



GOVERNMENT
OF SERBIA



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HANDBOOK FOR INTEGRATION AND LIVING IN SERBIA

For persons granted international protection in the Republic of Serbia

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HANDBOOK FOR INTEGRATION AND LIVING IN SERBIA

FOR PERSONS GRANTED INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Commissariat for Refugees, as a separate organization in the public administration system, was established by the Law on Refugees in 1992 to perform professional and other tasks related to the care, return and integration of refugees under this law and the related administrative tasks.

With the adoption of the Law on Migration Management in 2012, Commissariat for Refugees established by the Law on Refugees continues to work as the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration in accordance with the responsibilities set forth in this Law and other laws.

The Commissariat is engaged in a wide range of activities. Its original mission was to provide assistance to refugees from the 1991-1995 conflict, internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija, search for missing persons in wars on the territory of the former SFR Yugoslavia, work on the reintegration of returnees under the readmission agreement, provide reception and accommodation for asylum seekers and take care of the integration of persons which have been granted international protection.

The Commissariat carries out activities from registration and census to recognition of the status of refugees, gather the state of needs on the ground, to providing material and other assistance, and providing housing for the most vulnerable. At the same time, the Commissariat manages 6 asylum centers and 8 reception centers, takes care of returnees under the readmission agreement, integration of refugees and persons who have been granted asylum, proposes policies and legal solutions in the field of migration and monitors the implementation of these measures in practice.

Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is a member of the Government bodies and commissions that deal with issues of importance for migration, it closely cooperates with numerous state institutions, ministries, local self-governments, etc. At the same time, the Commissariat has developed regional and international cooperation with international organizations and institutions, donors, as well as the domestic non-governmental organizations, citizens' associations and the media. The Commissariat also has a network of trustees in 181 municipalities throughout Serbia.



The United Nations General Assembly established the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on December 14, 1950.

UNHCR opened an office in Belgrade in 1976 at the invitation of the then SFRY Government. In the beginning, the UN Refugee Agency dealt with the provision of international protection and the granting of refugee status, integration and resettlement of refugees who, fleeing from Eastern Europe and Africa, found safety in Yugoslavia. We cooperate with the state authorities of the Republic of Serbia in order to improve the position and provide permanent solutions for the people who are under our mandate in the country. Since 1992, the value of the assistance of the UN Refugee Agency for programs of protection and integration of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons in Serbia has exceeded 560 million euros.

INTEGRATION OF THE PERSONS GRANTED ASYLUM

Integration is a process in which the host country offers you various programs and activities that enable you to integrate into the new environment more easily and quickly. The integration program lasts 1 (one) year and is intended for all those who have exercised their right to asylum in the Republic of Serbia. In order for your integration into the local environment to be successful, you need to actively participate in all the programs that are available.

The authority responsible for integration in the Republic of Serbia is the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: Commissariat).

Once you are granted asylum, contact the Commissariat, where you will be assigned an integration advisor who will help you in the process of your integration in the Republic of Serbia.

Taking into account your previous knowledge, skills, abilities and wishes, in agreement with you, the integration advisor will prepare a plan of activities to help with integration (personal integration plan).

You will find detailed instructions and more information in this brochure.

COMMISSARIAT FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

4, Narodnih heroja, 11070 New Belgrade

Phone: (+381 11) 311-72-72

Fax: 011/311-72-72

Integration Advisor: +381 64/838-25-35

email: integracija@kirs.gov.rs

YOUR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

YOUR RIGHTS

- ◆ Right to residence
- ◆ Right to accommodation
- ◆ Right to freedom of movement
- ◆ Right to health care
- ◆ Right to education
- ◆ Right to access the labor market
- ◆ Right to legal aid
- ◆ Right to social assistance
- ◆ Right to property
- ◆ Right to freedom of religion
- ◆ Right to family reunification
- ◆ Right to documents
- ◆ Right to assistance with integration

YOUR OBLIGATIONS

- ◆ If you have been granted asylum, you are obliged to respect the Constitution, laws, other regulations and general acts of the Republic of Serbia
- ◆ You are obliged to attend Serbian language classes, organized through the Commissariat
- ◆ Children are obliged to regularly attend primary school
- ◆ You are obliged to inform the competent authorities about all changes that affect the exercise of rights and duties:
 - Changes in the residence addresses
 - Personal name changes
 - Changes in marital status
 - Employment status
 - Received financial social assistance, income and other revenues

You are obliged to report all changes to the integration advisor within 15 days from the day the changes occurred.

You are obliged to inform the Asylum Office about the change of residence address within 3 days from the date of relocation, personally or through your representative.

1. RIGHT TO RESIDENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



After receiving a decision approving your request for asylum and granting you asylum or subsidiary protection, you have the right to stay on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

The Asylum Office does not issue a special certificate that you have the right to stay in the Republic of Serbia. The decision granting you asylum/subsidiary protection and your ID card serve as proof that you have the right to residence.

You have the right to reside at an address of your own choice, but you are obliged to inform the Asylum Office and the integration advisor at the Commissariat of any change of address. You must submit information about your place of residence or any related changes within 3 days to the Asylum Office in person or through a legal representative, if you have one. The residential address is entered in your ID card, and in case of any change of address, a new ID card with the new address is issued.



2. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION



You have the right to be provided with temporary accommodation by the Commissariat.

If you have been assigned a Residential space for temporary accommodation, you can use it for a maximum of one year from the moment when you were granted the right to asylum or subsidiary protection.

If there are no available facilities or conditions for temporary accommodation, the Commissariat can provide you with financial assistance for temporary accommodation, also for a period of up to one year.

