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## **International Cooperation for Rehabilitation and Social Integration of Refugee Women in Turkey and Europe. Preliminary Outline**

Migration constituted one of the most significant socio-political processes during the twentieth century. Earlier, even in the midst of numerous wars, fewer people moved. While in 1910 approximately thirty-three million people lived outside their native countries, with immigrant status, in 2000 the figure was seventy-five million. During this period, the population of the Earth increased from 1.6 billion to 5.3 billion<sup>1</sup>. The number of migrations tripled during this period, and the number of migrants six fold. Importantly, we observe an increase in migrants in the last three decades of the twentieth century. At the end of 2014 there were 55 million forcibly displaced people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)<sup>2</sup>.

Europe is currently experiencing one of the greatest influxes of migrants and refugees in history. In 2015, more than one million migrants and refugees moved to Europe. In

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<sup>1</sup> H. Zlotnik, *Past Trends in International Migration and Their Implications for Future Prospects*, in: *International Migration into the Twenty-First Century: Essays in Honor of Reginald Appleyard*, ed. M.A. Siddique, Edward Elgar Publishing, Boston, MA 2001, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Africa 16,914,909 – Americas 7,290,914 – Asia and the Pacific 8,681,830 – Europe 6,502,670 – Middle East and North Africa 15,555,142. The UN Refugee Agency Data Base <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

the first two months of 2016 there were over 135 thousand people. Among the factors that encourage people to make the dangerous journey to Europe are the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The vast majority – more than 80% of those arriving by boat in 2015 – came from these three countries<sup>3</sup>.

Woman and children have been particularly impacted by the negative consequences of becoming refugees. The problems affecting female refugees include ignorance of their rights and the services available to them in the countries in which they have settled, marriage at an early age, sexual abuse. Refugees forced to emigrate because of civil war have faced psychological problems, alienation, exclusion, and loss of self-confidence.

The International Cooperation for Rehabilitation and Social Integration of Refugee Women in Turkey and Europe (No: 2016-1-TR01-K204-033919), supported by Erasmus+, is a project realized by partners from Albania, the Czech Republic, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Turkey, which is the project coordinator. The project aims to produce and disseminate solutions to the problems faced by refugee women and to create an innovative model of refugee rehabilitation and integration. The project also aims to increase the standard of life of refugee women.

The target group of the project is refugee women who live outside camps and do not benefit from the services provided in these camps. It aims to reach nearly 300 women participants and to offer rehabilitation programs supporting Syrian women refugees; provide art and handicraft courses; form informative education programs related to the immigrant's legal status, rights and available services<sup>4</sup>. The situation of refugee women in partnership countries will be analysed and examined, and the experiences and information of the countries concerned will be shared through educational visits to partner countries.

Therefore, in this paper we present a comparison of the situation of refugees in partner countries, as well as the strategies and policies addressed to them, using a data triangulation method. It is the starting point for further research identifying the problems of refugee women and for finding optimal solutions to help them to integrate.

Because of the specificity of data acquisition used in partner countries' strategies and refugee assistance policies, the triangulation method has been used to multiply methods, techniques and data sources to confront the information received and to summarize it. In this case, we multiplied the sources of information, the types of data and analytical techniques, and the number of people who participated in the study. Thanks to that we have received various points of view. The purpose of the study was to compare refugee policies in partner countries. Thus the main research questions raised in the paper are: How many refugees are in the country? From which countries do accepted refugees come from? How are the legal regulations on refugee assistance implemented by the country? Which institutions are involved in helping refugees? What assistance is provided? What financial support is provided for refugees by the country?

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<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Establishment and implementation of the rehabilitation program (implemented by Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality), art courses (will be implemented by Şehitkamil Public Education Centre), informative training programs and outputs on refugees' legal status, rights and services offered to refugees (implemented by Gaziantep University and partners).

There are some issues and research questions that are worth further investigation. These include the following: Does the EU pursue a common policy to help refugee women? How do countries determine their own policy responses? How are the experiences of other countries, good practice and complementing activities shared among countries? And finally, why do women need special integration programs and what is their specificity? It is also worth considering why some countries are fulfilling their obligations towards the EU and helping refugees while other countries close their borders to them?

There is also another group of questions worth answering. These are more general, but are crucial for the project. What is integration? How do we understand integration? Whom do we want to integrate and how? Do refugees want integration with local communities? How do local citizens perceive refugees?

