities of the organisation for the past 20 years.

Recommendations from the second national report, as well as focus groups on specific categories of BIPs (e.g. women, young people) have served to influence the State in developing ad hoc programmes or policies. For instance, FTDA has been advocating for many years, with partners, for the need to offer a solution to BIPs under the age of 25 who are not eligible for welfare support and have difficulty accessing social housing. The government opened more reception places for this group of BIPs and funded employment programmes dedicated to them.

In addition, in 2021 the government published a Vulnerability Action Plan, which takes on a number of recommendations expressed by FTDA, included in NIEM reports and coalition meetings. FTDA was involved in the working groups on the drafting of the Action Plan.

In order to gather evidence-based research, both for publications and advocacy, BIPs' perspectives were collected mainly through focus groups. In addition, when possible, BIPs with expert knowledge on the discussed topics were invited to participate or present during national coalition meetings.

Yet, refugee participation remains limited in France - it still has to be developed in NGO and public authorities' practices and it faces various obstacles such as the language barrier and the cost of interpretation as well as the difficulty to reach out to BIPs who have been present for many years.

Greece

Coalition meetings have been a suitable ground for the creation of networks between different groups that are central in the processes of integration but are often apart. Here, we are thinking about connecting governmental bodies with different support groups but also connecting professionals from different jobs and disciplines who provide services (psychologists, lawyers, social workers, academics) in the integration process with the direct experiences of the BIPs, which they face in their daily lives, as expressed directly by them.

Another aspect illuminated by the coalition meetings that is of great value is showing the perspectives of the vulnerable groups themselves that otherwise would have remained hidden. This is the case of a coalition meeting in which we brought refugee women who have been living in Greece for some time to tell us about their experiences, the problems they faced in the camps and the different obstacles they had to overcome often because of multiple discrimination.

The organisation of the coalition meetings evolved towards a more "experience-based" activity since during these years we realised that the connection between analytical research and government-directed action, despite its important task to build networks and to inform the authorities, did not give voice to the BIPs themselves. Furthermore, the last coalition meeting, such as the one held among imams of different origins, served to connect communities which share the same interests but are disconnected and often in a vulnerable position.

We tried to involve BIPs in our coalition meetings in order to learn about their perspective. We tried to place their personal experiences in the centre of the meetings and not as an "auxiliary" example of a larger discussion. Their experiences were introduced within a framework of discussion in which nothing was pre-determined, a moderator introduced the topics and asked questions arising from their experiences in order to expand their reflections.

Nonetheless, it has been challenging to bring BIPs to coalition meetings sometimes because of the language barrier and on other occasions because of their housing situation (living in camps far away from the cities).

Hungary

In Hungary, the weakness of institutions and inter-institutional coordination in the social sphere and the difficult access to many institutions and services have a negative effect on the integration of the forcibly displaced. It is so because funding for such institutions is low, the political context is hostile, and the service-providing structures are in a difficult situation.

Coalition meetings provided an opportunity for networking and information exchange in an unfavourable policy environment, so NGO representatives and practitioners could meet and discuss topics related to social work, education etc. issues related to BIP integration.

A specific positive example is the series of coalition meetings focusing on unaccompanied minors within vulnerable groups. Enhanced cooperation started in the framework of the coalition meetings, as a result of which the exchange of information between the child protection institution, the guardianship authority and civil society actors became smoother in the day-to-day work.

The advocacy activities responded to the specific needs of BIPs by enhancing the capabilities of the service providers working with them. Coalition meetings and related information exchange were able to reach the majority of the refugee-specific organisations in Hungary.

