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## Overview of refugee's access to housing in Europe

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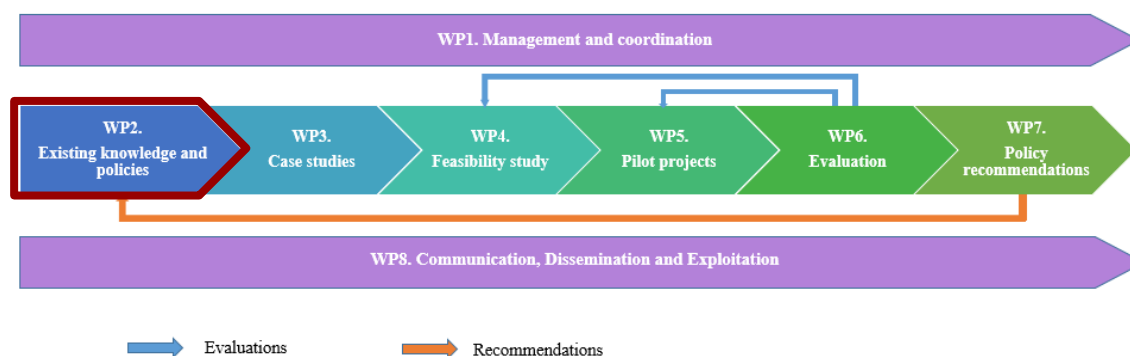
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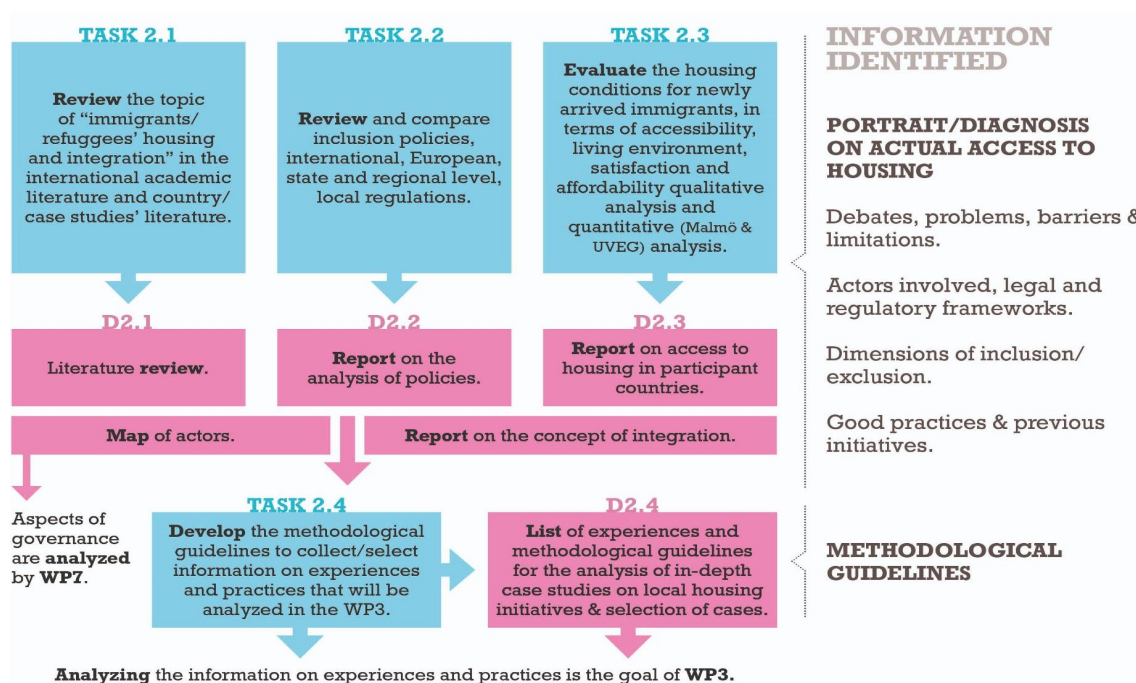
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# Introductions and methodological notes

## CONJOINED



WP2.3 consists on the qualitative analysis of the housing conditions for refugees and migrants in terms of accessibility, living environment, satisfaction and affordability in France, Sweden, Spain and Italy. It corresponds to the tasks 2.3.a., 2.3.b. and 2.3.b. of the proposal. The quantitative analysis of the Swedish and Spanish case (with special focus on Valencian Community), which corresponds to the task 2.3.c will be presented in a separate deliverable with the name of WP2.3.c. Both deliverables aimed to conform a solid report on the access to housing for refugees and migrants in participant countries.

Thus, the foundational objective of the present deliverable was to offer a qualitative-based diagnosis regarding the social and political milieu where access to housing is variably granted or hindered, as well as the related refugee’s needs and requests, their household’s compositions, and usual conditions of available dwellings. Furthermore, a series of challenges and recommendations are asked as a set practice-oriented insights for decision and policymakers.

The ultimate goals of the report are to gather information, with which to conform a diagnosis, and to orient and increase the efficacy of policies, whether specifically focused or not, that enhance and enable integration of refugees through the major proxy and asset of housing, according to relevant stakeholders on the ground.

In order to ensure the structural representativeness and significance of the qualitative data to be collected, the stakeholders' insights and perspectives, the major objectives of data collection are the following:

- 1) Third sector organizations related to refugees.
- 2) Other third sector organizations and immigrants associations (to collect information on refugees integrated in those associations).
- 3) City Councils municipal technicians (social educators, psychologists, social workers, local development actors).
- 4) Urban planners, urban developers.

The qualitative techniques initially posed in order to support this report consist on:

**Semi-structured individual interviews:** This technique may provide more freedom to the interviewees and more flexibility in the development of the data collection process. It also allows us to go more in-depth in topics that cause dissent. We propose between 4 and 6 interviews to key informants):

**Focus groups:** This technique allows to gather general and complex information on access to housing and to identify consensus and dissent on the main issues related to it. As there are many informants in each focus group it will be easier to identify the main shared obstacles and problems faced in the access to housing, to enlarge the perspectives and point of views, to pinpoint good practices, local housing initiatives, and case studies. We propose 4 focus groups.

Despite this initial approach, contingencies such as the availability and workload of key stakeholders, as well as the pandemic conjuncture in the different countries (sometimes feedbacking with the actual overload of stakeholders), have led to an unexpected diversity of methodological scopes. Nevertheless, whether there is a divergent intensity of qualitative, bibliographical and quantitative foundation amongst the different country reports, most of the initial research questions have been satisfactorily answered<sup>1</sup>. Hence, many different insights on institutions, policies, politics, social milieux, refugee's range of itineraries, as well as the subsequent challenges and recommendations have been captured to enhance the MERGING project.

All in all, this report results from the country reports analysing the cases of France, Italy, Spain and Sweden, with a sufficient range for each team to suitably address their national and local realities. Ultimately, a common methodology has been put in place to ensure comparability in data collection and diagnosis.

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of Sweden and Spain, some quantitative insights coming from the preparation of the WP2.3.b. report have been extracted in order to contribute with some additional contextualisation. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the main agreed approach for this very report is qualitative.

## FRANCE

This work is the country research report prepared within Work Package 2, focused on housing solutions for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection status in France, delivered under the H2020 project MERGING—Integration for Migrants. The main objectives of this report are to:

- Map the actions, scope, actors and resources involved in the access to housing for refugees
- Portrait refugees' needs and households
- Provide recommendations to associative, private and public stakeholders

Our report describes the actions engaged to favor refugees' access to housing in two French metropolises: Lyon and Rennes. Our study highlighted the existence of three different types of actions: actions impulsed by the gouvernement (top-down), actions developed by local actors and implemented at the national level (down-up) and actions developed by local actors and implemented at the local level (horizontal). We point the limits of the current system, segregating people based on their perceived desirability and autonomy as well as on their age and gender.

Our report describes the multilevel governance existing regarding refugees' access to housing in Lyon and Rennes. Based on Czischke (2018) multilevel governance model, we map stakeholders based on three dimensions (civil society, public authorities and markets) at both the local, regional and national levels. Six types of actors are identified: professional actors mandated by the government, professional actors operating without official mandate, confessional associations, civil initiatives, professional activists, and other types of actors.

Interestingly, our report points the heterogeneity of actions and situations existing on the French soil regarding refugees' access and participation to housing. While national actors tend to standardize procedures by implementing a single policy to the overall population of refugees, local actors try to adapt to individual needs and situations. The decentralization engaged by the French government a couple of years ago has two major consequences. First, it tends to raise competition among associations to get public subventions and – thus – the influence and decision power of those that received official mandate. Second, it increases the fragmentation of the French reception scheme and the heterogeneity of actors and procedures among territories.

Our reports highlights differences in the way refugees are taking (or not) part in the allocation process locally, and regarding the consideration of their needs.

## SWEDEN

In this report we address the issue of refugees' access to housing in Sweden with a particular focus on the Västra Götaland Region and the city of Gothenburg. We have implemented the overall methodology of the MERGING project with some necessary adaptations due to the global pandemic of Covid-19. We had to omit conducting focus groups since the essence of this research methodology lays in the group dynamics and interactions of the people during the discussions. In spring 2021 when the data collection period for this report was planned the global pandemic did not allow meeting in person, let alone having a group of 5-7 in a room. Our assessment was that we cannot replicate the necessary group dynamic of focus groups methodology through online meetings. On the contrary we assessed that we can conduct the part of the research which consisted of semi-structured interviews online. We conducted 9 semi-structured interviews (see annex for details) with the key stakeholders in the policy area of refugee housing. Administrative statistical information is used to outline the portrait of refugees. We also reviewed secondary literature to complement our data.

In MERGING due to limited time and resources we had to focus our study in relation to a specific part of immigrant population. We decided to analyze the specific policies and practices targeting refugees and beneficiaries of international protection, including subsidiary protection and protection based on humanitarian grounds. For the case of Sweden, the housing situation during the period of seeking asylum is important in the housing trajectory after the decision on asylum. Therefore, in many parts of this report we refer to housing for asylum seekers although this is not our target group.

The structure of the report is as follows. We begin with a section on the social environment and the ecosystems surrounding housing policies for refugees. We continue with a section on the portrait of refugees. Last, we close with a section on the portrait of policies regarding housing for refugees.

## SPAIN

This report addresses the stakeholders' roles and perspectives on refugees' and migrants' current situation in relation to their access to housing and other social rights in Spain, particularly focusing on the Valencian Autonomous Region and the city of Valencia. Thanks to the solid qualitative fieldwork, many and diverse insights on diagnosis and prognosis have been collected and duly classified, both discursively and practically oriented, with particular contrasts between regulation and implementation, as well as between policies and needs.

Regarding the qualitative fieldwork, an expansive approach has been followed, in which we have included a high representation of stakeholders concerned with social rights, social inclusion, integration, and access to housing for refugees and migrants. This decision has been made because most of them direct their actions jointly to migrants, refugees (asylum seekers and/or beneficiaries of international protection) and other vulnerable groups. Concerning the data collection,<sup>5</sup> focus groups, 9 semi-structured interviews have been conducted, with a total of 30 participants. All of those have been implemented online, both in line of the Covid-19 pandemic contingencies as well as to facilitate the contact with usually extremely busy stakeholders, most of which are based in various locations spread all over the region or even the country. Ultimately, a significant structural representativeness of the different dimensions of stakeholders has been reached.

Considering those specific profiles and along with the semi-structured character of the qualitative approach, openness to additional insights and adaptation to each stakeholder's or dimension of stakeholder's work, information and worries have been considered in the interviewing and moderation of groups.

The resulting transcripts, selective transcripts and or notes, have been analysed through the structure of the report in order to extract the various insights on the different topics, combined with additional desktop research in order to enrich and complement those materials.

## ITALY

Affordable housing is a critical matter in the European Union (European Commission, 2018), especially for vulnerable social categories such as migrants (FEANTSA, 2020). Moreover, the 2015 “refugee crisis” made the housing problem increasingly evident for asylum seekers and refugees in many European cities (Paidakaki, 2021), and Italy is no exception. Despite the relevance of this issue, the literature on the subject is still scant and fragmented. Therefore, MERGING project will hopefully contribute to a seemingly emerging research field, which is yet to be developed.

Since housing solutions for asylum seekers and refugees are highly context-dependent, this report will address the policies and practices related to access to housing for refugees and holders of international protection by addressing the case of Italy, with a particular focus on the Emilia Romagna Region and the city of Bologna.

The results we hereby present have been extracted by combining extensive deskwork on secondary literature analysis, administrative statistical information, and both institutional and non-institutional reports addressing our topic, with primary data collected from the beginning of MERGING project through spring 2021.

In collecting primary data, we had to implement contingency adaptations of MERGING project’s methodology so to face the challenges that arose due to the reigniting of the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, we concurred that it was not possible to conduct focus groups. Indeed, we were not able to guarantee all the necessary conditions so that group dynamics and interactions could be either safely conducted through in-person meetings or effectively developed in case of resorting to online sessions. As for the data collection through semi-structured interview, instead, we evaluated that it was possible to proceed through online meetings with the selected interviewees.

Accordingly, we were able to conduct:

- 8 semi-structured interviews with academic and professional experts working in the realm of housing and homing, as well as social integration and/or inclusion, migration studies, and urban studies.
- 6 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from the public administration at the regional and municipal levels.
- 6 semi-structured interviews with NGOs and non-profit organizations working in the housing sector, as well as migrants’ reception and inclusion, and the fight against poverty and serious marginalization, at the national, regional, and municipal levels.

These interviews were conducted by following the protocols agreed upon with our partner institutions within the scope of WP2’s. However, after running some test

interview, Bologna's research team decided to re-organize this protocol along six dimensions of analysis: (1) Description of the projects available; (2) Description of beneficiaries; (3) Description of services provided/needed; (4) Participatory approach; (5) Networks; (6) Assessment.

This allowed our team to map existing institutional and non-institutional actors, as well as experiences on the national and regional territory addressing the issue of access to housing for refugees and persons enjoying international protection - both as a specific target and as a residual target of interventions.

Both deskwork and data collection through semi-structured interviews revealed that Italian reception and protection system for asylum seekers fundamentally impacts its beneficiaries' trajectory towards autonomy and, thus, the actions needed and/or yet to be taken to facilitate refugees' and holders of international protection's access to housing. At the same time, it emerged that these trajectories are inevitably affected by the liminal nature of Italy's housing policies, as well as the overall limited accessibility of Italian private market of rents, especially for certain categories of perspective tenants such as young people and families, but also persons with a migratory background.

According to Italy's national legislation, in fact, humanitarian migrants benefit of a temporary public support system, which has been subject to several changes over the last years. Adding to such a constantly changing protection system and the limited time of public support for those foreigners who are recognized as in need of protection, the country's Republican history saw the structuring of a housing system largely characterized by very high number of owners and a very limited state intervention in housing policies (Colombo, 2019). Scholars have shown this system contributed to a condition of ongoing housing precarity and socio-economic instability for beneficiaries of protection, for instance due to the use of temporary facilities and multiple relocations during the reception process, or the absence of long-term integration facilitation (e.g., Dotsey & Lumley-Sapanski, 2021).

Moreover, the evolutions in Italian provisions of housing solutions for asylum seekers and refugees has depended on a multi-layered policy landscape comprising international, national, and regional policies. It has also entailed the complex and challenging intersection of different activities promoted from state, non-state and/or supra-state actors involved in enforcing migration regimes, as well as the policies concerning welfare, housing, and urban planning (e.g., Lomonaco, 2020; Meer et al., 2021).

Overall, state interventions have consisted of either (1) facilitating access to housing for those who cannot access the market with their own means; or (2) supporting the economic autonomy of people. In this sense, the interventions in favor of housing autonomy are located at the intersection of housing policies, social policies, and active labor policies (Stephens et al., 2010). Within such system, non-nationals, included

refugees and asylum seekers, have been sharing great difficulties in accessing housing with the most disadvantaged fragments of the Italian population.

Although asylum seekers are not MERGING project's target, the report will start by providing an overview on the socio-political ecosystem surrounding the current Italian migration policy and its developments, as well as the national policy on asylum. It will proceed by pointing out to national policies concerning the access to housing in Italy. By cross analyzing these two dimensions of national policy, the report will then focus on the case analysis of Bologna Municipality, so as to account for whether specific policies regarding housing for refugees and holders of international protection do exist or not. Moreover, we will present an overview of the projects addressing refugees' access to housing in Emilia Romagna, as well as the challenges they must face and those their very existence contributes to raising.

# 1. Portrait of welcome social milieux and ecosystems in access to housing for refugees

## 1.1 Actions

### FRANCE

In line with the multi-level and fragmentation of the French soil, actions engaged in the country are disparate, both from their nature and scale. Some of them will be boosted by the government and managed by large organisations covering part of the territory, others will be created and implemented by local associations. Some will be covering a wide array of needs (housing, access to the labor market, etc.) while others will focus on a particular task.

#### **Actions engaged at the national level**

At the national level, several actions have been implemented over the last years in order to facilitate refugees' access to housing. Besides the National Reception Scheme, we can mention the creation of the Solibail, a program created by the Ministry of Ecological Transition to mobilize private housing for vulnerable people. In this program, the State acting as a guarantor for house owners willing to rent to refugees (box 1).

*Box 1. Description of the Solibail Program*

Solibail is a program guaranteed by the State and designed for housing owners willing to house a low-income family without running risks. It allows owners to rent their properties to an approved association to house a low-income family, through a rental contract secured by the State. The association pays the rental and guarantees the good maintenance of the housing. Concretely, Solibail provides owners with several advantages:

- The security of paying their rents and charges, with no risk of unpaid rent, no vacancies, and no day-to-day management worries.
- A rent in line with market prices, as the financial conditions proposed for the rental of each property are defined according to the average rent of the geographical sector.
- The maintenance of properties, as the management association ensures that apartments are restored free of charge before being returned to their owners. It also carries out all the maintenance work remaining to tenants during the term of the lease.
- The assurance of getting properties back, as owners can decide at the end of each lease to get their property back. In case an occupant refuses to vacate the property upon return, the managing association will initiate legal proceedings and the related costs will be covered by the scheme. Owners receive daily occupancy allowances at the end of the notice period.
- The optimization of occupation and income: owners will receive a rent until the end of the lease, whether the apartment is occupied or not
- A personalized professional management: the accredited association in charge of each property ensures a follow-up and a personalized management of owners' accommodations, free of charges. It accompanies the housed households on a daily basis and ensures that each home is occupied in a peaceful manner.
- A possible tax deductions and assistance as, depending on the area, owners can benefit from tax deductions of up to 85% of their rental income.

Source: Ministry of the Ecological Transition (2021)

In addition to the Solibail, several programs have been initiated by the central state and monitored by the decentralized state (Prefecture, OFII, DDETS), which mainly target asylum seekers and refugees. These programs are implemented by associations mandated by the government, such as Coallia and Saint Benoît Labre for Rennes Métropole, Forum Réfugiés Cosi for Lyon Metropole, Coallia and Adoma for the Paris area. We can cite the example of Accel'air, a program implemented by Forum Réfugiés Cosi at a regional level. This program is supported by the central state as an experiment, and combines access to housing, training and access to the labor market. It should be replicated at the national level in the coming months. The objective of central state is to

implement a single widow policy for refugees to reduce the number of intermediaries and better control their integration.

### **Actions engaged at the regional/departemental level**

Besides actions engaged at the national level, numerous initiatives are carried out by the metropolises and the municipalities in terms of social housing in general (Sala-Pala, 2002). These actions are the result of both a tradition of proactive intervention by the territory's elected representatives and the political will of mayors (e.g. Nathalie Appéré in Rennes, Grégory Doucet in Lyon, Anne Hidalgo in Paris). The former prefect of the Rhone department, Alain Régnier (current Director of the Diarr), decided to consider refugees as a highly vulnerable population and to ensure them special treatment in the department (cf. part 1.3 stakeholders).

These actions concern refugees who apply for social housing (metropolitan level) as well as families with children and without status (municipal level), since the Mayor of Rennes has decided since her first election that no child would sleep rough in her territory. To implement these actions, the Metropolis relies on the above-mentioned operators and social landlords to house refugees. For families with children and without status, the City Council directly manages a shelter system with accommodation located in various places in the department. It also relies on associations that are poorly financed by the public authorities and which intervene in the field of accommodation for exiles (UTUD, for example). In the same vein, a couple of interesting initiatives have been engaged in 2021 by both the metropolises of Lyon and Rennes. These two metropolises decided to convene some squats hosting migrants and refugees. The agreements signed with the squats of Arloing (Lyon) and the Jardin des Poteries (Rennes) allow metropolises to experiment pilot initiatives: allowing vulnerable people to access to a temporary housing solution while making sure that facilities will be restituted at a certain point without damages.

### **Actions engaged by professional and non-professional associations**

Moreover, many actions are carried out by associations that are more or less specialized in the field of accommodation for exiles and that support these people regardless of their administrative status. These associations are mainly organized by volunteers, although some have one or two employees or people on civic service. They aim at meeting migrants' needs for listening, psychological and administrative support, legal and linguistic assistance, among others. This point will be further developed in part 1.3 Stakeholders.

Several actions have been implemented by large and professional associations, covering several regions. We can notably cite the example of the THRASOS project, created by Habitat & Humanisme, offering refugees willing to join the program an accommodation and a training to get a job in sectors suffering from labor shortages. The objective of THRASOS is to accompany beneficiaries of international protection in a process of

geographic mobility towards training and sustainable employment, in partnership with recognized companies and training organizations. The program targets several sectors of activity in tension, notably construction, food processing and logistics, agriculture and green spaces, catering, cleaning. Several jobs have already offered: roofer, order picker, greenhouse agent, kitchen/bakery clerks, etc.

Besides Habitat & Humanisme, other professional associations, such as Aurore, Caracol, or Singa, have been implementing actions on the French soil to facilitate the integration of refugees. They either temporarily occupy vacant buildings or offer a global accompaniment to foster integration (Aurore), give refugees the possibility to be hosted by French families for a couple of months up to a year (Singa), or even created refugee-national co-housings (Caracol). The same kind of initiatives have been implemented across the country, both in rural areas (such as Tero Loko) or in cities (e.g. Espero France, etc.).

*Box 2. Examples of initiatives supported by associations*

In 2014, Aurore created the "Un toit, un emploi" (One roof, one job) scheme - which integrated the national program EMILE in 2019 (*Engagés pour la Mobilité et l'Insertion par le Logement et l'Emploi* - Engaged for the Resettlement and the Inclusion through Housing and Employment). In 2017, the association also developed two new programs in the country side, such as in the Cantal department: AGIR and AGIR PRO. These two new schemes are dedicated to integration and socio-professional insertion: AGIR (Global Accompaniment for Reinforced Integration) and AGIR PRO (Global Accompaniment for Reinforced Professional Insertion). They offer support in addition to the common law for newcomers to the Cantal department (AGIR 15), and socio-professional support for new Active Solidarity Income (ASI) recipients.

In 2015, Singa created CALM (Comme A La Maison), a program connecting refugees looking for temporary accommodation with citizens who have a room to host them., citizens can host refugees for 3 to 12 months and offer them the framework to fully engage in integration projects and search for a housing solution. Singa put in relation refugees and hosts sharing common interest in order to make the cohabitation as enriching as possible. The matching is based on several criteria: proposed/requested location of the host and accessibility by public transport, professional activity and interests, etc. Singa offers the hosts a special training before the beginning of the cohabitation in order to sensitise families to cultural differences, etc. Since 2017, 570 refugees have been hosted one of the 2,500 hosting families across France.

Created in 2018, Caracol takes over the management of vacant spaces to promote and intercultural shared housing, infill housing. These are roommates where refugees and French where refugees and French people of different ages, origins of different ages, origins, and backgrounds. The Caracol's shared flats offer a stable living environment, over a long period of time, known in advance, within a collective organized around the principles of equality between each resident and autonomy in the daily management of the place. The residents are chosen for their desire to pursue an experience of experience of cohabitation, their adhesion to the values of the project

Sources: Aurore (2021), Singa (2021), Caracol (2021)

Besides national associations, several local ones are also in accommodation issues. These associations can be confessional or not, young or old. They are not mandated by the government (but collaborate with local authorities) and tend to rely highly on volunteers.

In the city of Rennes, we can mention UTUD, which offers accommodation to people in houses made available either by local authorities or by property developers, or Bienvenue, which organises solidarity accommodation. Other associations are more generalist but also work in the field of accommodation (some are quite strongly institutionalised: Emmaus, MRAP; others are weakly institutionalised: DIDA, Utopia 56, Carpes...). A certain number of people also live in squats (with the support of associations or collectives that are not institutionalised at all) or in tents in several public parks. In the metropolis of Lyon, we can mention several civil initiatives, such as YZEA, Pollionnay Accueil Solidarité or SMC Migrants, among others. Interestingly, a rising number of citizen initiatives (Le Dure à Cuire, InterSquat...) are emerging in large cities to protest against vacant building and offer vulnerable people (such as refugees) temporary shelters by creating and/or managing squats. In 2021, the Metropolis of Lyon decided to officially appoint two squats in the city, not only to frame these practices, to ensure the dignity and the respect of the buildings or to reinsure stakeholders, but also as an experiment to test whether appointed squats could offer new temporary housing solutions and, at the same time, fight against vacant buildings.

### **Market actors**

Finally, market actors also intervene in this field, by providing resources and/or competencies to offer refugees temporary housing solutions. In the city of Rennes, for example, the property developers who provide the houses managed by UTUD obviously play an important role. Some actors intervene for some groups of refugees. This is the case of the “Foyers de jeunes travailleurs” which accept some of them alongside with other categories of young people. Formally, these Foyers are associations but they have to integrate the housing market rules in their functioning. Other actors have a more indirect action: this is the case of the Union des entreprises 35 which recruits refugees and therefore the programs lead people to make more or less constrained housing choices (depending on the location of the company or the working hours).

In the city of Lyon, several professional actors developed networks and initiatives to offer temporary housing solutions for refugees. We can mention the example of the Ouvre Porte and the Entreprise des possible. In 2017, and in collaboration with three organizations (the AlterHotel, the Flaneur and the Hotel de Normandie), the association l’Ouvre Porte diverted the Italian concept of “suspended coffees” in order to create the concept of “suspended nights” in Lyon in order to offer

vulnerable people like refugees emergency shelters. In the same vein, Alain Mérieux (CEO of Biomerieux) created the Entreprise des Possibles, a collective of companies developing shelters and promoting the reintegration into society of people who no longer have a decent home, or who, because of their great vulnerability are at risk of ending up on the street. With their employees, and in conjunction with the associative world, these companies pool and redistribute human, financial and material resources to social action and housing actors working in the fight against extreme poverty to give the most disadvantaged people a roof over their heads and social support to enable them to rebuild their lives in the long term.

## SWEDEN

Refugee integration in Sweden, including housing, is the formal responsibility of the municipalities. Housing in particular is a highly politicized issue since Sweden has a long term and large-scale housing shortages, especially in the urban centers. Public housing, which can offer affordable permanent rental contracts, requires very long waiting times, sometimes a decade for the big cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö (Lind 2017). Naturally, the housing shortages affect both newly arrived in the country and policy makers trying to design and implement refugee housing policies both in practical terms and in terms of high politicization of the policy area.

The main formal policy on housing for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection is the settlement law (Government, 2016). The settlement law applies to all recipients of international protection who have stayed within the Swedish Migration Agency while their application for asylum was processed. In case an asylum seeker does not want to stay in the reception facilities of the Swedish Migration Agency, they can choose to arrange for their own accommodation. This option is called EBO (Lagen om eget boende, Law on own housing). In case they stay within the reception facility of the Swedish Migration Agency, they classify as ABO (Anläggningsbostäder, Supported housing) (Cetrez et al, 2020). In the latter case, the asylum seekers cannot choose where in the country to live and they cannot decline the placement that the Migration Agency offers to them.

As asylum seekers can barely affect the decision for the allocation of housing in the reception period, many prefer to stay with friends or family or in areas where they have a social network even if that means that they have to navigate an expensive, private housing market with very limited options. Once an asylum seeker has decided to arrange for their own accommodation, then they cannot enter the system of state allocated housing unless they change their mind during the asylum procedure.

When an asylum seeker receives a positive decision and is allowed to stay in Sweden and in case they have been within the ABO system, they are allocated in a municipality. The municipality is responsible to arrange their housing for a minimum period of 2 years which is the time that the establishment program lasts (Government 2010, Government, 2016). The beneficiaries of international protection cannot ask for a different placement and if they decline the placement they are given in a specific municipality, they have to arrange for their own housing. For the asylum seekers who resided in EBO after receiving international protection and their residence permit, they have to continue arranging their own housing.

Therefore, the different conditions in relation to housing depend on this divide between EBO and ABO. Another factor which affects the conditions and the overall welcoming environment for refugees and beneficiaries in international protection

is the length of the offered housing by the municipality for the ones who belong in the group of ABO. From our interviews with actors in the Västra Götaland Region

(Interview with municipality representative, Interview with regional government representative and Interviews with 2 representatives of different NGOs, all conducted in Spring 2021 online) we found big differences in the ways the municipalities interpret the settlement law. Some municipalities provide housing only for the minimum time of 2 years, some provide housing for 4 or 5 years and some provide permanent rental contracts. In practical terms, this means that in different municipalities there are different groups of people in a precarious housing situation and in need of support. The ones who were EBO during the asylum process and still need to arrange their own housing, the ones who are ABO and their contracts are expiring and the ones who for whatever reason left the formal system at some point and they had to find their way in the housing market without the support of the municipality. For the ones who do not get an apartment via the municipality or after their contract with the municipality has ended, there are major challenges and difficulties in finding housing. In Gothenburg in particular the cue for an apartment from public housing is around 6.5 years.

The overall integration policies of the municipality address all beneficiaries of international protection regardless of their housing situation. In Gothenburg the municipality has an integration centre (Integrationscentrum in Swedish, see more in <https://goteborg.se/wps/portal/enhetssida/integrationscentrum---motesplats-kring-ny-i-sverige>) which is running a wide range of activities specifically targeting newly arrived refugees and recipients of international protection. Some examples are the information centre, where refugees can get help with filling out forms and getting translation of important documents, programs targeting women and their empowerment, programs where refugees can be matched to a “conversation-pal” to practice Swedish, courses for civic integration and Swedish language courses.

In sum, newly arrived refugees can partake to the municipality formal programs of integration and if they are ABO they receive minimum two years of housing offered by the municipality. In Gothenburg refugees receive 4-year rental contracts if they are single and 5-year rental contracts if they are families. In interviews with actors involved in this process of allocating apartments (Interview with municipal representative, Interview with public housing company representative and Interview with the association of municipalities and regions representative, Spring 2021) we have gathered information on the different factors they take into consideration when they are allocating an apartment to a refugee or a refugee family. They are allocating them apartments in the areas in Gothenburg where there is not a high concentration of immigrants in order to avoid further segregation. They take into consideration the amount of the rent and they do not place them in apartments where their allowance would not cover the price of the rent and the

utilities. They try to take into consideration the size of the family but this is very difficult to always address since there are many refugees with many children and very few bigger apartments available. Last, they take into consideration any special needs or health conditions in terms of accessibility of the apartment.

For the ones who are EBO or the ones that their contracts expired the municipality offers coaching for searching apartments in the housing market. Some NGOs also participate in these activities and they also try to mobilize their networks to help refugees find an apartment (Interviews with 2 representatives of different NGOs, Spring 2021). Social networks are crucial in finding housing and many refugees end up taking a room in the apartment of a friend or family member. Accessing housing in the housing market can be very difficult. In the public housing, rents are lower but it takes a long time of waiting in the queue. In the private rental market there is a shortage in supply and often there is a prerequisite to have a well-paid permanent job. Last but not least the real estate market is unaffordable for most refugees to buy, due to a sharp rise in price during the recent decade, as well as borrowing constraint driven by a low level of income

## SPAIN

The following table sets out, in general terms, the main actions aimed at persons seeking international protection or persons with recognised status, and their scope. A reference to the administrative level involved and the main managers of these actions is also included.

*Table 1. Specific actions on applicants for IP and refugees*

ACTION	LENGTH	ADMINISTRATION INVOLVED	ACTION MANAGEMENT
Temporary accommodation in CAR	6 months	Central Government	Public Administration
Temporary accommodation in housing	6 months	Central Government	Third sector
Support for social inclusion (including rental housing)	From 6-12 months	Central and Regional Government	Third sector
Patrocinio Comunitario (Communitary Sponsorship)	From 18 to 24 months	Central and Regional Government	Third sector

Among the actions it is important to differentiate between those that are exclusively aimed at beneficiaries of international protection, and those that are aimed at vulnerable groups (regardless of their nationality and residential status).

Within those aimed solely at applicants for international protection, two types of actions can be distinguished, which are linked to the two stages of the application process (Garcés-Mascareñas & Pasetti, 2019; CEAR, 2020).. During the first initial reception phase (approximately 6 months) there are three Reception Centres in Spain (one of them located in the province of Valencia), and a wide range of reception places managed through agreements with different third sector organisations which, in general terms, are controlled through the management of temporary accommodation.

*FG1.E3. Firstly, for people benefiting from international protection, there is the system itself, which offers rental assistance and advice and guidance on how to obtain housing.*

Once the reception period has ended, applicants (whether they have been granted the protection status or not) have the right to access the network of existing public resources on equal terms with other vulnerable groups. Nonetheless, applicants for international protection have a certain disadvantage, as it is difficult for them to meet some of the requirements such as, for example, having more than one year of residence in the Spanish territory (Guijarro, n.d.). These aspects will be addressed throughout this report.

*FG1.E3: "Then we would have the rental subsidies that the Conselleria de Vivienda (Regional Ministry of Housing) provides and that in times of pandemic have increased a little more. We have the Renta Valenciana de Inclusión (Valencian Inclusion Income), which is also a support for the collective in this sense. Then we would have occasional aid that may be in some social entity, emergency aid that can support. Also the Ingreso Vital Mínimo (Minimum Vital Income) ... and now the Housing Offices are starting up... These are resources that are being recovered and put into operation and as I said before there is a lot of demand, complex demands and the group of international protection is one of those who are always left behind when it comes to accessing them".*

The following table sets out, in general terms, the main actions aimed at vulnerable persons who are also eligible for persons who are not or no longer applicants for international protection. A reference to the administrative level involved and the main managers of these actions is also included.

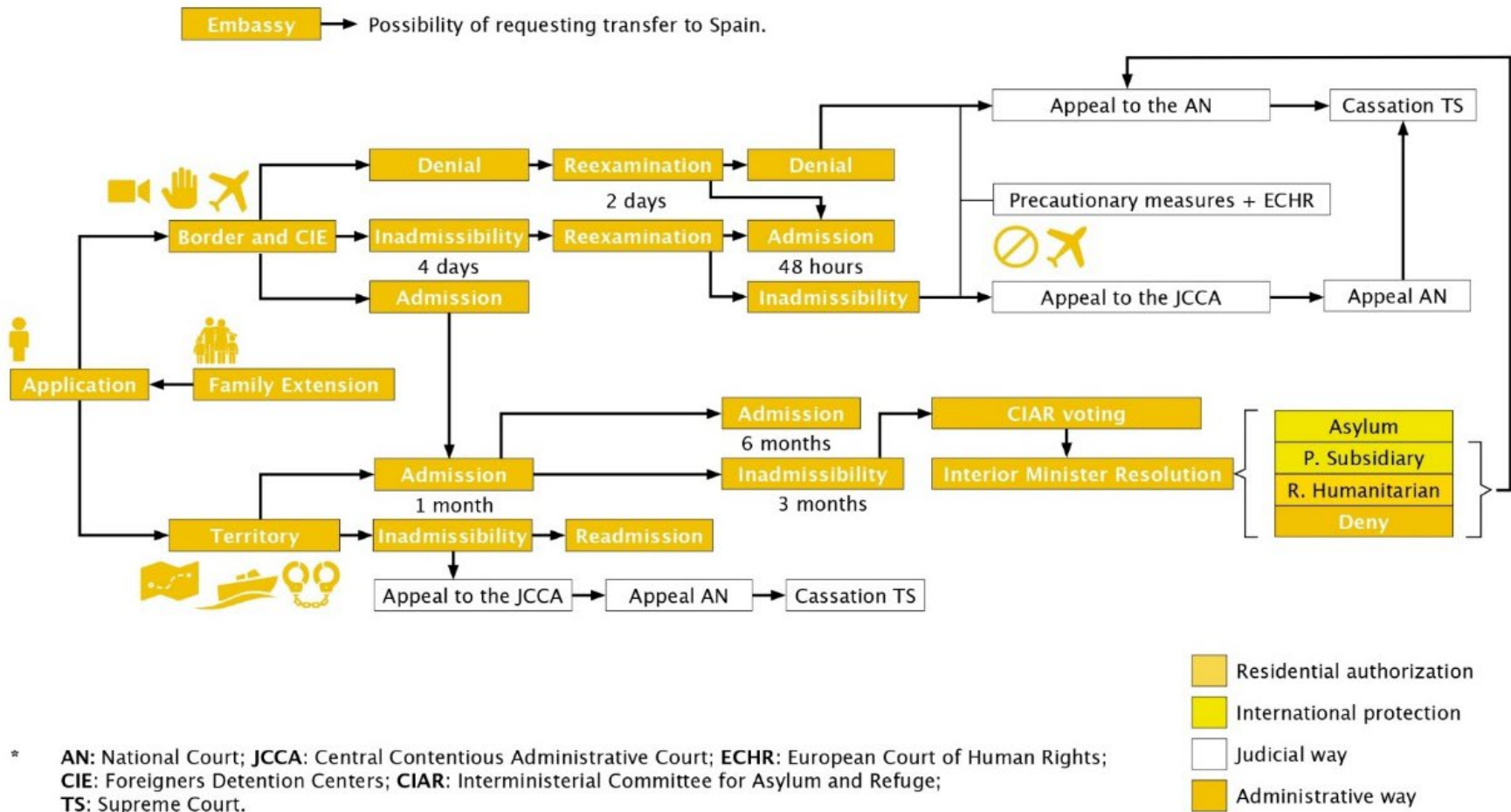
*Table 2. Actions for vulnerable population*

ACTION	LENGTH	COMPETENT ADMINISTRATION	IMPLEMENTATION
Rental subsidies (Social Function of Housing Act 2017)	Temporary	Regional Government	Regional Administration and Third Sector
Basic Inclusion Income	Temporary (maximum 1 year)	Regional Government	Regional Administration, Municipal Social Services Centres Third Sector
Minimum Living Income	Variable according to situation	Central Government	Central Administration
Housing Access Programmes/Projects	Temporary	Local government	Local government Third sector

Of course, the availability and application to all of those resources is conditioned by the administrative and documental status of migrants, subjected to several phases, processes and turning points which we can synthesize in the following figure:

Figure 1. Scheme of the asylum procedure in Spain

REFUGEES IN SPAIN AND EUROPE – BY CEAR 2020



## ITALY

According to Italy's national legislation humanitarian migrants benefit of a temporary public support system, which has been subject to several changes over the last years. Adding to such a constantly changing protection system and the limited time of public support for those foreigners who are recognized as in need of protection, the country's Republican history saw the structuring of a housing system largely characterized by very high number of owners and a very limited state intervention in housing policies (Colombo, 2019). Scholars have shown this system contributed to a condition of ongoing housing precarity and socio-economic instability for beneficiaries of protection, for instance due to the use of temporary facilities and multiple relocations during the reception process, or the absence of long-term integration facilitation (e.g., Dotsey & Lumley-Sapanski, 2021).

