

MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM HOUSING IN THE EU: BARRIERS, GOVERNANCE AND GOOD PRACTICES

EUROPEAN WEBSITE ON INTEGRATION (EWSI)

ANALYSIS



This analysis has been prepared by the Editorial Team managing the content of the European Website for Integration (EWSI) for the European Commission (EC). As such, the document reflects the views only of its authors and not the EC. The EC cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
CONTEXT.....	4
KEY POINTS	4
BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HOUSING.....	7
Navigating the housing market.....	7
The threat of homelessness.....	10
Good practices in curbing homelessness among migrants.....	11
Perceived discrimination.....	12
Access to mainstream housing and support.....	13
Addressing barriers to housing.....	15
Targeted measures for (vulnerable) migrants	16
Other services and advice available to migrants.....	16
UNDERSTANDING HOUSING GOVERNANCE	18
Competent levels of government across the EU	18
Multilevel governance of housing.....	20
Support from the central government.....	21
Initiatives at the local level and in rural areas.....	23
Good practices in rural areas	24
GOOD PRACTICES IN MIGRANT HOUSING: MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS ...	24
Good practices directly providing accommodation or rental support	24
Good practices using mediation to help secure housing.....	27
Good practices supporting the transition to longer-term housing.....	28
Good practices in longer-term housing support for vulnerable groups.....	32
Good practices in the provision of other housing services and advice.....	34
CONCLUSION	35



INTRODUCTION

Access to adequate and affordable housing for migrants is one of the priorities of the European Commission (EC)'s [2021-2027 actional plan on integration and inclusion](#). At the same time, securing adequate housing increasingly presents a challenge for local residents across the EU, too. In addition, housing policies often do not fall within the competence of a single ministry or agency but require cross-institutional cooperation. Data on housing and, in particular, on the housing situation of different migrants, is therefore harder to collect and process.

This European Website on Integration (EWSI) analysis looks at some of the challenges and good practices for migrant integration in terms of housing and accommodation.

The analysis explores the main issues third-country nationals (TCNs), including beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) and beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTPs), face in terms of securing suitable and safe accommodation. It also spotlights good practices in assisting migrants to find such accommodation. The analysis pays attention to mid- and long-term housing solutions, as well as to the work done on the local level, including in rural settings, where possible.

Data for the analysis was gathered through a questionnaire completed by the EWSI Country Coordinators – integration experts from the 27 EU Member States (EU27). The questionnaire included 15 questions; 13 were closed- and two were open-ended, but all necessitated additional comments, sources and elaborations as the subject matter requires a predominantly qualitative approach. Each question examined the situation of three specific groups of migrants:

- **TCNs with short-term residence.** Here 'short-term' signifies temporary residence issued, for example, based on visas granted for the purpose of studying and seasonal work. Short-term residence is therefore contingent on fulfilling certain criteria such as being enrolled in a study programme or having a temporary work contract. In the context of available social services, including housing, holders of short-term residence tend to have limited access.
- **TCNs with long-term residence.** Here 'long-term' corresponds to the status under [Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents](#), but may also include permanent and other forms of extended residence granted in the EU27. The category signifies a secure form of residence which is not dependent on specific reasons for being in the country (such as an employment contract, enrolment in a study programme or being the family member of a resident, for example). People with long-term residence tend to enjoy access to more social services than those with short-term residence.



- **Beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs).** Included as a subgroup here are also the beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTPs) – those displaced by the Russian war against Ukraine. The analysis however does not explicitly focus on them given other [studies on housing for BTPs including by the European Migration Network \(EMN\)](#) and instead provides examples only when specifically relevant to a certain point. Similarly, in some cases, asylum seekers may be grouped with BIPs vis-à-vis initiatives for housing which include them together with recognised beneficiaries of protection.

CONTEXT

According to the OECD/EC [Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In](#), in the EU, around one in five migrants spends over 40% of their disposable income on rent, compared to roughly one in eight among the native-born. This EWSI analysis further finds that the lack of affordable accommodation is the most often-quoted hindrance to accessing housing. In addition, according to the *Settling In* indicators, 26% of immigrants live in substandard housing, compared to 20% of the native-born population.

Migrants are also more likely to live in cities, according to the *Settling In* report again. While the idea of integrating in rural areas is a promising solution to address overcrowding or lack of housing in bigger municipalities, initiatives in this regard are still not sufficiently large in scope or in numbers to confirm this, as the current analysis later suggests.

The 2018 edition of the [Settling In](#) report, in addition, noted that housing is a key factor for well-being. Yet, the unfavourable economic situation of some migrants and their poor knowledge of the rental market may restrict their choice of accommodation. They may also experience discrimination from property owners, the publication reads. This EWSI analysis confirms that perceived discrimination is a major concern across the EU countries, and that limited information on how to benefit from housing support hinders access.

Finally, [Eurostat statistics](#) reveal that in 2022, only 23.3% of TCNs across the EU owned a home, compared to 73.7% of EU nationals. For the same period, housing cost overburden was a reality for 21.9% of TCNs compared to 8.1% of EU nationals, and 32.9% of TCNs lived in conditions of overcrowding compared to 13.9% of nationals.

KEY POINTS

This EWSI analysis finds that:

- Migrants of all three groups – TCNs with short-, TCNs with long-term residence, and BIPs/BTPs – face various barriers to accessing mainstream housing.



Targeted measures, where available, do not seem to be consistent or wide enough in scope to offset these barriers.

- The top three challenges BIPs in particular face include perceived discrimination, lack of affordable housing, as well as lack of sufficient public housing stock (whether available through mainstream or targeted measures).
- Migrants appear to be at an increased risk of becoming homeless compared to local and EU citizens in at least half of the EU countries, based on statistics where available, as well as on ad-hoc studies on the ground. A few good practices stand out – see below.
- Various issues prevent migrants from taking advantage of mainstream in-cash and in-kind support for housing ('in-kind' is understood as non-cash contributions of goods or services, such as the temporary provision of apartments for free or at preferential conditions). The barriers include:
 - several years of residence as a prerequisite for benefitting from such support;
 - long waiting lists;
 - limited availability;
 - complicated bureaucratic practices;
 - lack of information.
- The provision of specific housing services and advice may be made available through integration centres, usually in countries with a longer history of immigration. Elsewhere, these are often carried out by civil society organisations, which are either mandated to do so by the government or fill in the gaps on their own initiatives, including through EU-funded projects.
- Measures supporting medium- and long-term solutions for housing *specifically targeting migrants* are mostly available to BIPs and BPTs. Other TCNs, especially those with short-term residence, rarely qualify for targeted measures. Instead, TCNs are more likely to be eligible for *mainstream* measures, which are open to people with legal residency regardless of citizenship.
- Targeted measures for vulnerable groups appear to be rather patchy across the EU, with few groups included in housing provisions among BIPs, and even fewer in the case of other TCNs. Unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking appear to be the most common beneficiaries of such measures, with services again sometimes provided by non-governmental actors specialising in working with specific target groups such as LGBTIQ+ people.