Italy

The advocacy activity has been implemented mostly through coalition meetings. Indeed, it was possible to create a space where stakeholders, experts, and in some cases migrants shared their experiences and concerns. Specifically, Ismu chose to organise the coalition meetings by focusing, each time, on specific issues to be able to collect information and try to find possible solutions. Unfortunately, also because of the pandemic emergency, it was not possible to reach the institutional level. Nonetheless, we all think that keeping working together also through these moments of sharing is a crucial aspect of aiming to increase the integration processes for BIPs and migrants in general. Indeed, even if it is difficult in Italy to impact the political level through such activities, on the other hand, it is possible to achieve important results at the local level, in the field.

This is how Ismu valued the coalition meetings and its knowledge of the Italian system permitted the coalition meetings to be an important instrument for increasing the networking among NGOs and local institutions.

One of the outputs (the infographics) has been created together with people with a migrant background because the infographics want to be a relevant instrument for BIPs.

Ismu believes that these kinds of methodologies are the best way to achieve long-term results in Italy, hopefully even at the political national level. It was of help that each State had the opportunity to organise the meetings considering its context.

The most important participation of BIPs (or people with a migrant background) occurred in the last three coalition meetings. This was a choice made by Ismu based on each past coalition meeting's objective. Indeed, in the past, we focused on creating networking and facilitating the work of ONGs and experts. We wanted to share information with and gather inputs from these types of experiences. During the pandemic emergency, virtual coalition meetings have been organised. However, the last output, as said, has been planned and implemented with the support of people with a migrant background because we intend to offer them an instrument tailored to their needs.

It's possible to say that in some coalition meetings BIPs were the direct beneficiaries of the activities while in the last three meetings they were the principal actors.

Latvia

One of the biggest achievements of NIEM advocacy was the elimination of inequality between RRs and BSPs in their eligibility to state social benefits, a problem noted already in the Baseline Report and regularly brought in discussions with stakeholders.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the right to state social benefits was still determined by the type of residence permit, not the status of international protection. RRs as holders of permanent residence permits were entitled to state social benefits, including the one-time "Covid benefits" of 500 EUR for each child and 200 EUR to pensioners and persons with disability. BSPs as holders of temporary residence permits, however, were not entitled to any state social benefits (except maternity benefit), and thus could not receive "Covid benefits" either.

Adding to previous advocacy activities, a coalition of NGOs and the Ombudsman presented the case in one of the governmental meetings in the spring of 2021, which started the process of change. After several reminders from Ombudsman, amendments to the law on countering the consequences of Covid-19 were initiated and passed in December 2021, allowing BSPs to receive backdated "Covid benefits". Similar far-reaching amendments were later made to the law on state social benefits, making BSPs eligible for the same state social benefits as RRs from July 2023.

In another advocacy campaign, the NGO coalition successfully worked with the Ministry of Culture to get BIPs recognised as a separate target group for more integration measures in the 2022-2023 Plan for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society compared to the previous plan. The new plan also confirmed the participation of BIP representatives in the Consultative Council for Third Country Nationals.

Advocacy work was always driven by the perspective of BIPs, drawing on their comments and insights into problems and challenges experienced in their life in Latvia, which was provided, for example, during the focus group discussions.

Yet, BIPs were not directly involved in advocacy or coalition meetings. Their views were rather consolidated into “case descriptions” presented to the government officials, MPs and other stakeholders.

Direct involvement of BIPs in advocacy work had been difficult to ensure as Providus is not providing practical support to BIPs and thus relies on the connections made by other NGOs and often their descriptions of BIPs’ problems.

One of the lessons learned is the need to engage BIPs themselves in discussions on legislative and policy changes needed to improve their integration in Latvia.

Lithuania

In Lithuania, the NIEM national coalition was formed from stakeholders from different sectors: a) nongovernmental: Red Cross, Caritas; b) academia: Lithuanian Social Research Centre; c) governmental agencies: Refugee Reception Centre, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Security and Labour; d) international organizations: IOM Vilnius and UNHCR.

