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The integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market

Common Template for EMN Study 2022

Final Version, 9 August 2022

Subject: The integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market

Action: EMN NCPs are invited to submit their completed contributions by 25 November 2022.

If needed, further clarifications can be provided by directly contacting the EMN Service Provider (ICF) at emn@icf.com.

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study focuses on the integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market.

As stated in the EU Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 "The EU's work on integration and inclusion is underpinned by a shared set of principles and values, which should also guide the work of EU Member States when they design, implement or review their strategies for integration."¹ Research has shown that labour market integration is one of the key elements of migrant integration and successful participation in society. For many migrants, building a new life entails the important aspect of finding appropriate work in the host country, because it is related to their economic independence, health and overall wellbeing.²

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, COM(2020) 758 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0758&from=EN>, last accessed on 28 July 2022.

² Dustmann, C., Fasani, F., Frattini, T., Minale, L., Schönberg, U., Sunde, U., and Trigari, A. 'On the economics and politics of refugee migration' (2017), *Economic Policy*, 32, p. 497. de Vroome, T., and van Tubergen, F. 'The employment experience of refugees in the Netherlands' (2010), 44, p. 376. Ager, A., and Strang, A. 'Understanding integration: A conceptual framework' (2008), *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21, p.166.

In the EU, access to the labour market is a shared competence, regulated for different groups under various legislative acts. For applicants of international protection access to the labour market is regulated under Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU).³ The idea of allowing access to the labour market for the applicants of international protection is connected with the aim of promoting the self-sufficiency of applicants even whilst their applications are being processed. This contributes also to having better prospects for eventual integration of those who will ultimately be granted protection.⁴

Hence, access to the labour market with an aim to increase applicants' self-reliance and possible integration prospects is regulated in EU Member States by the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) currently in force. However, in terms of practical implementation, EU Member States have considerable flexibility in deciding whether to allow this access once the nine months deadline set as a maximum in the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) is reached, directly after the application is lodged, or sometime in between. Although almost all EU Member States give applicants access to the labour market during the asylum procedure, the period after which access to employment is granted, varies considerably from one Member State to another.⁵

EU Member States experienced an unprecedented influx of incoming applicants for international protection in the period of 2014-2016,⁶ which, in addition to immense pressure on the asylum systems, also led to changes in the integration programmes and activities offered to applicants for international protection. According to the results of a study carried out by the European Migration Network (EMN) in 2018,⁷ one of the main areas where the changes were detected was access to the labour market, with the study reporting on different measures taken after 2015 to improve such access for applicants of international protection. For example, Belgium reduced the waiting period between the lodging of the application for international protection and access to the labour market from six to four months, while Latvia reduced this period from nine to six months. In Germany, the Integration Act of 6 August 2016 foresaw the creation of 100 000 work opportunities for applicants for international protection

³ 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, 29.6.2013, p. 96–116.

⁴ Recital 23 in the Directive 2013/33/EU.

⁵ Please see the results of relevant past ad hoc queries on that topic:

European Migration Network, 'Ad-Hoc Query on Residence permit and labour market needs'. Requested by COM on 11 December 2020. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2021-02/202075_residence_permit_and_labour_market_needs_en.pdf

European Migration Network, 'Ad-Hoc Query on access of international protection applicants to the labour market', Requested by LU EMN NCP on 19th July 2016. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/2016.1091b_lu_access_of_international_protection_applicants_to_the_labour_market.pdf

European Migration Network, 'Ad-Hoc Query on access to the labour market for asylum seekers', Requested by AT EMN NCP on 23rd January 2015. Compilation produced on 3rd June 2015. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/654_emn_ahq_access_to_the_labour_market_for_asylum_seekers_wider_dissemination.pdf

European Migration Network, 'Ad-Hoc Query on the rules of access to labour market for asylum seekers'. Requested by FR EMN NCP on 25th October 2010. Compilation produced on 10th December 2010. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/269_emn_ad-hoc_query_rules_of_access_to_labour_market_for_asylum_seekers_25oct2010_wider_disseminat_en.pdf

⁶ Overall figures of Eurostat show a total of 431 095 first time asylum applicants in 2013 and 626 960 in 2014 in the European Union. In 2015 and 2016 more than 1.2 million first time applicants for international protection were registered.

⁷ European Migration Network, 'Changing Influx of Asylum Seekers 2014-2016', 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/00_eu_changing_influx_study_synthesis_final_en.pdf, last accessed on 28 July 2022.

to bridge the long waiting period of several months between the lodging of a claim and the decision on the status. Austria and Sweden focussed on better matching of qualifications with employment and, alongside Belgium, introduced measures for a swifter recognition of applicants' qualifications. Belgium offered an alternative to the recognition of a diploma to the applicants for international protection. Namely, they introduced a trajectory which could include, depending on the profession / field of study, participation in a limited number of courses on a related master discipline, attending one or more seminars, practical training sessions, or authoring a paper. With the aim of better matching applicants' qualifications with available jobs, Sweden introduced a fast-track scheme. Finally, Finland piloted a prepaid debit card, to which the employer could transfer the salary, to overcome the obstacle posed by the fact that applicants for international protection were not allowed to open a bank account. Although, the above-mentioned study brought out several changes EU Member States carried out in the period of 2014-2016, an in-depth study for the more recent years is needed to examine further the laws, policies and practices (measures) of the EMN Member and Observer Countries and developments when it comes to the integration in the labour market of applicants for international protection.

As noted above, the first point of divergence between the EU Member States is *when* labour market access is granted. Further issues relate to variations in the laws, policies and measures which guarantee that this access, when granted, is *effective*.

Under the expression 'effective access', there are several questions that need to be looked at. As the practical implementation of access to the labour market is under national laws, questions arise about whether EMN Member and Observer Countries,⁸ for example, use labour market tests, and what kind of impact they have in practice. Another basis for divergence comes from the rights that applicants in different EU Member States are entitled to when accessing the labour market and whether they are guaranteed equal treatment with nationals of the Member State or similar to as other third-country nationals who are working in the European Union (EU) (for example under the Single Permit Directive⁹ or the Seasonal Workers Directive).¹⁰ Another issue which allows divergences between the EMN Member and Observer Countries and would need to be explored further, is whether applicants for international protection are excluded from some specific labour market sectors and, if so, if this is limited in time (for example in some cases for certain seasonal sectors). Another question would be on the rights of the applicants in different EU Member States as regards the length of employment permits and hence, contract duration, equal treatment for freedom of association and affiliation, education and vocational training, the recognition of professional qualifications (including formal qualifications that cannot be documented) and diplomas and social security.

⁸ The European Migration Network (EMN) is a Europe-wide network consisting of [National Contact Points \(NCPs\)](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-members_en) in the EMN Member and Observer Countries providing information on migration and asylum. EMN Member Countries: AT, BE, BG, HR, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SE. EMN Observer Countries: NO, GE, MD, UA. For more information, please see: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-members_en, last accessed 14 July 2022.

⁹ Directive 2011/98/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State OJ L 343, 23.12.2011, p. 1–9.

¹⁰ Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 375–390.

Access to the labour market for the applicants of international protection would need to be in full compliance with labour market standards (such as a minimum wage, working conditions), which should also help to avoid distortions in the labour market. Research suggests that differences between EU Member States' rules on access to the labour market may also create incentives for secondary movements of asylum seekers.¹¹

While several EU Member States do not apply any specific restrictions¹² with regard to the applicants' access to the labour market but as integration measures vary, it is important to have an up-to-date and clearer overview of the ways the integration to the labour market is currently provided and facilitated by the EMN Member and Observer Countries.

In a study carried out by the EMN and published in 2019, which explored the labour market integration of third-country nationals in the EU Member States, the following most common obstacles were identified:¹³

- The accreditation of job qualifications/assessment of skills of those arriving from outside the EU;
- Tackling discrimination within recruitment processes and;
- Managing varying levels of language skills in integration measures.

These difficulties were found to be more pronounced when dealing with migrant women or vulnerable groups.¹⁴ It is likely that similar difficulties can come into play when it comes to ensuring effective access to the labour market for applicants of international protection.

The integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market is a topic that has also emerged in the context of discussions on the 2016 Reception Conditions Directive Recast proposal¹⁵ as one where laws and practices differ from one EU Member State to another. In a briefing¹⁶ by the European Parliamentary Research Service (labour market integration of asylum-seekers and refugees) it was brought

¹¹ European Migration Network, 'EMN Policy brief on migrant's movements through the Mediterranean, 2016, <https://emnbelgium.be/publication/migrants-movements-through-mediterranean-emn-policy-brief-update>. See also: Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs, 'Advisory report: Increasing onward migration of asylum seekers in the EU', 2019, <https://www.adviescommissievoorvreemdelingenzaken.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2019/11/05/increasing-onward-migration-of-asylum-seekers-in-the-eu>, European Parliament, 'Secondary movements of asylum-seekers in the EU asylum system', 2017, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608728/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)608728_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608728/EPRS_BRI(2017)608728_EN.pdf), Brekke J.P., Brochmann G., 'Stuck in Transit: Secondary Migration of Asylum Seekers in Europe, National Differences, and the Dublin Regulation', (2015), *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 28 (2), p. 145.

¹² Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) COM(2016) 465 final 2016/0222 (COD) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0465&from=EN>

¹³ European Migration Network, 'EMN Study on Labour Market Integration of Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States', 2019, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/emn-study-labour-market-integration-third-country-nationals-eu-member-states-2019-02-14_en, last accessed on 04 August 2022.

¹⁴ This is also confirmed by other studies for example European Commission and Joint Research Centre, 'Gaps in the EU Labour Market Participation Rates: an intersectional assessment of the role of gender and migrant status', 2020, [https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC121425;EMN_Study_on_Integration_of_Migrant_Women_in_the_EU:_Policies_and_Measures_\(to_be_published_in_June_2022\)](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC121425;EMN_Study_on_Integration_of_Migrant_Women_in_the_EU:_Policies_and_Measures_(to_be_published_in_June_2022))

¹⁵ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) COM(2016) 465 final 2016/0222 (COD) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0465&from=EN> (Reception Conditions Directive Recast).