In the case of the simultaneous need for a large number of persons to apply for temporary accommodation, priority is given to families that have more minor children; families of single parents with minor children; families with a pregnant family member; families with numerous family members; families with a member exposed to torture, rape or other severe forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence; families with difficult economic opportunities (elderly people, people with disabilities, etc.).

In order to exercise your right to temporary accommodation, you are obliged to attend Serbian language classes that will be organized and provided by the Commissariat for you and your family members.

For detailed information and an application for the temporary accommodation, you can contact the integration advisor personally or through a legal representative.



3. HEALTHCARE



If you have been granted the right to asylum or subsidiary protection in the Republic of Serbia, you have the right to health care in the manner in which health care is provided to citizens of the Republic of Serbia.

The costs of healthcare for persons granted asylum or subsidiary protection are paid from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, while the Ministry of Health is responsible for the right to health care.

Primary healthcare is free and is provided at the Primary Healthcare Center located in the municipality where you live. If the doctor at the Primary Healthcare Center deems it necessary, he/she can refer you to one of the hospitals (secondary level) or clinical center and institute (tertiary level) for additional examinations or treatment. If you have a doctor's referral, healthcare is free.

Depending on your place of residence from your ID card, it will be determined which healthcare center is responsible for you and your family. If you and your family members have health issues, you should contact the institution first.

If necessary, doctors from that institution can refer you to other healthcare institutions. The exception is if you have a life-threatening condition, when you need to call the emergency service at 194, or contact the nearest emergency service.

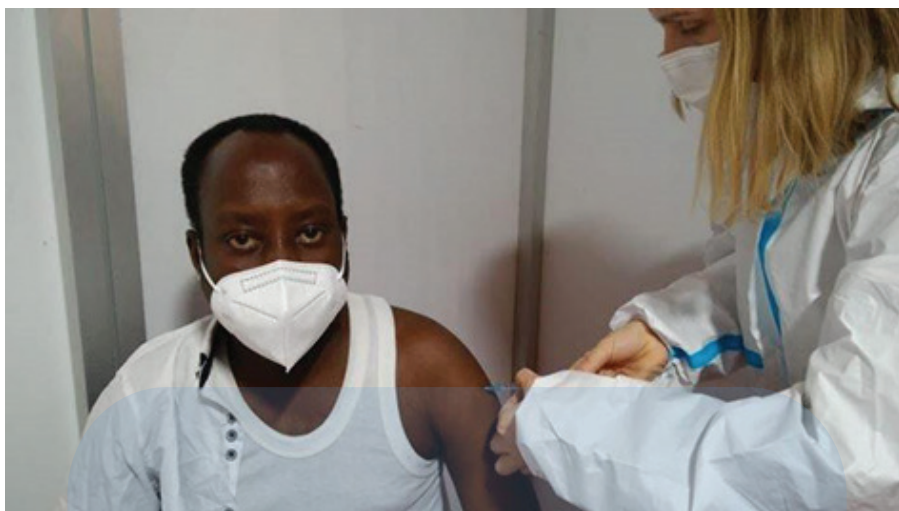
In the Republic of Serbia, there are medicines that are free and those that are paid for, and this applies to all citizens.

If you or any of your family members have been denied access to healthcare, contact your legal representative and integration advisor.

There are compulsory and voluntary health insurance in the Republic of Serbia.

Compulsory health insurance provides employees and other citizens with the right to healthcare and the right to financial benefit for certain health conditions. The unemployed can pay the insurance independently, while the employed have it calculated as a contribution from their salary.

Voluntary health insurance can be arranged independently of compulsory health insurance. You finance the voluntary health insurance premium yourself.



4. EDUCATION



Minors and adults who have been granted international protection have the same rights and obligations as citizens of the Republic of Serbia in the field of preschool, primary, secondary and higher education.

KINDERGARTENS



Preschool education and care in kindergartens is provided by public and private kindergartens. Kindergartens enroll children from the age of one to school age.

Preparatory preschool education (5.5 to 6.5 years of age) is compulsory.

You can enroll children in kindergarten throughout the year based on application. If more children are enrolled in the kindergarten than there are available places, the committee decides on admission.

You can submit a kindergarten application through the “eVrtić” service on the eUprava portal. Electronic submission of the application is done by simply filling out an electronic form.

For more detailed information, you can contact your integration advisor, UNHCR integration team representatives or your legal representative.

In case you want to submit your child's application to kindergarten in person, you need to submit the following documents:

1. Pediatric certificate about the health examination and the condition of the child
2. Letter of certification of employment if parents are employed or certification from the National Employment Service that they are registered as unemployed if parents are unemployed
3. Birth certificate (can also be a copy, regardless of the date of issue), or a copy of the ID card for persons who have received asylum in the Republic of Serbia
4. Completed registration application
5. Certificate of the child's current place of residence



In some cases, families may be exempted from kindergarten fees or the amount may be reduced.

PRIMARY EDUCATION



Primary education in the Republic of Serbia is compulsory and lasts for 8 years.

Parents have to obligation to enroll their children in primary school if they are at least six and a half years old and at most seven and a half years old. Primary education is free.

The deadline for submitting an application for a child's enrollment expires on February 1 of the calendar year, so that the child can start attending first grade from September 1. The school year starts in September and lasts until the middle of June of the following year.

If a child older than seven and a half is not enrolled in the first grade due to illness or other reasons, he/she can be enrolled in the first or corresponding grade, based on the previous knowledge tests. The previous knowledge check is performed by a team composed of teachers, pedagogues and school psychologists, respecting achievement standards and appreciating the best interest of the child.

For more detailed information, as well as the documentation required to enroll a child, contact your integration advisor at the Commissariat or your legal representative.