Moreover, the evolutions in Italian provisions of housing solutions for asylum seekers and refugees has depended on a multi-layered policy landscape comprising international, national, and regional policies. It has also entailed the complex and challenging intersection of different activities promoted from state, non-state and/or supra-state actors involved in enforcing migration regimes, as well as the policies concerning welfare, housing, and urban planning (e.g., Lomonaco, 2020; Meer et al., 2021).

Overall, state interventions have consisted of either (1) facilitating access to housing for those who cannot access the market with their own means; or (2) supporting the economic autonomy of people. In this sense, **the interventions in favor of housing autonomy are located at the intersection of housing policies, social policies, and active labor policies** (Stephens et al., 2010). Within such system, **non-nationals, included refugees and asylum seekers, have been sharing great difficulties in accessing housing with the most disadvantaged fragments of the Italian population.**

The Italian **political landscape** of the last twenty years has been characterized by **uncertainty and instability** with governing coalitions been made at times of many center-right-wing parties and at times of a majority of center-left wing coalitions. In this scenario, **policy responses to migration flows** in Italy have been characterized by the **salience of the immigration issues** and by changing configurations of governing coalitions.

The resulting **politicization of immigration** has led to a **more restrictive posture towards immigration**, whose results have been a steep decline in sea arrivals and asylum application acceptance rates since 2018.

Notwithstanding the detrimental results of the politicization of the migration issue in Italy, and Europe at large, several **National and international provisions still**

**guarantee the rights to asylum as well as asylum seekers' equal treatment with respect to nationals, at least formally.**

Italian Constitution Art. 10<sup>2</sup> disciplines foreigners' rights and duties, whilst Article 16 of the Italian Civil Code's Dispositions on the law in general, inscribes foreigners' conditions in Italy under the principle of reciprocity. Non-nationals are recognized with the right to claim asylum in the territory of the Italian Republic (Art 10.3 of the Italian Constitution). The rules governing the granting of refugee status to asylum seekers, however, still mostly revolve around the law ratifying the Geneva Convention<sup>3</sup> in combination with few EU ranking laws (Articles no. 77, 78, 79 and 80 of the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007<sup>4</sup>).

As explained in the WP2 country report on policies, Italian legislation explicitly regulated foreigner's legal position in detail only in 1998, when Legislative Decree no. 286 was passed, which is also called "Consolidated Act on provisions concerning the Immigration regulations and foreign national conditions norms"<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, **foreigners who have regularly entered the territory of the State can stay in Italy provided that they have a valid passport or equivalent document** and an entry visa for study / training reasons; for family reunification; for subordinate work reasons; for self-employment reasons.

Legislative Decree no. 286/1998 also introduced a quite controversial system **distinctively disciplining the conditions of extra-European nationals' entries** into the national territory as compared to that of other non-nationals. Accordingly, **all third-country nationals entering the Italian territory without a visa, as well as those overstaying their visas are considered as "irregulars"** unless they claim asylum.

Complementing the "Consolidated Act on provisions concerning the Immigration regulations and foreign national conditions norms", law No. 189 of **2002** structured and institutionalized for the first time a **public system of protection called the National**

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<sup>2</sup> See *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana*, available online at: <https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione.pdf> (IT).

<sup>3</sup> See *Ratifica ed esecuzione della Convenzione relativa allo statuto dei rifugiati, firmata a Ginevra il 28 luglio 1951*, 24 July 1954, available online at: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1954/08/27/054U0722/sg> (IT).

<sup>4</sup> See *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community*, 13 December 2007, available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12007L%2FTXT> (EN).

<sup>5</sup> See *Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero*, 25 July 1998, available at: <https://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/98286dl.htm> (IT).

**Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR).** Such legal provisions took over and ratified the experiences of **decentralized and networked reception** which had been carried out between 1999 and 2000 by nonprofit associations and non-governmental organizations. In **2001**, the massive civil society mobilizations of the previous years to support asylum seekers that had reached Italy from Albania and former Yugoslavia, had led the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to sign a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the **National Asylum Program (PNA)** (Giovannetti 2020: 824-825). This sanctioned the birth of the **first public system for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees** which, since its inception, was conceived as **a system spread throughout the Italian territory**. Central institutions therefore had to operate in close synergy with local ones, according to the **principle of responsibility sharing** between the Ministry of Interior and local authorities.

Law No. 189 of 2002 intervened for regulating the coordination structure for the functioning of the asylum system, namely through the establishment of the **Central Service for information, promotion, consultancy, monitoring and technical support** to local authorities.

The management of the Central Service was entrusted to the **National Association of Italian Municipalities**, to underline the **importance attributed to local authorities in the implementation of the asylum system throughout the peninsula**.

Nowadays, the Italian reception of asylum seekers and refugees consists of **two systems**, whose functioning is **funded respectively by the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services (FNPSA)** and the **Ministry of Interior**: the first is the SPRAR/SIPROIMI<sup>6</sup> system (now SAI<sup>7</sup>), managed by municipalities and NGOs, and the

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<sup>6</sup> SPRAR was renamed Protection system for persons enjoying international protection and unaccompanied minors (SIPROIMI) after the reform launched by legislative decree n. 13/2018. ee *Disposizioni urgenti in materia di protezione internazionale e immigrazione, sicurezza pubblica, nonche' misure per la funzionalita' del Ministero dell'interno e l'organizzazione e il funzionamento dell'Agenzia nazionale per l'amministrazione e la destinazione dei beni sequestrati e confiscati alla criminalita' organizzata*, 4 October 2018, available online at: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/10/04/18G00140/sg> (IT)

<sup>7</sup> In 2020, Decree-Law No. 130, converted into Law No. 173 of 18 December 2020, introduced further reforms. SIPROIMI was renamed SAI (Reception and Integration System), and it continued hosting refugees, as well as applicants for international protection, unaccompanied foreign minors and foreigners who are entrusted to the social services upon turning 18. Holders of residence permits for special protection already listed also continued to be accommodated. See *Disposizioni urgenti in materia di immigrazione, protezione internazionale e complementare, modifiche agli articoli 131-bis, 391-bis, 391-ter e 588 del codice penale, nonche' misure in materia di divieto di accesso agli esercizi pubblici ed ai locali di pubblico trattenimento, di contrasto all'utilizzo distorto del web e di disciplina del Garante nazionale dei diritti delle persone private della liberta' personale*, 21 October 2020, available online at: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/10/21/20G00154/sg>.

second is the Extraordinary Reception Centers (CAS), coordinated by the prefectures (the local offices of the Ministry of the Interior).

**Initially conceived as a temporary solution** to cope with the increase in migrant arrivals in 2011, the **CAS has become an essential additional support** for the **main reception system SAI**.

Today, asylum seekers, Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASCs), holders of international protection and people with specific residence permits are accommodated within SAI structures. Moreover, **SAI services are divided into two levels**: the **first reception** is dedicated to applicants for international protection, the **second reception** addresses instead those with an already determined legal status, and thus provide them with **additional services aimed at their social integration**. On the contrary, **CAS reception services only address asylum seekers** similarly to the SAI first reception.

According to Legislative Decree no. 18 of 2014, **every two years a National Plan of interventions and measures aimed at promoting the integration of beneficiaries of international protection** shall be provided by the **Ministry of Interior's National Coordination Table**.

The resulting Italian **programmatic document for the definition of strategic and operational objectives as well as the interventions to be implemented with the available financial resources** is called "**Programma Nazionale FAMI** (Fondo Asilo, Migrazione e Integrazione)". The interventions foreseen by the Plan are mainly funded with EU funds (Ministry of the Interior, 2017). In fact, FAMI programme brings together previous EIF (European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Citizens), ERF (European Refugee Fund) and RF (European Return Fund) funds, to reach three specific objectives: Asylum; Legal integration/migration; Repatriation.

## 1.2 Scope

### FRANCE

The state and its operators are taking in charge refugees, both in the investigation of their asylum application and in their integration process once refugee status has been obtained. Refugees are also supported by the Metropolis, which is responsible for the allocation of social housing. Depending on the person and their "degree of autonomy" or their "ability to live in the housing" (i.e. their ability to understand administrative procedures, to speak French or to integrate into autonomous housing), they will receive more or less social support.

- The least "autonomous" will be accommodated either in a temporary accommodation centre (managed by OFII).
- Those who are partially "autonomous" will depend on the Local Housing Commission managed by Rennes Metropolis. There are three possible options: accommodation in a migrant workers' hostel; follow-up called "support in housing" provided by Coallia; or rental intermediation provided by the Social and Solidarity Property Agency.
- People who are completely "autonomous" are directed toward the common law systems, either in the private housing stock or in the public housing stock (via the Metropolis's local allocation commission).

However, these cases are partly theoretical. Actually, the waiting period between applying for asylum and obtaining refugee status can be very long (up to ten years in some cases). Besides, many people do not obtain any status and become illegal while remaining in the territory. Indeed, the waiting time between the request for accommodation or housing allocation is long (between one and one and a half years) and the amount of accommodation and housing units is largely insufficient to cover the demand, whether at the time of the asylum requests or at the time of obtaining refugee status (in 2019, there were 1400 asylum requests for 288 places in the National asylum scheme). Also, for a couple to access social housing, both spouses must have been granted refugee status; couples with conflicting statuses will not be allocated housing. It should also be emphasized that people do not always accept the housing offered to them (even if this is still a minority case) because of the geographical distributions that are imposed on them (Gardesse, 2020). Indeed, many of them seem reluctant to leave the central city where they are close to their compatriots, where public services are nearby, where their children may already have gone to school, etc.

In addition, a certain number of refugees, particularly young men under 25 years of age (not receiving RSA) and in good health, face significant difficulties in accessing social housing due to their lack of income. As a result, they are frequently housed in solidarity accommodation (with French families or compatriots) or in squats or by the 115. The

young men we met during the fieldwork largely underlined the difficulties linked to this situation: the lack of resources leads many of them to enter into trafficking or to accept illegal work without any social protection.

## SWEDEN

The main scope of housing policies in Sweden is to effectively disperse refugees across the country. The rationale is that if after taking into consideration the labor market of each area refugees should be allocated all over the country with the rationale that their integration will be faster and more efficient. As described above, refugees who were not part of the Swedish migration agency's reception scheme are immediately out of the supported housing (ABO) later on when they are granted international protection. Over the years with relatively a high number of arriving asylum seekers, a number of cities have received a high number of EBOs. The large percentage of asylum seekers who decide to arrange their own housing resulted in high concentration of asylum seekers and refugees in specific big urban areas, for instance Malmö is the most migrant dense city in the country (Righard & Öberg 2019). The government with the aim of achieving a better distribution and burden sharing of asylum seekers and refugees across the country initiated the Settlement law (2016) which gave the mandate to the government authorities to assign a certain share of refugees to each municipality. According to the Settlement law, the allocation of newly arrived in the municipalities takes into consideration the labor market conditions, the population size and the number of newly arrived, unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers already settled in each municipality.

The Settlement law reduced the high percentages of asylum seekers and persons who have received international protection and choose their own accommodation (EBO). In an effort to further regulate the dispersal of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection across the country, the Government introduced in January 2020 a revision to the settlement law which restricts the possibilities of EBO for asylum seekers. Based on these restrictions if asylum seekers settle in areas which have been characterized as weak socioeconomical areas they can even lose their daily allowance (Cetrez et al, 2020).

This scope of dispersal across the country has been critiqued in previous attempts of the government to implement dispersal policies. In particular, the government attempted to implement a dispersal scheme (Zenou et. Al 2010, Soininen 1999) in the 1980's. Haberfeld et al. (2019) studied the relocation patterns of refugees that settled in Sweden under the 'Whole Sweden' policy which was introduced in 1985. The 'Whole Sweden' policy gave refugees no or little opportunity to select their own destination within the country, unless they could find housing by themselves. This policy had important economic effects for refugees (Edin, Fredriksson, and Åslund, 2003). According to the authors refugees' earnings increase when they live within their ethnic enclave (ibid). Research on this period of time has also showed how refugees moved to different places in Sweden after their initial settlement which was decided by the government. The criteria for their internal movement were connected to their level of education and to the local labor market. Highly skilled refugees tried to move to the bigger cities in search of better jobs (Haberfeld et al. 2019). Moreover, the research concluded that refugees moved closer to

people of the same ethnicity as them. These social networks were also found to increase the chances for labor market integration for newcomers (Haberfeld et al. 2019).

In relation to the current situation and the settlement law (Government, 2016) the critique also refers to the quality of the offered accommodation. A number of municipalities has been offering accommodation of very low quality, e.g. travel trailers, which has caused a lively debate both in newspapers and in academia. Some refugees have been very disappointed by the offered low-quality accommodation, since they might have waited for a long period to access housing (Grange and Björling, 2020). Nowadays in Gothenburg refugees are provided with apartments through public housing which has resolved some of the critique regarding quality. Still, there is a large percentage of refugees who arrange their own housing and often end up in very crowded apartments and low-quality housing overall.

## SPAIN

Regardless of deeper insights on some the issues provided in further sections of the report, there are several scope related insights that are worthy of remark:

### SPECIFIC NEEDS AND OBSTACLES ↔ WIDE-SPECTRUM APPROACH

There is a remarkable debate on how to tackle the specific needs of applicants and beneficiaries of IP beyond the initial asylum programs, while ensuring the prevalence of social need criteria to access to housing with a notably restrictive and unaffordable offer and within a conjuncture of increasing social vulnerability country-wide. Such debate has been also fostered by the recent rise of xenophobic national-populist discourses in Spain.

### EFFECTIVE EXERCISE OF RIGHTS ↔ LEGAL and BUREAUCRATIC REQUIREMENTS

Another important ambivalence is the recent years increase of sensible legislation and programs towards proactive integration of immigrants and refugees, usually confronting pre-requisites regarding a strict and constraining Foreign Law solely focused on legal and documental status. Furthermore, there are several constraints when it comes to legally recognize the titles, qualifications and permits that were held in the country of origin, hence blocking the enhancement that those pre-existing assets might pose to the integration process in the host society. Those recognitions are key to enable the access to similar status in terms of work positions and income, against the tendency to relegate migrants to less qualified and more precarious jobs.

### EFFECTIVE EXERCISE OF RIGHTS ↔ LACK OF BUDGET, HOUSING ASSETS, HUMAN RESOURCES, INSTRUCTION OF PERSONNEL and RATIONAL COORDINATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCES

The effective exercise of rights also faces relevant obstacles coming from the public institutions that must provide their financial support and are responsible of enabling it, whether directly or by delegating it to Third Sector organizations or to administrative levels at lower-territorial scales. That is the case of the restricted budgets available, with local administration specially restricted due to a 2013 reform stressing their budgetary priorities regarding deficit. Furthermore, the structural lack of public housing and particularly public housing renting options, has been already discussed. Another important obstacle is the lack of human resources in the public sector for the usual management of funds and procedures, with a workload that is partially increased by the density of administrative levels and the complex distribution and cession of competences and attributions between them (with frequent duplicities and omissions). Finally, and inevitably linked to the rest of aspects hindering the effective exercise of rights, there is the lack of transversal formation and instruction of public employees potentially serving applicants or beneficiaries of IP, that usually results in the uncertain realization of procedures depending on the particular knowledge and willingness of the public

employee or department involved. Such is the case of municipal registration in many municipalities (Aguilar-Idáñez & Buraschi, 2012; Domingo & Sabater, 2010). To reduce that uncertainty, many Third Sector entities conduct seminars with public employees on the rights of this target population and subsidiarily opt to vouch for specific people aiming to get specific procedures done by the public administration.

#### SOURCE OF ESSENTIAL REVENUE for SMALL-HOLDERS ← → URGENT NEED of HOUSING for IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The “culture of property” consolidated in Spain during the 1960s, with a significant increase in housing purchase during the economic expansion of the late 1990s and early 2000s, account for the high rate of housing ownership (Pareja-Eastaway & Sánchez-Martínez, 2010; Leal, 2005). All that combined with the structural lack of public housing, leave those newly arrived or recently released from asylum programs with the private housing market of particular small holders as the most viable, yet difficult housing solution. In that scenario, many small holders rely on renting revenues as a significant income for their own livelihood. On the other hand, immigrants and refugees depend on those housing options to keep their projects of integration. Most Third Sector entities are aware of that combination of both sides' legitimate interests and needs. Thus, considering the dependency of migrants and refugees on the willingness of private individuals beyond the latter's prejudices (Meier, 2012), lack of information and uncertainties regarding the perceived possibilities of fulfilling the payment obligations on time and on a regular basis, Third Sector organizations insist on the importance of public mediation and promotion in order to reassure and foster small holders offer. We ought to consider, nonetheless, that this would work for those refugees and immigrants with a legal recognition, leaving those on an irregular legal situation facing whether informal and uncertain private solutions, the assistance of an overwhelmed Third Sectors or homelessness.

#### INFORMALITY LINKED TO SEVERE SOCIAL and RESIDENTIAL EXCLUSION ← → FORMAL REQUIREMENTS to BECOME and STAY BENEFICIARY of HOUSING AID

A notable blind-spot of social services is pointed out when referring to the overlapping vicious cycle of exclusion coming from informality in several domains: if you lack of the proper legal documentation (whether the person in question is a newly arrived or has been denied international protection), you cannot be legally hired for a job, neither open a bank account, etc. Despite that risk, the official instruction of the municipal registration, formally enables the access to many of this basic rights. Nevertheless, the number and disparity of bureaucratic procedures and certificates required in order to access to public housing or to financial aid for rent or basic income, poses a big obstacle to applicants who have little knowledge of the administrative system or of the welcoming society whatsoever. What is more, even if the person or family in question becomes beneficiary of public aid and gets access to private housing (most likely, considering the lack of public housing stock), the majority of those financial aids require to be holder of the rental

contract, which is pretty difficult to people who face the urgent need of housing within a highly privatised and demanded stock and subject to prejudices.

#### URGENT NEED AND DIFFICULT ACCESS TO HOUSING $\leftrightarrow$ GOOD LOCATION and CONDITIONS AS A MAJOR ASSET TOWARDS INTEGRATION

The factors hindering access to housing for refugees and migrants mentioned above and the crucial and urgent need of housing as a fundamental axis for avoiding exclusion and enabling integration, certainly constrains the possibilities of choosing a dwelling with satisfactory conditions and well located. This results in the concentration of socially vulnerable population in specific neighbourhoods, usually scarcely equipped and poorly connected to major services and places of work, as well as potentially harbouring what many stakeholders qualify as pockets of increasing marginality. That problem is particularly noticeable when households benefiting from housing aid, whether through dwellings or subventions of rent, are out for autonomous access and financing of housing, usually relegated to those peripheral neighbourhoods due to unaffordable free-market prices of the better located and equipped dwellings they have previously been able to access to.

#### PREJUDICED AND EXPECTED RATE AND SUCCESS OF INTEGRATION DEPENDING ON THE ORIGIN

There are several references to major perceived factors explaining more or less difficult itineraries of integration depending on cultural and linguistic affinity, racial and ethnic prejudices, and public opinion on international conflicts. In that sense, Latin-American and Caucasian Eastern European migrants are usually the most accepted by the host society. On the other hand, migrants who are associated by prejudices to Islam and racialized people of African origin or ancestry are the ones who usually face the most obstacles and reluctances (Meier, 2012). As to the influence of public opinion, Venezuelans are particularly welcomed both due to recent bidirectional migrations and to the inclusion of the Venezuelan inner conflicts in the usual dispute between Spanish political parties. Moving to Syrians, there is a significant awareness and solidarity towards the victims of the Civil War and its outcomes, which surpasses potential pre-existing prejudices. Of course, all those prejudices still exist and have an impact in the expected responsiveness and attitude of many crucial actors such as public service's employees, law enforcement, holders of housing, etc.

#### FAMILIAL PROFILING $\leftrightarrow$ INDIVIDUAL MIGRATION PROJECTS

Several stakeholders insist on the importance of considering the individual migration projects with regards to access to housing and financial aid. Since, most of those resources are mostly delivered prioritising families (following the undeniable criterion of children's rights and well-being), migrants who are temporarily or permanently settling alone usually face an additional obstacle to access social coverage and assistance. This is

specially pressing considering that migrating alone significantly increases the risk of social and residential exclusion comparing to households with several members within working age.

## ITALY

The services provided within the scope of the so-called second reception are supposed not to be limited to basic material interventions (food and accommodation) but ensure a series of **functional activities to regain individual autonomy**, such as the **teaching of the Italian language, training and professional qualification, legal orientation, access to local services, orientation and work, housing and social integration**, as well as **psycho-socio-health protection**.

That is why, FAMI program's **initiatives range from language training to social and work placement, to mentoring services**. **Access to healthcare** can also be enhanced by using **specific projects** for the protection of migrants' health with special attention to psycho-physical vulnerabilities. A **dedicated and privileged line of intervention** is envisaged **for vulnerable categories**, in particular women, including victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied foreign minors, starting from the reception phase.

Italian National Integration Plan for holders of international protection has also provided for **actions aimed at preventing and combating discrimination**. This aim is pursued through the provision of **information services**, which are essential to make government inclusion policies accessible and transparent. Moreover, starting from 2007, the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) promoted the **establishment of Regional Anti-discrimination Centers**, aimed at detecting and taking charge of discrimination phenomena, as well as spreading the culture of respect for human rights and equal opportunities.

All this considered, **Italian asylum system resulted in creating several categories of migrants depending on each person's legal status** (holding a residence permit for seeking asylum, or due to the fact of holding some form of protection) and him/her being in Italy as a single individual or part of a family, or a vulnerable person. **Each category faces different policies to access housing**. Migrants applying for international protection are assumed to be more vulnerable (at EU and national level), and therefore it is assumed that **the State must directly or indirectly provide them with housing solutions until they are recognized with a clear legal the status**. Among them unaccompanied minors enter a dedicated reception mechanism (see report on policies), while disabled or severely ill persons, and single mothers with children are to be given top priority in being provided with suitable housing solutions. Single woman and families follow in this scale of vulnerabilities and accommodation priorities. Single man, instead, are considered as the least vulnerable.

## 1.3 Stakeholders

### FRANCE

As mentioned in our National Report D2.2, accessing to housing is conditioned by the officialization of migrants' statuses – either by the OFPRA or the National Court of Appeal for Asylum Seekers. This report focuses on refugees and beneficiaries of an international protection.

#### 1.3.1 National stakeholders

Accessing to housing for refugees is jointly piloted by two institutional actors: the DIHAL (*Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement* – the Interministerial Delegation for Housing and Access to Housing) and the DIAIR (*Délégation interministérielle d'accueil et de l'intégration des réfugiés* - Interministerial Delegation for Reception and Integration of Refugees). They both operate at the national level and monitor the actions engaged at the regional and local levels by prefects and local authorities.

#### **Interministerial Delegation for Housing and Access to Housing (DIHAL)**

The Dihal is a sectorial interministerial delegation created in 2010 that reports to the Prime Minister and is de facto attached to the French Ministry of territorial cohesion (Ministère de la Cohésion des territoires). It has developed several fields of action, all of which work to improve housing access and options for all people who either struggle to access housing (e.g., sleeping rough) in the first place or are in precarious, unaffordable or substandard housing. It aims at combatting homelessness and accelerating the access to permanent housing, in accordance with the principles of the "housing first" model. The Dihal is both a policy maker and coordinator of housing-related actions at the national level. Its missions have been specified and extended in the Ministerial Ruling of March 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 (article 7)<sup>8</sup>. The Dihal's main missions are both to monitor the renovation of housing but also to resorb slums, prevent rental eviction, facilitate the access to housing to vulnerable groups (notably to beneficiaries of international protections and Roma and traveler communities), supervising actors confronted to housing related issues, and developing social housing, among others.

Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, the Dihal is responsible for the budgetary program "Housing, pathways to housing and integration of vulnerable people" (€2.4 billion in 2020) and, since April 1, 2021, for all the competencies in the field of housing and access to housing – notably for refugees. A special division has been created to this regard, the Migrants

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<sup>8</sup> Available on: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000043294662>

Department. Unlike its name would indicate, this department is centered around refugees and people beneficiaries from subsidiary protection (PSP). The Dihal frequently cooperates with associations, social housing providers, subcontracted private companies on a national level, as well as with public and private local actors, often on a county-level. It is a member of the Interministerial Commission for the Housing of Immigrant Populations. This Commission is in charge of the renovation of old Migrant Workers' Hostels – engaged by the government in 1990 – and their transformation into social housings.

### **Interministerial Delegation for Reception and Integration of Refugees**

The Diair is an interministerial delegation created in 2017 in the action plan to guarantee the right to asylum and better control migration flows. It is placed under the authority of the Minister of the Interior. His mission is to participate in the definition and coordination of the policy for the reception and integration of beneficiaries from an international protection (BIP) – i.e. people that have been granted from an official status by the OFPRA or the CNDA. It seeks to ensure a good integration of refugees into French society and intervene in five areas, notably through housing. In other words, it aims at impulsing actions as well as coordinating and mobilizing actors at different levels: in central and local administrations, local authorities, associations belonging to the civil society.

The Diair pilots the National Strategy for the Reception and Integration of Refugees – stemming from the Tâché Report (2018), and currently one of the biggest action plan targeting refugees in France. The Interministerial Committee for Integration (2018) acted the implementation of a new set of measures designed to foster foreigners' integration in France, some of them being specifically dedicated to refugees. Indeed, the Interministerial Committee for Integration endorsed the fact that from 2018, *“refugees will benefit from a reinforced social and administrative support to assist them through the first months after obtaining their status”* – notably for accessing to housing. This decision is built upon the ministerial circular published on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, which endorsed the decision to mobilize 20,000 housing for refugees by the end of 2018 through three channels:

- Mobilizing all players involved in refugees' integration
- Reconducting accompanying measures favoring empowerment and safeguarding housing for refugees
- Maintaining and encouraging springboard projects developed by associations, such as citizen and solidarity housing.

This quota is about to be reached, despite great challenges. As explained by Alain Regnier<sup>9</sup> (2020), “Even if we have doubled the effort to capture social housing on the quota since 2017, the objectives of rehousing these groups have not been achieved because they are only on the State's quota. [...] Beyond the pandemic, with 9,000 or 10,000 social housing units mobilized the last two years, we are now at the limit of the possibility of mobilizing the prefectural quota, which must also be used to rehouse other groups under common law (people leaving shelters, Dalo, etc.). We have made a lot of progress, but we are not yet up to the reality of the needs. About 15,000 to 16,000 housing units per year (social or private) are needed to meet the needs of people receiving international protection. We must therefore mobilize more actors, despite the pandemic”.

The DiAir collaborates with elected officials to mobilize territories on the issue of access to housing for refugees, through the Solid'R Mayors network and territorial contracts (CTAIR). Among the 250 CTAIR actions that have been launched throughout France in 2019 and 2020, 15 actions (21% of the overall CTAIR budget) are dedicated to housing. In 2021, 18 cities and metropolises are part of the CTAIR program: Brest, Dijon, Lyon, Grenoble, Nantes, Toulouse, Rennes, Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand, Nancy, Strasbourg, Marseille, Tours, Besançon, Poitiers, Rouen and Montpellier. Each member receives an annual subvention (up to 300,000 euros) to develop initiatives related to the integration of refugees. The amount depends on the number of Republican Integration Contracts registered in the area. Each city or metropolis can submit to the local prefecture projects dedicated to the integration of refugees in order to obtain some extra funds. It has to be specified that, since June 1<sup>st</sup>, the CTAIR became CTAI and are placed under the authority of the DGEF (Ministry of Interior): these contracts are not only targeting refugees anymore, but rather all vulnerable groups (young adults, travelers, first-arrival migrants, homelessness...).

Both the DiAir and Dihal rarely intervene directly with their target group or on the ground. Rather, they seek to coordinate the different actors involved and assure steering functions and strategic aspects. Despite their political importance, such structure means that they are often little known by the actors ensuring implementation on the ground, such as local associations. They are both part of the CILPI (inter-ministerial commission for the housing of immigrant population). The CILPI pilots the plan for the treatment of migrant workers' homes (PTFTM). Its mission is also to strengthen the network of actors (administration, landlords, managers, associations and residents' representatives). It has the task of strengthening the network of players (administration, landlords, managers, associations and residents' representatives) and of leading discussion groups on better living together, integration of residents and their access to rights.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview of Alain Regnier by Elodier Raitière (AEF info), Sept 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 – available at <https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/itw-Alain-Regnier-logement-AEF-sept-2020.pdf>

### 1.3.2 Regional and local authorities

The French soil is made of 101 counties (*départements*) and 13 regions (*régions*), ruled by the Prefects, i.e. local government representatives. Each department has its own prefecture and prefect, the most important ones acting as regional prefectures as well. They are attached to the Ministry of the Interior.

#### Regional and departmental prefectures

The regional level ensures the link between the ministries, the national strategies, and the departmental administration, for implementation. The regional directorates define the methods of application of national directives in the region. They lead the networks of competences present in the region, at the departmental and regional levels. They distribute the resources allocated by the ministries. This work is carried out under the authority of the regional prefect.

The departmental level is the level of contact with users and the level of implementation of public policies, under the authority of the departmental prefects, who have at their disposal, in particular, the prefecture and the interministerial departmental directorates, the territorial units of the regional directorates and the police and gendarmerie services ([www.rhone.gouv.fr](http://www.rhone.gouv.fr)).

Since the beginning of the deconcentration process of the state, engaged in 1992, prefectures play a more and more important role regarding housing related issues. The National Strategy for the integration of Asylum seekers and refugees specifies that from 2021, *“it will be the responsibility of the deconcentrated services in each region (OFII territorial directorates in close collaboration with the prefectures) to ensure the management of all the accommodation available for asylum seekers in this territory, in order to accommodate on the one hand, asylum seekers registered at a one-stop shop in their area, as has been the case until now and on the other hand, asylum seekers referred to their CAES within the framework of regional orientation, which is the main change in this plan”* (Snadar, 2020:20).

Prefectures have to ensure the fluidity of the national reception scheme by receiving refugees and guaranteeing them an access to housing. Housings are allocated by departmental commissions placed under the authority of the prefecture and made of NGOs (mandated by the government or not), social housing providers and municipalities.

Alongside, the DDETS (*Direction départementale de l'emploi, du travail et des solidarités* - e.g. county directorates for employment, labor and solidarity) collaborates with the prefecture and the housing providers to help refugees access to the labor market.

## Municipalities

Finally, municipal actors such as villages or cities, are in charge of a lot of housing policy and action or strategy plans, such as the local urban planning strategy (*plan local d'urbanisme (PLU)*), the local housing programme (*programme local de l'habitat (PLH)*), some financial aid for people living in social housing or otherwise disadvantaged people. That being said, local actors may benefit of financial and practical support in order to implement policies, particularly if they align with projects currently being advanced by the current government and/or national actions plans.

Local actors may also take voluntary commitments, stepping in to save the day when the national level is technically responsible but in default. For example, regrading housing for refugees and other immigrant populations, the Rennes mayor's office made the promise to house all homeless families in order to compensate for a malfunctioning and defaulting national programme. (Ouest France, 2020). Another good example is the decision taken by the metropolises of Lyon and Rennes to convention some squats hosting migrants and refugees. The agreements signed with the squats of Arloing (Lyon) and the Jardin des Poteries (Rennes) allow metropolises to experiment pilot initiatives: allowing vulnerable people to access to a temporary housing solution while making sure that facilities will be restituted at a certain point without damages.

The CCAS (*Centre communal d'action sociale* – municipal/city center of social action) may also be important for people in exile. For example, when refugees cannot find housing and are homeless for a while, they can register at the CCAS address in order to have a postal address. CCAS may also be points of contact and advice when struggling to find housing or needing emergency housing.

### 1.3.3 Third sector actors

Besides national and local authorities, NGOs also play a central role in refugees' access to housing. Indeed, refugees can be supported in their access to housing by three groups of actors: 1) institutions and associations in the framework of the national reception scheme, 2) other associations and citizen initiatives– more or less structured.

#### **Associations acting in line with the national reception scheme**

Several professional actors and associations have been mandated by the government for 5 years to manage housing facilities for migrants and refugees. Their actions are ruled by the Code of Action and Families.

In January 2021, 111,978 places were available for migrants and refugees, among which 8.914 were specifically dedicated to refugees (in Temporary Housing Centers) and part of the 46.632 available in the Reception Centers for Asylum Seekers are open to refugees. As

previously mentioned, these places remain insufficient to absorb the demand, as 49% of asylum seekers could not benefit from the NDA in 2020 (SNADAR, 2020).

The social establishments are managed by legal entities under public or private law (associations, SEMs, CCAS, etc.). Their expenses are paid by the State. The most important ones are Adoma, Coallia, Entraide Pierre Valdo, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi and Le Pont, among others. These associations are mandated and funded by the government. They collaborate with prefectures to allocate housing to migrants – notably to refugees, either in centers (CADA and CPH) or in apartments. Each department is in charge of offering refugees a housing solution. Thus, discrepancies exist among departments regarding housing allocation.

“In France, we do have a national strategy for the reception of refugees, i.e. some guidelines coming from the government. Migrants and refugees are spread across the territory within the first 5 days by the OFII after their registration on the national platform in order to unblock metropolises like Paris. Each region, each department have to receive migrants and refugees. The problem is that, consecutive to the deconcentration of the state, each department organizes the allocation of housing in a different manner, based on different criteria due to the characteristics and needs of the local population. In other words, each prefect has to decide how are the most vulnerable among the vulnerable populations. They decide within commissions composed of representatives of local authorities, social housing providers and associations mandated by the government. Beneficiaries are not necessarily represented in these commission. These associations are usually historical actors in this field and have been selected based on the answer they provided to public tenders. In exchange of subventions, these associations manage shelters, organize the reception trajectory of migrants, help them integrate into the society, etc. It is a sort of transfer of competencies to both local territories and social actors” (Badis Hariti, Diair).

Due to the saturation of the national reception scheme, and despite major efforts made to increase the capacities at the national level and pressures on prefects to fluidify the NRS, the offer remains inferior to the housing demand. In such context, housing is being allocated based on general vulnerability criteria established by the OFII in order to make the process more transparent and objective. However, these rules exclude de facto some populations from the DNA, notably NMA (as they benefit from child protection), migrants falling under the Dublin procedures, migrants waiting for a reexamination of their application, etc.

“Harmonizing practices at the national level is hard because each territory is different. In some departments, refugees will be considered as extremely vulnerable people – like in the Rhône Department - and in others, they will be considered as vulnerable among the vulnerable. But this situation makes it hard, for the beneficiaries, to understand the allocation rule. It is even harder that, when they change status, then the rules, the

administrative procedures, their interlocutors, etc. change too. Thus, their access to housing may take longer than they expected due to the time required to assimilate these new procedures” (Badis Hariti, Diair).

In some departments, institutional or social actors collaborate to implement innovative solutions designed to foster refugees’ access to housing: experimentation of pilot projects combining access to training and housing for refugees under 26 years old in Charentes-Maritime, sacralization of an annual endowment of 500 social housing for refugee households in the Rhône, etc.

“The case of the Rhône department is unique but interesting: a couple of years ago, before the migration waves, the prefect Alain Regnier ratified the fact that refugees would be considered as a particularly vulnerable population and, thus, require specific treatment. The department decided that each year, 500 social housings would automatically be dedicated to refugees. Such a favorable decision remains rare and, somehow, politically sensitive because it raises the following question: what makes someone more vulnerable – thus priority – than someone else?” (Forum Réfugié Cosi).

### **Other associations and citizen initiatives**

Besides large and institutionalized structures, several associations are also acting to receive, help and/or offer housing solutions to migrants. Contrary to their larger counterparts, these associations are less structured, less professional, and focus not only on refugees, but rather on migrant people regardless their status (asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented people...). They are not mandated by the government but act on their own to compensate for the progressive withdrawal of the government from social affairs. They can be of confessional nature or not, can benefit from public subsidies or rely only on donations, and are mainly made of volunteers. They aim at meeting migrants’ needs for listening, psychological and administrative support, legal and linguistic assistance, among others.

