



AD HOC QUERY ON 2019.66 Access to housing for international protection holders

Requested by EMN NCP Italy on 20 June 2019

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom (23 in Total)

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1. Background information

In September 2017, the Ministry of Interior approved Italy's first National Integration Plan for Persons Entitled to International Protection. The Plan represents a pivotal step in setting out the priorities, and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders to facilitate the integration of persons entitled to international protection in Italy, while strengthening multi-sectoral coordination and multi-level governance of integration at large. Moreover, the Plan "identifies the lines of intervention for the effective integration of persons entitled to international protection, regarding socio-economic and employment inclusion, by promoting specific programmes reinforcing access to employment, access to healthcare and social assistance, housing, language training and education as well as combating discrimination."

Among the most urgent programme and policy priorities, Italy commissioned in-depth research which will culminate with the identification of good existing practices in other EU member states and their possible replicability in the country as regard the thematic area "access to housing for international protection holders":

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In this regard, we would like to ask to the Member States to support us with the research answering the following questions:

2. Questions

1. 1. What are the main obstacles (practical, financial, social, administrative) to accessing the private housing market for international protection holders in your Member State?
2. 2. Do regional/local authorities in your Member State support the exit of recognised refugees from second-line reception facilities? If yes, in what ways (e.g. helping them with the selection of property adverts, mediating with homeowners, supporting co-habitation initiatives, providing financial support, special policy in case of late payments or job loss)?
3. 3. Do beneficiaries of international protection have access to public housing plans? If yes, is access to public housing subject to any requirement? What kind of requirements? Overall, what are the main obstacles to accessing public housing for international protection holders in your Member State?
4. 4. Which one(s) of the available support instruments is(are) the most successful in facilitating access to independent accommodation for international protection holders in your Member State ('in kind' support, mediation, financial help or special schemes)?

We would very much appreciate your responses by **19 July 2019**.



3. Responses

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¹ If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

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		Wider Dissemination ²	
	EMN NCP Austria	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	<p>1. For years, there has been an acute shortage of affordable housing in a reasonable condition both on the private and social housing market. Third-country nationals, and beneficiaries of international protection in particular are less likely to be owner-occupiers. As a consequence, they are mostly tenants. However, landlords are often reluctant to rent to people who are dependent on the Public Centers for Social Welfare. It is therefore a difficult task to find suitable and affordable accommodation for most beneficiaries of international protection. Furthermore, there is a risk that beneficiaries of international protection are exploited by slum landlords.</p> <p>Other obstacles that could be mentioned are the high concentration of beneficiaries of international protection in the (larger) cities and the unstable housing situation many of them are confronted with. Besides, it appears to be quite challenging to align the housing opportunities with the employment opportunities. While many beneficiaries of international protection live in the larger cities, the employment opportunities in the primary and secondary sector or lower segment of the labour market can be elsewhere.</p> <p>Obviously, the situation of poverty many beneficiaries of international protection are confronted with does not facilitate access to housing. They also risk to end up in a vicious circle: during the period in which beneficiaries of international protection have not yet found adequate housing and/or have to focus on surviving, it is very difficult to actually start with their integration process, making it more</p>

² A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."

