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# Access to autonomous housing in the context of international protection

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## Explanatory note

This inform was prepared on the basis of national contributions from 26 EMN NCPs (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK and RS) collected via an AHQ developed by the EMN NCPs to ensure, to the extent possible, comparability. The information contained in this inform refers to the situation in the abovementioned EMN Member and Observer Countries up to October 2023.

Statistics were sourced from national authorities and other (national) databases.

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## For more information

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## 1. KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- Nearly all European Migration Network (EMN) Member Countries and Serbia reported challenges for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection<sup>1</sup> in accessing autonomous housing. Key challenges include the general shortage of housing and consequent increase in housing prices, coupled with long waiting lists within the social rental sector and discrimination in accessing housing in the private market. Language barriers and administrative obstacles also pose significant challenges in accessing autonomous housing.
- Most countries have specific procedures and/or measures to ease the transition from housing assistance provided under the reception system to autonomous housing. These include information/counselling (e.g. on the functioning of the housing market), placements in transitional housing, and extending the period of time for which beneficiaries of international protection can stay in reception centres, allowing more time to find autonomous housing.
- Most EMN Member Countries have a multi-actor structure to support access to autonomous housing, involving central, regional and/or local authorities, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Migration and asylum authorities, housing authorities and social welfare authorities are the main actors providing this type of support.
- Beneficiaries of international protection can typically access mainstream social and housing support services (e.g. social housing, social benefits, rental subsidy, support from social services). Conversely, applicants for international protection do not have access to these services.
- Most EMN Member Countries and Serbia have targeted policies and measures (at central, regional and/or local level) to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries of international protection. These include direct housing allocation, the provision of financial assistance (e.g. for rent, utilities, deposit/guarantee, advance payments), counselling and support to search for housing (e.g. identifying suitable properties, filling in housing applications) and mediation services. By contrast, applicants for international protection who wish to access autonomous housing outside the reception system (outside material reception conditions) usually do not receive any form of targeted support.
- European Union (EU) funds – primarily the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) – were used by less than half of the reporting EMN Member Countries to implement projects, initiatives or reforms to support access to autonomous housing for these groups.
- After accessing autonomous housing, EMN Member Countries and Serbia have very few specific mechanisms or measures to verify the adequacy of that housing. In some countries, housing standards are generally verified in the context of mainstream housing support (e.g. social housing, rental subsidy/housing allowance, guarantee deposit schemes).
- Good practices to support access to autonomous housing include specific financial support for the payment of initial costs associated with signing a lease, early provision of information on access to autonomous housing, flexibility in moving out of reception centres, enhanced coordination in the provision of support, fostering general integration, and guaranteeing access to certain mainstream social and housing policies for beneficiaries of international protection.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Access to adequate housing is a fundamental right and a precondition for other fundamental rights and ensuring human dignity.<sup>2</sup> Article 21 of the 1951 United Nations (UN) Refugee Convention<sup>3</sup> states that refugees must enjoy the most favourable treatment possible when accessing housing, in a manner that is not, in any case, less advantageous compared to other foreigners. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has also stated that the rights contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>4</sup> – including the right to housing – apply to everyone, including refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, migrant

workers and victims of international trafficking, regardless of their legal status and documentation.<sup>5</sup>

In the EU, the recast Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU<sup>6</sup> lays down common standards for the reception of applicants for international protection in EU Member States. The provision of housing is included under the definition of material reception conditions that Member States are required to provide for these applicants. Where housing is provided in kind, it can take the form of accommodation centres, private houses, flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants.<sup>7</sup> For beneficiaries of international protection, the Qualification Directive

1 Beneficiaries of temporary protection fleeing the conflict in Ukraine are covered separately (EMN, 'Access to accommodation and housing for beneficiaries of temporary protection', 2022, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EMN\\_INFORM\\_housing.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EMN_INFORM_housing.pdf), last accessed on 14 November 2023). Other third-country nationals residing in EMN Member and Observer Countries are also beyond the scope of this inform.

2 Resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all (2019/2187(INI)), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0020\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0020_EN.pdf), last accessed on 10 October 2023.

3 UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/28185>, last accessed on 14 May 2023.

4 UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1996, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>, last accessed on 14 November 2024.

5 UN Economic and Social Council, General Comment No. 20, Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights (Article 2, para. 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), 2009, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4a60961f2.html>, last accessed on 17 October 2023.

6 Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast), OJ L 180, p.96, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033>, last accessed on 14 May 2023.

7 Article 18(1) Reception Conditions Directive.

2011/95/EU<sup>8</sup> establishes an obligation for Member States to ensure access to accommodation under equivalent conditions to those of other legally residing third-country nationals.<sup>9</sup> That Directive also requires Member States to implement policies to prevent discrimination against beneficiaries of international protection and ensure equal opportunities in accessing accommodation.<sup>10</sup> Neither the Reception Conditions Directive nor the Qualification Directive contains any provisions on the transition from government-supported accommodation provided in the context of reception conditions to autonomous housing.<sup>11</sup> The recently published EMN inform on organising flexible housing in the context of international protection<sup>12</sup> showed that the organisation of outflow to housing and support services for beneficiaries of international protection greatly varies across EMN Member Countries, and is also a significant challenge in the governance of reception systems.

Access to autonomous housing plays an important role in the integration process. Having a place of residence is often a pre-condition to get a job or access other services such as education, healthcare, employment and social services. In the context of this inform and for the purpose of this research, “autonomous housing” can be identified as independent living arrangements, namely in the context of transition from government-supported accommodation provided for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in the context of reception measures to independent housing. The Commission’s Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027<sup>13</sup> highlights the importance to promote models of autonomous housing (rather than collective housing) for asylum applicants, especially families, and disseminate and scale up successful innovative models of inclusive and affordable housing for beneficiaries of international protection. In addition, EU Member States are encouraged to provide adapted and autonomous housing solutions as early as possible for refugees and asylum seekers who are likely to be granted international protection and enable a smooth transition for asylum seekers to independent living once they have been granted international protection. Several EU-level studies have highlighted that applicants and beneficiaries of international protection face a number of legal and practical obstacles in accessing autonomous housing.<sup>14</sup> This applies particularly to beneficiaries of international protection, who, after being granted status may be given only a few months (or days

in some cases) to find autonomous housing before being required to leave the accommodation provided during the reception phase.<sup>15</sup> Where beneficiaries of international protection are allowed to continue their stay in reception centres until they find autonomous housing, it often leads to prolonged stays in those centres, impacting countries’ capacity to provide housing to applicants for international protection under the Reception Conditions Directive.

Since Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine began in February 2022, the large number of people fleeing Ukraine has imposed additional pressure on EMN Member and Observer Countries’ housing capacity,<sup>16</sup> creating additional challenges in ensuring access to autonomous housing for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

This EMN inform maps the challenges faced by applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing and provides a comprehensive overview of how EMN Member Countries and Serbia organise such support for these two groups. It includes an overview of national and regional/local policies and measures supporting the transition and access to autonomous housing, as well as some examples of EU-funded initiatives and national good practices.