Attending primary education, Vranje 2022. © UNHCR/N. Pančić



SECONDARY EDUCATION



All students who finish elementary school and pass the final exam can continue their education through secondary education. Secondary education in the Republic of Serbia can be obtained through gymnasium, vocation secondary schools and art schools. Secondary education is free, but not compulsory.

If minors do not have proof of previously acquired education with them, they are enrolled in institutions of the educational system on the basis of a previous knowledge check. The test of abilities and knowledge is carried out by a special expert committee.

Every year in May, the Competition for enrollment in secondary schools is announced. Schools organize information days where children have the opportunity to get to know the programs in those schools. The ranking of students when enrolling in secondary schools is based on the points achieved during schooling and the points obtained at the final exam. The final exam is Little Graduation (Mala matura). After completing primary education, all students take the final exam in June.

HIGHER EDUCATION



Studying takes place at state and private higher education institutions organized in universities (faculties, art academies, college of vocational studies). To enroll in a higher education institution, an entrance exam is taken. The academic year lasts from October 1 to September 30 of the following year.

You can find more detailed information about enrollment in higher education institutions on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, of each individual faculty, as well as from your integration advisor.

A woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a white lab coat over a black shirt, is seated at a light-colored wooden table. She is focused on working with small dental components. On the table are several dental models, including a full upper and lower arch model and a separate white model with a pink insert. A small blue and a small purple object are also on the table. The background is a solid pink color.

DAFI Program

In 1992, the German Federal Government and UNHCR launched the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAFI), with the aim of contributing to the economic independence of girls and boys from the refugee population by providing them with higher education aimed at future employment, entrepreneurship or postgraduate studies.

Scholarship recipient of the DAFI program at the School of Applied Health Sciences, 2023. © UNHCR/M. Marković

The DAFI Program is a model that has provided access to higher education for more than 24,000 refugees in 56 countries over the past 32 years, enabling refugees to contribute to the community they came to through their training. This program has been active in the Republic of Serbia since 2021, and currently provides scholarships for six refugees from different countries in the Serbian language at public faculties.

ADULT EDUCATION



If you are an illiterate adult, you also have the possibility to receive assistance for inclusion in adult literacy programs. For further information, contact the integration advisor at the Commissariat.

BIG DREAMS OF REFUGEE STUDENTS IN SERBIA

Katya will become a biochemist, Sami a fashion designer, and Karim an electrical engineer. Reza will become a painter, Farah a dental technician, and Karim a physiotherapist. These six students are among the first refugees from countries outside our region who enrolled in studies at public faculties in Serbia.

They study in Belgrade, in the Serbian language, and are scholarship recipients of the DAFI Program (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund), thanks to the German Federal government, which covers their study costs. The scholarship is named after the famous physicist and professor, who was also a refugee.

Going to study, as a big step in everyone's life, was even bigger for them – it came after they took many steps towards finding protection and a home in Serbia. After numerous difficult moments, facing danger, and then getting to know a new environment, culture and learning a new language.

Katya Katihabwa Irakoze, from Burundi, is currently studying in her third year at the Faculty of Chemistry. Sami Rasuli and Reza Sharifi, who came to Serbia as unaccompanied children from Afghanistan, are in their third year at the Faculty of Applied Arts. Ziara Farah from Iraq and Karim Jala from Guinea are studying in the second and first year of the College of Applied Health Studies, respectively. Karim Nsengiumwa from Burundi is a freshman in the College of Vocational Studies in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

THE BIGGEST STEP SO FAR, TOWARDS THEIR FUTURE

“I feel very good at the university. I have friends here. I sit with the professors, I get some advice from them on how to paint. I have a plan to organize an exhibition where the topic is only portraits of refugee children”, says Reza. His professor Miroslav Lazović points out that Reza has a good basis for finding his own personal seal.

Reza left Afghanistan when he was only eight years old. In “DrvoArt” Secondary School, he had the support of both teachers and classmates to become a successful student. His work, creative spirit and commitment were recognized even before the beginning of his studies – Reza had one solo exhibition and he also participated in several group exhibitions.

“I always tell myself, if you finish this, eventually you will know this. It’s probably my motivation, since I’m a curious person. In 10 years, I would like to be in a place where people know that I can contribute something”, says Katya. Professor Natalija Polović says that she believes that Katya works much harder than local students, because she studies in a language that is in no way similar to her mother tongue: “I can say that I really admire her persistence”.



■ Student of the Faculty of Chemistry, 2023@UNHCR/M.Markovic



■ Student of the Faculty of Applied Arts, 2023. © UNHCR/M. Markovic

Katya graduated from high school in Burundi. She studies Serbian intensively and took chemistry and biology classes, provided by the UNHCR, in order to prepare for the entrance exam. Unlike many of her peers, apart from studying, she had other important responsibilities. Katya worked in a call center, since she speaks French, in order to provide enough funds for herself and her mother. She had to quit this job in order to intensify her preparation for the entrance exam.

Since he was a teenager, Sami wanted to present his work on the Fashion Week, he designs women's clothing, elegant dresses. His first goal is to have his own brand, because he thinks that "probably the most important thing for every designer is to have something of his own". His professor Tijana Milutinović believes that Sami can find and conquer the space of freedom through creative work, because creativity is a universal language that simply surpasses all obstacles and difficulties.

Sami's family fled from Afghanistan to Iran and Sami was born in Tehran. Although he lived with his parents, he did not receive personal documents, which is the case with many refugees from Afghanistan who have been living in Iran for decades, without access to basic human rights. Sami completed

primary school in Serbia, as well as the Belgrade School of Textile Design, where he graduated in clothing design. He showed exceptional talent and exhibited his works at school exhibitions, as well as group exhibitions, and Mikser Festival in Belgrade.