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			<p>challenging to become employed. A long period of unemployment sustains the situation of poverty; making is more difficult to find affordable and adequate housing.</p> <p>2. In principle, an asylum applicant who obtained a protection status has to leave the reception facilities for asylum applicants. It is the objective that the beneficiary of international protection finds housing on the private or social housing market. However, article 43 of the Belgian Reception Act foresees a transition period for recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection which allows them to stay for an additional period of two months in the reception structures for asylum applicants. During these two months, the beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to the same material aid and allowances as asylum seekers in the collective or individual reception facilities. If the beneficiary of international protection has not found housing during the transition period of two months, he can ask for an extension of his stay in the reception facility. During these two months, the social workers of the reception facilities will assist the beneficiary of international protection in finding housing. The social workers are familiar with asylum applicants and refugees, and they are trained to assist them. The social workers look for suitable housing on the internet, advertisements in newspapers and they will contact landlords and estate agencies. The beneficiaries of international protection are provided access to internet and telephones and can obtain tickets for public transportation to search or visit accommodations.</p> <p>For what concerns the assistance provided by the local authorities, the Public Centers for Social Welfare (PCSW) of the municipalities can provide assistance by paying a rental deposit and/or the installation allowance to help people who are homeless. (The rental deposit is a sum of money which is deposited on a blocked account. This amount is held as an insurance for the landlord in case the tenant does not respect his obligations, fails to pay the rent or does not maintain the house properly). The installation allowance is a sum of money to be used to buy furniture (bed, table, refrigerator, etc.) or pay utility bills (gas, electricity, etc....). These support measures provided by the PCSW are not exclusively reserved for beneficiaries of international protection. All persons entitled to social aid who fulfil certain conditions can apply for it. Besides, if a beneficiary of international protection is entitled to social aid but has not received this income, he can obtain money up front from the PCSW, for example to pay the first month of rent.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are also non-governmental organisations who assist beneficiaries of international protection in finding housing, such as Flemish Refugee Action, Belgian Committee for Aid to Refugees,</p>
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
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			<p>Caritas International Belgium, CIRE, Convivial, etc. These organisations provide assistance in many ways: information on how to search for housing; assistance in contacting landlords; information about the rights and obligations of the tenant and the landlord; information about the maintenance of the accommodation; information on how to make energy savings and ensure domestic security; and act as a mediator in case of disputes between the refugee and the landlord. Some NGOs can also provide accommodation for a short period of time for vulnerable persons or families in an emergency situation.</p> <p>3. Public, or social housing as it is called in Belgium is intended for single people or families with a limited income and is run by social housing companies. Refugees and other beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are eligible for social housing. Although the refugee status or subsidiary protection status in itself is not a ground for priority treatment, beneficiaries of international protection can qualify for an “absolute priority rule” if they are in a particular vulnerable situation.</p> <p>Most social housing consists of apartments offered for rent at a moderate price, but houses are also available. In addition, potential property buyers may be able to find a cheap mortgage. Social housing is the responsibility of the regions. The conditions thus vary from one region to another. The rent for social housing is calculated according to the income. Flats are assigned based on social and economic criteria. As mentioned in the answer to question 1 the main challenge is that there is a shortage of available and affordable housing, this is the case for the private housing market but also for the public (social) housing market, resulting in long waiting lists. Besides, specific procedures and conditions apply to be able to benefit from social housing. In Flanders, there is an obligation (or willingness required) to learn Dutch to be allowed to apply for social housing. However, since beneficiaries of international protection are part of the obligatory target group to follow the civic integration programme (including Dutch language courses), this condition is considered to be fulfilled.</p> <p>4. It is a good practice that a transition period exists and that a beneficiary of international protection does not have to leave the reception facility from the moment a protection status is granted and that the person has some time to find adequate housing. (However, this transition period also has a downside, as it puts pressure on the capacity of reception structures for applicants for international protection.)</p> <p>Several actors such as the staff of the reception facilities, social workers within the municipalities and NGO's provide support to find housing. Other important measures assisting the beneficiaries of</p>
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			international protection to find adequate housing are: the fact that they can benefit from social housing, the installation allowance and/or rental deposit paid by the Public Centers for Social Welfare (see reply to question 2 for more details) as well as the rent subsidy. Furthermore, the fact that landlords of properties on the private market which are found to be uninhabitable may be subject to a tax or may be the subject of criminal proceedings can also be considered as a good instrument to ensure suitable accommodation to some extent.
	EMN NCP Croatia	Yes	<p>1. The main obstacle to accessing the private housing market for persons who have been granted international protection in the Republic of Croatia (RoC) is the fact that a lot of lessors don't want to rent their housing units for accommodation of international protection holders. Therefore, it's hard to find housing units on the private housing market, especially small ones.</p> <p>2. N/A The system of providing international protection holders with housing solution in the RoC is different from the system in Italy. Croatian system is explained in point 4.4.</p> <p>3. In the RoC, the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care is in charge for accommodation of persons who have been granted international protection. Beneficiaries are accommodated in the State owned flats throughout Croatia and rented flats on the free market for which State pays cost of rent and other costs connected with the lease agreement. Consequently, there are no public housing plans, but State owned property in all parts of Croatia. When moving in beneficiaries, health needs, availability of schools, kindergarten, hospital and other specific needs of each family are taken into account.</p> <p>4. The Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care is from 1 January 2018 in charge of accommodation of persons who have been granted international protection. Our beneficiaries are accommodated in State-owned housing stock and rented ones, like explained in point 3.3. Beneficiaries</p>


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			<p>are entitled to free accommodation for two years starting with the date they were granted international protection, as well as overheads, in cases that they are unemployed.</p> <p>Till 2019, refugees were accommodated only in rented housing stock, mainly in Zagreb. Zagreb was chosen because of access to employment, healthcare, ect. In line with putting into use State-owned housing units, other towns are included that can also offer needed services.</p>
	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. The main obstacle in Cyprus is the increasing, already high, rental prices.</p> <p>2. No. They may only provide advice within the framework of other integration policies/projects.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. Financial support.</p>
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	Yes	<p>1. The biggest issue is very high financial cost connected with the accommodation and unwillingness of owners of flats to rent them to foreigners. There are also flats owned by municipalities but they are in most cases taken and there is a waiting list to rent them.</p> <p>2. The Mol is not aware of any initiative taken by municipalities or other local actors. The support is provided primarily on the state (central) level in the framework of State Integration Program (SIP) and in some cases also by NGOs (whose activities are in some cases co-financed by the local authorities). On the other hand the Mol cooperates with a lot of local actors and municipalities on integration of recognised refugees, not only in the area of housing but also in other areas such as resettlement programme etc.</p>



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			<p>3. It depends on each municipality. Generally speaking, beneficiaries do have access to public housing plans because they have in this area the same rights as Czech citizens. However, some municipalities might set their conditions and include some excluding characteristics (history of the stay in the municipality). Nevertheless, thanks to the assistance of the State Integration Programme it is possible to negotiate personalised conditions.</p> <p>The main challenges are already stated in the reply to Q1.</p> <p>4. One of the most important instrument of support represents the already mentioned State Integration Programme (SIP), please see http://www.integracniprogram.cz/en/#</p> <p>The SIP clients may be helped to search for a flat, to move there and to furnish it with necessary items. Furthermore, the initial costs to have a flat and to furnish it may be paid. Social workers get through the (under)lease contracts with the clients and, if possible, accompany them to flats and read the contracts to check everything is OK.</p> <p>The active cooperation with NGOs, municipalities and other ministries is an integral part of the programme. The SIP is coordinated by the Mol.</p>
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	<p>1. N/A.</p> <p>2. N/A.</p> <p>3. Beneficiaries of international protection have access to public housing plans by the same rules as any other person in Estonia. They and are not prioritised in any way.</p> <p>4. In Estonia there are no special schemes for facilitating beneficiaries' access to independent accommodation. However, all the other available instruments are made use of depending of the needs of the client.</p>