- The local level emerges as the most common competent authority for giving access to housing, often in conjunction with authorities at other levels of governance.
- Where local and regional authorities have the mandate over housing issues, support from the central government tends to be limited in scope. It usually comes in the form of funding schemes which are rarely long-term. For example, in cases of specific emergencies – such as the arrival of large numbers of people displaced by the war against Ukraine – central governments have additionally stepped up, in line with the specific needs of the target beneficiaries.
- In most countries, local authorities take the initiative to organise their own housing solutions for BIPs, as the latter fall within their competence. There are fewer specific housing policies or measures aimed at supporting TCNs, whether at national or local levels. This is especially true for countries which historically have not seen large numbers of immigrants, such as the Central and Eastern European, and Baltic states.
- A main cluster of good practices dedicated to medium- and long-term housing solutions focuses on the direct provision of accommodation. These projects are often run by civil society in cooperation with other stakeholders such as local authorities and private actors.
- Another notable portion of successful practices in housing focuses on providing mediation between migrants and private owners. These practices look to build trust between the two sides, and often create incentives for homeowners to rent to TCNs and BIPs/BTPs.
- Good practices also tend to fill in various gaps, including in the provision of ‘transitional’ accommodation options, especially for BIPs/BTPs. Thus, often, housing solutions may not neatly fit into the ‘initial’ or ‘long-term’ category, since services try to address various needs on the ground.
- Crucially, good practices also tend to look beyond fulfilling the basic housing needs of beneficiaries. Most housing schemes mentioned above require migrants to engage in other integration activities such as language and orientation courses, with the goal to become self-reliant and able to move on to private, long-term housing afterwards.
- While good practices are by nature predominantly local, it is more difficult to identify good practices in housing in rural areas, as migrants still tend to most often reside in urban centres. There are some good examples of housing solutions in places where the need for TCN seasonal workers has been long established. Outside of that context, however, there are few examples of initiatives in rural areas. It appears that unless there is a specific work



opportunity for the migrants, such as in agriculture, their employment options are limited, and local authorities and communities lack the incentive to attract newcomers.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HOUSING

Navigating the housing market

All the EU27 confirm that TCNs, including BIPs/BPTs, face specific issues and barriers when navigating the housing market.

While they do have access to the housing market, migrants often report discrimination. Landlords may be unwilling to lease to foreigners – both to BIPs/BPTs, and other TCNs. Examples of perceived discrimination observed on the ground include the refusal to rent property to people with foreign names in **Belgium**, the refusal to lease to migrant families with children in **Croatia** and **Romania**, as well as to single migrant women with children or larger migrant families in **Poland**.

In some cases, specific bureaucratic complications appear to dissuade landlords from renting to migrants. For example, in **Lithuania**, in order to receive residence permits, migrants are required by law to declare their place of residence. This declaration needs to be countersigned by the landlord, but only a small fraction of property owners appear to agree to this, as they are unwilling to ‘vouch’ for migrants. Similarly, in **Cyprus**, landlords may not be willing to rent out to BIPs due to expected delays in rent subsidies received from the state. The lack of information on how to navigate the local system may also pose a challenge, as stressed by the EWSI expert in **Portugal**.

The market may also impose additional requirements on migrants for them to enter into a contract. In **Italy**, for example, TCNs who want to buy property may need to provide additional financial guarantees and show a permanent work contract. In **Spain**, rental contracts concluded with migrants often see additional unfavourable clauses requiring extra guarantees such as paying deposits worth the amount of four months’ rent instead of the typical one or two. Similarly, in **Bulgaria**, landlords would often request three- instead of the typical two-month rent deposit.

All these examples come against the backdrop of a generalised housing crisis in the EU, particularly in big cities, which affects nationals, too. Housing has been a long-standing issue in the densely populated **Netherlands**, for example. In **Denmark** and **Sweden**, on the other hand, the majority of the population owns real estate and the availability of rented accommodations is in general quite limited, especially for lower-income groups. These groups include most TCNs, BIPs and BPTs, who cannot benefit from commercial bank credit schemes. At the same time, public housing, as discussed later, appears to be equally insufficient across the EU – for example, just 2% of housing in Luxembourg falls under this category.



Finally, it is important to note that the separate groups of migrants included in the study have varying degrees of access to the housing market: TCNs with long-term residence enjoy a slight advantage thanks to their experience in the host countries. TCNs with short-term residence may, on the other hand, face additional difficulties in accessing safe and affordable housing – this is a concern in **Malta**, for example. With the arrival of BTPs following the start of the Russian war against Ukraine, in addition, countries like **Romania** and **Slovakia** noted shifts in the rental market, with more properties now being leased to BTPs and fewer being available in turn to TCNs or BIPs, even when the latter search with the help of real estate agencies.

Lack of (affordable) housing and discrimination: the challenges facing BIPs in transitioning to longer-term housing

Extending the query to see what the main hindrances for BIPs transitioning from initial to more stable, long-term housing solutions are, three main challenges are fleshed out across the EU: **affordability (quoted by 22 countries), perceived discrimination (15), and availability (12)**. These are followed by issues such as lack of information and language barriers.

The top three challenges refugees and persons in need of international protection face when transitioning from temporary housing/reception premises to more stable/long-term housing solutions			
Austria	Availability	Affordability	Perceived discrimination
Belgium	Complicated system and discrepancies in different localities	Lack of dedicated support	Affordability
Bulgaria	Availability	Insufficient time (two weeks) for BIPs to find accommodation once they have been granted protection and are required to leave the reception centres for asylum seekers	Lack of support for vulnerable groups
Croatia	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	Lack of social housing
Cyprus	Affordability	Bureaucratic hindrances	Perceived discrimination
Czechia	Affordability and availability	Perceived discrimination	Lack of information/familiarity with the system



Denmark	Affordability	Lack of network	Lack of access to funding and loans
Estonia	Lack of trust	Affordability	Lack of information/familiarity with the system
Finland	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	Language barriers
France	The practice of settling BIPs in less populated territories in the country attempt to combat overcrowding in the big urban centres, but also limits migrants' access to (housing) services and employment	Age restriction preventing younger BIPs from accessing financial assistance	Lack of accommodations suitable for families
Germany	Availability	Affordability	Lack of social networks
Greece	No comprehensive housing policy	Availability	Affordability
Hungary	Availability	Affordability	Perceived discrimination
Ireland	Availability	Affordability	-
Italy	Discrimination	Lack of dedicated support	Complicated system and discrepancies in different localities
Latvia	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	-
Lithuania	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	Language barriers
Luxembourg	Affordability	Insufficient number of social workers to assist TCNs and BIPs/BTPs in addressing housing issues	Availability
Malta	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	Lack of information/familiarity with the system
Netherlands	Availability	Absence of medium- and long-term housing solutions in the context of BIPs/BTPs	Implementation issues at the municipal level, insufficient support at the national level
Poland	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	Availability
Portugal	Availability	Affordability	Housing conditions



Romania	Lack of dedicated support	Affordability	Perceived discrimination
Slovakia	Availability	Affordability	Perceived discrimination
Slovenia	Affordability	Insufficient time for BIPs to find accommodation once they have been granted protection and are required to leave the reception centres for asylum seekers	Perceived discrimination and marginalisation
Spain	Affordability	Perceived discrimination	Unfavourable contractual conditions
Sweden	Availability	Affordability	Housing is not available in all municipalities

The threat of homelessness

Migrants are also more vulnerable to homelessness in comparison to the local population (this is true for all three groups of migrants included in the study in about half of the EU countries each, respectively). Statistics are usually not available and the trend is often captured in reports such as the ones described below. The data is therefore often observational and, in the case of seven countries, is not available at all.

Six countries note that TCNs with long- and short-term residence were less likely to experience homelessness compared to the local population. However, those six states belong to Central- and Eastern Europe where migration is still more limited and where living standards are lower than in other parts of the union for all residents, thus likely making more people vulnerable to homelessness overall. For example, in the **Czech Republic**, social workers focusing on homelessness have noted to the EWSI Country Coordinator that EU citizens coming from neighbouring countries are the most represented part of the non-native homeless population, more so than TCNs and BIPs.