Although in most cases it is only when persons are granted international protection that they transition into autonomous housing, applicants for international protection may sometimes access autonomous housing before a final decision on their application. Accordingly, they are included here alongside beneficiaries of international protection, where relevant. Beneficiaries of temporary protection fleeing the conflict in Ukraine are outside the scope of this inform as this group has recently been covered by the EMN inform on arrangements for accommodation and housing for beneficiaries of temporary protection.<sup>17</sup> Other third-country nationals residing in EMN Member and Observer Countries are also beyond the scope of this inform. Finally, the inform exclusively covers policies and measures (targeted or mainstream) that support access to autonomous housing; other services related to the reception and integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection are not covered.

This inform was prepared based on contributions from 26 EMN Member and Observer Countries<sup>18</sup> and complements previous research by the EMN, in particular the 2022 EMN

- 8 Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast), OJ L 337, p.9, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0095>, last accessed on 14 May 2023.
- 9 Article 32(1) Qualification Directive.
- 10 Article 32(2) Qualification Directive.
- 11 Here, autonomous housing is defined as a housing solution different from accommodation provided in the context of material reception conditions, i.e. centres, private houses, flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants. Autonomous housing solutions include any housing within the private housing market for which applicants and/or beneficiaries of international protection may have received support from EMN Member and Observer Countries (e.g. financial or in-kind support), but not directly provided in the context of material reception conditions. Public housing (i.e. social housing) provided outside the context of material reception conditions (as part of mainstreaming policies for the general population) is included under the definition of autonomous housing used here.
- 12 EMN, ‘Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection’, 2022, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN\\_INFORM\\_flexible\\_housing\\_010223-final.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN_INFORM_flexible_housing_010223-final.pdf), last accessed on 14 November 2023.
- 13 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758>, last accessed on 14/02/2024.
- 14 European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), ‘Asylum Report 2022’, <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2022>, last accessed on 14 May 2023; Asylum Information Database (AIDA), ‘Housing out of reach? The reception of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe’, 2020, [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/aida\\_housing\\_out\\_of\\_reach.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/aida_housing_out_of_reach.pdf), last accessed on 14 May 2023.
- 15 See, for example: Caritas Belgium, ‘Vulnerable refugees in Liège: transitioning to independence’, 2023, <https://www.caritasinternational.be/en/projects/asylum-migration-en/vulnerable-refugees-in-liege-transitioning-to-independence/>, last accessed on 10 October 2023; EUAA, ‘Asylum Report 2021 - Entitlement to material reception conditions’, 2021, <https://euaa.europa.eu/easo-asylum-report-2021/4717-entitlement-material-reception-conditions>, last accessed on 10 October 2023.
- 16 EMN, ‘Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection’, 2022, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN\\_INFORM\\_flexible\\_housing\\_010223-final.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN_INFORM_flexible_housing_010223-final.pdf), last accessed on 14 November 2023.
- 17 EMN, ‘Arrangements for accommodation and housing for beneficiaries of temporary protection’, 2022, [Arrangements for accommodation and housing for beneficiaries of temporary protection \(europa.eu\)](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN_INFORM_temporary_protection_europa.eu), last accessed on 14 November 2023.
- 18 AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK and RS.

inform on organising flexible housing in the context of international protection.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING AUTONOMOUS HOUSING

Nearly all EMN Member Countries and Serbia reported challenges faced by beneficiaries and applicants for international protection in accessing autonomous housing.<sup>20</sup> These challenges were most commonly identified by NGOs<sup>21</sup> and competent authorities responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing (e.g. personnel in the reception system, municipal housing authorities, migration and asylum authorities).<sup>22</sup>

One of the main challenges reported by EMN Member and Observer Countries<sup>23</sup> related to the **general shortage in the housing market and insufficient supply of affordable housing**, particularly in urban and metropolitan areas. In Belgium, for instance, in 2022, around 1 600 recognised refugees were unable to leave reception centres due to a shortage of housing in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia. In Luxembourg, in December 2022, beneficiaries of international protection represented more than 51.3 % of people housed in the structures for temporary housing for applicants for international protection. In Ireland, difficulties in accessing autonomous housing have resulted in beneficiaries of international protection spending extended periods in reception centres lasting for months or, in some cases, years. France reported that, on average, beneficiaries of international protection stay in the reception system for 253 days after being granted their status. These outflow challenges have also hindered the inflow of newcomers into the reception systems of those countries.

The housing shortage **has increased the cost of accommodation in the private market**, posing a significant challenge for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection,<sup>24</sup> who in many cases cannot afford rental prices or are unable to meet the deposit and guarantee requirements.<sup>25</sup> The **limited availability of social housing** and long waiting lists to access such options in some EMN Member Countries<sup>26</sup> create additional barriers for beneficiaries of international protection. The legal requirements to access social housing (e.g. minimum residence requirements) also exclude many applicants and beneficiaries of international protection from accessing these housing options.<sup>27</sup> In Malta, for example, in order to access social housing, refugees must have lived in the country for at least 12 consecutive months during the previous 18 months. Slovakia requires five years

of permanent residence in a town<sup>28</sup> to be able to apply for social housing, while some regions in Italy<sup>29</sup> require several years of residence in the region to be eligible for public housing.

Another main challenge faced by beneficiaries and applicants for international protection in accessing housing in the private market is **discrimination by landlords** (e.g. due to their nationality, lack of trust).<sup>30</sup> Austria and Slovenia reported discriminatory housing advertisements. In Lithuania, 48% of the population surveyed for the 2021 Report of the Institute for Ethnic Research stated that they would be unwilling to rent to refugees.<sup>31</sup> Even where the landlord agrees to rent the accommodation, the rental contract is usually short-term or unregistered, preventing beneficiaries of international protection from declaring residence and receiving support from the municipality.

Several EMN Member Countries reported **administrative challenges** for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, such as the impossibility of accessing loans due to their temporary status (applicants and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection),<sup>32</sup> requirements to submit tax declarations from previous years,<sup>33</sup> lack of a steady income, or difficulties in meeting employment requirements.<sup>34</sup>

#### Box 1: Administrative barriers - the 'local connection' test in Ireland

In Ireland, local authorities provide extensive social housing support measures and programmes for beneficiaries of international protection. However, it is only possible to apply to one local authority for this support - the local authority in which the household 'normally resides' or with which the individual or family has a 'local connection'. If a person does not have a local connection in the area in which they want to apply, the local authority has the discretion to conduct a social housing assessment. The Local Government Management Agency identified the application of this 'local connection' test as a challenge for those seeking to transition out of International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS).

**Language barriers** were also highlighted as an obstacle to accessing autonomous housing.<sup>35</sup> Lithuania reported

19 EMN, 'Organising flexible housing in the context of international protection', 2022, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN\\_INFORM\\_flexible\\_housing\\_010223-final.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/EMN_INFORM_flexible_housing_010223-final.pdf), last accessed on 14 November 2023.

