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NATIONAL INTEGRATION EVALUATION MECHANISM SLOVENIA 2016



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Dear Sir/Madam,

You hold in your hands a National Report on the implementation of various areas of integration policy towards beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia. The report is the result of the evaluation of migration and integration policies in the EU Member States, implemented as part of the project “The National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM)”.

NIEM is a six-year long transnational project which aims to prepare key actors in the integration field in 16 EU Member States to better face the current challenges and improve the integration outcomes of beneficiaries of international protection. Representatives of academic centers, non-governmental organizations and think-tanks were invited to participate in the project.

The main aim of the project is to strengthen the competence of institutions involved in the integration of persons with international protection. Within the research part of the project, a tool has been developed to monitor and comprehensively evaluate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and to identify good practices and obstacles in integration, as well as to assess the impact of legislative and policy changes. NIEM establishes a mechanism for a biennial, comprehensive assessment of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

The project is based on the assumption that the creation of any migration and integration policy should be based on reliable official data – statistical, legal, administrative, financial and public policy. It is difficult to shape a rational policy without such information, therefore it is important to implement the so-called “evidence based policy”, i.e. policy based on knowledge and empirical evidence. NIEM will provide evidence on the gaps in integration standards, identify promising practices and shortcomings in different countries, as well as evaluate the effects of legislative and policy changes which may provide a basis for a further development of an appropriate integration policy.

This report is the result of the first of three planned evaluation rounds – the so-called baseline evaluation, which consist of 186 indicators aimed at diagnosing of the existing situation. The subsequent evaluations are carried out periodically every two years. After each round respective national reports are issued, as well as a common European report comparing the examined dimensions of integration policies of all the countries participating in the NIEM project.

The present report, which covers the state of affairs until 31 December 2016, was drafted in 2018 on the basis of the indicators completed in 2017. It was first prepared in English (since the indicators were prepared in English, to allow for international comparison) and translated into Slovenian language. The report is addressed to representatives of public administration, academic and research centers, think-tanks, non-governmental organizations, as well as to all those dealing with migration and integration issues. We do hope that the report will be met with interest and will provide a good basis for creating policies and deepening the knowledge about the integration of the beneficiaries of international protection.

Executive Summary

In the Republic of Slovenia, international protection refers to the refugee status and the subsidiary form of protection. Temporary protection refers to people who would receive this status in case of mass influx, provided that Directive 2001/55/EK was applied on the EU level, which has not happened yet.

Refugee status shall be granted to a third country national who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who is outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.

The status of subsidiary form of protection shall be granted to a third country national or a stateless person, who does not qualify for a refugee, when substantive grounds exist to suspect that upon his return to the country of origin, or in case of a stateless person, the country of last residence, the person would face real risk of being subject to serious harm as stipulated in the Law on International Protection.

In the period from 1995 to 2016, a total of 393 persons were granted international protection in the Republic of Slovenia. In 2016, 1308 asylum requests were filed in Slovenia and 170 persons were granted international protection. The majority of asylum seekers in Slovenia in 2016 were nationals of Afghanistan (419), Syria (281), Iraq (120), Pakistan (104), Iran (78), Turkey (60) and Algeria (42).

There is no strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia. There is also no national strategy for the integration of migrants. There is only Strategy for economic migration for the period 2010-2020 focusing on migrant workers.

Residence

Recognized refugees receive permanent residence permit upon recognition and status of a long-term resident after 5 years. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence permit upon recognition, and they can apply for permanent residence permit after 5 years; however, they can also receive the status of the long-term resident after 5 years (and time waiting for the decision is either in half or fully counted). As a result, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are in uncertain situation because they have to prolong their status and there is always a possibility that the Slovenian authorities claim there are no reasons for international protection anymore and they do not prolong it.

Beneficiaries of international protection (both those with refugee status and those with subsidiary protection) can become long-term residents after 5 years of legally residing in Slovenia but only if they meet all the conditions. A condition that is most difficult for them to meet is sufficient financial means.

Family reunification

Recognized refugees can submit application for family reunification immediately upon recognition (and within 3 months after receiving their status they can apply under reduced conditions, after those 3 months the same requirements apply as for other TCNs). Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection that receive the protection for more than 1 year can apply for family reunification immediately (and within 3 months after receiving their status they can apply under reduced conditions, after those 3 months the same requirements apply as for other TCNs). Frequently, this time - 90 days upon their status recognition - is not enough for them to prepare all the needed documentation. If they miss this deadline they need to meet the same conditions as all other foreigners - the most difficult condition to meet is to show sufficient financial means to support all family members (292,56 euro per person per month). This means that after 90 days it is basically impossible for beneficiaries to meet the conditions. Another financial problem is that beneficiaries have to cover the travel costs for their family members in case of unification – from certain countries this can be very costly.

Family reunification procedure can only start when a beneficiary of international protection knows exactly where family members are and has the required documentation (especially proof of family ties). However, Slovenian authorities demand original documents also from family members and for different reasons often people are not capable of delivering them. Also, it is frequently too difficult to provide documents clearly proving family ties. Usually documents provided are not accepted by Slovenian authorities as adequate. Slovenian authorities do not respect the principle of family unity. For example, unaccompanied minors can start family reunification procedure only for their parents but not their other (minor) siblings.

Citizenship

The competent authority may, if it is in accordance with national interests, according to its discretion, grant the citizenship to a person with refugee status recognized under the law on asylum if they actually live in Slovenia uninterruptedly for five years before submitting an application and meets other conditions. The law mentions only the refugee status, however according to Mol also persons with subsidiary protection are considered under the same conditions. Economic resources requirement is the same for all TCNs and it is not mentioned under exemptions in the case of refugees; this condition is met if a person is employed and has a limited job contract for at least 2 years prior to the naturalization procedure, or if a person is employed and has a permanent job contract for at least 6 months prior to naturalization procedure. Language requirement is that the person shows knowledge of Slovenian language for

everyday communication by a certificate of successful completion of the exam on the Slovene language at the basic level.

One of the conditions for naturalization is that a person has a release from current citizenship or can prove that he/she will get it if granted the citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia. However, Article 12 states that the competent authority may, if it is in accordance with national interests, according to its discretion, accept in the citizenship of Slovenia also a person with refugee status, recognized under the law on asylum, if he/she actually lives in Slovenia uninterruptedly for 5 years before submitting an application, and meets all other conditions of Article 10 of the Law, with the exception of having this release from current citizenship. Only three persons have applied for Slovenian citizenship in 2016 and 2 of them have been granted. One unsuccessful application from beneficiaries of international protection was rejected for economic resources requirements.

Socio-economic integration

In 2016 there were 21 beneficiaries of international protection in integration house in Ljubljana and 49 beneficiaries of international protection in integration house in Maribor, 70 persons in total. The majority lived in integration houses for one year (which is the maximum possible duration of time). In Slovenia, the main problems are a lack of capacities and the conditions to have access to public housing.

Housing

There are two integration houses in Slovenia with capacities for around 60 people. Once these two houses are full, there is no other public housing available for beneficiaries of international protection. Public housing is available either only to Slovenian citizens or in some cases to permanent residents in certain municipalities. Only beneficiaries of international protection with permanent residence (refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection after 5 years) have access to certain public housing, however, they have to compete with all other permanent residents and Slovene citizens who apply for the same public housing. This inevitably makes it very difficult or almost impossible to actually get public housing. Beneficiaries of international protection who are unemployed or without their own financial means are entitled to receive financial help from the state for the rent of private housing for up to 18 months and under certain conditions for additional 18 months. This condition has been new since 2016 and requires from the applicant at least 80% attendance at the Slovene language course.

The majority of beneficiaries therefore have to rent an apartment at the "open real-estate market" which also means regular market prices. These are often too high for beneficiaries, especially in Ljubljana - higher than the in-cash housing support they receive by the state. Also, when renting an apartment, it is expected by the owners that they would pay "security deposit" plus one rent in advance. Yet beneficiaries are usually waiting to receive financial help for more than one month or up to two months after the recognition of their status. In this

period most of them do not have any financial means, not even for sustenance, and certainly not enough for the rent or two rents.

This financial situation has become much worse since the International Protection Act has been changed in 2016 and one-time financial help upon status recognition was abolished. The other problem is that beneficiaries of international protection are facing a lot of discrimination and racism when searching for apartments. Many owners are not willing to rent their real estate to refugees, especially not to large families.

Beneficiaries of international protection who do not get a place in the integration house and are also unable to find private housing are then allowed to stay in the Asylum home also after they receive their status. There are several cases like this.

Unaccompanied minors (especially those younger than 15) are ensured accommodation in boarding schools.

Beneficiaries of international protection can become owners of property only after having obtained Slovenian citizenship.

Employment

In 2016, 62 recognized refugees (10 female, 52 male) and 13 beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (all male) were employed (Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants data). Beneficiaries of international protection have equal access to employment, but they do not have equal access to each position or vocation. The only policy adopted regarding the employment of beneficiaries of international protection is "the job training for persons with international protection" for six months; however, this policy only enables the training and not the actual employment, and also it does not mention any vulnerable groups.

Asylum seekers have access to employment only after 9 months and only if they did not receive a negative decision. Beneficiaries of international protection have access to employment in Slovenia, however it is a question what kind of job they are able to obtain (job related to their own profession or any kind of job or mainly physical work). Very often they do not have documents to prove their profession, skills or official education and it is difficult for them to obtain these documents.

Language is an additional barrier, since for the majority of jobs in Slovenia language proficiency is required. Moreover, many (or most) employers are not keen on employing refugees. Beneficiaries are facing a lot of discrimination and racism when searching for a job, sometimes employers do not know anything about their status and are unwilling to learn, sometimes they think it would take them a lot of time to arrange all administrative matters to employ a refugee, and sometimes they think that refugees will eventually leave Slovenia thus it is not worth investing in them.

Education

Persons with international protection share the same rights regarding pre-school, elementary, secondary, higher and adult and university education as Slovenian nationals. They have the right to scholarships and accommodation in student housing under the same conditions as Slovenian nationals. Funding for education and training of refugees is provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport.

Children of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors have the right to elementary-school education, however, only until the age of 15 which is the age of legal majority in Slovenia. They have to start attending elementary school in three months after lodging asylum application at the latest. All asylum seekers have the possibility while minor asylum seekers have the right to education in vocational and secondary schools under the same conditions as citizens of Slovenia. Asylum seekers are also granted access to higher and university education under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens.

The burden of proving the level of education obtained in the country of origin is on the asylum seeker. For all groups it is difficult to obtain required documentation to prove their already accomplished level of education or training. Without these documents it is difficult to get access to any vocational training (not only secondary vocational schools but also to other vocational trainings). One of the biggest challenges is the lack of knowledge of Slovenian language – exams for enrolling in some vocational or employment-related education are in Slovenian language, so if beneficiaries don't speak the language they can't even pass these exams.

There are no special vocational trainings or employment-related education programs for refugees, therefore they need to meet the same conditions as everyone else, which is often extremely difficult.

Healthcare

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have the right to be included into mandatory health insurance scheme if their insurance is not provided from a different title.

Asylum seekers in Slovenia only have access to urgent medical care thus it is a question if their health issue is even recognized as "urgent" and treated or not. Since asylum procedures last for a long time (and considering the fact that people usually spent some months travelling to Slovenia) this leaves irreversible negative effects on people and their health condition (also when they are beneficiaries of international protection).

It is very difficult for beneficiaries of international protection (especially living in Maribor) to find their personal doctors. Doctors often reject refugees as their patients, saying they could not overcome the language barrier and they are afraid they might misinterpret certain symptoms if they are not able to talk to the person.

Language barrier is certainly one of the biggest challenges, especially because beneficiaries of international protection do not have access to (publicly financed) translators that could accompany them, and health institutions also do not have any translators employed. NGOs working with beneficiaries daily (for example those running the orientation program) have translators for certain languages, however they are not available always and for everyone.

Financial assistance

According to the legislation, the level of social benefits of persons with international protection (not including persons under temporary protection) is equal to nationals in Slovenia, however the barriers are most often delays and long waiting periods.

Due to the abolition of one-time financial assistance (with the amendment of the International Protection Act in 2016), which allowed for bridging the gap, most refugees are facing severe financial distress and shortage in the first two months after gaining their status. For more than one month or even two they are waiting to receive regular social welfare, and until that time most refugees are without any financial means. Even later, when they already receive financial social assistance, beneficiaries often live in poverty. Since finding a job is very difficult for beneficiaries of international protection, most of them rely on social welfare, however that is often not enough to cover all monthly costs.

Socio-cultural integration

Beneficiaries of international protection have equal access to education as nationals (by law and in theory, however in practice they are facing several barriers). Since primary school is obligatory, enrolment is not a problem for primary school children. It can be an issue for secondary school students because they cannot choose school they would like to attend (vocational or high school) or schools are not willing to accept them because of the language barrier or because they don't have documents to prove their previous education or other reasons. Also, enrolment in universities can be difficult if a person does not have documents to prove previous education.

In 2016, 24 children with international protection were enrolled in kindergarten; 52 children with international protection (45 with parents with international protection, and 7 unaccompanied minors) in primary school; one asylum seeker was enrolled in secondary school and 2 asylum seekers were enrolled in university in Ljubljana.

Asylum seekers do not have access to publicly funded Slovenian language course, this is available only to beneficiaries of international protection. Asylum seekers can, however, attend adult education programs where they can learn basic Slovenian language (however this is not the official Slovenian language course).

Beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to 300 hours Slovenian language course, plus additionally they can attend 100 more hours. Those

registered at national employment office as job seekers can get access also to additional Slovenian language classes, however this is not organized within the official Slovenian language course for foreigners. In case of families with small children it is often the case that only one parent attends the course and it is usually a man. Since there is only one language course beneficiaries can attend and since there is no parallel baby-sitting for small children organized, women often stay home with children.

After 300 hours of the language course most beneficiaries of international protection achieve level A1, some of them (but rare) perhaps level A2. To meet the condition for Slovenian citizenship the required level is A2 - B1, which is difficult for beneficiaries of international protection to achieve. Beneficiaries are supposed to attend 5 hours 5 days a week and the orientation program which is implemented by an NGO (Association Odnos). This NGO received limited financial means to implement the program therefore only certain number of people (staff and translators) could be employed – not enough to be able to deliver intense quality program plus address all the specific needs of the beneficiaries. After these first three months beneficiaries are often still not completely independent, self-reliable and confident to communicate with state institutions. The state does not support voluntary initiatives by offering funding for the national, regional, local coordination of these initiatives or making them part of the standard integration offers for beneficiaries of international protection (e.g. regular social orientation classes followed by voluntary one-to-one mentorship programmes), or offering guidelines, training and other support to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives. Several NGOs nevertheless work and support beneficiaries of international protection in various ways, but mainly these NGOs are financed through EU projects, foreign donors/financers or donations or they work on voluntary basis. Still, some NGOs are implementing projects funded by the state (for example orientation program by the Slovene Philanthropy).

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Baseline questions

Population of beneficiaries of international protection

On 1 January 2017, there were 338 recognized refugees in Slovenia. There were no refugees (yet) in Slovenia who came through resettlement, there were only refugees that came through relocation (quota) system. There are also no persons under temporary protection nor persons under humanitarian protection. On 25 May 2017, there were 259 asylum seekers and 466 beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia according to the Ministry of the Interior.

Number of asylum seekers in last calendar year identified as having special reception needs

Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants did not provide any data on this matter; the only data made available by the Ministry of Interior in this respect was on unaccompanied minors.