“When I enrolled in this program, I wanted to try out whether I would like it, and I think it is perfect for me. At my professional practice, I noticed how satisfied people were with their teeth and the work I had done. I want to finish my studies and acquire enough knowledge to be able to work independently”, Farah points out.

Her professor, Igor Dimitrijević, said that Farah has proven to be an excellent professional and that she is excellent at communicating with patients and healthcare workers.

“I love sports in general, as well as playing and being part of football. I took the exam to practice occupational therapy. I want to finish this school, it won’t be easy. I hope that when I finish my studies, I will be lucky enough to have a job in that field”, emphasizes Karim.

Six students say that enrolling in college and starting their studies is certainly the most important step for them so far. Like their peers, they have many other passions and hobbies.

In the process of including refugees and asylum seekers in education, the Republic of Serbia has achieved enviable results so far. At the 2019 World Refugee Forum, the Government of Serbia emphasized its full commitment to the inclusion of children and youth from the refugee population in higher education. UNHCR, together with its partners, is strongly advocating the achievement of this goal and provides support to the competent institutions in this, so that together they will enable many new, big steps in the lives of those who were forced to leave their homes.

5. RIGHT TO ACCESS LABOR MARKET



EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

On February 1, 2024, as a result of amendments to the Law on Employment of Foreigners and the Law on Foreigners, persons who have been granted asylum or subsidiary protection can access labor market without a work permit, as well as asylum seekers for whom a decision on their asylum application has not been made six months after submission, without their fault.

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The National Employment Service (NES) is a state service that deals with the employment of citizens and non-citizens of the Republic of Serbia and has branch offices in all cities and municipalities in the Republic of Serbia. This service works by matching employers with job seekers. In order to take part in this process and exercise certain rights, you need to register with the National Employment Service.

The person registers with the NES organizational unit according to the place of permanent residence or place of temporary residence (address from your ID card).

Basic documentation for registration:

- 1. Identity card (copy, original for inspection);**
- 2. Decision on the recognition of the status of refugee or subsidiary protection**

After registering to the NES registry, you will be invited to an individual interview with an employment advisor who will inform you about your rights and obligations, NES services, as well as the conditions and opportunities for employment. You are obliged to report to your employment advisor regularly, at an agreed time once every three months.



Depending on the market needs, the National Employment Service organizes various training or retraining and requalification courses where you can acquire new skills to help you get a job.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR EDUCATION – QUALIFICATIONS AGENCY

The ENIC/NARIC center is an organizational unit of the Qualifications Agency that implements the process of recognizing foreign school documents. The procedure for the recognition of foreign school documents is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia, unless otherwise stipulated by an international agreement.

Documentation is received in the ENIC/NARIC center, at the premises of the Qualifications Agency, 51, Majke Jevrosime Street, Belgrade.

Phone consultation hours: every working day from 12:00 to 14:00,
contact phone: (+381 11) 745-57-24

Recognition of primary and secondary education:
(+381 11) 745-57-24

Recognition of a foreign higher education document for the purpose
of employment: (+381 11) 334-57-46 or (+381 11) 745-57-23

For the purpose of continuing higher education, contact the
educational institution you wish to enroll.



The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration can help you to start the procedure for the recognition of the obtained diplomas.



CAREER GUIDANCE OF REFUGEES

The guide for career guidance of refugees was prepared by the UNHCR, the Qualifications Agency and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, and aims to provide persons who have been granted international protection with useful information about the recognition of previously acquired education, opportunities for lifelong learning, inclusion in the labor market and where to seek help and counseling for each of the above situations.

Part of the guide is also an interactive online career questionnaire, which allows users to independently assess their qualifications and interests, helping them to accordingly explore options for education and employment in order to plan the continuation of their career in the Republic of Serbia.



The guide and questionnaire are available on the Agency's website.

MORE THAN EMPLOYMENT – BUILDING A NEW LIFE AND A BETTER SOCIETY

After finishing their search for safety, refugees are just starting a new life, in new circumstances. Although institutions and organizations provide assistance in this endeavor, new beginnings are not easy and the support of the entire society means a lot. The private sector is also increasingly involved in supporting vulnerable groups, and in partnership with the UNHCR, helps in the integration and inclusion of refugees.

Hassan Halima and Saliu Saliu were forced to leave their homes in Syria and Cameroon. For several years now, the two have felt like the citizens of Belgrade, sharing everyday life with their new fellow citizens.

One of the most effective ways for refugees to start their lives from the beginning is employment. The possibility of dignified work gives them the opportunity to rely on themselves to a greater extent and to contribute with their knowledge, experiences and values to the local community, society, but also to the economy of the country where they are starting a new life. This is shown by the stories of Hassan and Saliu, as well as the stories of many other forcibly displaced people.

The right to work for refugees and asylum seekers in Serbia is guaranteed by both local laws and international conventions.

1 The conversation with Hassan Halim is taken from the text published on the portal "Poslovi Infostud": <https://poslovi.infostud.com/vesti/Srbija-je-za-njih-obe-cana-zemlja-Hasan-i-Natalia-posao-dom-i-mir-pronasli-u-Beogradu/56824>

MOVING TOWARDS JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND GOOD HEALTH

Saliu Saliu lives in Belgrade. He fled to Serbia in 2018, moving in a wheelchair. As he says, the life of people with disabilities in Cameroon is very difficult and it is practically impossible to leave the house and be on the move. In Serbia, he received subsidiary protection, which is renewed every year.