20 AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK.

21 AT, BE, FI, HU, IE, LU, LV, PL, SK.

22 BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, SK and RS.

23 BE, CY, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PT, SI, SK.

24 BE, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, PT, SI, SK and RS.

25 CZ, FI, HR, IE, IT, LU, LV, PL, SI.

26 BE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, LV, NL, PT, SI, SK.

27 IT, MT, SK.

28 From the time they are granted their status.

29 Since residence registration. In judgment No. 44/2020, the Italian Constitutional Court declared the five-year requirement of the Lombardy regional law illegitimate, while other regional laws (e.g. Liguria) are under review. The Tuscany region has already eliminated the requirement.

30 AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, FI, HR, IE, IT, LT, LV, PL, PT, SI, SK.

31 Institute for Ethnic Studies of LSRC, Annual public opinion polls, 2021, <http://ces.lt/en/>, last accessed on 9 January 2024.

32 SK.

33 PT.

34 CZ, LU, PT.

35 BE, CY, CZ, DE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LV, PT and RS.

that home rental/sales advertisements are mostly in Lithuanian and prospective landlords are not always willing to communicate in a language other than Lithuanian. France

noted the lack of access to information, while Ireland and Portugal highlighted **limited social networks** as a factor hindering access to housing information.



## 4. MEASURES TO EASE THE TRANSITION TO AUTONOMOUS HOUSING

Most EMN Member Countries and Serbia have specific procedures and measures to ease the transition from housing assistance provided under the reception system to autonomous housing.<sup>36</sup> In some cases, this support is provided under general integration strategies and programmes implemented to support the outflow from the reception system.<sup>37</sup> For example in the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania and Poland, preparation and support to transition to autonomous housing is provided as part of individual integration plans.

The provision of **information, counselling and mentorship** by social workers (at reception centres and social welfare services) and/or NGOs is the most common form of support to transition to autonomous housing.<sup>38</sup> This typically includes the provision of general information on independent living, functioning of the housing market (e.g. types of rental contracts, administrative requirements, minimum housing standards, information on financing options, taxes), access to social housing, and/or housing assessments to identify housing needs. In Belgium, the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers (Fedasil) has developed a manual, 'Finding your own home', for beneficiaries of international protection and applicants residing in the reception network. The manual covers areas such as determining their maximum rental price, looking for a home, making an appointment for a visit, and concluding a rental agreement.

Several EMN Member Countries offer the possibility to access **transitional housing** until a more permanent housing solution is found.<sup>39</sup> In Belgium for instance, Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWC) have transit houses that can be rented out for a short period (six months, with the possibility of one extension) to people in emergency situations, including beneficiaries of international protection. Similarly, France has temporary housing centres (for six months, renewable)<sup>40</sup> to host beneficiaries of international protection without access to other housing solutions after leaving the reception system. Additionally, France has also implemented a civic accommodation scheme for the reception of refugees by private individuals. In Ireland, beneficiaries of international protection who have stayed longest in reception centres<sup>41</sup> were recently offered a transfer to alternative emergency accommodation. Some federal states in Germany have transitional homes to host beneficiaries of international protection and ease the transition to autonomous housing. In Lithuania, the Refugee Reception Centre can rent a temporary place of accommodation for beneficiaries of international protection until autonomous housing is found. Slovenia

and the Czech Republic have integration houses where beneficiaries of international protection can stay (for 12 and 18 months, respectively) while they find independent accommodation.

### Box 2: Transitional housing for beneficiaries of international protection in Belgium

Since the end of 2016, beneficiaries of international protection who must leave the reception system can temporarily use free spaces in private homes. Interested housing owners need to notify the municipality of their willingness to temporarily rent their space to beneficiaries of international protection. In practice, when making a notification, the municipality creates a subordinate address within the home, at which the owner and the tenant can domicile separately. The conditions for this form of renting are: that the room is part of the owner's home (the owner is not allowed to rent out detached garages or outbuildings); the owner may only house to one 'household', comprising a single person, a couple or a family; the space to be rented may not exceed one-third of the home, not including shared spaces; and the room must conform to the living standards of room rental.

Some EMN Member Countries allow for the possibility to **extend the period for which beneficiaries of international protection can stay in the reception system**, to allow them more time to find autonomous housing.<sup>42</sup> In Belgium, beneficiaries of international protection must, in principle, leave the reception structure within two months of being granted status. If, however, they still have not found housing by that time, Fedasil can extend the date for leaving the reception network. In France, beneficiaries of international protection who have not found autonomous housing after being granted status can stay in accommodation provided under the national reception system for a period of three months, which can be exceptionally extended for another three months by the Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII). In Ireland, beneficiaries of international protection living in accommodation centres managed by IPAS are no longer entitled to material reception conditions, but, given the time needed to secure alternative accommodation, IPAS may extend that accommodation provision for up to 12 months.<sup>43</sup> In Lithuania, after being granted international protection, beneficiaries can stay in Refugee Reception Centres for up to three months, which can be extended for up to six months in exceptional cases.

36 BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SK and RS.

37 BE, CZ, DE, EE, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, SK.

38 BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SK and RS.

39 BE, CZ, DE, FR, IE, LT, LU, SI.

40 Total of 9 000 places in 2022 in the metropolitan territories.

41 Average of 18 months, as of the end of June 2023.

42 BE, FR, IE, LT, LU, PL, SI.

43 In practice, beneficiaries stay for longer, due to challenges in sourcing autonomous housing.

### Box 3: HOPE Accommodation Orientation Programme in France

In France, the HOPE programme provides beneficiaries of international protection with temporary accommodation in one of the National Agency for Vocational Training for Adults (AFPA) training centres for a period of six months. During that time, beneficiaries of international protection also receive social, legal, medical

and housing search support to facilitate their integration and access to permanent housing. After leaving the AFPA training centre, beneficiaries of international protection are accompanied in their search for housing by social workers. In 2020, 84 % of participants had found autonomous accommodation at the end of the programme (10 % before the end of the programme), compared to 65 % in 2018.



## 5. PROVISION OF SUPPORT IN ACCESSING AUTONOMOUS HOUSING

Nearly all EMN Member Countries and Serbia provide some form of support to beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing.<sup>44</sup> However,

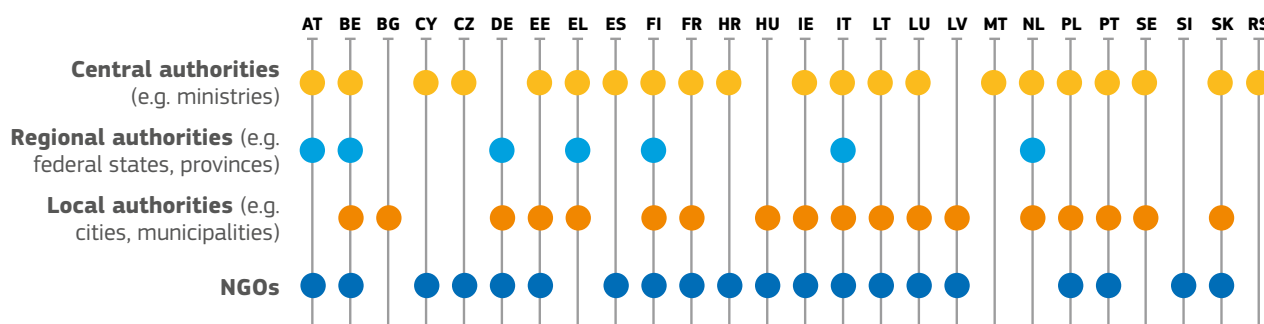
applicants for international protection who wish to access autonomous housing outside the reception system (material reception conditions) rarely receive such support.<sup>45</sup>

### Actors involved in supporting access to autonomous housing

Most EMN Member Countries have a multi-actor structure involving a combination of central, regional and/or local authorities and NGOs providing support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection to

access autonomous housing (see Figure 1).<sup>46</sup> The actors responsible for the provision of this type of support vary across EMN Member Countries and Serbia.