¹⁶ European Parliament, 'Briefing on the labour market integration of asylum-seekers and refugees', 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690651/EPRS_BRI%282021%29690651_EN.pdf, last accessed on 04 August 2022.

out that although national asylum rules have become more harmonised when it comes to access to the labour market to the applicants of international protection since 2013, differences in the approach to granting access persist across the EU¹⁷.

Against this backdrop, the study aims to research and compare EMN Member and Observer Countries' laws, policies and practices (measures) regarding the labour market integration of applicants for international protection in the period January 2017-June 2022.

2. STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the study is to inform the target audience (e.g. practitioners, policy officers, decision makers at both EU and national level, including the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), academic researchers, civil society organisations and the general public) on the labour market access of applicants for international protection, identifying existing laws, policies and measures regarding the labour market integration of applicants, good practices and challenges in the period of January 2017- June 2022.

The study's main objectives are:

- To map current national legal and policy frameworks in the EMN Member and Observer Countries as regards providing access to the labour market for international protection applicants.¹⁸
- To map current national measures¹⁹ in the EMN Member and Observer Countries as regards supporting effective access to the labour market for international protection applicants, and potential obstacles that hinder access.
- To identify the key actors, including where relevant on the local and regional level in the EMN Member and Observer Countries, responsible/involved in the design and implementation of support measures aimed at facilitating the labour market integration of international protection applicants.
- To provide examples of good practices and challenges from EMN Member and Observer Countries on the measures adopted at national level, but also, where applicable, at the regional or local levels, to facilitate access to the labour market for applicants of international protection.

¹⁷ European Migration Network: 'Ad-Hoc Query on Residence permits, borders and working conditions - Gaps in information', Requested by COM on 11 December 2020, https://www.emn.lt/uploads/Products/product_1833/202076_residence_permits_borders_and_working_conditions_gaps_in_information.pdf ; 'Ad-Hoc Query on residence permits and labour market needs' from 11 December 2020 (not published); Ad-Hoc Query on Labour market integration policies aimed at third-country nationals – update', Requested by Adolfo Sommarribas on 10 May 2020, https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/sites/default/files/2020-10/%5bWIDER%20COMPILATION%5d%20labour_market_integration_policies_aimed_at_third-country_nationals_-_update.pdf ; 'Ad-Hoc Query 2019.5 on Right to work for asylum seekers', Requested by Simon Woollaccott on 16 January 2019, <https://www.emnnetherlands.nl/sites/default/files/2019-09/2019%205%20Right%20to%20work%20for%20asylum%20seekers.pdf> .

¹⁸ Taking into account what is foreseen in the Article 15 of the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU).

¹⁹ EMN definition of 'measures' includes systematic initiatives (multi-year / long term), projects (ad-hoc) and legislative (structural) measures that are used to implement the integration policies (including those funded by governments but implemented by NGOs on behalf of the governments).

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study addresses third country nationals that have applied for international protection in the EMN Member and Observer Countries and would benefit from the access to the labour market in the meaning of Article 15 of the Directive Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) currently in force in the EU or in the meaning of any other equivalent national act that regulates access to the labour market for the international protection applicants.

The reporting period for this study ranges from 2017 to 2022, depending on the area of analysis (i.e. data, policies, laws, measures):

- Data: 2017–June 2022
- Policies/laws: As of August/September/October 2022
- Measures: As of August/September/October 2022

This period covers years after the high migration flows seen in 2015-2016 and after the Reception Conditions Directive Recast proposal by the European Commission. In addition, this period will give an overview of the most recent changes in the EMN Member and Observer Countries' laws, policies and practices as regards facilitating access to the labour market.

This study will present and compare laws, policies and measures for labour market integration for applicants of international protection in EMN Member and Observer Countries, discuss relevant evidence on the ways integration to the labour market is provided and draw good practices and challenges.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on national reports prepared by the EMN National Contact Points (NCPs).

The identification of a measure as a "good practice" in the context of this study will draw inspiration from the European Website on Integration, where a good practice is defined as a measure that is "effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and that reliably lead[s] to a desired result". The selection of the measure should be made by an expert working in the field (e.g. policy-maker; service provider; civil society organisation; migrant organisations) or based on studies or evaluations.²⁰

In the context of this study the terms 'laws, policies and measures' are defined as follows:

- 'Laws' regulate the legislative framework providing the access to the labour market of the applicants for international protection.
- 'Policies' refer to targeted integration strategies and action plans but also broader policy instruments relevant to the integration in the labour market.
- 'Measures' refer to systematic initiatives (multi-year / long term), projects (ad-hoc) and legislative (structural) measures that are used to implement the (labour market) integration policies (This includes for example loans that are granted to applicants of international protection for starting a business. This includes also

²⁰ European Commission, 'European Website on Integration – What are 'good practices'?', 2014, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/page/what-are-good-practices_en , last accessed 04 August 2022.

those measures funded by governments but implemented by NGOs on behalf of the governments).

5. EU LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

According to article 78 the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (EUTF)²¹ the EU shall develop a common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection with a view to offering appropriate status to any third-country national requiring international protection and ensuring compliance with the principle of *non-refoulement*. This policy must be in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees, and other relevant treaties. According to the second paragraph of the same article, the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt measures for a common European asylum system comprising standards concerning the conditions for the reception of applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection. With this aim in mind and in order to promote the self-sufficiency of applicants and to limit wide discrepancies between EU Member States, the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU)²² provides for rules on the applicants' access to the labour market. According to article 2 of the Reception Conditions Directive EU Member States shall decide the conditions for granting access to the labour market for the applicant, in accordance with their national law, while ensuring that applicants have effective access to the labour market.

According to article 15 in the current Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) EU Member States shall ensure that applicants have access to the labour market no later than nine months from the date when the application for international protection was lodged, if a first instance decision by the competent authority has not been taken and the delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.

According to the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) article 15(2), EU Member States shall decide the conditions for granting access to the labour market for the applicant, in accordance with their national law, while ensuring that applicants have *effective access* to the labour market. When it comes to ensuring access to the labour market to the applicants of international protection, for reasons of labour market policies, EU Member States may give priority to EU citizens and nationals of State parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EAA), and to legally resident third-country nationals. According to Article 15(3) of the same Directive access to the labour market for applicants of international protection shall not be withdrawn during appeals procedures, where an appeal against a negative decision in a regular procedure has suspensive effect, until such time as a negative decision on the appeal is notified.

In the Reception Condition Directive Recast proposal COM(2016) 465 final, the European Commission has proposed to further reduce the time-limit for access to the labour market from no later than nine months to no later than six months from the lodging of the application. In the same proposal, EU Member States were also encouraged to grant access to the labour market no later than three months from the lodging of the application where the application is likely to be well-founded.

Other relevant policy instruments include:

²¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>

²² 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, 29.6.2013

- The Pact on Migration and Asylum,²³ that was proposed by the European Commission on 23 September 2020, but which also includes proposals by the Commission from 2016. With the Pact, the Commission is proposing a fresh start on migration, bringing together policy in the areas of migration, asylum, integration and border management. From 2016, among others a proposal for the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) was kept, which regulates the access to the labour market.
- EU Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027²⁴ promotes an integrated approach to migrants' inclusion and aims to create close synergies with existing and upcoming EU strategies to foster equality and social cohesion to ensure everyone is fully included and participates in European societies.
- EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025,²⁵ which was published on 18 September 2020 by the European Commission to step up action against racism in the EU.

6. PRIMARY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

The study seeks to address four primary questions:

- What does the available data /research tell about the situation of international protection applicants in the labour markets of EMN Member and Observer Countries?
- To what extent are international protection applicants specifically addressed in national integration policies with regard to labour market integration in EMN Member and Observer Countries (e.g. strategies, action plans and government programmes)?
- How is access to employment and self-employment for applicants of international protection regulated in the EMN Member and Observer Countries?
- To what extent /and what kind of targeted labour market integration measures are available in the EMN Member and Observer Countries, specifically addressing applicants of international protection, and what has been identified as good practices/challenges in this area?

7. RELEVANT SOURCES AND LITERATURE

EMN STUDIES AND INFORMS

- European Migration Network and OECD, 'Skills mobility partnerships: exploring innovative approaches to labour migration', Inform, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2022-03/2022_March_Joint_EMN-OECD_Inform_Skills_Mobility_Partnerships.EN_.pdf

²³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, COM/2020/609 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0609>.

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, COM/2020/758 final, [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0758 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758).

²⁵ European Commission, EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025, [EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025 | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-racism/), last accessed on 04 August 2022.

- European Migration Network, 'Labour market integration of third-country nationals in EU Member States' Synthesis report, 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2019-02/00_eu_labour_market_integration_final_en.pdf
- European Migration Network, 'Social benefits and rights for beneficiaries of international protection', Inform, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/00_eu_social_benefits_inform_en.pdf
- European Migration Network, 'Changing Influx of Asylum Seekers 2014-2016', Synthesis Report, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/00_eu_changing_influx_study_synthesis_final_en.pdf
- European Migration Network, 'Integration of beneficiaries of international/humanitarian protection into the labour market: policies and good practices', Synthesis Report, 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/sites/default/files/2016-09/emn-studies-00_integration_of_beneficiaries_of_international_protection_eu_2015_en_final.pdf

AHQs:

- Ad-Hoc Query on Residence permit and labour market needs. Requested by COM on 11 December 2020. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2021-02/202075_residence_permit_and_labour_market_needs_en.pdf
- Ad-Hoc Query on access of international protection applicants to the labour market Requested by LU EMN NCP on 19th July 2016. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/2016.1091b_lu_access_of_international_protection_applicants_to_the_labour_market.pdf
- Ad-Hoc Query on access to the labour market for asylum seekers Requested by AT EMN NCP on 23rd January 2015. Compilation produced on 3rd June 2015. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/654_emn_ahq_access_to_the_labour_market_for_asylum_seekers_wider_dissemination.pdf
- Ad-Hoc Query on The rules of access to labour market for asylum seekers Requested by FR EMN NCP on 25th October 2010. Compilation produced on 10th December 2010. Link: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/269_emn_ad-hoc_query_rules_of_access_to_labour_market_for_asylum_seekers_25oct2010_wider_dissemination_en.pdf

8. AVAILABLE STATISTICS

- Eurostat - Asylum applicants by type of applicant, citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data (rounded) (migr_asyappctza)
- National statistics, applications/grants/refusals of the applications to access the labour market/self-employment as well as the employment rates of applicants for international protection, if available (see Q3)

9. DEFINITIONS

The following key terms are used in the common template. The definitions are taken from the EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary,²⁶ unless specified otherwise in footnotes.