Average length of reception phase

Average duration of all procedures in 2016 was 75 days, however many asylum seekers left Slovenia soon after submitting their application because they never wanted to apply for asylum in Slovenia in the first place. The average duration of procedures where asylum seekers stayed in Slovenia and waited for their decision (positive or negative) was 140 days, while average duration of procedures of asylum seekers from Afghanistan was 187 days.

Different lengths of reception phase for beneficiaries

In 2016, 87 positive decisions were delivered; among these 71 people received refugee status and 16 people received subsidiary protection. Procedures did not last more than 12 months. If we look at negative decisions which were 64 in the same year, 3 procedures lasted for up to 20 months. In both cases, positive and negative decisions were delivered mainly within 6 months. However, it is important to have in mind that these are only the procedures where a final decision (positive or negative) was made. Statistics for all procedures would show a different picture.

Procedure to identify applicants with special reception needs

International Protection Act defines who are individuals with special needs: children, unaccompanied minors, persons with disabilities, elderly, pregnant women, single parents with minors, victims of trafficking, victims of rape, torture and other forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with mental health problems. Articles 12, 13 and 14 focus on identification and treatment of vulnerable people with special needs. This Act provides for specific treatment and care: during an examination defined in Article 42 the assessment is made whether the person has special reception needs or whether an applicant is in need of special procedural guarantees, and the assessment of the nature of such needs (specific needs might be identified also at any later stage in the process). Material reception conditions, health and psychological counseling and care are adapted to applicants with special needs. Adequate support is provided to applicants in need of special procedural guarantees.

Mainstreaming

National strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

In Slovenia, there is no strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. There is also no national strategy for the integration of migrants. There is only Strategy for economic migration for the period 2010-2020 focusing on migrant workers.¹ Accordingly, the individual integration measures that exist are scattered and many integration needs of international protection beneficiaries as well as societal integration needs, are ignored.

Commitments in the national strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

There is no national strategy for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

Monitoring and review of policies for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

There is no strategy and there have been no changes since 2014.

¹ See

http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti__pdf/Strategija_ekonomskih_migracij-2010-2020.pdf

Residency

Type and duration of residence permit upon recognition

Under the International Protection Act beneficiaries of international protection are either persons recognized as refugees (who get permanent residence permit) or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (who get temporary residence permit). Subsidiary protection is temporary and can be limited to (minimum!) one year or a few years, it can also be prolonged for 2 years - for as long as there are reasons for it – and the law does not define maximum duration (Article 91). For example, a person might get subsidiary protection for 1 year, then prolonged for 2 more years, and prolonged again for 2 years, then after 5 years of living in Slovenia, this person (if meeting all the conditions) can apply for permanent residence permit under the Aliens Act.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act in Article 11 says that temporary protection lasts for one year, and it can be prolonged maximum two times, each time for six months. However, this act has not yet been used.

Renewal of residence permit

According to the International Protection Act, refugees get permanent residence permit which does not need renewal. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection must apply for renewal or prolongation before their temporary residence permit expires (Articles 105 and 106) and they have to meet additional requirements. The Ministry of the Interior (Mol) is obliged to send a notice and an application form to the beneficiary of subsidiary protection at least 60 days before the status expires; if the person would like to apply for the prolongation of this status, she/he must fill out the form and send it back to the Mol at least 30 days before her/his status expires. Upon receipt of the form the Mol shall issue an order by which it is established that the person is in the process of renewal of subsidiary protection. Then the procedure begins.

In the renewal procedure, the competent authority conducts a personal interview with the applicant and verifies the existence of grounds for extension of subsidiary protection, in the context of the reasons given in the application for international protection on the basis of which the person has been granted subsidiary protection. If there are grounds for an extension, the competent authority shall issue a decision by which subsidiary protection is extended for two years. If a person does not qualify for an extension, the competent authority shall issue a decision rejecting a request for an extension of subsidiary protection. The person can appeal to the Administrative Court within 15 days.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act in Article 11 states that temporary protection lasts for one year, and it can be prolonged maximum two times, each time for six months. Specific requirements for prolongation are not defined in the law. However, this act has not yet been used.

Residency requirements for granting permanent/long-term residence

In Slovenia, the procedures are as follows:

- permanent residence – after 5 years of temporary residence permit or in certain cases already before (for example marriage to a Slovenian citizen);
- long-term residence – after 5 years of legal and continuous residency in Slovenia (counting also the waiting time for the international protection – either half of that time, or in case it was longer than 18 months the entire time).

Recognized refugees receive permanent residence permit upon recognition; however, they receive the status of the long-term resident after 5 years (and time waiting for the decision is either in half or fully counted). Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence permit upon recognition, and they can apply for permanent residence permit after 5 years; however, they can also receive the status of the long-term resident after 5 years (and time waiting for the decision is either in half or fully counted).

The Aliens Act states in Article 53a that a foreigner with recognized international protection in Slovenia may obtain the status of long-term resident after legally and continuously residing in Slovenia for five years on the basis of recognized international protection status, if also other conditions set by this Act are met. In the five-year period of uninterrupted legal residence in Slovenia it shall also be considered half of the time of residence in Slovenia as the applicant for international protection. If the waiting period for recognition of international protection exceeded 18 months, then in the five-year period of uninterrupted legal residence it is considered the entire waiting period as the applicant for international protection.

The International Protection Act does not mention this specifically, however the Ministry of the Interior does clearly state on their website that the time a person has resided in Slovenia as a person with temporary protection is not included in the period for issuing a permanent residence permit.

Facilitated conditions for permanent/long-term residence

Recognized refugees (also resettled refugees) receive permanent residence permit upon recognition, while the status of long-term residents after five years under the same conditions as other third-country nationals (with the difference that their waiting time for the recognition of international protection is counted in that five-year period). Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence permit upon recognition and after five years they can obtain the permanent residence permit (if they meet also other conditions set by the Aliens Act - like other third-country national) and also the status of long-term residents as defined in Aliens Act (with the difference that their waiting time for the recognition of international protection is counted in that five year period for long-term residence).

Persons under temporary protection are not mentioned (in practice there are no persons with temporary protection in Slovenia, because the law on temporary protection has never been used).

Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for permanent/long-term residence

For beneficiaries of international protection that received refugee status permanent residence is granted upon recognition. For persons with subsidiary protection the situation is completely different; upon recognition they receive only temporary residence permit and after five years when they can apply for permanent residence they need to meet the same conditions as other foreigners (and for vulnerable groups the conditions are also not reduced).

Administrative barriers to permanent/long-term residence

Recognized refugees and resettled refugees receive permanent residence upon recognition. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence, they can apply to prolong it (and it is a question if it is prolonged or not!) and after 5 years of residence in Slovenia they can apply for permanent residence under Aliens Act – if they meet all the conditions. Often the condition of sufficient funds is an issue especially if a person is unemployed. Also, the procedures can last very long time. And there is always a chance that their subsidiary protection is not prolonged, and they lose their status. Additional problem could be if the person with subsidiary protection receives a passport for beneficiaries of international protection valid for a limited period and faces difficulties when trying to renew/prolong the passport (costs of translations and obtaining of new documents).

Fees and costs of the residency procedures (converted in euros)

Recognised refugees receive permanent residence permit upon recognition (so there is no need for them to renew it) and they do not pay any fees; if they apply for long-term residence status later on then they need to pay the administrative fee of 18,10 euro. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive their status for a limited period (a year or two years), they can renew it (if they have justified reasons their status can be prolonged for another 2 years) and after 5 years they can submit the application for permanent residence permit for which they need to pay administrative fee 90,60 euro.

If they apply for long-term residence status then they also need to pay the administrative fee of 18,10 euro. Additionally, both groups probably have other costs as well, such as translations (20-25 euro per page), posting documents, etc.

Article 24 of Administrative Fees Act defines that foreigners in the procedure of requesting international protection do not pay any administrative fees.

Legal assistance and support budgets

Beneficiaries of international protection do not have access to any free legal assistance or legal support (only asylum seekers have access to free legal assistance through an NGO Legal-Information Center of Non-Governmental Organisations – PIC).

Acceptance rate for permanent/long-term residence

In Slovenia permanent residence and long-term residence are two different statuses – we need to look at them separately (although the latter is granted in most cases when the holder has the former); recognized refugees receive permanent residence status upon recognition of their status; for long-term residence refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have to apply and meet the conditions; according to one representative of the Ministry of Interior there were some cases in year 2016, however the administrative unit was supposed to be able to provide the exact data. When contacted, the administrative unit stated they do not have such data and cannot provide it.

Reasons for rejection of permanent/long-term residence

In Slovenia permanent residence and long-term residence are two different statuses – we need to look at them separately; recognized refugees receive

permanent residence status upon recognition of their status; for long-term residence refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have to apply and meet the conditions; according to one representative of the Ministry of Interior there were some cases in year 2016, however the administrative unit was supposed to be able to provide the exact data. When we contacted, the administrative unit stated they do not have such data and cannot provide it.

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection concerning residency

Challenge 1

Unsure situation of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, because they have to prolong their status and there is always an option that Slovenian authorities claim there are no reasons for international protection anymore and they do not prolong it.

Challenge 2

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive upon their status recognition only temporary residence permit in Slovenia. If their status is prolonged then also temporary residence is prolonged and only after 5 years of legal residence in Slovenia can they apply for Slovenian citizenship (if they want to apply for permanent residence permit, they would need to give up their status first and apply from abroad at Slovenian embassy) – however, they need to meet all the conditions including sufficient financial means (in case of a family, sufficient to support the whole family). This condition is often very difficult (or impossible) to meet.

Challenge 3

Beneficiaries of international protection (both those with refugee status and those with subsidiary protection) can become long-term residents after 5 years of legally residing in Slovenia but only if they meet all the conditions – a condition that is most difficult for them to meet is sufficient financial means.

Further comments: For beneficiaries of subsidiary protection it is easier to apply for Slovenian citizenship than for permanent residence permit. The Aliens Act is in the process of being amended and hopefully certain amendments regulating the transition from one status (subsidiary protection) to another one (permanent residence permit) will be adopted.

Family unity and reunification

Family unity and legal status of family members

International Protection Act defines "family members of the applicant" (Article 2): third country nationals or stateless persons who have come together with the applicant in the Republic of Slovenia and the members of the family, which existed before the advent of the Republic of Slovenia. These are:

- The applicant's spouse, registered partner or partner with whom the applicant lives in a long-term cohabitation (in case of polygamous relation only one person is considered as spouse or partner, the one set by the applicant);
- Minor children of the applicant or the spouse/partner, if they are unmarried (regardless if they were born in a marital or consensual union or were adopted);
- Children of the applicant, born in Slovenia;
- The father, mother or other adult who is responsible for the applicant, if the applicant is a minor and unmarried;
- Another relative of the applicant, if between them exists a community that is essentially similar to the primary family and has the same function as a family, which is true family ties between family members, physical care, care, protection, emotional support and financial dependence.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act defines family members and the right to family reunification in Article 36: Basic family members under this Act are:

- The spouse or the partner with which the person who obtained temporary protection cohabited for at least one year before the arrival to Slovenia;
- Children of the person who obtained temporary protection until he/she has the duty to maintain them;
- Stepchildren if they maintain their stepparents, and stepfather or stepmother when they maintain their stepchildren;
- Grandchildren and nephews of person who obtained temporary protection, if that person is obliged to maintain grandchildren or nephews who have no parents;
- Other close relatives of a person who obtained temporary protection if they lived together as part of the family before arriving to Slovenia.

However, this Act has never been used.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia issued an important decision on the scope of family members (decision no. U-I-309/13 of 14 January 2015). The Constitutional Court decided that it is unconstitutional to limit the right to family reunification only to specifically listed family members, without giving the possibility to any other relatives (such as brothers and sisters) to invoke this right when special circumstances exist due to which family reunification should be granted. Consequently, a new possibility was provided in the Aliens Act according to which the competent body may exceptionally consider another relative as a family member if there are specific circumstances due to which family reunification in Slovenia should be granted. Special circumstances exist when these relatives were living in family unity which is in essence very similar to primary family and has the same functions – genuine family ties, physical care, protection, emotional support and financial dependence.

Definition of family unit for family reunification

This section refers to family reunification after the person has received international protection (asylum seekers must wait until they receive the international protection and then IF they receive it they can apply for family reunification). Thus, for their family members Aliens Act applies.

The Aliens Act defines family reunification for refugees (Article 47a) and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (Article 47b). In both cases, family members are:

- spouse/partner;
- minor children (only if they are not married);
- adult children and the parents of the beneficiary of international protection if the beneficiary of international protection or the spouse/partner is obliged to support them;
- if the beneficiary of the international protection is an unaccompanied minor, also his/her parents.

Exceptionally, the competent authority may consider as a family member other relatives of the refugee, if special circumstances speak in favor of family reunification in the Republic of Slovenia. Special circumstances are given, where there is a community of other relatives because of the specific factual circumstances, in essence, similar to the primary family and has the same function as the primary family, which is especially true family ties between

family members, physical care, protection, defense, emotional support and financial dependence.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act defines family members and the right to family reunification in Article 36: Basic family members under this Act are:

- The spouse or the partner with which the person who obtained temporary protection cohabited for at least one year before the arrival to Slovenia;
- Children of the person who obtained temporary protection until he/she has the duty to maintain them;
- Stepchildren if they maintain their stepparents, and stepfather or stepmother when they maintain their stepchildren;
- Grandchildren and nephews of person who obtained temporary protection, if that person is obliged to maintain grandchildren or nephews who have no parents;
- Other close relatives of a person who obtained temporary protection if they lived together as part of the family before arriving to Slovenia.

However, this Act has never been used.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia issued the already mentioned important decision on the scope of family members (decision no. U-I-309/13 of 14 Jan. 2015). The Constitutional Court decided that it is unconstitutional to limit the right to family reunification only to specifically listed family members, without giving the possibility to any other relatives (such as brothers and sisters) to invoke this right when special circumstances exist due to which family reunification should be granted. Consequently, a new possibility was provided in the Aliens Act according to which the competent body may exceptionally consider another relative as a family member if there are specific circumstances due to which family reunification in Slovenia should be granted. Special circumstances exist when these relatives were living in family unity which is in essence very similar to primary family and has the same functions – genuine family ties, physical care, protection, emotional support and financial dependence.

Residency requirement for family reunification

Recognized refugees can submit the application immediately upon recognition (and within 3 months after receiving their status they can apply under reduced conditions, after those 3 months the same requirements apply as for other

TCNs). Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection that receive the protection for more than 1 year, can apply for family reunification immediately (and 3 months after receiving their status they can apply under reduced conditions, after those 3 months the same requirements apply as for other TCNs). Those beneficiaries of subsidiary protection that receive their status only for 1 year, cannot apply for family reunification; they must wait 1 year and then request for the prolongation of the subsidiary protection and if their protection is prolonged only then they can apply for family reunification (that is why the answer is 0 – 12 months).

Resettled refugees are not specifically mentioned in the law, however the same measures apply to them as for the recognized refugees.

For persons under temporary protection neither Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act nor the Aliens Act state anything specific. However, there are no persons with temporary protection in Slovenia.

Economic resource requirement for family reunification

Recognized refugees, resettled refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection can apply for family reunification under reduced requirements within 90 days after their recognition. In this case there is no economic resource requirement (Aliens Act, Article 47a and 47b). If they do not apply within those 90 days, they can still apply later but under the same requirements as other TCNs. For other TCNs there are economic resource requirements (they need to prove they have enough financial means to support each family member they want to be reunited with) (Aliens Act, Article 33).

For persons under temporary protection neither Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act nor the Aliens Act say anything specifically. However, there are no persons with temporary protection in Slovenia.