Figure 1: Actors providing support to autonomous housing



In many cases, **migration and asylum authorities** at different administrative levels are responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and/or applicants for international protection.<sup>47</sup> In several EMN Member Countries, this responsibility primarily lies with national reception authorities.<sup>48</sup> In Belgium for instance, Fedasil is responsible for the period of transition from government-supported accommodation in reception conditions to autonomous housing. In the Netherlands, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) is responsible for matching beneficiaries of international protection to a municipality where they are provided with housing, and the provinces play a supervising role. In Lithuania, Refugee Reception Centres select the institutions within a municipality (normally NGOs) that will provide integration support to beneficiaries of international protection, including access to autonomous housing. In

Sweden, the Migration Agency is responsible for placing beneficiaries of international protection in a municipality.

In some EMN Member Countries, **housing authorities** at national, regional and/or local level are (co-)responsible for supporting applicants and/or beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing (e.g. social housing, public rental support initiatives).<sup>49</sup> In Luxembourg, the Ministry of Housing provides mainstream support mechanisms to any legal resident, including beneficiaries of international protection, to access housing. In Belgium, regional housing authorities<sup>50</sup> are responsible for providing access to social housing, for which beneficiaries of international protection can apply under the same conditions as Belgian nationals. In Portugal, the Institute of Housing and Urban Rehabilitation (IHRU) is responsible for all housing policies – in cooperation with the

44 BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK and RS.

45 The following countries do not provide any (targeted or mainstream) support to access autonomous housing to applicants for international protection: BE, CZ, EE, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, NL, PL, SE, SI, SK and RS.

46 AT, BE, CZ, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PT, SE, SI, SK and RS.

47 BE, CZ, DE, EL, ES, LT, NL, PL, SE, SI, SK.

48 BE, FI, IE, LT and RS.

49 BE, FR, IE (local authorities are responsible for social housing), LU, MT, NL, PT.

50 Walloon Housing Society, Brussels Housing of the Brussels Regional Public Service, Flemish Government Agency 'Housing in Flanders'.



municipalities – including those targeting beneficiaries of international protection.

Support to autonomous housing for applicants<sup>51</sup> and beneficiaries<sup>52</sup> of international protection is also provided by the **general social welfare authorities** in some EMN Member Countries. In Belgium, beneficiaries of international protection who have left the reception structure can receive financial support and assistance from the PSWC in searching for housing. In Cyprus, social welfare officers provide counselling and support to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in accessing a permanent place of residence. In Estonia, the Social Insurance Board is the main authority responsible for supporting beneficiaries of international protection to access autonomous housing.

## Coordination of assistance to access autonomous housing

Some EMN Member Countries use **cooperation agreements** between the different administrative levels (central, regional and/or local) to coordinate the provision of assistance to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection to access autonomous housing.<sup>54</sup> In Luxembourg, local authorities can sign an agreement with the Ministry of Housing within the framework of the social rental management (GLS) for beneficiaries of international protection, in return for the provision of financial and administrative support measures from the Ministry. Malta has established an inter-ministerial Committee for the coordination of this type of support.

Coordination also takes place through **regular meetings and exchanges** among the different competent authorities and NGOs involved.<sup>55</sup> In the Netherlands, the COA regularly exchanges information with the municipalities responsible for supporting access to autonomous housing through a 'client profile' managed through a digital Task Monitoring System. In Lithuania, the institutions implementing the integration plan provide the Refugee Reception Centre with decisions and recommendations on the provision, extension, renewal or termination of

In several EMN Member Countries, **NGOs** play an important role in ensuring access to autonomous housing for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.<sup>53</sup> In Spain, the Directorate-General for Management of the International and Temporary Protection System (DGG-SAPIT) collaborates with 23 social entities that directly support applicants and beneficiaries of international protection to access autonomous housing (e.g. through mediation services). In Ireland, targeted support to beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing is exclusively provided by NGOs, though often funded or partially funded by the government. Italy and Serbia highlighted the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in supporting access to autonomous housing.

support (including access to autonomous housing) every six months. In Ireland, one person from a local authority is seconded to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) – responsible for housing applicants for international protection and refugee integration – to coordinate and communicate with local authorities. DCEDIY also funds four positions in each local authority to coordinate the integration of migrants, including applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

Germany and Serbia have established **joint platforms** to coordinate access to autonomous housing and other integration services. Germany organises roundtables involving the administration (municipal level and, in special cases, higher levels of administration, such as regional councils), independent voluntary and welfare organisations and NGOs, to discuss refugee assistance, including access to autonomous housing. Serbia has established a joint team with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and UNHCR to coordinate the provision of support in accessing housing.

## Overview of policies and measures to support access to autonomous housing

In most EMN Member Countries, beneficiaries of international protection can generally access **mainstream social and housing support services** (e.g. social housing, social benefits, rental subsidy, support from social services) under the same conditions as nationals (see Figure 3).<sup>56</sup> Applicants for international protection, however, do not have access to these services in any of the reporting EMN Member and Observer Countries. Additionally, most EMN Member Countries and Serbia also have **targeted policies and measures** (at

central, regional and/or local level) to help beneficiaries of international protection to counter some of the specific barriers they face in accessing autonomous housing.<sup>57</sup> Conversely, only a few EMN Member Countries<sup>58</sup> provide some sort of targeted support to applicants for international protection who wish to access autonomous housing outside the reception system (outside material reception conditions) (see Figure 2).<sup>59</sup> In several cases, targeted support is provided as part of broader integration assistance granted to these groups.<sup>60</sup>

51 CY.

52 BE, CY, DE, EE, EL, LU, LV.

53 AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, PL, PT, SI, SK.

54 AT, BG, EL, FI, FR, IT, LU, PT.

55 CY, CZ, FR, IE, LT, NL, SK.

56 BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SK.

57 BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, SE, SI, SK and RS.

58 AT, CY, LV, PL.

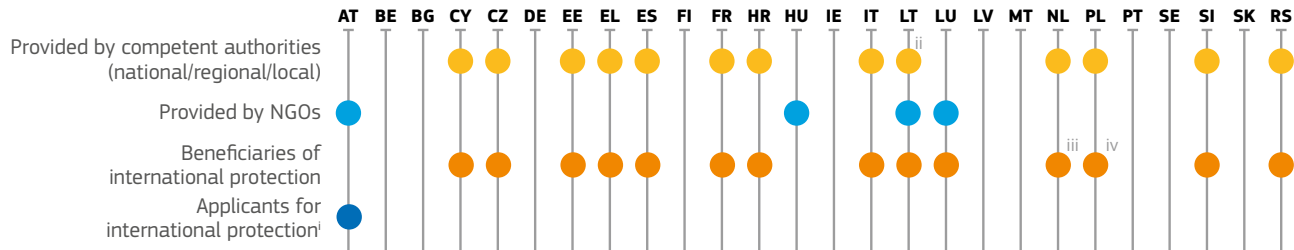
59 This includes support not directly provided by the countries as part of material reception conditions.