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	EMN NCP Finland	Yes	<p>1. Practical - lack of reasonable priced housing especially in the capital area.</p> <p>2. N/A.</p> <p>3. Yes they do. The same requirements than for other persons/citizens applying for public housing. Main obstacle - long queues for housing.</p> <p>4. N/A.</p>
	EMN NCP France	Yes	<p>1. For beneficiaries of international protection access to housing is generally hindered by their lack of knowledge of the French language and the socio-cultural codes, the lack of a stable employment and of available housing. In terms of private housing more specifically, the requirements to access housing in the private sector represents the main obstacle for the beneficiaries of international protection. Indeed, they must show proof of a permanent employment contract or a regular income, provide a deposit and present a guarantor. While family and friends may play an essential role in helping to pay the rent and acting as guarantors, refugees nevertheless have extremely limited networks to rely on. Ignorance or prejudice from landlords in relation to beneficiaries of international protection is also an important obstacle, as they tend to be considered as a 'risk group', incapable of paying their rent.</p> <p>2. The thematic of access to permanent housing for refugees hosted in second-line reception centres has been integrated in the local housing policy. Local representatives as well as department and regional prefects are cooperating with all of the relevant players (landlords, managers of hosting centres, public services, the civil society, etc.) to assign private residences and places in social housing to beneficiaries of international protection, and reach the set objectives of reinstallation. An online tool called "Housing Priority System" managed by the Integrated Units of Reception and Orientation of the departments, in charge with the support of</p>



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			<p>homeless or badly housed people, enables to connect refugees in reception centres with available housing.</p> <p>Furthermore, the directorates of social cohesion of the departments and the Regional and Interdepartmental Directorate of Accommodation and Housing in the Île-de-France region, are launching calls for projects to fund initiatives in favour of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, including their access to housing. The DRIHL is also cooperating with a public operator for social housing (GIP HIS) to relocate refugees in the Île-de-France region.</p> <p>Finally, regions host the department coordinators of the national platform for the housing of refugees. This platform is managed by the Inter-ministerial Delegation for Housing and Access to Housing and operated by GIP HIS; a scheme enables to assign available housing on the national territory to refugees in accommodation centres. The people reinstalled receive a financial aid of 1 500 euros, as well as an installation aid of 330 euros if necessary. The department coordinators are in charge with the identification of the available places and with the upload of them onto the platform so that they can be assigned.</p> <p>3. Article R. 441-1 of the Code on construction and housing that provides the conditions of attribution of social housing and the resources ceilings, states that social housing is to be attributed to people residing lawfully in France, including beneficiaries of international protection.</p> <p>In order to have access to social housing, applicants must fulfil the condition of resources of article R. AA-1 of the Code on construction and housing: their annual revenues must be lower than the amount set by decree and which depends on the type of housing (social or intermediary), its location, and the family situation of the applicant (Decree of 28 of September 2018 modifying the decree of 29 of July 2018 related to the ceiling resources for beneficiaries of the legislation on low-income housing and the new state aids in the rented sector).</p> <p>4. To our knowledge, there is no comparative study on the support instruments dedicated to access to independent housing for refugees in France.</p>
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			Some data shows that local authorities have made 8 7000 places available for beneficiaries of international protections in 2018, a rise of 90 % compared to 2017. The national platform for the housing of refugees has enabled 5 7000 people to access housing since its creation in 2015.
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<p>1. Unfortunately, Germany cannot contribute anything to the questions of this query, as the content mainly concerns federal state or municipal competences. A corresponding query with the federal states and municipalities would be very time-consuming and resource-intensive and not possible within the time-frame of an Ad-Hoc Query. We ask for your understanding.</p> <p>2. see question 1.</p> <p>3. see question 1.</p> <p>4. see question 1.</p>
	EMN NCP Greece	Yes	<p>1. Obstacles that international protection holders may face are mostly financial, related to their having a job or not, as well as to the high rentals especially in the capital and large cities.</p> <p>2. Those local authorities that participate as partners in the HESTIA programme provide consulting services including also help in locating possible housing, or in some cases even communicating with the landlord.</p> <p>3. In the framework of the new National Strategy on Integration of migrants, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, one of the measures foreseen is housing for the target groups.</p>


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			<p>More specifically, the new Strategy gives access to housing for vulnerable groups of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection through social housing. This specific action promotes the refurbishing of state and public buildings with a view to create social housing for both vulnerable groups of migrants and nationals, in quotas which will be defined in cooperation with Municipalities and Regions</p> <p>4. Access to independent accommodation is mainly provided through EU funded programmes. One such programme currently under funding approval by DG Home is the HELIOS programme. Target groups of HELIOS are the beneficiaries of international protection residing in emergency accommodation facilities in the mainland as well as ESTIA beneficiaries (ESTIA being a housing programme for asylum seekers). The Programme includes housing services in apartments and more specifically rental subsidies as a contribution for covering private house rent and basic operating costs as well as a contribution towards initial installation expenses. Furthermore, in the framework of the Programme, courses of Greek language will be conducted as well as private sessions of occupational guidance and preparation for integration in the labor market.</p> <p>The project's goal is to increase beneficiaries' prospects towards self-reliance, supporting them in their path to becoming active members of the Greek society and facilitating their non-discriminatory access to public services once they withdraw from the reception schemes and subsequently stop receiving benefits related to emergency support.</p>
	EMN NCP Hungary	Yes	<p>1. Owners tend to mistrust beneficiaries of international protection; lack of permanent employment with a steady income and high prices of renting are common obstacles as well.</p> <p>2. Currently there is no state supported exit opportunity specifically for recognized refugees, however they are entitled to the same support from the Family Support Service as Hungarian citizens till the proper accommodation is found. Several NGOs especially in the capital are running own integration support program, and some of them offer accommodation as well.</p> <p>3. There is no such housing scheme at present.</p>