- **Access to procedures for recognition of qualifications:** In the EU migration context, conditions and requirements governing the admission to procedures for recognition of professional diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications for third-country nationals (legally resident third-country nationals, beneficiaries of international protection) in EU Member States in accordance with the relevant national procedures.
- **Access to employment (also referred to in the study as labour market):** In the EU migration context, authorization of third-country nationals (legally resident migrants, beneficiaries and applicants for international protection to engage in employed or self-employed activities in EU Member States subject to the rules generally applicable to the profession and public service, as well as employment and working conditions.
- **Applicant for international protection:** A third-country national or a stateless person who has made an application for international protection in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken.
- **Integration:** In the EU context, a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU Member States.
- **Integration indicators:** Benchmarks used to measure the integration of migrants in specific policy areas, such as employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship.

10. ADVISORY GROUP

A core AG, consisting of four NCPs, COM and the Service Provider has been established to follow the development of the common template very closely and provide dedicated input and support.

- COM
- ICF/ EMN Service Provider
- AT NCP
- IE NCP
- IT NCP
- CY NCP
- ME NCP (Observer Country)

The following third parties will be invited to contribute to this study:

- European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

²⁶ EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en, last accessed on 04 August 2022.

- European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC)
 - European Integration Network (EIN)
 - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network)

11. TIMETABLE

The following tentative timetable has been proposed for the Study going forward:

Date	Action
Study specifications	
12 May 2022	Circulation of the first draft to the AG for written feedback (one-week deadline for review)
30 May 2022	First AG meeting and discussions on the written feedback
01 June 2022	Circulation of the second draft to the AG (one-week deadline for review)
20 June 2022	Second AG meeting and discussions on the written feedback
27 June 2022	Circulation of the third draft to the AG and study lead (three days for review)
11 July 2022	Circulation of the final draft to NCPs (two weeks deadline for review)
08 Aug 2022	Launch of the study
National reports TBC	
25 Nov 2022	Submission of national reports by EMN NCPs
Drafting of study	
09 Dec 2022	Draft of the study to COM and AG members (one-week deadline for review)
16 Dec 2022	Deadline for comments
7 Jan 2023	Circulation of the first draft to all NCPs (two-weeks deadline for review)
23 Jan 2023	Deadline for comments
3 Feb 2023	Circulation of the second draft to COM and all NCPs (two-weeks deadline for review)
17 Feb 2023	Deadline for comments
3 March 2023	Circulation of the third (final) draft SR to COM and all NCPs (two-weeks deadline for review)
17 March 2023	Deadline for comments
31 April 2023	Publication

12. TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Common Template of EMN Study 2022

The integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market

NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION FROM GREECE

Disclaimer: The following information has been provided primarily for the purpose of contributing to this EMN Study. The EMN NCP has provided information that is, to the best of its knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of the EMN NCPs' Member Country.

Top-line factsheet [max. 1 page]

The top-line factsheet will serve as an overview of the **national contribution** introducing the study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policy-makers. Please add any innovative or visual presentation that can carry through into the study as possible infographics and visual elements.

Please provide a concise summary of the main findings of Sections 1-5:

The E.U. hosts 21.6 million third country nationals, who represent 4.2% of the total population of the EU. The new migrants who settle in the E.U. every year represent about 0.5% of the EU population.

Most migrants residing in the E.U. are likely to remain in the medium term. Therefore, **finding a job and integrating smoothly into society is crucial for their successful integration.** Social support such as access to education, health care, employment and the provision of assistance for children is equally important.

In the framework of implementing policies relevant to migration and asylum, Greece aims at achieving **substantial integration of the applicants and beneficiaries of international protection into Greek society.**

For the implementation of the Greek integration model, **awareness, mobilization and participation** of the local society and community in the integration process is of primary importance. In this context, **the local authorities are the main implementing mechanism of integration initiatives.** At the same time, **they are co-shaping the development of integration policies,** which are supervised and coordinated by the central administration, thus promoting a close, open and constructive cooperation among the public administrative structures of the state.

Finally, equally necessary and important is the **contribution of civil society and international organizations** in the implementation of the actions planned for reception and integration.

Since 2013, Greece has drawn up three National Strategies in total, regarding the social integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection of third-country nationals. These are the *National Strategy for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals* of 2013, the *National Strategy for Integration* of 2019 and finally, the *National Strategy for the Social Integration of Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection*, which was drafted in 2021 and is currently being implemented.

The text of the National Integration Strategy of 2021 reflects a revised strategy that aligns with the new data that have been formed at the national, European and international level. In addition, the New National Strategy for Integration is based on the new action plan of the European Union and adopts the recommendations of the European Commission on social inclusion, as formulated in its New Action Plan (24.11.2020), with an emphasis on early action and on the pre-integration process for those with a refugee profile.

Similar recommendations have been made by international organizations such as the OECD, the UN International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), which works to find innovative solutions to regional challenges related to migration and which Greece joined in October 2021 as its 19th member.

The New National Strategy addresses both asylum seekers and recognized beneficiaries of international protection and is harmonized with the current legislative framework.

It includes **four main pillars**, which revolve around strengthening independent living, social housing, employment and social welfare:

(a) Pre-integration of asylum seekers for the smooth transition of adults into professional life and of minors from non-formal to formal education without discrimination. Protection of rights and promotion of the European way of life and of the Rule of Law. Prevention and efficient protection from all forms of violence.

(b) Social integration of beneficiaries of international protection through intensive education and training programs to facilitate access of beneficiaries to the labour market. Promotion of the European way of life.

(c) Prevention and efficient protection from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse through enhancing of reporting mechanisms and

(d) Monitoring and supervision of the integration process using commonly accepted and measurable indicators.

In terms of its philosophy, the New National Strategy for Integration is inspired by the principle that social integration is achieved through a two-way integration process, which should be supported by cooperation, dialogue and engagement/involvement of the host society at all stages (from reception to completion of integration).

Examining the pillars above, it is obvious that the New National Strategy focuses on the essential integration of applicants for international protection, beneficiaries of international protection, unaccompanied minors and migrants in Greek society. The effective implementation of such a policy requires cooperation with the relevant ministries and local authorities, as well as an on-going dialogue with civil society entities.

In addition, in the fall of 2021, the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs prepared the **National**

Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (ESKE), which was submitted to the European Commission. The aim of this new National Strategy is to define and document the strategic options of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, during the new programming period 2021-2027, through the development of an integrated policy to prevent and combat labour and social exclusion, mainly of special and vulnerable groups of the population living in Greece, including applicants for international protection.

With reference to the statistical data presented and analysed within this study, it is worth mentioning that overall from 2017 to 2019 there has been an increase in the number of international protection applications submitted in Greece, while from 2020 to June 2022, the statistics show an ever-increasing decrease in applications, which can be partially explained by the pandemic crisis that led to the adoption of significant restrictive measures by the Greek state.

Regarding the examination of statistical data based on gender, as analysed below, the number of male applicants for international protection is manifold comparing to that of female applicants, for each year under review. Regarding the distribution of the age range, the age group in which most applications for international protection are registered, is between eighteen (18) and thirty-four (34) years old. In particular, almost two out of three applicants belong to the 18-34 age group (65%), while only 1% of asylum seekers are over 65 years old.

Finally, this study highlights measures taken by the Greek state, as well as useful information on the status regulating applicants for international protection in Greek territory, with an emphasis on the field of integration into the labour market, which also constitutes the central theme of the present study.

Section 1: Integration of applicants for international protection - data and debates

This section aims to provide an overview of the main trends with regard to international protection applicants, as well as present information on public debates (if any).

Q1. Please provide an overview of the main trends (number of all applications for international protection, age, sex, citizenship) in working-age²⁷ international protection applicants,²⁸ in your country in the period January 2017-June 2022 as extracted from Eurostat and included in the statistical Annex.

1.1. Overview of the number of applications for international protection by age, gender and nationality (overall)

Examining Eurostat data regarding the number of applications for international protection registered in Greece in total for the period 2017-2022, changes are observed regarding the number of submitted applications for international protection.

In particular, from 2017 to 2018, there is a 14% increase in applications, while from 2018 to 2019 there is also a 16% increase. From 2020 onwards, a large downward trend has been recorded, which can largely be attributed to the restrictive measures taken by our country in the context of the pandemic crisis (from 58865 applications in 2019 to 12005 applications in 2022). In particular,

²⁷ Covering all international protection applicants aged 14 years old and beyond, as per Eurostat's age ranges.

²⁸ The files shared with NCPs also present data on first time international protection applicants. This information is available for NCPs' reference and information. The analysis, however, should focus on **all** working-age asylum applicants.

from 2019 to 2020, there is a 44% decrease in the number of applications, while from 2020 to 2021 an additional decrease in submitted applications is recorded by 28%. With reference to the year 2022, most of the registrations are observed in the month of June (2625) while the fewest in the month of February (1640).

1.1.1. Gender

Table 1:

Number of asylum applicants per gender (per year, rounded)					
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Female	11810	14065	16780	9570	4580
Male	32500	36595	42085	23355	19100
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0

Taking gender as a criterion, it is observed that the number of male applicants for international protection is manifold comparing to that of female applicants, in each year under review. In particular, for the period 2017-2021, male applicants for international protection reach a percentage of 73%, almost three times the percentage of women, which reaches 27%.