■ Saliu at work in the company "IKEA", 2022. © UNHCR/M. Marković

"The first thing I noticed when I came was that the people here are kind. I am often asked on the street if I need help, which was not often the case in Cameroon. I could not move freely, there was no bus service, and taxis are expensive. While I was being treated at the hospital in Zemun, the nurse and the doctor gave me a surprise – for the first time, I got a cake for my birthday," Saliu begins to tell his story.

He is speaking in Serbian, but he also speaks French, as well as Hausa and Fulfulde, the languages of his parents. He still attends Serbian language classes more than three times a week.

"Although the situation in Serbia for people with disabilities is much better than in Cameroon, it is also very difficult to find a job here. Many of us face discrimination. I don't know why that is, because we can do everything. For us, job opportunities are particularly important," Saliu emphasizes

After a short period of employment at the Primary Healthcare Center, in July 2022, he started participating in the “Skills for Employment” internship program at IKEA Serbia. After completing the program, he got a job opportunity and now works in the Quality Compliance Team.

Saliu controls whether the products in the department store are appropriately marked and presented, whether the prices are correct. This helps customers have the best possible shopping experience. According to his colleagues, his efficiency and thoroughness in work means a lot to everyone.

“I love what I do. My colleagues treat me extremely well and are always available if I need help or clarification, but I also very often have the opportunity to help them. When I think about the future, besides good health, one of the most important things for me is the opportunity to work. It’s not easy when you’re out of work and you don’t move outside your usual everyday environment”, says Saliu.

That’s why Saliu tries to be active. He plays wheelchair basketball for the club “Mega Despot”. He has many friends in the club, with whom he travelled throughout Serbia and won three medals, the last one in Niš, for second place in the national league. Back in Cameroon, he had a string of successes, in sharpshooting and javelin throwing. He was supposed to participate in the Olympic Games in Tokyo, but the pandemic and health problems prevented him from doing so.

The program under which Saliu began his engagement, “Skills for Employment”, was launched by IKEA Serbia more than three years ago, in cooperation with the UNHCR. The idea behind this pioneering step in the private sector in Serbia is to help refugees become independent members of society and acquire knowledge that will help them find work and fit into a new environment.

*“UNHCR helped me get a job. They told me that they cooperate with several companies and that “Mercator S” is looking for workers. With their help, I prepared my CV and they organized an interview with the employer. Before that, I was unemployed for three months and was trying to find something through advertisements, but I didn’t succeed”, says Hassan *.*

He says that his colleagues and managers are very good to him and that he did not expect them to be so kind and ready to help.

“I didn’t have much hope of finding a good job, because I thought I had to know the language perfectly. I like it here that people are delighted when they hear that I can speak at least a little Serbian and everyone helps me in communication. They welcomed me in “Mercator S” and told me not to worry, that they would help me and that the fact that I don’t speak the language perfectly is not a problem”, says Halima.

He spoke in Serbian for the first time after several months. As he points out, he went to a course while he was in Krnjača, but what helped him the most was learning through talking with his colleagues.



Halima at work in the company “Mercator S” © UNHCR

"I listened, I practiced and that's how I remembered the words. When I have free time, two days a week, I use it to learn the language. My responsibility at "Mercator S" is to deliver goods around Belgrade, but sometimes I also go to other cities. We have about 400 shops, and I try to remember the route, although I often use navigation. We work in shifts from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. My salary is solid", says Hassan.

He emphasizes that people in Serbia are pleasant and that they are especially kind when they hear that he is Syrian.

"They like to talk and have a lot of understanding for the situation in my country, because many have survived the war themselves. I always feel supported and that helps me feel good here. I came to Serbia alone from Damascus, but I met a lot of good people here and I have friends from work, we go for coffee and hang out. I would really like to stay in Belgrade", says Hassan.



6. FREE LEGAL AID



Representation in the asylum procedure and free legal aid to exercise the rights listed in the brochure are provided by non-governmental organizations such as:

1. Centre for Research and Social Development (IDEAS)

20/8, Ilije Garašanina Street, 11000 Belgrade

Phone: +381 69/565-72-53

Email: office@ideje.rs

2. Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BG Centre)

4, Kneza Miloša Street, 11000 Belgrade

Phone: (+381 11)308-53-28; +381 64/824-55-08

Email: bgcentar@bgcentar.org.rs

3. Asylum Protection Center (APC)

16, Mišarska Street, 11000 Belgrade

Phone: (+381 11)323-30-70; (+381 11) 407-94-65

Email: sediste@apc-cza.org

Apart from these, you can contact other non-governmental organizations, and they will help you depending on their capacities or refer you to other organizations and institutions.

After receiving the decision approving your asylum application, you need to contact the Commissariat on your own or through your representative, in order to get in touch with an integration advisor.

Phone number of the integratio advisor: +381 64/838-25-35

Email: integracija@kirs.gov.rs

The assigned integration advisor will inform you about your rights and obligations, and continue to work with you and/or your legal representative to exercise your rights.

7. THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



You have the right to financial social assistance (both for an individual and for a family), **if you earn less than the amount of financial social assistance through your work, income from property or other sources, i.e. if you do not have enough means to live.** You can exercise this right at the competent Center for Social Welfare of the municipality listed on your ID card. Depending on the nature of your financial or health situation, you can exercise your right through a one-time financial aid (paid once a year) or permanent financial aid (paid monthly).

8. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

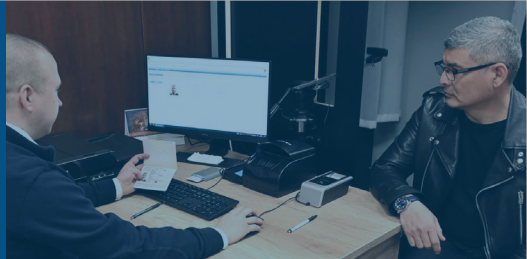
A person granted asylum has the right to be reunited with family members. Minor members of his family will receive the same status after arriving in the Republic of Serbia – asylum or subsidiary protection.