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			4. In our experience, the most successful approach is the combination of housing and other support measures in order to financially strengthen the beneficiaries.
	EMN NCP Ireland	Yes	<p>1. An answer has been sought and may be available at a later stage.</p> <p>2. The Reception and Integration Agency published a <i>Guide to Living Independently</i> for beneficiaries of international protection in 2016. This guide contains a range of information to beneficiaries of international protection on how to seek accommodation when they receive status. It includes descriptions of possible entitlements, contact details of relevant authorities and an accommodation search checklist. The English language version of the Guide is available at: http://www.ria.gov.ie/en/RIA/GuidetoLivingIndependently.pdf/Files/GuidetoLivingIndependently.pdf The Guide describes certain supports which may be available to beneficiaries of international protection - e.g. social housing; the Housing Assistance Payment for renting in the private rented sector; and the possibility of applying for an Exceptional Needs Payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to pay a deposit and first month's rent. These supports are mainstream supports which are also available to the general population.</p> <p>Residents of Reception and Integration Agency accommodation who have been granted status or a permission to remain have the same access to housing supports and services as Irish and EEA nationals. Considerable work is being undertaken to support these residents to move out of accommodation centres and into secure permanent accommodation. The Reception and Integration Agency have a specific team who work on this. Their work is enhanced through the funded transitional support work provided by Depaul Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust (national NGOs). A number of NGOs have also been awarded funding under the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). These include the PATHS project (Providing Asylum-Seekers in Transition with Housing and Support) and South Dublin County Partnership.</p>

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			<p>Additionally, the Reception and Integration Agency is liaising with officials in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, and the City and County Managers Association collectively to support residents with permission to remain to access housing options.</p> <p>3. Beneficiaries of international protection may have entitlement to social housing on the same basis as Irish and EEA nationals. Applicants must satisfy eligibility criteria and a needs assessment. Long waiting lists generally apply to all applicants for social housing.</p> <p>4. An answer has been sought and may be available at a later stage.</p>
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<p>1. According to the current legislation, international protection holders can access to housing services (either public or private) at the same conditions of Italian citizens, as foreseen by the article 29, comma 3-bis of the Legislative Decree 251/2007.</p> <p>However, international protection holders are still facing some challenges to access the private housing market due to three main reasons (i) lack of financial resources; (ii) eventual lack of trust from private properties owners or from real estate agencies (iii) absence of a working contract</p> <p>2. Italian local and regional authorities provide support to recognized international protection holders in exiting second – line reception facilities. More specifically, operators from territorial reception projects can use the following instruments to support refugees in accessing the private housing market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in the search and selection of property adverts; • Eventual agreements with selected real estate agencies and homeowners; • Promotion and organization of meetings with tenants associations or housing local experts to provide legal information about leases and rents to international protection holders.


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			<p>In addition, to facilitate international protection holders integration path some financial contributions are foreseen. These contributions are delivered according to the specific situations, based on the individual pathways and on the evaluations made by the responsible team of the project. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution for accommodation: This contribution can be used to cover the costs related to the administrative steps such as agency intermediation, deposit costs, and the payment of the initial monthly allowances. • Contribution for furniture purchase: This contribution can be used by international protection holders to buy essential furnishings, appliances and other objects necessary to the housing set. This contribution amounts to 2000 € maximum and it can be delivered on specific situations, on the basis of the ad hoc evaluations realized by the responsible project team. • Exit contribution: This is an occasional contribution usually given to facilitate international protection holders who are exiting from a reception centers and who are not in possess of a detailed integration path. The maximum amount of this contribution cannot exceed the amount of 250 € pro – capite. <p>3. Yes. As already explained in question 1, international protection holders can access to housing services (either public or private) at the same conditions of Italian citizens, as foreseen by the article 29, comma 3-bis of the Legislative Decree 251/2007.</p> <p>These are social housing intended for the most disadvantaged sections of the population assigned by the municipalities on a yearly basis according to a specific ranking updated every year. To access public housing, the following requirements must be respected:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Holding a “residence card” or a permit of stay for working purposes; 2) Residence or main working activity in the same municipality in which the application is presented 3) Lack of an alternative adequate accommodation; 4) Evidence of not having previously received any contribution from subsidised public residential construction; 5) The overall household income must not exceed the amount specified by the relevant legislation (income limit is usually indicated in the application form).
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			<p>4. According to our experience, the success of support instruments to access independent accommodation varies according to the geographical context. For example, in Southern Italy successful measures to facilitate independent accommodation involve a specific support to access the job market as a regular contract is a pre-requisite to access private housing market. On the other hand, in Northern Italy private accommodation have higher rent prices therefore the most adequate support instrument will be financial support to allow the international protection holder to pay the rent and the related expenses in adequate neighborhoods.</p>
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<p>1. Regarding financial considerations, the state currently does not provide targeted housing support neither in-cash, nor in-kind. Financial support that the state provides is the benefit that is provided for 10 months in case of refugee status and 7 months in case of subsidiary protection status. There was a change in law in recent years that granted refugees a doubled one month one-time benefit immediately after receiving of status to be able to secure the first down payment for private dwelling, discontinuing the financing a month earlier than previously prescribed by law. Availability of social services support varies from municipality to municipality; in some municipalities, refugees need to have declared their place of residence for a certain amount of time (sometimes 3-5 years).</p> <p>2. Yes. In the form of a project financed by the Asylum, migration and integration fund carried out by the Office of Citizenship and Migration affairs, persons receiving international protection are aided in exiting second-line reception facilities with "start packages" providing several household items that the persons themselves have requested. Within the framework of the social worker/social mentor project, the social mentor helps refugees find appropriate and accessible property adverts and mediate the potential lease with homeowners, provide informational support on the housing market and practical information such as information on communal expenses and rent paying. In 2017, a pilot-project carried out by the Society Integration Fund was introduced in which several families received a reimbursement for their rental costs; the amount reimbursed depended on the size of the family, and the reimbursement was conditioned upon their active participation in language learning, employment and educational activities. The project was deemed to have had positive results on the socioeconomic</p>