However, as observed, while the number of applications for international protection for both genders initially shows an upward trend from 2017 to 2019, from 2020 onwards there is also a downward trend, which can be attributed, as already mentioned, to the restrictive measures of the pandemic (for the male population from 32500 applications in 2017 to 9795 in 2022 and for women from 11810 applications in 2017 to 2220 in 2022). As for the third category "unknown gender", there appears to have been no registration of applications throughout the time period under review.

1.1.2 Age

Table 2:

Number of asylum applicants per age (per year, rounded)					
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
14-17	5445	5470	6945	3615	3790
18-34	28640	33510	38545	21710	14955
35-64	9985	11390	12990	7410	4845
65 +	240	295	385	190	90

Regarding the distribution of the age range, the age group in which most applications for international protection are registered, is between eighteen (18) and thirty-four (34) years old. In particular, almost two out of three applicants belong to the 18-34 age group (65%).

In addition, the 18-34 age group shows an increasing trend of almost 35% from 2017 to 2019 (28640 applications in 2017 which reached 38545 applications in 2019), while from 2020 onwards, a decreasing trend is observed, compared to

2017. In particular, the decrease in applications for the above age group by the end of 2022 compared to 2017 is almost 74% (28640 applications in 2017 which reached 7520 applications at the end of 2022).

Following with significantly fewer registered applications is the age group of thirty-five (35) to sixty-four (64) years which shows an upward trend until 2019 of about 27% (9985 applications in 2017 reaching 12990 in 2019) and then also recorded a downward trend from 2020 to 2022. Specifically at the end of 2022 the applications compared to 2017 decreased very significantly, by almost 75% (9985 applications in 2017 which decreased to 2510 by 2022).

This is followed by the age group of fourteen (14) to seventeen (17) years old, which also shows an increasing trend in the registration of applications for the provision of international protection from 2017 to 2019, and then also follows a decreasing trend from 2020 to 2022 (5445 in 2017 which reached 6945 in 2021, which by the end of 2022 decreased by about 48%, reaching 1910 applications). Finally, the lowest percentages of applications have been recorded in the age group of sixty-five (65) and older. Specifically, only 1% of asylum seekers are over 65 years old. And in this particular age group, while there was an increasing trend until 2019, it was then followed by a general downward trend from 2020 to the end of 2022 (240 applications in 2017 which at the end of 2022 decreased to 65, a decrease of about 70%).

1.1.3 Nationality

Looking at the registered applications for international protection based on the nationality of the applicants for the period 2017 to 2022, it becomes clear, at a first glance, that there is considerable variation between states. However, in order to facilitate the study, here is a table of the five most popular countries **per year under review** from 2017 to 2022, based on the number of registered applications submitted to Greece by third-country nationals.

Table 3: Top five countries per number of submitted applications of third-country nationals, per year under review

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Syria (10030 applications)	Afghanistan (8480 applications)	Afghanistan (16165 applications)	Afghanistan (8420 applications)	Pakistan (4225 applications)	Afghanistan (1915 applications)
Pakistan (8810 applications)	Syria (8135 applications)	Pakistan (7060 applications)	Syria (5840 applications)	Afghanistan (3225 applications)	Pakistan (1805 applications)
Afghanistan (5475 applications)	Pakistan (7650 applications)	Syria (6675 applications)	Pakistan (3815 applications)	Syria (2750 applications)	Syria (1555 applications)
Iraq (4885 applications)	Iraq (6075 applications)	Iraq (3590 applications)	Bangladesh (1630 applications)	Bangladesh (2725 applications)	Bangladesh (1050 applications)

Albania (2035 applications)	Turkey (3175 applications)	Congo (2845 applications)	Congo (1615 applications)	Somalia (1470 applications)	Palestine (700 applications)
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Following the above analysis, **the top five nationalities** for the years 2017-2021 are, in order, **Afghanistan** at 20%, **Syria** at 16%, **Pakistan** at 15%, **Iraq** at 8% and **Turkey** at 5%. Regarding the year 2022, **the top three countries** are in order **Afghanistan** at 16%, **Pakistan** at 15% and **Syria** at 13%.

In particular, starting from 2017, **Syria** seems to be the country with the most registered applications and indeed with a fairly large difference compared to the rest, which can be explained by the civil war raging in the country, while gradually in the following years there appears to be a decrease in the number of registered applications, but it still remains a country with a consistently high rate throughout the time period considered.

Next, **Afghanistan** presents an equally high number of registered applications, from 2017 to 2022, peaking in 2019, where the number of applications reached 16165. Following that, Pakistan remains consistently in the top three countries from 2019 to 2022, while, as can be seen from the table, from 2020 onwards, **Bangladesh** has been consistently ranked fourth, while **Albania, Turkey, Congo, Somalia** and **Palestine** have been ranked fifth from 2017 to June 2022 respectively.

1.2. Overview of the number of applications for international protection based on age, gender and nationality (first time applicants)

Subsequently, as to the number of applications registered per year and per category under review regarding applicants for international protection for the first time in our country (first time applicants), it is not considered appropriate to provide a detailed overview of the available data, as there are no significant differences in proportion to the overall data that we have examined above (overall analysis).

However, it is noted that from 2017 to 2020, the vast majority of asylum applicants concern third-country nationals who submitted a request for the first time, while in 2021 the percentage of subsequent applications reached 19% of all applications international protection.

Q2. Is the labour market situation²⁹ of international protection applicants monitored with official data (gathered by the authorities and reliable)? If so, please provide an overview in terms of indicators that are used in your country, focus on specific groups, data collection intervals etc.

No. No specific indicators are applied to monitor the labour market situation of applicants for international protection, therefore no data are available for analysis.

²⁹ For example: participation rates/unemployment rates of applicants for international protection.

- Q3. Are statistics available on applications/grants/refusals of the applications to access the labour market/self-employment as well as the employment rates of applicants for international protection? Yes/No
If yes, then please provide the totals per year in the period 2017-2022.

NO

Nevertheless, it is noted that in Greece, according to article 57 of Law 4939/2022 "Ratification of the Code of Legislation on the reception, international protection of third-country nationals and stateless persons and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced foreigners" (A'111), applicants of international protection have the right to access the labour market after the lapse of six (6) months from the completion of the procedure for filing the application for international protection, under the terms and conditions provided for by Greek legislation.

In particular, the applicants of international protection, providing that they are in possession of an "international protection applicant's card" or an "asylum applicant's card", have the right to access dependent work or the provision of services or work, throughout the period of validity of the card. The right to access the labour market is automatically revoked in the event of a negative decision, which does not have a suspensive nature, and the applicants do not have the right to stay in the country.

- Q4. What are the main public and policy debates regarding applicants for international protection's labour market integration (e.g. time frame for access, opportunities and challenges)?

The issue of international protection applicants' access to the labour market is regulated by Greek legislation, as analysed above in Q3.

However, the Greek state constantly ensures to take initiatives that support applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, in order for the latter to be able to make use of their skills, especially in view of the recorded shortage in labour force, contributing thus to the increase of the Greek GDP. In this way, the integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection into the country's workforce is being promoted, resulting into strengthening sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, construction and others³⁰. The measures taken by the Greek state in combination with the allocated amount of 32 million euros from the Recovery Fund for training programs for these people, effectively contribute towards the integration of these social groups into the labour market.

Section 2: Integration policies in the EMN Member and Observer Countries

This part of the study describes the Member Country's organisational approach towards labour-market integration policy and analyses how applicants of international protection are addressed in national labour market integration policies for third-country nationals.

³⁰ <https://migration.gov.gr/periodeia-stin-ipeiro-gia-ta-nea-programmata-entaxis/>

Q5. Does your state have a specific policy/ strategy to support the labour market integration of third-country nationals? Yes/No^{31 32}

YES

- a. if yes, does it encompass applicants of international protection? Yes/No
 - i. if yes, please provide a brief outline of the strategy / policy in place in your country to integrate applicants of international protection into the labour market.

Since 2013, Greece has drawn up three National Strategies regarding the social integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection of third-country nationals. These are the National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Citizens of 2013, then the National Strategy for Integration of 2019 and finally, the **National Strategy for the Social Integration of Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection**, which was drafted in 2021.

The current National Strategy concerns both the integration of applicants for international protection and beneficiaries of international protection. Especially in the case of applicants for international protection, this National Strategy introduces a **pre-integration procedure. However, in the so-called pre-integration process of applicants for international protection, no actions are foreseen for their (pre)integration into the labour market, as is the case with beneficiaries of international protection.**

In addition, the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, prepared **the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (ESKE)** which was submitted to the European Commission in the fall of 2021. The aim of the new National Strategy is to delineate and document the strategic options of the said Ministry, during the new program period 2021-2027, through the development of an integrated policy to prevent and combat labour and social exclusion, mainly of special and vulnerable groups of the population living in Greece, including applicants for international protection. In this context, there's been a close cooperation with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in developing a synergy with the National Strategy for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and measures (implemented and planned) of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum were included, without changing the competences of the latter, in terms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its policy and measures. The measures for applicants for international protection are included in the Operational Axis (201,302,403) of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (ESKE).

Furthermore, besides the aforementioned National Strategies, the right of access to labour market for the asylum applicants is expressly provided by **article 57 of Law 4939/2022 as analysed above.**³³

³¹ Please note that measures aimed at supporting labour market integration of applicants are discussed in section 4.

³² Please note that regional/local level strategies/policies should be reported only if national is not available.

³³ According to article 75 of Law 4939/2022: 1. The card is valid for one (1) year and is renewed until the completion of the examination process of the application for international protection. 2. By decision of the Governor of the Asylum Service, the validity period of the cards of applicants/persons from a

- ii. if no, please answer question 5b below
 - b. if no, how is the labour market integration of applicants for international protection addressed? Is there a mainstreaming labour market integration approach applicable? Yes/No
 - i. if no, please provide a reason, if available, and describe briefly how international protection applicants are treated in practice with regard to labour market integration.
- Q6. Have there been any major changes in the strategy/policy to support the labour market integration of third-country nationals within the temporal scope of the study (January 2017 – June 2022)? Yes/No
- a. If yes, please explain briefly the content, including what was the driver and objective for these changes?