## Legal framework

In the last century political migration became an institutional and legal problem. The international community established and adopted a catalogue of legal norms governing the reception of refugees in their territory and the creation of institutions to supervise them.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>5</sup> adopted on December 10, 1948, by the United Nations General Assembly recognises the innate dignity and equal, unalienable rights of people as the basis for liberty, justice, and world peace. Article 1 of the Declaration states that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights, they are endowed with reason and conscience, and that they should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Article 2 establishes the principle of non-discrimination – equality in the use of rights set forth in the Declaration, without any distinction between races, colours, sexes, languages, religions, political or other opinions, national or social origins, property, birth, or other status. Civil rights include: the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state and the right to leave any country and return to one's own country, the right to seek asylum, the right to a nationality.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights respects the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his or her own, and to return to his or her country (Article 13). It respects the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution (Article 14). Furthermore, this right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations (Article 15), and no one is permitted to take that nationality arbitrarily and to deny the right to change it<sup>6</sup>. The declaration does not mention the state's obligations to grant immigrants the right to cross national borders, to grant asylum and citizenship to foreigners and naturalized foreigners.

<sup>5</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

<sup>6</sup> S. Benhabib, *Prawa innych. Przybysze, rezydenci i obywatele*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Warszawa 2015, p. 21.

A number of European Union conventions have also been signed. Citizens of the countries that have ratified these conventions can access justice at the European Court of Human Rights<sup>7</sup>. Similar laws exist in America as a result of the Inter-American System of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights<sup>8</sup>.

Migrants decide to leave not because of an immediate threat of persecution or death, but in order to improve living conditions, find a job, education, family reunification or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants do not face such obstacles. If they decide to go home, they will continue to benefit from government protection<sup>9</sup>.

Refugees face the challenges of starvation, abduction, violence, sexual/physical/emotional abuse and obtaining admission into a protected country. A refugee is an individual who is fleeing his or her country to escape persecution based on race, religion, nationality or membership of a certain group or having a particular political opinion. The terms of asylum-seeker and refugee are often confused: an asylum-seeker is a person who claims to be a refugee but whose application has not yet been finally examined. On average, around 1 million asylum seekers apply for asylum each year<sup>10</sup>.

Despite these regulations, candidates for refugee status and asylum seekers have limited access to civil and political rights. Lack of freedom of movement outside the state, restricted employment, lack of political participation, lack of political rights, non-membership of trade unions, lack of pension rights, unemployment benefits and limited entitlement to employment, health care, as well as limited ability to pay for children's education all negatively impact on refugees and asylum seekers<sup>11</sup>.

The main legal act concerning the provision of shelter to refugees is the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention) of 1951. Under the Convention, a refugee is a foreigner, who, unlike other foreigners, has no ties with their country and its authorities, which prevents him/her having the protection of any State.

The concept of citizenship obliges the state to care for its citizens. When a person leaves the state of which he/she is a citizen, as a result of persecution, he/she cannot count on the care of this country. However, other countries do not have the obligation to care for him/her. It means that protecting the rights of refugees is organized on the level of the nation-state. We live in a time when the institution of citizenship is disintegrating and the emergence of subnational and transnational democratic space begins<sup>12</sup>. At the same time, it must be admitted that policy at the subnational, cosmopolitan sphere is usually

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<sup>7</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination; The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; The UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; The Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU; European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

<sup>8</sup> D. Jacobson, *Rights Across Borders: Immigration and the Decline of Citizenship*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1997, p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> A. Edwards, 'Refugee' or 'migrant' - Which is right?, 27 August 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/55df0e556.html> [accessed: 30.12.2015].

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>11</sup> S. Benhabib, *Prawa innych...*, p. 168–171.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 12–13.

confined to the issue of equitable distribution, and little space is devoted to visions of a community based on an equitable basis (just membership) and the moral claims of refugees and asylum seekers. Attempts to develop a theory of global justice do not take into account the issue of migration. The Convention on the Status of Refugees is over sixty years old and was created in another political reality. The concept of refugee has changed and there are refugees, such as internal refugees, who do not meet the condition of leaving their country to be recognized as refugees or asylum seekers, have not fallen into the definition of refugees. This Convention was later on supplemented by a series of international regulations<sup>13</sup>.

Despite numerous disputes over the forms and principles of exile until the mid-twentieth century, there was a willingness to accept foreigners. However, due to globalization, terrorist attacks and the transfer of distant conflicts, a wave of animosity against foreigners has emerged. In addition, migrants are accused of many negative economic, social or cultural phenomena. Refugees are increasingly becoming the subject of public and political discussion, and their characteristic feature is the difficulty of distinguishing between economic, political, religious and social migrants. The main emphasis in these discussions is halting the migration wave and the effectiveness of the international protection system.