Spouses and other adult family members who arrive through the family reunification process do not receive the same legal status through the asylum procedure, but they regulated their residence in the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the regulations related to foreigners.

Since family reunification is a complex procedure, you can learn more about it from your legal representative or integration advisor.



9. RIGHT TO DOCUMENTS



IDENTITY CARD

The Asylum Office issues an identity card to a person over the age of 15 who has been granted international protection in the Republic of Serbia.

In order to obtain an identity card for persons who have been granted the right to asylum or subsidiary protection, you need to submit a request to the Asylum Office, attaching two 2.5 x 3.5 cm photos, stating the current address of residence in person or through a legal representative.

An identity card (ID card) is issued for a period of 5 years for persons with recognized asylum, or for a period of 1 year with the possibility of extension for persons with recognized subsidiary protection. If you change your place of residence, you are obliged to inform the Asylum Office within 3 days, after which you will be issued a new identity card with the new address.

You have the obligation to carry your ID card with you at all times.

If you lose your ID card or it is stolen, you need to inform the Ministry of Internal Affairs, your integration advisor and your legal representative about it immediately, that is, within 3 days at the latest.

REGISTRATION NUMBER FOR FOREIGNERS

After receiving the decision granting you asylum, you need to contact the Asylum Office in order to be assigned a registration number for foreigners, which you will need in order to exercise other status rights.

To that effect, it is necessary that you personally or through a legal representative submit a request to the Asylum Office to obtain a registration number, specifying the purpose for which the EBS (registration number for foreigners) certificate is issued.



TRAVEL DOCUMENT

According to the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection, refugees have the right to a travel document for refugees, while persons with approved subsidiary protection can receive a travel document in exceptional cases of a humanitarian nature. **To obtain a travel document, contact your legal representative or UNHCR.**



First travel document for refugees issued in the Republic of Serbia, March 2024. © Ministry of Interior

BANK CARD

After you have received your ID card and registration number for foreigners, you can go to the bank of your choice and submit a request to open a personal bank account. In agreement with the bank, you can get a bank card with which you can use to withdraw cash from ATMs or pay in stores. For other types of cards and banking services, contact the official at the selected bank, and if you encounter difficulties, you can contact the integration advisor or UNHCR.

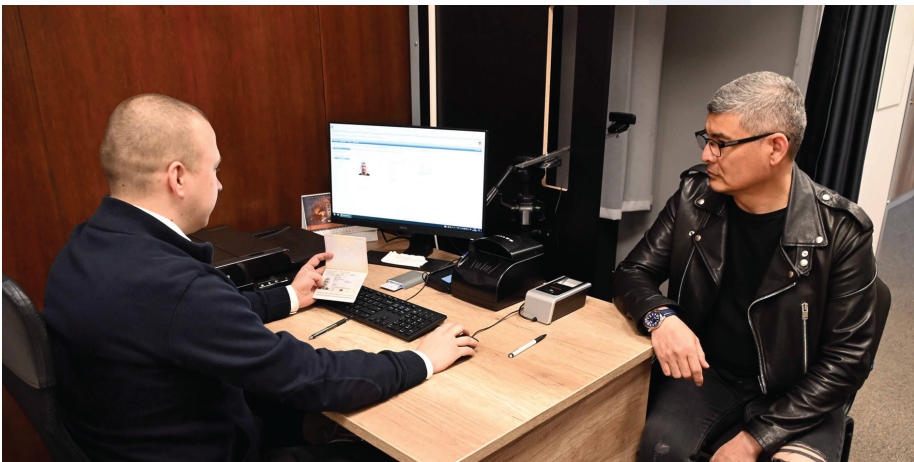


DRIVER'S LICENSE

The procedure for obtaining a driver's license is regulated by a special regulation in this field. If you do not have one, but you want to get a driver's license of the Republic of Serbia, or if you already have a driver's license of your country and you want to drive a vehicle in the Republic of Serbia, contact the Traffic Police Administration in the territory of your residence for further information.

If you have a valid driver's license from your country of origin, you can start the process of translating it. However, your foreign driver's license cannot be replaced for a driver's license of the Republic of Serbia if it is invalid or has been revoked, withdrawn or canceled by the authority that issued the foreign driver's license. In that case, you have to take the driving test again.

You can take the driving test at any driving school in the Republic of Serbia and it is paid for. Each school has its own system, dates of classes and tests, and independently determines the price.



10. ASSISTANCE WITH INTEGRATION

You and your family members will be provided with assistance in integrating into social, cultural and economic life in the Republic of Serbia, for a period of one year from the day your right to asylum was recognized.

INDIVIDUAL INTEGRATION PLAN

Based on your needs, knowledge, opportunities and abilities, the Commissariat will prepare a personal integration plan in cooperation with you. Personal integration plan contains a plan and program of activities for the next year, which can facilitate your inclusion in the economic and social life of the Republic of Serbia. Together with you, the Commissariat will define the goals and steps for their most effective realization. In addition to being involved in the development of the plan, you are expected to play an active role and collaborate with the integration advisor to achieve the set targets. Accordingly, the Commissariat can liaise you with other relevant institutions or non-governmental organizations.

Personal integration plan is prepared for a period of one year, with revisions every six months or more often if the circumstances require it. The personal integration plan is prepared in Serbian, and you will be informed about its content in a language you understand.