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			<p>integration of the refugee families in the Latvian society, but as of yet has not been continued as a long-term project. Persons receiving international protection receive information on searching for dwelling both in the integration course within the project "Support Activities for Persons Under International Protection II" (carried out by society "Shelter "Safe House"" (biedrība "Patvērums "Drošā māja"", financed by the Asylum, migration and integration fund and administered by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia), and receive informational and practical support from the social mentor from the social worker/social mentor project (carried out by Latvian Red Cross, administered by Society Integration Fund, financed by the European Social Fund) that is assigned to each person until the receiving of status and 12 months after.</p> <p>3. In principle, beneficiaries of international protection have access to public housing plans. However, the law does not require that municipalities recognize refugees as one of the "vulnerable groups" entitled to municipality assistance regarding housing policy and services (to deem them a vulnerable group is at the liberty of each municipality). Moreover, in large cities there are long waiting periods for receiving social housing that are faced by all those societal groups eligible for such municipality assistance.</p> <p>4. Among successful instruments of facilitating access to private long-term accommodation is successful entrance into the labor market, because upon that condition the refugee or the refugee family can support themselves long-term and in a sustainable manner, and successfully integrate after the end of government benefit. In searching for desired and affordable accommodation, help is provided by the Social worker and Social mentor project carried out by the Red Cross, managed by the Society Integration Fund and funded by the European Social fund; it provides information and assistance in mediating with the potential landlords. Informational support is provided by two projects carried out by society "Shelter "Safe house"", managed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia and financed by the Asylum, migration and integration fund - the project "Information centre for newcomers" provides informational support in the form of professional consultations and translations, both oral and written, and the project "Support measures for persons receiving international protection" provides integration courses covering, among other topics, questions regarding the housing market. The pilot-project carried out by the Society Integration Fund in which refugee families were reimbursed for their rental costs under the condition that they actively participate in language learning, employment and</p>
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			educational activities was also a successful support instrument as its outcomes indicated a largely positive effect on the socioeconomic integration results of the receivers of international protection.
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. Main obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -rent prices are higher in larger cities and allowance does not cover it; housing would only be affordable in province but often there are not enough employment options; -property owners are often not willing to rent for international protection holders (or foreigners in general) because owners do not want to register residence place for refugee in the apartment (without registration they cannot access services provided at the municipal level); -practical experience shows that when refugees try to find an accommodation by themselves, the search is unsuccessful due to language barriers and prejudice not to rent to foreigners or large families with small children; -some municipalities are not active and not experienced in the coordination of integration processes and/or are willing to cooperate in assisting international protection holders with the search for housing. <p>2. Yes. After a refugee leaves the Reception Center or other initial reception facility, he/she is provided with financial support – one-time settling-in allowance paid to purchase the basic furniture and household items. Later, beneficiaries of international protection receive allowance to cover daily expenses (rent, food, utilities, travel, etc.). After 6 months the allowance is reduced by 50%. In the process of finding housing integration curators in the municipalities assists beneficiaries of international protection, however, this is a shared responsibility. Also, after the integration period in the Reception Center is over, support for integration is provided in a municipality (for 12 months, with a possibility to extend it to vulnerable groups for up to 36 months), in which a person chooses to reside. At this stage, non-governmental and other organizations provide mentoring services to persons who have been granted asylum. Currently, mentoring services were provided by Caritas of Vilnius Archdiocese and Lithuanian Red Cross Organisation. Mentors help foreigners to acquire basic necessities, rent an apartment, organize Lithuanian language courses, organize kindergarten and children's education at</p>

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			<p>school, consult foreigners on other issues, ensure foreigners' attendance at the Employment Service, help to fill in and prepare necessary documents, etc.</p> <p>Cooperation between NGOs (Caritas and Red Cross), municipalities and Employment Service working with beneficiaries of international protection could be mentioned as successful instrument. In this way, the search for accommodation and employment is held together.</p> <p>3. Yes, but in general, social housing is not a viable option at the moment, as beneficiaries of international protection would need to wait in line with other local residents applying for social housing. Waiting period is long and normally beneficiaries of international protection need housing immediately.</p> <p>4. -Cooperation between NGOs (Caritas and Red Cross), municipalities and Employment Service working with beneficiaries of international protection could be mentioned as successful instrument. In this way, the search for accommodation and employment is held at the same time. There have been cases when employment was found, but there were no possibilities to find an accommodation. It is also difficult to find an accommodation for rent in smaller cities or rural areas, because of poorly developed housing rental market.</p> <p>-Targeted financial support for housing (rent) provided by state facilitates the integration of a refugee.</p> <p>-NGO staff, Refugees Reception Center interpreters/social workers mediating between the owner of accommodation and beneficiaries of international protection proves very useful. The most common types of assistance are: assistance in search of specific options, organization of meetings, assistance by going to see the object of immovable property, assistance of an interpreter while discussing the rent conditions and other issues (e.g. how to write-off electricity meters, etc).</p>
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. In Luxembourg, beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) have the same access rights to housing as any third-country national legally residing in the country in accordance with article 64 of the amended law of 18 December 2015 on international protection and temporary protection. This implies</p>