## The situation of refugees in the project partners countries

### Albania

The real need to help refugees in Albania emerged during the Kosovo war<sup>14</sup> of 1998–1999. During the war almost 400,000 people were forced to move from Kosovo to Albania. Most of them were Kosovo Albanians seeking shelter from oppression<sup>15</sup>. Cooperation between the Albanian government and NATO was important. International forces on Albanian territory helped end the conflict during which over 1,500 people died. During this period a first “refugee wave” arrived in Albania.

A second “refugee wave” took place between 2013 and 2016. People from Iran and other countries sought shelter in Albania from Mujahedeens that advocated the overthrow

<sup>13</sup> A complete list of these documents can be found in the *UNHCR Protection Manual*, which is the repository of protection policy and guidance, <http://www.refworld.org/protectionmanual.html> [accessed: 30.12.2015]. *Common European Asylum System*, European Commission, available online [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en) [accessed: 30.12.2015]. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A European Agenda on Migration*, Brussels, 13.5.2015 COM(2015) 240 final, available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication\\_on\\_the\\_european\\_agenda\\_on\\_migration\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf) [accessed: 30.12.2015].

<sup>14</sup> Kosovo was a southern part of the former Yugoslavia and was autonomous before the plan of putting it under Serbian control.

<sup>15</sup> *NATO's role in the conflict in Kosovo*, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm#B>.

of the governments in those countries<sup>16</sup>. The Albanian government built the National Reception Centre for Refugees for asylum seekers in Babrru, a locality near Tirana in 2014. This centre plays an important role for refugees from Kosovo, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria and Syria<sup>17</sup>. Because of the Syrian war, Albania has put on alert the border security troops and other special forces to control the borders much more effectively than previously, especially on the border between Albania and Greece. The capacity of Babrru is limited to about 150–200 people. The Albanian authorities do not open the country's borders for more refugees, including for Syrians.

Albania's refugee law developed not long after the Kosovo war. The new constitution of 1998 included the first stipulation of asylum seekers' rights<sup>18</sup> and, in chapter I, article 4, defined for the first time in Albanian history who is a refugee<sup>19</sup>. This Balkan country accepted the 1951 Refugee (Geneva) Convention criteria on defining refugees and refugee protection<sup>20</sup>. Despite these important moves, it cannot be expected that the government will undertake further steps. First, they have to overcome previous refugee issues, and in view of the size of the country, their capacity is limited. Albania does not want to accept Syrian refugees because of cultural differences and worries about the difficulties of assimilation.

## Czech Republic

Czech Republic is one of the so called "transit countries" for refugees. In 2014 there were 1,155 asylum claims. In the same year Germany received 202,815 applications<sup>21</sup>. The reasons for this include Germany's system of social care, supposed high level of living standards and work possibilities<sup>22</sup>. In accordance with the EU resettlement policy the number of people resettled to Czech Republic in 2015 was 70, but in 2016 there were almost 285% more people<sup>23</sup>. These two years relate mainly to Syrian refugees who were resettled e.g. from Jordan, and 400 more would be resettled from Turkey by June 2017.

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<sup>16</sup> M. Khalq, <http://iran-interlink.org/wordpress/?tag=tirana-albania-mojahedin-khalq-mko-mek-massoud-rajavi-maryam-rajavi-ncri>.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Ward Loretto Foundation *The Albanian National Reception Centre for Refugees: Babrru near Tirana*, October 2nd, 2015. <http://www.renate-europe.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Report-on-Visit-to-the-Reception-Centre-for-Refugees-in-Babrru-Albania.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> R. Peshkopia, *Albania – Europe's reluctant gatekeeper*, <http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/textOnlyContent/FMR/23/15.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> National Legislative Bodies / National Authorities, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5c07.html>.

<sup>20</sup> R. Peshkopia, *Albania...*

<sup>21</sup> *The 2015 refugee crisis through statistics*, <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20Refugee%20Statistics%20Compilation%20-%202017%20Oct%202015.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> *Refugees still feel like 'prisoners' as Czech camp touts improvements*, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/737454/refugees-still-feel-like-prisoners-as-czech-camp-touts-improvements#ixzz4d8FdeV5e>.

<sup>23</sup> *People were only from Middle east and North Africa*, <http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,CZ E,,57a198134.0.html>.

An Asylum act regulates the law and rights relating to refugees. The latest amendment was made at the end of 2015<sup>24</sup>. It defines who is a refugee and how to reunite families, etc.<sup>25</sup> Asylum seekers have places in three refugee camps: Vyšní Lhoty, Bělá pod Bezdězem or Balková. The capacity of the first camp is the largest. 544 people are able to stay there. Vyšní Lhoty camp is the refugee camp to which the first 70 people from the mentioned resettlement program were sent<sup>26</sup>. Bělá pod Bezdězem (founded in 1990) has a capacity of 246<sup>27</sup>. The last camp has a capacity of 200 and it is quite new. The first residents came in 2016<sup>28</sup>.

