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7.12.10 Validation of skills and recognition of qualifications

Skills validation and the recognition of qualifications have increasingly become part of comprehensive integration programmes.[653]

New initiatives were launched in Sweden in 2019. The government tasked the Swedish Council for Higher Education to develop and pilot special measures for: a) skills validation and the recognition of qualifications when documentary evidence is missing; and b) when the educational level is documented but the level was not completed. The Council also worked on a permanent structure for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning. Pending its implementation, the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education will maintain state support for the validation processes.

On 10 July 2019, Norway announced a new labour market integration strategy to assess the competencies of refugees in different languages. Thus, the strategy helps refugees and immigrants to enter the labour market more quickly by assessing competencies and skills in languages other than Norwegian and Sami.

On March 12, 2019 the Norwegian Minister for higher education, announced[654] that Norway will increase its support for the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) to 1 million NOK (approximately 100 000 Euros) in 2019 because of the good results obtained by the project. Since the launch in 2017,
319 applications have been assessed and 249 refugees have obtained the EQPR.

An evaluation session took place in Greece under the current phase of the Council of Europe project, (EQPR), providing refugees with a document that summarises their highest qualification obtained, language skills and work experience.[655]

In Croatia, free translation and authentification of diplomas and certificates required for continuing education or inclusion in the labour market continued to be provided for beneficiaries of international protection.

Nonetheless, laws do not facilitate the recognition of qualifications for beneficiaries of international protection in many countries, for example in Bulgaria.[656] Beneficiaries need to manoeuvre through regular procedures for recognition, which requires documentation or re-taking examinations.

653 See for example: EASO. (2019). *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2018* /sites/default/files/easo-annual-report-2018-web.pdf

654 Norwegian Government. (2019, March 12). *Increased Support for the Qualifications Passport for Refugees* https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/increased-support-for-the-qualifications-passport-for-refugees/id2632111/

655 Council of Europe. (2019, December 13). *European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR): Assessment sessions in Athens and Bari successfully completed* https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/newsroom/-/asset_publisher/ESahKwOXlcQ2/content/european-qualifications-passport-for-refugees-eqpr-assessment-sessions-in-athens-and-bari-successfully-completed

656 AIDA Bulgaria. (2020). *Country Report: Bulgaria - 2019 Update*. Edited by ECRE. Written by Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_bg_2019update.pdf

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