In other countries, however, data shows that TCNs are more exposed to homelessness. For example, [2017 data from b](#) suggests that two out of three of those sheltered in emergency facilities are not EU nationals; in addition, 19% were asylum seekers and 3% had refugee status. Similarly, the [Lille Métropole development and urban planning agency also noted](#) that in the 2019-2020 period, 37% of those living on the street were third-country nationals. In **Austria**, in addition, [statistics](#) from 2020 show that 40% of all registered homeless people were non-nationals, although there is no differentiation between EU and non-EU citizens provided here. At the end of 2022, **Slovakia** took initial steps to highlight the links between migration, poverty, and homelessness. A [publication by the Slovak ministry of healthcare](#) points out these dependencies and features good practices from other EU countries, such as the city of Barcelona supporting a local NGO to house 200 homeless people, the city of Prague helping to rent



hotel and hostel rooms to people without homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and more-

The reports, statistics and anecdotal evidence included as the basis for the answers to this question reveal that BIPs and other TCNs can all be at a heightened risk of homelessness, especially in cases of intersections with other vulnerabilities such as being the victim of domestic abuse.

Good practices in curbing homelessness among migrants

Good practice in Finland

Moniheli, a Finnish multicultural network of organisations, runs **the Katto programme which aims to prevent homelessness**. The programme's statement reads: 'Migrants are at higher risk of experiencing homelessness and overcrowding [...] People face prejudice and discrimination in the rental housing market. We provide support in finding housing in many languages, share housing information and organise training for professionals and do advocacy work.' The services of the Katto programme are available in the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa and are available in Finnish, English, Arabic, Ukrainian and Russian. The programme also purveys research and has issued **recommendations (in Finnish) for eradicating immigrant homelessness in the capital region until 2027**.

Good practice in Poland

The **Witaj w domu (or 'Welcome Home') programme [EWSI good practice]** has been providing housing support for BIP families at risk of homelessness since 2016. The project is run by the *Ocalenie* Foundation and aims to help the most vulnerable achieve basic self-reliance so that they are no longer dependent on social assistance. They can benefit from assistance in finding a flat to rent, as well as from rent subsidies. The programme requires the signing of a contract, in which the refugee family commits itself to receive professional support from the foundation and take part in activities such as:

- learning the Polish language;
- support in children's education;
- psychotherapy for adults and children;
- assistance in finding jobs;
- support in improving health and dealing with the health services system;



- legal assistance for families who are still in the process of applying for protection status.

Each refugee family also receives individual support from a family assistant (integration specialist) employed by the foundation. The programme is funded by institutional and private donors alike. Individuals can provide financial support to specific refugee families through the [project website](#).

Good practices in Spain

The project [Casas sin Gente para Gente sin Casa \(Empty Houses for the Homeless, an EWSI good practice\)](#), helps refugees in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, to find their homes by establishing trust between them and the owners of empty properties. The project relies on collaborative law – a process based on good faith and disclosure between homeowners and renters. It assists the dialogue between refugees and homeowners and helps set up ‘conscious contracts’. These contracts reflect the values, needs and constraints of both parties. The contracts include a 'peace pact' which establishes how the parties would resolve any unexpected situations and conflicts that may arise throughout the contract.

Perceived discrimination

Perceived discrimination was identified among the major hindrances for TCNs and BIPs.

In most countries, civil society institutions are identified as the most important stakeholders in addressing instances of perceived discrimination. This is the case in 19 countries when looking at TCNs with short-term residence, as well as in 17 countries in terms of both TCNs with long-term residence and BIPs/BTPs, respectively.

On the other hand, where the state is strongly involved in the governance of housing options for migrants, it is also seen as the most important actor in addressing possible instances of discrimination. So is the case in **Denmark, Estonia, Greece and Portugal** for all groups of migrants. The same is valid for TCNs in **Slovakia**, and for BIPs in **Romania**.

Good practice in Belgium

Cities in [the region of Flanders](#) and [the Brussels capital](#) have been [implementing testing campaigns](#) to evaluate the levels and types of perceived



discrimination in the housing market in different areas. Landlords and agencies found to employ discriminatory practices are contacted and invited to take part in a training programme on diversity and anti-discrimination. *Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)* has been [developing the so-called 'correspondence tests'](#), also for hiring in local administration, to identify discrimination.

Access to mainstream housing and support

When it comes to accessing in-kind mainstream social housing support (such as using social housing), most migrants face specific issues related to their status.

In a few cases, access to mainstream in-kind support is not available. In **Hungary**, none of the migrant groups included in the study have access to such support. **Denmark** does not provide it to either short- or long-term TCNs, while **Italy**, **Malta** and **Spain** do not include TCNs with short-term residence. This is because the requirement for accessing this service is residence longer than the one issued to these residents. In some places, including **Croatia's** capital Zagreb, such support is not provided to TCNs at all but only to nationals. In **Slovenia**, only those with permanent residence may apply.

Most countries note access to in-kind support is problematic because of additional requirements such as holding residence for several years at a specific locality before qualifying for access to social housing. Such is the case in **Austria**, **Belgium**, **Bulgaria**, **Greece**, **Poland** and **Spain**.

Other times, social housing is very limited to begin with, often not sufficient to serve the needs of the local population and EU nationals. This issue is quoted in **Bulgaria**, **Ireland**, **Italy**, **Malta**, **Poland**, **Portugal**, **Romania**, and **Slovakia**, as well as in some municipalities in **Finland** and **Sweden**. In the **Czech Republic**, there is no concrete law on social housing. While local Czech authorities may choose to allocate social housing to migrants, their stock is so limited that access to it is often not possible in practice.

Long waiting lists are another major hindrance to accessing in-kind support, and may also dissuade those who are on shorter-stay permits in countries such as **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Poland**, and **Portugal**. In **Sweden**, waiting times can be ten years long. Newly arrived migrants or short-term residents, who tend to have more immediate needs, are therefore not able to benefit from social housing.

In **Denmark**, in-kind support is available in the form of furniture, but stocks appear insufficient.



In **Greece**, migrants may qualify to take part in the [Kalipsi \(or 'Coverage'\) programme](#), managed by the labour ministry in collaboration with municipalities. The programme aims to utilise apartments, previously used by BIPs in the context of former ESTIA II and ESTIA 2021 programmes, for housing people belonging to vulnerable social groups, including TCNs.

Portugal offers a set of national programmes, such as the Affordable Rental Programme, *Chave na Mão* ['Turn key'], and *Reabilitar Para Arrendar* ['Rehabilitate to Rent'] that support access to decent housing for all legally residing people, including migrants.

It is also important to note that in certain EU countries different local and regional authorities within the same country may put forward different requirements for accessing housing. In **Italy**, the criteria for accessing social housing are set by the local governments according to regional regulations, and conditions vary widely from city to city. Sometimes these criteria may include length of residence and other requirements not initially set by the law. For example, [the Constitutional Court declared unlawful](#) a regional law which required five years of residence from foreigners. In another ruling, the court also found that a regional practice of asking for legalised documents attesting to the absence of real estate abroad or in the country of origin was discriminatory.