The strong presence of voluntary actors raises questions about the roles that are effectively devolved to the latter, who can be considered as the “*institutionalized artisans of local migration policies*”, to paraphrase Bourgois and Lièvre (2019).

### **Mapping ecosystems**

In order to understand how ecosystems are organized and identify who are the main actors involved in housing for refugees at the local and national level, we built a matrix based on Czischke’s (2018) methodology.

Collaboration enables individuals to share the resources, competencies and skills necessary to work together in order to achieve a defined common goal (Czischke, 2018). Achieving common objectives often implies working with a multiplicity of other actors, i.e

other individuals, groups, organizations – public and/or private, profit or non-profit-oriented, institutionalized or not - at the local, national or international levels. It means examining the type of collaboration (at the organizational level) and cooperation (at the individual level) practices (Poocharoen & Ting, 2015; Czischke, 2018).

The interactions of these two practices lead to the development of co-production behaviors. Co-production can be defined as the fact that an individual, a group or an organization can be simultaneously both the producer and the consumer of the good/service. Goods and/or services are built by their final user in collaboration with other stakeholders willing to contribute in a wide array of ways. The collaboration is, thus, made possible thanks to the efforts engaged by the beneficiaries and/or the project initiator to reach the final objective (Poocharoen & Ting, 2015). As mentioned by Czischke (2018:63), the diversity of actors *“often entails a high degree of complexity, encompassing different motives, institutional logics and behaviour (Mullins, 2006)”*.

Understanding refugees’ access to housing in France requires to pay attention to stakeholders and their multi-level interactions due to the fragmentation and great disparity of actors involved in the process: between national-regional-local levels, between public and private actors, mandated and non-mandated NGOs, etc. In other words, it requires to take different degrees of specification and different levels into consideration (Crostack, Klute & Refflinghaus, 2011). To do so, we adopt Czischke (2018) methodology, based on both Alexander and Robertson (2004) and Sudiyono’s (2013) seminal work on multi-level stakeholders in the housing context.

The stakeholder onion model (Alexander & Robertson, 2004) has been acknowledged to be a powerful tool to describe multi-level stakeholders’ relationships, identify power relations among them and explain their impacts on a given situation. The onion model provides a better understanding who are the main stakeholders engaged in refugees’ access to housing, based on their scope, relative importance and closeness with refugees.

The more directly and operationally involved stakeholders will be in a cause or an organization, the closer they will be from the center of the diagram. On the opposite, the more indirectly involved they will be, the further they will be from the center.

Sudiyono (2013) enriches Alexander and Robertson (2004) model in two ways. First, he categorizes stakeholders based on three elements: their relative legitimacy, control over resources and veto. Second, he distinguishes three different domains to which stakeholders belong: market, state and civil society.

In line with Czischke (2018), stakeholders can be positioned at three different positions:

- **Layer 1: Local stakeholders:** those who have significant influence in the access to housing thanks to strong local legitimacy and /or strong control over essential resources (financial resources, legal permits, etc.) locally.
- **Layer 2: Regional stakeholders:** they play an important role in enabling refugees' access to housing and operate at the regional level.
- **Layer 3: National stakeholders:** they are operating at the multiregional or national level. They can be companies, institutional actors, general public, associations, etc. They usually play an indirect (or less direct) role in refugees' access to housing

Figures 2 and 3 summarize the main actors involved in the access to housing for refugees in the Lyon and Rennes metropolises.

Figure 2. Stakeholders engaged in refugees' access to housing in Lyon

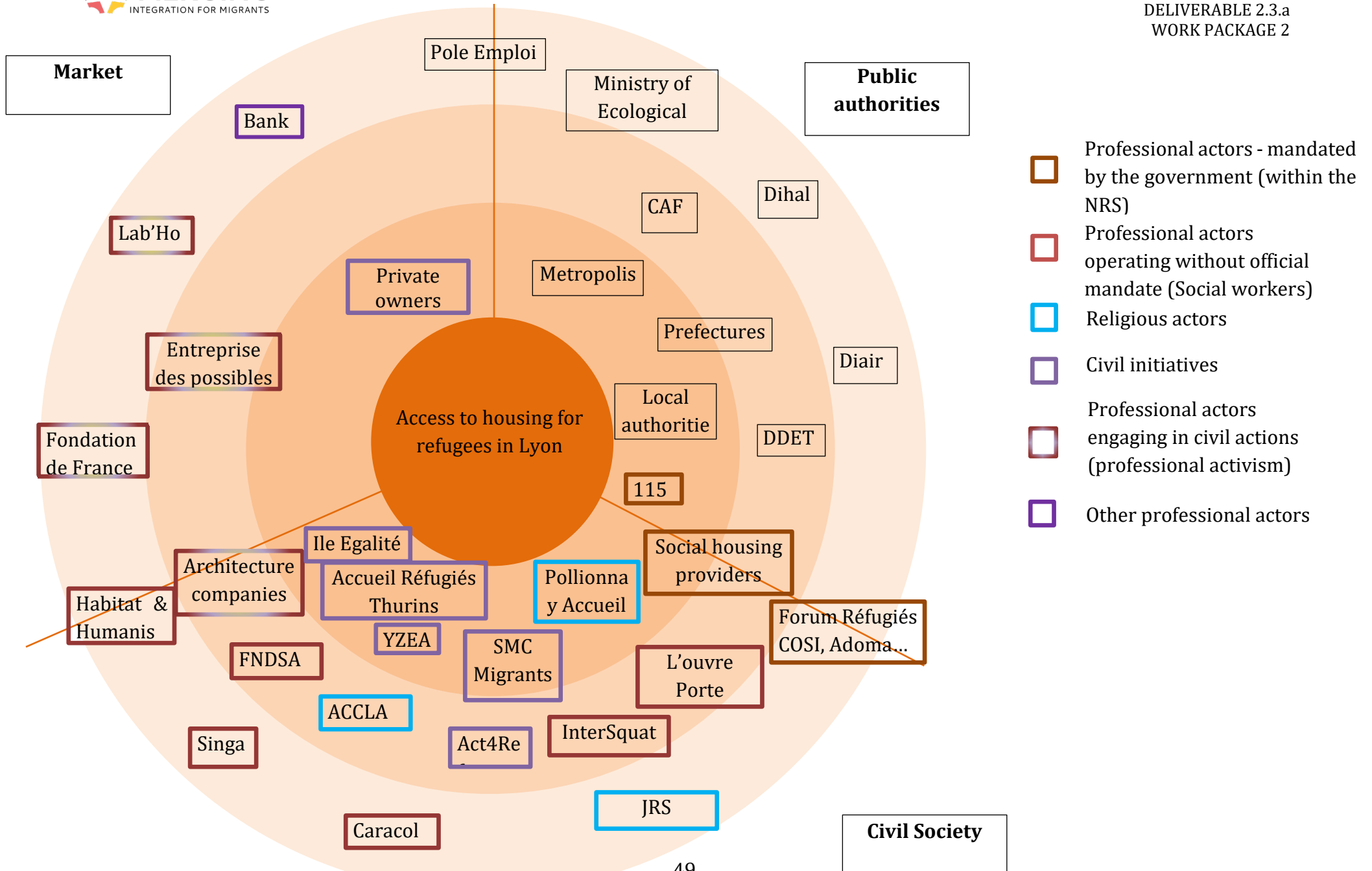
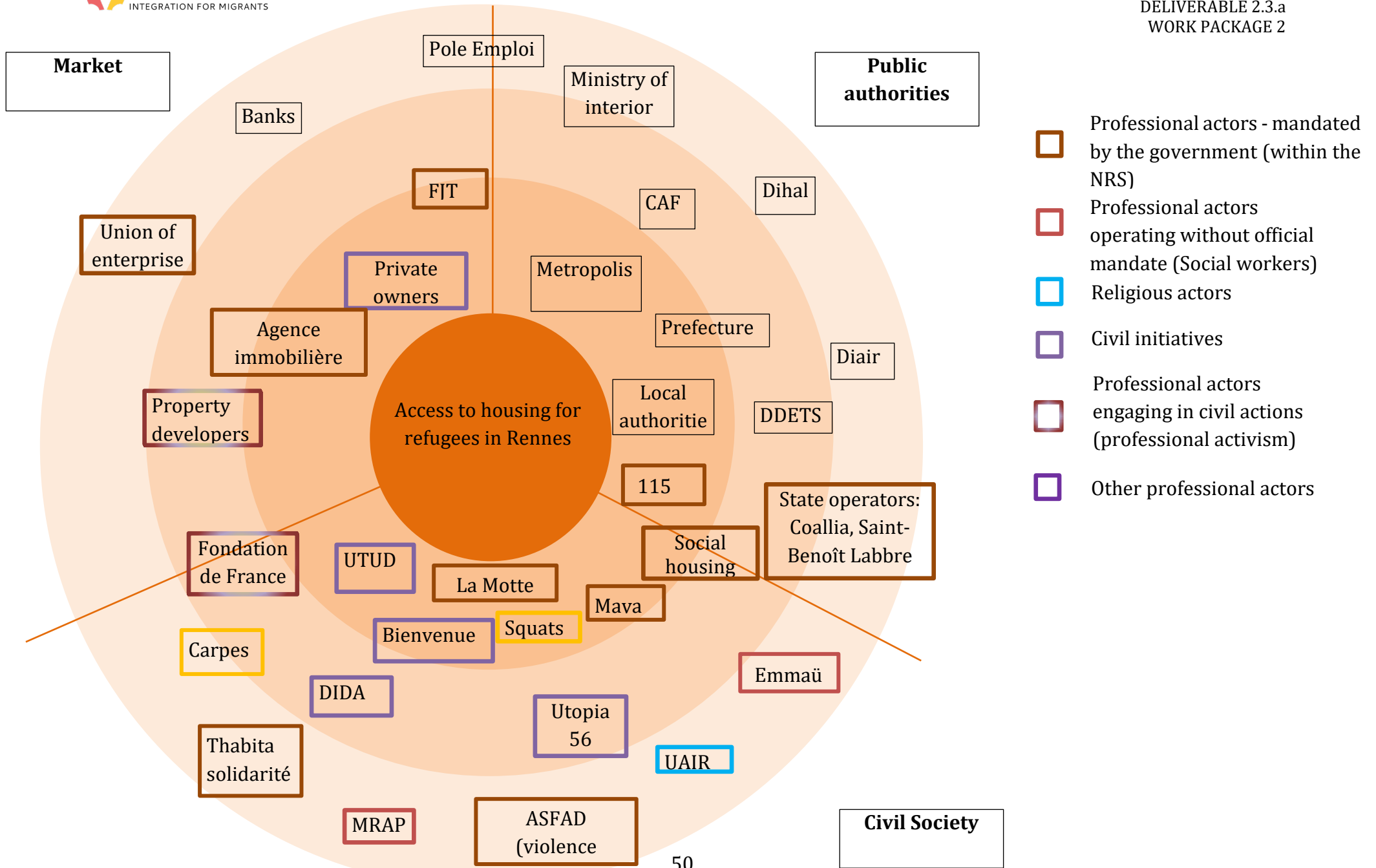


Figure 3. Stakeholders engaged in refugees' access to housing in Rennes



## Glossary

CADA	Centre d'Accueil de Demandeurs d'Asile (Reception Center for Asylum Seekers)
CALM	Comme A La Maison (Like at Home)
CCH	Code de Construction et du Logement (Construction and Housing Code)
CPH	Centre Provisoire d'Hébergement (Temporary Accomodation Centers)
CTAIR	Contrats territoriaux d'accueil et d'intégration des réfugiés (Territorial Contracts for the Reception and Integration of Refugees)
DDETS	Directions Départementales de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités (Departmental Directorates for Employment, Labour and Solidarity)
DGEF	Direction Générale des Etrangers en France (General Directorate for Foreigners in France)
DIAIR	Délégation interministérielle à l'accueil et à l'intégration des réfugiés (Interministerial Delegation for the Reception and Integration of Refugees)
DIHAL	Délégation Interministérielle pour l'Hébergement et l'Accès au Logement (Interministerial Delegation for Housing and Access to Housing)
EMILE	Engagés pour la Mobilité et l'Insertion par le Logement et l'Emploi (Engaged for the Resettlement and the Inclusion through Housing and Employment).
FNAVDL	Fond National de Soutien pour et dans le logement (National Fund for Support to and in Housing)
HUDA	Hébergement d'Urgence pour Demandeurs d'Asile (Emergency Accommodation for Asylum Seekers)
OFII	Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (French Office for Immigration and Integration)
OFPRA	Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (French Protection Office for Refugees and Apatrides)
SIAO	Service Intégré d'Accueil et d'Orientation (Integrated Reception and Orientation Service)
UTUD	Un Toit c'est Un Droit (A roof is a Right)

## SWEDEN

In Sweden migrant integration is provided at the municipal level. Sweden is quite a decentralized state with three levels of government. The national, the regional and the municipal. The municipal self-governance is enshrined in the constitution. Local authorities (municipalities and regional councils) are independent bodies, who freely make their own decisions within a regulatory framework shaped by laws and the constitution. The specific scope of municipal authority and the areas of decentralization are decided by the parliament. (Barthoma et al. 2020).

The different actors and their mandate in relation to housing for beneficiaries for international protection can be summarized as follows:

### National State

The government introduced the settlement law (Government, 2016). Within this legal framework, the state decides how many beneficiaries of international protection (more often referred to as newly arrived) will be allocated in each of the municipalities and by county. Also, they provide the guidelines for the implementation of the settlement law. In 2020 the Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret) published a report on the implementation of the settlement act so far with some rather negative findings in relation to the attempts of the municipalities to social dumping (Statskontoret 2020). Social dumping is when a municipality makes people in need of support measures move to another municipality without the person himself expressing a clear will to move. It is often municipalities with high unemployment and a strained municipal economy that then need to take over the responsibility and costs for individuals who move from more affluent municipalities (ibid)/

The Swedish Migration Agency is the governmental agency which is responsible for applying the algorithm which, after taking into consideration the labour market conditions, the population size and the number of newly arrived, unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers already settled in each municipality, allocates refugees in the different counties across the country.

An important part of the establishment law (Government 2010) is the labour market integration for the newly arrived. The Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) is responsible for the integration in the labour market of the beneficiaries of international protection aged 20-65 who have been granted a residence permit. They develop an individual 'establishment plan' together with the person concerned and in collaboration with the relevant municipalities, authorities, companies and organizations. They also have the mandate to decide the amount of allowance paid to beneficiaries for international protection for their participation at the establishment program.

## **Regional Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelserna)**

The regional Administrative Boards participate in the planning, organization and implementation of the housing policies for beneficiaries of international protection. They operate at the county level and they are the ones deciding after receiving the number from the Swedish migration agency how many refugees will be allocated in each municipality within the county. Their role of promoting regional cooperation is fulfilled by collaborating with other actors such as municipalities, government agencies, private companies and the civil society. They also support municipalities in the coordination of municipal activities such as Swedish language education for immigrants and civic orientation education. In relation to financial involvement, they are in charge of distributing state funding to municipalities in order to cover the cost for the policies of the settlement law.

## **Municipalities**

Municipalities are the main responsible actor for integration. This includes housing and education. Education comprises of Swedish language education, civic orientation classes and adult education. They are also responsible for preschool, school and child care. Until the settlement law in 2016, the distribution of refugees in Sweden was organized through communication and agreement between the Swedish Migration Agency and the municipalities. This allowed municipalities to decide how many people they want to take. Between 2006 and 2010, 92% of all Swedish municipalities received and settled beneficiaries of international protection. The annual average was 74 refugees per municipality, which led to a large variation across municipalities, especially the bigger ones ended up hosting the vast majority of beneficiaries (Barthoma et al. 2020).

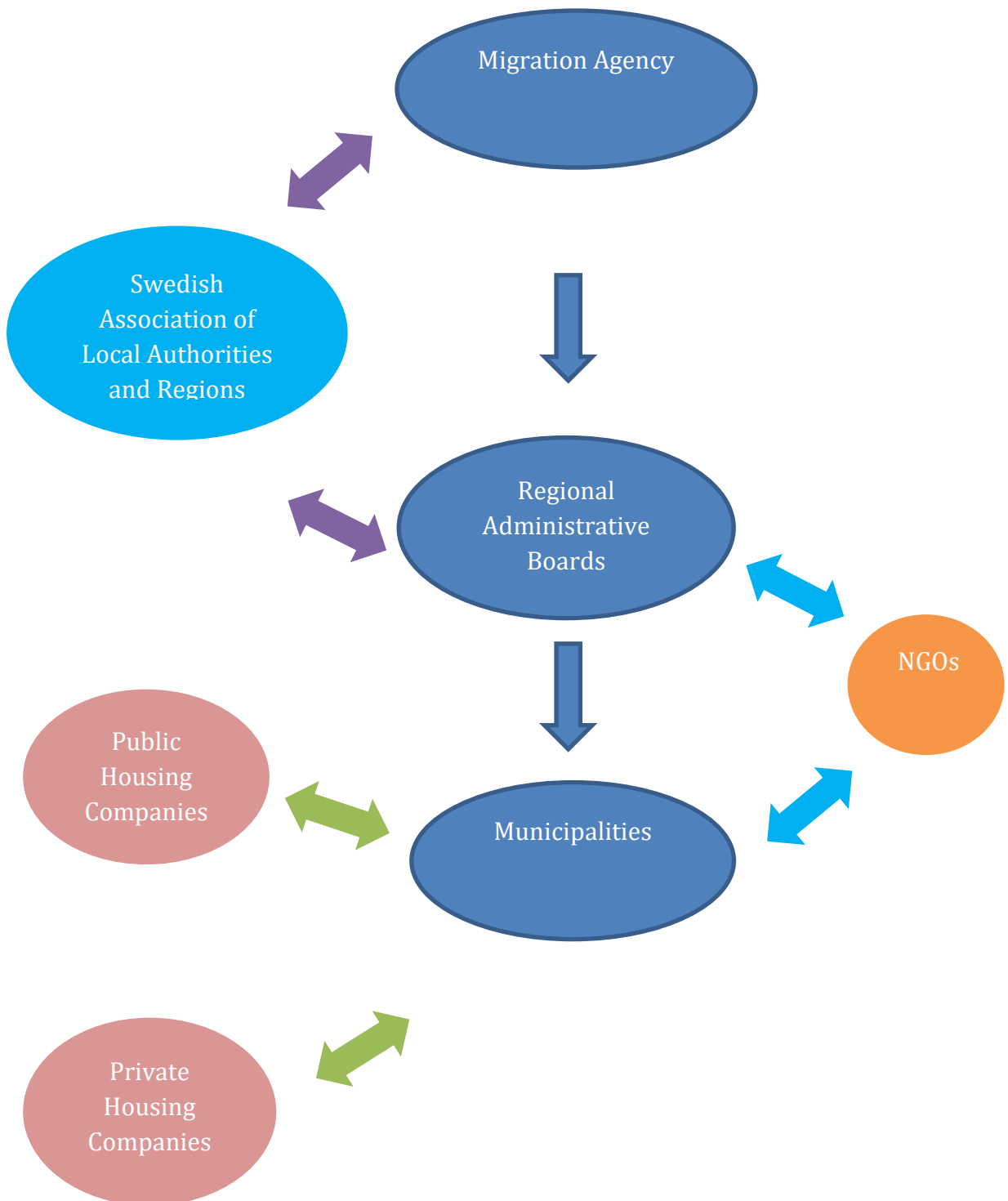
After 2016 all municipalities were forced by law to receive a specific share of beneficiaries of international protection. This was a top-down change on the reception system which had major implication for housing since not all municipalities had a possibility to house the amount of people they were required by the state. The government tried to mitigate this issue by offering the municipalities 1.85 billion SEK in grants to support the construction of new housing for asylum seekers and newly arrived (Fratzke 2017, 13-14). The municipalities are in close collaboration with the public housing system in arranging rental apartments for refugees (Interview with representatives of the public housing company in Gothenburg, Interview with Municipality representative in Gothenburg, Spring 2021). The municipality of Gothenburg has been also collaborating with private companies which own and develop rental apartments. They have been negotiating for example the use of land plots for new development in exchange for rental apartments for refugee housing (Interview with Municipality representative in Gothenburg, Spring 2021).

In addition to the three main levels of government, there are a few more key actors involved directly or indirectly in the housing and overall integration of beneficiaries for

international protection. One of them is the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. This organization provides advice and support to municipalities and regions and works close with the state authorities in order to coordinate the integration policies at the local level.

The role of the civil society, although is very important, is rather vague. In 2018 there was an official agreement between the state and civil society organizations which established a new national support structure for dialogue and collaboration (Righard and Öberg, 2019). In the aftermath of 2015, the civil society was very active in the reception of newcomers and the state relied a lot in their support to fill gaps (Hansen 2018). In recent years, the civil society has shifted from reception activities to integration as the needs for beneficiaries for international protection have changed and the new arrivals have decreased (Barthoma et al. 2020).

Figure 4. Actors and their mandate in relation to housing for beneficiaries for international protection



## SPAIN

### Public Administration Governments

At the national level, the body dedicated to immigration is mainly the Ministry of Inclusion, National Security and Migration - Secretary of State and Migration. The Secretary of State for Migration develops the migration policy established by the Government of Spain. Among its powers this actor develops the Reception and Integration System for Applicants and Beneficiaries of International Protection (SAISAR System) and the Spanish Observatory of racism and Xenophobia – OBERAXE which function is collecting information on projects, surveys, resources, reports and studies, promoted by the Secretary of State for Migration and by other ministerial departments, entities and institutions; in order to serve as a platform for knowledge, analysis and promotion of work to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

In the case of Spain, the autonomous communities are responsible for various competences within the framework of integration policies through sectorial policies on employment, education, housing, health, social affairs, etc., through their own statutes of autonomy. In addition, the autonomous communities is also in charge of the transfers of powers carried out, which in some cases are full of legislation and execution, and in others they are only of execution.

Likewise, at the regional level, we will remark that for the Valencian Community, we will highlight the following three Public Administration Governments that develop access to housing for refugees policies:

- Vice-presidency and Council of Equality and Inclusive Policies – Autonomous Secretariat of Planning and Organization of the System Council

It is in charge of strategic planning promotion, training and professional qualification policies, evaluation of public and quality policies in the field of social services, as well as the coordination of the map of social services, infrastructure and system management, to implement the Valencian social model.

This Council develops some resources such as Red Pangea, an instrument for coordinating policies for the care of migrants with the local administrations of the Valencian Community that have offices in various municipalities. They are located in the dependencies of the town councils and associations. In addition, the masses provide care to migrants who are in a situation of social need through information actions, first reception, mediation and accompaniment to the services necessary for their autonomy and social inclusion. They also develop projects to promote coexistence and interculturality.

- The Bioclimatic Housing and Architecture Ministry – General Directorate of Housing Emergency, Social Function of Housing and Observatory of the Habitat and Urban Segregation

It studies and analyses the housing situation in the Valencian Community and the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors. Moreover, this Ministry develops measures to address emergency housing situations and, especially, intermediation programs in situations of eviction; design and execution of plans for rental assistance and the promotion of social housing, and the fight against energy poverty.

- Department of Universal and Public Health – General Directorate of Planning, Technological Efficiency and Patient Care Population System (SIP)

This system is the corporate administrative register of the Department of Health that collects and updates the identification, location, allocation of health resources (area, area, centre and medical) and the right to health benefits of the people residing in the Valencian Community or displaced persons who access the Public Health System.

### **Public Administration Services**

In order to implement the several policies and programmes, public administration services will be applied from the governance. In this way, we will remark the map of public services that will be regarded in our work:

- Refugees Reception Centre of Mislata CAR - Mislata

CAR is an instrument to guarantee the coverage of basic needs and the integration of those applicants or beneficiaries of international protection, of the stateless status and Temporary Protection for seeing their fundamental rights threatened in their home countries.

- **Commonwealth of Public Services in Marina Alta (MASSMA)**, which provides a public service to citizens that aims to improve the quality of life and ensure the right of people to live in dignity at all stages of his life.
- **Commonwealth of Ribera Alta - Social Services Area**, which is a local entity that groups all the municipalities of the Ribera Alta Region. The services provided by this entity in the social area are Regional Housing Office (OCH), General Social Services and Home Help and Pangea Immigration Service.

- **Commonwealth of Aldaia - Quart de Poblet - Social Services Area**, which offers a range of services:
  - Guaranteeing social protection through basic Social Services benefits in situations of need.
  - Facilitation to access to social resources for the entire population, preventing inequalities in the use of resources.
  - Informing, guiding, advising and mediating facilitating coexistence, fulfilment and personal autonomy.
  - Facilitating social integration, enabling personal and social conditions for participation in social life.
  - Promoting social solidarity, enhancing social responsibility in the face of social needs.
  - Carrying out a personalized intervention, based on a social diagnosis and an integrated social treatment.
- **Gandia City Hall – Social Services Area**, which owns a housing access program that promotes social support alternatives and integrated solutions for groups with problems of access to housing, training and employment as a means of social integration. This program is aimed at groups that encounter great difficulties and limitations in accessing existing aid.
- **Cullera City Hall – Local Development Area and Red Pangea**, which carries out actions of reception, information, advice and mediation to the population and the associations that represent it. At the community level, it will develop actions that facilitate coexistence in the face of cultural diversity.
- **Valencia City Hall:**
  - Immigration Service Centre – CAI

CAI is created to structure a coordinated social care system for the homeless immigrant people's first reception. It is located in Mislata (Valencia), which allows optimizing the different resources available and profiting their actions, making available a social team for the assessment and initial social intervention with said population that presents the need for a first reception.

It provides accommodation and maintenance resources for the first reception. Moreover, this resource encourages social integration by providing or facilitating access to training actions, socio-cultural contextualization and learning in Spanish and Valencian. It also supports and guides users for their access to basic public resources and services and, where appropriate, for the processing of their documentation (passport, travel documents ...). Finally, it analyses the existing demand, the new needs, the adequacy of the existing resources and the proposal of new resources.

- Social and labour insertion programs

Many services that come from the Municipality of Valencia are essential to our work. We will specifically highlight some of its services:

- **Rental Applicant's Registration** is a registry where people who have a need for rental housing will be registered. It is used to inform about the real demand for social housing in the city of Valencia. Facilitates and streamlines future rental housing award processes. It guarantees the maximum transparency of all processes.
- **Individualised Economic Benefit** are financial aid for people to remedy a seriously deteriorated situation of urgent need or with serious specific problems that affect their personal, social and economic autonomy. These situations include access to or maintenance of the habitual residence and / or the expenses derived from it.
- **Access to Housing Programme** aims to achieve a set of coordinated, concerted possibilities, initiatives and actions to facilitate access to decent housing for those families with a significant number of deficiencies, and who cannot normally access it. in the real estate market. It is about making viable a rental or owned home.
- **Access to Accommodation Resources in the City of Valencia for Homeless Immigrant People** is a programme which allows homeless and resourceless immigrants to access resources for assistance accommodation in the city of Valencia. The First Reception Area coordinates the accommodation of homeless immigrants, constituting this the only entry point in the network of resources for assistance accommodation in the city.

### Third Sector

As it is known, third sector organizations are the main actors that assume the role in access to housing. Nevertheless, we will mainly differentiate between entities that work with migrant population (regular/irregular) and entities that work with refugee population.

In the same way, there are different entities that work with both groups. Each entity has its role and they can also receive aid, such as the one different NGOs receive from the Spanish Government for the SAISAR system.

When it comes to understand the work of organizations for the access of immigrants to housing, identifying the following aspects has much importance:

### *ACCEM*

ACCEM is an NGO focused on granting the enjoyment of fundamental rights for all kind of socially vulnerable groups, with a particular line of action on migrant and refugees and specific housing and guidance initiatives for solicitants of International Protection through the existing programs agreed with Public Administration.

They also conduct awareness-raising campaigns for companies and civil servants, in order to enhance the enjoyment of rights and the path towards inclusion of migrants and refugees.

They have territorial delegations in 13 of the 17 Spanish autonomous regions and do operate in 31 of the 50 provinces. As to their functional structure, they organize in the following areas:

- Advocacy and Communication
- Management and Administration
- Programs
- Human Resources

### *Spanish Red Cross – Valencian Community*

This Valencian NGO that works in the regional geographical scope of the Valencian Community works in the social inclusion of both groups, people with refugees' status or with the right to subsidiary protection and people in extreme vulnerability.

The work done with refugees is carried out within the framework of the Program for the Reception and Integration of Applicants for International Protection – or so-called SAISAR- of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security. This program aims to address, not only the basic housing and maintenance needs of these people, but also the needs of a physical, psychological, health, communicative, social, legal, training and employment nature, among others.

### *Jesuit Service to Migrants – Valencia*

The Jesuit Migrant Service (SJM) is a non-profit organization created in 2009 by the Social Sector of the Society of Jesus to assist, accompany and defend the migrant population in its process of integration into the host society.

The SJM is integrated into the Social Sector of the Society of Jesus in Spain. Moreover, it participates in resettled refugees' pilot projects in Spain. At the European level, it is part of the Jesuit Refugee Service Europe (JRS Europe) network, and worldwide at the Jesuit Refugee International Service (JRS International).

## *Cáritas*

Cáritas is an NGO rooted on the Spanish Catholic Church, tackling social exclusion from a wide range of spectrums and wide-spread infrastructures. Taking advantage of Spanish Church housing and organisational assets, it has a remarkable local implantation and amount of staff, with ability to act practically at any municipality or neighbourhood where there is a parish.

For instance, just in the Cáritas' division operating throughout the Archdiocese of Valencia, covers the whole province of Valencia and two northern counties of the province of Alicante, covering 327 municipalities inhabited by 2,8 million. Within that area, the Diocesan Cáritas of Valencia operates through 434 parishes, more than 5300 volunteering staff, 190 hired staff, 4800 benefactors, aiding more than 62 000 people.

### Territorial organization

- Parishes → For information and basic assistance (clothing, maintenance support, projects on socio-labour guidance and intervention on childhood and youth)

Functional organization → Centralized at the capital and main municipalities of the diocese (e.g., City of València)

- Inclusion Area → Working with homeless people, migrants at risk of social exclusion, women involved in prostitution and victims of human trafficking. Specific housing resources with social workers supervision
- Familial Intervention Area → Intervention within households. Hosting in dwellings for families excluded of decent housing. Shelter facilities for unaccompanied migrant children and teenagers
- Socio-legal Attention → Legal and administrative assistance on acknowledgement of social rights access to social aids and housing, Foreign Law, derivation to public services
- Charitable Economy Area → Focused on socio-labour guidance through its own employment agency. Intermediation and active search of employment offers throughout the private sector of the area.

### *Spanish Refugee Assistance Commission (CEAR-PV)*

This actor provides care to refugees, stateless people and vulnerable immigrants in their offices in Valencia and the reception centres available in Cullera and Sueca, through the different areas of work, that are:

- Legal Area.
- Reception Area.
- Inclusion Area.
- Incidence, social participation and volunteering.
- Marketing and Development

CEAR has around 1,000 shelters for the international protection applicant's and people with extreme psychological, physical and/or social vulnerability care, which are distributed in shelters in the following Autonomous Communities: Andalusia, Canary Islands, Catalonia, Valencian Community, Euskadi, Navarra and Madrid.

### *CEPAIM – Valencia*

CEPAIM promotes a model of inclusive and intercultural society that facilitates full access to the citizenship rights of the most vulnerable people in our society, especially, migrants. Therefore, it develops policies to combat any form of social exclusion and collaborates in the development of local territories and countries of origin of migrants.

### *ALANNA*

Alanna's mission is to contribute to the achievement and development of an inclusive, sustainable and egalitarian society, carrying out local programs that provoke the social inclusion of people who are in more vulnerable situations, mainly women, minors and families,. It collaborates with the political business and social fabric in order to fight against inequality, poverty and social exclusion.

### *Arquitectura Sin Fronteras España (ASFES)*

This association works to improve habitability and defend people's right to a decent habitat promoting equitable and sustainable human development. In order to achieve a more just and equitable reality, it collaborates with a large number of organizations (public and private institutions, social groups, non-profit organizations and associations) that, like ASF, work to prevent or resolve situations of risk of exclusion and social marginalization, both in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and in cases of substandard housing, assuming a social commitment and direct contact with the population.

### *La Casa Nueva Association*

The association offers comprehensive care by assisting, advising, guiding and accompanying immigrants and refugees in order to refer them to other public and private entities. Some of the other actions they do are:

- Legal and labour advice (registration, healthcare card, residence and work authorization, ...)
- Schooling in entities dedicated to training, especially Spanish and Valencian languages, as well as occupational training.
- Training through courses, workshops and specific projects.

### *Nova Feina Foundation*

They accompany socially disadvantaged people in their incorporation into employment. They do it through itineraries and employment services, training, intermediation and monitoring in the workplace.

### *Provivienda Association*

This actor ensures that all people enjoy the right to housing under equal conditions. From their association, they aim to respond to residential needs, especially of people in situations of greater difficulty. It is found in several regions of Spain.

### *València és Refugi*

This non-profit entity constituted by people of various nationalities for the defence of the rights of refugees included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, training and information from both the host society and the immigrants themselves and the fight against racism, xenophobia and social exclusion.

Their primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of people who have been forced to flee. Together with [partners](#) and communities, they work to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another country. They also strive to secure lasting solutions.

### *Needlab*

This non-profit design and research organization aimed at solving sustainability issues for communities using human and environment centred design strategies. With the ideology of “think global, act locally”, they focus on unveiling new ways of creating a dialogue between local materials, social customs, cultural heritage, and the environment. Their mission is to research, build, advocate for dignity in design and self-sufficiency in communities. Their aim to promote sustainability by sourcing materials locally and empowering people through skill development; their vision is to make cities and human

settlements; resilient and sustainable. Moreover, they are aligned with the United Nation 2030 Development Goals.

## **Business**

The involvement of actors from the private sphere is of vital importance in terms of building bonds in all layers of society. Therefore, this would mean an implication and help from the importance of business in the project. We will only highlight one business actor that interests us for its work due to its participation in activities of architecture projects:

### *Okambuva*

This construction company specialized in the use of natural materials and techniques for construction carries out architecture projects, including the integral management of the work, request for licenses and legal procedures as well as professional advice for execution. It offers training through courses, workshops and events around green building. Moreover, it promotes research and development of new products, through experimentation and recovery of materials, techniques and trades of traditional and natural construction. Their services, products and their way of participating in the existing economy respond to respect and fair exchange between people and the environment.

### *EntreCalles*

Architectural and urban planning studio based in the city of Alicante and fueled by the complementary formation of its founders in Sociology and Geography, they embrace a socially and territorially sensible approach towards architecture.

For instance, they've carried several projects along with public administrations, in order to analyze the different housing needs and habits corresponding to the cultural background of beneficiaries of social housing projects

## **Immigrant Associations**

### *Rumiñahui*

It was created with the aim of attending to the demands and needs of the Ecuadorian collective. Over the years, the organization has become the main reference and the voice of those who emigrated to Europe, in search of a promising future, no matter the country of origin. Its main demands have been Improvement of the social conditions, framed in a regular administrative situation and, subsequently, the insertion in the Spanish society in conditions of equality, both in rights and duties.

### *The Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia*

It is an association at the service of the Muslim community. It exists to represent it in all areas of society, as well as to foster coexistence and mutual knowledge between Muslims and the rest of society, both from other religions and from other nationalities. It works to promote social cohesion, strengthen ties of union and recover the Hispanic-Muslim legacy in the history of Spain.

### *Colombian Women Association (Colectiva de Mujeres Exiliadas, Refugiadas y Migradas)*

This Colombian Refugee and Exiled Women's Collective in Spain has been working since 2004 with women exiled from Colombia due to the last forty years conflict, strengthening ties between them and building them into peace-creating subjects. This group is made up of Colombian women in exile who organize themselves to make the situation of inequality and discrimination in their country, especially towards women visible.

Figure 5. Scheme of stakeholders within Valencian Community

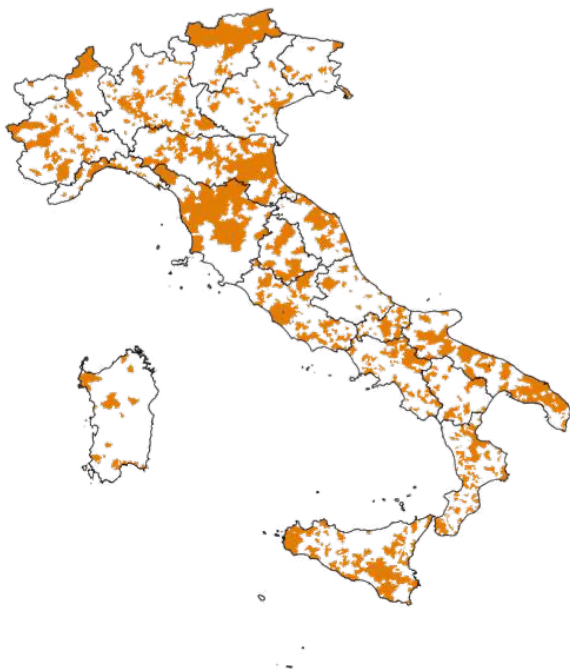


## ITALY

The Central State is a crucial stakeholder in promoting initiatives for the reception and integration of refugees and persons holding international protection, **essentially through the activities promoted by the Ministry of Interior whose Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration has an Office dedicated to Reception Centers.** Furthermore, as anticipated, the Italian **Central Government** is also active at the level of the **State-Regions conference** to promote and activate as many SAI projects as possible throughout the peninsula. Considered the actions and scope of Italian integration policies as related to the access of asylum seekers and refugees to job training opportunities, healthcare, and the local social services, the Ministry of Work and Social Policies as well as the Ministry of Health are also directly and indirectly involved as relevant stakeholders.