The “State Integration Programme” (SIP) includes descriptions of operations undertaken for refugees and is based on pp. 68–70 of Act No. 325/1999 Coll., on Asylum<sup>29</sup>. It contains information about the Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior Act from the beginning of 2017<sup>30</sup>. The main points of this Act are: Integration Stages, Integration in an Integration Asylum Centre, Integration under Permanent Placement in a Municipality, Areas of Integration, Housing, Employment, Education, Social services, Healthcare services, Information about Czech Language Courses<sup>31</sup>. The Czech Republic is a new home for people from Slovakia, Ukraine and Vietnam, but it also wants to accept the particularly needy, e.g. Syrians<sup>32</sup>.

## Greece

Greece has experienced migratory flows due to its geographical location and as the first country of entry in accordance with the Dublin Regulation<sup>33</sup>. At the moment there are about 804,465 immigrants in Greece. Half of them are refugees. 15% of the population living in Greece are refugees and immigrants, either of the first or second generation. There are 77 different nationalities among refugees who arrived in the country recently. Most of the immigrants entering the EU are Syrians and Afghans fleeing war and instability in their countries<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> More details includes Czech Republic: Act No. 325/1999 Coll. on Asylum <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a7a97bfc33.html> or Czech Republic Immigration Detention Profile <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Czech-Republic-immigration-detention-report-updated.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> *First refugees to arrive in Vyšní Lhoty camp on Friday*, <http://praguemonitor.com/2015/08/07/first-refugees-arrive-vy%C5%A1n%C3%AD-lhoty-camp-friday>.

<sup>27</sup> *Refugee Center Bela pod Bezenem*, <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/talking/refugee-centre-bela-pod-bezdezem>.

<sup>28</sup> *HN: Refugee camp in Balková opens this week*, <http://praguemonitor.com/2016/11/18/hn-refugee-camp-balkova-opens-week>.

<sup>29</sup> *Integration of Recognized Refugees*, <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/integration-of-recognized-refugees-913320.aspx>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>31</sup> Description of each point: <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/integration-of-recognized-refugees-913320.aspx>.

<sup>32</sup> *Flüchtlinge in Tschechien? Nein danke!*, <https://www.boell.de/de/2016/05/19/tschechien-fluechtlinge-nein-danke>.

<sup>33</sup> *The Dublin Regulation*, <http://www.unhcr.org/4a9d13d59.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> *Refworld Greece*, <http://www.refworld.org/country,COI,UNHCR,,GRC,,,0.html>.

The refugees in Greece have been settled in special accommodation facilities such as enclosed areas and camps; where necessary, medical examinations, financial support, community support, food support and psychological support are provided. Support comes from the EU's Funding on Asylum. The Commission, through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund<sup>35</sup>, provided a total of €294.5 million to Greece, and under the Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visas<sup>36</sup> a total of another €214.8 million. A further €133 million has been awarded to Greece as emergency assistance since 2014<sup>37</sup>.

The Greek asylum legal system is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and on European Union (EU) legislation on the Common European Asylum System. In 2011, the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the EU found that the Greek asylum system was faced with “systemic deficiency”, including the absence of reception centres, poor detention conditions and lack of an effective remedy<sup>38</sup>.

Every foreigner has the right to lodge an application for international protection, provided that he/she fulfils the criteria of the Geneva Convention. The competent national authorities responsible for admitting asylum seekers shall inform those seeking asylum of their rights. Decisions are taken by the asylum services on a case-by-case basis. The asylum Service consists of the Central Asylum Service and the Regional Asylum Service. There are eleven regional asylum offices in Greece, and other regional offices have started to accommodate the increasing number of refugees in 2014 and 2015.

As regards the rights of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, a residence permit is issued for a period of three years, renewable at the request of the person concerned. Minors who have been recognised as refugees have access to education. In addition, adults have access to development under the same conditions as nationals. They have access to social protection under the same conditions as nationals, to paid or independent employment and to health care under the same conditions as nationals of the State concerned<sup>39</sup>.

## Latvia

Latvia receives one of the lowest numbers of asylum applications in the entire EU<sup>40</sup> and most of them live in Riga. Refugees in Latvia came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, the Russian Fed-

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<sup>35</sup> *The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund_en).

<sup>36</sup> *The Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visas*, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/security-and-safeguarding-liberties/internal-security-fund-borders\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/security-and-safeguarding-liberties/internal-security-fund-borders_en).