In **Slovakia**, local authorities similarly set additional criteria for migrants to access accommodation, such as several years of permanent residence, which ends up excluding migrants who are not long-term residents. In the **Netherlands**, municipalities decide themselves whether an individual or a family has the right to social housing and if their case should be prioritised based on income needs and vulnerabilities. To be on the list, however, TCNs would need to show either a work contract or a valid reason to stay (such as a family reunification status, student visa, etc.), as well as to prove their financial solvency or have a sponsor. All these requirements would often make access to mainstream support unlikely.

Finally, a lack of information about eligibility and how to apply for in-kind support is also seen as a barrier to accessing social housing, including in **Italy**, the **Netherlands** and **Poland**.

In terms of mainstream in-cash support, such as rent subsidies, access issues are again observed across most countries. **Hungary** does not offer mainstream in-cash support to the migrant groups included in the study, although BTPs specifically benefit from targeted support. **Croatia** does not offer it to TCNs at all, while **Cyprus**, **Lithuania**, **Romania**, **Slovakia**, and **Spain** do not offer it to TCNs with short-term residence. **Sweden**, on the other hand, does not offer in-cash support to BIPs.

Residence length is an important precondition in countries like **Austria**, **Latvia**, **Malta**, and **Spain**. For TCNs, permanent residence is a condition in **Slovenia**, including in terms of in-kind support.



Conditions again may differ among the different localities within a country. Rent subsidies in **Austria** are within the legal competence of the provinces, for example, and the amounts vary. The requirements also vary in **Italy**, as with in-kind support.

Reported obstacles to obtaining in-cash benefits include heavier bureaucracy and lack of information in **Belgium**, where BIPs who transition to long-term housing also need to have both a residence permit and a bank account. A bank account is a condition in **Latvia** too, but banks are often reportedly reluctant to open accounts for migrants and mandate lengthy review procedures.

In **Cyprus**, the most notable barrier is the delay in the assessment of applications for support schemes such as the Guaranteed Minimum Income Scheme. A complicated welfare system (requiring an income test) can also dissuade applicants in the **Czech Republic**. Lack of sufficient information on how to apply and navigate the procedure is also an issue in **Greece, Poland, Portugal** and **Slovakia**.

In **Bulgaria**, rent subsidies are only available to specific vulnerable groups such as elderly single people above 70, orphans under 25 and single parents. Although technically eligible, migrants who fit into those categories are rarely among the beneficiaries.

Denmark, on the other hand, offers rent subsidies – paid only via bank transfers – to all who have legal residence, based on their income level and the amount of rent due; TCNs and BIPs/BTPs may obtain help in applying at their local municipality. **Finland** offers subsidies universally, with migrants qualifying based on a residence permit or being refugees in a reception centre. In **Estonia**, in-cash support is clearly defined as available to persons with specific needs and below a certain income level.

Addressing barriers to housing

Most countries have institutions or other entities working to address obstacles to accessing housing such as discrimination. This is the case in 21 countries for TCNs with short-term residence, in 21 countries for TCNs with long-term residence, and in 24 countries for BIPs. Most often, the services are managed by civil society entities mandated and funded by the state, private or EU financing. In general, these services mainly consist of consultations on finding housing, with examples in the section below. Where these consultations are taking place through projects, there often are issues of sustainability after the end of a certain programme period.

Neither long- nor short-term TCNs have access to services addressing barriers to housing in six countries. BIPs/BPTs have no access to such services in three countries.



Targeted measures for (vulnerable) migrants

When it comes to **supporting medium- and long-term solutions to housing specifically targeting migrants**, measures are mostly available for BIPs/BPTs. This is the case in 19 countries. In contrast, only six countries provide such support for TCNs with short-term, and eight countries – for TCNs with long-term residence.

In Italy, dedicated services to assist all groups of migrants are available at the local level. Services supporting access to housing are implemented by the Italian Integration and Reception System (SAI) or by local partners, and often through AMIF or other funds. For example, the municipalities of Acate and Santa Croce Camerina work on the regularisation of migrant workers and have initiated projects combining housing support and legal help for victims of labour exploitation, in cooperation with professional and non-governmental organisations. See a 2022 report about migrants' [access to housing, employment and other services in small towns and rural areas in Italy](#).

In addition, TCNs with short-term residence often do not qualify for in-kind or in-cash support due to limits in their residence duration, as noted above. This makes them the least supported group of migrants included in this analysis. Ad hoc, niche support however exists in some countries: for example, in **Croatia**, employers of TCN workers on short-stay visas are exempted from paying income tax on the costs of accommodation. In practice, that could mean that someone can benefit from it for five consecutive years on short-term residency based on a work contract.

Medium- and long-term solutions targeting vulnerable groups of migrants exist above all for BIPs. Measures for them are available in 23 countries, but only for specific vulnerable populations. In addition, 11 countries offer targeted measures for vulnerable TCNs with short-term and 12 – for TCNs with long-term residence.

Most often, the target groups include unaccompanied minors and minors who have been victims of trafficking; people with disabilities are also often included.

Other services and advice available to migrants

Specific housing services and programmes help migrants by translating documents required for accommodation, and providing housing advice and support. A total of 21 countries provide such help to BIPs, and 16 and 15 countries respectively provide such help to TCNs with short- and TCNs with long-term residence.

In **Belgium**, public welfare centres are the main responsible actors for that type of service, supported also by local civil society organisations. The [International House of Leuven](#) helps migrants with advice on finding rented homes rental guarantees, and information on the local energy providers. In the **Netherlands**, assistance is available



through both municipalities and private organisations such as the Dutch Council for Refugees.

In **Germany**, the Integration Through Qualification (IQ Network) programme offers counselling, qualification measures, and job placement services. This programme helps TCNs and BIPs find employment and, subsequently, secure housing. Additionally, the German public employment agency Jobcenter can provide support in finding both employment and housing for those eligible.

In some countries, housing information may be provided as part of orientation and integration programmes BIPs. **Italy's** [Integration and Reception System \(SAI\)](#) guides beneficiaries of protection towards independence, including in terms of housing.

The analysis also explored whether expert advice (in writing) and one-to-one counselling are available for migrants, as well as whether migrants are represented by others when they face discrimination in the housing market. These services are available in a systematic manner across the entire country in 14 EU states for BIPs, and in nine and ten countries respectively for TCNs with short- and long-term residence permits. In these cases, expert advice is usually provided through the official integration centres working at the local level, or through municipalities.

Expert housing advice, counselling, and representation are available to both TCNs and BIPs/BTPs in **Germany**. These services are typically provided by a combination of public and private entities, including NGOs. The funding comes from various sources, including the federal government, state governments, local authorities, and private donations.

In **Romania**, counselling across the country is provided systematically to BTPs. In **Ireland**, the services are exclusively provided by NGOs, who also work with migrants living in rural areas. In **Croatia** and **Lithuania**, expert advice is provided in bigger urban centres where more migrants are present.

Likewise, civil society is quoted as the most important stakeholder in providing general housing advice in 17 EU countries in terms of BIPs, and in 15 and 16 countries in terms of TCNs with short- and long-term residence respectively. NGOs are often the ones to provide expert advice and housing-related services too, whether mandated by the government or on their own initiative. Also, migrant communities play an important role in assisting TCNs with short-term residence in the Czech Republic, Finland and Portugal, as well as for TCNs with long-term permits in the Czech Republic and Italy.

The last section of this analysis features more concrete good practices helping migrants secure housing, clustered by the type of services provided.