Other than the **State and Regional levels of negotiations** on the provision of services for integrating refugees into the Italian national system, **the municipal level is also crucial** for determining who are the relevant stakeholders involved into these processes.

Italian **SAI projects** (former SPRAR and then SIPROIMI), indeed, **are only activated** by the **municipalities** on a **voluntary basis** (See Map n. 1 for an overview on the National distribution of SIPROIMI/SAI projects). Therefore, only the willing local authorities, with the **support of the third sector** (non-profit organisations, lay and Catholic associations, and NGOs), guarantee an “**integrated reception**”.



**Map n. 1 - Distribution of SIPROIMI/SAI projects throughout the National Territory**  
[Source: Annual Report SIPROIMI/SAI 2020]

compiled with the data available until May 2021<sup>10]</sup>

## 1.4 Management and Collaboration

### FRANCE

The initiatives carried out in the territory are both top-down and bottom-up but also horizontal.

They are top-down if we consider the actions carried out by public authorities at different levels. As in other areas of public policy, the state and local authorities design public policy and rely on more or less institutionalized associative actors to implement their objectives. As for the associations, although they are largely financed by the State, they do not have much room for maneuver when it comes to questioning the content of actions defined by the public authorities. Among our institutionalized associative interlocutors, some do not question this state of affairs at all (Coallia, for example, defines itself as an actor of public policy), others underline the lack of means or the inadequacy of certain measures concerning refugees (the local Mission, for example).

Some initiatives are rather bottom-up. They are developed by associations (with official mandate or not) or organizations at the local level and replicated at a wider scale by authorities due to their newness, effectiveness or cost efficiency. The interviews on housing conducted with the actors of the Municipality and of Rennes Métropole highlighted the pioneering role of this territory in terms of social housing allocation and actions in favor of exiled people. According to the interviewees, this territory has served as an example at the national level but also for other large cities.

The same observation has been made in Lyon, with the governmental decision to replicate the Accel'Air program (developed by Forum Réfugiés-Cosi) at the national scale. *"The government was very interested in our program, notably the positive and quick results we obtained in terms of integration, and they plan to replicate it at the national level. Accel'air is a single window program: instead of meeting different actors, going through different procedures, etc., refugees meet only one person. To the government's eye, it reduces both the time and the administrative complexity related to integration (thus... the costs)"* (Forum Réfugiés Cosi).

At another level, the associations succeed in a number of cases in alerting the public authorities (especially the City Council and the Metropolis) to the need to change the way

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<sup>10</sup> ANCI and Ministero dell'Interno, *Atlante SIPROIMI/SAI 2020. Rapporto Annuale SIPROIMI/SAI*, available online at: [http://www.anci.it/wp-content/uploads/Rapporto-SIPROIMI\\_SAI\\_leggero-1.pdf](http://www.anci.it/wp-content/uploads/Rapporto-SIPROIMI_SAI_leggero-1.pdf) (accessed on November, 18, 2021), p.21.

in which public problems are formulated. In this way, they play an advocacy role and help shape public policy. Associations like Fondation Abbé Pierre, UTUD (Rennes), Foyer Notre Dame des Sans-Abris or Intersquats (Lyon) seem to play an emblematic role in this respect.

Finally, the initiatives are also horizontal in the sense that networks of actors are formed and allow the constitution of forms of counter-power in the support of exiled persons. The case of the Ouvre Porte (mentioned earlier), the Ile Egalité in Lyon or the Inter-Orga Collective, in Rennes, illustrate this trend.

### *Box 3. Presentation of the Ile Egalité*

Created in 2020 by a group of citizens after the first lockdown, the initial objective of the Collectif Solidarité Cusset was to offer vulnerable people living in the area the operational support they had trouble obtaining from institutional actors: food supply, French classes, etc. At the end of 2020, a major consultation has been organized by the collective, with the beneficiaries, to get a better understanding of people's real needs. In January 2021, the collective decided to requisite a vacant building in the area and to create the Ile Egalité (Equality Island), a squat collaboratively run by citizens and beneficiaries, offering people in need services such as:

- Weekly food distributions in the form of a free grocery store open to all without condition, every Thursday afternoon
- A free laundry service available to residents of the neighbourhood every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.
- Solidarity canteens to make struggles visible, create solidarity and meet each other. The first canteens of support took place with the striking employees of the General Electric factory and the VTC drivers in Villeurbanne. We wish to be a space of relay and support of social struggles.
- Free French workshops, administrative offices, sports activities, and workshops focused on the media
- Temporary housing solutions

Sources: Collectif Solidarité Cusset (2021) and Radar Squat (2021)

It has to be said that collaboration between associative actors and local public actors varies a lot across the territory, depending on local political overtone. As previously mentioned, the fragmentation of the country and the eclectism of French regions/departments/municipalities (especially regarding the question of housing for refugees) generate important differences in terms of housing practices and policies. Some territories are marked by a fracture between associations and local authorities, while others are characterized by a long history of close collaborations. Interestingly, the COVID-19 crisis had an impact on this trend. Indeed, the municipal elections that took place after the first lockdown provoked unexpected political “green” and social shifts. The

consequence of these shifts is the emergence of a bigger number of municipalities developing social programs to house vulnerable people (such as refugees). These collaborations are, for example, a long-standing characteristic of local social policies in Rennes (Loncle, 2011), and more recent in Lyon. The inter-organization for the support of exiled people brings together most of the associations working in the field of accommodation and housing for exiled people in Rennes metropole. Its creation goes back to a few years and it allows to gather all the weakly institutionalized associations, collectives and trade unions or political parties intervening in the field of housing for exiled people as this member of UTUD explains:

*Well, UTUD is part of the Inter-Orga Collective, and we could even say that it was at the origin of the creation of this Inter-organisation collective in support of exiled people in Rennes. That is to say, it is a collective that was formed at the time of the occupation of La Poterie, which was a former retirement home, which centralised, we'll say, the question of the struggle for the rights of exiled people in Rennes, for a year what. From June 2016 to July 2017, and that's where the inter-orga crystallised, which then became the inter-orga. On the question of housing, there are quite a few collectives in Rennes that are active, there's the Groupe Logement du 14 Octobre, GL14, there's Bienvenue, which also does accommodation, there's Dida, which has a bit of an accommodation component, there's the DAL, with whom we have relations but who are less present in the inter-orga, let's say, who are more concerned with the social housing aspect, so we're complementary to them, let's say, because we're concerned with people... (...) And then after... there are collectives that can mobilise on the question of housing without it being their speciality, I think of the Collectif Sans-Papiers, sometimes they do it. And there are also all the organisations that are not specifically involved in the issues of exiles in Rennes but which are always mobilised with us in the framework of the inter-orga. I'm thinking of the trade unions, and I'm thinking of certain political parties too. And then on the questions of education... There's what's left of RESF35, Réseau éducation sans frontière, knowing that I don't think there's much activity from this association in Rennes. RUSF is also the same, the University Network without Borders, I don't think there's much activity there either, but they're still somewhat linked, and then I'm less of a specialist on the question of education, but there's that axis (a member of UTUD).*

This local network allows associations, including the smallest ones, to exchange on the issues encountered in supporting people and to develop complementary responses in this field. Similar networks exist in the field of food aid.

In general, the field of housing for exiles raises important political questions and is marked by very important conflicts of values (Coutant, 2018). From this point of view, the local situation is no exception to this rule. There are major conflicts between the state and local authorities in the way public policy and its objectives are conceived. In line with the main European trends, national French policies and practices are making the access to fundamental rights (notably housing) more complex. Their typology is creating two categories of migrants, based on their perceived legitimacy: economic migrants are considered as undesirable, when individuals (often intellectuals) persecuted in their

countries are, to the authorities' eyes, legitimate. At the regional and local levels, these fractures are even deeper – some departments taking proactive measures to offer vulnerable people a housing solution while other refuse to do so despite legal obligations.

“The prefect Alain Régnier (now at the head of the Diarr) created a special status for refugees in the Rhone department in times when the country was not receiving so many migrants. People were kind of positive regarding the fact to offer foreigners persecuted in their country a house, and special treatments. But the migration flows, and more specially the terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice changed people's minds. Implementing a similar decision today would be almost impossible: people would wonder why they should accept that foreigners have a special treatment, when local citizens suffer too... It would be harder to implement today, even if it is legitimate. Nonetheless, the decision made by the prefect decades ago ensures refugees the access to 500 dwellings in the department. It is clearly insufficient, but it is better than nothing” (Forum Réfugiés Cosi).

Regardless their will to receive refugees, local authorities are often overwhelmed by the increase of urgent needs, and the progressive governmental withdrawal from social issues<sup>11</sup>. The representatives of the local authorities underlined the difficulty for them to develop a local policy that essentially compensates for the failings of the state:

When there are people on the street, they (the militant associations) go to the City of Rennes saying: "why don't you house them?" whereas it's a State competence on housing and it's the State that doesn't fulfil its mission and the City comes in compensation. And moreover, it's the State that gives the titles and the problem isn't to militate for people to have accommodation because it's not dignity, it's to go to the Resto du cœur for 10 years, to go begging all your life, etc. The problem is to go to a shelter and to be able to get a job. The problem is to have a residence permit... (a local civil servant)

Other conflicts are less high profile but also reveal different values. This is the case for the way in which local policy on refugee housing is conceived, depending on the political leanings of the elected representatives.

Furthermore, conflicts also arise in the field of associations, which are subject to competition for public funds or for the recruitment of volunteers. The interview conducted with Forum Réfugiés Cosi highlights this point:

“The problem, today, is that we have to solve an unsolvable equation: we have to help more and more people, with less and less subventions. The government wants to deal with a very limited number of large associations in order to reduce the number of interlocutors and to have a better control on public spending. They publish call for tender,

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<sup>11</sup> A detailed explanation of these mechanisms is available in D2.2 French Report.

and associations have to compete to get public funds (a bit like what happens for companies willing to work with the government). Today, the government invests in shelters and programs for refugees so many associations enter this new ‘market’. They are not specialized in migration issues, but they are looking for funds so they apply and it is starting to be problematic for other professional associations: the competition is fierce, and if they obtain the funds, they will end by calling historical actors like us because they do not know how to do...” (Forum Réfugiés Cosi).

In this competition for public funds, the most institutionalized associations are often singled out by the less institutionalized and vice versa. Besides competition for funds or volunteers, more and more associations are developing actions to help migrants (notably refugees) due to the rising social demands observed since 2015. The Foyer Notre Dame des Sans-Abris explains that *“today, 68% of the individuals hosted by the FNDSA are foreigners. The profiles of our beneficiaries changed across the years – from national homelessness to migrants – but hosting people in need, regardless their origins, is part of our DNA. However, these people have special needs on the legal, psychological and social point of view. We hired a lawyer in 2015 to help foreigners with their administrative procedures and social workers, we created day centers and shelters to offer refugees a roof for 1 to 9 months... We work in close collaboration with the OFII and the actors operating locally to offer housing solutions to migrants. The specificity of these new beneficiaries pushed us to develop whole new competences and a type of expertise”*.

Within each of the groups, opposition is revealed either on the basis of resources (for example, certain associations with a long history of presence in the country will seem to overshadow the other associations) or for political reasons (for example, among the less institutionalized associations, different conceptions of support coexist both within and between the associations). In the interviews conducted, the anarchist collectives came back to these different ways of conceiving actions in this field.

## SWEDEN

As it becomes evident from the above Sweden has a rather centralized, formal governance model in relation to refugee housing and integration. While the law is very clear about the role of the municipalities as responsible actors for integration, the new settlement law (Government, 2016) made a turn towards centralization. The dispersal policy which is pursued is giving little space to maneuver to some municipalities who before 2016 did not receive any refugees. At the same time some big cities like Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm are not very much affected since they already attracted many refugees.

The problem with the settlement law that almost all our interviewees identified (Interviews with the municipality, regional council, migration agency, public housing, association of municipalities, Spring 2021) has to do with the vague definition of the timeframe that the municipalities have to offer housing to refugees. This is due to the fact that instead of stating how many years should the municipalities offer housing for, or whether the municipalities have an obligation to provide permanent rental contracts, the law says that the municipalities should offer housing during the establishment of the newly arrived. As discussed above the establishment program lasts for two years after the person receives a residence permit connected to the international protection status. In practice this vagueness leads to very big differences in the implementation of the refugee housing policies across municipalities in Sweden. Some only offer housing for two years and some offer permanent rental contracts while some others choose anything between these two options.

Overall, the collaboration between the governmental agencies and levels of government as described in the above section is quite harmonious. Nevertheless, there are complaints from the part of the municipalities that the government should fund them more generously for their housing and integration work. A minor comment that came up in interviews with actors involved was that the municipalities want more information about the refugees which they will receive especially in relation to the potential support they might need in terms of healthcare, social work services and similar needs which can affect a lot their budgeting. As the system works currently the municipalities only get information in relation to the number of the refugees they will receive, whether they are families and whether they need accessible housing.

## SPAIN

From the analysis of the *focus groups* we can see that there is a good relationship between the different agents involved and, consequently, that is positive for the management of the different programme; nevertheless, some clarifications should be made.

Collaboration between the different third sector organisations is a common practice given their relevant work in the processes of social inclusion. Their relationship with the different levels of the administration is also good, although it is worth mentioning that, thanks to the will expressed by the different levels of management, this has improved considerably in recent years. Even though, there is much work to be done.

However, the sector continues to demand better training for the administration staff who then manage the different procedures:

*FG1.E1: "...there is a part related to the formation to public agents that is very well as a title and in the practical thing it is that your census does not depend on the municipal civil servant of turn that is in charge from that of the documents of the register. Or that your health care, when you are in a process of healing, does not depend on the fact that the civil servant wants to grant you the temporary registration or a health card".*

## ITALY

As anticipated, the **Italian reception system for asylum seekers historically emerged from bottom-up initiatives** of the civil-society that self-organized into a decentralized and networked reception system towards the end of the 1990s. **Nonprofit associations and non-governmental organizations thus triggered the birth of the public system for the reception of asylum seekers**, which was accordingly structured as a territorially dispersed system. **Central institutions therefore had to ratify and structure the pre-existing reception network**. As a result, they eventually ended up **coordinating it and favoring its further expansion**. To do so, they had to **operate in close synergy with local institution**, according to the **principle of responsibility sharing** between the Ministry of Interior and local authorities.

The Italian system of “integrated reception” **combines material reception through accommodation to linguistic and intercultural mediation; orientation and access to local services; professional training; orientation to work placement; orientation to social inclusion; legal guidance; and psycho-socio-health protection**. Such services are intended to accompany beneficiaries towards full autonomy and overcome an approach based on emergency interventions and welfarism. For these reasons, they also include **orientation to housing insertion** (Servizio Centrale, 2018: 7).

During the phase of the asylum application, in fact, **accommodating asylum seekers is considered a priority and thus an emergency**, for it is strictly linked to an immediate need for subsistence. And yet, the **provision of housing to asylum seekers is temporary**. Indeed, **the main feature of SAI’s services is the temporary nature of the reception that is expected and, in all cases, to promote the independence and integration of recipients**. Later, **when the status is acquired, access to housing becomes a matter of social integration**.

In this vein, the main goal of SAI is to provide support for everyone in the reception system, designing an individual program that enables the person to regain a sense of independence, being involved in the life of his/her community, in terms of employment, housing and access to local services and social interaction as well as school integration for minors.

## 1.5 Successes and Failures

### FRANCE

Identifying successes in the public action targeting refugees is not an easy task, considering the great difficulties faced by these populations and the time needed to fully integrate. The interviews conducted with different stakeholders –institutional actors, associations, etc. – highlighted the daily issues faced, leading us to point out the limits of the French housing system.

Regardless their nature, stakeholders all confess having difficulties to meet refugees' housing needs due to the lack of resources available, the complexity of administrative procedures, but also the existence of internal tensions.

Renaud Payre, Vice-President of Housing in the Metropolis of Lyon, explains that “as metropolises, the actions we can engage for refugees are limited, as their integration is a state competence: the state handles refugees' integration, we take care of housing and other social issues. The distinction is thin, and we constantly have to walk on eggshells. Besides these administrative elements, we are also facing some internal and local tensions. As you know, the city and the metropolis changed political orientations during the last local elections. The city and the metropolis have been governed by the same team for more than two decades: a lot of projects have been implemented, but citizens now want a new political and social line for their city. We are trying to impulse changes and to bring new dynamics but it remains complex for two reasons. First, we are facing internal resistances due either to competition among departments and political tensions between the previous and the current teams. Identifying vacant buildings and lands in the Lyon Metropole is, for example, a difficult and long task for these reasons. Second, we are trying to change the way we receive exiled people locally by bringing new actors and experimenting housing projects in the metropole. For decades, the reception and housing of exiled people has been assigned to a historical actor, Forum Réfugiés Cosi, in the region. They have a strong expertise, developed their own way to handle applications, and they did a good job in managing shelters, etc. over the years. However, we believe that benefiting from this expertise is not incompatible with the fact of experimenting new projects, developed by other actors such as Singa, Caracol or others. The objective is not to put social actors into competition, but rather to diversify social actors so that we can enrich our practices, innovate, change the way we receive people to have better and faster solutions to offer”.

Despite tensions, several interesting initiatives have been implemented in the metropolises of Lyon and Rennes – either by local authorities or third actors – even if it is too soon to describe them as successful operations. We can cite the actions engaged by Habitat & Humanisme in the Metropole of Lyon – and, at a broader scale, in France – to take care of families leaving CADAs and identified as vulnerable, with little autonomy and

with difficulties too great to be referred directly to the local social services. The accompaniment (administrative regularization, schooling, literacy, health, housing, etc.) of these families is carried out by the association's employees, in collaboration with volunteers. For a period of one year, renewable for 6 months, it aims to give these families a minimum of autonomy so that they can stand on their own two feet. Beside this accompaniment, Habitat & Humanisme developed, in April 2018, the “Escalaes Solidaires”, i.e. moments of shared meals, professional integration and well-being workshops. The objective of these shared moments is to create links and regain self-confidence.

If bottom-up initiatives are more common than top-down ones, we can however mention some actions that have been implemented by local authorities to offer refugees a housing solution -either temporary or permanently. The preparation for the evacuation of the squat “Maurice Seve”, in Lyon, by local authorities is an example of top-down initiatives providing housing and social solutions to exiled people.

“One of the first decision of this new metropolis was to build tiny houses in order to provide exiled a decent temporary house when the squat Maurice Seve has been evacuated. It was a major and symbolic decision, as the overall cost of this operation is almost of 1 million euros. Now that these persons are sheltered, we have to find them a permanent housing solution – and this is what we are doing now. Building tiny houses is a perfect solution, of course, but at least, the evacuated persons were not left in the street while waiting for a social housing. I am proud of our teams and partners because we have been able to move fast: our teams were able to unblock and depollute lands in record time, Hekipia was able to build almost 20 eco-friendly tiny houses in a couple of weeks, and the association Le Mas agreed to take care of the 52 beneficiaries in a couple of minutes. Of course, it did not really please everyone, but watching the commitment, the reactivity of these teams and the positive energy that emerged from them was very inspiring for me, and highly encouraging for the future” (Renaud Payre, VP Housing, Lyon Metropole).

In Rennes, the housing policy - with its specificities (history, transparency, experiments) as well as the social composition of the territory - seem to favour a reception of refugees that is perhaps less based on mistrust than in other places in the country (Halluin-Mabillot, 2012). This is what this local agent emphasises:

'It's a public that is super well perceived, on which bah we can imagine... we're happy to recognise refugees, to get involved with refugees, etc. We're happy to recognise refugees, to get involved with refugees, etc. For another public, well in other areas, it's more complicated. So in Rennes, clearly, we're in a very student, young, integrated city, etc. So it's a public that's, well, not a public that we're going to be able to reach. So it's a very promising public (a local civil servant)

The systematisation of the installation of people in diffuse housing appears to be an interesting orientation to allow an easier integration of people. This is what an employee of a state-operated association emphasises:

Afterwards, the specificity is that our accommodation is only in diffuse housing, so there is not really any visibility. The people are integrated into social life like any other... they are not stamped elsewhere. It could very well be three young people who share a flat, who are students in Villejean or who come to do their apprenticeship or to the high school next door (an employee of a state-operated association).

The development of shared accommodation to alleviate isolation also seemed to be a rather stimulating avenue (Launay, 2018), as shown by this employee of a state-operated association:

Here we have just received a young person who arrived, so who is... as an isolated minor on the territory, so he goes from structure to structure, so he has just turned 18, and he arrives at the CPH. Well, we put him with two dads, in quotes, in the flat, because two rather mature gentlemen because we know that he needs a framework too (an employee of a state-operated association).

The initiatives of weakly institutionalised associations also contain some very encouraging elements. For example, we can mention the operating methods of UTUDs, which make it possible to house people for several years even though they do not necessarily have a residence permit or the resources to access social housing, and which thus give them the opportunity to take a breather and initiate their integration process despite their precarious situation. We can also mention the broader support provided, for example, by an association such as DIDA, which not only provides French courses and accommodation for people in solidarity housing, but also carries out numerous cultural and leisure activities, which are much appreciated by exiled people. Finally, as a local success, the structuring of weakly institutionalised associations into inter-organisations, which seems to stem from the partnership traditions of this city, undeniably gives this collective action more strength in the face of public actors or institutionalised associative actors.

## SWEDEN

In relation to the official policy around housing provided by the municipalities the main success is that this formalized policy has some minimum standards in place and it allows for a better coordination between the different agencies and service providers during the integration period. Especially for the municipalities that offer permanent rental contracts the policy seems to ensure some stability and continuity which can support integration. At the same time there is critique that with this system refugees might end up in neighborhoods where they are not welcome or they might receive housing of poor quality (Grange & Björling 2020, Jansson 2021).

When it comes to the different housing projects we have identified during our desk research and interviews, one can read both successes and failures within their implementation. Below we have summarized the projects and some critical comments on their successes and failures.

### **Askimsviken in Gothenburg, Västra Götaland Region – temporary housing.**

In 2016 and 2017, the municipality of Gothenburg with a population of a bit over half a million was assigned to settle 880 and 1400 newly arrived refugees. The fact that Gothenburg has long been struggling with a severe housing shortage did not facilitate this process (Stepanova and Romanov 2021). One of the strategies pursued by the city of Gothenburg was to build temporary housing. This would first and foremost be a quicker solution since it takes less time to get a permit to build temporary than permanent housing. In January 2016, the director of the Property Management Administration presented twelve designated sites in six different city districts. Due to fierce opposition by local inhabitants in these 12 sites, and due to the power of objection to an urban development project that all citizens affected have, only one temporary housing project materialized in Askimsviken (Stepanova and Romanov 2021).

The temporary housing project with 57 apartments in Askimsviken hosted a group of around 140 refugees. The project is managed by a municipal housing company and is supposed to be demolished after ten years since it is planned as temporary housing. Although a relatively small percentage of newly arrived beneficiaries of international protection reside in Askimsviken the municipality has tried to implement innovative collaborative work which would allow quicker integration, self-sufficiency and independent living (Brorström and Diedrich, 2020). The project was also supposed to produce policy recommendations and best practices in order to suggest a model for integration policies. The municipality established a team comprising by representatives from all relevant agencies and aimed at integrating all the inhabitants of the project in the labor market. As Brorström and Diedrich (2020) show the collaboration between all actors was not as smooth as it was supposed to be on paper. Their findings show the complexities of collaborative work and how boundaries as part of these efforts may become enacted simultaneously as barriers inhibiting collaboration and as junctures

facilitating new opportunities for shared activities (ibid). Moreover, the fact that only a handful of newly arrived were actually part of this project compared to the initial planning for 12 complexes of temporary housing also point to the limited effect it had in the overall integration of refugees arriving in Gothenburg since 2016.

### **SällBo in Helsingborg of the Skåne Region - housing for youth, refugees and seniors**

Helsingborg is located in the south of Sweden, it has a bit less than one hundred thousand inhabitants and it is an important -harbor city. The housing project of SällBo is situated in the neighborhood of Fredriksdal that was mostly built during the 1960s and 1970s and consists of multifamily buildings of 2–14 stories. The neighborhood was originally inhabited mainly by Swedish working-class families with children. After the second generation moved out, many of the first generation stayed. This has eventually led to a high amount of elderly living in the area. As the area offered relatively cheap apartments, many newly arrived migrant families also moved in (Arroyo et al. 2021).

While many elderly living in Fredriksdal felt isolated, young refugees needed affordable accommodation but had difficulty in getting first-hand contracts themselves. Helsingborgshem, the public housing company of the municipality, took the initiative of addressing the housing needs of these groups and included young Swedes which resulted in the integration project SällBo, where elderly, young Swedes and refugees live together sharing common areas (Savage, 2020). Fredriksdalshemmet was substantially renovated to become SällBo in 2019. Helsingborgshem formulated the project concept and the architectural program for the renovation and carried out the interior design in order to fulfill its purpose (Arroyo et al. 2021).

As Arroyo et al. (2021) argue that SällBo is a new type of collaborative housing which offers opportunities for inhabitants to interact, socialize and integrate. An important conclusion from this study is that social integration happens through encounters in everyday life in common spaces –both indoors and outdoors. This offers some complementary insights to the more formal collaborations pursued in the case of Askimsviken in Gothenburg. The actual mix of different groups can be more important than the collaboration of public agencies in the day-to-day integration.

### **Ungbo in Gothenburg – Housing for homeless youth**

Since 2019 Stadmissionen, Rådningmissionen (NGOs in Gothenburg) and the city of Gothenburg started a housing project for youth (ages 19-29) who were homeless. The project was run in a building of Stadmissionen and it comprised of 20 rooms and some common spaces. It also provided the residents with social services and assistance in navigating different administrative tasks. Although the project was not targeted initially for beneficiaries for international protection, it ended up accommodating this group. This tells a lot for the high risk of homelessness for young people who have received

international protection. The city of Gothenburg and Rådningssmissionen left the project a year later and now it is continued by Stadsmissionen.

### **Hjärterum**

Hjärterum is a project of the NGO Rådningssmissionen. The scope of the project is to facilitate access to housing for newly arrived refugees. As described above it can be very difficult for the refugees who arrange their own housing to find a place to rent. Hjärterum is helping by acting as an intermediary. They hire rooms, apartments and houses from private owners which in turn they sublet to newly arrived refugees. The role of Rådningssmissionen which is a well-known NGO as an intermediary has been proven to increase the trust of private owners and provide incentives to rent out housing to people who might otherwise be reluctant to have as tenants. The project runs since 2017 and it has been very successful in mediating access to housing for more than 250 people.

## SPAIN

One of the most recognized successes, but at the same time one of the most feared, is the significant reduction in the average waiting time for resolution. The issue simplifies the process while complexifies the aftermath for those whose applications are denied. If the resolution of the international protection status (which as we will see below has undergone a significant change and now comes in a period of six months) is favourable, people will find themselves in a situation of administrative stability that will allow their social inclusion, employment and consequently housing. But if, on the contrary, the resolution of the international protection status is negative, then they will remain in a situation of vulnerability and instability that, consequently, will have a negative impact on the whole process of social inclusion (Ribera, Delclós & Garcés, 2020).

*FG2.E2: "When there is a favourable decision we can continue with the accompaniment from the different institutions, and this is a guarantee of a better insertion and a better acquisition of a home because we accompany through intermediation, the subsidy of the benefit [...] We are accompanying until the person acquires sufficient autonomy. When a refusal arrives, which may come to an applicant in 5 or 6 months, that person has not even had time to learn the language, nor to contextualize with the environment, nor to acquire enough tools to be autonomous. That is when there is a differentiation. Yes, right now, within the international protection sector, the people who are granted international protection already seem like "first class people" compared to people who remain in an irregular situation from one day to the other".*

An example of good practice developed has been to offer a reduction in the *Impuesto de Bienes e Inmuebles* (Property and Real Estate Tax) to property owners who rent their houses to people in a situation of social exclusion. Some municipalities find this kind of practices very useful in order to facilitate the access to social housing, given the fact that the public housing infrastructure is non-existent.

FG1.E5. "we have been trying to put into practice, but it is not easy... in small municipalities it has been done that, in case there is no public housing, other types of possibilities are articulated, such as a bonus to the owners for renting their housing to a person in a situation or at risk of social exclusion. This is an alternative when public housing is almost non-existent. On the part of ACCEM, whenever we have had the opportunity there has been a transfer of this information to public administrations, there may be reductions in the IBI of the owners, there was a period that applied in the city of Castellón. Somehow you are favouring access to rental housing for a person in a situation of social exclusion or at risk of social exclusion. It is true that the situation is complex, but it is also true that the entities, and I am sure that other agents too, will have initiatives and proposals to alleviate this situation. I think that this is also important, we know how public housing is and we cannot take short-term measures, but while long-term measures will hopefully be put in place, we need to articulate other types of measures that are faster".

On the other hand, though not exactly fitting the focus on refugees, a very significant and recurrent failure is related to the lack of public resources to assist unaccompanied foreign

minors, particularly regarding the so called “emancipation resources”, consisting in semi-autonomous housing and socio-labour centres aimed to keep those reaching legal adult age on the track of inclusion despite the saturated and precarious labour market and the unaffordable housing private market. The scarcity of those specific resources usually results in former institutionalized minors facing homelessness and severe poverty and exclusion, up to the point that a significant share of them have not even acquired the residence and working permit before turning 18 and automatically exiting the itinerary of Childhood and Youth areas of social services, hence becoming undocumented migrants (Guijarro, n.d.). Several stakeholders raised their concerns about the high number of those profiles coming to feeding centres and resources for homeless people. Within that severe exclusion and poverty, some of them become involved in drugs and petty crimes, thus feedbacking with xenophobic national-populist discourses.

FG2.E1. In resources for homeless people we are massively assisting young migrants who, instead of following the path of inclusion, education, housing and access to labour market, are knocking at the door of centres originally focused on people with 10 or more years homeless and with substance abuse. Most of them are newly arrived or coming from juvenile centres and have been institutionalized until quite recently, but they can't access to emancipatory semi-autonomous housing. The foreseen network to prevent their exclusion and foster their integration is practically non-existent.

FG2.E2 If I don't have enough resources to avoid a precarious situation that is expanding within my society and unfitting institutional system, how are those young people supposed to subsist? The answer is low level drug-trafficking and robbery, anything they can grasp. And sadly all that feedbacks with social exclusion and hate and racist speech that finds in those profiles the perfect scapegoat.

It is worth mentioning that a significant reform of the Spanish Alien Law has been approved by October of 2021 in order to ensure that unaccompanied foreign minors get their residence and work permits as soon as they turn the legal working legal age of 16 years old.

## ITALY

Despite several transformations have affected the Italian reception system ever since its creation, **a comprehensive plan for reception and inclusion of forced migrants is still lacking**. Our interviews have revealed that **SAI programmes seldom achieve beneficiaries' full autonomy**, and **access to housing in Italy is a rather problematic issue for both nationals and non-nationals**. It remains unresolved by national policy makers to date, and a source of constant challenges for **local administrators**. The latter, indeed, **are also entrusted with the administration of public housing resources provide by the State to those segments of the population unable to access the private market**. Therefore, it is in this broader country scenario that the challenges refugees and holders of international protection are facing in their search for housing shall be contextualized. And yet, these challenges are also quite site-specific as they strongly depend on regional and municipal policies, and not just national ones.

Therefore, albeit recognizing that departing from the national framework concerning asylum policy and housing policies is key, we believe providing an **overview of the networks and actions implemented in the context of the Emilia-Romagna region** and, more in details, in the municipality of Bologna can be of use for better understanding how the Italian Reception System for refugees works at the intersection between National, Regional, and Municipal actions, as well as actors.

The **Emilia-Romagna** region, through the regional **law n. 5/2004 “Rules for the social integration of foreign immigrants”**, recognized the phenomenon of migration as a structural and organic component of the regional context and, consequently, has placed the policies of integration within its planning, going out from the logic of emergency which stands out and permeates the national right-wing discourse.

Therefore, Emilia Romagna has always been at the forefront of reception policies and is often reported as a success story at the national level, although several **differences surface among the different municipalities**. Indeed, it has a long history of top-level welfare and strong civil-society actors actively involved in its provision. Moreover, it is the second Italian region for the number of migrants welcomed, after Lombardy, and regional reception data always remained at 10% of the national total.

As reported by the Regional Observatory on the Migration Phenomenon (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2021), Emilia-Romagna's first reception and extraordinary reception centers, together with SAI services, welcomed 10,494 persons as of December 2020.

The regional reception model is characterized by a **high level of territorial dissemination** as compared to other areas of the country. By the end of June 2020, a **network of 174 municipalities, accounting for 53% of the regional total, hosted asylum seekers and refugees in CAS or SAI**. The region also participates in the **coordination table for unscheduled migratory flows chaired by the Prefect of**

**Bologna** and has **activated the Regional-Local Bodies coordination mechanism**, which involves the **leading municipalities of the district together with the local authorities responsible for SAI projects**. In addition to agreeing on an equitable territorial distribution of migrants, this coordination mechanism has contributed to the emergence of a **reception model that is highly widespread as it consists of medium and small-sized structures**, which are deemed to be **the most functional solutions to beneficiaries' social inclusion** (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2021). Moreover, regional data reveal that **Bologna is the only province showing higher numbers of beneficiaries in the SAI system rather than CAS**. This means that the highest numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, and holders of international protection in Emilia Romagna are currently welcomed by structures of the Bologna province. In particular, as of 31 December 2020, Bologna Municipality's data indicated the presence of 898 migrants in local SAI project, of which 514 are holders of protection. Specifically: 299 have refugee status, 111 subsidiary protection, 102 humanitarian protection and 2 special protections<sup>12</sup>.

Bologna Metropolitan area's SAI project functions thanks to the **synergic action of the International Protection service of "ASP - Città di Bologna"** (The Public Company for Welfare) **with the following local third sector realities**: [Abantu cooperativa sociale](#), [Antoniano onlus](#), [Arci Solidarietà](#), [Associazione MondoDonna onlus](#), Cidas cooperativa sociale, [Cadiai cooperativa sociale](#), [Consorzio Indaco società cooperativa sociale](#), Consorzio di cooperative L'Arcoiaio (Arca di Noè, Società Dolce, Piccola Carovana, Piazza Grande, Open Group), [Cooperativa sociale C.S.A.P.S.A. Due Onlus](#), [Gruppo CEIS](#), [Lai-momo società cooperativa sociale](#).

This synergetic combination is the product of an intense collaboration among all actors involved, that also **resulted in the promotion of co-planning activities**.

ASP International Protection service has the function of managing the social services addressing the needs of asylum seekers and refugees in the area, while coordinating activities concerning the reception of beneficiaries in the structures managed by the third sector, which are distributed in the whole metropolitan area of Bologna.

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<sup>12</sup> Data retrieved from Bologna's SAI system official website "Bologna Cares", see <https://www.bolognacares.it/dati/>.

## 1.6 Participation

### FRANCE

The participation of refugees – and more generally from exiled people – in the management or the housing decision making process remain rare, regardless the actors involved (public authorities, associations operating on behalf of the state or by social landlords). A couple of exceptions must be mentioned, though, often carried out by associations that do not benefit from public mandate. We can cite the council of inhabitants created by Aurore at the 5 Toits (a temporary shelter in Paris) or Caracol, for example.

Public institutions do not, to our knowledge, take initiatives to organise, nor encourage the participation/empowerment of migrants. Several explanations have been brought by the public services interviewed (Dihal, Diair and local authorities), notably the lack of resources and habits, the will to avoid creating false hopes and the fact that refugees are represented in commissions and meeting by associations. According to the Dihal, *“beneficiaries do not take part in the decision making, or the governance. Integrating them would be too complex, too long: we are dealing with a wide number of actors, each department is different... Refugees are represented by associations during commission, etc., but they are not directly involved in the management, or other things. To our point of view, it could create expectations that we would ne be able to satisfy, and thus generate a lot of frustration”*.

In associations mandated by the government, this practice clearly does not seem to be a priority neither, despite the law of 2002-2 which imposes the organisation of consultation bodies with users in medico-social institutions. Several elements can explain this trend: the lack of human resources (notably social workers) to anime collectives and to face daily emergencies/needs, the lack of financial resources, etc.

Habitat & Humanisme explains that “it is clearly something that we want to develop and that we have to work on. The problem is the following: when one association receives a mandate from the government, the government will give the equivalent (for example) 40 euros/person for X beneficiaries the first year. The association establish a budget, hires social workers, etc. The second year, the government will reduce the subvention from 40 to 30 euros/person, for X + 20 beneficiaries because they put a lot of pressure on associations to host more and more beneficiaries ... Budgets are reducing, needs are rising: it is kind of a vicious circle. As associations, we have to operate with less budget, thus less professionals and more volunteers, we have to act fast and be creative: in such context, it is hard to stop, reflect on our functioning and change the governance in order to include beneficiaries. The second major issue is that there is a high turnover among our beneficiaries: they stay a couple of days, weeks or months and leave. Such a turnover is

hardly compatible with the stability required to take part to the governance of housing projects, unfortunately”.

Besides the resources-related issues, the type of housing has an impact on the participation of refugees in the management and governance of housings. Indeed, the practice of collective and large housing, such as in the 5 Toits (in Paris) can encourage the creation of collective of beneficiaries, meeting regularly with social workers and other stakeholders (artists, etc.) to discuss about current issues, engage projects, etc. The practice of diffuse housing, however, does not help the development of participation initiatives, as this employee of a state-operated association points out:

“So, maybe my colleagues in the CADAs have been able to set up some. We have... it's the fact that we're diffuse too... which has led to the fact that the participation mode has been... it seems complicated to us to implement it. We have a satisfaction questionnaire at the end. But there is no social life council as defined in the 2002 law.<sup>2</sup>”

On the side of the weakly institutionalised associations, attempts are being made to involve people more systematically in the running of the accommodation and housing (Bonnell, 2020). However, the way in which these initiatives are carried out and the involvement of the participants depends very much on the values held by the volunteers (values that are not always shared within the same association). For example, at UTUD, a volunteer explained that some volunteers see their actions as helping exile people, while others campaign to enable them to live in the most "ordinary" way possible in French society.