Housing requirement for family reunification

International Protection Act actually says that for the period of accommodation of persons with recognized international protection in the integration house or other accommodation capacity of the relevant authority also family members of these persons who obtained residence permit in Slovenia based on the right to family reunification under Aliens Act can live in the integration house or other accommodation capacity of the relevant authority – for the period of 1 year with possibility to prolongation for 6 months (Article 93).

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act says (Article 25) Persons enjoying temporary protection shall be provided accommodation and meals in

accommodation centers; and (Article 26) persons with temporary protection, which are housed in accommodation centers that are partially or fully closed, or otherwise opt for private accommodation, financial allowances are granted for private accommodation. The amount, duration and method of payment of financial aid for private accommodation is determined by regulation under the second paragraph of Article 23 of this Act, taking into account in particular the number of family members and income and other benefits. Financial assistance for private accommodation is paid by the relevant authority. However, this Act has never been used.

Health insurance requirement for family reunification

Aliens Act, Article 33 which defines conditions for residence permit states that other TCNs who want to reside in Slovenia need to have an adequate health insurance. Article 47a which provides for family reunification of a foreigner with recognized refugee status does not mention health insurance requirements. Article 47b which provides for family reunification of a beneficiary of subsidiary protection states that a TCN who resides in Slovenia based on temporary residence permit as a family member of a beneficiary of subsidiary protection has the same rights in the areas of health care, social welfare, education and employment as Slovenian citizens (but there are no requirements).

Health Care and Health Insurance Act says (Article 14 and 15) that insured under this Act are also persons to whom Slovenia granted refugee status or subsidiary protection in accordance with the rules on international protection, and their family members, if they are not insured in any other way.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act also does not mention health insurance requirements, only the right to health care. However, this act has never been used.

Language assessment for family reunification

Aliens Act does not mention language assessment as one of the conditions for obtaining a residence permit (neither for family members of beneficiaries of international protection nor for other TCNs).

Requirement to comply with integration measures for family reunification

There are no integration measures as requirements, neither for family members of beneficiaries of international protection nor for other TCNs.

Time limit for facilitated requirements for family reunification

Recognized refugees and resettled refugees can apply under reduced conditions within 3 months after recognition (after those 3 months the same requirements apply as for other TCNs). Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection that receive the protection for more than 1 year, can also apply for family reunification under reduced conditions within 3 months after receiving their status (after those 3 months the same requirements apply as for other TCNs).

Those beneficiaries of subsidiary protection that receive their status only for 1 year, cannot apply for family reunification; they must wait 1 year and then request for the prolongation of the subsidiary protection and if their protection is prolonged only then they can apply for family reunification; again only within 3 months under reduced conditions.

For persons under temporary protection neither Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act nor the Aliens Act say anything specifically. However, this act has never been used.

Documents from country of origin to verify family links

Articles 47a and 47b of the Aliens Act say that a refugee or a beneficiary of subsidiary protection must enclose documentary evidence to prove family ties and the identity of the members of his/her family. If the refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection does not possess documentary evidence to prove family ties, he/she must state all the facts about family members, in particular, their personal names, dates and places of birth, residence address and information about where are they residing in the time of application. The application must be accompanied by a written consent, which allows the competent authority to be able to verify family links data on family members through the international organizations working in the field of migration.

DNA/age tests to verify family links

DNA/age test requirement is not mentioned in the Aliens Act nor in any other.

Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for family reunification

There are no facilitated conditions for any of the vulnerable groups. The only difference for unaccompanied minors is that they can be (re)united with their family members or relatives legally residing in another EU member state already during the procedure for acquiring international protection (Regulation (EU) 604/2013 (Dublin III) if this is in their best interest.

Expedited length of procedure for family reunification

In accordance with the General Administrative Procedure Act (Article 222), the decision in administrative procedure has to be issued in two months since the complete application was lodged. If it is not issued, the applicant may file an appeal to the Ministry of the Interior due to the "silence of the first instance body", i.e. the administrative unit. The appeal may be filed as if the first instance body issued a negative decision. However, in practice the procedures rarely (or almost never) last only 2 months.

Average duration of family reunification procedures

Family reunification procedure can only start when a beneficiary of international protection knows exactly where family members are and has the required documentation (especially proof of family ties). Family tracing is not part of family reunification procedure. Family tracing services are in principle provided by the Red Cross, however until 1 June 2017 Red Cross Slovenia did not trace any family members, nor did it report about any developments regarding the tracing procedure (neither positive nor negative). Family reunification procedure is the same for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, however each individual case lasts for a different period of time – from 2 months (in case of complete documentation provided – original documents, verified documents with photos, certificates proving family ties etc.) up to 1 year and a half (in case when beneficiary cannot provide certain requested documents).²

² We have requested the accurate data from the ministry several times but they did not respond.

Amount of fees and costs (in euros) for family reunification

Family reunification procedure is the same for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and they do not pay any administrative fees (according to the Act on administrative fees beneficiaries of international protection are exempt from paying the fees).

However, they do have other costs, which are difficult to calculate because it depends on each individual case and the country they come from. The translations of their documents (birth certificates, marriage certificates etc.) cost at least 20 euro per page (and up to 40 euro per page). DNA tests are not a practice in Slovenia, because authorities demand testing of all family members in the same laboratory which is impossible (this has been done only one time in a case of a family from Somalia, the cost was 500 euro, however the family did not have to pay this after the requests of a legal representative; after that case DNA tests have never been done again). Additional costs are transportation costs (again depending on the country where family members are from - could be up to 1.000 euro per person), exit visas in case they have to pay them to leave their countries, or escort costs in cases of children – minors travelling alone. Average cost is impossible to calculate but could be around 1.000 euro per person or more.

Family tracing services

Beneficiaries of international protection do have access to Red Cross family tracing services, however so far this has proven to be completely ineffective and unsuccessful.

Use of family tracing

Red Cross Slovenia representatives confirmed they did not receive any family tracing requests in 2016. However, representative of an NGO working daily with refugees confirmed that for every UAM who does not know where his/her parents are the family tracing procedure **must** start, while for other asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection this is optional (if they want they can submit tracing request to Red Cross). However, so far none of the requests were successfully solved.

Travel/family assistance budgets for family reunification

Travel expenses or other costs in cases of family reunification (such as DNA tests for example) are not covered by the state budget.

Status of family members

For recognized refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, resettled refugees, and persons under temporary protection, the permit for family members entitle them to the same legal status as their sponsor.

Autonomous residence permit for family members

The children at the age of majority (so children when they are 18 years old and more) are eligible ONLY if the person with international protection is obliged (by the legislation of country of origin) to maintain them.

In the case of the refugees (also resettled refugees) their family members receive permanent residence permit (Article 47a). Thus, there are no conditions for prolongation and their status in autonomous.

In the case of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection their family members receive temporary residence permit for the same period as the person with subsidiary protection (Article 47b). This person has to prolong subsidiary protection and their family members must prolong temporary residence permit and only after 5 years they can then apply for permanent residence permit. In case if the subsidiary protection of the beneficiary is not prolonged (within those 5 years), then also temporary residence permit of family members will not be prolonged. They become autonomous only after 5 years when they can obtain permanent residence permit. There is an exception defined in Aliens Act (Article 47): The competent authority may extend the residence permit of family members in the case of death of the TCN or if the marriage/partnership ended, but lasted at least three years in Slovenia. In this case the status of family members may be extended only once, with a validity of up to one year.

Access to services for family members

Aliens Act (Article 106 - Aid for the integration of foreigners who are not EU citizens): (1) Foreigners who are not EU citizens are entitled to programs that provide faster integration into the cultural, economic and social life in Slovenia, namely to:

- Programs of Slovenian language and getting acquainted with Slovenian history, culture and constitutional order;
- Programs of mutual knowledge and understanding with Slovenian citizens;
- Information relating to their integration into Slovenian society. This means family members do have access to integration programs, however it is not clear if in the same amount as persons under protection.

Decree on Ways and Scope of Providing Programs of Support for Integration of Third Country Nationals states in Article 4 that TCNs can attend free language courses in the amount of 60, 120 or 180 hours, depending on their status which can either be permanent or temporary residence. However, beneficiaries of international protection have the right to 300 hours of free language course.

Employment, Self-employment and Work of Aliens Act states in Article 6 that refugees, and persons with subsidiary protection as well as their family members, displaced persons with temporary protection, and asylum seekers under certain conditions have free access to labour market and, therefore, do not require a work residence permit for self-employment in Slovenia.

In the field of education, persons with international protection share the same rights as Slovenian nationals (Article 7 of the Vocational Education Act and Art. 101 of the International Protection Act), however the rights of their family members are based on their status (either temporary residence permit or permanent residence permit) and are thus treated like other TCNs. International Protection Act in Article 95 states that beneficiaries of international protection have the right to social care under the Social-Care Act under the same conditions as Slovenian nationals. According to Act Amending the Social Assistance Benefits Act (Article 3) the recipients are citizens of the Republic of Slovenia who have permanent residence in Slovenia, foreigners who have permanent residence permit in Slovenia, and persons with international protection and their family members, which have – based on the right to family reunification – obtained a residence permit in the Republic of Slovenia and have registered permanent or temporary residence in Slovenia (this means family members of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection also).

Health Care and Health Insurance Act in Articles 14 and 15 stipulates that beneficiaries of international protection and their family members have obligatory health insurance covered by this Act (paid from the State budget) in case their health insurance is not covered in other ways. International Protection Act in Article 92 further states that for the duration of the right to housing for beneficiaries of international protection also their family members that obtained residence permit in Slovenia based on family reunification are entitled to accommodation in an integration house. Further, in line with Article 93

beneficiaries of international protection that reunited their family in Slovenia are entitled to the financial allowance for private accommodation for their family members as well from the day they arrive to Slovenia.

Acceptance rate for family reunification

The Ministry of Interior and the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants (which includes also Asylum home) did not provide the information on acceptance rates.

Reasons for rejection for family reunification

We have requested this information from the Ministry of Interior and from Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants (which includes also Asylum home), however they have not provided this information. An estimation was received from a representative of an NGO working closely with asylum seekers and refugees, who is also a legal expert, that residence period, housing requirement, health insurance, language assessment or integration assessment were not the reasons for rejecting family reunification. According to them, no one has been rejected due to economic resources, however some people have been rejected because of not falling in the scope of family members or due to the incomplete documentation.

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection concerning family reunification

Challenge1

UAM can start family reunification procedure only for their parents but not their other (minor) siblings; this means that parents have to choose either to come to Slovenia and be reunited with one child while leaving their other children in country of origin or in some third country, or to stay with other children and "choose" to be separated from this one child which is in Slovenia. Slovenian authorities hence do not respect the principle of family unity.

Challenge 2

Documentation is extremely difficult to obtain especially from some countries (like Eritrea) because Slovenian authorities demand original documents also from family members and often people are not capable of delivering them for different reasons: they either don't have the requested documents, or they can't send their original documents because they would consequently have problems

in their country of origin, there is no option to make verified copies of documents, or they cannot post the documents because the authorities examine all outgoing post (especially from war zones or zones under occupation), or people were born outside their own countries (maybe as refugees) and never obtained any birth certificate by any state, some people are stateless etc. Often it is too difficult to provide documents clearly proving family ties. Often documents provided are not accepted by Slovenian authorities as adequate.

Challenge 3

The deadline for beneficiaries of international protection to start the family reunification procedure under milder conditions is only 90 days upon their status recognition. Often this is not enough for them to prepare all needed documentation. If they miss this deadline then they need to meet the same conditions as all other foreigners – the most difficult condition to meet is to show sufficient financial means to support all family members (292,56 euro per person per month). This means that after 90 days it is basically impossible for beneficiaries to meet the conditions. Another financial problem is that beneficiaries have to cover the travel costs for their family members in case of unification – from certain countries this can be very costly.

Challenge 4

The scope of the definition of family members is too narrow, in particular with regard to siblings of minor beneficiaries of international protection.

Citizenship

Facilitated residence requirement for naturalisation

The conditions for acquisition of citizenship by naturalisation for mostly the same as for other TCNs; they are defined in Articles 10 – 16 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act. One requirement is reduced for the recognized refugees. According to the provision of Article 12, the competent authority may, if it is in accordance with national interests and by discretion, grant the citizenship to a person with refugee status recognized under the law on asylum if they actually live in Slovenia uninterruptedly for five years before submitting an application and meets the conditions laid down in the first 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the first paragraph of Article 10 of this Law.

Period of residence requirement for naturalisation

According to Article 10 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act, the general condition for naturalisation is actually living in Slovenia for 10 years, continuously last 5 years prior to the application, and the lawful status of a foreigner in Slovenia. However, in line with Article 12, the competent authority may, if it is in accordance with national interests, according to its discretion, grant the citizenship to a person with refugee status recognized under the law on asylum if they actually live in Slovenia uninterruptedly for five years before submitting an application and meets other conditions. The law mentions only the refugee status, however according to Mol also persons with subsidiary protection are considered under the same conditions.

Economic resource requirement for naturalisation

According to Articles 10 to 16 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act, economic resource requirement is the same for all TCNs and it is not mentioned under exemptions in the case of beneficiaries of international protection.

Language assessment for naturalisation

In line with Article 10 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act, one of the conditions is that the person shows knowledge of the Slovenian language for everyday communication by a certificate on successful completion of the exam on the Slovenian language at the basic level; this condition is the same for all TCNs. There are certain exemptions that are the same for all TCNs, also beneficiaries of international protection.

'Integration'/citizenship assessment for naturalisation

There are no other "integration"/citizenship assessment requirements for naturalisation required by law or practice, only Slovenian language test.

Criminal record requirement for naturalisation

In line with Articles 10-16 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act, the condition is that a person proves he/she has not been sentenced to imprisonment for more than 3 months (unconditionally) or that he/she has not been given a suspended sentence of imprisonment with a probation period longer than one year; TCNs must obtain such proof from their country of origin, however since beneficiaries of international protection cannot request such documents from their countries of origin, the Republic of Slovenia would only check their criminal records for the period they reside in Slovenia (note that this is not specifically written in any law, however it would be in direct conflict with the purpose of international protection to demand from beneficiaries of international protection to contact their country of origin and request certain documents).

Documents from country of origin for naturalisation

The law does not provide for any favorable treatment. Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act (Articles 10 and 12) requires that a person has a release from current citizenship or prove that he/she will get it if granted the citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia; however, Article 12 says that the competent authority may, if it is in accordance with national interests, according to its discretion, accept in the citizenship of Slovenia also a person with refugee status, recognized under the law on asylum, if he/she actually lives in Slovenia uninterruptedly for 5 years before submitting an application and meets all other conditions of Article 10 of this Law, with the exception of having this release from current citizenship.

Facilitated conditions for vulnerable persons applying for naturalisation

There are no reduced or waived conditions for the vulnerable groups.

Naturalisation by entitlement for second generation

Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act in Article 14 provides that if the father and mother acquire Slovenian citizenship by naturalisation then also their child who is not yet 18 years old can obtain Slovenian citizenship on parents' request.

If one of the parents acquires Slovenian citizenship by naturalisation, then also his/her child who is not yet 18 years old and lives with him/her in Slovenia continuously for at least one year prior to the application and has the lawful status of an alien (also on parent's request).

Slovenian citizenship can be granted also to a child who is born in Slovenia and has not yet reached one year of age, if requested by the parent who acquired Slovenian citizenship by naturalisation.

Expedited length of procedure

In accordance with the General Administrative Procedure Act (Article 222), the decision in administrative procedure has to be issued in two months since the complete application was lodged. If it is not issued, the applicant may file an appeal to the Ministry of the Interior due to the "silence of the first instance body", i.e. the administrative unit. The appeal may be filed as if the first instance body issued a negative decision. However, in practice the procedures rarely (or almost never) last only 2 months.