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			<p>that the BIPs have the right to establish themselves wherever they want, however, the reality of the housing market does not allow them to find adequate housing and they have to stay in the reception centres.</p> <p>There is a lack of affordable housing that affects not only the BIPs but also the Luxembourgish nationals, EU/EEA citizens and third-country nationals legally residing in Luxembourg. This makes that the prices of renting a house in certain regions of the country (See Statec, Le Logement en chiffres, n° 6, Juin 2017, p. 7) are outside of the financial means of a BIP.</p> <p>The average price of renting an apartment in Luxembourg City was 1.145€ and in the North of the country was 760€ in 2017 (See Statec p. 7) and for a house it was 1.441€ at the national level.</p> <p>As most of the BIPs do not have jobs and benefit of the REVIS (Social inclusion income) the possibility of obtaining housing is very limited. Also, private owners do not have any guarantee in case of late payments, so they are not very keen to renting to them without the financial backing of the State.</p> <p>2. As the scarcity of social housing and affordable housing is a general challenge in Luxembourg, the Government recently decided to implement a package of measures to support municipalities in their efforts with regard to housing provision.</p> <p>The municipalities can make available housing that belong to them or are rent by them from private owners. The proposition of these renting agreements is handled through the Directorate of Legal Counsel of the Municipal sector of the Ministry of Interior. In exchange of these availability the municipalities receive a package of financial measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Ministry of Housing offers a financial aid (of 75% to 100% of reimbursable expenses) for the acquisition and construction of housing which can house BIPs. b) Through the circular of the Ministry of Interior n° 3324 of 24 November 2015 there is the possibility that the Luxembourg State will cover the difference paid by the municipality to the private owner and the rent paid by the BIP to the municipality (subsidize rent). Also, it will cover up to 1.200€ per year per accommodation in concept of management fees.
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			<p>In order to facilitate the access to the residential market, the Luxembourg Reception and Integration Agency (OLAI) collaborates with local agencies and associations, such as the AIS (Agence immobilière sociale – social real estate agency), the Fonds du Logement or SNHBM (Société nationale des habitations à bon marché SA).</p> <p>Since April 2016, a new Service of the Luxembourgish Red Cross has been set up: The Luxembourgish Integration and Social Cohesion Centre (Lëtzebuenger Integratiouns- a SozialKohäsiouns-Zentrum – LISKO) which benefits of the financial support of the Ministry of Family and Integration.</p> <p>LISKO supports all BIPs, who do not have the necessary resources to undertake the required steps to achieve integration within the Luxembourgish society, including accessing social housing. In the context of housing, the LISKO offers a guarantee to enable beneficiaries of international protection to gain access to housing. The tool concerns a “guaranteed lease”, in which the Red Cross is a party to the rental contract as the guarantor (not as the renter). Furthermore, LISKO organises workshops to disseminate information on housing amongst the BIPs using its services. In addition, the Red Cross signed a “Social Rental Management” convention with the Ministry of Housing in 2018. This convention enables it to offer its beneficiaries housing at a moderated cost.</p> <p>In collaboration with municipalities, the government furthermore intends to look into the possibility of beneficiaries of international protection living with private residents in their homes, for instance by verifying in advance the conditions to grant the social inclusion revenue, or by granting a residential address at a social office.</p> <p>3. As mentioned before, BIPs have access to public housing plans in the same conditions as third-country nationals legally residing in Luxembourg. Social housing is provided for all households with modest income. Social housing is not free of charge for BIPs. They have to pay the rent and the utilities from their income, either from REVIS they receive or, from their salary if they have a job.</p> <p>The main obstacle is the scarcity of social housing and affordable housing.</p>
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			<p>In Luxembourg, two public promoters (Fonds du Logement or SNHBM (Société nationale des habitations à bon marché SA)) in the social housing market are specialized in the construction of affordable housing or housing at subsidised prices.</p> <p>Certain municipalities also dispose of a housing portfolio of social housing (i.e. Luxembourg City), which is then sold or rented in accordance with social criteria.</p> <p>In addition, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has a Social Real Estate Agency (AIS), which seeks to combat social exclusion, acts as an intermediary between owners of real estate and households with modest income. This body, which operates under the auspices of the Foundation for Access to Housing (Fondation de l'accès au logement), rents out accommodation suitable for the applicant's household and then pays the rent to the owner of the property. However, every application for accommodation through the AIS must go through a social service, since its services are subject to a number of conditions. The municipal or regional social offices work together closely with the Social Housing Agency. It is provided until the economic situation of the household changes.</p> <p>There is a specific project of Caritas Foundation which targets the access of housing of BIPs entitled « Specific integration programme for helping 120 bénéficiaires of international protection and their families after their exit of the reception centres ». This project is subsidised by the « Oeuvre nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte » (National Relief Fund of the Grand-Duchess Charlotte) in the framework of the call for projects entitled « mateneen ».</p> <p>4. No information available.</p>
	EMN NCP Malta	Yes	<p>1. Access to housing remains an issue for international protection holders in Malta as rental prices have increased greatly over the past few years and this population remains highly dependent on the rental market for accommodation as home ownership is scarce [1]. The increasing price of renting often implies that international protection holders remain for longer periods of time in reception centres or rent places of substandard quality. Difficulties in accessing rental market prolong stay in the open</p>