LEARNING THE SERBIAN LANGUAGE

Within fifteen days from the recognition of asylum or subsidiary protection, you are obliged to apply in person or through a legal representative to the Commissariat for attending Serbian language and writing classes. The integration advisor will refer you to the selected language school where you will take a test of knowledge of the Serbian language and alphabet, on the basis of which the school will evaluate your prior knowledge. Based on the test, you will be assigned to the appropriate group. You will receive all the necessary learning

The costs of attending the Serbian language are covered by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, in the amount of 300 school classes for persons who are not enrolled in regular education. In addition to these 300 classes, if your job requires a higher education degree, you may be granted an additional 100 classes.

If you attend a regular school, in addition to the regular Serbian language classes as part of the school curriculum, you can be provided with additional 140 classes of learning the Serbian language and alphabet. If you are older than 65, the Commissariat will provide you with a customized program of learning the Serbian language and alphabet for a duration of 200 classes.

If you attend Serbian language and alphabet classes, the Commissariat can reimburse you for the costs of public transportation to the place where the lessons are organized if the lessons are held outside of your place of residence.

If you get a job opportunity while attending the Serbian language course, the timing of the classes can be adapted to your working hours.

The language school keeps records of your attendance, and if you do not attend the Serbian language and alphabet classes within the agreed period of time, without a valid reason, the Commissariat is not obliged to assign you new or additional Serbian language classes.

FORMS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSARIAT

- The Commissariat can provide you with **one-time financial assistance** in case of special social or health needs. The amount of financial assistance is determined by the Commissioner. For information on how to obtain this assistance, contact the integration advisor at the Commissariat or your legal representative.

- Considering that you have the right to temporary accommodation, for a maximum period of one year, and if there are no available facilities for temporary accommodation, the Commissariat will provide you with **financial assistance for temporary private accommodation.**

For information on how to obtain this assistance, contact the integration advisor at the Commissariat or your legal representative.

LEARNING ABOUT SERBIAN CULTURE, HISTORY AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

If you have been granted international protection, you have the opportunity to participate in the program where you will learn about Serbian culture, history and constitutional arrangements for 30 hours a year.

Lessons of Serbian culture are provided by the Commissariat. These classes consist partly of theoretical lectures, also visits to important sights, museums and institutions. This program is necessary for all persons who plan to organize their future life in the Republic of Serbia. There is no knowledge test at the end of the program.

If you do not participate in the program of Serbian culture, history and the institutional system within the specified period of time, the Commissariat has no obligation to provide you with new or additional classes of the mentioned program.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE IN SERBIA

ADULTHOOD

In the Republic of Serbia, a person becomes an adult upon reaching the age of 18. However, some rights can be exercised earlier:

From the age of 16, a child can:

- get married (only with the court permission)
- confirm paternity
- obtain a driver's license for a motorcycle.

From the age of 15, a child can:

- get a job and dispose of earnings or property acquired through own work
- in case of divorce, decide with which parent he/she will live if he/she is able to reason
- decide to maintain personal relations with the parent with whom he/she does not live if he/she is capable of reasoning
- give consent for a medical procedure if he/she is capable of reasoning
- decide which secondary school he/she will attend if he/she is able to reason.

WORKING ABILITY OF MINORS

A working relationship with a person younger than 18 years of age can be established with the written consent of parents, adoptive parents or guardians, if such work does not endanger his/her health, morals and education, i.e. if such work is not prohibited by law. **A person under the age of 18 can establish an employment relationship only on the basis of the findings of the competent health authority, which establishes that he/she is capable of performing the task on the job and that such tasks are not harmful to his/her health.**

ENTERING INTO MARRIAGE

There are two forms of partnership recognized by law – marital and extramarital union that can be formed between a man and a woman. Citizens of the Republic of Serbia usually enter into marriage after they become adults. Exceptionally, minors who have reached the age of 16 can get married with the permission of the court if it is estimated that the person has reached the physical and mental maturity required to exercise the rights and duties in marriage. There are two forms of partnership recognized by law – marital and extramarital union that can be formed between a man and a woman.

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman regulated by law and can only be entered into based on the voluntary consent of both parties. In the Republic of Serbia, partners are equal, so the conclusion, duration and termination of marriage are based on the equality of a man and a woman.

Blood relatives cannot marry. A marriage is void, among other things, if it was not concluded by the free will of both parties and if it was not concluded before a state authority – the registrar. There are two forms of partnership recognized by law – a marriage union concluded in front of the registrar and a non-marital union, which in terms of rights is equal to a marriage union, in accordance with the law. **It is a woman's right to freely decide on giving birth.**

According to current laws, a religious ceremony of marriage in front of an official person of a religious community is a traditional ceremony and a marriage concluded in this way is null and void before the state authorities.

MONOGAMY

The Republic of Serbia allows marriage registration with only one partner.

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION/GENITAL MUTILATION

The ritual of circumcision of girls in the Republic of Serbia is a crime and the perpetrator are charged for inflicting serious bodily harm, which is regulated by the Criminal Code. The perpetrator shall be punished with imprisonment.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If someone in your family treats other members unequally, humiliates them or physically abuses them, forces them to have sexual relations, restricts their freedom of movement, threatens them, forces them to work or prevents them from working or otherwise violates their rights by violent means, that person will be punished by law. **By law, everyone has the right to protection from domestic violence.**

If you want to report domestic violence, the call to the SOS line number is free:



0800 100 007

Autonomous Women's Center <https://www.womenngo.org.rs/>

0800 300 339

Women Against Violence Network

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The Republic of Serbia is a Central European, Balkan and Danube country that covers an area of 88,499 km².

Territorial organization: Two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija were formed on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. In addition to autonomous provinces, there are local self-government units: municipalities, cities and the City of Belgrade.

Capital city: Belgrade (1,685,563 inhabitants according to the 2022 Census).