Average duration of naturalisation procedures

Internal Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation Directorate (and within it the Sector for citizenship) does not gather data based on the type of international protection one has, therefore we can not provide the data separately for refugees and persons with subsidiary protection; 130 days is the average duration of the naturalisation procedure for both groups.

Amount of fees and costs for naturalisation (in euros)

Administrative tax is defined by Administrative Fees Act and its Tariff. According to tariff no. 12, the tax for naturalisation is 181,20 EURO. However, we have

received information from MoI that persons with international protection do not pay the administrative tax, they only pay 4,50 euro. Other costs include: translation – page of court certified translation costs at least 22 EURO per page (page is 1500 characters)³; language test: from 122 EURO to 137,25 EURO⁴, posting documents from different countries, etc. therefore other costs are easily around 300 euro or more.

Acceptance rate for naturalisation and access to nationality

Internal Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation Directorate (and within it the Sector for citizenship) does not gather data based on the type of international protection one has, therefore we can not provide the data separately for refugees and persons with subsidiary protection; 3 persons have applied for Slovenian citizenship in 2016 and 2 of them have been accepted in Slovenian citizenship.

Reasons for rejection of access to nationality

One unsuccessful application from beneficiaries of international protection was rejected last year for economic resources requirements. Economic resource requirement is usually the most difficult condition to meet.

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection concerning access to nationality

Challenge 1

Sufficient financial means – this condition is met if a person is employed and has a limited job contract for at least 2 years prior to the naturalisation procedure, or if a person is employed and has a permanent job contract for at least 6 months prior to naturalisation procedure. There are also some other options (for example pension, stipend, etc.) which are all listed in Decree on criteria and circumstances establishing conditions for acquiring the citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia through naturalization.⁵

³ See <http://www.multilingual.si/sl/cenik-sodnih-prevodov>.

⁴ See <http://centerslo.si/izpiti/>.

⁵ Uradni list RS, št. 51/07 in 112/09):<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED4352>

Challenge 2

Beneficiaries of international protection (like others) have to pass the Slovenian language exam which is one of the conditions for Slovenian citizenship. This is often difficult for them.

Challenge 3

Persons with refugee status can apply for Slovenian citizenship after 5 years of continuous legal residency in Slovenia (and if they meet all the conditions), while persons with subsidiary protection are not specifically mentioned. However, according to MoI in practice also persons with subsidiary protection were "allowed" to apply for citizenship after 5 years (and not 10), however it seems that this was merely "good will" of the officials to accept their applications and even grant them citizenship as there is no legal basis for this (the law – Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act – specifically mentions only persons with refugee status).

Housing

Free movement and choice of residence within the country

Recognized refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, resettled refugees, and persons under temporary protection have the same right for free movement and residence as nationals.

Access to housing and housing benefits

Recognized refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, resettled refugees, and persons under temporary protection do not have access to non-profit housing which is accessible only to Slovenian nationals. However, beneficiaries of international protection do have certain "housing benefits" such as the right to monthly financial allowance for the rent for the period of 18 month (which can be prolonged).

Access to housing for vulnerable persons

There are no special policies for vulnerable groups regarding their access to housing. However, in practice unaccompanied minors (especially those younger than 15) are ensured accommodation in boarding schools (currently in 2 boarding schools in Slovenia).

Access to property rights

Article 68 of the Constitution states that foreigners may acquire ownership rights to real estate under conditions provided by law or international treaty ratified by the National Assembly. At the moment, only EU citizens may buy real estate in Slovenia under the same conditions as Slovenian nationals (through the ratification of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which provides for equal treatment irrespective of EU citizenship). Other foreigners cannot. Thus, beneficiaries of international protection can become owners only after having obtained Slovenian citizenship.

Administrative barriers to accessing public housing

In Slovenia the main problems are lack of capacities and the conditions to have access to public housing (not so much the administrative barriers). There are two integration houses in Slovenia with capacities for around 60 people. Once these two houses are full, there is no other public housing available for beneficiaries of international protection. Public housing is available either only to Slovenian citizens or in some cases to permanent residents in a certain Municipality. Only the beneficiaries of international protection with permanent residence (refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection after 5 years) have access to only certain public housing. However, they "compete" with all other permanent residents and Slovenian citizens who apply for the same public housing, and therefore it is very difficult or almost impossible to actually get it. Beneficiaries of international protection who are unemployed or without their own financial means are entitled to receive financial help from the state for the rent of private housing for up to 18 months and under certain conditions for additional 18 months.

[Awareness raising about the specific challenges of beneficiaries of international protection on the housing market](#)

There is no "public housing" scheme for beneficiaries of international protection in Slovenia. The only public housing available for them is integration house which is owned by the state and managed by the Ministry of Interior. Other public housing for beneficiaries does not exist. There are also no publicly financed campaigns to sensitize private housing owners (in practice to some extent – but in a very limited way – this is done by one NGO that assists beneficiaries of international protection searching for private housing).

[Targeted housing advice, counselling, representation](#)

Beneficiaries of international protection upon their recognition receive information about their housing rights which consists of either a place in integration house or (if the integration house is already full) financial assistance to pay rent for private housing. However, beneficiaries do not receive any targeted housing advice or counselling or representation by housing experts. They get support for searching for apartments by a specialized NGO which is helping refugees with integration in first 3 years after they get the status. According to the NGOs obtaining suitable and affordable housing on the market of apartments available for rent for profit is one of the biggest challenges for international protection beneficiaries.

Provision of targeted temporary housing support

There are two integration houses in Slovenia with capacities for around 60 people where international protection beneficiaries may stay for up to one year. Once these two houses are full, there is no other public housing available for beneficiaries of international protection. Beneficiaries of international protection who are unemployed or without their own financial means are entitled to receive financial help from the state for the rent of private housing for up to 18 months and under certain condition for additional 18 months. This condition (which exists since 2016) requires that a person attends at least 80% of the Slovenian language course for international protection beneficiaries. Before 2016 beneficiaries were automatically entitled to 3 years of financial assistance for private housing rent. One more thing needs to be mentioned as a temporary housing support: beneficiaries of international protection who do not get a place in the integration house and are also unable to find private housing (often the owners are not willing to rent to refugees) are then allowed to stay in the Asylum home also after they receive their status. Currently there are several cases like this.

There are no persons under temporary protection in Slovenia, however according to the law they do have the right to financial assistance for private housing which is limited to the same period as their protection (1 year and possible prolongation two times for six more months).

Provision of targeted long-term housing support

Beneficiaries of international protection can obtain financial help for renting private housing for maximum 3 years (18 months automatically if they are unemployed, while additional 18 months only if they attend Slovenian language course at least in the amount of 80 % of the course), however this is still considered as a short-term support. After these 3 years, if beneficiaries of international protection are still unemployed and without their own financial means, they have access to further financial support to pay the rent – however this measure is the same for all permanent residents in Slovenia, it is not specifically targeting this group.

Period of targeted housing support

Accommodation in integration house may last for a maximum of 12 mnths after the person is granted international protection. Beneficiaries of international protection who are unemployed or without their own financial means are

entitled to receive financial assistance for up to 18 months and under certain condition for additional 18 months, as mentioned.

Housing quality assessment

Authorities are not very successful with dealing with housing issues; through Ministry of Public Administration they published a call for owners of private housing (to rent their apartments/houses to beneficiaries of international protection) however they did not list any criteria at all, they only wrote the apartments should be equipped, furnished and available immediately, and preferably in larger urban areas; they mentioned that interministerial working group will decide about "which apartments are appropriate". However, the practice shows that to beneficiaries of international protection the authorities often offer an apartment in unacceptably poor conditions for unreasonably high price. Beneficiaries of international protection are supposed to find their apartment on the free "housing market" which means houses/apartments are in various conditions. This is however not solely a problem for beneficiaries of international protection but a general problem for all residents in Slovenia who are renting.

Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into housing policies

There is no integration strategy nor any specific strategy on housing of beneficiaries of international protection.

Coordination with regional and local authorities on housing for beneficiaries of international protection

The national government (Ministry of Interior) seems to communicate with local authorities (municipalities) a manner that triggers notable resistance of local communities. All local communities where the national government wanted to ensure housing for beneficiaries of international protection have resisted and protested against such decisions. The national government is facing a problem of finding any location let alone the location with integration perspectives. Local authorities and local communities are arguing that the national government is not including them into discussions on time, that they are the last ones to even receive the information about government's plans.

Partnership on housing with expert NGOs

The state provides only very limited means on an *ad hoc* basis, in a form of project funding and usually for a specific purpose. In general, the state does not provide any means for NGOs to continuously assist beneficiaries of international protection to find accommodation in Slovenia. Association Odnos is an NGO that runs a project financed by AMIF and Slovenian government – to assist with integration in general,⁶ while another NGO (Slovene Philanthropy) runs 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees

Budget for the housing market integration of beneficiaries of international protection

Planned budget for housing was actually within the whole planned budget for migration related costs in general, therefore Ministry of Interior could not give us the exact number. Mol claims that 57.668,01 euro have been spent (but it is not clear if this was all for housing).

Share of beneficiaries of international protection living in the area of their choice

In answers to this question we detected disagreement between respondents, as 4 of them (NGO representatives) think few beneficiaries live in the area of their choice, while 1 thinks most of them and 1 thinks nearly all of them live in the area of their choice. Both of these respondents work for state institutions. Generally, the small sample size and wide variation make the weighted average statistically unreliable.⁷

Number of beneficiaries of international protection using targeted public accommodation

In 2016 there were 21 beneficiaries of international protection in integration house in Ljubljana and 49 beneficiaries of international protection in integration house in Maribor (in total, 70 persons). However, we did not receive data on the type of status these persons had (refugee status or subsidiary protection).

⁶ See

http://odnos.si/programi_in_projekti/projekt_pomoc_pri_integraciji_za_osebe_z_mednarodno_zascito_2015_2017/.

⁷ A full summary of answers: 50% "few"; 25% "some"; 12,5% "most"; 12,5% "nearly all" (avg. 2,13 - around half). It is crucial to note here that despite the average answer being "around half" none of the respondents actually chose this answer.

Length of the use of targeted public accommodation

In 2016 the majority of the 70 beneficiaries of international protection lived in integration house (in Ljubljana or in Maribor) for one year (which is the maximum amount of time available). However, we did not receive data on the type of status these persons had (refugee status or subsidiary protection).

Targeted in-cash housing benefits after status recognition

The in-cash housing benefits amount to around 300 euro, depending on the location; in Ljubljana the benefits are around 400 euro, in Maribor around 250 euro.

According to Mol, in 2016 the average monthly cost of in-cash housing support to all beneficiaries of international protection (in total, not per person) was 3.374,00 EURO; 75% was covered from EU funds, and 25% from the state budget; this amount does not include the costs of the integration houses, this is only in-cash support for renting private accommodation. The amount of in-cash support one single person can receive for housing support per month is equal to the social welfare which is around 292 euro. A family of 5 people would receive 180% of this amount, thus 525 euro for rent per month. See more details in Decree on the methods and conditions for ensuring the rights of persons with international protection.⁸

Housing security of beneficiaries of international protection

There is no exact data available, however none of asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection are homeless; some might live informally with friends but such data do not exist; some lived in mainstream temporary public housing such as "crisis centers" for children or boarding schools where unaccompanied minors were living; most of asylum seekers lived in asylum home, while most of beneficiaries of international protection live in private housing with legal contract; none of asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection own their own apartment.

Housing disadvantage

⁸ See <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED5654>.

Generally, the small sample size and wide variation make the weighted average statistically unreliable, so we here include a full summary of answers:

	Is there a disproportionately high share of rental costs among all expenditures?	Are there overcrowded living conditions?	Are there substandard housing conditions/ infrastructure?	Is it in remote location (no or remote access to public services, schooling, employment opportunities, family and community life)?
recognised refugees	14.3% "few"; 28.6% "some"; 28.6% "most"; 28,6% "nearly all" (avg 3.3 -most)	66.7% "few"; 16.7% "half"; 16.7% "most (avg. 1.8 - some)	50% "few"; 16.7% "some"; 33.3% "most" (avg. 2.2 - around half)	40% "few"; 60% "some" (avg. 1.6 - some)
beneficiaries of subsidiary protection	33.3% "few"; 16.7% "some"; 33.3% "most"; 16.7% "nearly all" (avg. 2.8 - half)	60% "few"; 40% "half" (avg. 1.8 - some)	60% "few"; 40% "most" (avg. 2.2 - around half)	40% "few"; 20% "some"; 20% "half"; 20% "nearly all" (avg. 2.4 - around half)

[Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection on the housing market](#)

Challenge 1

The capacities of the integration house (which is the only publicly owned housing option for beneficiaries of international protection) are too small and therefore the majority of beneficiaries of international protection do not have access to it. Integration house is in two locations, in Ljubljana for around 15 people (at the moment 3 families live in this house) and in Maribor for around 45 people (together 60 people in the whole country). This means that the majority of beneficiaries have to rent an apartment at the "open real-estate market" which also means regular market prices. These are often too high for beneficiaries, especially in Ljubljana – higher than the in-cash housing support they receive by the state (for 18 months, and if they meet the conditions for another 18 months). Slovenia agreed to accept 567 refugees through relocation (quota) program, however the relevant authorities did not ensure sufficient housing capacities (despite the fact that there are several publicly owned buildings in different cities in Slovenia – owned either by the state or the municipalities). This should be the primary concern of the state.

Challenge 2

Beneficiaries of international protection are facing the financial problems – when renting an apartment, it is expected by the owners that they would pay "security deposit" plus one rent in advance. However, beneficiaries are usually waiting to receive financial assistance for more than one month or up to two months after the recognition of their status. In this period most of them do not have any financial means, not even for the food, certainly not for the rent or two rents. Owners of the apartments rarely agree to wait that long and give them a renting contract anyway. This financial situation has become much worse since the International Protection Act has been changed in 2016 and one-time financial help, aimed to cover for this transition period upon status recognition, was abolished.

Challenge 3

Beneficiaries of international protection are facing discrimination and racism when searching for apartments. Many owners are not willing to rent to refugees, especially not to large families.

Employment

Legal employment and self-employment

The data for this section was not provided neither by MoI, nor by Ministry of Labour or National Employment Office. National Employment Office claims they cannot answer some of the questions due to the protection of personal data, however in general they are not allowed to collect any data other than on the persons registered at National Employment Office as unemployed. Once a person becomes employed, the National Employment Office can no longer keep track of that person (which means they have no data about the type of employment, the contract, etc.). National Employment Office only has contacts with those beneficiaries of international protection who register themselves as unemployed – therefore they do not have any general data on international protection beneficiaries. They also do not have any data on specific vocational trainings or education for better employment opportunities. The representative of National Employment Office suggested we should get all requested data from the MoI or the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants (which was established on 1.6.2017) – however neither of them responded fully to our requests. We only received partial data from the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrant: 62 recognized refugees (10 female, 52 male) and 13 beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (all male) are employed.

Educational attainment level

We requested this data from Ministry of Interior, the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, the Ministry of Labour, the National Employment Office, however we have not received it from anyone. National Employment Institute informed us on 14. 6. 2017 they do not have the data requested.

Access to employment

In terms of access to labour market, the rights of asylum seekers are limited. Only asylum seekers who have not been issued a first instance decision in nine months, without the delay being caused by them, have the right to free access to the labour market (until 2010 the waiting period was one year). Free access to the labour market means that the asylum seeker may conclude an employment contract or may become self-employed solely on the basis of their legal status of an asylum seeker, without asking the Employment Office of the Republic of

Slovenia for consent and without a work permit. Before the nine-month period asylum seekers can, if they wish to do so, undertake various maintenance and interpretation tasks at the Asylum Home, for which they get compensated.