60 BE, BG, CZ, EL, FR, LU, LV, PL, SK.

### Targeted support to access autonomous housing

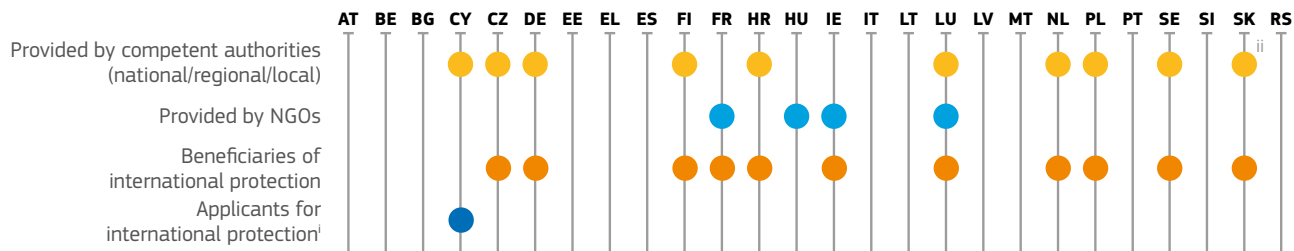
**Figure 2: Overview of type of targeted support provided in accessing autonomous housing<sup>61</sup>**

#### Financial assistance (e.g. for rent, utilities, deposit/guarantee, advance payments, furniture)



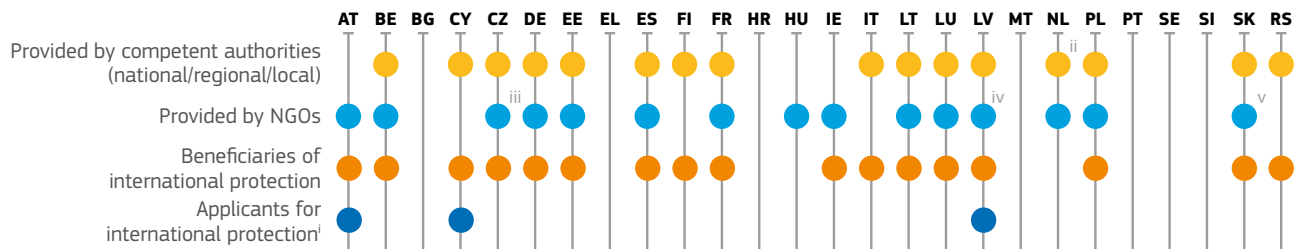
- i This includes support provided by EMN Member and Observer Countries that is not directly provided by the countries in the context of material reception conditions.
- ii The Refugee Reception Centre selects the institution implementing integration on the territory of the municipality chosen by the beneficiary of international protection (in most cases an NGO selected through public procurement), which signs a contract for services with the recipient of international protection and provides assistance in the territory of the municipality (mediation and financial support).
- iii Most municipalities provide a furnishing budget (loan or gift) to beneficiaries of international protection.
- iv Monthly cash benefits to cover living expenses, including housing fees.

#### Housing allocation (e.g. placement in housing owned or rented by competent authorities or through NGOs)



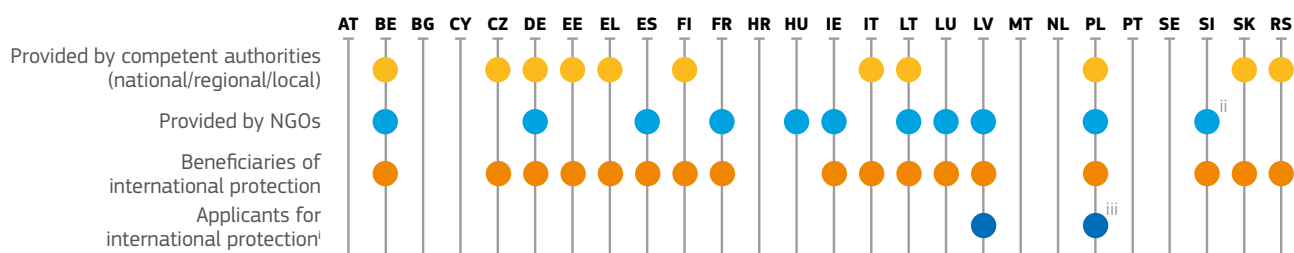
- i This includes support provided by EMN Member and Observer Countries that is not directly provided by the countries in the context of material reception conditions.
- ii City council of selected Slovak cities.

#### Counselling and support to search for housing (e.g. identifying suitable properties, filling in housing applications, accompaniment to house viewings, navigating reference letters)



- i This includes support provided by EMN Member and Observer Countries that is not directly provided by the countries in the context of material reception conditions.
- ii Municipalities provide information and practical support, typically through a contracted (volunteer) NGO (e.g. Dutch Council for Refugees).
- iii Although the State Integration Programme is coordinated and implemented at central level by the Ministry of the Interior and the Refugee Facilities Administration, assistance is provided at regional level through the individual integration plan, supported by local NGOs.
- iv Society Integration Foundation has signed a cooperation agreement with Caritas Latvia, which provides the services of social workers and social mentors to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.
- v Slovak Humanitarian Council (SHR) – a local NGO contracted by the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior.

#### Mediation services (e.g. communication with landlords, lease agreements, translation)



- i This includes support provided by EMN Member and Observer Countries that is not directly provided by the countries in the context of material reception conditions.
- ii There is one NGO that works as the implementing partner of the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants, supporting beneficiaries of international protection to search for housing on the rental market. Other NGOs do this on voluntary basis, without specific support from the government.
- iii Access to mediation services for applicants for international protection are available in PL, but rarely used in practice.

<sup>61</sup> Note that the specific type of support provided may vary across different regions/municipalities within a country.

As shown in Figure 2, several EMN Member Countries and Serbia provide **targeted financial support** to beneficiaries of international protection to facilitate their access to autonomous housing.<sup>62</sup> This type of support primarily consists of financial assistance to pay the rent, the deposit/guarantee, agency fees, utilities, or condominium fees. In Lithuania, after finding housing and signing a lease agreement, beneficiaries of international protection receive a one-time settlement allowance for the purchase of basic utilities or to pay the deposit and are also compensated for part of the rent. Similarly, in Estonia, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to a one-time allowance (up to € 1 200) to cover expenses related to entering into a rental agreement (e.g. deposit, advance payment). In Serbia, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration provides refugees with monthly financial assistance for housing for one year. Italy and most municipalities in the Netherlands also provide beneficiaries with a furnishing allowance.