UNDERSTANDING HOUSING GOVERNANCE

Competent levels of government across the EU

The role of local-level governance is crucial for integration, including in terms of housing. Local authorities are indeed the main actors in providing access to housing for all three groups of migrants included in this study: they are the competent authority for housing in the case of six countries (see table below) in terms of BIPs, in seven countries in terms of TCNs with short-term residence, and in eight countries in terms of TCNs with long-term residence. They are also *one* of the competent authorities for the same groups in, respectively, 14, 11 and 11 countries where the competence over housing is shared between different levels of governance.

In five countries, the competent authorities in terms of BIPs are identified at the national level (such as ministries), and the same is true in four countries for TCNs with short-term residence and in five countries for TCNs with long-term residence.

Regional authorities are not identified as the sole competent authority in any of the countries, but sometimes share this competence with other government structures. This is the case in **Belgium**, where the regional governments oversee funding in this area. In **Germany**, at the regional level, the 16 states are responsible for implementing federal policies, adapting them to their specific context, and providing additional support and resources for housing and integration. The regional level is involved in the planning of housing policy in **Greece**. In **Italy**, regional and local governments are responsible for managing housing for migrants. In **Slovakia**, the regional and the local level, are involved, in providing social housing to BTPs.

Country	Which is the competent authority for providing access to housing to TCNs and BIPs ?		
	TCNs with short-term residence	TCNs with long-term residence	BIPs and BTPs
Austria	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Belgium	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Bulgaria	local authorities	local authorities	local authorities
Croatia	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance



Cyprus¹	no specific authority responsible	no specific authority responsible	no specific authority responsible
Czech Republic	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Denmark	local authorities	local authorities	local authorities
Estonia	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Finland	local authorities	local authorities	local authorities
France	national authorities	national authorities	national authorities
Germany	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Greece	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Hungary²	no specific authority responsible	no specific authority responsible	no specific authority responsible
Ireland	no specific authority responsible	local authorities	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Italy	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Latvia	local authorities	local authorities	local authorities
Lithuania³	no specific authority responsible	no specific authority responsible	national authorities
Luxembourg	national authorities	national authorities	national authorities
Malta	national authorities	national authorities	national authorities
Netherlands	local authorities	local authorities	local authorities
Poland	local authorities	local authorities	local authorities
Portugal	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Romania	local authorities	local authorities	authorities on multiple levels of governance

¹ In Cyprus, while there is no specific authority responsible, several organisations receive state funding in order to implement housing initiatives. In the case of unaccompanied minors and vulnerable TCNs, these organisations are also funded to provide adequate accommodation.

² In Hungary, no specific authority is designated in charge of housing for migrant populations; ad-hoc, limited competences are shared across institutions and government levels in terms of BTPs.

³ In Lithuania, no specific authority is designated in charge of housing for TCNs with long- and short-term residence; the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is the competent institutions in terms of BIPs and BTPs.



Slovakia	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Slovenia	no specific authority responsible	national authorities	national authorities
Spain	national authorities	national authorities	authorities on multiple levels of governance
Sweden	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance	authorities on multiple levels of governance

Multilevel governance of housing

Examples of **multi-level governance** include the model implemented in **Austria**, where the provinces and regional governments are competent for housing issues, but local authorities provide and administer social housing. In **Belgium**, all levels of government are involved – federal, regional, and localities within cities (or communes), often with the help of private companies and civil society organisations.

In **Germany**, regular meetings and consultations take place between the federal and state authorities to coordinate efforts, share best practices, and address challenges. State authorities collaborate with local ones to ensure the implementation of housing policies and measures, and provide funding, resources, and guidance to cities and municipalities responsible for the actual provision of accommodation and support services. In addition, different agencies and departments within each level of governance also collaborate to address the housing needs of TCNs, and BTPs/BIPs. For example, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) works closely with state and local authorities, as well as with other federal agencies such as the Federal Employment Agency, to coordinate support services. Finally, authorities at all levels of government work with NGOs and migrant communities to address housing needs. This collaboration often involves joint projects, information exchange, and the coordination of services. For example, the [Federal Ministry of the Interior and Home Affairs \(BMI\) collaborates with the Berlin-based firm Wunderflats and the ProjectTogether organisation](#). Thanks to this initiative, landlords offer private accommodations to Ukrainian BTPs through a digital platform in an efficient manner, minimising bureaucratic hurdles.

In **Portugal**, cooperation is embedded in the overall integration governance. The competent authorities include the central government in the face of several ministries and the High Commission for Migration (ACM, I.P.), who cooperate in turn with regional, local authorities and inter-municipal entities, as well as with private and non-profit organisations.

In other instances, however, there is no authority clearly identified as responsible for migrants' access to housing. This is the case for all TCNs and BIPs in **Cyprus** and



Hungary, for all TCNs in **Lithuania**, and for TCNs with short-term residence in **Ireland** and **Slovenia**.

In most cases, different levels of government cooperate to provide access to housing for BIPs. In **Italy**, the reception system of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection is based on the cooperation of different levels of government. The Integration and Reception System (SAI) is funded mainly by the interior ministry, but is implemented by local municipalities and coordinated at the central level by the Italian Association of Municipalities (ANCI). In [the context of the reception of BTPs fleeing the war against Ukraine](#), coordination among the different levels of government took place: the Civil Protection Department, regions, autonomous provinces, prefectures, local authorities, and the private sector have all been involved in the provision of first reception services. Additionally, regional coordination structures have been created to properly manage reception services and ensure comprehensive assistance is delivered to all new arrivals.

Cooperation may include various actors on the local level, too. In **France**, the city of Strasbourg is committed to a [‘hospitable city’ approach \[EWSI good practice in French\]](#) to provide a dignified welcome for vulnerable people with a migration background. Reception depends on collective responses, coordinated by the City of Strasbourg. These responses adapted to people and building pathways while taking into account the skills and fields of action of each actor. More than 150 associations, charities, academic actors, citizen organisations and institutional bodies have been working together since 2018.

Finally, cooperation also takes place across municipalities in different EU states. In **Croatia**, the project [Improving Social Housing Model in the City of Zagreb](#), for example, aims to ensure the exchange of experiences between the City of Ljubljana (**Slovenia**)’s Public Housing Fund, and the City of Zagreb. The project is interested in transferring good practices of Ljubljana to tackle problems related to the housing of marginalised groups.

Support from the central government

The central government supports local and regional authorities’ housing initiatives for BIPs in 17 countries and for other TCNs with short- and long-term residence in nine and ten countries, respectively.

The central level supports local initiatives mostly through financing. The funding schemes are often part of existing integration frameworks – for example, the central government in **Sweden** provides support during the first two years of arrival in a municipality. As of the third year, it is for the municipality to finance a housing solution. This measure gives municipalities a strong incentive to integrate migrants into the labour market, so that they become independent.



In **Croatia**, the cities of Karlovac and Sisak accommodated dozens of BIPs arriving via a resettlement scheme supported by the central government via the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care and [the Regional Housing Programme](#). The programme was launched in 2012 by the governments of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia in 2012 with the objective of providing durable housing solutions to vulnerable BIPs, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, either in their places of origin or of displacement. The RHP came to a successful conclusion in 2023, having provided secure homes to 382 families or 934 people in Croatia. The programme was financed and supported internationally, including by the EU.

In the **Czech Republic**, the interior ministry announces calls for non-investment subsidies for municipalities to cover expenses associated with the stay of BIPs in social services facilities, as well as for developing municipal accommodation infrastructure. Funds are also available via a trickle-down system in **Belgium**, and the regional governments receive some financing from the federal level, too.