Beneficiaries of international protection have free access to labour market according to Employment, Self-employment and Work of Aliens Act, however, this applies to all employment positions apart from those for which Slovenian citizenship is specifically required, which is determined by sectoral laws. For example, Judicial Service Act requires that all judges have Slovenian citizenship; Civil Servants Act also defines for which positions in the public administration one should have citizenship; Attorneys Act also includes a condition of the Slovenian or other EU citizenship.

Beneficiaries of international protection do have equal access to employment, but do not have equal access to each position or vocation.

Access to self-employment

Article 6 of the Employment, Self-employment and Work of Aliens Act defines the right to free access to the labour market in the sense that the foreigner in Slovenia can be employed, self-employed, or performing work without the consent to the single permit or the EU Blue Card or without the seasonal work permit.

Only asylum seekers who have not been issued a first instance decision in nine months, without the delay being caused by them, have the right to free access to the labour market. Liberal professions, such as lawyers, notaries, engineers, architects, doctors, dentists and accountants, may be accessible to them if they are self-employed and meet the conditions for these professions (e.g. licences, state exams etc). For some of these professions (like for lawyers, notaries) Slovenian citizenship is a condition, however not for all.

Access to employment for groups of special concern

The only targeted policy adopted regarding the employment of beneficiaries of international protection is a programme called "on the job training for persons with international protection" which lasts for six months; however, this policy only enables the training and not the actual employment, and also it does not mention any vulnerable groups.

Administrative barriers to accessing employment

Asylum seekers have access to employment only after 9 months and only if they did not receive a negative decision in these 9 months. Beneficiaries of international protection do have access to employment in Slovenia, however it is a question what kind of job they are able to obtain (job related to their own profession or any kind of job or mainly physical work). Very often they don't have documents to prove their profession or official education and it is difficult for them to obtain these documents. For all groups language is an additional barrier, as for majority of jobs in Slovenia language knowledge is requested. Those beneficiaries with specific qualifications / skills might find employment faster than those without any specific knowledge or expertise or any education at all. Often, they find work at different NGOs dealing with refugees. However, majority of beneficiaries is struggling to find employment in Slovenia.

Awareness raising about the specific labour market situation of beneficiaries of international protection

Public employment services have all relevant information since they are the most familiar with the employment legislation, however it is a question if employment services are sent any additional information by the government or Ministry of Interior. Public employment services are obliged to regularly inform their staff about the content of any kind of regulation, however it is a question how this rule works in practice.

There are no publicly financed campaigns to sensitize private employment actors.

Right to recognition of formal degrees and right to skills validation for beneficiaries of international protection

Beneficiaries of international protection have the right to recognition (so-called nostrification, equivalence determination procedure) of formal degrees. International Protection Act in Article 88 states that the burden of proving education acquired in the country of origin is on the asylum seeker. Further, in line with Article 101, costs related to the recognition of foreign qualifications attested by the foreign diploma, certificate or other evidence of formal qualifications of persons who have been granted international protection shall be borne by the relevant authority. The relevant authority shall also cover costs related to the recognition and evaluation of education in cases where persons with recognized international protection cannot prove their formal education by

documents. Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act does not mention this issue.

Assessment of skills of beneficiaries of international protection

The state provides nation-wide criteria to assess beneficiaries' level of professional education and skills. The same criteria to assess their level of education and skills applies as for all other residents in Slovenia. The state provides assessments with appropriate translation or in the first language of the beneficiary. For beneficiaries of international protection the state provides for assessment with appropriate translations, but not for asylum seekers.

The state provides guidelines for assessments where documentary evidence from the country of origin is unavailable (i.e. level of education, skills, needs). There are no official guidelines for assessments when documents are not available, this is done on an *ad hoc* basis.

Recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates, and other evidence of formal qualifications

According to the Recognition and Evaluation of Education Act asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection have to go through the same procedures as nationals who acquired qualifications abroad.

Support in the recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates, and other formal qualifications

As mentioned already above, the International Protection Act in Article 101 states that costs related to the recognition of foreign qualifications attested by the foreign diploma, certificate or other evidence of formal qualifications of persons who have been granted international protection shall be borne by the relevant authority. The relevant authority shall also cover costs related to the recognition and evaluation of education in cases where persons with recognized international protection cannot prove their formal education by documents.

Job-seeking counseling and positive action

Asylum seekers only have access to mainstream services. The only policy available for beneficiaries of international protection is (since February 2017) special program for "on-the-job" training which lasts for 6 months. Within the program the employers receive some funds for the training, while the beneficiary receives transportation and food allowance and payment in the

amount of 3 euro per hour. However, if beneficiaries of international protection enroll in this program, they lose their social benefits (social welfare, allowance for housing rent, child benefits...) therefore it does not "pay off" and people are not motivated to enroll; in the first 2 months after the program has been announced, only 3 people have applied. Another change which was considered in 2016 was that employment office would employ 2 persons as specialized staff specifically for working with beneficiaries of international protection (one person in Ljubljana and one person in Maribor). This was in preparation and beneficiaries at the time period covered by this report did not yet have access to this service.

Targeted support for entrepreneurs

There is no targeted support by the state or public bodies for entrepreneurs who are beneficiaries of international protection. There are some projects by NGOs or international organizations (IOM), however they are carried out on an ad hoc basis and no concrete information about the results were available in 2017.

Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into employment policies

There is no formal strategy and there are no such mechanisms in Slovenia. Certain measures are being adopted by the employment office.

Coordination with regional and local authorities on employment for beneficiaries of international protection

The only policy available for beneficiaries of international protection is (since February 2017!) special program for "on-the-job" training which lasts for 6 months and was available nation-wide. In the program the employers receive some funds for the training, while the beneficiary receives transportation and food allowance and payment in the amount 3 euro per hour.

Partnership on employment with expert NGOs or non-profit employment support organizations

In general, the state does not provide any means for NGOs to continuously assist beneficiaries of international protection to find employment. Association Odnos is an NGO that runs a project financed by AMIF and Slovenian government – to

assist beneficiaries of international protection with integration in general.⁹ Part of this could be also assistance with searching for employment, however this is not done in a systematic way and it is not nation-wide (not specifically with this purpose). Another NGO Slovene Philanthropy runs a 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees supports beneficiaries with integration in general, also with searching for jobs, however this support activity is not funded systematically.

Budget for the labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection

The Ministry of Interior did not provide this data claiming that this is in the domain of the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities or National employment office. However, National employment office claimed they cannot provide requested data either.

Acceptance rate for recognition of skills/qualifications

The ENIC-NARIC center at the Ministry of education, science and sport is responsible for recognitions of skills/education in Slovenia. They provided the information that in 2015 only 5 beneficiaries of international protection applied for education/skills recognition (1 from Afghanistan, 3 from Syria and 1 from Ukraine) while in 2016 only 1 person applied. These persons all had required documentation therefore the procedures were the same as with any other foreigners or persons obtaining education in other countries. So far they did not have any experience with beneficiaries of international protection who did not have required documentation. This is because such persons do not even apply as they already know they can not provide the required documentation and are not even motivated to try. However, ENIC-NARIC is not the only institution in Slovenia where people can apply for recognition of their education – any educational institution (school, faculty, university...) can do that, however the Ministry could not provide us the data how many people applied for recognition of their education at various educational institutions in Slovenia. Also, each ministry is responsible for recognition of the profession which falls under the relevant sector (for example Ministry of health for any professions related to medical care, or Ministry of infrastructure for professions in construction, etc.)

⁹ See

http://odnos.si/programi_in_projekti/projekt_pomoc_pri_integraciji_za_osebe_z_mednarodno_zascito_2015_2017/.

Overqualification

Generally, the small sample size and wide variation make the weighted average statistically unreliable. A full summary of answers:

	Self-reported overqualification rate
asylum seekers	Some (avg. 1.83) 50% said "few"; 33.3% "some"; 16.7% "most"
recognised refugees	Some/Half (avg. 2.00) 50% "few"; 33.3% "some"; 16.7% "almost all"
beneficiaries of subsidiary protection	Some/Half (Avg. 2.00) 40% "few"; 40% "half"; 20% "most"

[Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection related to employment.](#)

Challenge 1

One of the biggest obstacles when searching for employment in Slovenia is the no or weak knowledge of Slovenian language – if beneficiaries of international protection do not speak Slovenian their chances of finding a regular job are very small.

Challenge 2

It is difficult to obtain education/profession/skills/qualifications officially recognized in Slovenia if beneficiaries do not have required documents (proof). Consequently, that often means that they have to take on low paid physical work, even if they have a profession.

Challenge 3

Many (or most) employers are not keen on employing refugees. Beneficiaries are facing a lot of discrimination and racism when searching for a job, sometimes employers don't know anything about their status and are unwilling to learn, sometimes they think it would take them a lot of time to arrange all administrative matters to employ a refugee, and sometimes they think that refugees will eventually leave Slovenia anyway and it is not worth to invest in them.

Vocational training and employment related education

Enrolment in vocational training or employment-related education

We requested this data from Ministry of Interior, the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, the Ministry of Labour, and the National Employment Office, however we have not received it from anyone. National Employment Office informed us on 14. 6. 2017 they do not have required data.

Access to mainstream vocational training and employment-related education

According to Article 88 of the International Protection Act, children of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors have the right to elementary-school education, however, only until the age of fifteen which is the age of legal majority in Slovenia. They have to start attending elementary school in three months after lodging asylum application at the latest. All asylum seekers have the possibility while minor asylum seekers have the right to access education in vocational and secondary schools under the same conditions as citizens of Slovenia. Asylum seekers are also entitled to access higher and university education under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens. The burden of proving the level of education obtained in the country of origin is on the asylum seeker.

In line with Article 101 of the International Protection Act and Article 7 of the Vocational Education Act, persons with international protection share the same rights regarding pre-school, elementary, secondary, higher and adult and university education as Slovenian nationals. They have the right to scholarships and accommodation in student housing under the same conditions as Slovenian nationals. The funding for education and training of refugees is provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The same goes for regular programs of adult education in which case the Ministry covers the expenses for three years. Expenses arising from recognition of foreign diplomas and school reports are paid for by the Mol.

In the field of temporary protection the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act would apply. According to Article 29, persons with temporary protection that are under 18 years old, have, under the same conditions as nationals, the right to enrollment and completion of primary education, and the enrollment in and completion of lower and secondary vocational and secondary technical and general education for acquiring publicly recognized education in public and private schools, which are financed from public funds, if they are less than 18 years old when enrolling and meet the entry requirements. Persons with temporary protection, which are older than 18, may be included in the training of the first paragraph under the same conditions that apply to participants of

adult education, and in education in higher vocational schools and at university level in accordance with the regulations governing this type of education. However, this act has never been used.

Access to vocational training and employment-related education for groups of special concern

There are no special measures for vulnerable groups.

Administrative barriers to accessing vocational training

For all groups it is difficult to obtain required documentation to prove their already accomplished level of education or training. Without these documents it is difficult to get access to any vocational trainings (not only secondary vocational schools but also to other vocational trainings). Beneficiaries could in theory access "national vocational qualifications" exam, however they need to have a document clearly showing they have completed at least primary school. If they do not have such proof, they cannot take this exam. For asylum seekers the procedures can also be lengthy.

Raising awareness about the specific situation of beneficiaries of international protection regarding vocational training

Public employment services are familiar with the legislation therefore they should have all the information; however, it is questionable if they receive any additional information regarding vocational training of beneficiaries of international protection; Public employment services are obliged to inform their staff, however it is another question how or if this is done in practice. There are no publicly financed campaigns.

In general, beneficiaries of international protection have the same rights and access to education and vocational trainings as Slovenian citizens. There are no specific limitations or measures for beneficiaries of international protection, however in practice the situation is completely different because they simply cannot provide equivalent documents to those f.e. Slovenians can, therefore access to education and vocational trainings is de facto not the same. The only policy that has recently been adopted is "on the job training for persons with international protection" for six months.¹⁰

¹⁰ See https://www.ess.gov.si/delodajalci/financne_spodbude/razpisi/usposabljanje-na-delovnem-mestu-osebe-z-mednarodno-zascito.

Accessibility of vocational training and other employment-related education measures

Beneficiaries of international protection have in principle the same access to vocational trainings and employment education for adults as Slovenian citizens (in theory, however in practice they face numerous difficulties in accessing vocational trainings). On the other hand, Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act does not even mention vocational training and employment education. The only educational measure-policy that has recently been adopted is the already mentioned "on the job training for persons with international protection" for six months¹¹ which is more interesting for the employers than for the beneficiaries of international protection due to the conditions.

Length of targeted vocational training and employment education

Except for the mentioned six months "on the job training" the length of the training is determined after an individual assessment or there is no general time limit.

Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into vocational training and employment-related education policies

There is no formal strategy and no such mechanism in Slovenia.

Coordination with regional and local employment authorities on vocational training and employment-related education

The national government does not coordinate with regional and local employment authorities to support them in providing orientation to beneficiaries of international protection to enroll in and complete vocational training/employment related education; or to provide additional means to build partnership with and encourage local employers to invest in the training of beneficiaries of international protection.

Partnership on vocational training and employment-related education with expert NGOs and non-profit adult education organizations

In general, the state does not provide any means for NGOs to continuously assist beneficiaries of international protection with vocational education. Association Odnos is an NGO that runs a project financed by AMIF and Slovenian

¹¹ See https://www.ess.gov.si/delodajalci/financne_spodbude/razpisi/usposabljanje-na-delovnem-mestu-osebe-z-mednarodno-zascito.

government – to assist beneficiaries of international protection with integration in general.¹² Part of this could be also assistance with searching for adequate vocational education, however this is not done in a systematic way and it is not nation-wide, therefore our answer is that the state provides means to NGO only on ad hoc basis (however, not specifically with the purpose of vocational education). The same answer applies for an NGO Slovene Philanthropy which runs a 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees.

Budgets for the vocational training of beneficiaries of international protection

The Ministry of Interior did not provide this data claiming that this is in the domain of the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities or National employment office.

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection related to vocational training and employment-related education.

Challenge 1

One of the biggest challenges is adequate knowledge of Slovenian language – exams for enrolling in some vocational or employment-related education are in Slovenian language therefore if beneficiaries don't speak the language they can't even pass this exam.

Challenge 2

To enroll in vocational or education-related education beneficiaries need to have certificates (evidence) from their country of origin about the completed education (for example they need to prove which year of high school was the last one they completed). Often, they do not have such documents with them and it is very difficult to obtain them once they are in Slovenia.

Challenge 3

In Slovenia there are no special vocational trainings or employment-related education programs for refugees, therefore they need to meet the same conditions as everyone else, which is often extremely difficult (for example, someone from Syria very likely had to drop out of school at one point and missed some years of schooling; when coming to Slovenia it is very difficult to compete with other residents or citizens of Slovenia for enrolling in certain vocational program).

¹² See

http://odnos.si/programi_in_projekti/projekt_pomoc_pri_integraciji_za_osebe_z_mednarodno_zascito_2015_2017/.

Health

Procedure to identify asylum seekers with special health-related reception needs

The provision of Article 42, paragraph 4 of the International Protection Act states that prior to carrying out further process [before submitting an application for international protection] a person undergoes sanitary disinfection and preventive medical examination where certain health-related reception needs can already be determined. In general, asylum seekers only have the right to emergency health care. Women also have the right to contraceptive use, abortion and health care during pregnancy and childbirth. Further, a vulnerable person with special needs, exceptionally also other applicant, is entitled to additional health services, including psychotherapeutic assistance approved and established by the Commission in the fourth paragraph of Article 83 of the International Protection Act. Minor applicants and applicants who are unaccompanied minors, are entitled to health care to the same extent as children who have compulsory health insurance as family members. Also schooling children over 18 years old, and by the end of their education, but only up to the age of 26, are entitled to the same extent of health care.