#### Box 4: LSKO centre – Luxembourg

The LSKO centre is run by the Luxembourg Red Cross to promote the social integration of beneficiaries of international protection – particularly the most vulnerable – as part of an agreement with the Ministry for the Family, Integration and the Greater Region. To encourage access to private housing for beneficiaries of international protection, LSKO established a guarantee system for landlords (this is now run by the Solidarity Housing Unit (CLES) of the Luxembourg Red Cross), who can benefit from a guarantee covering up to two months' rent in the event of non-payment (refundable and by activating voluntary budget management), as well as an advance payment of up to € 3 000 for any material damage not covered by the rental deposit. Beneficiaries of international protection have access to this guarantee system when certain administrative and financial criteria are met.

#### Box 5: Rental intermediation – France

In France, some NGOs (e.g. Refugee Insertion) rent apartments in the private market, acting as an intermediary between beneficiaries of international protection and the owner, in the form of a 'rolling lease' (sub-letting agreement) for one year. This lease is a general lease, with the additional condition that the NGO will accompany beneficiaries of international protection and support them for the duration of the lease (e.g. supporting technical maintenance of the apartment, administrative procedures, budget management, payments related to the lease). After one year, the beneficiary can sign a regular lease with the landlord and become a direct tenant. However, if after that period, the person is still not sufficiently independent to remain in the dwelling, the support may be extended by a further six months.

**Counselling and support in the search for autonomous housing** in the private market is provided in most EMN Member Countries and Serbia (e.g. reviewing properties, monitoring rental offers, accompaniment to

house viewings, establishing contact with NGOs implementing housing programmes, guidance after the lease is signed).<sup>63</sup> In several cases, **mediation services** with rental agencies and landlords are also provided (e.g. to facilitate communication with landlords, help to sign lease agreements, translation services).<sup>64</sup>

#### Box 6: Housing 4 Refugees project – Belgium

The Housing 4 Refugees project is financed by Fedasil and implemented by Caritas International. It maps and matches the existing networks of landlords who want to rent to people who have just acquired international protection status (solidarity owners). It also includes training for social workers to support the target group in the different administrative steps in leaving the reception network (e.g. applying for a rental guarantee, contacting the PSWC).

Several EMN Member Countries have **housing allocation programmes** for beneficiaries of international protection, which provide them with direct accommodation for a certain period.<sup>65</sup> In Croatia, beneficiaries of international protection who do not have sufficient financial resources can live in State-run apartments for two years. If there are no available State-run apartments, apartments are rented on the private market and the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets pays the rental cost. In Germany, some of the independent cities in Brandenburg have contractual agreements with housing associations that provide a certain number of social housing units for beneficiaries of international protection, which they can later take over by means of their own tenancy agreement. In the Netherlands, municipalities provide housing for beneficiaries of international protection mostly via housing associations. Every six months, the Dutch central government determines the number of beneficiaries of international protection a municipality must house, and the COA matches beneficiaries of international protection with the respective municipalities. Similarly, in Sweden, beneficiaries of international protection are offered municipal placements. The Swedish Migration Agency reimburses municipalities for certain costs of hosting beneficiaries of international protection for the first two years, after which they are covered by the regular social system. In the context of its Housing First Plan (2017-2023), France mobilised more than 64 000 housing options for beneficiaries of international protection, allowing almost 126 000 individuals to access accommodation between 2018 and 2023.

#### Box 7: Housing for refugees funding programme – Germany

Within the framework of the Housing for Refugees funding programme, the state of Baden-Württemberg supports municipalities to create housing to accommodate refugees. The funding is limited to investment and is granted for measures that result in new, additional housing for permanent follow-up accommodation.

62 CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, SI and RS.

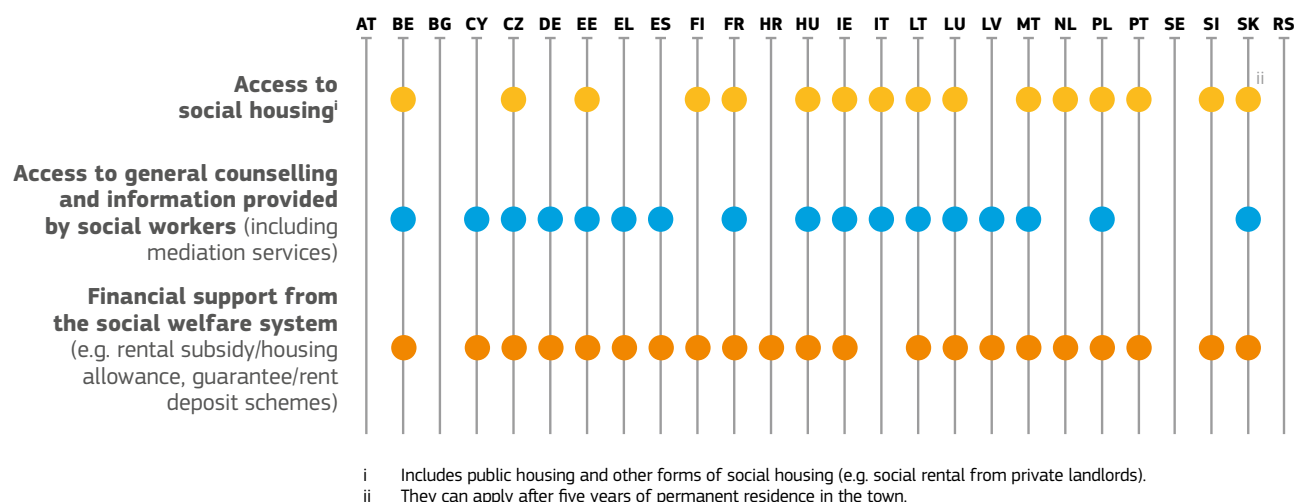
63 AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, PL, SK and RS.

64 BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, SI, SK, PL and RS.

65 CZ, DE, FI, FR, HR, IE, LU, NL, PL, SE, SK.

### Mainstream support to access autonomous housing

**Figure 3: Overview of type of mainstream support provided to beneficiaries of international protection in accessing autonomous housing**



In addition to the targeted support described above, most EMN Member Countries support beneficiaries of international protection to access autonomous housing through mainstream housing and social welfare packages, including:

- **Access to social housing schemes;**<sup>66</sup>
- **Financial support from the social welfare system**<sup>67</sup> generally available to people on a low income or in receipt of social welfare payments (e.g. social benefits, guarantee/rent deposit schemes, rental subsidy/housing allowance);
- Access to **general counselling and information** on access to housing, provided by social workers within the general social welfare services (including mediation services).<sup>68</sup>

In most cases, these support services are available to beneficiaries of international protection under the same

conditions as nationals, albeit with some exceptions. The Netherlands reported that about half of its municipalities have a local ordinance making beneficiaries of international protection a preferential group for the allocation of social housing. In Luxembourg, beneficiaries of international protection can access social benefits and social housing under the same conditions as nationals. However, the use of the European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion (Ethos) criteria to prioritise applicants for social housing has, in practice, translated into a certain prioritisation of beneficiaries of international protection. In Italy, mainstream housing support is accessible to beneficiaries of international protection under the same conditions as any other third-country national (i.e. some minimum residence requirements apply). In Slovakia, after five years of legal residence, beneficiaries of international protection can access social housing under the same conditions as nationals.