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			<p>centres, leading to overcrowding, poor conditions and ghetoisation (since centres are often in locations not so easily accessible) [2].</p> <p>A trend to move from the island of Malta to the island of Gozo was registered, due to the substantially lower prices, however with further challenges to their integration posed by less availability of services (in areas of employment, adult education and social support) [3].</p> <p>Moreover, migrant population often rents dwellings of sizes not suited for the number of individuals living in them with shortage of space and light. Access to private accommodation is increasingly challenging for several groups including migrants and international protection beneficiaries, resulting in higher numbers of homeless persons or of persons living in squalid conditions [4].</p> <p>Discrimination in accessing the rental market is a continuous issue of concern also among beneficiaries of international protection. There is scarcity of up to date in-depth research in this area, but communities continue to highlight problems long identified: racial stereotyping, resistance of house owners to rent to migrants on pretenses of inability to secure payment, negative experiences in the past, complaints by other tenants and issues of cleaning and upkeep.[5] Recent reports by migrant community leaders reveal that also the lack of a Maltese ID card is frequently alleged by private landlords as a reason not to rent to a migrant, even in possession of other valid identification documents issued by the Maltese authorities. Community leaders have also expressed concerns with systematic refusals to rent to numerous families.[6] Even though the number of complaints to the National Commission for the Promotion on Equality remains low, reports on the basis of racial and ethnic discrimination continuously show that housing is a field of concern [7].</p> <p>A recent white paper on attempts to address issues of potential abuse in the tenancy system currently in place, recognising how migrants are one of the particularly affected groups, with the need for longer contracts for greater stability (usually only 6 months to 1 year), recognising the relationship between employment fragility and access to housing, setting recommendations for policy improvement including an individualised means-testing mechanisms which ensure that the subsidy effectively lifts the housing cost overburden[8]. A new Residential Leases Act is at present in discussion in Parliament.</p> <p>[1] JRS and aditus foundation (2016), 'Struggling to survive - an investigation into the risk of poverty among asylum seekers in Malta'.</p> <p>[2] NCPE (2012), 'I am not a racist, but...Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Groups and Housing in Malta'.</p> <p>[3] UNHCR (2018), Gozo: The Way Forward.</p>
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			<p>[4] JRS and aditus foundation (2018), AIDA Country Report Malta.</p> <p>[5] Fondazzjoni Suret il-Bniedem, Housing Asylum Seekers.</p> <p>[6] Data collected directly from migrant community leaders.</p> <p>[7] NCPE (2018), Annual Report.</p> <p>[8] Parliamentary Secretary for Social Accommodation (2018), White Paper Rent as a Housing Alternative.</p> <p>2. Even though it is not directly within its remit, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) tries to provide assistance to beneficiaries of protection in finding a house in the community. Since there is a lack of specific services created for that end, AWAS in practice provides some level of assistance in this regard [1]. Daily allowance provided is attached to the residence at an AWAS centre, after leaving these facilities an unemployed or at-risk person can enter the general schemes of social assistance to the extent these are applicable to them and in respect of the conditions established [2].</p> <p>Beneficiaries of international protection in Malta may request to remain in open centres after being granted protection. The decision on such request is taken by AWAS after having carried out an individual assessment with a care-worker, considering different criteria among which vulnerability of the applicant [3].</p> <p>More information can be gathered addressing relevant national authorities particularly with regards to the types of support provided for exit strategies for the transition to independent accommodation. In terms of financial support, however, both refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are entitled to Housing Benefit on Privately rented dwellings (Rent Benefit). Eligibility for rent subsidy does not depend only on legal status, but also on factors such as the condition of one's accommodation (having a contract of lease, living in Malta for at least 18 consecutive months). To apply all applicants must pay a 10€ fee. The amount of subsidy given depends on the rent payable and on the applicant's gross annual income. The benefit is provided for one year, automatically renewable for one more year [4]. A recent study by UNHCR showed that there is little awareness among refugees about the support provided by the Housing Authority.</p> <p>(8) Parliamentary Secretary for Social Accommodation (2018), White Paper Rent as a Housing Alternative.</p> <p>[9] NCPE (2012), op cit.</p> <p>[10] Information available at the website of AWAS, assessed in July 2019.</p>
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			<p>[11] JRS and aditus foundation (2018), op cit. The exact criteria of the individual assessment are unknown to the authors of the study, who in contact with AWAS received information that vulnerability is considered. The criteria are also unknown to IOM.</p> <p>[12] Information available at the website of the Housing authority, assessed in June 2019.</p> <p>3. Regulation 20(1)(c) of the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations 8 states that refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are entitled among others to appropriate accommodation with the added provision that the social welfare entitlements of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection may be limited to core social welfare benefits. Furthermore, the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations 10, with Regulation 11 stipulate that: housing provided to asylum applicants should “guarantee an adequate standard of living”, with particular attention to the situation of vulnerable persons. Beneficiaries of refugee status are eligible for social housing, i.e. alternate accommodation provided by the state, provided that they have limited income and assets and are residing in Malta for at least 12 months. For an individual to receive the social benefits s/he is entitled to s/he must be able to provide relevant authorities with a rent contract, residence permit and protection certificate issued by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner [1].</p> <p>[1] JRS and aditus foundation (2016), op cit.</p> <p>4. As part of the recently launched integration strategy, “I belong” programme applicants are supported by caseworkers throughout the integration process including when it comes to the issue of housing. However, the interim report on the implementation of the integration strategy and relevant action plan is not available yet therefore the concrete measures undertaken, and their impact cannot be measured at this stage.</p>
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	<p>EMN NCP Netherlands</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The private sector is often in the hands of institutional investors, who usually do not want or cannot serve the social rental target group. So, a large part is free sector, for which international protection holders mostly do not have the resources. In the time of the high number influx, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) did an experiment with Amvest (Dutch investment manager and developer of homes and residential areas in the Netherlands), but that actually didn't work. Also, because deposits were required. 2. No, after the first housing under arranged accommodation, one is, if desired, a home seeker like any other home seeker in the Netherlands. So, no urgency is at play and the person just has to register with a corporation. 3. Yes, beneficiaries of international protection can have access to public housing plans, if their income position (usually Income support, especially at the start) gives access to the social rental sector. Here too it applies that people are equal to other groups in the same financial position. 4. The municipalities are obliged by law to grant housing to beneficiaries of international protection once their residence permit is granted. This obligation is probably the most successful in finding housing, because without that obligation by municipalities one would have no access whatsoever. Also, the fact that there is no priority to move on to public housing plans, people are treated equally and public support remains.
	<p>EMN NCP Poland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beneficiaries of international protection have equal access to the private housing market. However, there are practical problems related to the lack of foreigners' orientation at the initial moment of stay in Poland regarding the functioning of the private housing market. Another difficulty is insufficient knowledge of the Polish language, which may be a barrier in communicating with the potential landlord. Among the beneficiaries of international protection are also large families, for whom it is more difficult to find a sufficiently large flat.