<sup>37</sup> International Rescue Committee, <https://www.rescue.org/country/greece>.

<sup>38</sup> T. Papademetriou, *Greece*, [in:] *Refugee Law and Policy in Selected Countries*, The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center, March 2016, pp. 149–164, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/refugee-law-and-policy.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> Latvia has most negative attitude towards refugees in EU [http://www.baltictimes.com/latvia\\_has\\_most\\_negative\\_attitude\\_towards\\_refugees\\_in\\_eu/](http://www.baltictimes.com/latvia_has_most_negative_attitude_towards_refugees_in_eu/).



eration, Syria, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan<sup>41</sup>. In 2016 most of them came from Afghanistan, Syria, Russia and Iraq<sup>42</sup>.

Between 1998 and 2016, Latvia received requests of international protection from 2118 asylum seekers. In 2016, 47 people were granted refugee status and 107 people received alternative protection status. From UNHCR statistics on refugees, published in 2013, 23% of those recognised as refugees in Latvia were females. Of those, 33 % were girls aged zero to 17, and the remaining were females aged 18 to 59<sup>43</sup>. The latest data show that Latvian social workers and social mentors provided assistance in January 2017 to only 184 people – 89 adults with 95 children. There were 39 families and 16 individuals who lived outside institutions.

Regulations in Latvia allow asylum seekers to stay for 3 months and more in the Asylum-seekers' Reception Centre. They then receive 139 EUR in the first month and 97 EUR after this time for each family member for living outside the asylum centre. Latvia takes part in the European Union resettlement program. It takes refugees from other European countries. In September 2016 Latvia committed to take a specific number of asylum seekers until 2018 mostly from Italy and Greece<sup>44</sup>.

In 1997 Latvia adopted the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (1951 Geneva Refugee Convention) and established an asylum procedure the following year. After 12 years it created The Latvian Asylum Law which completely changed the asylum system. It established the asylum procedure, conditions for acceptance of asylum-seekers and possibilities for other forms of protection. "It guarantees equal rights for refugees and persons with alternative status to information (Art. 34), while the rights granted to the respective groups differ in regard to residence status (Art. 36), social benefits (Art. 37(1)(2)), and family unity (Art. 38(1)(3))."<sup>45</sup>

In 2002 Latvia laid down in the Immigration Law of the Republic of Latvia an additional law related to asylum seekers. It was amended in 2014. The sentence "Immigration Law provides for different residency types for persons with alternative status and 1951 Convention refugees and their family members in Latvia (Articles 23(13) and 24(9))" should be highlighted.<sup>46</sup> The integration of refugees in Latvia proceeds not through strategies or official documents. Refugees are treated as a group of third-country nationals and for this reason they are the subject of different regulations.

<sup>41</sup> *Integration of refugees in Latvia: Participation and Empowerment*, <http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,LVA,,58a4877c4,0.html>.

<sup>42</sup> On this website it is possible to select a time period, refugee country of origin, etc., [http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum\\_seekers\\_monthly](http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum_seekers_monthly).

<sup>43</sup> This and other data/information connected with refugees in Latvia are from the UNHCR report, <http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,LVA,,58a4877c4,0.html>.

<sup>44</sup> *Almost all asylum seekers relocated to Latvia have left the country*, [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic\\_states/?doc=123845](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic_states/?doc=123845).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*.

## Poland

Poland ranks 17th among EU member states in terms of the number of immigrants. Approximately 200,000 foreigners live in Poland (under the Act on Foreigners). Between 1990 and 2015 (June) 135,000 applied for asylum in Poland (under the Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners). Only 4500 people (3.5% of all applicants) were granted international protection (refugee status) and approximately 15000 people were granted other forms of protection (subsidiary protection, tolerated stay)<sup>47</sup>. In 2014 Poland received 2,732 applications and 73 % of them were rejected. After the elections in Poland in 2015 refugee policy changed. The more conservative government started to tighten procedures of giving permission, and most applications were rejected by the authorities. In addition, it is now more difficult to access information, obtain statistics or commentaries because, since 2015, the new government has stopped publishing them<sup>48</sup>.

On average, refugee status was given to about 150 people annually (since 2007 and until the end of August 2016: 1,472 people). The majority of them are Chechens. During the last 8 years, 83.5 thousand applications for refugee status were submitted. Half of the applicants were women – the highest ratio in the EU.

Poland provides protection for several percent of cases, for example, in 2016 it was 16 percent. The protection (in one of three forms) was obtained by citizens of Russia (558), Syria (336), Belarus (145), Iraq (83) and Afghanistan (63). In other cases, applicants departed from Poland to wealthier countries before their request was granted or rejected. These people are classified as economic migrants (more than 80 per cent of cases). Those people who are given protection in Poland rarely stay in this country. Approximately 80% of applicants for refugee status decide to go to Western Europe.