In **Greece**, eleven [Migrant Integration Centers \(MICs\)](#) in ten municipalities connect TCNs and BIPs/BTPs with social service programs, including on housing, offered by the group. The MICs are run by the local authorities under the oversight of the Department of Social Integration of the Greek Ministry of Immigration and Asylum. The work of the MICs is embedded also in [the 2021 integration strategy](#) of the country.

In **Ireland**, the central government relies on local authorities to find accommodation solutions for BIPs. This is often the case in former holiday villages, and in units with bedrooms with multiple beds.

Some governmental support is strictly related to BTPs. In **Romania**, [the 50/20 Programme](#) is a national scheme for rent and food subsidies available to both public authorities and natural persons who provide accommodation and meals to BTPs across the country.

In **Spain**, funding supporting housing initiatives is provided by the government, with additional support for addressing the needs of BTPs and BIPs.

The **Slovenian** Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants has set up two integration houses (*integracijska hiša*) for recognised BIPs with no financial means. To stay in those houses, BIPs need to sign a contract. All costs are covered by the state and beneficiaries can remain there for a year, with the possibility to extend with another six months. The first integration house is located in the capital Ljubljana and offers 15 places for families and single women. The second house is in Maribor – it has the capacity to host 35 people and is intended to host single men.



Initiatives at the local level and in rural areas

Finally, local authorities implement their own housing solutions in 23 countries in relation to BIPs. For TCNs with short- and long-term residence, the number of countries drops to, respectively, 14 and 13.

A notable example is the project [Fundão: an embracing land](#) of the Fundão Municipality in **Portugal**. Through its integration centre, the municipality carries out integration activities for migrants of at least 23 nationalities. In terms of housing, the municipal program reuses and reconstructs old buildings to provide decent and affordable accommodations to asylum seekers, BIPs and TCNs, including seasonal workers. The project benefits from Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) funding.

In **Hungary**, where no specific authority is directly responsible for the housing of migrants, local authorities still started initiatives to accommodate BTPs, and some local temporary shelters are now transformed into more permanent solutions.

As good practices tend to be focused on the local level for tangible results, a number of the projects featured earlier in this analysis rely on partnerships with local municipalities.

However, finding good practices in housing in rural areas is still more challenging. First of all, it is important to address bureaucratic barriers to making such initiatives happen. For example, in the **Czech Republic**, the small and remote [town of Vejprty](#) has suffered a population decline in the last twenty years. In 2023, it renovated several flats with state funds and provided them to families of displaced people from Ukraine. Vejprty was not able to obtain governmental funds to support efforts since financing is not available to municipalities providing accommodation to persons without a permanent residence, such as BTPs, under the current rules.

In **France**, in addition, rural areas host just 3.4% of the refugee population in the country. A 2022 report on *L'intégration des réfugiés dans les territoires ruraux* ['Refugee integration in rural areas'] explained the issues involved in integrating in rural areas, such as migrant employment. The report also provides advice on how to secure private housing for refugee tenants.

Similarly, in **Finland**, [the Forssa Municipality's Integration Program for 2021- 2024 \(available only in Finnish\)](#) discusses its 'good relations framework' and centres on community mediation as key to housing policy. Community mediation is used to solve conflicts occurring among neighbours and in the community. It has proved successful and increased migrants' attraction to the area. Connecting community mediation to housing policy and housing counselling might provide practices for long-term housing in the area, the strategy notes.



Good practices in rural areas

Good practices in Germany

[Wohnen für Hilfe](#) (or 'Housing for Help') is a programme that connects elderly homeowners with migrants in need of accommodation in some rural areas. The migrants provide help around the house, such as gardening, cleaning, or companionship, in return for affordable housing.

Good practice in Italy

[House Ponte](#) is a project helping migrants access temporary accommodation in the small Municipality of Novaretto-Caprie, Susa Valley, Turin. The project relies on private funding but is promoted by the local authorities with the support of Orso Cooperative. The beneficiaries are usually migrants who have recently left initial reception facilities, or migrants who recently arrived in the territory.

GOOD PRACTICES IN MIGRANT HOUSING: MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

The practices below are clustered by the type of service they provide, although successful initiatives tend to be versatile and often cover more than one issue at a time.

Good practices directly providing accommodation or rental support

Good practices in Austria

The [In-Haus \(Start-Unterkünfte\)](#) rental project is run by the organisation **Volkshilfe Oberösterreich** in the Upper Austria province. All non-nationals (TCNs, BIPs/BTPs, and EU citizens alike) can rent beds and rooms (fixed at €250 and €360, respectively) or flats (at prices based on their size), with amenities included in the rent. The minimum period for renting is three months, while the maximum – two and a half years.

The [Startwohnungen für Migrant*innen](#) (or *Stater Flats for Migrants*) project is run by Caritas Vienna and the **Niederösterreich Ost** organisation. The starter flats are available for all non-nationals (TCNs, BIPs/BTPs, and



EU citizens alike) in Vienna, and regular counselling in different areas of integration (housing, education, employment, etc.) is included. The project offers housing for a period of up to three years.

Good practice in Belgium

The publicly funded non-profit organisation [CIRE](#) runs **Collective and Solidarity Savings Groups** and assists low-income families to take part in collective acquisition initiatives. The groups use deposit funds through a rental guarantee fund for TCNs and BIPs in case migrants cannot access public funds or social housing. The project has been running since 1994.

Good practice in Germany

The state of [Baden-Württemberg in Germany announced a policy measure to support the construction of housing for BIPs and asylum seekers](#). The measure includes the investment of €80 million to create up to 1 500 new affordable housing units in the state. The funding will be used to construct new housing as well as to renovate and convert existing properties. The initiative is part of the state's broader efforts to address the housing needs of BIPs and promote their integration into society.

Good practice in Denmark

In 2018, [the Frederiksberg Municipality started building 41 small flats](#) offering housing to 82 students and young BIPs. There, they share kitchens, bathrooms and living rooms, while being assigned a small private bedroom each. The rent is subsidised with costs also kept as low as possible to make it affordable for the target groups. The project is a collaboration of the Frederiksberg Forenede Boligselskaber (FFB), the Friendly Housing Foundation and Frederiksberg Municipality. The project's concept won in 2017 the Danish Design Award for its innovative concept for refugee integration.

Good practice in Ireland

[A Place to Call Home](#) is a housing programme run by the **Irish Refugee Council (IRC)** which provides accommodation and direct housing support. It benefits recognised BIPs who need to move out of the country's Direct



Provision (reception centres) after the end of their status determination procedure. The project states that BIPs often lack financial resources and knowledge of the Irish rental market, are unable to provide acceptable references to landlords, and face discrimination. A Place to Call Home thus helps the 'transition from Direct Provision to life in the community' by offering accommodation in 20 properties donated to the programme by religious congregations, civil society and members of the public. These homes are sub-leased to individuals and families, who also receive integration supports from the IRC in the form of English language training, and education and employment consultations. Since the start of the programme in 2018 until the end of 2022, over 80 people have been directly accommodated thanks to it, and over 1 000 have benefitted by its auxiliary support measures.

Good practice in Italy

[Fondazione Casa Amica](#) manages over 250 accommodations in the Bergamo area and offers homes to over 1 000 people, including migrants. The foundation promotes research and consults in the area of social housing, forms partnerships for public and private housing initiatives, carried out housing interventions in favour of rent-controlled in collaboration with public and private bodies, experiments with new housing models and manages its own accommodations, including for migrants.