The national coalition members actively participated in consultations with public agencies regarding the preparation and endorsement of the "National Integration Action Plan (2018-2020)" that covers non-EU national migrants and BIPs. Partly as a result of NIEM advocacy actions, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, responsible for implementing the Plan, has formally established a "Commission to coordinate the implementation of the integration of foreign nationals" and included members of the national coalition in this commission. This can be viewed as one of the most significant achievements related to NIEM advocacy work.

In 2021, Lithuania and other neighbouring countries experienced an influx of irregular migration across the border of Belarus, which caused many challenges for the Lithuanian government. Its response in some cases was to disregard obligations to protect human rights and international legislation regarding migration. The national coalition members joined other NGO partners and, in an advocacy effort, prepared a joint letter to the European Commission, which had requested to prevent the unlawful activities towards asylum seekers and migrants. This joint letter was favourably received and replied to by a member of the European Commission, Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, who explained what instruments are being prepared for this and similar crises on the EU level.

At the beginning of the project, there was no formal organization of BIPs in Lithuania. Therefore, their involvement was manifested on individual basis, consulting with individual BIPs and encouraging them to establish a formal organization representing their interests.

At the end of 2019, a formal organization Refugee Council of Lithuania (RC) was established. Since then, the representatives of RC have participated in NIEM research by collecting data, organizing focus groups, and presenting research results at NIEM national events and coalition meetings.

Netherlands

The NIEM advocacy in the Netherlands was not very successful, which is due to several reasons. The most important reason is that the advocacy landscape in the Netherlands is already quite saturated, thus impeding our ability to carry out advocacy activities. Perhaps, if we had been more actively involved in the Dutch advocacy landscape early on during the project and if we had joined the efforts with others, we may have been more successful in our advocacy activities.

Nevertheless, we were able to organise some national coalition meetings. Thanks to our academic profile as a university, we managed to organise national events with the participation of students, academics and other stakeholders. During one of the national events aimed at dissemination, we presented the results of the NIEM project to students interested in (European) migration, other academics and local stakeholders. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were only able to organise a similar national event just once again and online. The Covid-19 pandemic, too, has hindered our advocacy activities.

In the Netherlands, BIPs were not involved in the advocacy work.

Poland

What the NIEM project in Poland brought to the public debates on refugee integration was establishing the Refugee Council for the NIEM project to position BIPs in the centre of discussions on integration policies, at least within the project. The purpose of establishing the Council was to strengthen the influence of people with refugee backgrounds in Poland on debates about the shape of the integration policies, their outcomes and changes to the policies, as well as to strengthen their influence on research on the integration of people applying for international protection and under protection, as this is the group that is affected by integration policy effects and research results being the reference for the policies.

Activists and community leaders with experience of forced migration, involved in actions for intercultural dialogue and integration, working mostly as integration advisors or assistants, intercultural mentors etc. were invited to the Council. Ten people were involved in the Council's work, representing different cultural groups of BIPs in Poland and different periods

of stay and integration. The value of the Council was also introducing the Council's members to each other (most of them did not know each other before) to create a common platform that could cooperate as a group and possibly continue their work after the project if they decide to.

Establishing the Council allowed us to take a more BIPs-driven approach towards the debate on integration policies in the project. The Council set up the agenda of the most urgent areas to discuss and to suggest introducing systemic changes - e.g. access to housing and health care were identified as priorities. Conclusions and recommendations from the internal discussions within the Council were then discussed during meetings with different stakeholders and decision-makers of a given area of integration. The results of discussions were summed up in policy briefs.

Since beneficiaries of international protection are the group that integration policies concern and affect, the IPA team tried to carry out the project considering the perspectives of BIPs on the NIEM national results and hence the Refugee Council for the NIEM project was established. That is why in the case of the project meetings with different groups of stakeholders (coalition meetings, national dissemination events) the voice of BIPs was represented by active community leaders - they commented on the research results, discussed areas of integration policies etc. An inclusive model of public debates on integration seems to be crucial for shaping relevant policies.