As mentioned above, on November 29, 2021, the National Strategy for the Social Integration of Asylum Seekers and Beneficiaries of International Protection was published. The National Strategy in question sets goals and provides actions for

specific country of origin may be reduced, taking into account the expected duration of issuing a decision in the first instance and, if it appears from the official statistics of the European Union that the percentage of granting international protection to applicants from that country, during the two (2) previous quarters, is lower than thirty-five percent (35%). In this case, the duration of the card cannot be longer than three (3) months. 3. By decision of the Head of the competent Receiving Authority, the period of validity of a specific applicant's card is limited, when the delivery of a decision is imminent or when a transfer is pending in the framework of the application of Regulation (EU) 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. In this case, the duration of the card cannot be longer than thirty (30) days. 4. By decision of the Head of the competent Receiving Authority, the period of validity of a specific applicant's card is limited depending on the procedure followed for examining his/her application. In particular, the duration of the bulletin cannot be longer than thirty (30) days in the cases of: a) applications that are examined with absolute priority, in accordance with the first paragraph of par. 7 of article 88, b) applications that are examined with priority, in accordance with the second paragraph of par. 7 of article 88, applications that are examined in accordance with par. 9 of article 88 (expedited procedure), and applications that are examined in accordance with article 89 (inadmissible) and c) applications that are examined with the border process. 5. Notification to the applicant of the rejection decision on his application results in the auto-exemption of the card. Against the rejection decision, the applicant may file an appeal before the Independent Appeals Committees, in accordance with article 97 of this Code, by legitimizing a lawyer for this purpose. 6. If the applicant is detained or is in a Reception and Identification Center or a Closed Controlled Facility, or if the application for international protection has been submitted in accordance with article 95 of this Code, the applicant's for international protection card is granted after the detention is lifted or the end of the reception and identification procedures or after the entry into the territory of the Country is allowed in accordance with par. 2 of article 95 of this Code. 7. If, when the detention is lifted, the applicant is not provided with a ticket, because the full registration has not taken place, paragraph 7 of article 69 of this Code shall apply. 8. If the applicant does not show up to renew the pass at the latest on the next working day after its expiry, it automatically ceases to be valid. Exceptionally, the expiration of this deadline is suspended in the event of force majeure, due to which its renewal becomes impossible, and this suspension lasts for the entire period of time that the force majeure lasts. In these cases, the applicant needs to invoke, in a certain way, the incidents that constitute force majeure or an insurmountable obstacle that made it impossible to renew the card on time, and the claim must be proven immediately with documentary evidence. 9. The competent Receiving Authorities are obliged to inform the electronic asylum system of any event that affected their smooth operation with a special note on it. Any malfunctions of the above system cannot be at the expense of the applicants. The validity of the tickets that expire during this malfunction is automatically extended for as long as it lasted. Allegations of the applicant concerning the malfunctioning of the electronic asylum system are proven by the granting of a relevant certificate from the Asylum Service. 10. In case of non-renewal of the card on the next working day after its expiry, the application for international protection or the appeal is examined according to the procedure of article 86 of this Code. 11. The ticket can be issued in the form of a card with electronic registration and renewal, as well as by any suitable technological means. By decision of the Minister of Migration and Asylum, every relevant detail for the implementation of this article is regulated.

the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the labour market, but not for the (pre)integration into the labour market of applicants for international protection.

As regards the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, a key pillar (the second of the four) of the aforementioned National Strategy provides for the social integration of beneficiaries of international protection with the development of intensive education and training programs to facilitate the access of beneficiaries to the labour market as well as the promoting of the European way of life.

At this point, it should be noted that article 23 of the Presidential Decree 106/2020 established a separate unit for social integration, the "**Directorate of Social Integration**" whose competencies are described in the said Presidential decree. The Directorate of Social Integration is a unit of the General Secretariat of Migration Policy and has as its **operational objective the planning, monitoring and implementation of the integration policy of each national strategy for the social integration of legally resident third-country nationals in the country, as well as the corresponding sectoral policies and social integration programmes. The actions and measures planned and implemented, inter alia, by the Directorate of Social Integration target:**

A. The applicants for international protection during their stay and participation in the housing programmes of the reception system for:

- Greek language courses
- counselling on labour issues
- registering their professional profile

B. The beneficiaries of international protection for:

- facilitating their access to labour market and vocational training in cooperation with Ministries, local authorities, international organizations and civil society
- mapping their educational background, their work experience and their professional profile based on European or international tools for registering skills

C. The migrants for:

- faster and more effective granting of residence permit
- ensuring their access to labour market and education without discrimination
- and
- improving the services provided to them and ensuring their participation in society

Furthermore, regarding the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, an important policy change to support the integration of third-country nationals into the labour market took place in 2016, with the establishment of Community Centers, Roma Branches and Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) (Article 4 of Law 4368/2016 (21 A')).

The operational specifications of Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) were set by a relevant joint ministerial decision (Government Gazette 1344 B') while the Management Organisation Unit of Development Programmes (MOD) developed the Implementation and Operation Guide of the Community Centers (2016). According to the above, the Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) are tasked with the following:

1. Provision of information, services, advisory support on migrants' integration issues and networking

- Cooperation and referral of requests to other relevant structures, services and entities (Councils for Integration of Migrants, Associations of Migrants/Beneficiaries of International Protection, NGOs, Social Services)
- Implementation of courses and parallel actions.

In detail, the Services provided, per Axis, are:

- Provision of information, services, advisory support for migrants' integration issues and networking
- Provision of information and socio-psychological support to migrants and beneficiaries of international protection and especially vulnerable groups among them (e.g. women, children, etc.)
- Development of learning support for migrant children/beneficiaries of international protection of pre-school and school age and provision of information about language training actions for adults taking place in the region.
- Raising awareness of the local community and the fight against xenophobia, racism, human trafficking, etc.
- Promotion of volunteering
- Supporting the participation of migrants/beneficiaries of international protection in groups, associations, organizations of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, etc.
- Networking with other Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) and services/entities related to the integration of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection

2. Cooperation and referral of requests to other relevant structures, services and institutions (Migrant Integration Councils, Associations of migrants/beneficiaries of international protection, NGOs, social services).

- Diagnosing problems and referring them to specialized structures/services (Hostels for the homeless, abused women and victims of human trafficking, Structures for the disabled and people with mental health issues, Nurseries and Kindergartens, Targeted Actions for migrants/refugees, structures for the provision of basic goods, structures for the provision of rations, community pharmacies, Day-care centers for the elderly (KIFI), municipal clinics, etc.)
- Referral of requests and cooperation for inclusion of the target groups in language learning programs, training, employment, recognition of skills and qualifications from abroad, etc. Cooperation with the local labour market to gain access through counselling and escorting services (mentoring schemes).

3. In the framework of the Migrant Integration Centers (KEM), actions may be implemented in parallel, such as:

- Greek language courses and elements of Greek history and Greek culture for adult migrants and beneficiaries of international protection,
- Intercultural actions with an emphasis on the coexistence of children and young foreigners and natives,
- Actions to promote access to the labour market.

The aim and driving force for the establishment of the Community Centers was the need to support first-level local authority organisations in the implementation of social protection policies and in the development of a local point of reference for the reception, the provision of services and connection of citizens with all Social Programmes and Services implemented in their area of operation.

Q7. Are specific governance structures in place to support the labour market integration of international protection applicants? If yes, please provide an organigram or overview of the institutional framework for developing and implementing relevant strategy/policies/measures on the labour market integration of applicants for international protection.

A special structure at the local level is the Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) (see Q6a).

The Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in collaboration with the Special Service for the Coordination and Monitoring of Actions of the European Social Fund (EYSEKT), planned in 2016 the establishment and operation of "Migrant Integration Centers" (KEM) which are Annexes of the "Community Centers" of the Municipalities and are financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Regional Operational Programs (RPPs).

The Directorate of Social Integration, being responsible for the proper functioning of the integration structures at the local level, monitors the operation of the Migration assuming a coordinating role. Currently there are eleven (11) KEMs, which operate in ten (10) Municipalities of Greece and include the following three (3) axes with the corresponding services provided both generally (to migrants, holders of all types of residence permits, to beneficiaries of international protection and to asylum seekers) and more specifically (in cases of vulnerable third-country nationals).

Institutional framework for the Operation of KEMs consists of:

- article 4 of Law 4368/2016 (Government Gazette 21 A)
- articles 7 and 16 of Law 4445/2016 (Government Gazette 236 A')
- the joint ministerial decision D14 /15834/237 /19.04.2019 (Government Gazette 1344 B')
- the Implementation and Operation Guide of Community Centers drafted by Management Organisation Unit of Development Programmes (MOD) (May 2016)

- a. describe the key stakeholders and their role (government departments, public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)

The key stakeholders are the institutions of the National Mechanism for Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of social integration and social cohesion

policies, in the part that concerns measures and policies to support the integration into the labour market of applicants for international protection. On behalf of the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight against Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the competent agency is the Directorate of Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion which, as the core of the National Mechanism, aims to coordinate and evaluate policies for social protection, social cohesion and policies, which aim to ensure social solidarity and fight poverty and social exclusion.

At the local level, the basic structure is the Community Center with the Migrant Integration Centers (KEM), for the cases of those Community Centers that have KEMs. The main role of the Center is focused on the following axes:

- Receive – Inform – Support the people.
- Cooperate with Services and Structures.
- Cooperate with the local labour market to integrate the unemployed.

b. indicate the responsibilities of the different key actors, noting whether their role is specific to international protection applicants or more general.

Include national / regional /local structures where relevant.

The Directorate of Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for developing collaborations with national, regional and local entities for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (ESKE), as well as for the organization of work meetings, on-site visits, consultations, with the aim of promoting issues related to of the application of ESKE. Only the KEM's role is specified (see Q6).

Section 3: Accessing the labour market (employment and self-employment)

This part of the study describes how applicants of international protection can access the Member and Observer Countries' labour markets as well as enter self-employment.

Section 3.1. Procedures for accessing the labour market

Q8. Please describe the procedure required to enter the labour market/self-employment for an applicant for international protection in your state.