In a squat, a volunteer member of a collective emphasises:

Ideally, what we want is that one day we won't need to be there at all. But it takes a long, long time, I think. What we decided in any case in the collective is to... when a decision is taken at the General Assembly by the residents, we do everything, we put everything in place so that this decision, which was taken collectively, is kept. (M. from the collective that created the squat.)

## **SWEDEN**

MERGING intends to apply a participatory approach to refugee housing especially in order to test how this affects integration. In Sweden as it becomes evident from the above analysis housing for refugees is formalized and centralized. The initiatives we found during fieldwork have some minor aspects of participation in the day-to-day implementation at least. In particular in the case of sällbo the tenants have monthly meetings where they discuss issues around the house and different needs they have or activities they want to suggest. Also, we have been in contact with NGOs who work a lot by utilizing unofficial networks in order to help refugees to find housing. In these networks there are many refugees or migrants helping out newly arrived ones. Overall, the participatory aspect is very low in Sweden and therefore MERGING can contribute new knowledge by applying a participatory model for the pilot.

## SPAIN

In relation to participation, even though in recent years collaboration between the different agents has improved significantly, one of the objectives among the participants on the focus group is to facilitate the coordinated management of the different actions and programs that are being developed. Without this coordination, there would exist different initiatives without connection one to the other, and that would facilitate an overuse of the resources, and maybe sometimes also a misuse of the infrastructure devoted to the reception process.

*FG1.E6: "I am going to summarise it in that there should be greater articulation between the actors of the foster care system, but with fixed policies of social cohesion, integration and inclusion so that all the public and third sector actors involved in the care of users can strategically manage the whole reception process. I believe that there must be an openness of active participation with all the actors involved in the reception process in order to achieve a much more effective and active social cohesion".*

Another remarkable aspect in relation to participation is the scarcity of forums in which the beneficiaries participate and to whom a voice should be given so that they themselves can communicate their main demands, difficulties and even provide solutions. Quite often those who are asked within research or public funding evaluations are the social workers and other technicians in charge of social entities, while the ones who might be asked are the beneficiaries.

*FG1.E5: "I think that we have to pass on the message and the difficulties that people may have to access housing and ultimately to access rights, but I do think that in some way the voice of those people who encounter this difficulty on a daily basis is also missing. When you asked us what their capacities and abilities are, who better than them to answer that question? There also comes a time when social entities are a part of it, but, above all, I would recommend to value the possibility of having our collaboration to listen to the voice of these people.*

As a relevant contribution, it is worth highlighting the contribution made by the architects and urban planners' focus group. They refer to the fact that urban and architectural projects require a succession of strategic, political and technical decisions that define a physical transformation. That is why facing them from an inclusive and participatory glance has a double interest: on the one hand, it allows understanding the complexity of the different positions, both needs and wills of the technical workers from different disciplines and of the direct and indirect users; on the other hand, it is a privileged opportunity for community invigoration, due to the fact that it is possible to organise meetings with interests groups, which can weave links towards collective objectives.

In the focus group on urbanism and architecture, it is also highlighted that diversity influences the configuration of new urban contexts (Bonnet et al., 2016; Gardesse & Lelevrier, 2020). In this sense, the incorporation of the perspectives of users and

beneficiaries in the architectural projects is deemed crucial, considering that giving optimal responses to the processes of inclusion requires knowing cultural differences, needs and habits, in order to be able to generate links with the environment.

*FG4.E2 "...participation... is the only thing that can guarantee the success of a project, especially a project of these characteristics. It makes no sense, in a general scope, to initiate processes or propose projects without knowing or participating with the people who are really going to use them, inhabit them, live them... when a person participates in the construction of something, it is evident that afterwards they respect it much more and feel identified with what they have generated together with you."*

*FG4.E3 "...we cannot understand architecture as an end in itself, but as a tool for people... when we are far from the ways of inhabiting, it is fundamental to include it... when you propose the social inclusion of a collective, if you generate some participative processes where for example local population is included with vulnerable population, you are generating some links in the own constructive process. So, even if you get to build something physical, it does not become the ultimate goal, it becomes a tool for an end that is to satisfy human needs such as inhabiting a territory".*

## ITALY

**SAI projects** usually provide beneficiaries with **reception solutions in rented apartments or medium-sized structures** and **take full responsibility for their livelihoods**. **Personalised programmes** are also offered to clients so that they can (re)acquire autonomy, participate, and effectively integrate into the Italian society. **Such an approach requires supporting refugees and holder of international protection** in finding employment and housing, other than accessing local services and education, but also **participating to the social life of the community of reference** (Servizio centrale, 2018).

According to the official documentation of the SIPROIMI/SAI system, as many as 97.8% of the hosting projects declare that they encourage the active participation of the beneficiaries in the activities of their host structures. However, a careful analysis of the initiatives that are understood as factors of participation shows that these are limited to activities in which the beneficiaries are mainly engaged in cleaning their own spaces (99.8% of the projects). These activities are also described as part of an educational pathway whose intended aim is to "make the beneficiaries of the projects responsible" towards the community and "make them acquire all the habits necessary to become autonomous within the structure"<sup>13</sup>. This suggests an approach that, **rather than recognizing beneficiaries as protagonists in determining their own path of integration into the host society in a truly autonomous way** tends to **see them as subjects of an educational path whose aim is their social integration**.

The SIPROIMI/SAI 2020 report also describes **initiatives whereby beneficiaries who have been hosted for a longer period are involved in the process of accompanying the newcomers in the project** (94.3% of cases) as activities aimed at soliciting their participation. This implies that the beneficiaries already present within the projects become for the newcomers a source of information necessary for life in the host structure and in the local community, also through the **organization of workshops and training meetings** (92.1%) and **awareness and information initiatives** (91.0%). The declared aim of these activities is to **make the beneficiaries more responsible for their role**.

Despite institutional data on the reception system, however, several of our interviewees concurred that **truly participatory approaches** involving beneficiaries - i.e., those intended to recognize them with real protagonism in co-designing the services offered to them by the actors entrusted with secondary reception - **are still under experimentation, and do not constitute a structural phenomenon**.

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<sup>13</sup> ANCI and Ministero dell'Interno, *Atlante SIPROIMI/SAI 2020. Rapporto Annuale SIPROIMI/SAI*, available online at: [http://www.anci.it/wp-content/uploads/Rapporto-SIPROIMI\\_SAI\\_leggero-1.pdf](http://www.anci.it/wp-content/uploads/Rapporto-SIPROIMI_SAI_leggero-1.pdf) (accessed on November, 18, 2021), p. 81.

Confirming what already critically underlined by Colombo (2019), also our informants admit so-called “newcomers” that are currently clients of secondary reception and protection services remain largely excluded from the debate concerning the approaches that would facilitate their path for social integration and inclusion (Colombo, 2019).

## 2. Portraits of refugees

### 2.1 Needs: Refugees' needs and requests on access to housing identified

#### FRANCE

An analysis of the refugee and exile population in Lyon and Rennes lead to contrasting and eclectic results: because of the diversity of their situations (gender, family status, resources...) and background (curricula, migration paths and trauma, etc.), refugees' housing and social needs are extremely different. A family with children will logically need a larger house than a single person, a refugee studying might need a quiet place, someone suffering from trauma might need a quiet and single place, etc.

Beyond the typology of the housing, it is necessary to take into consideration the specific needs of each household in terms of proximity of public facilities such as transports, schools, or administrations. Placing a family in an area where access to school and/or kindergarten is easy, ensuring that the housing allows for good interconnection with public transport to go to work, etc. Such considerations will facilitate the socio-professional integration of refugees locally. There are therefore no single needs or, as one manager of the Saint Benoît Labre association explains, *"each one has its own needs"*. The Saint Benoît Labre association works for the housing and integration of the most disadvantaged and, in the field of migrant reception, manages a CADA and a CPH in the Rennes area.

Interestingly, the consideration of refugees' needs is variable across actors and territories. In the metropole of Lyon, two of the actors interviewed appear to have opposite policies in this matter. They can apply a "single offer" policy, like Forum Réfugiés Cosi, or try to find the better matching between people's needs and existing housing facilities, such as Singa.

The representants of Forum Réfugiés-Cosi explain that "our policy is to offer refugees a single housing option: if they refuse it, they lose their right to get a social housing and will have to look for a flat on the private market. It might look hard, said like that, but we have so many demands that we cannot comply with the exigences of refugees. In Lyon, each year, between 8,000 to 12,000 of social housing are allocated to vulnerable individuals, for more than 80,000 demands. Other associations like the Cimade will keep looking for housing until they meet refugees' expectations: people can refuse the housing offered as often they want, the association will keep looking. It is not our policy, because we cannot afford to do so."

Contrary to Forum-Refugiés Cosi, Singa adopts a more personalized approach towards housing. As previously mentioned, the association connects refugees with citizens who

have a room to host them (for 3 to 12 months). They study refugees and hosts backgrounds, wishes and center of interests in order to organize the matching, based on the proposed/requested location of the host and accessibility by public transport, professional activity and interests, etc. The objective is to identify similarities to make the cohabitation as enriching as possible. The manager of the office in Lyon explains that *“this process is essential to ensure the success of the cohabitation, first, but also the good integration of the refugee”*.

All the people we met, whether from the association sector, the State or local authorities, agree that they try to take these different needs into account in the responses they provide to exiles seeking accommodation or housing. Pragmatically, they also know that it is easier to support a person or family whose needs have been best addressed.

However, these arguments of principle and common sense come up against the reality on the ground. The associations or local authority services in charge of accommodation and housing for exiles do not have access to all housing solutions for all situations. For example, this manager of the Saint Benoît Labre association admits that she postponed the reception of a visually impaired man, considering that the proposed accommodation was not suitable for his disability. He could only be accommodated after a whole system of aids had been developed.

This last point highlights a central dimension of the discourse of those responsible for housing and accommodation of exiled people. For them, the main need is the need for support and particularly for *“knowing how to live”*, i.e. in line with society's expectations in terms of practical housing care, noise, housing occupation, etc. (Dietrich-Ragon, 2017). This learning of *“how to live”* is implemented concretely through the monitoring of social workers, but also through the very path that public policies require people to take: from accommodation in adapted structures (CADA, HUDA, CPH, etc.), to autonomous social housing.

The predominance of this need for support masks the importance of another need, in contradiction with the first: the need for anonymity and autonomy. For this service manager from Rennes Métropole, refugees want *“housing like everyone else”*. For him, *“this is the most heard word in the end”* but paradoxically perhaps the least listened to because of the structural constraints that weigh on the availability of housing, but also because of the difficult capacity of the public authorities not to judge the needs expressed by prioritising them between those that appear to be the main ones and others that are more secondary (such as wanting a separate kitchen or a balcony, for example).

## SWEDEN

### Institutional and quantitative insights

In Sweden, housing for asylum seekers is either provided by the Migration Agency (ABO) or arranged by asylum seekers themselves (EBO). This distinction follows asylum seekers even after they receive international protection (i.e. receive residence permit in Sweden). The ones who stayed within the Migration Agency’s reception facilities will be offered housing and integration services once they are assigned to a municipality. The others will have to continue arranging for their own housing, mainly through renting or buying from the market. Although there is public housing in Sweden, the supply is way lower than the demand, leading to a severe shortage and long waiting queues.

*Figure 6. Refugee Housing in Sweden (ABO)*

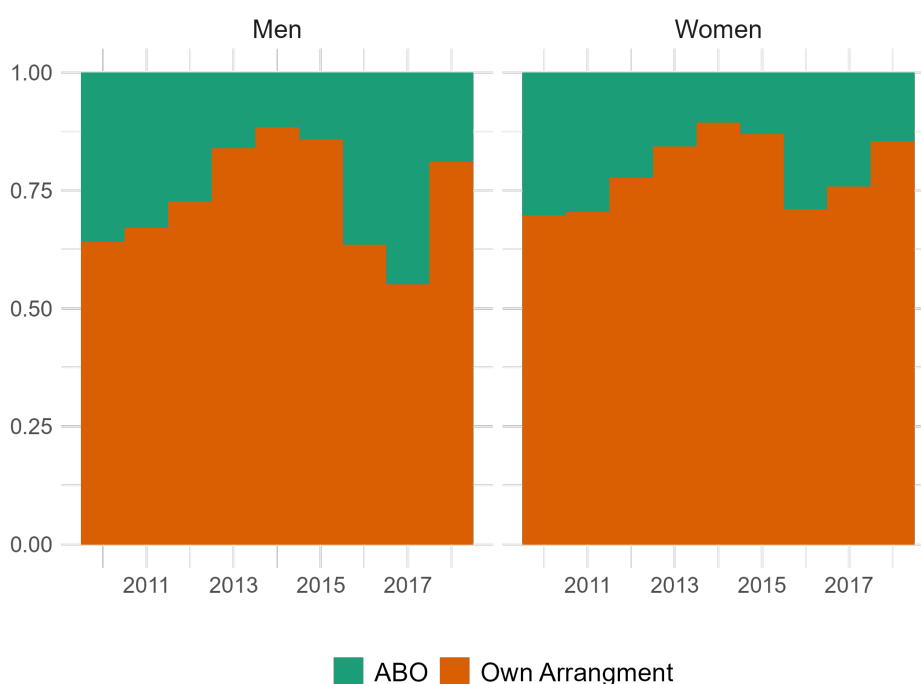


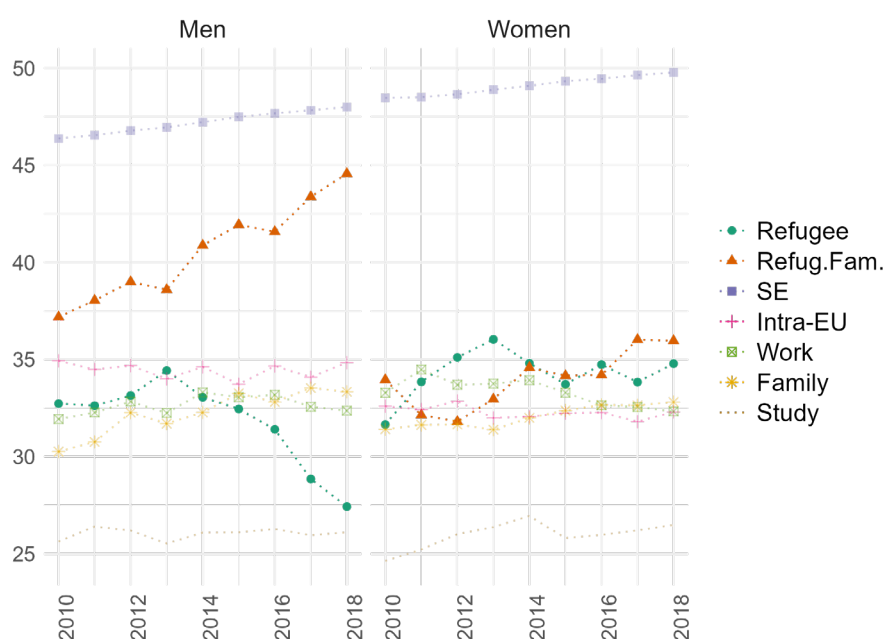
Figure 6 depicts the proportion of refugees who were offered housing through the ABO system. This proportion fluctuates notably overtime. It gradually declined and remained low during 2010-2015, and then increased sharply. In 2017, the share peaked at nearly 50% for refugee men, and followed by a large drop again. These fluctuations may reflect changes in policy for refugees’ settlement and integration. In some years, the policy might be more effective in meeting refugees’ housing needs, compared to other years. Nonetheless, the fluctuations may also be driven by changes in refugees’ preferences, for example the choices of location. Hence, one shall not interpret Figure 6 as evidence of refugees’ unmet housing needs. It merely indicates that the majority of refugees arranged

housing by themselves, which could be due to ineffective settlement policy, but also their own preferences.

## Refugees' Demographic Composition

Figure 7 depicts the average age of newly arrived immigrants who are 18 years or older. There is a striking difference between refugee and reunified refugee family (the family brought to Sweden later through family reunification). Like other immigrants, refugee men tend to be much younger, compared to the native-born population.

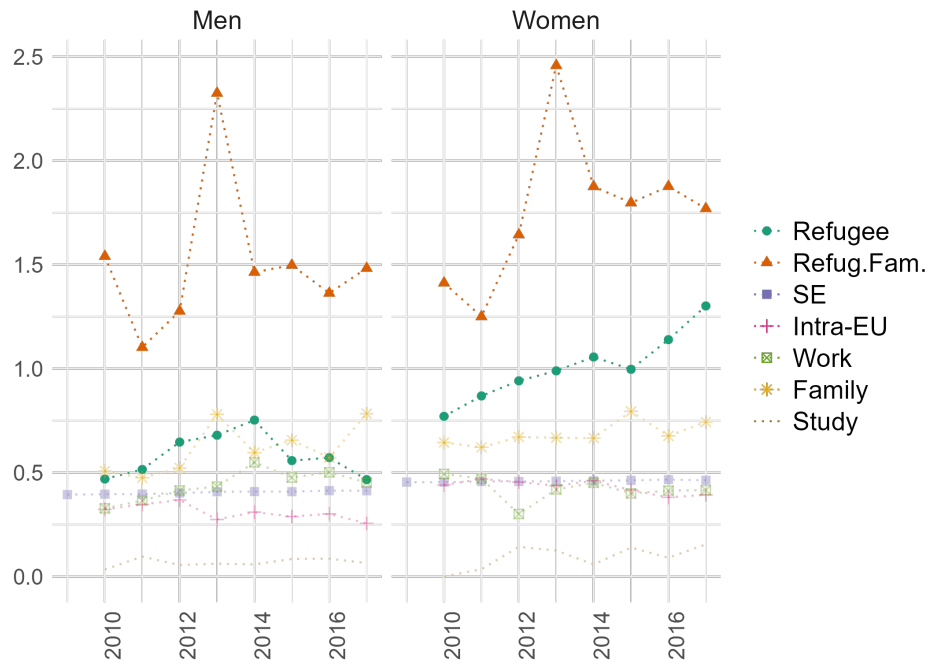
*Figure 7. Mean Age of Newly Arrived Immigrants, Sweden*



However, men who arrived through family reunification are notably older than other immigrants, and, more importantly, the mean age at arrival increased substantially overtime. In 2018, men who came for refugee family reunification are on average 45 years old, which is merely 6 years younger than an average Swedish-born men. Another important note in Figure 7 is that newly arrived refugee men became increasingly younger; the mean arrival age dropped from about 35 years to about 27 years during 2013-2018.

Figure 8 illustrates the number of children that an average immigrant brings with when arrived in Sweden. Those who came through family reunification generally bring more children than refugee themselves. Among the refugees, there is a noticeable gender difference; refugee men tend to arrive with fewer children, compared to refugee women. Moreover, the number of children that refugee women came with increased overtime.

Figure 8. Average Number of Children of Newly Arrived Immigrants, Sweden



## SPAIN

One of the main difficulties is the absence of external guarantees for access to housing, as most of the landlords ask for an assurance that the rent is going to be paid. The fact that there is a programme or a guarantee behind people, whether from a public administration or from the support of an organisation, would favour access to housing.

*FG1.E1: we identified an absence in the guarantees that are the vehicle to be able to negotiate the rent and to reach an agreement with the property; the guarantee that we had is that we could accompany during a certain time, a part of social accompaniment and a part of economic aids until they could connect, in the best of the cases, with the resources of proximity.*

The requirements for access to rental housing also suppose an obstacle to those applicants for international protection, mainly because due to the short time they have been in the country, their incorporation into the labour market has not yet been possible. This instability, both at the working and the social level, implies that they do not have the guarantees of economic stability and sustained income that landlords require for the signing of a rental contract (Colectivo IOE, 2005). Moreover, some of the landlords ask for some guarantees that exceed the usual requirements to rent a house or those that are expected under the Law of Urban Leases (Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos). This is especially visible in cases of renting a house to migrants and also refugees.

*FG1.E3: "Then there is also the issue of the abusive requirements that are being put in place to access leases: payslip, guarantee, non-payment insurance, etc. that many times in the second part of the reception process there is a subsequent guarantee and a contribution of economic security or coverage of some of the requirements by the system and social entities... but once their stay is over, that accompaniment disappears. This helplessness aggravates the situation much more and makes landlords and bidders put even more conditions, which may even go against the Law of Urban Leases".*

Another of the needs raised is the availability of the necessary documentation to access the labour market, as this is limiting the availability of a guarantee for access to housing. This documentation is, generally, having a work contract, something that is limited in the case of asylum seekers, who are in a legal limbo. Moreover, the situation is even worse in some sectors as in domestic work, where having a work contract is an exception. This, for example, affects more women than men, although there are some other sectors within the submerged economy that affects mostly men as agriculture and building industry.

*FG1.E4 It is fundamental to have access to documentation that enables you to work, either through asylum or international protection or through other channels, which exist on the basis of the law on immigration and the law on asylum. Access to training and to the labour market, access to the labour market and having a job is fundamental when it comes to being able to access housing.*

*FG2.E5: "...the sectorization of the migrant population, above all of the women, that many of them work in the submerged economy and that implies that they do not want to make them a contract. And yes, this is the biggest difficulty that we work with here, that they cannot find housing resources where they can rent a room or a flat without a work contract. And of course, without a guarantee, without a paycheck, and so on.*

One of the elements of greatest concern and which is integrally related to access to housing is registration within the local Padrón (municipal register). Without registration it is not possible to access the social welfare system and consequently the person is excluded from any circuit of aid or support for social inclusion. Registration is also key to have access to health care, work and a minimum legal recognition (CEAR, 2020). Although the current legislative framework gives some flexibility to the municipalities to relax the requirements, the immigrant population (regardless of their status) is still finding some reluctance in some municipalities because of a technical interpretation of the Registration Law.

*FG5.E1: "...we find a problem that is the Padrón (Census), which is an essential requirement to be able to access public housing and to be able to access the grants. There is an article, maybe the third or the fifth, in the Resolution of April 2020 of registration, where there are some exceptions. That is to say, the municipalities could register homeless people, but it is a discretionary criterion of interpretation of each town hall. However, we have municipalities... that are more permissive, and municipalities that do not understand or do not want to apply that special article of type of registration. Therefore, it would also be a point to consider in these demands of refugees, who often demand to be able to register to qualify for social assistance".*

There appear discourses that raise a criticism against the models of social integration, which are non-existent in real life, more oriented to multiculturalism than to interculturalism. Academic recognition of titles is a very long and complicated process, which sometimes end in partial recognition, which implies that a full recognition is only possible after having some courses in a Spanish university. So, in general terms, people with an academic title ends up working in other jobs unrelated to their previous experience. Therefore, the recognition of academic degrees emerges as an element of restraint and, consequently, as a great need.

*FG5.E3. "We are constantly talking about inclusion, and we only find ourselves facing one obstacle after another. Then we have also had a lot of people from the health sector, especially from Eastern European countries, and from Venezuela they come with a lot of training as well, and here the most common thing is that they carry out tasks that have nothing to do with their training. We also get people who have a culture that is a source of wisdom, and which has been lost in our culture. People who are not formally trained, but who could participate in a very rich exchange. What happens is that we are in a multicultural but not intercultural reality. We don't interact".*

Leaving apart the problems we have seen before, our informants highlight the values that asylum seekers bring and their ability to integrate, to be independent subjects of a system and to defend themselves. Even though there can be obstacles and difficulties for the inclusion process (getting a job, renting a house, having their curricula recognised, etc.) their motivation and capacity to adapt to new circumstances are key in order to understand how they overcome adversities.

*FG2.E1: "A very positive experience, with people from sub-Saharan countries, with enormous resilience, with tremendous strength, with an immense potential of personal resources and very good itineraries (...) they make an effort to obtain a work contract, they maintain and renew their [residence] card, they have no problems living together, they learn to live here, they are an element of reference for their family, they send money to the family, they regroup, they integrate..."*

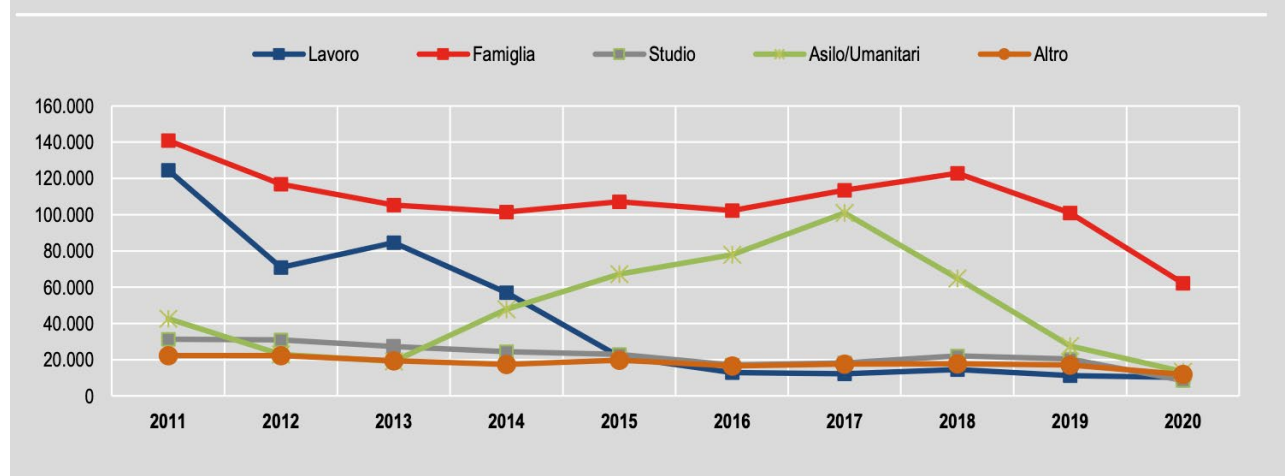
*FG2.E2: ... "in relation to the group of Venezuelans... I can say that... I have attended quite a few families, and in the 7-8 month of the insertion itinerary they are already working with contracts that, generally, although temporary and with not very good conditions, they are a group that moves quite easily and obtain economic stability in the short-long term".*

## ITALY

According to ISTAT data for 2020, the number of non-EU citizens entering Italy were 40% less than in 2019, totalling 106,503 people. Only 12.6% of them are present in Italy with a permit for asylum or humanitarian protection. The **most represented nationalities** among refugees or humanitarian protection holders are Pakistan (46.5%), Nigeria (35.7%) and Bangladesh (17.8%).

Overall, **permits issued for asylum and humanitarian protection were 51.1 % less than the previous year**, following a downward trend at least since 2017, when asylum-related permits had peaked (see Chart n. 1 - green line). **Permits related to family reunification**, which have always been the main reason for the entry of non-EU citizens in Italy, **also decreased by 38.3 %** (see Chart n. 1 - red line).

**FIGURA 1. CITTADINI NON COMUNITARI ENTRATI PER MOTIVO DEL PERMESSO.** Anni 2011-2020, valori assoluti.



**Chart n. 1 - Non-EU citizens entering Italy by permits typology between 2011 and 2020** [Blue line: work reasons; red line: family reasons; grey line: study reasons; green line: asylum or humanitarian reasons; orange line: other reasons]<sup>14</sup>.

While in 2016 men accounted for 88.4% of migrants for asylum or humanitarian protection, in 2020 this figure slightly exceeded 76%. Among the citizens of **Georgia, Venezuela and Colombia** present in Italy for asylum or international protection, **the female component predominates**. Flows from **Bangladesh and Pakistan, on the other hand, remain clearly male-dominated**. **The share of minors** entering for protection-related reasons **is increasing** (from just over 3% in 2016 to over 10% in 2020). **The arrival of children under the age of 18 is very high and exceeds 20% of the total of**

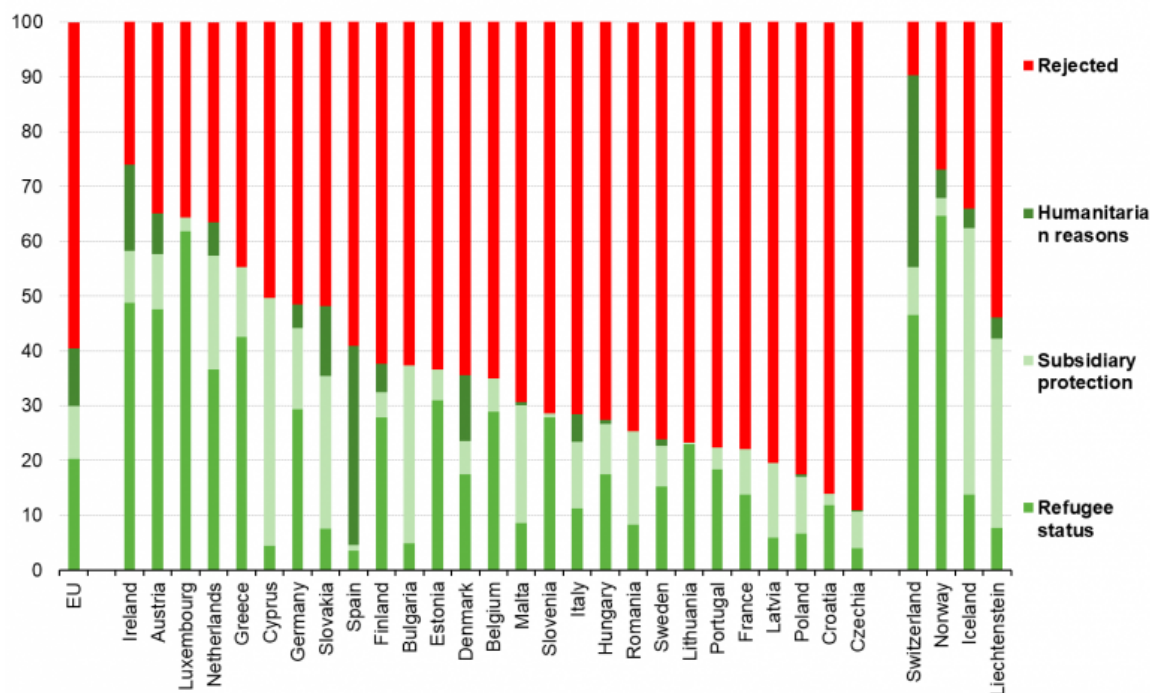
<sup>14</sup> ISTAT, *Cittadini non comunitari - Anni 2020-2021*, report available online at [https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/10/Cittadini-non-comunitari\\_2020\\_2021.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/10/Cittadini-non-comunitari_2020_2021.pdf) (accessed on November 18 2021).

**new entries** for El Salvador and Peru and even **touches 30% for Nigeria**. It is very low for Bangladesh (0.9%), Pakistan (2.3%) and Georgia (3.2%).

As confirmed by Eurostat data on the distribution of first instance decisions on asylum applications from non-EU citizens by outcome, in 2020 Italy rejected almost 70% of the received asylum applications. As for the remaining decisions, the recognition of subsidiary protection constituted the most represented one together with the refugee status and followed by the least represented case of permits for humanitarian reasons (see chart n. 2 and table n. 1).

**Distribution of first instance decisions on asylum applications (from non-EU citizens) by outcome, 2020**

(%)



Note: calculation is based on exact figures (not rounded).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr\_asycdfsta)

**Chart n. 2 - Distribution of first instance decisions on asylum applications from non-EU citizens by outcome - 202**

First instance decisions by outcome and recognition rates, Q2 2021

	Total decisions	Positive	Of which of which			Rejected	Rate of recognition in %	
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian reasons		Total	of which Refugee and subsidiary protection status
EU	134 850	48 785	25 040	15 555	8 195	86 065	36	30
Belgium	5 250	1 765	1 460	310	-	3 480	34	34
Bulgaria	645	335	15	320	-	315	51	51
Czechia	205	25	10	15	0	180	13	13
Denmark	635	345	150	120	75	290	54	42
Germany	33 120	12 820	6 965	4 665	1 195	20 295	39	35
Estonia	15	10	10	0	0	5	65	65
Ireland	250	240	95	10	130	10	96	44
Greece	8 925	4 560	3 230	1 335	0	4 365	51	51
Spain	21 780	6 155	1 440	430	4 285	15 625	28	9
France	35 215	8 170	4 690	3 480	-	27 050	23	23
Croatia	105	0	0	0	0	105	2	2
Italy	10 720	5 065	1 325	2 065	1 675	5 655	47	32
Cyprus	3 100	925	85	840	0	2 175	30	30
Latvia	50	35	25	5	-	20	63	63
Lithuania	140	35	35	0	0	105	25	25
Luxembourg	310	250	225	25	-	60	81	81
Hungary	10	10	0	5	0	5	67	67
Malta	195	45	10	35	0	150	23	22
Netherlands	5 265	3 670	2 165	945	565	1 595	70	59
Austria	4 000	2 895	2 270	495	130	1 110	72	69
Poland	515	205	40	165	0	310	40	40
Portugal	85	25	25	5	-	60	32	32
Romania	1 125	255	80	175	0	865	23	23
Slovenia	55	5	5	0	-	50	9	9
Slovakia	30	5	0	5	0	25	19	16
Finland	500	255	200	20	35	240	51	44
Sweden	2 605	675	485	90	100	1 930	26	22
Iceland	70	5	5	0	0	65	6	6
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	260	200	180	5	10	60	76	72
Switzerland	2 180	1 990	1 115	160	710	190	91	59

Note: The absolute numbers presented in the table are rounded to the nearest 5.

Rate of recognition is the share of (first instance) positive decisions in the total number of decisions at first instance. In this calculation, the exact number of decisions has been used instead of the rounded numbers presented in this table. Rates of recognition for humanitarian status are not shown in this table, but are part of the total recognition rate.

- Not applicable

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr\_asylcfstq)



Table n. 1 – First Instance decisions by outcome and recognition rates

Unfortunately, deskwork revealed that **data are only available for refugees who are still into the reception system (CAS and SIPROIMI/SAI)**. Refugees and holders of international protections that exit from the reception system also fall of national and international statistics.

At the local level, the latest data available indicate that the local SAI in the municipality of Bologna has a capacity of 1,120 reception places with this number increasing to 2,046 if considering the greater metropolitan area. For the municipality of Bologna, reception places are distributed as indicated in the table below.

Location	Extraordinary Reception Centres (CAS)	Ordinary SAI	SAI DS-DM (Health and mental distress)	SAI MSNA (unaccompanied foreign minors)	Total
Municipality of Bologna	284	572	47	217	1,120
Greater metropolitan area of Bologna	685	1,017	61	283	2,046

Table n.2 - Reception places in the municipality of Bologna as of 30/09/2021 (Source: Bologna Cares)



When considering the characteristics of the beneficiaries, a large majority are males (667 versus 225 females in 2020). Indeed, only 53 are single women, 550 are single men, 213 are families with two parents, 76 are single-parent families and 6 are transgender persons. With respect to age distribution, the vast majority are aged between 18 and 25 (43.8%) followed by beneficiaries aged between 26 and 30 (17.3%). The first five most representative nationalities are Nigeria (232 persons); Gambia (86 persons), Pakistan (68 persons), Mali (53 persons), and Syria (49 persons).

In terms of legal status of the beneficiaries, **514 hold international protection permits** of which 111 hold a residence permit for subsidiary protection, 299 have a refugee status, 102 benefit from humanitarian protection and 2 from special protection. With respect to unaccompanied minors, 95% of them are males with the main countries of origin being Albania (84), Tunisia (37), Bangladesh (17), Gambia (11), Somalia (11), and Egypt (10).

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As already discussed in WP2 Italian country report addressing policies, both international and Italian **legal provisions formally guarantee and protect equal treatment in access to housing for refugees and holders of international protection**. However, already the 2018 annual report of the SPRAR/SIPROIMI system showed the **many obstacles to refugees' achievement of housing autonomy**. In 2018, less than 5% of the beneficiaries received a housing contribution at the end of the path, and less than 1% were supported in the procedures related to the lease contract upon leaving the reception.

As many as 67.4% of the reception projects encounter difficulties in housing integration due to the **precarious employment of the beneficiaries**, while 55.5% denounce **mistrust from real estate agencies and property owners**.

Hence, refugees exiting the reception system do so from a very fragile position. It is not by chance that foreign persons accounted for 52% of the total number of individual files processed by Italian Caritas services during 2020 (211.233 persons), and refugees most specifically accounted for 10%. Emilia-Romagna Region was among the regions with the highest percentages of foreign assisted persons, together with Tuscany, Liguria, Lazio, and Lombardy. In line with previous years, the weight of European citizens accessing Caritas services for confronting poverty decreased further in 2020, against an increase in people from Africa and Latin America (especially Peru). Both men and women asked for help, 50.7% and 49.3% respectively. The average age of those assisted by Caritas among the immigrant community in Italy was 40 for men and 42 for women, thus consistently younger than Italians accessing the same services whose average age was 52<sup>15</sup>.

At the root of the many fragilities intercepted is undoubtedly the **issue of work**, which has been **negatively affected by the health crisis** and the anti-contagion restrictions. Among the immigrants encountered by Caritas, the quota of unemployed is high (45.2% compared to 36.7% of Italians), but the incidence of employed is also very high (30.9%

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<sup>15</sup> Caritas Italiana and Migrantes, *XXX Rapporto Immigrazione*, 2021, available online at <https://www.caritas.it/caritasitaliana/allegati/9645/Sintesi%20Rapporto%20Immigrazione.pdf> (last accessed November, 18, 2021).

compared to 19.2% of Italian citizens). These data show **foreign citizens encounter serious difficulties in finding employment**, and that **when they find a job it is often precarious, underpaid and irregular**, as well as not always able to protect them from the risk of poverty. Indeed, 79% of foreign users of Caritas services experience **conditions of poverty**. This is followed by **work-related problems**. According to Caritas' data, difficulties in accessing **housing** as well as economically struggling for **maintaining a house** represent the **third major problem** for people in conditions of poverty. This problem is much more pronounced among foreigners than among Italians (23% compared to 15%).