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			<p>As a part of an individual integration program, international protection holders receive financial benefits for 12 months to cover expenses related to livelihood (including payment of housing costs), which allows them to rent a flat on the private market.</p> <p>2. All asylum seekers upon receiving a positive decision on international protection are informed about necessity to leave the reception center within three months from the date that the decision was issued. They are all informed by social workers where they need to apply to be a member of integration program and what kind of documents they need to collect. They also have access to information on NGOs and foundations working on migration issues and providing free legal assistance. By this program (except of financial assistance for living and polish course, insurance contribution) international protection holders can get specialized counseling that includes advice, opinions and information that requires specialist knowledge and skills, in particular, legal counseling, psychological, vocational and pedagogical counseling.</p>
	EMN NCP Slovakia	Yes	<p>1. During the search for the accommodation for beneficiaries of international protection, workers encounter various problems. First of all, it is the high price of rent and unwillingness/reluctance of the landlords to provide accommodation to relocated persons and beneficiaries of international protection. Despite this, there is also positive experience when Slovak citizens offered their properties for certain period of time e.g. for relocated persons to be used for one year for only the costs of overheads.</p> <p>2. In the Slovak Republic, the nongovernmental organization, implementing the integration project funded by the AMIF is responsible for providing the beneficiaries of international protection with accommodation and/or helping them with search and negotiations with owners. In one Slovak city, Košice, there are 3 social flats provided by the municipality (housing association) to the NGO for the minimal costs to be used by the beneficiaries of international protection. A suitable housing is searched for all beneficiaries of international protection. Beneficiaries of international protection are temporarily</p>


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			<p>accommodated in hostels, as the rent is cheaper, however a suitable housing in flats or family houses is usually searched for. In case the implementers of the Integration project are providing the accommodation for clients in their own premises, the cost for rent usually depends on whether a person lives in a private or shared room.</p> <p>3. Beneficiaries of international protection do not have access to public housing plans. They may apply for rented/social flats. Conditions for getting these rented /social flats state the municipalities themselves and often beneficiaries of international protection do not meet these conditions. Another obstacle is that the number of these flats is very low.</p> <p>4. The housing for beneficiaries of international protection immediately after getting the protection is provided by the NGO implementing the integration project. They try to find accommodation of an adequate quality, in the location of the whole country, taking into account the needs of individuals or families so that they integrate successfully and as soon as possible.</p> <p>The beneficiaries of international protection get also financial contribution for housing during the first six months after getting the international protection.</p>
	EMN NCP Spain	Yes	<p>1. In general terms, the main obstacle not only for the beneficiaries of IP but for the autoctonous population when accessing at housing in the private market, is the cost of it, both for rent and for purchase, especially in large cities. In addition, in the case of rent, there may be some obstacles of a practical nature on the part of the owners regarding the payment guarantees that these people can offer, for this reason, the social organizations supporting the refugees carry out mediation activities in front of the owners, information and advice as well as in some cases, financial support to overcome these obstacles. The lack of sufficient social housing to cover the needs of the total population has also a hard impact in the IP holders.</p> <p>2. In Spain, the system for hosting international protection beneficiaries is a national competence that is managed in collaboration with social organizations specialized in the care of these beneficiaries. These</p>


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			<p>social organizations supporting refugees are responsible for managing their own reception devices through the financial support of the State Administration; however, given the increase of applicants produced in recent years, collaboration frameworks have been established with municipal or regional governments to offer these second-line reception facilities. The support to access private housing is mainly provided by the aforementioned social organizations and takes various forms: mediation with the owners, information and advice on access to a home, timely financial assistance for coverage of the cost of renting a home based on the number of components of the family unit, etc.</p> <p>3. There are no specific plans to access to public housing for refugees other than the devices mentioned in the previous question; given the increase in the number of IP applicants and beneficiaries in recent years, both municipal and regional governments are offering housing resources to facilitate second-line reception facilities.</p> <p>Access to social housing entails a series of requirements, which may be different in each Autonomous Community, and that have to do with socioeconomic status and other administrative requirements (local registration, residence time, etc. etc.), requirements that are also required to the native population in a similar situation of vulnerability.</p> <p>4. Possibly they are the economic helps to face the payment of rent; also specialized mediation with homeowners</p>
	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	<p>1. In Sweden the housing situation differs very much depending on where in the country it is. Housing is easier to access in rural areas and in the northern part of the country. In or close to the bigger cities the housing situation is very hard for everyone.</p> <p>When it comes to beneficiaries of international protection the municipality in which they are placed after having received their residence permit should help them to find housing but if they choose to move to another municipality they must find housing themselves although in some instances the municipality can be of assistance.</p>

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			<p>2. In Sweden the municipalities have an agreement about a certain number of refugees that they should receive that year from reception facilities. This means that the municipality is providing housing for those refugees. If the refugee is not accepting this placement or housing they will have to find their own accomodation.</p> <p>3. Please see answer to question 1 and 2.</p> <p>4. Not applicable.</p>
	EMN NCP United Kingdom	Yes	<p>2. Please see Q1</p> <p>3. Please see Q1</p> <p>4. Please see Q1</p>