Romania

The NIEM project has had a major contribution to convening the civil society energies to strengthen the voice of human rights defenders and beneficiaries of international protection. The Coalition for the Rights and Migrants and Refugees (CDMiR – *Coaliția pentru Drepturile Migranților și Refugiaților*) did not exist at the beginning of the project. At the end of the NIEM project, CDMiR had 23 members (NGOs) and five supporters (UNHCR Romania and four academic institutions).

The Coalition is a recognized dialogue partner on all topics related to immigration. In the context of the war in Ukraine, the government announced six thematic groups to draft action plans for the integration of Ukrainian refugees: Education, Health, Employment, Housing, Vulnerable groups, Minors, and Children and Youth. The relevant ministry coordinates each working group, and it includes 1-2 civil society representatives. CDMiR nominated representatives in all groups, and the respective ministries accepted CDMiR's nominations.

During the NIEM project, the Coalition actively contributed to the public debates on the policies and legislation on migration. CDMiR submitted over 30 opinions and recommendations. Some examples of successful advocacy initiatives are: improvements of the legislation related to access to education submitted by CDMiR and accepted by the

Parliament (2019); better procedures for access to citizenship (2018); recommendations to the draft National Strategy on Immigration (2019) and the draft National Strategy on Social Inclusion (2020) accepted by the respective ministries.

Due to the relatively low number of BIPs and the absence of a structured dialogue framework, in most cases, beneficiaries of international protection have few opportunities to participate directly in the policy process in Romania.

One of the major objectives of CDMiR (the national coalition) was to empower the beneficiaries of international protection, and make their voices heard:

- at all national events, CDMiR invited BIPs and offered them the floor;
- the Coalition closely cooperated with an association of citizens born in different countries (due to the bureaucratic burden, BIPs have difficulties registering their own associations), and one of these associations is a member of the Coalition;
- most member organizations work with BIPs whenever possible.

Slovenia

Migration, asylum and integration were topics on which Peace Institute (PI) was already working before, however, with the NIEM project (and also some others, like Mipex, EWSI, etc.) we could say PI was consolidated as a key research institution in these fields in the country.

NIEM with its specific tool enabled us to carry out the first comprehensive holistic research on the integration of BIPs in Slovenia. Based on that we wrote three thorough national reports, which contain up-to-date and relevant data.

One of the very successful aspects of the NIEM research and advocacy work in Slovenia was our continuous contact with and inclusion of BIPs (in interviews, focus groups, public events, and coalition meetings, and we also strived to engage some BIPs as co-workers). We see this as extremely important, especially for a more than a 6-year project which focuses on BIPs.

We would say we were also quite successful with networking and building coalitions with all the most relevant stakeholders in this field which also helped with advocacy work raising awareness on the topic.

Despite consistent research, unfortunately, these have mostly not been used in policy-making and legislative change. We hope this will happen in the future. We will try to strengthen cooperation with institutions and we want them to see us as their ally in preparing the best possible policies. All of us have (or should have) a common goal, which is to improve the integration and inclusion of foreigners in Slovenian society and thus create a pleasant and functional social sphere for both the local population and immigrants.

PI has always followed the principle of inclusion of the target groups in research and advocacy work - "never about them, without them." In 2019 a translator and cultural mediator with a refugee background was engaged in the NIEM project, and this has given the project work a much-needed refugee perspective. In the last year of the project, the team introduced another (female) cultural mediator as we realised that a specific cultural mediator gives access to a specific population (having in mind either gender or religion or some other identity).

The cultural mediators have also assisted us at NIEM events, facilitating collaboration with the refugee community and their inclusion in advocacy and outreach work. We invited BIPs to national events as speakers. We also organized national coalition meetings with BIPs in order to maintain contacts, inform them about our work and follow up on the issues they were facing.