In June 2015 the Polish government agreed to accept 2,000 refugees: mostly citizens of Syria and Eritrea. It was planned that these people would be resettled (900 people) from the camps of the UN in the Middle East or relocated from other EU countries (1,100).

There are 11 centres for foreigners in Poland. Most of them are located in eastern Poland. Currently 1549 people reside in them and there are 431 vacancies. The number of places may be increased and the government may indicate new places. Last year, a plan to assist Ukrainians was established and Poland was prepared to help 30 thousand people. The Polish budget allocated 56 million zlotys (14 million euro) to maintain refugee centres and help asylum seekers. Last year, financial aid for each person seeking refugee status amounted to an average of 1380 zlotys per month (345 euro).

The Minister of the Interior is responsible for the coordination of migration and asylum policy, with control over citizenship, repatriation and policy to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings. The Minister of the Interior supervises the Head of the Office for Foreigners and the Border Guard. Other major actors are the Ministry of Labour and

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<sup>47</sup> Data concerning the situation of refugees in Poland are available at The Office for Foreigners website: <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/> and <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-miesieczne/status-uchodzczy/2016-2/>.

<sup>48</sup> It is possible to download two excel documents which include tables containing almost all the data. Commentaries are not available: <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>.

Social Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange, the Ministry of Economy, the Inter-ministerial Committee for Migration (CM), the Prime Minister, the Refugee Board (RB), local authorities (voivods, units of social assistance, labour offices) and administrative courts. Migration policy is implemented both at the central as well as the regional level, within the competence of the Council of Ministers and other relevant Ministries (e.g. labour, education).

Refugee families are mainly located in refugee centres or in private flats in cities located in the centre's neighbourhood. The families that live outside the centre can be contacted once a month, as they are obliged to come to the centre for their monthly allowance.

Refugees are given financial support at two stages: before and after receiving refugee status. Assistance is provided for the duration of the asylum procedure (six months) and two months after its completion. Limited financial support is then offered through individual integration programmes. Refugees are, however, covered by national health insurance. The financial support that asylum seekers receive is not enough to subsist<sup>49</sup>. A refugee seeker is not allowed to work unless the procedure for granting the status lasts for more than half a year and it is not the fault of the foreigner. Then the head of the Office for Foreigners may issue a certificate giving access to legal work.

In 2015 Poland received 12,325 applications<sup>50</sup> and in 2016 ca. 12,319 applications, mainly from Russians and Ukrainians<sup>51</sup>. This situation has arisen firstly due to the location of Poland, near the war between Ukraine and Russia. Secondly, the new government prefers refugees from countries whose culture and religion is more known and understandable.

## Romania

Romania is the country in which refugees arrive relatively least often compared to other EU member states. The percentage of immigrants among the total population<sup>52</sup> increased from 0.6% (in 1990) to just 0.9% (in 2013)<sup>53</sup>. The low percentage is due to the low number of people who applied for refugee status in Romania between 1991 and 2013. During this period, 25,100 asylum applications were registered, of which 5,200

<sup>49</sup> An asylum seeker may stay in the refugee centres that provide accommodation and meals, is offered a refund of the cost of tickets for public transport if the trip is related to the procedure for granting refugee status and medical examination, and 20 zlotys (5 euro) per month for the purchase of personal hygiene products, 50 zlotys (12 euro) as pocket money, a one-off aid payment of 140 zlotys (35 euro) for the purchase of clothing and footwear, free Polish language education, medical and dental care. Children have the right to education. Additionally, NGOs provide help, legal advice to refugees. If a person prefers to rent a flat instead of staying in a refugee centre, he/she is given 750 zlotys (188 euro), but if there is more than one person in the family – the financial help is lower, for example a family of three is given 1350 zlotys (338 euro).

<sup>50</sup> Raport roczny 2015, <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>.

<sup>51</sup> Raport roczny 2016, <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>.

<sup>52</sup> M. Sebe, *Romania's Stance in the Issue of the Refugees Crisis. Preliminary Observations*, <https://www.iedonline.eu/download/2016/IED-Mihai-Sebe-Working-Paper-2016-update.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> *International Migrant Stock, 2013*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, United Nations, available online at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimatestotal.shtml> [accessed: 30.12.2015].

were approved. In 2014, 1506 asylum applications were submitted in Romania, of which 713 were granted refugee status or another form of protection<sup>54</sup>. In 2015 Romania received a total of 1,266 asylum requests<sup>55</sup>. In 2015, the European Commission decided to relocate 160,000 refugees from Greece and Italy to other EU countries on a mandatory basis. Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary voted against this decision, but they had to accept it because all the other countries voted in favour of it. According to the information communicated by the Greek authorities, 32 of the 67 asylum seekers to be transferred to Romania refused to be transferred<sup>56</sup>.