### Use of EU Funds to support access to autonomous housing

Less than half of the EMN Member Countries reported using EU funds to implement projects, initiatives or reforms to support access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection.<sup>69</sup> Funds from the AMIF were the most commonly used.<sup>70</sup> Portugal reported using NextGeneration Funds, while

Italy also used the European Social Fund (ESF). Table 1 presents some examples of projects funded under AMIF to promote access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection in EMN Member Countries.

66 BE, CZ, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK (they can apply after five years of permanent residence in the town).

67 BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK.

68 BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, SK.

69 BG, DE, EL, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, PT, SI, SK.

70 BG, DE, EL, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, PT, SI, SK.

**Table 1: Projects funded under AMIF to promote access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries and applicants for international protection**

EMN Member Countries	Project description
<b>France</b> <sup>71</sup>	The global and individualised support for refugees programme (AGIR) provides support to beneficiaries of international protection in gaining autonomy for a maximum of 24 months. It enables them to access support for employment, social rights and healthcare, create a bank account and exchange their driving licence, as well as access autonomous housing and training in departmental one-stop-shops. The AGIR programme is co-funded by AMIF.
<b>Germany</b>	The project ‘Improving reception conditions for persons seeking protection, beneficiaries of protection and persons granted temporary protection in Brandenburg’ aims, among other things, to improve accommodation, initial orientation and social counselling. This is done by establishing regional support structures to accommodate refugees in decentralised housing. The project is co-financed by the Ministry of Integration.
<b>Greece</b>	The HELIOS programme provides integration support to beneficiaries of international protection. This includes support to access autonomous housing (in apartments rented in their name) along with other services (e.g. integration courses, support in accessing employment, integration monitoring, sensitisation of host community). Housing support includes contributions to rental and moving-in costs, support to find an apartment (e.g. accommodation workshops), access to the HELIOS apartment database, interpretation and translation support (by intercultural mediators), and matchmaking sessions (for beneficiaries looking for a roommate). All beneficiaries are entitled to 12 months of rental subsidies. This programme was funded under AMIF between 2019 and 2021. Since 2022, it has been funded by the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.
<b>Italy</b>	The call for proposals ‘Promotion of the autonomy of beneficiaries of international protection and their exit from the reception system through the implementation of individual socioeconomic integration pathways’ aimed to provide support to municipalities participating in the Reception and Integration System for the promotion of autonomy paths for beneficiaries of international protection upon exit. The notice financed 42 projects (July 2019–April 2023) to ensure the social inclusion of refugees at the end of their stay in reception facilities. Within these projects, individual housing integration pathways were provided for beneficiaries of international protection, including housing support for 3 607 beneficiaries of international protection, of which 1 321 signed rental contracts, found housing solutions through housing or co-housing arrangements, or secured stable housing accommodations.
<b>Lithuania</b>	Establishment of three integration centres in major Lithuanian cities, where social workers provide information, mediation, and other types of assistance to beneficiaries of international protection looking for housing.
<b>Slovenia</b>	The project ‘Ensuring financial allowance for accommodation in a private residence’ provides beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia with financial support to pay the rent and utilities costs for the first two years. This project is funded (75 %) through AMIF.
<b>Slovakia</b>	One of the goals of the Rifugio project implemented by the Slovak Humanitarian Council is to support beneficiaries of international protection to find autonomous housing (e.g. through the provision of counselling) as part of their integration process. Support can also be provided to applicants for international protection on a case-by-case basis.

71 FAMI grant application in process.

## 6. MECHANISMS TO VERIFY THE ADEQUACY OF AUTONOMOUS HOUSING

Access to autonomous housing is not a guarantee for the adequacy of the housing, especially where housing markets are tight (e.g. in terms of offering sufficient living space, good housing conditions, and absence of problems in the residential area, such as noise, pollution, crime, vandalism or access to basic facilities).<sup>72</sup> According to a Eurofound report, extreme cases of housing inadequacy can be considered forms of homelessness.<sup>73</sup>

Few EMN Member Countries and Serbia have specific mechanisms to verify the adequacy of the autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries and applicants of international protection (where this is not directly provided by competent authorities).<sup>74</sup> In Portugal, the Single Operating Group (*Grupo Operativo Único – GOU*), coordinated by the High Commission for Migration, is responsible for verifying the adequacy of autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries and applicants for international protection. In Greece, the HELIOS programme verifies the adequacy of the housing rented by beneficiaries of international protection in two stages: visits by HELIOS staff, and then by the Apartment Verification Department, to assess the adequacy of all the houses (either in person or through videocalls). In Poland and Serbia, housing conditions are only monitored where beneficiaries of international protection receive financial support from the State. In

Lithuania and the Czech Republic, although there is no specific mechanism to assess autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries of international protection, social workers implementing the integration plan for these groups may assess their housing conditions.

In some countries,<sup>75</sup> although there are no specific mechanisms to assess the adequacy of autonomous housing accessed by beneficiaries of international protection, housing standards are generally verified in the context of the mainstream housing support provided (e.g. social housing, rental subsidy/housing allowance, guarantee deposit schemes). In Luxembourg, housing standards are (in principle) verified before guarantees are given and, where accommodation is offered under the social rental guarantee scheme, the standards of suitable accommodation are checked when the lease is signed. Similarly, in Ireland, under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme – to which beneficiaries of international protection have the same access as nationals – the competent local authority is responsible for verifying that the rental property meets the required standards. In Germany, for people receiving social benefits (irrelevant of migration background), the intended housing offer must be submitted to the competent benefit provider (local social welfare agencies) for approval.

## 7. GOOD PRACTICES IN SUPPORTING ACCESS TO AUTONOMOUS HOUSING

Several EMN Member Countries and Serbia have evaluated (parts of) their existing policies and measures to support access to autonomous housing for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.<sup>76</sup>

Different evaluations, studies and expert opinions have identified good practices in several EMN Member Countries<sup>77</sup> and Serbia in supporting access to autonomous housing in the context of international protection. These include:

- Provision of **financial support** to facilitate the payment of initial fees, deposit/guarantee, etc. associated with the signing of a lease agreement;<sup>78</sup>
- **Early provision of information** on access to autonomous housing to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection;<sup>79</sup>

- **Enhancing coordination** and collaboration between the different actors providing support in accessing autonomous housing (see Box 9);<sup>80</sup>
- **Allowing for flexibility in the timeline to move out of reception centres** to provide beneficiaries of international protection with additional time to search for autonomous housing;<sup>81</sup>
- **Promoting the overall integration** of beneficiaries of international protection,<sup>82</sup> and supporting them to **build social networks** and **maintain contact with the local community**.<sup>83</sup> In the Czech Republic for example, the adoption of an individualised approach to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, combining social assistance, direct economic and material support, language training, and help in searching for housing, moving, and furnishing the apartment is seen as a good practice.<sup>84</sup> In France, the accommodation of beneficiaries of international

72 Eurostat, Indicators to assess housing conditions, n.d., [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Housing\\_conditions](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Housing_conditions), last accessed on 17 October 2023.