As already mentioned article 57 of Law 4939/2022 provides for the right to employment for the applicants for international protection after the lapse of six (6) months from the completion of the process of filing the application for international protection.

Furthermore, the interested parties, as long as they hold an "international protection applicant's card" or an "asylum applicant's card", have the right to access dependent work or the provision of services or work throughout the period of validity of the card. This right is automatically revoked in the event of a negative decision, which does not have a suspensive nature, and the applicants do not have the right to stay in the country.

Finally, applicants are required to inform the competent Reception Authority of any commencement of work or of each contract of dependent work that they enter into, by presenting a notice of commencement of work or a copy of the contract or the recruitment notice to the Public Employment Service (D.YP.A.) or the recruitment notice in the Business Service Information System (ERGANI). In case of violation of this obligation, provisions of par.3 of Article 61 of Law 4939/2022 shall apply, according to which the competent reception authority stops access to the material reception conditions when it is established that the applicant has concealed financial resources and has, as a consequence, benefited unfairly from the material reception conditions.

- a. Does your state regulate differently access to employment or self-employment?

The applicants for international protection have access to dependent work or to the provision of services or work throughout the period of validity of the card. But not access to independent professional/ financial activity. The same terms stand for the access to employment or self-employment.

- b. Please provide in your response an overview of the applicable legal framework and make a clear distinction between what is prescribed in laws, policy documents and practice.

About the access of applicants into labour market, please see Q8

Furthermore, applicants have access to the registration and monitoring of vocational training programs, under the same conditions as Greek citizens, regardless of whether they have access to the labour market or not. Access to vocational training, linked to an employment contract, requires access to the labour market (Article 584 of Law 4939/2022).

For the needs of medical care, access to health services, the labour market and social security, applicants for international protection are assigned a Temporary Foreigner's Insurance and Health Care Number (P.A.A.Y.P.A.). The P.A.A.Y.P.A. is granted at the same time a person gets the special asylum applicant card, issued by the Asylum Service, and its number corresponds to it and remains active throughout the period of examination of the asylum application (par.2, Article 59 of Law 4939/2022).

Access to the labour market is made by hiring the applicant for international protection by the employer. The recruitment announcement is posted on the ERGANI business service information system. The prerequisite for the recruitment announcement is the possession of the international protection applicant card, the expiration of the 6-month time period, the possession of the Tax Identification Number and the Temporary Foreigner's Insurance and Health Care number (P.A.A.Y.P.A.).

Section 3.1.1. Employment (If the access is regulated differently for employment and self-employment)

See Q8a

Q9. What is the minimum period from lodging an application for international protection after which an applicant has access to the labour market?³⁴

As noted above, the minimum period required is set at six (6) months from the completion of the process of filing the application for international protection.

Q10. Please describe the reasoning related to the minimum period of accessing the labour market and conditions of access to the labour market/self-employment.

Greece has incorporated in national legislation the recast of the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), according to art. 15, pr.1 of which, Member States should ensure that applicants have access to the labour market within nine (9) months from the date on which the application for international protection was submitted, if no such decision has been taken by the competent authority and the delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.

As mentioned above, access to the labour market is made by hiring the applicant for international protection by the employer. The recruitment announcement is posted on the ERGANI business service information system. The prerequisite for the recruitment announcement is the possession of the international protection applicant card, the expiration of the 6-month time period, the possession of the Tax Identification Number and the Temporary Foreigner's Insurance and Health Care number (P.A.A.Y.P.A).

Q11. Is the right to access the labour market automatic after a specified period?
Yes/No

Q12. What kind of documents are necessary in order to access the labour market?³⁵

See Q10

Q13. Is a work permit or another type of administrative application/decision necessary for accessing the labour market? Yes/No

In the past, a "work permit" used to be a prerequisite document for asylum applicants in Greece in order to get access to the labour market. However, art 69 of Law 4375/2016 repealed this prerequisite. A prerequisite for the recruitment announcement is the possession of the international protection applicant card, the possession of the Tax Identification Number and the Temporary Foreigner's Insurance and Health Care number (P.A.A.Y.P.A).

Sometimes a special permit or additional formalities are required for certain categories of work (for example, employment in establishments where certain health standards must be met)

- a. if yes, please specify:
 - i. who is required to submit the application, the applicant/employer/jointly by both?

³⁴ According to the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) article 15(1) Member States shall ensure that applicants have access to the labour market no later than 9 months from the date when the application for international protection was lodged if a first instance decision by the competent authority has not been taken and the delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.

³⁵ According to Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU) article 6, Member States shall ensure applicants have a document that proves they are applicant.

- ii. which authority is responsible for granting access to the labour market?
- iii. what are the criteria for obtaining the work permit?
- iv. what is the average duration of the procedure to grant access to the labour market? If applicable, please also add any official time limits according to law/policy.

Section 3.1.2. Self-employment (if the access is regulated differently for employment and self-employment)

Q14. Is self-employment of international protection applicants permitted in your state? Yes/No

Applicants for international protection do not have the right to have independent financial/professional activity.

- a. if yes:
 - i. what is the minimum period from lodging an international protection application after which an applicant has access to self-employment?
 - ii. which authority is responsible for granting access to self-employment?

Section 3.2. Conditions and limitations in accessing the labour market

Please provide a reference to the legal base (where relevant, linking it to what is described in Q8, if applicable, and make a clear distinction between what is prescribed in laws, policy guidance and practice).

Q15. If applicable, please describe the period of validity and conditions of the authorisation to access the labour market/self-employment.

As already mentioned, applicants for international protection, after the lapse of six months from the completion of the process of submitting the application for international protection, and if they hold a valid "international protection applicant's card" or "asylum applicant's card", have the right to access dependent work or the provision of services or work.

The card is valid for six (6) months and is renewed until the completion of the examination process of the application for international protection. By decision of the Director of the Asylum Service, the period of validity of the cards of applicants from a specific country of origin may be reduced, taking into account the expected duration of issuing a decision in the first degree and since the official statistics of the European Union show that the rate of granting international protection to applicants from that country, during the two previous quarters, is lower than thirty-five percent (35%). In this case, the duration of the card cannot be longer than three (3) months. (Article 70 of Law 4636/2019).

Q16. Is the authorisation limited to certain employment sectors or occupations? In other words, are applicants for international protection excluded from some labour market sectors or from certain occupations? Yes/No.

No, they are not excluded from sectors of the labour market, unless specified otherwise in regulated professions.

If yes, from which ones?

Q17. Is employment restricted to a single employer?

NO

Q18. If applicable, please describe the conditions and procedures of the renewal of the authorisation to access the labour market. Are they the same for all employment sectors and occupations?

See Q15

Q19. Does your Member Country give priority to EU and EEA citizens (Art. 15/2 clause 2 of the Reception Conditions Directive Recast (2013/33/EU)) and to other legally resident third-country nationals in accessing the labour market? Yes/No
a. if yes, please specify how priority is given in law/policy and in practice (labour market test, minimum share of employment by EU/EEA nationals, occupations lists etc.)?

Q20. Are there any other limitations in place, either in law or in specific measures relating to applicants of international protection for accessing labour market / self-employment?

Section 4: Support measures to enhance labour market integration and self-employment

This part of the study looks at examples of labour market integration measures targeting applicants of international protection.

Please indicate (where applicable) in the table below the main policy or legislative measures,³⁶ and their rationale and aims, that make up your policy / strategy (according to answer to Q5 above) to support the labour market integration/self-employment of applicants for international protection, by integration area. Please focus on measures that specifically aim at facilitating labour market access for the international protection applicants.³⁷

³⁶ Please make sure legislative and policy actions are distinguished from each other.

³⁷ Thereby, please focus on: either (1) specific measures tailoring international protection applicants or (2) general measures that also include international protection applicants (in those cases where specific measures are not available/relevant).

Area/component	Overview of the main measures Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.	Stakeholders Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)	Target group Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?
1. Language acquisition	<p>In the context of the National Strategy for Social Integration of 2022, "Objective 2-Action 1" entitled "Defending Rights and Ensuring Access to Education and Public Services", aims to ensure access to qualitative education, without segregations and exclusions; these principles apply to the education of both children and adults.</p> <p>The goal, based on international experience and practice, is the inclusion of refugee children in formal education. Providing these children with tailored non-formal education, such as intensive language learning courses, will facilitate their integration into formal education. Access to formal education presupposes the development of basic language</p>	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and Ministry of Migration and Asylum	Applicants of international protection and their children

Area/component	Overview of the main measures	Stakeholders	Target group
	<p>Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.</p> <p>and communication skills in Greek and in English, the recognition of skills through educational activities, cultural exchanges, peer learning and programs approved in terms of structure, content and methodology, which they should attend to receive the relevant certification. In addition, it is provided to strengthen the access to tertiary-higher education through the acceleration of the recognition of qualifications and skills.</p> <p>Within the framework of the same Strategy and in "Action 2", it is envisaged to provide Non-formal Education (NFE), which is carried out by professionals specialized in teaching Greek as a foreign language to asylum applicants, in</p>	<p>Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)</p>	<p>Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?</p>

Area/component	Overview of the main measures	Stakeholders	Target group
	<p>preparatory classes or, as additional support, in the formal education system and includes teaching the basic concepts in the English language.</p> <p>Within the framework of the same Strategy, in "Action 2" it is envisaged to ensure access to Greek public schools for all ages, by strengthening schools with extra human resources and technological means including the introduction and implementation of a common registration process</p>		
<p>2. Vocational education and training (including reskilling schemes)</p>	<p>Applicants have access to registration and attendance of vocational training programs, under the same conditions as Greek citizens, regardless of whether they have access to the labour market. Access to</p>		<p>The mentioned measures are planned to be applied horizontally to applicants for international protection.</p>