Spain

The advocacy work in Spain which proceeded in parallel to the research process proved to be successful and fruitful in several ways. Firstly, it developed trust in a coalition that, over the years, has grown significantly, coming to include the main actors and stakeholders in the field of asylum both at the national and local levels. This, on the one hand, has led to important meetings and events in which NIEM evaluations serve as the empirical basis for common policy reasoning (about the general situation of the reception system, but also focused on specific issues/challenges particularly relevant for stakeholders). On the other hand, it made it possible to generate new follow-up projects in coordination with some stakeholders, such as the survey on BIPs integration outcomes realized with UNHCR Spain. More generally, the advocacy work made it possible to place the NIEM research and insights within a broader debate on asylum seekers and BIPs' integration at public and media levels.

BIPs were not directly involved in our advocacy work.

Sweden

In Sweden, there is a widespread consensus on the importance of BIPs' reception and integration. The focus has been on establishing systematic intersectoral collaboration in conducting the NIEM research in order to disseminate the research output to the practitioners and stakeholders. We also actively exchanged experiences with two NIEM countries - Netherlands and Lithuania - in our international coalition building.

The Swedish team has, as part of coalition meetings, held several academic seminars, and intersectoral brainstorming/conversation sessions. We connected not only with researchers that are engaging with similar research agendas but also with practitioners. We also

interviewed and conducted participant observations where BIPs are taking part in civil society activities and interacted with them.

We tried to connect the BIPs' voices through engaging with civil society organizations and reflect the voices of BIPs through not only the representatives of civil society organizations but also through participant observation and interviews with BIPs.

An example where BIPs voices were central was in one of the coalition meetings held in 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4lFsF9xUUM>

Perspective of Beneficiaries of International Protection

In this final section, we include some quotations of BIPs that were shared with NIEM researchers throughout the project:

“No municipality wants to sign an integration agreement with me and my family – what are we supposed to do?” – M.P., Syria (Bulgaria)

“The most important thing for me is that I was able to find a job due to speaking rare languages and thus I could support my family. We could not rely on the state” – M.T., Afghanistan (Bulgaria)

“Living in the camp [i.e. one of the facilities under the Ministry of Interior] is really hard. You have no privacy, nothing to do, no friends, and you don't speak the language. [...] I just sat there, doing nothing, and I had depression. It was terrible.” A., Ukraine (Czechia)

„During the [job] interview, I didn't mention I was applying for asylum [...]. I told this to the employer only after I got the job and signed the contract. The employer got scared, thought it was illegal. Only after contacting [a specialized NGO] did they see that it was fine.” N.N. (Czechia)

“Since I arrived in France, I have never had access to accommodation, even though I have a work contract. I have been waiting for housing for several months and I feel like the social workers' support is not enough. It's very difficult to live in these conditions, on the street, after everything I've been through.” A., Congo (France)

“Many refugees living in France have a very high level of education from their home country. The problem is that too many jobs are regulated in France, and they struggle to get their diplomas and skills recognised. Therefore, they lose confidence in themselves because they have to start from scratch. More efforts should be done to help refugees in that sense.” E., Albania (France)

“Many people are not informed about refugee status and do not understand our situation and the specificities of our status. I think there is a need to raise awareness among the people who provide services to facilitate our access to rights.” F., Guinea (France)

“Some information related to the cure, specifically regarding psychological or psychiatric ones, are not easily understandable” N.N (Italy)

“We are not going to say ‘give us money’. Give us tools to be able to function as people in the community”. N.N. (Latvia)

"We are not here as guests, as people coming for vacation. We are not in and out. This is not sightseeing for us. If you accept me as a refugee, you need [to give me] some tools to survive". N.N. (Latvia)

"My problem [is] that even if I can afford to rent an apartment in Latvia, the owner would not rent because, first, I am a foreigner and second, I have a big family." N.N. (Latvia)

"I would like to underline [...] the importance of mentors. They are organising these kinds of things. [T]o get a job, they also play an important role. They [...] are even using their personal environment, personal networks. [...] Mentors really helped to get jobs for refugees." N.N. (Latvia)