Period for identification of asylum-seekers with special reception needs regarding their health care

The law does not define any period after submitting the application. International Protection Act in Article 42 says that prior to carrying out further process [thus, before submitting an application for international protection] a person undergoes sanitary disinfection and preventive medical examination – this is already an opportunity for identification of persons special health care needs. Article 13 (identifying vulnerable persons with special needs) says that special reception needs/requirements of a person may be determined at any later stage in the process of international protection.

Inclusion in a system of health care coverage

Asylum seekers have the right to emergency health services only, which includes the right to emergency health care and cannot select a personal doctor, which is insufficient and causes many problems. Vulnerable groups (people with special needs and other applicants in exceptional cases) have the right to access additional health services, including psycho-therapy, which are determined and approved by a special commission. Sometimes asylum seekers also rely on health care at a pro bono health centre for people without medical insurance.

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have the right to be included into the mandatory health insurance scheme, if their insurance is not provided from a different title. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are included among the insured persons by the provision of Article 15 of the Health Care and Health Insurance Act which lists individuals for whom health insurance is paid from the State budget. In accordance with this Act, the financial resources for health care of refugees are provided by the Ministry of Health. Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act only mentions the right to health care (emergency care mainly) and does not mention the right to be included in the system of health care coverage. *However, this act has never been used.*

Extent of health coverage

Asylum seekers only have the right to emergency health services, which include the right to emergency health care and emergency rescue transport as decided by the doctor and the right to emergency dental help; emergency treatment as decided by the treating doctor and female health care which includes contraception, abortion and health care of pregnant women and women during delivery. Minor asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, as well as children who attend school until the age of 26, are entitled to health services in the same scope as children with basic health insurance in Slovenia.

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have the right to be included into the mandatory and additional optional health insurance scheme, if their insurance is not provided from a different title. For them health insurance is paid from the State budget.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act only mentions the right to health care (emergency care mainly) and does not mention the right to be included in the system of health care coverage. *However, this act has never been used.*

Access to health care for special needs groups

As mentioned, vulnerable groups (people with special needs and other applicants in exceptional cases) have the right to access additional health services, including psycho-therapy, which are determined and approved by a special commission. Asylum seekers and persons under temporary protection have access to only urgent health care, however such health care entitlements as pediatric care for minors, care for minors who have been victims of any form of abuse or trauma, and care relating to pregnancy and childbirth are included in this urgent health care. Beneficiaries of international protection have access to health care – the same as other residents or Slovenian citizens with covered health insurance which also covers special needs.

Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to health care

For asylum seekers and persons under temporary protection only urgent health care is available, thus it is a question if their health issue is even recognized as "urgent" and treated or not, thus the procedure is subject to discretionary decisions with uncertain outcome. The other issue is often long waiting periods which means there are excessive administrative delays and waiting periods, however this is an issue also for others. Beneficiaries of international protection can face similar barriers, since it depends what kind of health insurance they have (only basic or also additional) and which services it covers (however, this goes for all residents in Slovenia, not specifically beneficiaries of int. protection). Additional barriers are also language issues (unavailable help of translators) and often medical staff is rejecting to accept them as their patients.

Information for health care providers about entitlements

Ministry of health is very inactive and unresponsive. National Institute for Public Health is a lot more active and engaged in work (and projects) with asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. Certain health care providers are well informed, however we cannot say that they regularly receive information and that they regularly inform their staff on entitlements and limitations of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

Information concerning entitlements and use of health services

Asylum seekers have access to information on health care entitlements in the Asylum home (social workers, medical staff-nurse, legal representatives), while beneficiaries of international protection have access to information upon recognition of their status by NGOs Društvo Odnos (assisting refugees with integration in first 3 years after they receive their status) or Slovene Philanthropy (running a 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees). At the end of 2016 the National institute for public health also published brochures for asylum seekers and beneficiaries about the Slovenian health system and their rights. These brochures should be available to all of them, however in practice it is difficult to say how broadly they have been distributed.

Availability of free interpretation services

Free interpretation services are available only to asylum seekers inside Asylum home and only on certain occasions, not systematically and not always. In general, there are no interpretation services available in the health system. NGOs working with refugees (Slovene Philanthropy and Odnos) have their own interpreters and can also use them for escorting people to medical

appointments, however this is not ensured systematically (especially if medical emergencies happen at late hour or at night).

Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into health policies

The Ministry of health has not adopted a formal strategy involving all relevant partners (government ministries, health care providers, regional and local authorities, NGOs) to facilitate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection through adequate health policies. It has not adopted a mechanism to monitor the use of health care services and the health outcomes for beneficiaries of international protection, as well as a mechanism to review health legislation, practices, services and outcomes for beneficiaries of international protection in coordination with all relevant partners (government ministries, regional and local authorities, NGOs).

Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or health bodies on health for beneficiaries of international protection

The national government does not coordinate with regional and local authorities and/or health bodies to support them in dealing with the health needs of beneficiaries of international protection (guidelines, trainings, regular information sessions on the entitlements and limitations of beneficiaries of international protection) or to provide means to adequately address the health needs of beneficiaries of international protection.

Most coordination seems to be done on ad hoc basis and especially through NGO projects or international organizations (such as IOM, Unicef) projects, while coordination is missing on the national government level (Ministry of Health).

Partnership on health care with expert NGOs

In general, the state does not provide any means for NGOs to continuously assist beneficiaries of international protection with access to health care. Association Odnos is an NGO that runs a project financed by AMIF and Slovenian government – to assist beneficiaries of international protection with integration in general.¹³ Part of this could be also assistance with access to health care, however this is not done in a systematic way and it is not nation-wide (not specifically with this purpose). Further, Slovene Philantropy set up a pro bono medical centre for people without health insurance, that is also used and visited

¹³ See

http://odnos.si/programi_in_projekti/projekt_pomoc_pri_integraciji_za_osebe_z_mednarodno_zascito_2015_2017/.

by asylum seekers. Slovene Philanthropy also runs 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees assists them with access to health care, however also on ad hoc basis (project) and in limited amount.

Budgets for the health care services

Ministry of Interior did not provide this data claiming that this is in the domain of the Ministry of health.

Unmet medical needs of persons seeking or benefiting from international protection

Generally, the small sample size and wide variation make the weighted average statistically unreliable. A full summary of answers (online survey, 10 respondents, 5-6 for this question):

How many persons reported unmet medical needs in the last calendar year?

...asylum seekers?	about half (avg. 2.5) - 50% "few"; 16.7% "about half"; 16.7% "most"; 16.7% "nearly all"
...recognised refugees?	about half (avg. 2.5) - 33.3% "few"; 33.3% "some"; 16.7% "most"; 16.7% "nearly all" <u>[none answered "about half!"]</u>
...beneficiaries of subsidiary protection?	some/about half (avg. 2.00) - 60% "few"; 20% "some"; 20% "nearly all"

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection concerning health care

Challenge 1

It is very difficult for beneficiaries of international protection (especially living in Maribor) to find their personal doctors. According to our respondents, doctors often reject refugees as their patients saying they do not see how to overcome the language barrier and they are afraid they might misinterpret certain symptoms if they are not able to talk to the person. This is more an excuse than a rational concern because there are various ways how language barrier could be overcome, there is even a manual/dictionary on health issues in several languages with added drawings / pictures of body parts, organs, different situations. Some doctors didn't even give any reasons for not accepting

refugees, while some others were even insulting refugees and those accompanying them to the doctor.

Challenge 2

Language barrier is certainly one of the biggest challenges, especially because beneficiaries of international protection do not have access to (publicly financed) translators that could accompany them and health institutions also do not have any translators employed. NGOs working with beneficiaries daily (for example those running the orientation program) have translators for certain languages, however they are not available always and for everyone.

Challenge 3

Asylum seekers and temporary protection beneficiaries in Slovenia only have access to urgent medical care and since asylum procedures last for a long time (and considering the fact that people usually spent some months travelling to Slovenia) this leaves irreversible negative effects on people and their health condition (also when they are beneficiaries of international protection). One of the problems in Slovenia is treatment in case of a toothache because this is not considered an urgent situation. Among asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection there are many young people who lost a tooth or several teeth because instead of a treatment that other residents in Slovenia get, dentists would simply extract their teeth.

Social security

Inclusion in a system of social security

Under Articles 90 and 99 of the International Protection Act, beneficiaries of international protection have the right to social care under the same conditions as Slovenian nationals. The funds for social care of the beneficiaries of international protection are provided in accordance with the national legislation. The Social Security Act in Article 5 also defines that the beneficiaries of social care include refugees, but not beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, while foreigners who do not have permanent residence permit (persons with subsidiary protection) can exercise their right to only individual services in the cases and under the conditions laid down in this Act.

Further, Article 3 of the Act Amending the Social Assistance Benefits Act states that the beneficiaries under this Act include persons who have been granted international protection and their family members, who were granted their right to family reunification in the Republic of Slovenia and have registered permanent or temporary residence in Slovenia.

Extent of entitlement to social benefits

In line with Articles 90 and 99 of the International Protection Act, beneficiaries of international protection have the right to social care in the same scope as Slovenian nationals. Social Security Act provides the same rights to refugees as to Slovenian nationals, while beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have a limited scope of rights under this law. Under the Act Amending the Social Assistance Benefits Act the scope of social rights is the same for international protection beneficiaries (and their family members who were granted the right to family reunification) as for Slovenian nationals.

Administrative barriers to obtaining entitlement to social benefits

According to the legislation the level of benefits of persons with international protection (not including persons under temporary protection) is equal to nationals in Slovenia, however the barriers are most often delays and long waiting periods – for example, after recognition of the status a person usually waits for about 2 months before receiving social assistance money, while on the other hand this person has to rent an apartment and owners usually request at least 2 rents in advance. A change from 2016 is also that one-time financial assistance upon status recognition (which helped people to get by during those first 2 months) was cancelled with amendments to International Protection Act in 2016.

Information for social welfare offices about entitlements

Social welfare offices mainly inform their on staff members, they do not regularly receive information about entitlements for persons with international protection from the relevant ministry or the state. Offices share information with their staff and then staff from different offices among themselves.

Information concerning entitlements and use of social services

Asylum seekers have access to information through social workers working inside Asylum home. Beneficiaries of international protection upon recognition of their status have a meeting/conversation with a social worker or a counselor about their rights and entitlements regarding social services. Also, two NGOs (Slovene Philanthropy and Društvo Odnos) working with refugees and assisting them with integration can provide this information to them.

For persons under temporary protection the law does not specify how they are informed.

Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into social security

There is no formal strategy (and Ministry responsible for social affairs will not adopt any strategy on integration, this is under the domain of the Ministry of Interior), there are also no mainstreaming mechanisms in the field of social security.

Coordination with regional and local authorities and/or welfare bodies on social security for beneficiaries of international protection

Social / welfare offices seem to be sharing information and experience among themselves, they do not receive systematic support by the national government or the relevant ministry. Currently beneficiaries of international protection are living only in a few areas in Slovenia (Ljubljana, Maribor, Postojna, Nova Gorica) therefore only those local welfare bodies are involved in any work with beneficiaries.

Partnership on poverty relief with expert NGOs

In general, the state does not provide any means for NGOs to continuously assist beneficiaries of international protection with access to income support and to poverty relief measures. All partnerships are project-based. Association Odnos is

an NGO that runs a project financed by AMIF and Slovenian government to assist beneficiaries of international protection with integration in general.¹⁴ Part of this could be also assistance with access to income support and to poverty relief measures, however this is not done in a systematic way and it is not nation-wide (not specifically with this purpose). Also, Slovene Philanthropy which runs 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees can assist with access to income support. However, all beneficiaries of international protection who are unemployed have access to social welfare in the same amount as nationals. To arrange these beneficiaries should not need assistance of NGOs (but in practice they do due to language barriers etc.). Perhaps the role of NGOs is more important in assisting with the access to poverty relief measures, because also the social assistance they receive from the state is not enough for a normal life in an urban area.

Beneficiaries of international protection living in poverty

According to the online survey, one half of refugees and beneficiaries of international protection has an income from private/employment sources that is below the risk-of-poverty threshold. About one half has an income from private/employment sources and social transfers/support that is below the risk-of-poverty threshold. *However, the small sample size and wide variation generally make the weighted average statistically unreliable.*

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection concerning social security and social assistance

Challenge 1

Due to the abolition of one-time financial assistance (with the amendment of the International Protection Act in 2016), which allowed for bridging the gap, most refugees are facing severe financial distress and shortage in the first two months after gaining their status. For more than one month or even two they are waiting to receive regular social welfare, and until that time most refugees are without any financial means. Humanitarian workers working daily with refugees report about situations when people cannot buy food or basic personal hygiene items (women, for example, sanitary pads). Of course, they often contact humanitarian organizations, but sometimes they cannot get help even from them (recently, formula milk for babies was unavailable, for example).

Challenge 2

¹⁴ See

http://odnos.si/programi_in_projekti/projekt_pomoc_pri_integraciji_za_osebe_z_mednarodno_zascito_2015_2017/.

Beneficiaries of international protection have discovered that different centers for social work across Slovenia have different practices regarding granting people the so-called extraordinary financial help. This is financial help that people can request from the Center for social work for a specific purpose (for example for furniture, clothes or something else). Beneficiaries consider this unfair since most of them cannot choose where they want to live (due to housing challenges in Slovenia) and they do not understand why all beneficiaries are not treated the same way.

Challenge 3

Even later, when they already receive financial social assistance, beneficiaries often live in poverty. They do not have their relatives in Slovenia who could help them, or developed social networks that could provide them with the necessary support. Since finding a job is very difficult for beneficiaries of international protection, most of them rely on social welfare, however that is often not enough to cover all monthly costs.

Education

Enrolment in education of refugee children and youth

The only data we received from Ministry of Education for school year 2016/2017 is the following: 24 children with international protection (parents with international protection, no data about the type of protection) enrolled in kindergarten; 52 children with international protection (45 with parents with international protection, no data about the type of protection, and 7 unaccompanied minors, no data about the type of protection) in primary school; 1 asylum seeker is enrolled in secondary school (however unclear which type of school) and 2 asylum seekers are enrolled at the university in Ljubljana. The Ministry of education does not have data about the gender of children and youth or the details about their status. However, the data we received from the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants about beneficiaries of international protection (not by the type of their status though) for 2016 was the following: 22 children were in pre-school, 40 in primary school, 18 in primary school for adults, 10 in secondary schools, and 6 in tertiary education.

Average time between an asylum application and the enrolment of children in primary/secondary education/preparatory educational programs

We have requested this data from the Ministry of Interior, the Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, and the Ministry of Education, yet none of them provided the data. However, at least for primary school children field work experience shows that inclusion works quite well and there are no major delays in enrolments.

Access to education

Under Article 88 of the International Protection Act, children of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors have the right to elementary-school education, however, only until the age of fifteen which is the age of legal majority in Slovenia. They have to start attending elementary school in three months after lodging asylum application at the latest. All asylum seekers have the possibility while minor asylum seekers have the right to access education in vocational and secondary schools under the same conditions as citizens of Slovenia. Asylum seekers are also entitled to access higher and university education under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens. The burden of proving the level of education obtained in the country of origin is on the asylum seeker. Further, under Article 101, persons with international protection share the same rights regarding pre-school, elementary, secondary, higher and adult and university

education as Slovenian nationals. They have the right to scholarships and accommodation in student housing under the same conditions as Slovenian nationals. The funding for education and training of refugees is provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The same goes for regular programs of adult education in which case the Ministry covers the expenses for three years. Expenses arising from recognition of foreign diplomas and school reports are paid for by the Mol.