Area/component	Overview of the main measures	Stakeholders	Target group
	<p>vocational training, which is linked to an employment contract, requires access to the labour market in accordance with the provisions of article 53 of Law 4636/2019.</p> <p>In addition, in the framework of the National Strategy for Social Integration of 2022, it is foreseen in "Objective 2- Action 3" entitled "Protection of Rights and Ensuring Access to Education and Public Services" provides for the strengthening of the specific population with vocational programs training, in order to further develop already acquired skills, based on the needs of local economies.</p>	<p>Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)</p>	<p>Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?</p>
<p>3. Civic integration courses</p>	<p>In the context of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion of 2022, "Objective 2" entitled</p>		<p>The mentioned measures are planned to be applied horizontally to applicants for</p>

Area/component	Overview of the main measures Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.	Stakeholders Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)	Target group Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?
	<p>"Protecting Rights and Ensuring Access to Education and Public Services" provides:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening the provision of legal aid by securing lawyers and legal advisers to provide, inter alia, information and to support asylum, return, family reunification, relocation procedures. 2. Conducting information sessions regarding the legal framework applicable in Greek territory for third-country nationals, in addition to asylum procedures, such as criminal law, civil and administrative legislation, recognized rights and imposed obligations, as an integral part of the pre-integration process. 3. Development of a digital application per 		<p>international protection.</p>

Area/component	Overview of the main measures	Stakeholders	Target group
	<p>Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.</p> <p>geographic area with all the information stakeholders should know about the services available, while ensuring that said information is accurate, clear and understandable. Creation of digital material (e-guides) in various languages, regarding the usual administrative procedures, which concern asylum seekers and providing them with relevant facilities through the official websites of the competent public bodies.</p> <p>4. Information sessions regarding the allowances granted, the benefits provided, the eligibility criteria and the application process.</p> <p>In addition, in "Objective 4", of the same Strategy entitled "Promoting the</p>	<p>Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)</p>	<p>Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?</p>

Area/component	Overview of the main measures Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.	Stakeholders Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)	Target group Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?
	<p>European Way of Life", it is foreseen:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Familiarization of the target population with democratic concepts and institutions, through the design and delivery of lessons (e.g. on how a democratic society works and makes decisions, principles of democracy and Rule of Law, European values, etc.) 2. Presentation (in the context of joint activities within the reception facilities) of the structure of the Greek State, the European Union, the role of the member states and the basic European values. 3. Information on various issues related to the way of life in Greece and Europe. 4. Promote knowledge and respect for human rights within the 		

Area/component	Overview of the main measures Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.	Stakeholders Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)	Target group Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?
	<p>community, based on national law, human rights law and the principles of human dignity, equality and peaceful coexistence.</p> <p>5. Awareness raising on issues of freedom of religion and respect for all religions as well as the public space, by organizing workshops and seminars.</p> <p>6. In order to strengthen and promote skills related to everyday life, workshops are organized for practice in cooking, using public transport, traffic on the streets, ordering in a restaurant, looking for directions.</p> <p>7. Strengthening digital skills so that technology contributes to adapting to a new environment.</p> <p>8. During the reception stage, seminars will be</p>		

Area/component	Overview of the main measures Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.	Stakeholders Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)	Target group Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?
	held, in which information will be provided regarding rights and obligations of citizens in host countries and the EU and the European way of life.		
4. Support for recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications including those formal qualifications that cannot be documented (lost or destroyed in the context of existing procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications) Please note in the overview column if the procedure is a general one or specific to international protection applicants.	By joint decision of the Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs, Education and Religious Affairs and Citizen Protection, more specific conditions for the evaluation of qualifications are provided for, if the applicants do not have the necessary supporting documents (par. 2, article 58 of Law 4939/2022.	Ministry of Labour and social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Citizen Protection	The mentioned measures, based on art. 58 of the law 4939/2022 is intended to be applied horizontally to applicants for international protection
5. Skill assessments to validate prior (non-accredited) learning and experience	See above		
6. Information and counselling (labour market orientation, tailored advice, other)	See above in "civic integration courses" box		
7. Incentive measures for employers (e.g. tax reductions, labour	No such measures are applied		

Area/component	Overview of the main measures Please describe the rationale, scope and aim under each area.	Stakeholders Please describe the stakeholders involved, where applicable at state, regional and local level (public authorities, trade unions, employers' associations, NGOs, others?)	Target group Please indicate whether the measures address applicants for international protection in general or particular categories of applicants for international protection (e.g. women or minors of working age)?
matching services, recruitment support)			
<p>8. Support for self-employment (for example preferential taxation and social security contributions, administrative support with establishing a company etc, business plan development, other).</p> <p>Please note in the overview column if the support differs from the regular support to self-employment available to national population, EU citizens or other third-country nationals.</p>	<p>Applicants of international protection do not have the right to self-employment</p>		
9. Indirect support (e.g. childcare, transport)			

Section 5: Good practices and challenges

What integration support programmes, projects, legislative or other practical initiatives are available that specifically facilitate effective access to the labour market for applicants of international protection and have been identified by experts as a “good practice” in accordance with the definition provided in paragraph 3 “Scope of the study”? Please provide up to three examples (see the templates below and please adjust accordingly).

Measure 1	
Overview	
Name	Migrant Integration Centers (KEM)
Type	Legislative/policy (structural) measure
Area	Other
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the legally residing third country nationals, • the beneficiaries of international protection (holders of a Uniform Type Residence Permit), • and asylum applicants (holders of an International Protection Applicant Card).
Target group	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Tailor-made labour market integration measure (only applicants for international protection)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mainstream labour market integration measure (for all)</p> <p>If the measures is for all, please describe how applicants for international protection benefit:</p> <p>The Migrant Integration Centers (KEM) are an important institution of the Local Authorities as they are the local point of reference for informing, serving and networking the migrant/refugee population of the Municipality with other social services and programs, inter alia. These structures help to access basic goods and provide many services under the same roof, such as: information, support, counselling and referral of the migrant/refugee population to the right services in order to assist them with various requests.</p> <p>In addition, they implement actions to strengthen social integration such as: a) Greek language courses and elements of Greek history and Greek culture for adult migrants, applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, b) intercultural actions with an emphasis on the coexistence of children and young foreigners and natives and c) actions to promote the access of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection to the labour market.</p>
Coverage	<p><i>National</i></p> <p>Some of the eleven (11) KEMs established in ten (10) Municipalities of the country (Athens, Andravida-Kyllini, Heraklion, Thiva, Thessaloniki, Kallithea, Kordelio-Evosmos, Lamia, Lesbos, Piraeus) began to operate towards the end of 2017 and more in early 2018.</p> <p>The KEMs are addressed to legally residing third country nationals, including beneficiaries and applicants for international protection. From the start of their operation until the third quarter of 2021, approximately</p>

	49,170 unique beneficiaries have been served by KEM, while on average approximately twenty (20) people are served per day
Link	https://migration.gov.gr/en/migration-policy/integration/draseis-koinonikis-entaxis-se-ethniko-epipedo/kentra-entaxis-metanaston
Source and justification	Due to the significant contribution of KEMs to the promotion of social integration policies, the Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum has proposed the geographical expansion of these structures, as well as their reinforcement with additional services, during the programming period 2021-2027

Description

M1.Q1. Please describe how third-country nationals can access the measure, notably:

- a) *Elaborate in brief on the conditions and process of accessing the measure for applicants for international protection*
Interested applicants for international protection can go to the nearest KEM and benefit from the services provided, by presenting the relevant documents
- b) *Is the measure voluntary or compulsory? Is it provided free of charge?*
The use of the KEMs from the applicants for international protection is on a voluntary basis and is provided free of charge to the beneficiaries.
- c) *If applicable, indicate if the measure is different from the regular support available to national population, EU citizens or third country nationals?*
As mentioned above, legally residing third-country nationals, beneficiaries of international protection (holders of a Single Type Residence Permit), and asylum seekers (holders of an International Protection Applicant's Card) have the right to access the KEM on equal terms.
- d) *Are there any reasons for to be excluded/to lose access to the measure? If so, which ones?*
Illegally residing persons in the country are excluded from access to KEM services, subject to more specific provisions

M1.Q2. Please describe briefly the context in which the measure has started:

- a) *When was the measure introduced and what was/is its duration?*
The KEMs were established by Law 4368/2016 (Government Gazette 21 A') and are branches of the Community Centers of the Municipalities. The Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum coordinates and monitors the operation of the KEMs. No date has been set for the cessation of their operation.
- b) *What was the need/purpose to start/implement such measure (e.g. labour market needs in the Member Country, need for integration, changes in integration policies)?*
The aim and driving force behind the establishment of the Community Centers was the need to support first-level local authorities organizations in the implementation of social protection policies and in the development of a local point of reference for the reception, provision of services and interconnection of citizens with all the Social Programs and Services that are being implemented in their area of operation.

The basic needs/purposes of establishing KEMs are:

- Provision of information, services and specialized services to third country nationals.*
- The development of partnerships and networks to connect the beneficiaries with social integration services and programs.*
- The implementation of integration actions to promote social cohesion*

c) *When is the measure provided (e.g. upon arrival, upon arrival until (please add till when), no determined time limitation)?*

The K.E.M. were established in 2016 with Law 4368 (Official Gazette 21 A,)

d) *Key activities*

- Information, service, advisory support for issues of integration and networking of migrants.*
- Cooperation and referral of requests to other relevant structures, services and institutions (Councils for Migrant Integration, Associations of Migrants/Beneficiaries of International Protection, NGOs, Social Services).*
- In the context of KEMs actions may be implemented at the same time, such as: courses in the Greek language and elements of Greek history and Greek culture for adult migrants and beneficiaries of international protection, cross-cultural actions with an emphasis on the coexistence of children and young foreigners and natives, and actions to promote the access of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection in the labour market.*
- Informing third-country nationals about legal issues that concern them and are related to their legal stay in the country (e.g residence permits, refugee card, issuance of AMKA).*
- Social-psychological support, especially to vulnerable groups of third-country nationals (eg women, children).*
- Support the education of migrant children/beneficiaries of international protection of pre-school and school age and provision of information about adult language training actions implemented in the region.*
- Raising awareness of the local community on issues of xenophobia, racism and human trafficking.*
- Promotion of volunteering*
- Supporting the participation of third-country nationals in groups, associations and intercultural organizations.*
- Networking with other K.E.M and services/entities active in the field of integration of third country nationals.*
- Diagnosis of problems and referral to specialized structures/services (Hostels for the homeless, abused women, victims of human trafficking, structures for the disabled and for people with mental health issues, nurseries and kindergartens, targeted actions for migrants/refugees, structures for the provision of basic goods, structures for the provision of rations, social pharmacies, day-care centers for the elderly (KIFI), municipal clinics, etc.).*
- Referral of requests and cooperation for inclusion of the target groups in language learning programs, training, employment, recognition of skills and qualifications from abroad. They work with the local labour market to gain access through counselling and escorting services (mentoring schemes).*

M1.Q3. Please briefly describe the implementation modalities, notably:

- a) *By whom is it implemented (agency, government institution, NGOs, private sector etc.), and what are the coordination structures?*

The Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in collaboration with the Special Service for the Coordination and Monitoring of Actions of the European Social Fund (EYSEKT), planned (since 2016) the establishment and operation of "Migrant Integration Centers" (KEM) which are branches of the "Community Centers" of the Municipalities and are financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Regional Operational Programs (RPPs).