73 Eurofound, 'Unaffordable and inadequate housing in Europe', 2021, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/2021/unaffordable-and-inadequate-housing-europe>, last accessed on 17 October 2023.

74 CZ, EL, LT, PT, PL and RS.

75 BE, DE, FI, FR, IE, IT, NL, LU.

76 BE, DE, EL, FR, IT, LT, LU, SI and RS.

77 BE, CZ, EE, FR, IE, LU, LT, LV, PL, PT.

78 BE, EE, LV and RS.

79 LV and RS.

80 IE.

81 BE, IE.

82 CZ, FR.

83 DE, PT.

84 Support provided under the State Integration Programme.

protection in private houses and the integration support provided under the cohabitation programme run by the Inter-ministerial Delegation for Housing and Access to Housing is also considered a good practice;

- Guaranteeing access to certain **mainstream social and housing policies** for beneficiaries of international protection.<sup>85</sup> In Luxembourg, evaluations have shown that the GLS system has a greater impact than the agreements signed between the State and municipalities for the provision of housing to beneficiaries of international protection.

#### **Box 8: Purchasing social housing units for refugees in Lithuania**

To address the issue of limited availability of social housing and increase housing opportunities for refugees, the municipality of Jonava district purchased five dwellings to house beneficiaries of international protection, giving priority to families. The dwellings were purchased in the context of the project 'Increasing the competences of municipalities by providing services to citizens of third countries', funded by the Council of Europe Development Bank.

A study of the municipalities where the project was implemented identified the purchase of social housing units to host refugees as a good practice.

#### **Box 9: Community Response Forums in Ireland**

Community Response Forums were initially developed for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and were then repurposed and/or reestablished, first to support Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection, then later to support the integration of applicants for international protection. These Forums bring together all public, community and voluntary organisations that provide support locally along with the Chair/Mayor of each local authority. They enable a coordinated civil society and local governance response to complex challenges that benefit from the input of multiple stakeholders and service providers (e.g. transitioning to autonomous housing). Galway City Council identified these Forums as good practices, as they provide platforms for essential collaboration between statutory and voluntary bodies.

## ANNEX 1. DATA ON ACCESS TO AUTONOMOUS HOUSING

Very few EMN Member Countries collect data on the numbers of beneficiaries of international protection who have accessed autonomous housing<sup>86</sup> and/or the numbers of beneficiaries of international protection who have received financial or in-kind support to access autonomous housing.<sup>87</sup> As the housing market, the administrative requirements to access housing, and the type of housing support offered differ across countries, the number of beneficiaries of international protection who accessed autonomous housing or who received support in this context also varies considerably across EMN Member

Countries and Serbia. Table 2 presents a somewhat limited overview of reported data on the number of beneficiaries of international protection who accessed autonomous housing and/or received housing support in 2022.

None of the responding countries, except Greece, collect data on the average time until beneficiaries of international protection have access to autonomous housing. In Greece, in 2022, it took an average of 5.8 months for beneficiaries of international protection to access autonomous housing through the HELIOS programme.<sup>88</sup>

**Table 2: Data on access to autonomous housing, 2022**

	Number of beneficiaries of international protection who accessed autonomous housing	Number of beneficiaries of international protection who received financial and/or in-kind support to access autonomous housing
<b>EL</b>	1 860 <sup>89</sup>	1 860 (received assistance to access autonomous housing under the programme HELIOS) <sup>90</sup>
<b>ES<sup>91</sup></b>	11 382	-
<b>FR (2021)</b>		10 208 (obtained housing with State assistance) <sup>92</sup>
<b>HR</b>	-	32 (provided with direct accommodation) <sup>93</sup>
<b>IE</b>	733 <sup>94</sup>	-
<b>LT<sup>95</sup></b>	731 <sup>96</sup>	-
<b>SE</b>	-	6 619 <sup>97</sup> (assigned housing in a municipality)
<b>SI</b>	788 <sup>98</sup>	-
<b>RS</b>	29 <sup>99</sup>	10 (financial support) <sup>100</sup>

86 ES, FR, IE, LT, MT, SI and RS.

87 EE, FR, HR, SE and RS.

88 32 months since they applied for international protection (International Organization for Migration (IOM) data).

89 Number of beneficiaries of international protection who received assistance to access autonomous housing under HELIOS (IOM data).

90 Number of beneficiaries of international protection who received assistance to access autonomous housing under HELIOS (IOM data).

91 Beneficiaries of international protection who have accessed phase 2 of the integration process (preparation for autonomy).

92 41.4 % of outgoing protected persons.

93 Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets data.

94 DCEDIY data (September 2023).

95 Beneficiaries of international protection who are receiving integration support and live in autonomous housing.

96 Data collected by Refugee Reception Centres.

97 Swedish Migration Agency data.

98 Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants data.

99 Commissariat for Refugee and Migration data.

100 Commissariat for Refugee and Migration data.







## For more information

EMN website: <http://ec.europa.eu/emn>

EMN LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-migration-network>

EMN Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/emnmigration>

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Croatia <https://emn.gov.hr/en>

Cyprus [www.emncyprus.moi.gov.cy](http://www.emncyprus.moi.gov.cy)

Czechia [www.emncz.eu](http://www.emncz.eu)

Denmark [www.justitsministeriet.dk/](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/)

Estonia [www.emn.ee/](http://www.emn.ee/)

Finland <https://emn.fi/en/>

France [www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM2](http://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM2)

Germany <https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/EMN/emn-node.html>

Greece <http://emn.immigration.gov.gr/en/>

Hungary [www.emnhungary.hu/en](http://www.emnhungary.hu/en)

Ireland [www.emn.ie/](http://www.emn.ie/)

Italy [www.emnitalyncp.it/](http://www.emnitalyncp.it/)

Latvia [www.emn.lv/en/home/](http://www.emn.lv/en/home/)

Lithuania [www.emn.lt/en/](http://www.emn.lt/en/)

Luxembourg <https://emnluxembourg.uni.lu/>

Malta <https://emn.gov.mt/>

The Netherlands <https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/>

Poland <https://www.gov.pl/web/europejska-siec-migracyjna>

Portugal <https://rem.sef.pt/>

Romania <https://www.mai.gov.ro/>

Spain <https://www.emnspain.gob.es/>

Slovak Republic <https://emn.sk/en/>

Slovenia <https://emnslovenia.si>

Sweden <http://www.emnsweden.se/>

Norway <https://www.udi.no/en/statistics-and-analysis/european-migration-network---norway>

Georgia [https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=1&clang=1](https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=1&clang=1)

Republic of Moldova <https://igm.gov.md/en>

Ukraine <https://dmsu.gov.ua/en-home.html>

Montenegro <https://www.gov.me/en/mup>

Armenia <https://migration.am/?lang=en>

Serbia <https://kirs.gov.rs/cir>