"I wish there was like special courses for children. Just to improve their integration at the same level as in schools. To send my children for some free course. I wish that. I think it is a big problem that children didn't integrate." N.N. (Latvia)

"It is good that I have a place to stay, at the [Reception] Centre but most of the time I feel helpless there, without any real opportunities to find a job" M., Syria, 31y. (Romania)

"The asylum procedure was fast and it went well, and I am grateful for that. Now everybody is telling me that I have all the rights but what am I supposed to do by myself?" M., Syria, 22y. (Romania)

"I have two children and I couldn't enrol them to school until the foundation [Save the Children] helped me. Without their help, nobody would help me" W., Syria (Romania)

"I am not working currently but I am obliged to look for a job that is less than my qualifications and education. I am a doctor but I am looking for jobs like working in restaurants" N.N. (Slovenia)

"In administrative offices or other public institutions they refuse to talk in English. Once in Uprauņa Enote, the lady refused to talk to me in English and I still do not speak fluent Slovenian and she told me to 'go and study and when you will be fluent in Slovenian come here'." N.N. (Slovenia)

"In the end, the pandemic was declared and we ended up with 300 people staying in a shelter with 180 beds. We could not leave the room and the[re] were not enough resources. I myself experienced sexual harassment". BIP from Colombia (Spain)

"Th[e practitioners] believe that the migrants are unified, that there is only one type of migration. Practitioners should take into account what type of migrant is arriving and why." Transsexual Latin American BIP (Spain)

"I feel great about Sweden, I am grateful that I am in a calm place, a first-world country and for the general conditions I have. But when it comes to my social life, it is bad. Social life is tough

here. I always feel excluded, even in the (programming) courses I take. I always feel like an outsider". N.N (Sweden)

"It [integration] will never work. It is one-way; there is always an obligation for BIPs to do something like study and learn the language, whereas [members of] the host community are not doing anything." N.N (Sweden)

Project photos



Bulgaria, 2021 National forum Together writing the new stories for refugee integration



Bulgaria, 2021 Coalition Meeting *Refugee-Led Initiatives*



Czechia, 19th coalition meeting, October 2021



France, NIEM meeting



Greece, 22nd Coalition Meeting with different imams representing different religious communities



Greece, 21st Coalition Meeting: The experiences of refugee women



Hungary NIEM coalition meeting Hungary 9 Oct 2019



Italy, NIEM meeting



Latvia, Presentation of the national Evaluation 2 report, 12 April 2022



Lithuania, NIEM meeting



Poland, coalition meeting with representatives of the state public administration involved in the integration of BIPs, 2018.



Poland, National report promotion event, June 2022



Romania, national coalition meeting



Romania, NIEM presentation



Slovenia, national event January 2020



Spain, NIEM meeting

Final conference & photos

On June 20, 2022, to mark World Refugee Day, the NIEM partnership organized the final project conference “Refugee integration in the EU - What next? European Conference on monitoring and improving policies” in Brussels, Belgium.

Among the invited guests were Luca Barani (European Commission, DG Migration and Home Affairs), Begüm Dereli (European Council on Refugees and Exiles), Sophie Magennis (UNHCR Regional Representative for EU Affairs in Brussel), and Janina Ochojska (Member of the European Parliament) who joined the expert panel discussion about the current challenges EU member states are facing in terms of increased forced migration from Ukraine and implementation of temporary protection directive. They discussed, inter alia, what kind of support the European Union can provide to member states during the humanitarian crisis and what solutions might improve integration support for beneficiaries of international protection in all member states.

The leaders of refugee communities shared their experiences about activities provided locally to strengthen displaced people's advocacy and public participation and suggestions how to strengthen the involvement of forced migrants in consultations and policymaking towards a more efficient and inclusive integration policy.

Photos by Umit Vurel