The Directorate of Social Integration, as responsible for the proper functioning of the integration structures at the local level, monitors the operation of the KEMs assuming a coordinating role. Currently there are eleven (11) KEMs, which operate in ten (10) Municipalities of Greece and include three (3) axes with the corresponding services provided both in general (to migrant holders of all types of residence permits, to beneficiaries of international protection and to asylum seekers) and more specifically (in vulnerable cases of third- country nationals).

The indicative cost and operating specifications of the KEMs are provided in the Implementation and Operation Guide of the Community Centers, which was issued in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Special Coordination and Monitoring Service of ESF Actions (EYSEKT) and the Unit for the Organization and Management of Development Programs

- b) *If applicable, are there any reimbursement (totally or partially)/cost sharing possibilities?*
- c) *How and by whom is it promoted?*

See M1.Q3/a

M1.Q4. Please briefly describe the impact of the measure and notably:

- a) *Did it meet the anticipated objectives? YES/NO/Partly*
- b) *What are the main outcomes*

From the start of their operation until the third quarter of 2021, approximately 49,170 unique beneficiaries have been served by KEMs, while on average of approximately twenty (20) people are served per day.

- c) *Monitoring and evaluation of impact (please describe the evaluation tools and methodology, if possible specify what indicators have been adopted and how those were measured)*
- d) *Challenges during implementation and remedies applied*

The need for reinforcement in members of staff of KEMs is a challenge for the future.

- e) *Likelihood of continuation of the measure. If discontinued, please explain why*

The operation of the KEMs continues as normal, while it is worth noting that they were also included in the National ESF Program 2021-2027, within the framework of which the operation of 32 KEMs has been foreseen

Overview	
Name	<i>Please insert name of the measure here.</i>
Type	<i>Choose from drop down menu here</i>
Area	<i>Choose from drop down menu here</i>
Access	Please describe who has access to the measure, i.e. all applicants for international protection or particular categories
Target group	<input type="checkbox"/> Tailor-made labour market integration measure (only applicants for international protection) <input type="checkbox"/> Mainstream labour market integration measure (for all) If the measures is for all, please describe how applicants for international protection benefit
Coverage	<i>Choose an item.</i> <i>If "other", please add further information here</i>
Link	<i>Please provide hyperlink to source/project here, if available</i>
Source and justification	Please indicate the source/who proposed the practice as good and explain why the measure is considered a "good practice" (see Section Methodology).
Description	
<p>M2.Q1. Please describe how third-country nationals can access the measure, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Elaborate in brief on the conditions and process of accessing the measure for applicants for international protection</i> b) <i>Is the measure voluntary or compulsory? Is it provided free of charge?</i> c) <i>If applicable, indicate if the measure is different from the regular support available to national population, EU citizens or third country nationals?</i> d) <i>Are there any reasons for to be excluded/to lose access to the measure? If so, which ones?</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	
<p>M2.Q2. Please describe briefly the context in which the measure has started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>When was the measure introduced and what was/is its duration?</i> b) <i>What was the need/purpose to start/implement such measure (e.g. labour market needs in the Member Country, need for integration, changes in integration policies)?</i> c) <i>When is the measure provided (e.g. upon arrival, upon arrival until (please add till when), no determined time limitation)?</i> d) <i>Key activities</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	

M2.Q3. Please briefly describe the implementation modalities, notably:

- a) *By whom is it implemented (agency, government institution, NGOs, private sector etc.), and what are the coordination structures?*
- b) *If applicable, are there any reimbursement (totally or partially)/cost sharing possibilities?*
- c) *How and by whom is it promoted?*

M2.Q4. Please briefly describe the impact of the measure and notably:

- a) *Did it meet the anticipated objectives? YES/NO/Partly*
- b) *What are the main outcomes*
- c) *Monitoring and evaluation of impact (please describe the evaluation tools and methodology, if possible specify what indicators have been adopted and how those were measured)*
- d) *Challenges during implementation and remedies applied*
- e) *Likelihood of continuation of the measure. If discontinued, please explain why*

Measure 3	
Overview	
Name	<i>Please insert name of the measure here.</i>
Type	<i>Choose from drop down menu here</i>
Area	<i>Choose from drop down menu here</i>
Access	Please describe who has access to the measure, i.e. all applicants for international protection or particular categories
Target group	<input type="checkbox"/> Tailor-made labour market integration measure (only applicants for international protection) <input type="checkbox"/> Mainstream labour market integration measure (for all) If the measures is for all, please describe how applicants for international protection benefit
Coverage	<i>Choose an item.</i> <i>If "other", please add further information here</i>
Link	<i>Please provide hyperlink to source/project here, if available</i>
Source and	Please indicate the source/who proposed the practice as good and explain why the measure is considered a "good practice" (see Section Methodology).

justification	
Description	
<p>M3.Q1. Please describe how third-country nationals can access the measure, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Elaborate in brief on the conditions and process of accessing the measure for applicants for international protection</i> b) <i>Is the measure voluntary or compulsory? Is it provided free of charge?</i> c) <i>If applicable, indicate if the measure is different from the regular support available to national population, EU citizens or third country nationals?</i> d) <i>Are there any reasons for to be excluded/to lose access to the measure? If so, which ones?</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	
<p>M3.Q2. Please describe briefly the context in which the measure has started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>When was the measure introduced and what was/is its duration?</i> b) <i>What was the need/purpose to start/implement such measure (e.g. labour market needs in the Member Country, need for integration, changes in integration policies)?</i> c) <i>When is the measure provided (e.g. upon arrival, upon arrival until (please add till when), no determined time limitation)?</i> d) <i>Key activities</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	
<p>M3.Q3. Please briefly describe the implementation modalities, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>By whom is it implemented (agency, government institution, NGOs, private sector etc.), and what are the coordination structures?</i> b) <i>If applicable, are there any reimbursement (totally or partially)/cost sharing possibilities?</i> c) <i>How and by whom is it promoted?</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	
<p>M3.Q4. Please briefly describe the impact of the measure and notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Did it meet the anticipated objectives? YES/NO/Partly</i> b) <i>What are the main outcomes</i> c) <i>Monitoring and evaluation of impact (please describe the evaluation tools and methodology, if possible specify what indicators have been adopted and how those were measured)</i> d) <i>Challenges during implementation and remedies applied</i> e) <i>Likelihood of continuation of the measure. If discontinued, please explain why</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	

Q20. Are there any specific protocols, synergies between agencies/institutions to support labour market integration of international protection applicants that have been identified as good practices?

See Q21

- Q21. What kind of challenges have been identified in your country when it comes to access to the labour market by applicants for international protection? Please provide a distinction³⁸ between legislative challenges and challenges in practice and specify how those challenges have been identified.

Employment is a key element of the integration process, as finding work for the social groups under review is fundamental to their participation in the country's economic and social life. Facilitating the access of migrants, applicants and beneficiaries of international protection to the labour market can improve the economy of the host society, as it will have a positive impact on the sustainability of the welfare system, the insurance system and the overall quality of life of the workforce.

A particularly critical element is the strengthening of the interconnection of the needs of the labour market in professions and skills with the corresponding knowledge and skills either of the workers who move legally to the country for the purpose of work or of the applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. In this way, there will be a smooth transition and integration of the interested parties in the labour market, by making the best use of and correctly matching the skills of migrants/refugees populations with the needs of the labour market.

In the framework of integration into the labour market of people who enter the country legally, they are hired and employed in jobs where there is a shortage in fields of employment that are not fully covered by the domestic workforce.

Section 6: Conclusions

This part of the study compiles the main findings from sections 1-5.

- Q22. Please synthesise the findings of your national report by drawing conclusions from your responses:

- a) What are the main trends with regard to the situation of international protection applicants in the context of labour market integration and what are the main debates regarding their labour market integration identified in your country (Section 1)?

Please describe.

The Greek state takes initiatives that support applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, in order for the latter to be able to make use of their skills, especially in view of the recorded shortage in labour force, contributing to the increase of the Greek GDP. In this way, the integration of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection into the country's workforce is promoted, strengthening sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, construction and others.

- b) If at all and to what extent are international protection applicants specifically addressed in national integration policies with regard labour market integration (Section 2)? What are the key characteristics of the national integration policies for promoting labour market participation for the applicants of international protection (Section 2) and how is the access to employment and self-employment for applicants of international protection regulated/supported (Section 3)

Please describe.

³⁸ Where applicable

The national integration policies have been extensively analysed throughout this study, both at the legislative level and through the latest Integration Strategy.

- c) To what extent are targeted measures to support labour market participation available in your country, specifically addressing applicants for international protection (Section 4) and what has been identified as challenges as well as good practice in this area (Section 5)?

Please describe.

These issues have been discussed in detail above.

Annex: Eurostat statistics

Eurostat Data for each EU Member State will be extracted centrally by the Service Provider and an Excel-Sheet prepared for each country and shared with the NCPs.

The Statistical Annex consists of the following:

Annex 1.1: Eurostat data asylum and first time asylum applicants
[[MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA](#); [MIGR_ASYAPPCTZM](#)]