However, Romania signed the Geneva Convention in 1991. According to law no. 122 of 4 May 2006, the Romanian asylum procedure consists of three main phases: Ordinary procedure (administrative phase), First court – complaint (if rejected in administrative phase) and Second court – appeal (if rejected in first appeal). The asylum procedure can take from a few months up to several years depending on the case specifics.

There are six refugee camps around the main asylum flow borders (with Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine). The refugee camps have an open-type accommodation system with curfew hours (that are flexible during the asylum seekers' religious holidays). Asylum seekers benefit from free accommodation in the refugee centres and a monthly financial stipend from the state (around €120) during their full asylum procedure. After 3 months of being in the asylum procedure asylum seekers have the right to work in Romania with no restrictions. Beneficiaries of a form of international protection benefit from a state-provided integration programme that lasts 6 months. If they have a recognised type of vulnerability this can be extended to a maximum of 12 months. During the integration programme they receive free Romanian classes, a monthly financial stipend of about €250 and accommodation in a refugee camp (they pay a small sum per person – €30–50). Single mothers with their children, the elderly, persons with a disability, people who suffered psychological trauma can remain accommodated indefinitely. Beneficiaries receive the same rights as Romanian citizens (education, work, housing, etc.), with the exception of voting and specific job access (judge, police, army, public notary, authorized translator, etc.). Beneficiaries of a form of protection can apply for long-term residence after 4 years and can apply to take the citizenship exam immediately after receiving long-term residence if they fulfil the requirements according to law no. 21/1991 article 8. Beneficiaries of a form of protection can travel using their travel document and work inside the EU under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. Beneficiaries of a form of protection who do

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<sup>54</sup> *UNHCR in Romania*, available online at <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/ro/despre-noi/unhcr-in-romania.html> [accessed: 30.12.2015]. Please note that in accordance with the Press Statement, *Evaluation of activity of the General Inspectorate for Immigration in 2015*, February 18th 2016, we had a total number of 1,547 asylum requests. For the present paper we have maintained the UNHCR data. The Statement is available online at <http://igi.mai.gov.ro/comunicate/citeste/ro/1335/Evaluarea-activitiei-Inspectoratului-General-pentru-Imigrari-n-anul-2015> [accessed: 6.03.2016].

<sup>55</sup> Press Statement, *Evaluation of activity of the General Inspectorate for Immigration in 2015*, February 18th 2016, available online at <http://igi.mai.gov.ro/comunicate/citeste/ro/1335/Evaluarea-activitiei-Inspectoratului-General-pentru-Imigrari-n-anul-2015> [accessed: 6.03.2016].

<sup>56</sup> *Refugees don't want to come to Romania and Bulgaria* <http://www.romania-insider.com/refugees-dont-want-come-romania-bulgaria/>.

not have any education have the possibility of accessing the “Second Chance” program. Beneficiaries of a form of protection have facilities for family reunification and can reunite with their first degree family inside Romania (the family members – spouse, underage children and parents – will receive legal leave to remain, according to law no. 44/2004 and law no. 194/2002).

## Turkey

Turkey is one of the countries most affected by migration. The number of refugees in Turkey has reached more than 3 million people, including Syrians, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, Somalis and other nationalities, making Turkey the country receiving the largest number of refugees in the world. About 90% of Syrian refugees in Turkey remain outside the camps and have limited access to basic services. The European Union and its member states are funding the Turkey Refugee Facility, which has provided EUR 3 billion between 2016 and 2017 to meet the needs of refugees and host communities through humanitarian and development assistance<sup>57</sup>.

The European Commission, in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), the Turkish Red Crescent Seminar and Turkish government institutions, is launching the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), a social assistance system that will meet the basic needs of up to one million refugees. With a budget of EUR 348 million, it is the largest humanitarian project in the history of the European Commission.

Registered refugees have access to public services, including education and health care. However, for many of them this access is limited for reasons such as registration problems and language barriers. The total amount of humanitarian aid provided to Turkey by the EU institutions since the start of the crisis has been more than €588 million<sup>58</sup>.