Other major cities:

Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar, Subotica, Kruševac, Leskovac.

Climate: moderately continental.

Official currency is the Serbian dinar.

Official language: The Serbian language and the Cyrillic alphabet are in official use, and the Latin alphabet is also used. National minorities have the right to use their language and alphabet in official use in the areas they inhabit.

Population: The total population is 6,647,003 (according to the 2022 Census). The largest percentage of the population is made up of Serbs, followed by Hungarians, Roma and Bosnians. The Republic of Serbia is a multinational country where members of 21 national minorities live. The Constitution and the law guarantee the equality of all citizens, and the status and additional rights of national minorities are regulated by the Constitution and laws.

Religion: The majority of the population are Orthodox Christians, while the number of Catholics and Muslims is similar, about 5%.

NATIONAL SYMBOL

National flag



Coat of arms



National anthem: The anthem of the Republic of Serbia is a solemn song Bože pravde (God of Justice) whose lyrics were written by Jovan Đorđević, and music was composed by Davorin Jenko.

“God of Justice,
Thou who saved us
when in deepest bondage cast,
Hear Thy Serbian children’s voices
be our help as in the past”.

Statehood Day is celebrated on February 15.

Political system: The Republic of Serbia is a parliamentary republic. Power is divided into three branches – legislative, executive and judicial.

Authorities: The National Assembly is a representative body and the bearer of constitutional and legislative power.

The president represents the country at home and abroad, promulgates laws, commands the army and more. The president is elected in direct elections for a period of 5 years.

The Government is the holder of executive power that is responsible to the National Assembly, determines and conducts policy, executes laws and proposes laws to the National Assembly.

Courts are independent and autonomous in their work and judge according to the Constitution, the law, other general acts, ratified international treaties and general principles of international law.

HOLIDAYS

Public holidays:

- January 1 and 2 – New Year
- February 15 and 16 – Sretenje – Statehood Day of the Republic of Serbia
- May 1 and 2 – Labor Day
- November 11 – Armistice Day in the First World War

Religious holidays:

- 7. јануар - први дан Божића
- Easter holidays – Good Friday, the first and second day of Easter
- Orthodox – the first day of family saint patron's day
- Catholics and members of other Christian religious communities: the first day of Christmas, Good Friday and the first and second day of Easter.
- Members of the Islamic community: the first day of Eid al-Fitr and the first day of Eid al-Adha,
- Members of the Jewish community: the first day of Yom Kippur.

Working public holidays:

- January 27 – Saint Sava School Celebration
- April 22 – Remembrance Day of the Victims of the Holocaust, Genocide and Other Victims of Fascism in the Second World War
- May 9 – Day of Victory over Fascism
- June 28 – Vidovdan
- October 21 – Remembrance Day for Serbian Victims in the Second World War.



USEFUL CONTACTS AND ADDRESSES

Police	192
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Firefighters	193
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Emergency Medical Service	194
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ER (0-24)	2, Pasterova Street, 11000 Belgrade Phone: (+381 11) 361-84-44
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Belgrade Airport	Belgrade Airport 59, 11180 Belgrade Phone: (+381 11) 209-40-00; Flight schedule: (+381 11) 209-44-44; Website: http://www.beg.aero/lat/
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Belgrade Bus Station	46-48, Antifašističke borbe, 11070 Novi Beograd Phone: 011/2636-299 Website: http://www.bas.rs
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Belgrade Railway Station	Prokop, Savski Venac, Beograd Phone: 011/361 48 11, 361 67 22 Website: www.zeleznicesrbije.com
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Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia	4, Narodnih heroja Street, 11070 Belgrade Phone: (+381 11) 311-72-72 E-mail: kirs@kirs.gov.rs Web: http://www.kirs.gov.rs
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**City Center for
Social Welfare**

4, Ruska Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: (+381 11) 265-03-29, 265-05-42, 265-00-93
E-mail: office@gcsrbg.org Web: <http://www.gcsrbg.org>

Ombudsman

16, Deligradska Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: (+381 11) 206-81-00
E-mail: zastitnik@ombudsman.rs
Web: <http://www.ombudsman.rs>

**National
Employment
Service**

8, Kralja Milutina Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: (+381 11) 292-98-00
E-mail: pisarnica.Beograd@nsz.gov.rs
Web: www.nsz.gov.rs/live/mreza/direkcija

**United National High
Commissioner for
Refugees (UNHCR)**

64, Blvd Zorana Đinđića ,
Phone: (+381 11) 415-54-24
E-mail: srbbe@unhcr.org Web: www.unhcr.rs

**International
Organization
for Migration (IOM)**

19 Žorža Klemansoa, Belgrade 11158
Phone: 011 4551 066
E-mail: iombeograd@iom.int
Web: <https://serbia.iom.int/>

**Centre for Research and
Social Development
(IDEAS)**

20/8, Ilije Garašanina Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: +381 69/565-72-53
E-mail: office@ideje.rs

**Crisis Response and
Policy Center
(CRPC)**

33, Orfelinova Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: +381 60/099-16-34
E-mail: office@crpc.rs

**Belgrade Centre for
Human Rights**

4, Kneza Miloša Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone:(+381 11) 308-53-28,
E-mail: bgcentar@bgcentar.org.rs
Web: <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/>

**Asylum Protection
Center (APC)**

16, Mišarska Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: (+381 11) 323-30-70;
(+381 11) 407-94-65
E-mail: sediste@apc-cza.org

**Centre for Human
Trafficking Victims'
Protection**

22-26, Nemanjina Street, 11000 Belgrade
Phone: +381 63/610-590



HANDBOOK FOR INTEGRATION AND LIVING IN SERBIA

FOR PERSONS GRANTED INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

2024