

Recognised refugees should get five-year renewable residence permits

- Harmonising standards for the recognition of refugees
- Five-year residence permit for both refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary
- MEPs against compulsory review of the refugee status in case of changes in the country of origin
- Protection can be withdrawn if the beneficiary is involved in serious crimes

Residence permits for all beneficiaries of international protection in the EU should be valid for five years and be renewable for additional five-year periods.

Civil Liberties Committee MEPs backed on Thursday a new “Qualification” regulation on the recognition of people in need of protection and for the rights granted to them. By turning the previous directive into a regulation, which is directly applicable by member states, criteria and standards for the recognition of a refugee status become more harmonised. The legislation was passed by 40 votes in favour to 13 against and with 4 abstentions.

The aim of the regulation is to ensure that asylum seekers face equal treatment and get the same form of protection regardless of the member state in which they file their request. This should help reduce ‘asylum-shopping’. MEPs also want to improve integration in the societies hosting refugees.

MEPs aim to minimize the distinction in terms of rights between refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (people at real risk of serious harm if they return to their home country, but who do not qualify for refugee status). Subsidiary protection was set up as a response to a short-term need, but this has not proved to be the case.

When assessing an asylum claim, member states will have to rely on the information from the EU Agency for Asylum on the situation in the country of origin and should also verify possible internal protection alternatives. If there is no longer a need for protection, authorities can withdraw it. They can also do so if the beneficiary is involved in terrorism or other serious

crimes. But MEPs deleted the compulsory review of the refugee status, following a “significant change in the country of origin” and left it as an option for national authorities.

Unaccompanied minors

MEPs included provisions to make sure that unaccompanied children receive adequate protection, like any other children in the country they are located. They should have a guardian appointed, if possible the same one since their arrival to the EU, and be placed with relatives, foster families or in open specialised centres.

Quick facts

The new Qualification Regulation is part of a wider review of the Common European Asylum System put forward last year by the European Commission. The reform of the Dublin Regulation, which determines the member state responsible to deal with an asylum application, is the centerpiece of the system’s revamp.

The recast of the Reception Conditions Directive, a new Asylum Procedures Regulation, a new EU Framework for Resettlement, the reinforcement of the Eurodac system and the establishment of a truly EU Asylum Agency are the other legislative files in which Parliament is currently working. Some of those are already being negotiated with the Council.

" New harmonised rules on international protection offer new hope for people in need in the EU and decrease the administrative burden for the member states. Equal status for refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries in terms of rights, guarantees and the length of the residence permits of five years offers a real chance to integrate. "

Tanja Fajon (S&D, SL)

Further information

[Interview with EP rapporteur Tanja Fajon \(S&D, SL\)](#)

[Civil Liberties Committee web page](#)

[Procedure](#)

[EP Research Service: Reform of the Qualification Directive \(briefing\)](#)

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