Good practice in Malta

Collaborative housing projects, or public-private partnerships (PPPs), allow the government, in collaboration with NGOs and private sector partners, to develop housing projects that cater to medium- to long-term housing solutions. Social housing is thus designed in consultation with the community and provides affordable housing options to those in need, including migrants.

Good practice in Poland

BIPs in Lublin who experience issues with integration, are in financial need and intend to settle in the city, can benefit from the [Sheltered Housing for Foreigners \[EWSI good practice\]](#). The programme is run by the City Hall of Lublin and the Municipal Family Support Centre in Lublin. Sheltered housing is a form of social assistance aimed at preparing BIPs for an



independent future and integration with the local community. Currently, four sheltered apartments function in Lublin. BIPs living there have the right to support with Polish language learning, handling administrative matters, legal matters, health care and employment. The tenants are also supported by a social worker working to address their individual needs. The total period of stay in the sheltered flat should not exceed 24 months.

Good practices using mediation to help secure housing

Good practice in Belgium

The organisation [Convivial](#) creates networks of supportive landlords sympathetic to the issue of BIPs and provides support in finding accommodation, from the first contact with the landowner until moving in. The organisation also helps tackle administrative matters and acts as an intermediary in relation to the property owner during the first two years of the lease. Convivial also offers loans for rental guarantees or the first month's rent when other funds are not available to BIPs. In addition to these main services, the organisation also provides the most vulnerable and excluded BIPs – including those facing homelessness – with transit housing for a period of 12 to 18 months.

Good practice in Estonia

The [Estonian Social Insurance Board assists in finding \(long-term\) accommodation for BTPs from Ukraine](#). The services include a real estate portal with options for BTPs, as well as assistance by the regional advisers from the Social Insurance Board in terms of finding suitable accommodation.

Good practice in France

The programme [Accompagnement global et individualisé des réfugiés \(AGIR\)](#) offers individualised support to BIPs in finding both employment and housing. Rental mediation initiatives such as [SOLIBAIL](#) allow private owners to place their property for rent at a lower rate to an association that may host refugees there. The owners who do this will benefit, in addition to the tax advantages offered by the measures of the National Housing Agency



(ANAH), from a one-off incentive payment of €1 000. The system also guarantees the rental payments as well as a refurbishment at the end of the lease which cannot exceed 18 months.

Good practice in Greece

The [HELIOS project \[EWSI good practice\]](#), run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), helps both BIPs and BTPs to find accommodation in apartments rented in their own name, including by providing contributions to rental and move-in costs, and through networking with apartment owners. Between 16 July 2019 and 30 November 2023, a total of 45 221 beneficiaries enrolled in the HELIOS project and 23 377 received rental subsidies upon finding independent housing. The HELIOS project is currently funded by the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum and has previously benefitted from the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

Good practice in Italy

The company [Il Mondo In Casa Mia](#) acts as tenant in respect to the owner of the accommodation, and as grantor tenants to which the company then leases. The contractual charges are borne by the company, and the rental and sub-lease contracts have a duration of four years, renewable for four more if termination is not requested by one of the other parties. Over the second four years, the owner can request the return of the accommodation with a six-months' notice at any time, and the company will offer the tenant another accommodation within 30 days. *Il Mondo In Casa Mia* manages about 90 apartments defined as 'marginal housing' – or modest housing that Italian families do not want.

Good practices supporting the transition to longer-term housing

Often, housing solutions may not neatly fit into the 'initial' or 'longer-term' category, since services try to address various needs on the ground. NGOs in particular may also be able to fill in the gaps towards transitioning to longer-term solutions in support of and in cooperation with the state.



Good practice in Belgium

The organisation [Singa](#), which operates on private and public funds, facilitates a flat sharing scheme between TCNs and BIPs, and local residents. The programme [Comme a La Maison \(CALM\)](#) links house shares in Brussels with refugees, welcoming them in shared homes. This is meant to create rich experiences, and promote diversity. Both the beneficiaries and the local hosts should be able to communicate in English or French. The programme is open to BIPs aged 18 and above, and hosts should be able to offer a room for at least a year. The organisation offers an ‘admin buddy’ to help tackle administrative matters. Since 2017, 100 cohabitations have been set up, with 92% of beneficiaries later securing sustainable housing.

Good practice in Czechia

The [Halfway House project](#), operated by the organisation Aid to Refugees, provides temporary accommodation for up to 12 months to young foreigners aged 18-26 years without a family background. Beyond housing, the project offers training in financial literacy, time management, communication with the authorities, job searching, and local customs, as well as social and legal counselling and help with finding suitable accommodation afterwards. The project has three houses – two are operated in Prague the capacity to accommodate ten people, and one is located in Brno, with placements available for sic people.

Good practice in Germany

The German [Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community](#), the non-profit organisation [Unterkunft](#) and [Airbnb](#) teamed up in a campaign to provide temporary housing solutions for BTPs arriving from Ukraine. The initiative helped secure housing for about 60 000 people who were connected with families and individuals willing to offer accommodation across Germany. Interested housing providers registered on the websites www.unterkunft-ukraine.de or airbnb.org and underwent an authentication process to ensure safety for all parties involved.

Currently, *Unterkunft* is working on a research project with the *Deutschen Zentrums für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM)* to try to understand:

- the experiences of hosts and how the scheme could be transferred to other groups in need outside of BTPs;



- what prevents a larger number of private individuals from systematically providing private accommodation;
- how the problem of accommodation and integration can be reduced.

Good practice in Hungary

The [Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta](#) runs a 12-month-long integration program for BIPs, which can be extended for an additional six months in exceptional cases. The model was set up in 2018 and makes use of a network of private accommodations rented out by the NGO from the private housing market. The programme is a combination of housing provision and integration services including language, cultural and labour market orientation. So far, more than 2 000 people have participated in it, including people displaced from Venezuela, persecuted Christians from Pakistan, Afghan evacuees who arrived after the 2020 Taliban takeover, and, most recently, Ukrainian BTPs. The order also provides emergency accommodation to BIPs and BTPs.

Good practice in Latvia

The organisation [Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem \(GPB\)](#), or ‘I Want to Help Refugees’, together with the Julia Taft Fund, implemented a project meant to support BIPs with covering their rent and utility payments for a maximum of six months. During this period, BIP families are expected to engage in integration activities such as language classes, look for employment, and take steps to increase their self-reliance. Mentors assist the BIPs throughout the process. The project ran from August 2022 to May 2023, with a budget of \$24 000.

GPB also [created a website with housing offers for BIPs and BTPs in Latvia](#), which also offers information on the available support, etc. Available in Latvian, Ukrainian and Russian, the website is meant to add versions in other languages commonly spoken by BIPs, such as Farsi.

Good practice in Poland

The [Refugees Welcome Poland](#) project of the Ocalenie Foundation has been active since 2015 to help match Warsaw residents who want to rent a room in their home with BIPs in need of housing assistance. Refugees are



provided with professional support free of charge, including a Polish language course, support from cultural mentors, legal and psychological assistance and career counselling. Additionally, they can obtain food vouchers and a monthly public transport pass. They can also benefit from the support of 'buddies', or volunteers who help with everyday problems and offer friendship. Host families, in turn, receive ongoing support, including through workshops and group supervision. The programme is funded through the income from the annual Refugees Welcome charity art auctions and individual donations.

Good practices in Portugal

The database CASAFARI aimed at real estate market professionals [launched the Housing for Refugees platform](#), the first portal to bring in one housing for BTPs in Portugal. It listed over 1 100 accommodation options.