In November 2015, the EU launched a scheme in Turkey to support Syrian refugees. It provides a common coordination mechanism for actions financed from the EU budget (1/3 of funding) and national contributions from member states (2/3 of funding) to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to the needs of refugees and host communities. The Facility foresaw EUR 3 billion for 2016 and 2017. The European Commission also supports projects that include services in the healthcare sector, which include basic health care, physical rehabilitation, care for the injured during the war, assistance to people with disabilities, mental and reproductive health services.

Summary of data on asylum seekers and refugees in the six countries studied

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<sup>57</sup> *Turkey: refugee crisis*, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/turkey\\_syrian\\_crisis\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/turkey_syrian_crisis_en_1.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*.

The number of refugees staying in the country and their countries of origin	Albania Kosovo-Albanians, Ukrainians, Afghans, Iranians, Turks, Bulgarians and Syrians	Czech 2014 - 1,155 asylum claims, 2015 – 70 people relocated to Czech, 2016 – ca. 200 people relocated to Czech; Ukrainians, Syrians,	Greece about 400.000; 77 nationalities, mostly Syrians and Afghans	Latvia 2118 asylum seekers, 2016 - 47 persons granted refugee status, 107 persons received alternative protection status; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, the Russian Federation, Syria, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	Poland 1990-2015- 135,000 applied for asylum, 4500 people - refugee status, approx. 15000 people- other forms of protection; Russians, Ukrainians, Syrians, Belarusians, Iraqis, Afghans;	Romania 2014- 1506 asylum requests 2015-1 266 asylum requests 2016 and 2017 with a total number of 6 205 refugees relocated to Romania following the European decisions	Turkey over 3 million people: Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians, Somalis and other nationalities
The legal regulations on refugee assistance implemented by the country	1951 Refugee (Geneva) Convention, Albania's Constitution from 1998	Asylum act, "State Integration Programme" based on pp. 68–70 of Act No. 325/1999 Coll., Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior act	The Geneva Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol, and (EU) legislation on the Common European Asylum System. Greece's asylum system suffers from "systemic deficiencies", including a lack of reception centres, poor detention conditions, and the lack of an effective remedy	1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, The Latvian Asylum Law, the Immigration Law of the Republic of Latvia	Law on refugee protection in the territory of the Republic of Poland, Refugees Act	The Geneva Convention of 1951	The Geneva Convention of 1951

The institutions involved in helping refugees	the Chamber of Lawyers, the Albanian Committee of Helsinki	NGOs, refugee camps: Vyšní Lhoty, Bělá pod Bezdězem or Balková		Office for Foreigners	Office for Foreigners, refugee camps	The Romanian Immigration Office (RIO) The Resettlement Committee	
The specificity of provided assistance	education, health care and employment	Housing, Employment, Education, Social services, Healthcare services, Information about Czech Language Courses	accommodation, medical examinations, financial support, food support and psychological support	accommodation, medical examinations, financial support, food support and psychological support	accommodation, medical examinations, financial support, food support and psychological support	access to public services, including education and the health sector covering primary health care assistance, physical rehabilitation/post-operative care for war wounded people, assistance to people living with disabilities, mental health services and reproductive health	EU funding the Facility for Refugees in Turkey - €3 billion.
The financial outlay for refugees provided by the country			EU: The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund €294.5 million The Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visas €214.8 million. €133 million -emergency assistance since 2014		EU: €240 mln		

## Conclusion

The presence of refugees is an actual social and political reality in all the countries that participated in the project “International cooperation for rehabilitation and social integration of refugee women in Turkey and Europe”. However, the number of incomers and their countries of origin vary. The average number of refugees in each participant country and their profile is important. It means that each of the seven countries have their “own group” of refugees, and the reason for this is mainly the geopolitical situation. This is the case in Poland (Ukrainians, Russians), Czech Republic (Ukrainians), and Turkey (Syrians).

The study carried out under the project shows that the legal regulations on refugee assistance based on the Geneva Convention from 1951 are implemented by the project partner countries. All countries taking part in this project have their own refugee regulations defining refugees, or what rights they have. In all seven countries there are refugee camps. The specificity of the assistance provided to refugees, as well as the institutions of assistance, vary depending on the local context. The most popular forms of provided assistance are education, healthcare and financial support, but also psychological help.

Of course, because of the project schedule, the research carried out is only a preliminary step in a longer-term process. The next steps require deepening and refining, but the direction of future work is clear. This article is a preliminary outline of the topics covered by the assistance provided to migrants and refugees in selected EU countries and Turkey. However, it merely sketches local practices in each country, and is worth further development in the form of separate country studies and comparative studies showing how specific aspects of assistance (such as education, health, legal aid, opportunities and cultural concepts of assistance and integration, and gender issues) actually affect the integration and situation of refugees and migrants, who also have their own ideas about these issues and their place in the world.

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