As most foreigners, refugees' **fragility** is also linked to serious **difficulties in navigating often hardly accessible administrative or bureaucratic procedures**. Also not insignificant is the percentage of those who have problems related to education, i.e., mostly **language problems and illiteracy**, but also **health problems**. Moreover, as it was true already in the pre-pandemic situation, foreign citizens continue to suffer from a **double disadvantage**: permanence in **conditions of poverty** and **insufficient protection through the ordinary income support measure** for people in economic difficulty.

In the specific case of the metropolitan area of Bologna, the **average wage of immigrant residents remains significantly lower compared to the total resident population**, 10.552 Euros versus 25.730 Euros respectively. Moreover, as in the rest of the national territory, **the measure currently in force to support people in poverty in Italy** - i.e., the 'Reddito di cittadinanza' - **has enormous limitations in terms of covering foreigners** and is **inaccessible to refugees**. In fact, **one of the access requirements is residence in Italy for 10 years**, the last two of which must be continuous.

The **most needed actions** are therefore those aimed at **countering, sanctioning, but most importantly preventing the extremely discriminatory treatment refugees exiting the reception and protection system** currently face in Italy - similarly to other foreign residents - and that consistently hamper their path towards full autonomy and self-determination. This would require first of all more **serious and structural actions aimed at educating the Italian society itself to multiculturalism, countering prejudices** through information and exchange, but also by **promoting truly participatory projects involving willing refugees in an active rather than passive way**, and **sanctioning discriminations**. Moreover, also **stronger policies and more effective actions are needed than those already in place** to easing refugees' **access to the job market**, but also **education, health**, and of course **housing**, as well as extending to this target all the **support initiatives available** at the national, regional, and municipal levels **for households in situation of poverty**.

## 2.2 Households: Portrait on household compositions, conditions of dwellings

### FRANCE

The accommodation and then housing of migrants is theoretically organised by the public authorities. The people received follow a defined pathway from supported accommodation (CADA, HUDA, etc.) to autonomous accommodation in a social or private residence, throughout the asylum application procedure until they obtain their residence permit. Refugee status opens up common law, and the persons concerned are therefore entitled to social housing (Dietrich-Ragon, 2017).

During the asylum application procedure, placement is orchestrated by the OFII, which 'manages' the flows by assigning and moving the people concerned over vast geographical areas without the persons being able to oppose this mobility. Indeed, this young Sudanese man describes how he was sent by OFII to Lorient and then to Saint-Brieuc. This mobility meant cutting himself off from his friends, which he was afraid of. Despite the intervention of social assistance, this mobility could not be avoided.

I tried to refuse because I was really unwell. You're with people from Calais, even from Italy and all that, and then, all of a sudden, OFII decides to send you elsewhere. And you don't understand why (...) I tried with the social worker, I said 'I don't want to go, I don't want to leave my friends and all that, I don't want to'. She told me 'no, either you accept, or OFII gives you a month to sort out your situation and then they throw you out'. It's like a threat in fact (...) As long as you don't have the papers, it's the OFII that manages your things and all that. And then you are obliged to accept".

This is the context in which the public systems operate, and it is in this context that the reception of exiles in Rennes must be carried out in practice. In reality, the situation is also made more complex for several reasons:

- Not all applicants for refugee status obtain it. The absence of a residence permit prevents the people concerned from hoping to obtain permanent accommodation and to register for social housing. The absence of a residence permit also adds to the ranks of people considered to be undocumented, who are no longer entitled to the accommodation facilities set up by the state and local authorities and who, when they remain on national territory, can only turn to associations in the hope of obtaining a more or less temporary place to stay, if not a squat or the street.
- The reality of housing in Rennes is that there is a high level of tension in the property market, which impacts on access to housing for the most disadvantaged and particularly for exiled people. In fact, the actors involved in housing for exiles have to deal with a persistent shortage, each doing everything possible to capture vacant housing, entering into real competition between them. The main issue is therefore to

obtain vacant housing in order to adapt it and allocate it to the people waiting. The shortage of housing does not allow, very often, that a family or a single person has an individual housing. Housing is often shared and sometimes even in dormitories. This is especially the case for single men for whom it is most difficult to secure a single room.

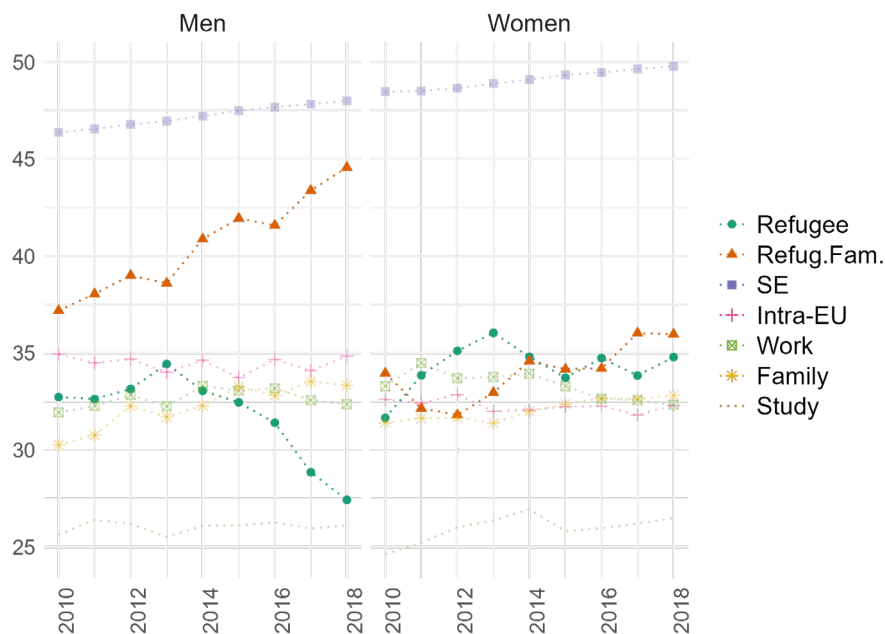
**SWEDEN**

Quantitative-based insights

**Refugees' Demographic Composition**

Figure 9 depicts the average age of newly arrived immigrants who are 18 years or older. There is a striking difference between refugee and reunified refugee family (the family brought to Sweden later through family reunification). Like other immigrants, refugee men tend to be much younger, compared to the native-born population.

*Figure 9. Mean Age of Newly Arrived Immigrants, Sweden*

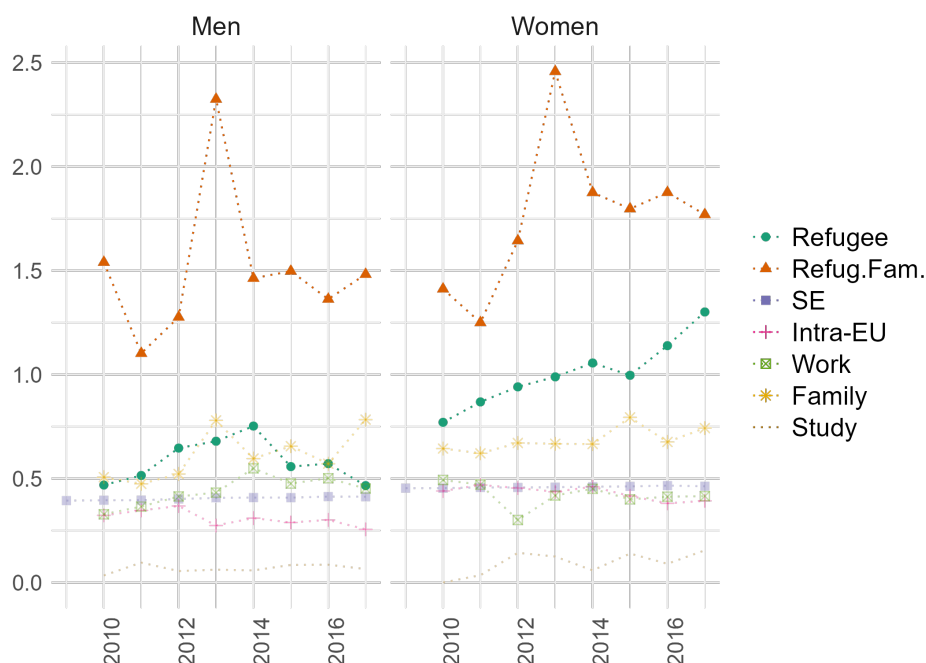


However, men who arrived through family reunification are notably older than other immigrants, and, more importantly, the mean age at arrival increased substantially overtime. In 2018, men who came for refugee family reunification are on average 45 years old, which is merely 6 years younger than an average Swedish-born men. Another important note in Figure 2 is that newly arrived refugee men became increasingly younger; the mean arrival age dropped from about 35 years to about 27 years during 2013-2018.

Figure 10 illustrates the number of children that an average immigrant brings with when arrived in Sweden. Those who came through family reunification generally bring more children than refugees themselves. Among the refugees, there is a noticeable gender

difference; refugee men tend to arrive with fewer children, compared to refugee women. Moreover, the number of children that refugee women came with increased overtime.

*Figure 10. Average Number of Children of Newly Arrived Immigrants, Sweden*



### Refugees' Socio-Economic Characteristics

The impact of a large influx of refugees on a host country's economy would, at least partially, depend on the level of human capital that the newcomers are endowed with, as a high level of education and/or skills may imply great potential for learning new skills, as well as level economic integration. In this section, we provide an overview of the socio-economic characteristics of newly arrived refugees. Specifically, we use the Swedish population registers to analyze the educational attainment and labor earnings of an average refugee who arrived in Sweden during 2010-2018.

Empirical evidence generally suggests that international migrants tend to be positively selected in terms of human capital. For example, Mexican immigrants in the United States are more educated than those remained in Mexico (Chiquiar and Hanson, 2005). Across OECD countries, the schooling level is higher for emigrants, compared to that for non-emigrants in the source countries (Grogger and Hanson, 2011). And recent evidence in Sweden further indicates that the positive selection even exists among older immigrants (Qi et al., 2019). While most evidence of positive selection is based on the migrant populations that are predominantly composed of economic migrants (whose main

objective tends to be income maximization), much less is known about the selectivity of refugees.

Figure 11 depicts the educational composition of newly arrived immigrants (aged 18+) in Sweden. This figure allows us to compare the educational level of refugees and of those who came through refugee family reunification with the native-born Swedes, as well as with other types of immigrants (e.g. intra-EU, labor, family, and student immigrants), it also exhibits how the educational composition has evolved overtime.

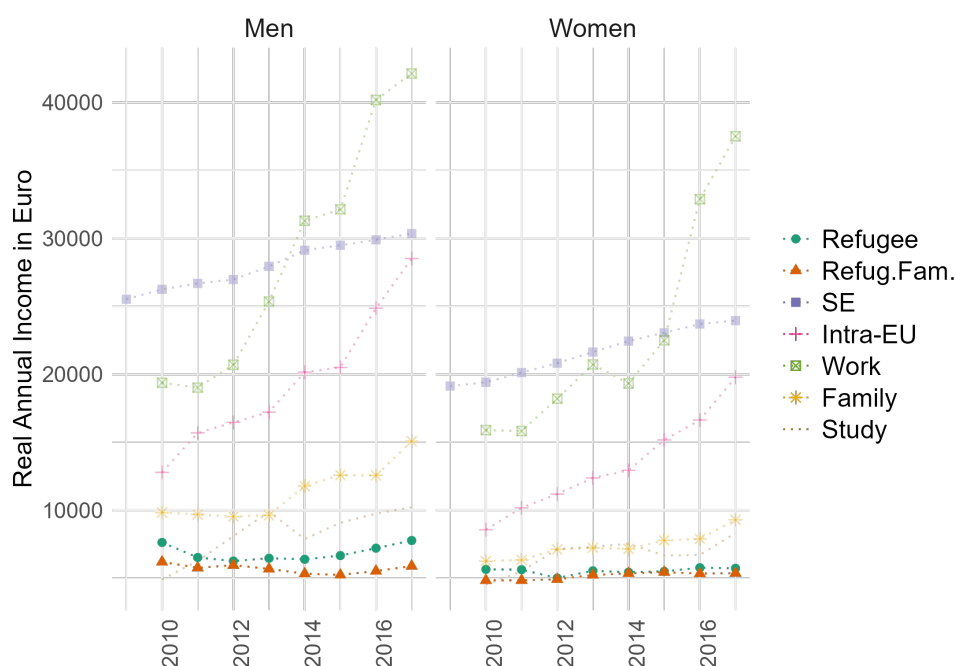
*Figure 11. Educational Attainment of Newly Arrived Immigrants, Sweden*



In general, newly arrived refugees and their reunified families tend to have a lower level of education, compared to the native-born Swedes as well as other type of immigrants. When comparing refugees arrived in different time periods, an interesting pattern emerges. That is, refugees arrived during 2013-2016 have a higher level of schooling than those arrived before and after. This pattern is partly because the majority of refugees arrived in this period are from Syria. And these Syrian refugees are known to be positively selected in terms of education (Aradhya and Mussino, 2020). Such a selection might not be surprising, as during the Syrian civil war, the high-educated were more likely to get draft evasion, compared to the lesser-educated. Moreover, those who can afford a journey to Sweden (that may entail crossing multiple borders and paying high fees to smugglers) are likely to be those who are socially and economically advantaged, and hence with a high level of education. And the less advantageous and low educated population who cannot afford such a long and costly journey may be displaced in a nearby location.

The positive selection of refugees arrived during 2013-2016 may potentially benefit Sweden’s economy. However, the realized benefit would depend on the extent to which the foreign credentials that refugees brought with are transferable into the Swedish labor market. Figure 12 compares the initial labor income (one year after arrival) for refugees and their reunified families with that for the native-born Swedes and other types of immigrants. Both refugees and reunified families earn an extremely low level of income. And these patterns are persistent over the cohorts arrived since 2010, which is in stark contrast to labor and intra-EU migrants.

*Figure 12. Immigrants’ Initial Labor Income in Sweden*



More importantly, despite refugees arrived during 2013-2016 have a higher level of schooling, their initial income is as low as those arrived before and after. This implies that there is little immediate labor market return to the educational credentials that newly arrived refugees brought with. However, this might not necessarily be a negative outcome, as the majority of refugees arrived after 2011 tend to participate in the introduction program during the first two years after arrival. And during this program, refugees not only learn Swedish, but also acquire skills that are necessary for labor market integration. Recent evidence suggests that the Swedish introduction program has been effective in improving refugees’ economic performance (Qi et al., 2019, 2021).

## Refugees' dwellings

Of all 21 regions in Sweden, Stockholm Lan, Skane Lan, and Vast Gotland Lan are the most populous, as these are the regions where Stockholm, Goteborg, and Malmo (the three largest cities) are located. Figure 13 illustrates where the newly arrived immigrants choose to live initially. While intra-EU, labor, and family migrants mostly choose Stockholm region, more than half of refugees and reunified refugee families are concentrated in less populous regions. The geographical distribution of refugees and their families is very similar to that of the native-born Swedes.

*Figure 13. Immigrants' Initial Housing Location, Sweden*

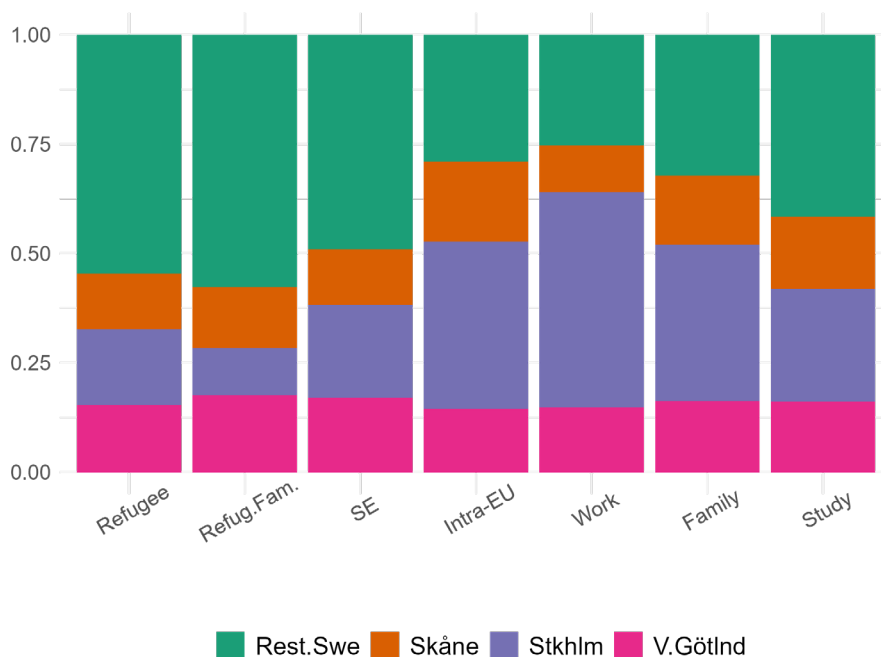
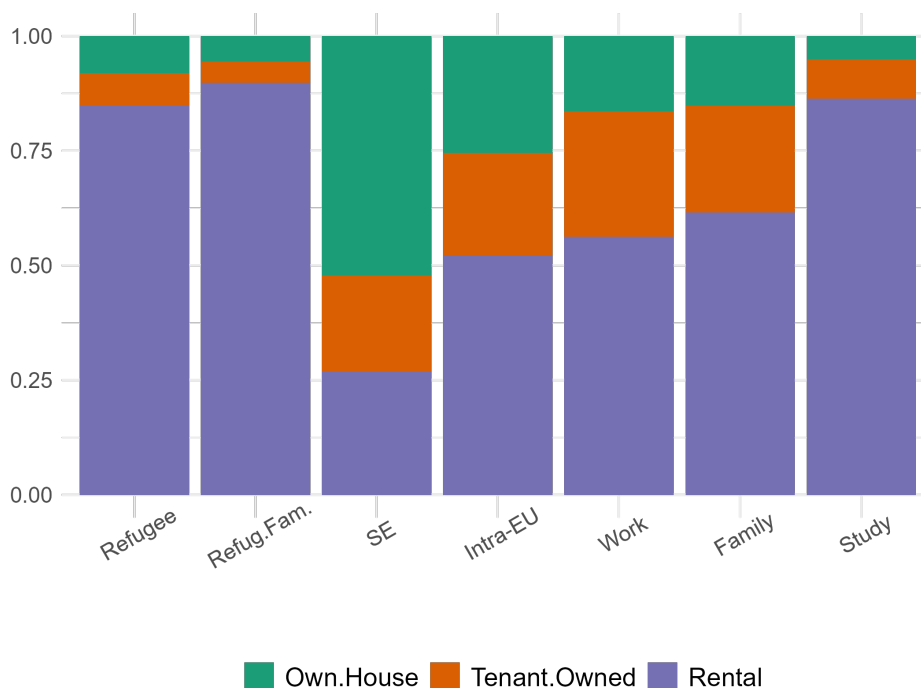


Figure 14 depicts the type of housing that different immigrant groups choose to live in upon arrival. There are generally three types of housing in Sweden: owned house, tenant-owned dwelling, and rental. Owned house includes villa and small attached houses. Apartments are commonly owned by a tenant association. Tenants will need to buy the apartments at the market price, and pay a monthly fee to the association. It is to some extent a hybrid of own dwelling and rental housing. The rental housing can be accessed through the rental market, as well as through the public housing service. The latter typically requires an application process and a long waiting period.

*Figure 14. Immigrants' Initial Housing Type, Sweden*



As shown in Figure 14, there are large differences in the type of housing that newly arrived immigrants choose. Nearly half of the intra-EU, labor, and family migrants own the property that they live in, whereas students as well as refugees and reunified families predominantly live in rental housing. The level of home ownership among refugees and reunified families is in stark contrast to the native-born Swedes. Despite the geographical distribution of the two groups are similar (as shown in Figure 13), the majority Swedes own their property, whereas refugees and families predominantly rent.

In sum, in Sweden, refugees' housing can be arranged by the Migration Agency during the asylum application period, and later by the municipality that hosts them. This type of refugee is registered as ABO in the Swedish population register. Our analysis suggests that the percentage share of refugees who are ABO is small. And the majority arranged housing by themselves. It is unclear whether this situation is due to ineffective settlement policy, or driven by refugees' preferences.

Similar to the native-born Swedes, refugees tend to initially settle in less populous regions. However, a key difference is that the majority of Swedes own their property, whereas refugees and reunified families predominantly rent. The low level of home ownership could be associated with refugees' socio-economic characteristics. Most refugees as well as their families have a low level of education and extremely low labor income.

## SPAIN

### Focus groups

The participants in the focus groups agree that housing is an essential element in the inclusion process not only for asylum seekers but also for all types of migrants. It is a key factor to understand the initial reception process as well as to ensure the integration into the host society (Mayblin & Poppy, 2019; Mahieu & Van Caudenberg, 2020). It is also a source of stability for them, so housing policies must be one of the pillars of the reception process, especially for asylum seekers.

*FG1.E1 "...the importance of housing is vital to be able to generate minimum conditions, basic for their processes of integration and life projects".*

*FG2.E3 "Access to housing is fundamental in the process of inclusion, having a place where they can be located and where they can generate roots and articulate a life project".*

*FG3.E3 "It is essential. Housing is the greatest source of stability a family can have."*

*FG4.E2 "I think that it is impossible to conceive of a reception without the right to housing. If housing does not exist, we are almost in charity. It seems to me that it is not even questionable".*

There is some agreement within our focus groups in the fact that access to housing is limited to low-cost housing, generally located in peripheral neighbourhoods and with poor sanitary conditions (Bonnet et al., 2016). However, in general terms, all the participants in the focus groups were very discreet when speaking of the interior conditions of the dwellings. This is not the case of the following informant, who assured that those houses where migrants use to rent as a first resource usually do not meet the minimum sanitary conditions, even when there are children living there.

*FG5.E2: "...they are located in those peripheral ghettos of the municipality, they are usually the ones with the least infrastructure, the ones with the lowest habitability conditions and the administration of that municipality does not take care of the cleanliness as in the other streets of the municipality...". Then, the interior of the houses are usually flats with children in which the sanitary conditions are not met...".*

It is quite habitual sharing housing between two or more families or between several single people and families. This practice can be of great help in those cases where paying a rent is complicated (Kohlbacher, 2020). Dealing about type of property, the most popular option among migrants is renting a house rather than buying one, which is much more expensive and needs other types of guarantees apart from a job contract. Even more,

renting a house let the migrants have some savings for remittances, that is, to take care and guarantee the maintenance of their families back in their origin country:

*FG5.E1: "... between them they agree to pay a rent and each one rents a room... when they have a job contract, they spend part of it on their own home ... and they always spend another part to take care of their families wherever they are".*

*FG2.E4: "We have the problem that the contracts they get are temporary and the real estate agencies don't want that, neither the landlords. So, the ~~α~~ alternative we can have is that, if there are 3 or 4 people who are going to live in a house, each one brings their own contract, and that's how we are getting the houses".*

Our informants have recognised housing as a fundamental axis of the integration process. It is a key factor especially because having a home opens the door to registration within the Padrón (municipal register) and this is, as we have seen before, an essential requirement to guarantee access to other rights such as health, education and social services, but also to get recognised their citizenship rights and even to be able to apply for future regularisation processes in which they can have full citizenship rights.

*FG1.E3 "I wanted to stress on the issue of context [the need to have a home] as a necessary element to be able to access the register."*

*FG3.E1 "...if access to housing is not guaranteed as such, the rest of the stabilities of a family crumble. It affects education, health, social life and all the areas with which we intervene from social welfare."*

*FG4.E3 "...it seems to me that decent housing is the basics. It is like talking a bit about the right to the city, which in the end is a tool, a mechanism to obtain other basic rights. And housing is a bit like that. In the end, having access to housing or aspace to live in allows you to access other basic rights such as food, health care, etc."*

Housing has a relevant connection with the urban context in which it is located (Gardesse & Lelevrier, 2020). Our informants within the focus groups mentioned at least two links: first, quality of life. And second, participation in the community. Furthermore, housing is very important to understand the use of the city and the configuration of public spaces. For example, concentration of migrants in some peripheral neighbourhoods makes difficult their inclusion in normal circumstances and ends up in a vicious circle in which their life conditions, social inclusion, job opportunities and housing are pre-configured.

*FG1.E1 "...indeed it [housing] has all that importance in the access to rights (...) it also influences the urban configuration".*

*FG4.E2 "...we always think that housing is the fundamental piece within the city. Because at the end of the day cities are made to be inhabited and residential use*

*seems to be the primary use of the city. But it is much more complex than all that, because in real life everything forms a system in which the pieces cannot be separated from each other, and each piece has its own entity. But when the pieces of the system change, the system changes. And that's what happens to the city".*

*FG5.E3: "...within the region...migrants are located in the peripheral neighbourhoods, and we always insist that a factor of inclusion is to take care of the space... we are not coexisting, we are coexisting. And yes, these migrants are generally relegated to peripheral neighbourhoods where there is a very high rate of delinquency in many cases. And this is the general view in the region, on a daily basis and what people tell us. And it is something that worries us a lot, the issue of housing, of having a place to live"*

Consequently, there is a need to ensure that migrant people and asylum seekers are integrated in normalised neighbourhoods (Bonnet et al., 2016). This requirement means that preferential action neighbourhoods (barrios de acción preferencial) should be avoided due to the difficulties in terms of inclusion and community participation. This kind of neighbourhoods were promoted at the end of the 20th century in several cities as a solution to the social insertion of people living in slums in the urban peripheries, but the undesired effect was the creation of new spaces of exclusion which reproduced itself from time to time, making it difficult to exit from this dynamic and aspire to a normalised reintegration.

*FG2.E1: "...I am in favour of not focusing on specific neighbourhoods. The whole issue of social housing such as the 613 in Burjassot, Nazaret I think that we have to integrate them in a normalised way, housing within neighbourhoods like any other person, not concentrating poverty in certain neighbourhoods, avoiding "preferential attention neighbourhoods" from which it is then difficult to reintegrate into more normalised neighbourhoods".*

Another fundamental point is the context in which the house is located, that is, the neighbourhood, but also the community and its ties. These questions are central to understand the inclusion process. Firstly, because they are conditioning the process of learning and developing of social abilities for the coexistence and the generation of support networks. And secondly, because all these factors are in the base of autonomy, that is, the ability of migrants of being fully included in a society and not to depend on external help.

*FG1.E1 " all that context that goes beyond the walls of the home and penetrates*

*Into the community. And within the communal, the access to those vital exchanges from the resource, neighbourliness, displacement and all those issues that have to be accessible."*

*FG5.E2 "...to have housing available, in order to be able to have a more integral development in the community where they live and to be able to achieve autonomy and full inclusion, which is what every person who is in these migratory processes wants".*

Finally, housing appears as a key element to guarantee a certain quality of life. Therefore, having a stable house is an element that can guarantee other fundamental aspects of the integration process, as we have seen before, like the access to labour market, training or having an ordered and stable life.

*FG1.E3 "...in terms of physical space that offers that protection and security to be able to start a life, access the labour market, training, and daily life. A space where you can rest and have your privacy with physical conditions, cleanliness and tidiness to face life in society."*

*FG5.E1 "...it is very much related to the fact of being able to develop in an orderly way...that they can develop a more socially integrated life".*

### Quantitative-based insights

This report on asylum seekers has been made possible thanks to the collaboration of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. General information on national immigration has been extracted from the National Institute of Statistics.

The longitudinal information comes from the cross-referencing of two data extractions from the Population Information System (SIP), a first one, as of 31 May 2021 and another one, with a series of conditions, between 1/01/2017 and 31/05/2021.

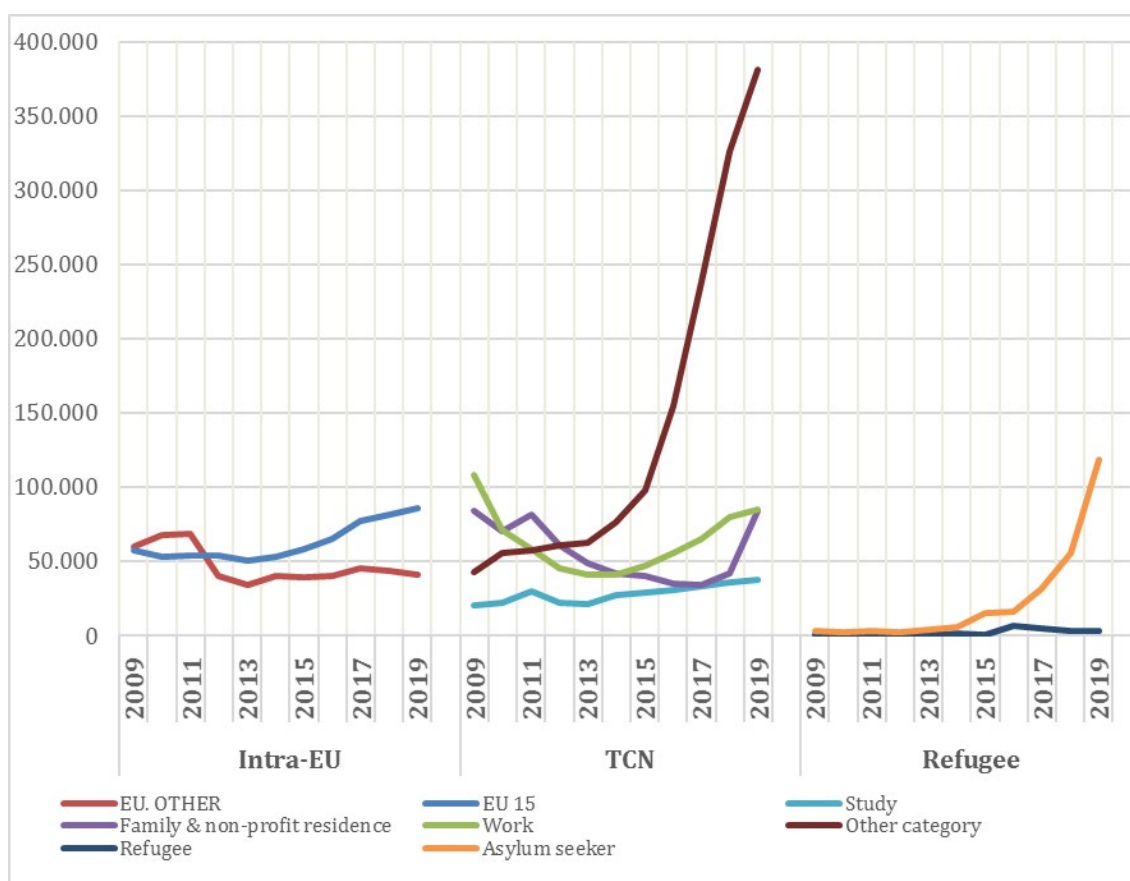
The SIP is the corporate administrative register of the Regional Ministry of Health that collects and updates data on the identification, location, allocation of health resources (area, zone, centre, and doctor) and entitlement to health benefits of people residing in the Valencian Community or displaced persons accessing the Public Health System.

The information in the SIP is mainly updated by operators who connect online to the application from primary and specialised care centres. It is also updated by means of computer cross-referencing with databases from institutions that provide data of interest related to insurance.

## Immigration flows-asylum seekers Demographic Composition

The Figure presents information on immigration received in Spain, according to country of birth. On the one hand, immigration from the European Union (EU 15 - Rest of EU) is compared. Immigration from the rest of the world classified by type of residence permit. Finally, asylum seekers and those who finally obtain refugee status.

*Figure 15: Immigration received in Spain by Country of birth (2009-2019)*

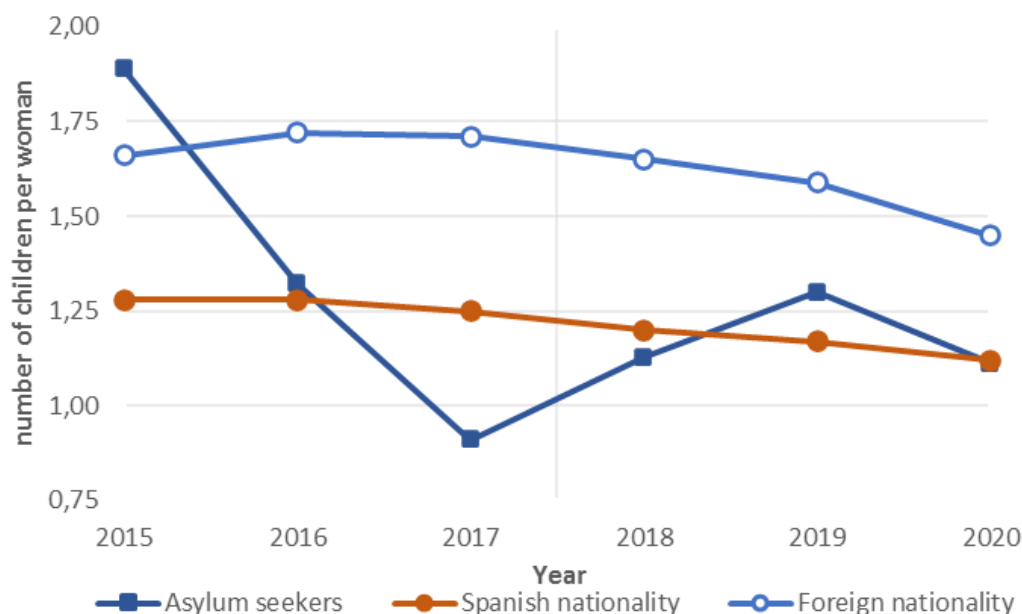


Source: Own elaboration based on data on migration flows from the National Institute of Statistics, asylum seekers from the Ministry of Social Inclusion and types of migration flows from the Ministry of Interior.

Note: The United Kingdom is included in the EU 15 category.

In this Figure illustrates the number of children that an average in Spain per woman according to nationality (Spanish-foreign) and of asylum-seeking mothers.

*Figure 16. Average Number of Children according to nationality and of asylum-seeking*



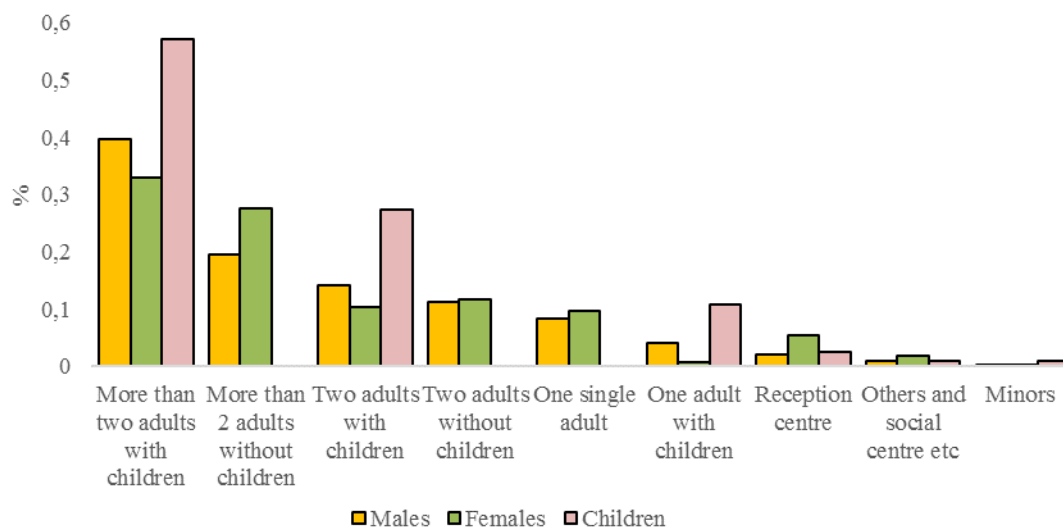
Source: Prepared by the authors based on birth indicators from the National Statistics Institute (INE) and the Population Information System (PIS) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community.

Note: The average number of children per woman of asylum seekers has been calculated from a sample of 2,569 mothers in the Valencian Community.

## Refugees' Socio-Economic Characteristics

Around 50% of households are made up of two adults or more with children. Approximately 30% are childless households. About 8% are adults living alone. It is worth noting the 4% of households of single women with children. The rest of the people reside in a collective center.