Decree on the methods and conditions for ensuring the rights of persons with international protection in Article 13 defines which costs are covered by the Mol and which by the Ministry of education, science and sport.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act in Article 29 states that persons with temporary protection status under 18 years have under the same conditions as nationals of the Republic of Slovenia the right to: enrollment and completion of primary education and of lower and secondary vocational and secondary technical and general education for acquiring publicly recognized education in public and private schools, which are financed from public funds, if they are less than 18 years old at the time of enrolment and meet the entry requirements. However, persons with temporary protection older than 18 years may be included in the education of the first paragraph under the same conditions that apply to actors of adult education in education in higher vocational schools and at university level in accordance with the regulations governing this type of education. The costs of education in the first paragraph of this Article shall be borne by the Ministry of Education, to the same extent and under the same conditions as apply to citizens of the Republic of Slovenia. This means persons from paragraph 2 would most likely have to pay for their education.

[Access to education for groups of special concern](#)

Beneficiaries of international protection have equal access to education as nationals (by law and in theory, however in practice they are facing several barriers), but the law does not specifically mention any vulnerable groups. However, in practice minors are encouraged to enroll in some kind of education (depending on their pre-knowledge and education).

[Administrative barriers to education](#)

By law beneficiaries of int. protection have the same access to education as Slovenian nationals. However, in practice they are still facing many barriers. Since primary school is obligatory enrolment in education is not a problem for primary school children. It can be an issue for secondary school students because they can not choose a school they would like to attend (vocational or

high school) or schools are not willing to accept them because of the language barrier or because they don't have documents to prove their previous education or other reasons. Also, enrolment in universities can be difficult if a person does not have documents to prove previous education. People can face also delays and long waiting periods, and also – apart from the primary school – educational institutions could decide not to accept someone, thus we could say it is discretionary decision and uncertain outcome. Most often asylum seekers attend primary school (children) or school for adults where they mainly learn Slovenian language (however, most asylum seekers are not motivated due to very long and uncertain asylum procedure, and also the level of this adult school is quite low which means this is not appropriate for those with already completed higher levels of education in their country of origin).

Raising awareness about the specific situation of beneficiaries of international protection regarding education

Awareness raising in Slovenia is mainly done by the NGOs and not in a systematic way by the authorities or public institutions. There are some campaigns publicly financed (by Government Communication Office), however on an ad hoc basis and in a form of small scale projects carried out by NGOs. Otherwise schools and universities are not sent information and they do not regularly inform their staff on the entitlements or limitations of persons seeking or benefiting from international protection.

Placement in the compulsory school system

On a systematic level there is a lot to be done. For now, schools are more or less deciding on their own on ad hoc basis. There are some schools we could point out as good practices, however nation-wide there is no strategy or guidelines specifically for persons seeking or benefiting from international protection. Institute of Education adopted Guidelines for inclusion of migrant children in kindergartens and schools in 2012. In these guidelines it is written that it is recommended for schools to assess the level of education and prior learning of children through an interview with them and the parents, it is recommended to include translators when necessary, etc. However, it is also written that the autonomy of each educational institution should be respected and therefore each institution can do things their own way. During the asylum procedure children usually do not have problems with changing schools, because mostly they attend the same school throughout the whole procedure. However, this is not really due to state measures, it is simply so that all children asylum seekers are attending the same primary school in Ljubljana, while two groups of unaccompanied minors are placed in two boarding schools in Postojna and Nova Gorica where some children attend primary school and others school for adults

(this is a "pilot project" of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of education and Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities for the period of 1 year). Ministry of education is preparing a new Protocol on this however it is not yet published. Ministry of education has also prepared some new assessment procedures/tests however this is also not yet public and they do not implement them yet.

Length of language support

Minor asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection are enrolled in primary school immediately and at first they are mainly taught Slovenian language (20 hours at first) but slowly they are enrolled in regular classes and they attend classes in Slovenian language. How many hours of additional help with learning the language they get is actually up to the individual school or school staff and the volunteers or NGOs that assist with this. Beneficiaries of international protection have the right to 300 hours language course (plus additionally they can get 100 more hours) after the recognition of their status, however this goes for adults not for primary school children.

Regularity of orientation and language programmes and targeted education measures

Asylum seekers (and persons under temporary protection-however there are none in Slovenia) do not have access to orientation programs, language course or targeted educational measures; adults can attend school for adults where they mainly learn basics of Slovenian language, however this does not include orientation program or targeted measures. Beneficiaries of international protection have access to 300 hours language course (plus 100 more hours if they request) and they have access to education to the same extent as Slovenian nationals (in theory, however in practice they face various barriers); relocated refugees (and also resettled refugees if there were any in Slovenia, but there are none yet) have access also to a 3-month orientation program. However, we cannot say that there is systematic funding, because orientation program is outsourced to an NGO in a form of a project (thus funding is provided for the period of this project and there can be a gap before the next call is open and the next project is granted funds), language course is implemented by people's universities or other adult education institutions, however we have not found any information about financing any special targeted educational measures in addition to this.

Mechanisms to mainstream the integration of children and youth under international protection into education policies

Ministry of education did not and will not adopt any strategy on integration because only Ministry of Interior is in charge of integration of refugees; however, Ministry of education is preparing some kind of a new Protocol on education/inclusion of refugees, but it is not yet published/public.

Coordination with regional and/or local education authorities and school boards on education for children and youth under international protection

Schools and school staff seem to be left to their own engagement and they share information and experience with more experienced schools (those that have experience with refugee children for years). Schools do get some additional means for additional hours of Slovenian lessons for refugee children. Ministry of education was at the time of writing of this report preparing a new Protocol on education/inclusion of refugee children however it is not yet published/public.

Partnership on education with expert NGOs

In general, the state does not provide any means for NGOs to continuously assist beneficiaries of international protection with education. Association Odnos is an NGO that runs a project financed by AMIF and Slovenian government – to assist beneficiaries of international protection with integration in general.¹⁵ Also, Slovene Philanthropy is running a 3-month orientation program for relocated refugees. Part of this could be also assistance with access to adequate education, however this is not done in a systematic way and it is not nation-wide (not specifically with this purpose). However, several NGOs do assist beneficiaries of international protection with informal education (learning Slovenian language, assisting with school work, etc.) through their projects (which depends on the funding, timeline, volunteers, staff, etc.).

Participation in targeted education

We have requested this data from Ministry of Interior, from Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, from Ministry of Education, however none of them provided the data.

¹⁵ See

http://odnos.si/programi_in_projekti/projekt_pomoc_pri_integraciji_za_osebe_z_mednarodno_zascito_2015_2017/.

Budgets for targeted educational measures for minor beneficiaries of international protection

Planned budget for education was actually within the whole planned budget for migration related costs in general, therefore Ministry of Interior could not give us the exact number. MoI stated that 1.408,60 euro have been spent for beneficiaries of international protection and 7.348,63 euro for the asylum seekers.

Education staff for minor beneficiaries of international protection

From Ministry of Education, science and sport we got the information that nobody was employed full time to work with asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection with the specific aim to support them in education.

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection concerning children's education

Challenge 1

Language barrier is a big challenge since education in Slovenia is at all levels in Slovenian language (exception could be certain University programs). For primary school children get a set of introductory language classes first, however this is a challenge especially for older children wanting to attend secondary schools or high schools.

Challenge 2

For enrolment in secondary or high schools (vocational, technical or general upper secondary) beneficiaries of international protection would need to meet the same conditions as other residents of Slovenia, however this is often very difficult or even impossible (especially if there are limited free places at a certain school and not everybody who apply gets accepted).

Challenge 3

Beneficiaries of international protection are often facing a problem of obtaining their documents / education certificates from their country of origin which they need to enroll in secondary and tertiary level education in Slovenia. Since they often can not provide requested documents, they can only enroll in primary school program for adults for example, where they can learn Slovenian language but that is pretty much all.

Further comments: One of the challenges when it comes to integration of children in the field of education is also parents' computer illiteracy. Not being computer literate is an obstacle both for them and their children as they cannot

be fully involved as other parents and they cannot help their children with some of the school work for example.

Language learning and social orientation

Enrolment in publicly funded host language courses

According to Cene Štupar people's university representative, 378 asylum seekers were enrolled in 2016, from these 360 persons were enrolled in literacy program or primary school for adults, and 18 were unaccompanied minors; 47 beneficiaries of international protection were enrolled in 2016 in Ljubljana, however data on the type of their status is not available. We have received the data from Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants that in 2016, 68 beneficiaries of international protection were enrolled in total, 55 in Ljubljana and 13 in Maribor.

Average time between an asylum application and the enrolment in a host language learning program

Asylum seekers do not have access to publicly funded host language courses, they only have access to adult learning programs or primary school for adults (where they can learn basics of Slovenian language, however this is not an actual language course).

Access to host language learning

The state does not provide language courses for asylum seekers. Article 90 of the International protection Act states that the state provides assistance with the integration into society for beneficiaries of international protection, and language courses fall within this assistance. Further, in line with Article 103, refugees are entitled to a 300-hour course of Slovenian language (or, exceptionally more), which is paid for by the Mol. Refugees, who have already completed schooling on any level in Slovenia, who were enrolled in at least a three-year regular schooling programme, who have already acquired a certificate on successfully completed test of Slovenian language proficiency on at least elementary level or who have health impairments which prevent them from everyday communication and are unable to pass the elementary level Slovene language test, elderly persons over sixty with international protection and illiterate persons can be provided with a Slovenian language course which is customized to the needs of everyday communication. Also, a bylaw called Decree on the methods and conditions for ensuring the rights of persons with international protection in Article 15 further describes language courses.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act does not mention language courses among the rights of the persons under temporary protection.

Administrative barriers to publicly funded host language learning classes

Asylum seekers do not have access to publicly funded Slovenian language course, but may attend adult education program where they can learn basic Slovenian language (however this is not the official Slovenian language course). For beneficiaries of international protection there is no documentation that would be needed to be obtained to attend a language course, there are no costs and there are no delays and waiting periods. However in practice they can face barriers. If they rent an apartment in rural areas or smaller villages with poor public transportation system, it could be a huge challenge for them to attend language course (which is in larger urban areas; not even in all cities in Slovenia), they might also have to wait for sufficient number of participants before the group is actually formed and the course begins in a certain town. There are no specific language courses for illiterate persons, which is also an additional barrier for them.

Quality of language courses

Asylum seekers do not have access to publicly funded Slovenian language course, this is available only to beneficiaries of international protection. Asylum seekers can, however, attend adult education program where they can learn basic Slovenian language (however this is not the official Slovenian language course).

For beneficiaries of international protection the following process applies: participants are placed in courses according to their needs after an assessment of existing knowledge of the host language; curricula are targeted and take into account the specific communication needs of newly arriving refugees (in taught vocabulary, raised issues etc.); teaching is provided by trained and certified second-language teachers. Especially the lack of different formats seems to be a barrier for mothers with small children, since very often they do not attend classes (regularly) due to their occupation with their children. Perhaps they would attend classes regularly if there was parallel childcare organized.

Duration of host language learning

Beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to 300 hours Slovenian language course, plus additionally they can attend 100 more hours. Those registered at national employment office as job seekers can get access also to additional Slovenian language classes, however this is not organized within the official Slovenian language course for foreigners.

Duration of translation and interpretation assistance

Asylum seekers have access to translation during the official procedure (interviews) and when translators are present inside the Asylum home; unaccompanied minors have a right to translations (for maximum 1 hour) when discussing their education, health issues etc. with their legal guardians. Beneficiaries of international protection who are accommodated in the integration house have some access to translations if the translator is present in the integration house (however this is not systematic, it is more project-based and runs through NGOs – Slovene Philanthropy and Društvo Odnos), while those renting their own apartments do not have any translation services available to them, only when dealing with immigration authorities (Ministry of Interior) it is most likely the translator will be available.

Host language learning budgets

In 2016, the budget planned for the asylum seekers was 6.183,62 euro however 4.178,90 euro have been spent; and for beneficiaries of international protection 74.585,69 euro have been planned but 85.552,25 euro have been spent.

Host language learning staff

Cene Štupar educational institution in Ljubljana works with 40 certified teachers who have different individual contracts and only work for Cene Štupar people's university part time and they do not teach only beneficiaries (there are also other programs at this institution); thus it is not possible to calculate full-time equivalent for teaching beneficiaries only.

Completion of host language courses

After 300 hours of language course at Cene Štupar people's university most beneficiaries of international protection achieve level A1, some of them (but rare) perhaps level A2. To meet the condition for Slovenian citizenship the required level is A2 - B1, which is difficult for beneficiaries of international protection to achieve.

Impact of language courses

About half of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection seeking or benefiting from international protection who participated in publicly funded language courses in the last calendar year reported that the course was very helpful to learn as much of the language as they wanted to learn. Some (avg. 1,7) reported that the course was very helpful to learn the specific vocabulary/skills that they need for their job/profession. Some (avg. 1,5)

reported that that the course was very helpful to get involved in their local community (school, associations, political activities). Few reported that the course was very helpful to get a better job or education.

Completion of publicly funded social orientation courses

Orientation program in Slovenia is available only for beneficiaries of international protection (not for asylum seekers). It starts after the person obtains the status and lasts for 3 months. Slovene Philanthropy (NGO) is running this program in Ljubljana and in Maribor where beneficiaries of international protection live. 27 refugees and 1 beneficiary of subsidiary protection completed publicly funded social orientation courses in the last calendar year. In other cities in Slovenia there is no such program – which is also one of the reasons why all beneficiaries of international protection live in these two (biggest) cities. There are no special orientation programs for vulnerable beneficiaries.

Access to social orientation

The International protection Act does not provide for social orientation courses for asylum seekers. However, in Article 103 this law states that the right to integration assistance is provided for three years after the date of acquisition of refugee status or subsidiary protection. Assistance in the process of integration which is carried out by the MoI includes preparation and implementation of a so-called personal integration plan, organizing Slovenian language courses and courses on the history, culture and constitutional system of Slovenia. The MoI provides funding for up to 30 hours of courses on Slovenian history, culture and constitutional system. This is further described in the Decree on the methods and conditions for ensuring the rights of persons with international protection, Articles 14-17.

Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act does not mention any social orientation courses among the rights of the persons under temporary protection.

Administrative barriers to publicly funded social orientation

Asylum seekers do not have access to publicly funded social orientation program, this is available only to beneficiaries of international protection (relocated refugees have a 3-month orientation program which is implemented by NGO Slovene Philanthropy; all beneficiaries of international protection after their status is recognized have support of NGO Društvo Odnos which provides assistance with integration for 3 years to all beneficiaries). Asylum seekers can, however, attend adult education program where they can learn also some basics

about Slovenian state, system, language etc. (however this is not the orientation program!). For beneficiaries of international protection no administrative barriers were noted. However, in practice they can face barriers – if they rent an apartment in rural areas or smaller villages with poor public transportation system, it could be a huge challenge for them to attend orientation program.

Quality of social orientation courses

Orientation program (3 months for relocated refugees) is being implemented since 2016 (therefore this is a change after 2014) and the Ministry of Interior published a call for proposals for the first time; the only conditions were that the orientation course lasts for 3 months, 5 hours per day, 5 days per week; persons implementing the orientation program should have at least high school education; and that beneficiaries should be learning basics of Slovenian language and get familiar with Slovenian system, institutions etc. There is no country-wide standardized curriculum; orientation program probably does encourage interaction with the receiving society however it is a question if there are funds available for field trips etc.; orientation program is not regularly evaluated as this is the first year of the implementation; courses might be complemented by additional information material, however this depends on the NGO running the orientation program.