The [Plataforma de Apoio à Habitação project](#) by Refugees Welcome Portugal also helps match BIPs and homeowners for temporary housing solutions. Homeowners need to be able to offer a room for a minimum of three months, and the house share will define the rules and model of coexistence, including whether the BIPs would have to participate in rent payments or not. A mentor is available to assist the beneficiaries in their overall integration too. While the matching process may take time, the programme notes it would always try to find alternative housing solutions for those in urgent need.

The project [Residências Refúgio](#) offers Social Inclusion Cultural Residences in Lisbon to BIPs and asylum seekers in need. The aim is to support the inclusion of people through mediation, and cultural and reflective activities while offering shelter. The project was born in 2020 from the merger of the mission of *Largo Residências*, *Fórum Refúgio* and *Fundação Aga Khan*. It has also been supported by the City of Lisbon. The social residences are open to BIPs who, at the end of their stay with the country's reception centres, are not able to secure housing for themselves. As part of the year-long Social Inclusion Cultural Residences, beneficiaries are supposed to complete a project – such as an artistic one – seen as 'their personal project towards autonomy'.

Good practice in Romania

A one-stop-shop for integration service is provided to BTPs in Romania by



The [Centre for Humanitarian and Social Assistance Nicolina in Iasi \[EWSI good practice\]](#). The centre opened in March 2022 thanks to the partnership between the Municipality of Iasi and the Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations for Social Services (FONSS). The services include accommodation (with capacity of 200 people), as well as social and psychological support, daycare, social activities, Romanian language courses for adults and children, and more. The centre has 50 social workers, psychologists, nurses and community workers, available on day and night shifts. Apart from BTPs, the centre has provided care to over 1 300 people from the host community, too.

Good practice in Sweden

The transition accommodation project *Vintertullen* started in 2018 with the goal of enabling newly arrived BIPs to become self-sufficient through employment and move out of city accommodation facilities into private housing within two years. The project has been successful thanks to its intense collaboration with BIPs, with social workers even moving their offices into the refugee accommodation centre, helping to build rapport with the beneficiaries. See more information in Swedish about [Vintertullen](#). The project has been [positively evaluated by the Stockholm city council committee for Södermalm \(in Swedish\)](#).

Good practices in longer-term housing support for vulnerable groups

Good practices in Belgium

The organisation [Mentor Jeunes](#) aims to bring unaccompanied minors (UAMs), previously hosted in reception centres, into host families, and to accompany them throughout the reception process. The programme works as a middle-to-long-term solution for housing needs. The Hospitable Families project is specifically aimed at the youngest, most vulnerable UAMs. The project was developed in partnership with the state refugee agency Fedasil and Youth Aid. Each beneficiary child is matched with a host family in an individualised manner, based on their needs and profiles. The *Mentor Jeunes* team supports the children and the host families in the initial pre-reception period, as well as throughout their cohabitation. The organisation also provides psychosocial, academic, legal and administrative support, which only stops when the children come of age.



Good practices in Cyprus

The [Semi-Independent Living Program](#) aims at the smooth transition of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) aged 16 and above to adulthood in Cyprus. Most of the UAMs arriving in Cyprus are aged 16-17, and social support ends for them at 18. The programme provides semi-independent housing solutions and access to social services at both local and national levels. Outside of catering to children's basic needs, the programme is meant to help them acquire the skills and experience needed to transition to independence and adulthood. The programme is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the cooperation and coordination of the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. Cooperation with the local authorities is crucial to ensure the identification and use of suitable housing units, as well as to ensure access to social services for the UAM, including schooling and medical care.

Good practices in Germany

Specialised support for LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants is available through projects like [Queer Refugees Germany](#), which provides advice to queer migrants in all sorts of matters, including housing, through a network of contact points across the country.

In addition, housing support is available in Germany for people with disabilities, including TCNs, BIPs, and BTPs, through various social welfare programs and accessible housing initiatives, and [a new online portal](#) attempts to list in one place the accommodation options for migrants with disabilities.

Good practices in Italy

In Italy, the projects [Supreme and PIU Supreme](#), funded by the Asylum, Integration and Migration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) over the 2014-2020 financial period, protected seasonal agriculture workers from labour exploitation, including by providing safe accommodation. In May 2022, the Italian authorities granted 200 million from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan to the regions where accommodation for seasonal workers was inadequate. The funds will help develop adequate housing solutions of seasonal migrant workers – see more details on [protecting seasonal workers in Italy](#) is available on EWSI).



In 2023, [eight municipalities in Italy also developed their local plans](#) to combat labour exploitation in agriculture. [Trade unions in Italy have also supported seasonal workers](#) in the fight against ‘gangmastering’.

Good practice in Spain

Some other projects address the housing needs of vulnerable groups but rather from an initial-reception perspective. An example is the [Ödos Programme: Protecting Vulnerable Women with Minors \[EWSI good practice\]](#). The programme is designed to help migrant women with young children arriving by boat to Spain from African countries. The programme runs a reception centre for 50 women and children in Montilla, Córdoba, aiming to provide them with care for at least three months. It also offers longer-term support to those who wish to remain in Spain, while acknowledging that most women tend to move on to other European countries (mainly France).

Good practices in the provision of other housing services and advice

Good practice in Austria

[Wohndrehscheibe \(or ‘Residential Hub’\)](#) is a project run by the *Volkshilfe Wien* organisation to provide advice, information and support for financially struggling people in Vienna. Both nationals and TCNs can benefit from services assisting them in dealing with the private housing market. These includes information on financial support and housing offers. The project is financially supported by the City of Vienna.

Good practice in Belgium

Caritas International runs the initiative [Housing Café](#) in the cities of Brussels, Liège, Antwerp and Ghent. Through them, integration coaches and volunteers accompany TCNs in their accommodation search, from the first contact with the landlord to moving in. The programme also offers support in navigating administrative matters such as registering one’s address with the municipal administration or registering with the public welfare centres). Vulnerable BIPs, in addition, can benefit from additional support after moving in. [Caritas](#) also offers transit accommodation to the most vulnerable.



Good practices in Italy

The [*Vicini di Casa Association*](#) was founded in Udine in 1994 to help both Italian and foreign citizens in need to access housing. It provides real estate search services, rental assistance, and also contributes to the housing supply through residential building interventions.

CONCLUSION

Reported discrimination in housing, the dwindling of affordable accommodation options, and the lack of sufficient public housing stock are among the biggest setbacks to securing safe and secure housing for migrants across the EU. Access to mainstream housing support is not always available to migrants, although targeted measures partially alleviate the situation. Measures in housing governance however vary greatly not only among the different EU countries, but often across localities hosting migrants within the same country. All these issues can stand in the way of securing medium- and long-term housing options.

The majority of good practices successfully addressing the housing needs of TCNs and BIPs/BTPs focus on the provision of direct housing solutions or mediation between the migrants and the private market. The success of these and other initiatives, including ones centering on vulnerable groups of migrants, often relies on the cooperation between state, private and civil society actors. Notably, in addition to catering to the immediate housing needs of migrants, successful initiatives invest in building the beneficiaries' skills towards self-reliance. Thus, many of the good practices go beyond housing issues and employ a holistic approach to fostering integration. More initiatives should be encouraged on the rural level, where such an all-encompassing approach to integration could create incentives for migrants to leave overcrowded urban centres, and for the local community to invest in inclusion.