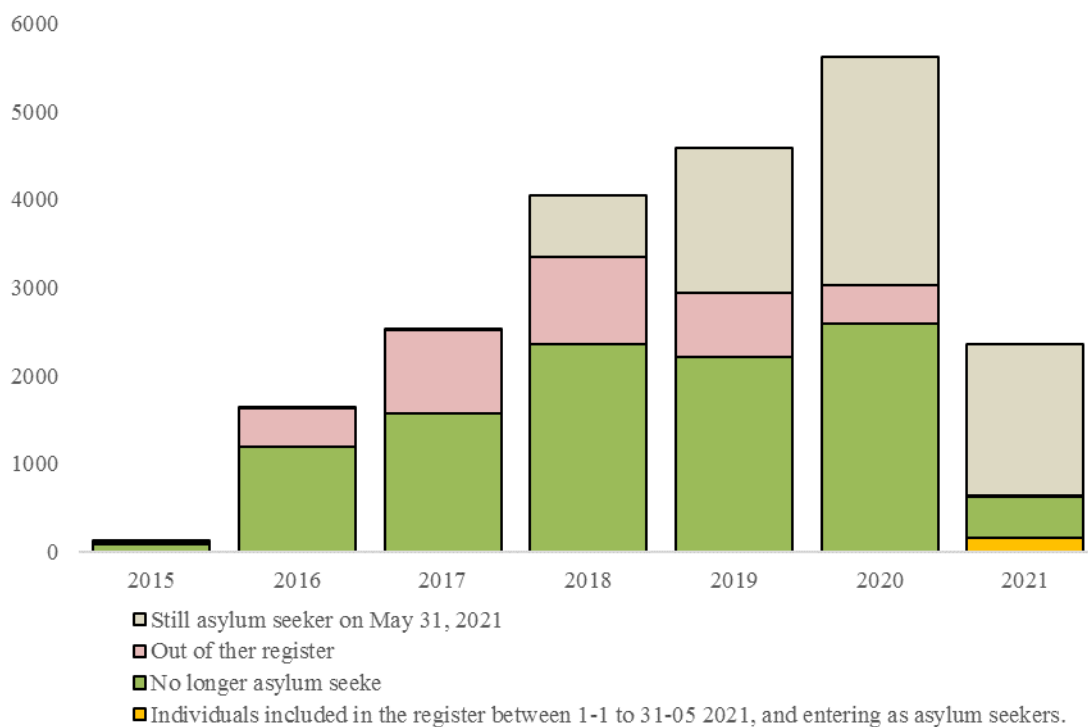
*Figure 17: Household composition of former and current asylum seekers*



Source: Prepared by the authors based on household indicators from the Population Information System (PIS) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 19.785

In the following figure we can observe the destination or current status of the users according to the year in which they were accredited as asylum seekers. Most of those who started the process between 2015 and 2017 changed their status. However, one third of them disappeared from the registry (change of region or country, expiration of status or other reasons). As of 2018, one can observe users who changed their status, around 50% and those who are still awaiting a resolution or have been removed from the register.

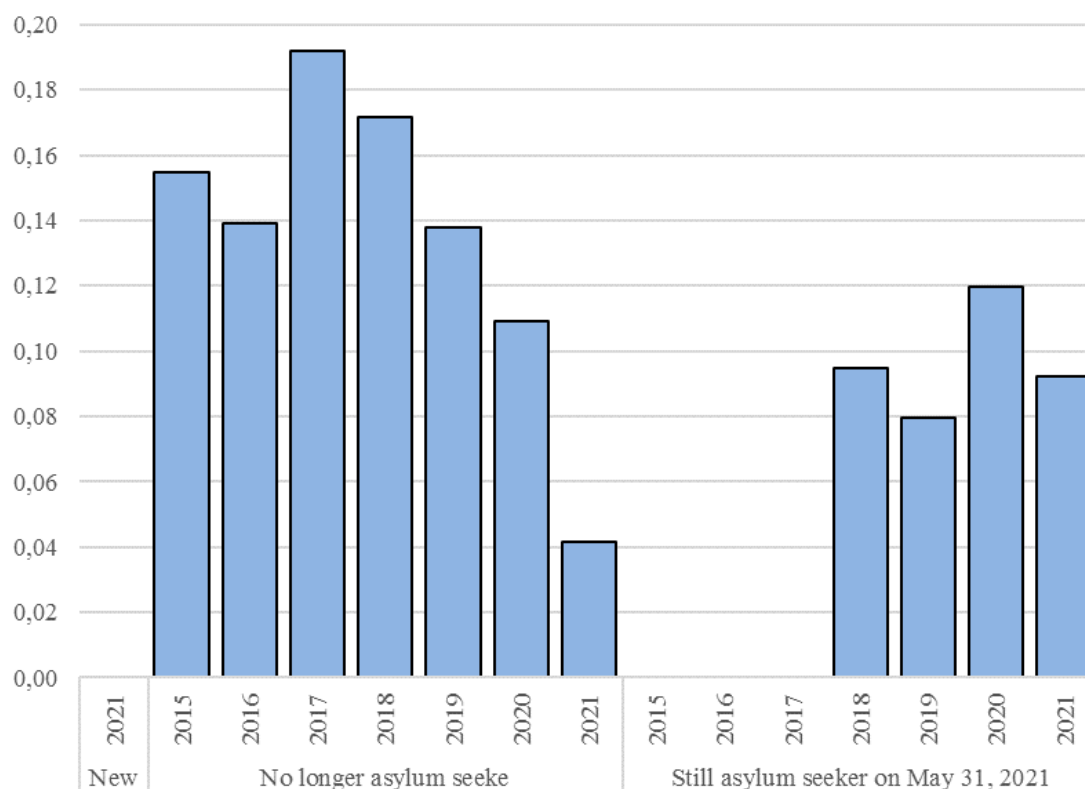
*Figure 18: Status of users according to the year in which they were accredited as asylum seekers*



Source: Prepared by the authors based on status indicators from the Population Information System (PIS) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 20.875

The new figure presents information on the change of place of residence. Between 5% and 20% of the users who ceased to be asylum seekers have changed their address. The higher the seniority, the higher the probability. People who are awaiting the resolution of their file have a mobility rate of about 10%.

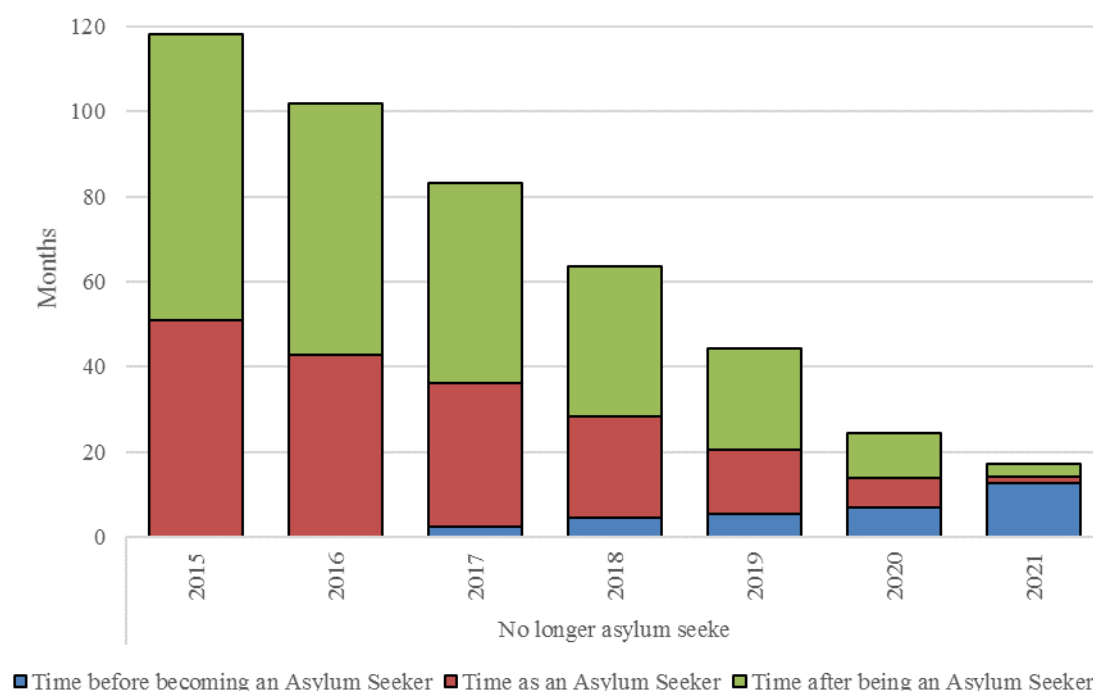
*Figure 19: Changes of address (housing) during the period depending on destination or status*



Source: Prepared by the authors based on georeferencing indicators from the Population Information System (PIS) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 17.477

In the following figure, we analyze the time elapsed in months (the tenth fraction of the length of the year in sunny days: 365.2425) between one state and another of the persons who ceased to be asylum seekers and who as of May 31 reside in the Valencian Community. Specifically, the time prior to the asylum application, the time of processing and the time after the end of the processing. People who were directly accredited as applicants in 2015, remained 51 months on average in that status, in the following years, the durations have been reduced. As of 2017, applicants appear to have been previously registered in another state.

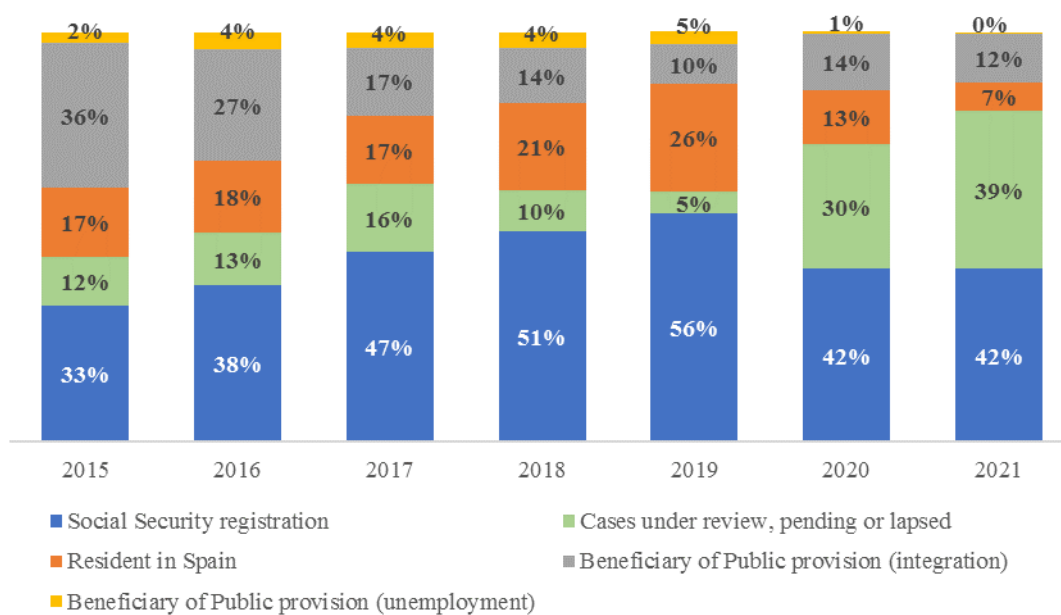
*Figure 20: Average number of months the asylum seeker has stayed in one state or the other*



Source: Prepared by the authors based on date comparison registered from the Population Information System (PIS) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 10.448

Finally, we present the figure with the percentages in the accreditation modality. This variable provides us with information on the origin of the right to health care. Between 33% and 56% were registered with the Social Security, in this case, the users are recognised as contributors. It is worth noting that in the last two years, between 30% and 40% of users are in the process of processing their files. If we look at the history, they will probably be resolved with the recognition of a solidarity benefit or they will be transferred to a generic status (resident in Spain), in which they have health coverage but do not meet the requirements for a solidarity benefit. A small percentage between 1% and 5% receive unemployment benefit.

*Figure 21: Last known destination of former asylum seekers who are currently in the system*



Source: Prepared by the authors based on date comparison registered from the Population Information System (PIS) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 20.875

## ITALY

According to the Caritas-Migrantes 2021 report, in Italy **refugees and holders of international protection**, like most foreign citizens, **are among the social groups most exposed to poverty, not only economic but also educational, relational, and health-related.**

Whilst in the pre-pandemic years absolute poverty in foreign-only households stood at 24.4% according to ISTAT parameters, today **more than one out of four households (26.7%) are poor in absolute terms, compared to an incidence of 6% among Italian-only households.** Over the course of a year, the incidence has risen by 2.3%, bringing the number of poor foreign families to 568,000.

The Caritas-Migrantes 2021 report also documents that among the immigrants supported, there is a high proportion of families: 60.7% are in fact married, mostly with a cohabiting partner; 74.1% declare they have children and 52.5% have minor children (among the Italians the percentages are much lower).

Attesting for the urgency of the issue of access to housing for refugees and holders of international protection, in 2017 the Ministry of the Interior published a **National Plan for the Integration of Holders of International Protection**<sup>16</sup> that **identified access to housing as one of the priorities of intervention.** Also, UNHCR in October 2020 released a **Guidance on Racism and Xenophobia**<sup>17</sup> in which **refugees' access to housing is cited as one of the urgencies to be included in public programming against racial discrimination.**

Nevertheless, only in 2021 a "guide to housing autonomy for holders of international protection" was published due to a non-state initiative jointly promoted by UNHCR Italy together with the Association of Legal Studies on Immigration (ASGI) and the United National Tenants' Union (SUNIA)<sup>18</sup> in an attempt to respond to this extremely serious challenge.

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<sup>16</sup> Ministero dell'Interno Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l'Immigrazione, *Piano Nazionale di Integrazione dei titolari di protezione internazionale*, 2017, available online at: <https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/piano-nazionale-integrazione.pdf> (last accessed on November 18, 2021).

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR, *Guidance on Racism and Xenophobia*, 2020, available online at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5f7c860f4> (last accessed on November 18, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR, ASGI, and SUNIA, *La casa dei rifugiati. Guida all'autonomia abitativa dei titolari di protezione internazionale*, 2021, available online at: <https://www.unhcr.org/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2021/04/guida-la-casa-dei-rifugiati-ITA.pdf> (last accessed on November 18, 2021).

In fact, **refugees in most cases do not have the economic resources to buy a house, and they are hardly able to access public housing** (the "case popolari") which, in any case, represents only between 5 and 6% of the housing market in Italy. Moreover, the **criteria for allocating public housing** in many cases **disadvantage immigrants**, even when they have a very low income, because they **require a minimum length of residence**, which ends up excluding holders of international protection who have been residing in Italy for a shorter period of time. Therefore, **this category of residents is forced to seek accommodation in the private market.**

Yet, even in this area the situation is critical. **The material availability of rented accommodation is, in fact, extremely scarce** in a country where more than **75% of households reside in their own homes** and **60% of properties are owned by individuals who use them as their main residence**. **Rental properties account for just 10% of the total housing available** in the country, and this **fragmentation of supply** means that, when interacting with the private market, **home seekers generally have 'one-to-one' dealings with individual landlords** (Colombo, 2019).

The **scarcity of rented accommodation** and the **need to deal with a large number of interlocutors significantly disadvantages refugees**, who generally have **low economic capacity** and encounter **difficulties in linguistic interaction with private individuals and housing agencies.**

## 3. Portrait of policies in current access to housing for refugees

### 3.1 Design & Implementation

#### SWEDEN

The **first challenge** in implementing and designing housing policies in Sweden is the severe housing shortage (Interview with municipality representative, Interview with public housing representative, interviews with NGOs representatives, Spring 2021). The fact that especially in the big cities there are not enough available apartments brings both practical issues in relation to finding apartments for refugees and political issues in relation to allocating some of the available housing to refugees.

Furthermore, building new housing in Sweden is very expensive and takes a long time. According to our interviews the average time for issuing a building permit in Gothenburg is 3 years. Newly built apartments have a much higher rent than older apartments which makes it very difficult to allocate them as refugee housing. The public housing company of Gothenburg has taken the strategic decision to reduce the building costs and has the ambitious aim to have the cheapest building cost in the whole country (Interview with Public housing representative, Spring 2021). Another related problem which delays the building process is the regular conflicts between different actors and interest groups around environmental issues and the placement of new buildings. These groups can be residents' associations for example who do not want the surroundings to change and have more buildings in the place of green areas. Or environmental interest groups who wish to protect the flora and fauna of an area where there are undergoing plans for new buildings.

The **second challenge** relates to the vague guidelines for the implementation of the settlement law (Government, 2016). According to our interviewees the problem is that neither the government nor most of the municipalities want to carry the political cost of providing permanent housing to refugees. This is problematic because for the cases where the municipalities only provide housing for two years the refugees rarely have the possibility to develop the social network that requires to get a rental apartment on their own afterwards, let alone to gather points in the queue system. This can hinder integration since instead of focusing on following the establishment program, learning Swedish and searching for jobs they end up worrying about where they will be living when their contract expires.

The **third challenge** that our interviewees identified has to do with the existing algorithm for allocating ABO refugees to the different municipalities (Interview with Swedish Migration Agency Representative, Spring 2021). As it stands now the criteria for this allocation are not individualized and to a large extent they are random. For instance, while the size of the labor market is taken into consideration, the individual skills or

overall potential of a refugee to be integrated to the labor market is not taken into consideration. Existing social networks or family ties are not taken into consideration either. Last, the preferences of refugees are not included. The result is not only the loss of human capital and more hurdles to integration but it also leads many refugees to move after their initial placement to another place. Consequently, the lack of individualized criteria works in the opposite direction of the scope of the policy which is the dispersal of refugees across the country.

Last but not least, in many big cities and in Gothenburg in particular there is a problem with segregation. The municipality is trying to address it by placing the ABO refugees in public housing in central areas of the city and not in apartments in the suburbs which have a high concentration of immigrant population. Though this intervention only affects the ABO and not the ones who arrange their own housing. For the latter it is easier to find housing in the immigrant dense neighborhoods because this is where they usually have their social contacts.

## SPAIN

As a preamble, it is worth mentioning that there is an agreement within the *focus groups* in highlighting the need to develop a State Law that acts as a legal framework in which the right of access to housing is recognised, not only for the group under analysis but for all citizens, in line with article 47 of the Spanish Constitution: *"All Spaniards have the right to enjoy decent and adequate housing. The public authorities will promote the necessary conditions and will establish the pertinent norms to make this right effective, regulating the use of land in accordance with the general interest in order to prevent speculation"*. As it has been already mentioned in Spain's country report of Merging's Work Package 2.2, the Government is working on the content of this legal framework, and it is expected that its approval will arrive in 2022.

Focused on the scope of the Valencian Community and at the specific group: applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, there are two different moments established by the model of administrative asylum procedure in Spain, which differentiates between first and second phase. The first phase, also known as initial reception, refers to the period of time between the submission of an application for international protection and its decision. During this period, reception and accompaniment is the responsibility of the State. The process in Spain is organized through temporary reception in the so-called Refugee Reception Centres (CAR). There are three of them throughout the country, one of them in the Province of Valencia. There can also be a temporary reception through arrangements with the third sector organizations which are, in the case of the Valencian Community: Red Cross, ACCEM, CEPAIM and CEAR. These NGOs articulate the process of reception through shared housing.

This fostering process has been modified on 1st April 2021 and involves two very important substantial changes. The first refers to the length of stay in the foster care system; to the date the time a family could stay in the first phase was up to 18 months. The new model estimates that this time will be reduced to 6 months. The second change is that it involves the Autonomous Communities in the management of social inclusion in the second phase, which results in the assumption of new and broader autonomous competences.

The main concern lies in what is going to happen to those people who in just six months may be left out of the foster care system. The third sector considers that there is not enough time to guarantee the success of the process of social inclusion. Furthermore, they consider that the transfer of powers in terms of reception to the Autonomous Communities may result in greater difficulty in guaranteeing access to housing, due to the fact that they are supposed to promote a system that guarantees the right of access to housing.

*FG1.E4: "Here I wanted to point out about the reception system..., because it has changed a lot. It used to be a system that provided more guarantees, in which certain phases were established: an initial reception, which was more of an emergency, and a second phase. Now it has been broken and only people who obtain asylum or subsidiary protection will have access to this second phase. So,*

*...what we would have to explain is that the change in the reception system weakens this guarantee of access to housing... the person who has had access to reception in the first moment, there is a moment in which his case is denied and he is left in a situation of considerable distress, because he has to leave the reception mechanisms within a certain period of time and access to housing is going to be very complicated, because they find themselves in a situation of administrative irregularity. "*

## ITALY

As already pointed out in the WP2 report on policies, **right to housing is not formally protected by the Italian Constitution**, and yet **it emerges from several interpretations provided by Italian Constitutional Court**, which rules on disputes concerning the constitutional consistency of laws. In the Italian Constitution (1947)<sup>19</sup>, indeed, the art. 31, 42 and 47 implicitly refer to the right of housing, while Art. 2 and 3 refer to the principles of equal rights and non-discrimination. Accordingly, the Constitutional Court has provided several judgements that have characterized the right to housing as a fundamental right (Judgment 49/1987<sup>20</sup>; Judgment 217/1988<sup>21</sup>; Judgment 119/1999<sup>22</sup>; Judgment 252/1983<sup>23</sup>).

More specifically, **judgment 404/1988**<sup>24</sup> addressed the right to housing of foreigners residing in Italy by stating that “The availability of accommodation is an essential condition for the foreigner, legally resident, who wants to provide a guarantee for access to the work of another foreigner [see art. 23 of Legislative Decree no. 286/98 and art. 34 D.P.R. 394/99] or to exercise the right to family reunification [see art. 29 of Legislative Decree 286/98.]”.

Moreover, at the **beginning of Italian Republican era**, the constitutional provisions implicitly referring to the right to housing as a fundamental right had justified **relevant State interventions in terms of house quantity**, to contribute to the lack of housing after the war, **and house quality**, to replace the presence of a stock of old houses below minimum adequacy standards.

The **coming into force of the new Title V of the Constitution**, approved by constitutional law no. 3/2001, has in fact led to a **radical reorganization of legislative powers between the State and the Regions**. According to article. 117, paragraph 1, the “determination of the **essential levels of services concerning civil and social rights** that must be guaranteed throughout the national territory” is among the matters of exclusive **competence of the State**. According to paragraph 2, which indicates the matters of concurrent legislation, **the Region has the legislative power on “government of the territory”**. In paragraph 4 it is established that any other matter not expressly reserved for state legislation falls under regional legislative competence.

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<sup>19</sup> See *Constitution of the Italian Republic*, 27 December 1947, available online at: [https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione\\_inglese.pdf](https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf) (EN).

<sup>20</sup> See *Sentenza n. 49 del 1987*, available online at: <https://www.giurcost.org/decisioni/1987/0049s-87.html> (IT).

<sup>21</sup> See *Sentenza n. 217 del 1988*, available online at: <https://www.giurcost.org/decisioni/1988/0217s-88.html> (IT).

<sup>22</sup> See *Sentenza n. 119 dal 1999*, available online at: <https://www.giurcost.org/decisioni/1999/0119s-99.html> (IT).

<sup>23</sup> See *Sentenza n. 252 del 1983*, available online at: <https://www.giurcost.org/decisioni/1983/0252s-83.html> (IT).

<sup>24</sup> See *Sentenza n.404 del 1988*, available online at: <https://www.giurcost.org/decisioni/1988/0404s-88.html> (IT).

Since art. 117 does not indicate public housing either among the subjects of exclusive state legislation, or among those of concurrent legislation, the relative competences fall within the subjects included in the residual legislation of the regions. Accordingly, **Italian regions are responsible for the planning and coordination of housing policies through the implementation of public housing programs (Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica - ERP) and subsidized residential construction.**

Specific calls for tenders should be published, aimed at facilitating the purchase, recovery or construction of the first home, as well as increasing the number of apartments to be rented out at controlled rates. The Region also exercises supervision and control over the acts of the Territorial Residential Building Companies (Aziende Territoriali di Edilizia Residenziale – ATER). Therefore, **measures and approaches to housing are highly dependent on specific institutional and organizational assets of the local social policies.** Moreover, **Italy is characterized by a sub-protective welfare system that depends on the wealth of the single regions.**

A large quantity of public housing was built during the '50s and '60s. Yet, starting from the end of the '70s the role of the Italian government in this policy area witnessed a strong downsizing and it was almost reduced to zero since the '90s. During this period, policies favored property of houses (not only on the private market but also by privatizing houses built through public plans or providing subsidies or discounts). As highlighted by some authors, the underlying assumption is that families are responsible for their own housing situation (Housing Europe, 2017).

As anticipated above, in fact, **Italy is traditionally characterized by a level of property ownership that is among the highest in Europe (close to 70%) and an illiquid and slow-moving rental market.** The high level of property ownership has justified the **delayed absence of public housing policies.** Adding to that, some macro factors such as the **enormous growth in the cost of housing and rents lower than family income growth**, the **job insecurity** especially for young people, the **changes in family structure**, the **intensification of migration**, and the **easier access to credit for loans** in connection with financial crises have undermined the traditional solutions to accessing housing for more numerous and heterogeneous parts of the population than in the past.

The **severe lack of public intervention in social housing or public housing stock** made Italy a very small rental market as compared to other European countries. In fact, **there is no national rent regulation**, and the **housing market is essentially private** (Colombo, 2019).

Within this framework, **the most disadvantaged Italian people experience great difficulties in accessing housing, which they share with migrant persons, refugees and holders of protection included**, as housing is no longer considered a social priority in Italy (Meer et al. 2021; Petrillo, 2018).

## 3.2 Access

### SWEDEN

To summarize the information from the above sections on access to housing for refugees in Sweden in general, and in Västra Götaland Region and the municipality of Gothenburg in particular, is highly politicized. The municipality, although the number of refugees settling in Sweden is around  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the number in 2016, still maintains a discourse of crisis (Interview with representative of the regional administration, Spring 2021). Refugees receive short term rental contracts; they cannot buy apartments or houses due to high real estate prices, and borrowing constraint (refugees' low income hinders them from getting housing loans from the bank). And they cannot get enough queueing time to access the public housing after their contract with the municipality has ended. The only support they get after this point is coaching in order to search for apartments in the private rental market. The private rental market is much more expensive than public housing and oftentimes the landlords require that tenants have stable well-paid jobs and recommendation letters from previous landlords. As it becomes evident, access to housing is not without hurdles and often refugees end up subletting a room in a crowded apartment or they become homeless.

## SPAIN

As a result of the aforementioned change of model in the foster care system, it is expected that the support given to families in accessing housing will disappear, due to the short time given to work on social their inclusion. The participants of the *focus groups* consider that 6 months is not enough to guarantee access to housing.

The difficulties of housing for migrants and asylum seekers goes beyond the time of stay. One of biggest barriers to the foster process is the lack of public housing. It is well known that Spain has a very limited public housing stock. Consequently, it is difficult to rely on public housing and private renting and sharing flats are the most common practices among migrants.

The privatization of the real estate system and the price of housing is another of the big barriers identified by the participants on the *focus groups*. In this situation the most common option for migrants and asylum seekers is to share flats or going to live in segregated neighbourhoods, with the psychosocial consequences that this fact entails.

So one of the possible solutions to the problems of housing for migrants and asylum seekers, but also for the whole Spaniards, is a change in the current housing market, at least in two directions: first, enlarging the stock of public housing. Second, changing the legal framework of the free housing market, which means that it gets easier to rent a house.

## ITALY

According to FEANTSA and Abbé Pierre Foundation there are almost two million homeless families and of the around 50000 homeless in Italy many are migrants (2018). A regressive panorama characterized by growing **rejection tendencies**, the **worsening of housing conditions**, and the **territorial displacement of migrants** emerged after the 2008 crisis. **Migrants** were increasingly **pushed and segregated in interstitial and peripheral spaces** and entered a **vicious circle between informal work and informal housing**. In 2015, the refugee crisis paved the way for a whole series of new mechanisms for migrants' displacement, containment, and relocation.

Article 40 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration states that regularly residing foreign nationals, similarly to Italian citizens, may access public housing without any discriminations whatsoever (article 43, paragraph 2, letter c, of the Consolidated Law). However, more recent law provisions have introduced **additional requirements**. In particular, the **2008 national housing plan** (Law no. 133 of 6th August 2008) **envisaged the provision of residential housing to different groups of subjects, including low-income regular migrants**. And yet, such **provision** has been **subject to the applicants' residency in the national territory for at least ten years, or in the regional territory for at least five years** (article 11, paragraph 13). **The same applies to the requirements for accessing a rent supplement**.

According to all our interviewees, the provision of a **residency conditionality for accessing public residential housing** has penalized the population with a migratory background and even more so those with refugee status or holders of international protection. This population, indeed, is characterized by a strong mobility within the peninsula, which is consistent with the logics of seasonal work.

As also confirmed by Housing Europe (2018), even **the most recent reception programs addressed to newly arrived migrants are mainly concerned with temporary shelters for refugees and asylum seekers**, whilst there is a **structural lack of attention for post-program integration's projects**. This results in a **high level of housing precariousness** for subjects moving from state-managed accommodation to independent housing.

Scholars such as Mariani and Rossi (2011), Fravega (2018), Colombo (2019) Lomonaco (2020) as well as Meer et al. (2021) have demonstrated the precarious situation in which many migrants and refugees find themselves derives from legal norms that recognize migrants "a permanently flexible status", which exposes them to the vulnerable condition of **underpaid workers** (i.e., working poor), and the conditions of **exclusion and downward assimilation** deriving from it, that often results in a process of **entrapment in "ethnic, economic and housing niches"** (Fravega, 2018).

Moreover, as confirmed by several of our interviewees, so-called “newcomers” have to endure not only job insecurity but also the **distrust of real estate agencies and landlords** that derives from it, combined with **excessively high rents and deposits** and generalized **difficulties in accessing housing subsidies**, as well as **lack of social networks of support** to access housing. At the same time, the **lack of housing solutions hampers refugees’ and holders of protection’s societal integration** (Cortese and Zenarolla, 2016; Boccagni, 2017; Pece, 2017 and Vietti, 2020) as it **impacts immigrants’ employment options**, the **educational opportunities** they are exposed to, as well as their **social interactions, residence situation** and, accordingly, their **possibility to apply for family reunification and citizenship rights**.

Intervening into this vicious circle, Italian **Third Sector organizations had to fill state policies’ gaps in the provision of housing solutions to marginalized groups of both nationals and non-nationals**, from which differentiated paths and dimensions of social inclusion have arisen. The most frequent solutions have been recurring to Host families, Co-housing projects, social housing initiatives, but also Property brokerage, and especially the Housing First approach (a delivery service system mainly based on immediate access to permanent and independent housing).

### The Emilia-Romagna experience and the case of Bologna municipality

According to the stakeholders we interviewed, at the end of their staying into the reception and protection system beneficiaries are directed, when possible, towards **municipal services of “housing transition”** (“Transizione abitativa”). Transition projects are housing projects managed by non-profit organizations or third sector associations and financed by ASP “Servizio Abitare” to temporarily provide accommodation to residents in so-called “housing distress”, both nationals and non-nationals. This has engendered **a system of services provision consisting of the combination of public funds with funding raised by nonprofit organizations**. Among the main “housing transition” projects available in the city of Bologna we mention: “Housing Led” project, managed by Antoniano Onlus; “Pro-tetto” project, managed by Caritas diocesana; and “Vis” as well as “Transizione abitativa” projects managed by Società Dolce cooperative.

**Different types of housing solutions are provided to different beneficiaries**, together with **educational support aimed at achieving autonomy**, in close collaboration with the sending social service. The intensity of the educational support varies according to the situation of the beneficiaries. The service is aimed at single adults or groups living in dwellings subject to eviction orders; living in spaces provided urgently and temporarily by social services; living in spaces improperly used for housing.

The **preliminary investigation for access to transitional housing is initiated by the social services responsible for each case**. In the case of refugees and holders of international protection this would be ASP International Protection service.

However, the very nature of “housing transition” projects is that they are **fixed term and thus temporary solutions**, which usually never last more than a year. According to some interviewees, **these solutions may risk resulting in the mere postponement of the challenge of accessing stable and autonomous housing conditions for refugees and/or holders of international protection**. “Housing transition” projects are deemed to provide temporary solutions for averting the risk of homelessness, but **they do not answer the demand of stable housing solutions**. Moreover, “housing transition” projects have **limited resources**, which **cannot always satisfy the demand of intervention**.

In case “housing transition” is not an option, or when periods in “housing transition” projects come to an end, International Protection service and SAI projects in charge for each case have to **support beneficiaries exiting the protection system in finding a home in the private market, either autonomously or mobilizing personal acquaintances and informal networks**. **Co-housing and family reception projects are also activated**, such as the “Vesta”, “Refugees Welcome” and “Famiglie Accoglienti” projects. Some other nonprofit organization provide **property-brokerage services** and/or coordinate **co-housing experiences** within apartments they rent for beneficiaries. It is the case of Housing First Co.Bo. Experience, of the Bologna cooperative “Piazza Grande”.

- *Vesta*

“Vesta” programm is a family reception project launched in 2016 by the Camelot cooperative as part of the SPRAR program of the Municipality of Bologna. According to Fabio Colombo’s description, the specificity of the project is that it is aimed at holders of international protection over the age of 18, leaving programs in structures for unaccompanied foreign minors. Families who are willing to take in immigrants must submit an application to the municipality; they must then attend a training course which, if successfully completed, will lead to their reception into a family. The period of stay ranges from six to nine months.

Another feature is the explicit desire to create and maintain a community of people around the project, promoting meetings, recreational, cultural, and sporting activities to encourage the growth of social relations between host families and beneficiaries.

The path starts with the signing of a Welcome Agreement by the selected and trained families and guests; the family must guarantee the beneficiary (or beneficiaries, two refugees can also be accommodated, if the space is adequate) a private room and food for some time ranging from six to nine months. This period cannot be extended, as Vesta is a

temporary solution, not permanent. The family is also required to involve the guest in family life and extra-family social life, to facilitate their integration into the wider social context.

If selected, families receive 350 euros per month to cover expenses. The goal is to ensure that the hospitality is not an expense for the family but nor should it be a source of income. According to the project website, 170 applications arrived through the website for the province of Bologna. 55 families have participated in the training courses, of the most diverse family types: extended families, grandparents, families with minor children, families with children away from home, couples.

In the province of Bologna, 30 reception projects have been launched by Vesta up to August 2018, of which 25 have been completed and 5 are in progress. The project website also reports the results of the completed reception projects. In 9 cases, the refugees received were able to achieve living and working autonomy, find an accommodation and a job, in one case at the same cooperative, a beneficiary was hired as an intercultural mediator. In the other 10 cases analyzed, a situation of housing autonomy is reported, through solutions in most cases of shared rent. According to Colombo, family-based accommodation appears to be the most viable, sustainable path, which shows more evident results in social inclusion and housing autonomy achieved by the beneficiaries at the end of the projects, thanks to the support of the welcoming family that activates its informal resources.

- ***Refugees Welcome***

“Refugees Welcome Italia”, of the Refugees Welcome International network, represents another example of host families' projects. It is a non-profit association for public benefit, non-partisan, non-political, and with exclusively charitable purposes. It is configured as an interesting experience of economic disintermediation attributable to the sharing economy, with a strong value dimension at the center (Marchetti 2018). Families apply via the web and are contacted by a volunteer from the nearest territorial group. Families are prepared for reception through a series of training sessions. After the training, each household is added to a database that serves as a waiting list. The project wants to promote a cultural change and a new model of hospitality: they believe that family hospitality is the best way to facilitate the social inclusion of refugees in the country and to fight prejudices and fears. Being received in a family can be a decisive moment for the refugee on the path towards full autonomy.

- ***Housing First Co. Bo.***

Regarding the solutions related to co-housing, in the Italian region of Emilia Romagna, the Housing First model stands out. Cohousing are residential complexes and apartments consisting of private accommodation accompanied with common areas intended for sharing between co-housers. Living in cohousing means living according to a qualitative

lifestyle, in a balance between the autonomy of the private home and the sociability of common spaces, within places co-designed by and with the people who will live there. They are apolitical, non-partisan aggregations, not united by religious or ideological beliefs.

Housing First in Bologna is managed by the social cooperative Housing First Co. Bo, who received funding from Bologna Municipality's Public Firm for services to the person (ASP). It hosts 73 people, of which 70 live in co-housing, 3 in studio flats. In the US the majority of people who join Housing First are accommodated in studio flats, however in Italy due to scarce resources this is not possible. In Bologna HF was accommodating 70 people in 35 apartments (co-housing), 6 provided by the public body ASP (Municipality) located in the city, while 29 come from the private market.

Housing First Co.Bo rents the apartments and makes regular subletting contracts to its beneficiaries. Rent payments are made possible thanks to the contribution of the beneficiary and some support from the municipality and third-sector organizations. HF was born as a community, a social response to the needs of homeless and marginalized people. Providing a home is not the only solution. Psychologists, anthropologists, social workers all work together to support the integration of beneficiaries.

The housing model has two protagonists:

1. The guest and his/her will;
2. The community.

During the Covid-19 period HF tried to involve all stakeholders from its community network to support its people. They collaborated with social services, providing psychological support and listening as much as possible to people's desires and dreams. HF provides training courses in collaboration with social services that will hopefully lead the beneficiaries to find a job. In addition, HF facilitates its people to access legal and healthcare services, by accompanying them to the lawyers if necessary and to the general practitioner or specialist. HF is a permanent housing solution. Beneficiaries of the program can live there long-term if they choose to stay.

Evidence from our research shows that several new co-housing projects are being built in the Emilia Romagna region. The Tandem project from CIAC Onlus, in the province of Parma, constitutes another interesting example.

### Barriers encountered by refugees in accessing housing

According to the stakeholders and experts we interviewed so far, both at the national and the local levels, the **main challenges to implementing and designing housing policies targeting refugees and holders of international protection** are essentially due to the **temporary nature of most state support measures** available for accessing housing solutions. Indeed, this ultimately contributes to a condition of **ongoing housing insecurity and socio-economic instability** and adds to fixed-term reception programs and a general disinvestment in post-reception projects, which create a condition of **post-reception program housing insecurity** for refugees.

While the temporary nature of reception programs has prevented governments from investing in long-term social inclusion programs, we could also argue here that **states often deliberately use refugees' uncertain temporality as a justification to exclude them from accessing services**. Case studies provide evidence for this problem and demonstrate that often **the most vulnerable are excluded from welfare policies because of their invisibility** to the State's radar, or due to restrictive categorization and eligibility criteria.

Our interviews have shown that sometimes refugees and holders of international protection also constitute an extremely sensitive target, as they can be characterized by **multi-dimensional vulnerabilities** (socio-economic disadvantage, addictions, mental illness, etc..) that should be considered and addressed globally by social services to achieve social integration.

Indeed, **marginalization originates from the principle of asylum seekers' arrival in Italy**: upon arrival, these persons do not always find a system of information, coordination, and help that can effectively provide them with the tools they need to navigate the new context they become a part of.