Provision of social orientation for groups of special concern

Social orientation program is in general the same for all beneficiaries of international protection, however NGOs implementing this orientation program (Slovene Philanthropy, and also NGO Društvo Odnos which supports beneficiaries with integration in first 3 years) see that in practice this universal program does not work and individualized approach is needed; they try to work individually with beneficiaries as much as they can within their capacities and available funds.

Social orientation budgets

The Ministry of Interior claims that for year 2016 for asylum seekers the planned budget was 12.334,96 euro but the amount spent was 38.871,35 euro; and for beneficiaries of international protection the budget planned was 27.552,50 euro but the amount spent was 9.806,19 euro. For asylum seekers: the project Assistance in housing and care of asylum seekers offers help with social integration, free time activities, etc. and is implemented by an NGO Institute for African Studies. For beneficiaries of international protection: the project Assistance in integration of beneficiaries of international protection which is implemented by an NGO Odnos since October 2015.

Social orientation staff

Slovene Philanthropy had 3,5 full-time equivalent staff employed for social orientation program in 2016. Association Odnos also had staff employed for social orientation program in 2016. And Association Institute of African Studies had staff employed in 2016.

Impact of social orientation programmes

Based on our survey, some of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection seeking or benefiting from international protection who participated in publicly funded social orientation programmes in the last calendar year reported that the programme was very helpful to access the public services they need. Some reported that the programme was very helpful to get involved in their local community (school, associations, political activities). Some reported that the course was very helpful to get involved in their local community (school, associations, political activities). Few reported that that the programme was very helpful to get a better job or education.

Additional information: Challenges for beneficiaries of international protection related to host language learning and social orientation

Challenge 1

Beneficiaries have a right to 300-hour language course after their status recognition. However, in case of families with small children it is often the case that only one parent attends the course and it is usually a man. Since there is only one language course beneficiaries can attend and since there is no parallel baby-sitting for small children organized, women often stay home with children. This means it is even more difficult for them to integrate in the society if only their husbands are learning Slovenian. The state should adopt other supporting measures for more women to actively participate.

Challenge 2

Orientation program starts with the recognition of the status and lasts for three months. Beneficiaries are supposed to attend 5 hours 5 days per week and the orientation program is implemented by an NGO. This NGO received limited financial means to implement the program therefore only certain number of people (staff and translators) could be employed – not enough to be able to deliver intense quality program plus attend all the specific needs of the beneficiaries. After these first three months beneficiaries are often still not completely independent, self-reliable and confident to communicate with state institutions. They often need further support and assistance.

Challenge 3

There is no adequate Slovenian language course for illiterate persons. They attend the same classes as others and teachers try to work individually with them, however this is very difficult in a mixed group.

Further comments: In general, certain measures would need to be adopted to motivate refugee women to attend classes (regularly) as this is crucial for the integration. And also, more people should be employed full time to assist refugees through the orientation program.

Building bridges and fostering participation

Expectations of mutual accommodation by beneficiaries of international protection and host society members

The roles of the receiving society are not defined. There is no national integration strategy on beneficiaries of international protection that would address this question.

Awareness raising on the specific situation of beneficiaries of international protection

Government Communication Office has published 2 calls for project proposals since 2016 – funds for small projects (up to 7.000 euro) were available to NGOs to implement awareness-raising activities and break stereotypes and prejudices about the refugees and asylum seekers.

Coordination with regional and local authorities on social cohesion

There is no strategy at the national level and there is also no strategy at the regional or local level encouraged by the state. Ministry of Interior in charge of this at the national level is dealing with attempts to cooperate with local authorities in a wrong way obviously since in every local community where they want to accommodate beneficiaries of international protection they are facing resistance and protests.

Encouragement of voluntary initiatives to complement public policies

The state does not support voluntary initiatives by offering funding for the national, regional, or local coordination of these initiatives; or making them part of the standard integration offers for beneficiaries of international protection (e.g. regular social orientation classes followed by voluntary one-to-one mentorship programmes); or offering guidelines, training and other support to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives. Several NGOs do work and support beneficiaries of int.protection in various ways, however mainly these NGOs are financed through EU projects, foreign donors/financers or donations or they work on voluntary basis. Some NGOs are implementing also projects funded by the state (for example orientation program by Slovene Philanthropy).

Number of beneficiaries of international protection receiving one-to-one mentorship

There are no one-to-one socio-cultural mentorships in publicly funded voluntary initiatives in Slovenia.

Number of legal guardians for unaccompanied minors

Legal guardians (officially 51 people in Slovenia, however around 20 active ones) are publicly funded only for representing unaccompanied minors asylum seekers; once these UAM get their status (refugee or subsidiary protection) legal guardians are no longer responsible for them and do not represent them, because from that moment on another guardian (caretaker) takes over, however these guardians are not receiving any payments because this is a honorary function. There are around 18 guardians/caretakes in Slovenia doing this honorary function.

Support for involvement of beneficiaries of international protection in civic activities

The state does not support the participation of beneficiaries of international protection in civic activities (voluntary organisations, sports clubs, involvement in political parties etc.) neither through targeted information campaigns on the rights and possibilities of beneficiaries of international protection to join such activities; nor by offering means to such organisations to organise outreach to beneficiaries of international protection (campaigns, people-to-people events, one-to-one mentoring schemes). Several NGOs cooperate with beneficiaries of int.protection and assist and support them in various ways, however most of them are running projects that are financed by foreign donors/financers or EU calls for project proposals, very few are financed by the state and only on ad hoc basis and small scale projects therefore our answer is "none of them applies".

Involvement in national consultation processes

There is no such body that would include also beneficiaries of international protection and consult with them regarding issues concerning their integration.

Involvement in local consultation processes

The state does not support regional and local authorities to have a permanent body to consult with beneficiaries of international protection on issues of their regional and local integration. There is no national integration strategy and no such body that would include also beneficiaries of international protection and consult with them regarding issues concerning their integration.

Funding for associations working on the socio-cultural participation of beneficiaries

The Ministry of Interior provided the information that they spent 120.358,44 euro in 2016 for institutional / organizational funding, however according to our information and other NGO's information, MoI finances only projects that NGOs implement, therefore we have put the mentioned amount of funds under the project-based funding column.

Number of beneficiaries of international protection in civic activities

Some of the refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection were regularly involved in political activities (e.g. participation in political party, association or action group, lawful demonstration, petition or contact with politicians). Some were regularly involved in socio-cultural activities (e.g. sport clubs). Some were regularly involved in volunteering for NGOs or voluntary initiatives.

Number of NGOs in the country run by beneficiaries of international protection

We have not found information on any NGOs that would be established and run by beneficiaries of international protection. There are a few NGOs where beneficiaries are members or volunteers or employees, however these NGOs combine a mixed population.

Additional information: Challenges for fostering the participation of beneficiaries of international protection in civic activities and actively engaging the receiving society in the integration of beneficiaries of international protection

Challenge 1

Racism, intolerance and prejudices rooted in the receiving society. (Also prejudices that beneficiaries have towards the receiving society are not to be neglected though.)

Challenge 2

Weak intersectional communication, coordination and action of various state institutions involved in integration of beneficiaries. And also, uncoordinated actions/programs of various NGOs / civil society and often a sense of competition among them instead of cooperation and complementary projects which could help beneficiaries with integration.

Challenge 3

Often beneficiaries of international protection - after everything they have been through in their country of origin, on the way to Slovenia and also while living in

Slovenia - simply do not have any energy left to try to get included in the society, in various organizations, activities etc. Especially women are often seen as "passive" in this regard, and mainly stay at home with children. Slovenia does not have any integration strategy, it is difficult to get integrated in the society even if someone has a good social network in Slovenia, but when someone does not have that and does not get all needed support, this is even more difficult - and somehow unrealistic to expect that these people would (quickly) become active in civil society organizations.

Final comments: The reality is also that beneficiaries (especially in their first months after status recognition) are facing severe financial problems and they need to focus first on getting to know the system, contact all relevant state institutions, schools, health centers etc. and they often do not have energy or motivation to think about how to be actively engaged also through various civil society organizations. Some beneficiaries do, however not that many.

Conclusion and reflection

In spite of the fact that in the last years Slovenia faces increasing number of both asylum seekers as well as of those to whom the status of refugee or subsidiary protection was recognized there is still not enough attention given to the policies and measures needed to improve the procedure, the living conditions and social integration of persons with international protection.

The fact that Slovenia of 2016 (until today) still does not have an integration strategy influences all the areas of vital importance for the persons with international protection and asylum seekers. While a number of partial measures in various areas were implemented, they often do not fully achieve the goals and some procedures and measures take place ad hoc. The asylum seekers, and persons with granted international protection therefore face many problems which do not stop after acquiring the protection – while attempting family reunion, finding housing, learning the language, looking for employment etc. Challenges can involve residence permit, especially for the persons with subsidiary protection which is not given on a permanent basis. They often face insecurity and do not know what will happen to them, while they suffer lack of economic and other resources. Even more insecurity exists for those who would only get temporary protection, yet there are no cases of temporary protection in Slovenia by now. No special vulnerable groups are recognized except for minors and (in the case of health care) pregnant women.

Family re-union for persons with international protection can be difficult or impossible due to various reasons, in the first place due to the very short time in which the beneficiaries have to start the procedure for family reunification, but also, for example, due to the impossibility of finding the members or due to the official definition of family. Yet the financial burden (for collecting the documentation and buying the fares) can be even a greater challenge. As to the housing the beneficiaries in Slovenia are either dependent on the integration houses or are left to the open market where they face both high prices which they cannot cover with the sum allocated to subsidy their rent for a limited period, as well as prejudices and racism of the owners of real estate who do not wish to rent their property to the refugees. There exist neither an integration policy in the field of employment nor any consistent strategy of job training for the refugees.

While they are offered a Slovenian language course and some initial orientation courses (by an NGO) their proficiency often does not reach the level which is required at the job market or in the everyday exchange with authorities. The particular training “on the job” which is guaranteed by the state is mainly in the interest of employers. Some benefits are conditioned with, for example, attendance of the language course or similar. In each of the areas the beneficiaries also meet administrative barriers that are often difficult to surmount. Health services are in principle fully accessible to refugees and those

with subsidiary protection, yet they face language barrier and some doctors refuse to take them even though they have the visual interpretation booklet which helps them in understanding the patient's troubles. Moreover, the asylum seekers are only granted urgent medical services (which however includes full service for children and for women's reproductive health) and can only get payment for other services if granted by the special committee. This causes huge problems in their health condition and also after they are eventually granted the status.

Refugees are in principle included in social care protection which equals those of permanent residents, while beneficiaries with subsidiary protection do not have the right to social care (only certain rights under specific conditions) and social work centers decide about this on individual basis and often ad hoc. Social help also varies with the region where the person is located, and delays in payment occur often which hampers beneficiaries in other areas. In some cases, centers did not provide the refugees with one time financial urgent assistance. In this field, even more restrictions of rights are announced, while the government already abolished one time financial assistance for the persons with international protection in 2016 which enabled them to somehow surmount the most grave financial distress and shortage in the first two months after gaining the status. With this the Slovenian government too took the direction of creating "hostile environment" for asylums seekers and persons with international protection and made the applicants and refugees to become even more at risk of deeper poverty and dependent on the humanitarian assistance and pity of others.

While the field of education seems to offer the most of opportunities for refugees and their children, schools and trainings are not fully accessible for them due to other challenges like language barrier and administrative problems which include recognition of achieved education – often a difficult endeavor due to the missing documents and ad hoc decision of organs in such cases. Although they can attend up to 400 hours of free courses of Slovenian language the knowledge the refugees can get there still does not enable them to equally participate in the offered vocational programs and attend the same level of courses as the native speakers. There are however no special vocational programs for refugees and they therefore mainly remain with only attending the language course. Asylum seekers do not have access to serious publicly funded language course, while in cases of families with small children refugee women often do not attend course (only one course is offered continually). While the challenges for children are not so big as for adults, the language barrier still exists for older children. Due to the fact of concentration of asylum seekers and persons with temporary protection in some regions and centers, they are also concentrated in certain schools which are therefore more prepared for work with refugee children. On the other hand, if refugees were more dispersed there might occur more challenges – especially due to the fact that they mainly rely on

themselves, while there is no special personal in state administration to deal with the issues of refugee integration in education.

Low economic resources are often causing most of the problems in several areas where refugees could improve their and their family's circumstances, for example while attempting to acquire permanent or long term residence or naturalization where they have to prove that they have enough economic resources and the requirement is difficult to meet. Their situation is not favorable in any regard and they have additional problems if they fail to get their qualifications officially recognized: problems occur in finding the employment and they often have to rely on low paid and heavy physical work which has more general consequences, not only that they work as low qualified workers and are paid less. This also enhances the prevalent image of low qualified and poor migrant who enters the Slovenian job market and wants to get social benefits, the typical cultural discrimination stereotype. Among employers too, who are not acquainted with refugee status and now almost nothing about it, discrimination and prejudices represent the barrier. They think administrative matters are too complicated and don't learn about the situation while thinking that refugees would leave Slovenia anyway and are therefore not interested in employing them.

The report finds that persons with subsidiary protection are in principle in much worse position than the recognized refugees in many of the areas and that the legislation on temporary protection is even more exclusive, while there are no cases of temporary protected persons in Slovenia.

Broad social integration which should be the goal of the comprehensive integration policies is one of the main challenges for persons who seek and get international protection. In order to achieve this, many actors and programs would need to complement each other. While the first steps were made, the integration strategy is missing. There exists publicly funded introduction course in social orientation and also three years support in integration (provided by NGO-s), yet this is only offered in two main cities of Slovenia, while the course is too intensive and the NGOs do not have enough capacities for intense quality program.

The main problem is still that there exists no national integration strategy on beneficiaries of international protection, and therefore no national or local consultation mechanism or process. The roles of the receiving society are not defined. Local communities and people in general do not understand the importance of international protection as human rights mechanism and the need to give assistance and to socially integrate persons with international protection. Awareness raising activities on the position and needs of asylum seekers and refugees intended to counter stereotypes are few and not sufficiently funded by the state and they mainly depend on international (EU) funding. It seems that the state officials do not understand the problems and do

not find the right approach to address the public as they – for example when they want to accommodate beneficiaries of international protection – face resistance and protests in local communities. Moreover, not enough encouragement of voluntary initiatives to complement public policies is present and too little funding and other kinds of assistance, although some programs are carried out by the state funded programs in NGOs and a policy of legal guardians for UAM is developed and functioning. Neither could we detect any significant civic involvement and participation of beneficiaries themselves (except for some minor cases) in general or special voluntary organizations or the establishment of their own organizations. Several NGOs cooperate with beneficiaries of international protection and assist and support them in various ways, however most of them are running projects that are financed by foreign donors/financers or EU calls for project proposals. Very few NGOs are financed by the state and only on ad hoc basis carrying out small scale projects. Often, NGOs compete for the same funds and do not cooperate on the basis of complementary activities which also hampers the building of alliances.

While not enough knowledge and prejudices, intolerance and cases of racism exist among members of receiving society the beneficiaries also lack knowledge and skills to acknowledge and overcome their own prejudices regarding the opportunities they have in the new surrounding. While faced with non-existent integration strategy, the lack of social networks and financial restrains, it is difficult for the beneficiaries to get integrated in the society and it is unrealistic to expect that them to rush to become civically engaged. They might need some recovery after getting exhausted from long paths they have made, administrative pressures and structural violence they face.