**Personal knowledge and forms of inter-ethnic mutual assistance become the privileged strategies in the search for housing solutions** when the time has expired of state-sponsored reception programs. Nevertheless, **problems persist in terms of accessing the real estate market**, due to the **lack of structural and effective policies for regulating rents**, within a real estate market that continues to be hegemonized by private property (Colombo, 2019).

For these reasons, when assessing the main criticalities of accessing housing for refugees in the Emilia-Romagna region and, more specifically, the city of Bologna, our interviewees have pointed out to **four main challenges** that need to be addressed by either public or third sector actors entrusted with the provision of these services:

1. Create opportunities for the regularization of rentals, rental support measures, social housing regulation, and the revision of how night shelters operate.
2. Invest in training and specialization of social workers and those who are part of the network of services that address marginalization.

3. Promote the availability of financial support for such initiatives or a minimum wage/income with which the addressees of the initiative can participate in the rental costs. Equally important are material resources, such as the availability of apartments and accessible health and social services.
4. Reviewing the organizational structures and intervention models of social and health services so that they trigger “empowerment” logics. This will help re-evaluating the potential for integration homeless person (both nationals and non-nationals) can have, removing as much as possible the stigma of someone who is unable to pay the rent. This requires the de-institutionalization of marginality and the de-standardization of responses solely targeting primary needs.

### 3.3 Recommendations

#### FRANCE

Our report presented the main actors, actions and challenges related to housing for refugees in France. It outlined refugees' needs in terms of housing, and portrayed the new configuration of households, smaller and younger than before.

We will now propose a set of recommendations to policy makers, housing owners (private and social) and third sector actors (notably associations) regarding three dimensions, namely procedures (2.3.1), housing (2.3.2) and beneficiaries (2.3.3).

#### Procedure-related recommendations

Accessing to housing - notably social housing - remains a long and complex process in France. Several recommendations will be presented in order to improve the housing related procedures.

##### Reduce the delays necessary to obtain a construction permit for social housing

The lack of affordable solutions, coupled with the rise in property prices and social needs, makes it even harder for refugees to find a decent place to stay. The metropolis of Lyon registered 80,000 applications for social housing in 2020, but was able to give a positive answer to only 8,000 of them. Besides the rise in property and land prices, the lack of affordable housing can be explained by the time required and the administrative burdensome related to the attribution of construction permits.

In France, the attribution of construction permit depends on local authorities. Any project whose surface would be higher than 20m<sup>2</sup> requires a permit and an architect when the buildings exceed 150 m<sup>2</sup>. Applications are analyzed by competent authorities that have 3 months to give a verdict. However, applicants often need up to a year to obtain it. *"In theory, local authorities have 3 months to give you an answer – starting when your application has been declared as "complete". In reality, they often ask for one extra document, and another, and another, etc. and every time that they ask for a new document, the delay re-start from scratch. The thing is that local authorities often lack competent persons to study applications, and they hardly meet the delays, so they ask for more documents in order to have more time. Then, you also have to comply with people that will try to terminate the permit, because they do not want to have social housing close to their home, they are opposed to a project, etc. So, in theory, you can have a permit in three months, but the reality is sadly different"* (interview of a construction project manager). Increasing the social housing capacities could be facilitated, at the local level, by making the attribution of construction permits smoother and faster.

##### Making allocation processes more individual and transparent

Our study pointed the negative impact generated by the standardization of the allocation processes for social housing. This standardization tends to invisibilise applicants, and generate several negative externalities, such as a feeling of frustration, helplessness, assistantship and isolation. Furthermore, it does not take into account the specific needs and desires of applicants, in terms of housing typology, neighboring and location. As a consequence, people remain in the application process for years or, in some cases, are excluded from it and condemned to precarity. Individualizing housing allocation procedures from inception would facilitate the integration of refugees, and reduce widely the hidden costs related to existing social procedures.

### Encouraging the temporary occupation of vacant buildings

Due to its core characteristics, the housing market remains scarcely flexible and responsive to the evolution of social needs. Offering rapidly housing to people in need requires the implementation of new strategies and contracts. The experiments ran by the metropolises of Lyon and Rennes regarding the conventioning of squats led to positive and promising results, not only for the occupants and the local authorities, but also for the closest stakeholders (better acceptance from neighbors, etc.). In the same vein, the temporary occupation of vacant building (relay housing) presents interesting advantages, such as the valorization of a given location, the protection from vandalism, etc. Encouraging the implementation of relay housing would not only be beneficial for refugees – as it would ensure that they are housed in safe and decent places, but also to owners and local authorities as it would ensure the protection and the integrity of their real estate assets.

### Avoiding competition among associations

The new strategic plan for the reception and integration of refugees, implemented in 2017, coupled with the progressive deconcentration of state powers, initiated in 2010, participated in the reorganization of the housing procedures and actors. Our report highlighted the impacts of these institutional changes on social actors, notably on associations that have to compete and merge in order to reach a critical size and win public bids. The competition created between associations has negative consequences on both the refugees and the members of these associations (employees and volunteers) as it tends to generate stress and distrust. The initiative engaged by Inter-Orga, in Rennes, open up promising perspectives in terms of collaboration between associations. Instead of placing associations under competition, it would be more interesting and efficient to encourage them to develop networks of solidarity made of associations having complementary competencies. Besides benefiting for their mutual expertise, these associations would gain visibility and legitimacy, being more audible when pleading and in a better position when answering public tenders. Recognizing the competencies and expertise developed by these associations across time – through official certification – would also participate in the legitimization of their actions.

## **Housing-related recommendations**

Besides procedures, three housing related recommendations can be addressed to policy makers, authorities, housing providers and associations.

### Mobilizing more the private housing stock

Our study revealed that accessing to the private housing markets remains difficult for refugees. Besides high rental costs, refugees often face invisible barriers generated by their lack of financial and social stability. Private owners tend to be reluctant to rent to vulnerable people such as refugees – preferring people having more stable and secured situations. Despite the existence of program supported by the government (e.g. Solibail) or social housing providers (e.g. sliding lease), mobilizing private housing remains a difficult task due to owners' lack of awareness about these systems. Promoting Solibail, sliding lease (or related programs) could participate in unlocking the access to the private housing stock for refugees. This trend could be reinforced by the implementation of temporary tax exemptions or reduction for owners renting a private accommodation to vulnerable people for a minimum time (e.g. 5 years).

### Adapting the typology of housing to new migration realities

Along with the migration flows, the typology of households changed over the past years. Households are smaller (1 to 2 kids max), and many refugees are coming as single individuals. However, the existing housing stock – built in the 60s and 70s to host large families, is not adapted anymore to this new public. This misalignment has three consequences: the allocation of housing too big for single refugees or small household, the lack of housing and the use of forced cohabitation – refugees having to share the same flat and, sometimes, the same room. If cohabitation can be relevant when sheltering people – i.e. for a limited amount of time, it can be hard to handle on the long run for refugees that need quiet / safe places to heal their wounds and rebuild themselves. Improving refugees' mental health and wellbeing also implies that we reconfigure social housing to make it smaller and individual, so that people can benefit from their own quiet place. This is particularly important for young refugees (under 25), as they tend to be the most exposed to housing deprivation, and cannot access to financial aid due to their age (the solidarity revenue being offered only to people older than 25).

### Housing and the availability of public services

Housing has a key role in the socio-professional integration of refugees: it can facilitate or slow down the process. Our reports pointed that the proximity of public services (notably transportation, kindergarten and schools) from housing is crucial for refugees, as it helps reducing the risk of isolation, and facilitate the completion of administrative procedures, the search for job and/or frees time for training. Thus, attention has to be paid to the

proximity of public services when allocating housing to refugees, notably in rural areas that tend to be scarcely dotted in public services.

### **Refugees-related recommendations**

In order to facilitate refugees' integration, our analysis led us to formulate three recommendations.

#### Allow asylum seekers to enter to the job market

As previously mentioned, the rise of housing prices and the lack of affordable housing solutions make it hard for refugees to access to housing – notably on the private rental market due to their lack of financial resources and stability. The French system does not allow asylum seekers to access to the labor market, preventing them from accumulating enough money to live decently and prepare their access to the rental market. Asylum seekers are often constraint to turn to undeclared jobs, feeding precarity and trafficking of all sorts. Allowing asylum seekers to work legally would not only reduce their vulnerability and exposure to criminal organisations, but also give them the resources necessary to gain autonomy, the feeling of belonging and contributing to the society and, at the obtention of their status, access to the housing market.

#### Make the housing allocation and management process more inclusive

Our study highlighted the frustrations generated by the top-down allocation and management system. Including beneficiaries into the governance of social housing would increase the perceived transparency of the allocation process, contribute to have a better understanding and matching between people's needs and expectations, but also to empower refugees.

#### Give social, institutional and medical actors special training

Consecutively to the migration flows, social, institutional and medical actors have been highly solicited by immigrants in France. The interviews conducted with the medical and social experts allowed us to measure the sense of helplessness of these actors, overwhelmed by the diversity and complexity of refugees' needs. The traumas generated by the migration trajectories, the isolation and feeling of despair caused by the time spent in limbo in the countries of transit and arrival, the fear of loneliness when obtaining the international protection... these heavy elements are hard to handle. As explained by Nicolas Froment, sociologist of mental health, "in hospitals, psychiatrists and nurses are usually trained to deal with traumas or illnesses that are common here: depression, anxiety, anorexia, etc. When it comes to migrants, they are lost because the traumas that they went through are close to what medics see on war zones. They suffer from PTST, and psychiatrists are not trained to deal with it".

Regardless their status and profession, actors engaged in refugees' reception and integration processes are often not sufficiently trained to deal with these new pathologies, and refugees' specific needs. Thus, developing specific training (medical, administrative, legal etc.) for stakeholders would improve the efficiency of their actions and improve the integration process.

Table 1 summarizes the recommendations addressed to public actors, housing providers and NGOs, regarding procedures, housing and refugees.

*Table 3. Summary of recommendations*

	Public actors	Housing providers	Associations
Procedures	<p>Reduce the delays required to obtain a construction permit for social housing.</p> <p>Individualise more housing allocation processes.</p> <p>Develop the conventioning of squats and, to a broader extend, infill housing to ensure decent housing for people while protecting the integrity of real estate assets</p>	<p>Move from a logic of standardization to a logic of individualization of housing allocation procedures</p> <p>Increase the transparency of housing allocation procedures</p> <p>Sanction a fixed number of housing units for refugee populations</p>	<p>Densify the solidarity networks by encouraging the bringing together of associations with complementary functions (provide specific and rapid support to refugees, have more weight when responding to public tenders)</p>
Housing	<p>Mobilize more of the private housing stock by intensifying the use of Solibail and property tax exemptions/reductions</p> <p>Creation of transdisciplinary and even international think tanks to propose new alternatives</p> <p>Ensure the existence of public services near housing in order to fight against the isolation of refugees and facilitate their socio-professional integration</p> <p>Avoid isolating people in distant areas</p>	<p>Develop the concept of sliding leases on a large scale to allow refugees to access private housing</p> <p>Offer individual housing units of smaller size adapted to the new types of homes and single refugees</p>	<p>Educate social landlords and homeowners on the availability of vacant units/buildings through advocacy</p>
Beneficiaries	<p>To open the right to all exiled persons to work so that they can become autonomous, members of the host society and avoid trafficking</p>	<p>Greater inclusion of refugees in the allocation and management of public housing</p>	<p>Training associative actors and social workers on the specificities of refugee populations</p>

## SWEDEN

Based on our analysis we will proceed in formulating some recommendations which can improve access to housing for refugees as well as their overall integration while promoting a welcoming environment. In relation to the type of housing it seems that public housing within the city and not in remote and segregated areas is an affordable choice which allows for better integration. Therefore, we can recommend the development of a larger public housing stock. An important clarification here is that more public housing does not necessarily mean affordable public housing. As it became clear in our interviews and desk research refugees but also students and elderly people need affordable housing. Therefore, we recommend the development of affordable public housing. Newly build projects should include affordable options. From our research on different housing projects it seems that mixed housing and not dwellings where exclusively refugees are placed create a more welcoming environment and can promote integration.

Another recommendation relating to the institutional setting for refugee housing is the further clarification of the settlement law (Government, 2016). The municipalities should be advised to offer permanent rental contracts. This will increase the sense of security for refugees and it will further discourage them from moving to another place. It will also remove the political discussion from the local level. The increased politicization of migration and of housing in Sweden hinders integration and encourages the discourses of “crisis”. Therefore, we think that if the central government takes a political decision and amend the settlement law in order to make it mandatory for municipalities to offer permanent rental contracts the implementation will become smoother and more homogenous at the local level.

In relation to the existing system which separates people into two the categories of EBO and ABO already when they are seeking asylum, we recommend increased flexibility. If someone decides that they want to be part of ABO after their asylum decision they should be given this opportunity. It is very hard for asylum seekers who come to a new country to understand the local housing conditions. And in Sweden housing is very difficult to secure. Therefore, there should be a possibility for people who decided to arrange their own housing during the asylum application period to return within the state supported system after they receive their status of international protection.

In relation to the different actors which implement refugee housing policies we recommend that NGOs should continue to receive funding and other assistance from the public authorities in order to have an active role in refugee housing. So far it seems that support to NGOs is more opportunistic and during 2015-2016 that the state was in great need of implementing partners they received increased funding. Although the numbers of newly arrived refugees have dropped there is still a need for NGO support both in housing and in overall integration projects.

Last but not least we have some recommendations for municipalities in relation to their long-term planning on housing. First the issue of segregation should be addressed in its larger socio-economic dimensions. Segregation is not only about the origins of the inhabitants of an area and separation between Swedish and immigrant neighborhoods. It relates to urban planning and the ways that non-integrated areas to the city become easier segregated. More importantly, it relates to socio-economic factors. Therefore, both urban planning policies and social policies are needed to tackle segregation.

Second, it is important to view migration as part of the globalized world we live in. During 2015 and 2016 municipalities increased their capacity of receiving refugees. Nowadays even though the numbers of newly arrived have dropped it is important to maintain the resources in place in order to assure the integration of the refugees who arrived the previous years and to maintain the readiness for future situations of increased arrivals. Continuity in the different departments, policies and resources for refugee integration should be prioritized.

## **SPAIN**

There is the need for an articulation of alternative measures which, although they require the involvement of public administrations, in the long term can be consolidated, especially in small municipalities. This articulation requires a greater willingness in the reception and social inclusion of applicants.

A first measure is to create a policy of subsidies for landlords, avoiding the creation of new social housing that tends to be integrated in segregated and isolated neighbourhoods that, in the end, favour segregation instead of inclusion.

In this sense, the possibility of promoting renting in much more affordable smaller urban areas and shrinking rural areas is also contemplated, although it is also important to consider that, in this type of municipalities, access to the labour market is more limited, so it would be necessary to accompany them developing policies for the municipality that guarantee a more comprehensive reception.

Another measure could be the creation of new support and advice projects aimed at both tenants and landlords, where communication, understanding between the parties is encouraged and trust is fostered.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that there is coincidence in making housing policies go hand in hand with other types of policies such as employment, training, and access to documentation, etc. These would guarantee an integral approach to social inclusion policies, and make them transversal to the entire population, extending rights for all.

TABLE 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUSED ON POLICIES

PROPOSAL	IMPACT APPROACH	INITIAL TARGET	ESTIMATED POLICY-MAKER
Subsidies and incentives to owners reluctant to let dwellings to people at risk of homelessness or poor housing	PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION (with a significant role of racial and ethnic prejudices)	Smallholders of dwellings	National regulatory competency + Regional and local implementation
Promotion of settlement in medium/small-sized and demographically shrinking municipalities	PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION	Local governments usually facing depopulation / People at risk of social exclusion	National and regional governments
Mediation and endorsement public services connecting people at risk of social exclusion in need of housing and small holders looking forward to let dwellings	PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION	Small holders of dwellings / People at risk of social exclusion	Local governments
Solid network of public housing stock for urgent and short-term shelter of newcomers in need	NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANTS	Newly arrived migrants unable to find proper shelter, and thus risking entering an itinerary of exclusion at the host society	Regulation by national and regional governments + Implementation by regional and local governments
Systematic collection and availability of statistical data in order to properly address the housing needs of refugees	REFUGEES LEAVING THE ASYLUM PROGRAM	Local Housing Offices + Valencian Entity of Housing and Land (EVHA)	Transversal data coordination (though, formal registration mostly coming from national and local levels)
Support, guidance and advisory programs focused on those leaving the asylum programs	REFUGEES FINISHING THE ASYLUM PROGRAM + APPLICANTS OUT OF THE PROGRAM DUE TO DENIAL	Refugees and migrants that are no longer covered by the asylum program	Regulation by national and regional governments (current movements towards further decentralization of competences) + Implementation by public Social Services or Third Sector organizations
Training and instruction of public employees regarding rights of migrants and applicants for international protection	MIGRANTS + APPLICANTS FOR IP reaching public administration for any eventual procedure	Public employees potentially serving migrants and applicants for IP at any wider-spectrum service	Funding and willingness by public governments + Training by Public Sector or Third Sector experts

TABLE 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUSED ON SCOPE

PROPOSAL	APPROACH	INITIAL TARGET	ESTIMATED REFORMER
Broadening the subsidies and housing options for single-people households	SINGLE-HOUSEHOLD MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES WITHOUT COVERAGE FROM THE ASYLUM PROGRAM	Migrants and refugees autonomously looking for housing solutions without a family	National regulatory competency + Regional and local implementation
Long-term and integrative planning of housing, employment and education policies conjoined with documental status	HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATIONS + STRUCTURAL AND LONG-TERM NEEDS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIOECONOMIC AND WELLFARE FABRIC	Migrants + General population and Welfare State	National regulatory competency + Regional and local implementation
Tackling specific issues hindering the access of migrants and refugees to generalised public resources and services and further integration (mostly related to procedures and documental requirements)	ENABLING EXERCISE OF RIGHTS FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES OUT OF SPECIFIC TRANSVERSAL PROGRAMS TOWARDS INTEGRATION (e.g., Recognition of foreign degrees, requirements to access generalised social aid and resources)	Migrants and refugees embarked on their autonomous integration projects	Multiple administrative and governmental levels involved

## ITALY

Among the housing solutions and integration initiatives addressing refugees and holders of international protection we have surveyed in the Emilia Romagna region we report some best practices that could be read as recommendations to improve refugee housing policies in Italy.

**a) the “Host families” approach** promote a reception model that can contribute to fight prejudices, discrimination, and clichés, precisely because it is based on exchange, encounter and mutual knowledge between refugees and Italian citizens. Being welcomed in a family is good for everyone: not only for refugees, but also for citizens who decide to open the doors of their homes. Those who host a refugee at home can get to know a new culture, help a person build a life project in a new country, become a more aware and active citizens and create new bonds.

**b) Projects that provide property brokerage for supporting refugees or beneficiaries of international protection in accessing a home** suggested the importance of:

1. **creating Guarantee Funds**, co-designed with banks, credit institutions, trade associations, and real estate agencies, conceived as participatory and sustainable tools that supports beneficiaries who do not have the guarantees required in the activation of lease contracts and to prevent any situations of arrears.
2. **instituting a Global Service**, conceived as an additional tool to protect real estate property specializing in the operational management of the ordinary maintenance of the apartments and administrative-bureaucratic support in the activation of lease and supply contracts.

In the analysis of what could be the forms of further support and recommendations to be put to value in addressing the complexity of finding a home for migrant people in the territory of Bologna and its province, operators believe it is essential to act on few additional levels, such as:

- **Awareness-raising among owners and trade associations** to reduce the strong prejudice against migrant families;
- **Structuring of a home team that has mandated to activate training and favour individual orientations paths;**
- **Open and strengthen the network with the sector that deals with “housing transition” projects**, paying particular attention to families with minors who appear to have the greatest difficulty in the exit phase.
- **Promote the creation of a third party that can act as an economic guarantor for outgoing beneficiaries and can act as a mediation body** for the activation of co-housing paths and the development of housing projects with the involvement of real estate agencies and property owners.

- **Create tools for sharing good practices** and searching for collective solutions through networking activities involving various transversal services (legal/labour).
- Thinking about **incentive mechanisms for tenants** willing to rent apartments over a long time.

**Simplify the system of contributions provided to refugees and holders of international protection that are about to exit the SIPROIMI/SAI system.** Indeed, these are currently cumbersome and unclear mechanisms, which do not promote beneficiaries' autonomy.

## Conclusion: main challenges and recommendations

Notwithstanding the foregoing specific challenges and recommendations detailedly portrayed for each of the encompassed countries, there are several similar challenges and recommendations between national contexts.

Firstly, there is a **common ground of lack of available and fitting housing stock**. Whether it is mainly due to the barriers of access to the highly privatised market (Spain and Italy), to the generalised scarcity of housing stock (Sweden), or by the amount of demand and the private holder's reluctance and lack of knowledge of the existing incentive programs (France), it is a major problem in all of the cases.

Besides the logical increase of public housing, either by new construction or by purchase, the proposed way to tackle it differs depending on the current situation and more pressing aspects. Thus, in the case of highly privatised and priced housing markets such as the Spanish and the Italian, the deriving recommendations are focused on the increase of **publicly fostered services of mediation and endorsement with private owners**, both small holders and financial entities with big stocks of vacant dwellings that are usually held away from asylum seekers, migrants and socially vulnerable people because of prejudices, uncertainty, lack of knowledge and overwhelming pre-requirements.

In the case of France, the main emphasis is placed on **promotion of existing programs of mediation and endorsement, along with tax incentives for private owners**. Sweden, as the country with the highest rate of public housing and more pressing generalised lack of dwelling, particularly needs **an expeditive increase of affordable housing stock**, though it is an urgent matter to all of the studied countries.

From the scope of this investigation, all those proactive measures are deemed particularly important to **ensure access to proper housing for people ending or leaving the reception programs, along with further backing and guidance in the search of stable and autonomous housing solutions**. This is an especially pressing matter in Spain, as the asylum seeker's reception programs are becoming more restrictive in terms of time, documental status requirements and financial power since a major reform by April 2021.

More specifically, there are also transversal references to the **importance of allocation**, both in terms of **municipalities within the country or region** as well as **within the municipality itself**. Access to housing properly connected to basic services and labour market opportunities, fully integrated in the urban daily landscape of the host society, is characterised as a fundamental asset towards solid integration.

From the bigger scope, this implies **being sensitive towards asylum seekers' preferences beyond eventual governmental policies of dispersion** all over the territory in question. Dispersion might be promoted, either to avoid an escalation in

effective or perceived overdemand of public resources (and the deriving xenophobic national-populist discourses) or to alleviate shrinking demographic tendencies. In the case of asylum seekers and migrants, they might be logically leaning towards settling within the nodes with the most economic activity and pre-existing migrant communities, which are usually the ones with the most tightened housing markets.

From the urban perspective, it entails **avoiding high concentration of migrant communities in peripheral and segregated neighbourhoods** that progressively fill the remaining and more affordable urban land, usually reinforcing pre-existing loops of social exclusion in poorly connected and equipped areas. Of course, this is easier in countries such as Spain, Italy and France, where the big problem is accessibility to housing rather than the lack of housing stock, with a significant number of vacant dwellings. Sweden, on the other hand, faces the difficult task of increasing the housing stock from scratch while preventing a rise in segregation between host and settling communities and conflicts on the use of the scarce land that it's still available.

In the case of France and Spain, **the adaptation of public housing to new migration realities such as single migrants**, is also stressed as an important matter to address. It is worth remarking the fact that **the uncertain and difficult access to proper and stable housing solutions** is considered a **problem not only in terms of a direct axis of integration, but as a very pressing and worrisome matters that actually tend to hamper the progress in other dimensions of integration.**

Moving towards a wider scope, there is a consensus regarding the **importance of tackling the specific barriers hindering the effective exercise of rights and access to basic public resources of asylum seekers**, which hamper their further integration. This barriers might be due to the intricacy of the system and difficult access to relevant information, or even to legal impediments such as the one keeping asylum seekers out of the formal labour market in France. However, the main cause of those obstacles is linked to the lack of instruction and formation of **all kinds of Public Sector and Third Sector staff potentially serving asylum seekers**. Hence, **transversal formation in terms of mental health, law and administrative procedures** is posed as a crucial recommendation to be followed by public and Third Sector managers.

Of course, **mediation and informative campaigns towards private sector, particularly employers**, is also fundamental to enable and enhance integration of refugees.

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### **Annex of semi-structured interviews**

1. Municipality representative
2. Regional administration representative
3. Regional administration representative
4. Public housing company representative
5. Association of municipalities and regions representative
6. NGO representative
7. NGO representative
8. NGO representative

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### **Annex of focus groups and interviews**

*Table 4. Spain. Focus groups participants (1/2)*

DATE	26/05/21		25/05/21		26/05/21	
APPROACH	FG 1: 3rd SECTOR OO. Focusing on REFUGEES		FG 2: 3rd SECTOR OO. and ASSOCIATIONS working with MIGRANTS (wider spectrum)		FG 5: MUNICIPAL TECHNICIANS (from a specific grouping of municipalities)	
	ENTITY	ROLE	ENTITY	ROLE	ENTITY	ROLE
1	Provivienda Association	National Officer for International Protection	Cáritas (Diocese of València)	Inclusion Area Officer	Mancomunitat de la Ribera Alta  (Grouping of Municipalities of the Ribera Alta county)	Housing County Office Coordinator
2	Spanish Red Cross – Valencian Autonomous Region	International Protection Officer	Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia (CCIV) + Spanish Refugee Assistance Commission (CEAR)	Social Area Officer + Social Worker		Social Worker at the PANGEA Office (focused on assisting migrants)
3	CEPAIM Foundation - Valencian Autonomous Region	Coordinator	Alanna Association	Housing Program Officer		Social Worker at the PANGEA Office (focused on assisting migrants)
4	Spanish Refugee Assistance Commission (CEAR)	Advocacy Officer and Former Coordinator at CEAR in the Valencian Autonomous Region	La Casa Nueva	Founder and volunteer		
5	ACCEM - Valencian Autonomous Region	Coordinator	Rumiñahui	Coordinator of Valencian delegation		
6	Jesuit Service to Migrants – Valencia	Hospitality and Awareness Officer				

*Table 5. Spain. Focus groups participants (1/2)*

DATE	27/05/21		7/06/21	
APPROACH	FG 4: URBAN PLANNERS and DEVELOPERS		FG 3: MUNICIPAL TECHNICIANS	
	ENTITY	ROLE	ENTITY	ROLE
1	Architecture Without Borders - Valencia	Architect and Volunteer	Sagunto City Hall	Social Worker
2	EntreCalles architectural studio	Founding partner, architect and geographer	Social Services Grouping of Municipalities of the Marina Alta county (MASSMA)	Coordinator and Social Worker
3	Dempeus Initiative (originally stemming from Architecture Without Borders)	Architect and co-founder	Aldaia-Barrio del Cristo grouping of municipalities	Delegate Councilman

*Table 6. Spain. Interviews and interviewees*

		<b>ENTITY</b>	<b>ROLE</b>
28/04/2021	E1	University of Almeria	Sociologist. Researcher and professor
07/05/2021	E2	European Commission	Directorate-General for Translation
19/05/21	E3	Polytechnic University of Madrid	Architect and urbanist. Researcher and full professor
26/05/21	E4	UNHCR Spain	Coordinators of Community Sponsorship Program in the Basque County
26/05/21	E5	Polytechnic University of Valencia	Architect and urbanist. Researcher and professor
31/05/21	E6	Cáritas of the Diocese of Valencia	Coordinator for Socio-Legal Assistance
10/06/2021	E7	Valencian Regional Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies	Director-General of Equality and Diversity
16/06/21	E8	NeedLab Studio	Architect and founding partner
16/06/21	E9	PANGEA Office of the Gandia City Hall	Social Worker

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# MERGING

INTEGRATION FOR MIGRANTS

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strategies, policies, dwellings and governance

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# Immigrants' Access to Housing: A Comparative Analysis of Sweden and Spain

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## **2 Introduction**

Immigrants' housing trajectories may hold myriad social and economic implications; they could shape immigrants' integration processes and long-term socio-economic achievements, which, at the aggregate level, constitute the overall impact of immigration. In many European nations, settlement policy is a common instrument to geographically disperse newly arrived immigrants with the aim of facilitating integration (Robinson et al., 2003). However, many foreign-born individuals still ended up in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, result in an ethnic segregation pattern (Andersson et al., 2010). Such a segregation pattern may further deteriorate life outcomes of disadvantaged foreign-born population, e.g. poor health and/or economic performance (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Malmberg and Andersson, 2015).

Segregation and immigrants' adverse life outcomes are not uncommon even in Sweden or Spain, despite of ample integration and settlement policies being in place; immigrants' economic performance has been worsening overtime, particularly among refugees (Qi et al., 2019, 2021) and asylum seekers. This report seeks to provide an overview of immigrants' labor and housing market trajectories. It also discusses possible mechanisms underlying immigrants' integration processes as well as their choices of housing location and type.

The analyses in this report rely on various data sources, ranging from macro data compiled by national statistics office and the Ministry of Universal Health and Public Health (government of the Valencian Community) to micro population registers. As the sources vary depending on the type of analysis, data description is provided in respective sections. Moreover, due to large differences in data collection and structure between Spain and Sweden, comparative analyses are only conducted when comparable sources are available.

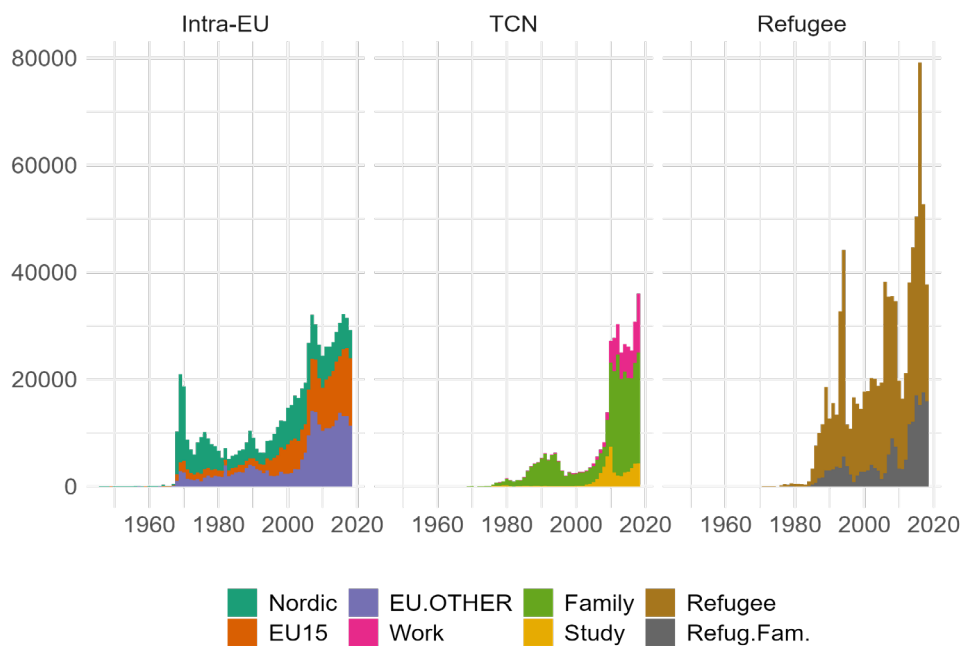
## **3 Migration Flows to Sweden and Spain**

Immigration in Sweden has accelerated in recent decades. Figure 1 depicts the trend increases in immigration flows by categories. The most striking note is that asylum-related immigration tends to be larger in magnitude, but also more volatile, compared to non-refugee related immigration. These features make the prediction of future asylum inflows extremely difficult. Without such a foresight, it is challenging to enable proactive



planning and preparedness, and to ensure adequate resources for the reception of asylum seekers, such as food, shelter, processing applications, and resettling refugees into their receiving societies (Napierala et al., 2021). As became apparent during the mid-2010s, the large “unexpected” influx of asylum seekers left many EU governments unprepared.

Figure 1: Immigration by Categories, Sweden

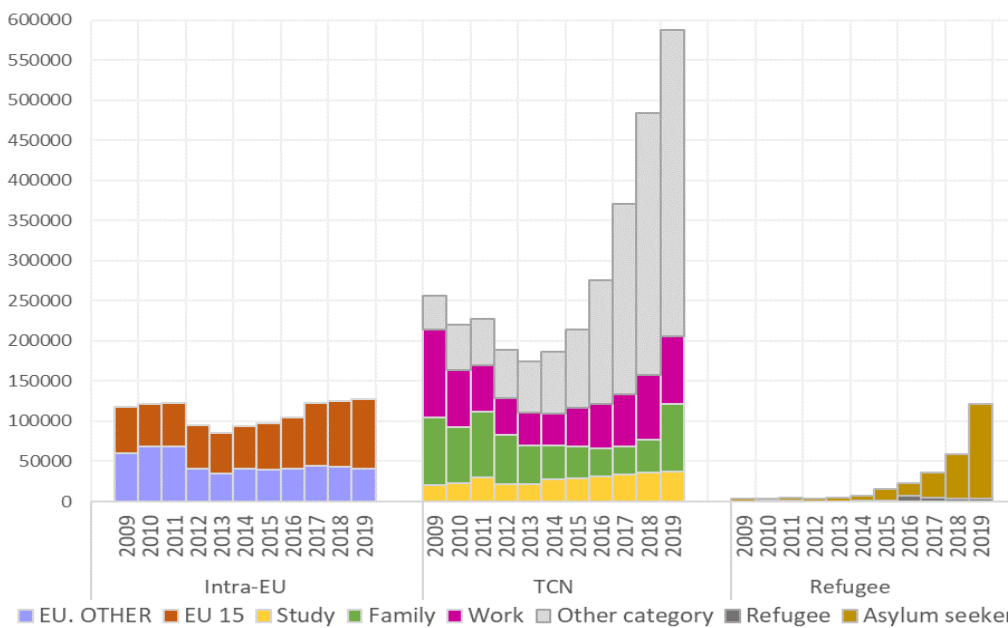


Source: Authors’ calculation using Swedish population registers

Figure 2 shows the evolution of migration flows over the last decade in Spain. Firstly, the data on migrations of non-Spanish citizens from the EU are represented, which remain stable. Next, migrations from the rest of the world, these have increased substantially between 2015 and 2019. The number of people entering the country increased 180% from 2015 to 2019, and in the last observed year they totaled 526,792. The annual flows of first residence authorizations for third-country nationals decreased in the period from 2009 to 2015. In recent years they have increased enormously, accounting for 206,124 authorizations in 2019. The evolution of the number of applicants for international protection in Spain indicates a progressive increase from 2015 to 2019. The increase in applications submitted in 2015 and 2016 coincides with the significant increase



Figure 2: Immigration by Categories, Spain



Source: Authors' calculation using data on migration flows from the National Institute of Statistics, asylum seekers from the Ministry of Social Inclusion and types of migration flows from the Ministry of Interior

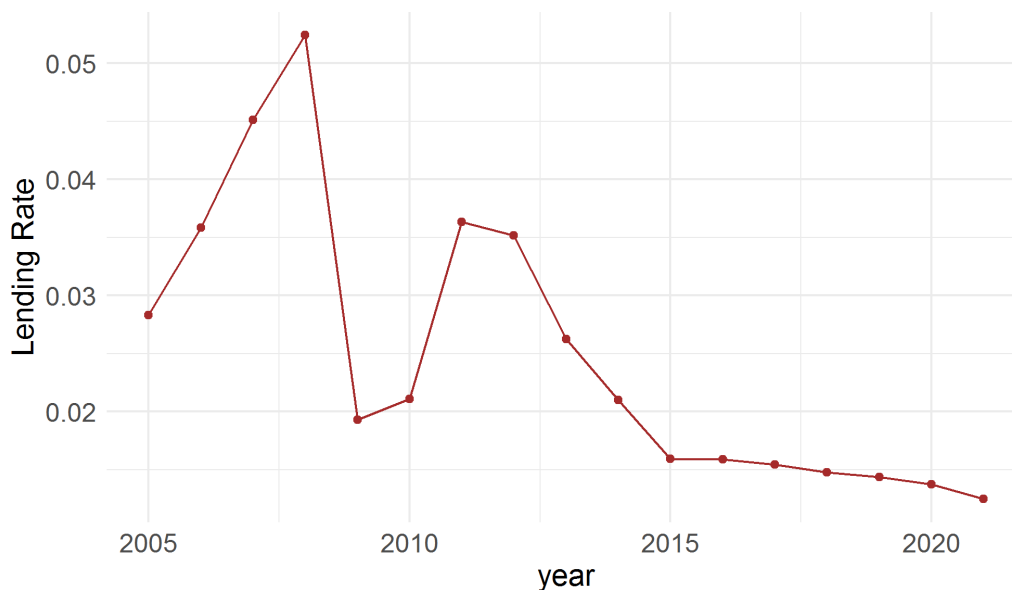
#### 4 Macro Economy and Housing Market

Like in elsewhere, monetary policy in Sweden played a key role in coping with the 2008 financial crisis. As can be seen in Figure 3 the lending interest rate went down from 5% in 2008 to 2% in 2009. During 2011-2012, the Swedish central bank tried to raise the interest rate. However, due to a sustained low inflation, the interest rate



was lowered again in 2013. And in 2015, the repo interest rate in Sweden reached zero for the first time, and then became negative in the subsequent years. As a result, the lending interest rate went down to 1% in 2015, and stayed at a low level ever since. This low interest environment since 2013 reduced the cost for those who already own their home, but it might also inflate the housing price and therefore increase the cost for those who become new home owners.

Figure 3: Lending Interest Rate, Sweden

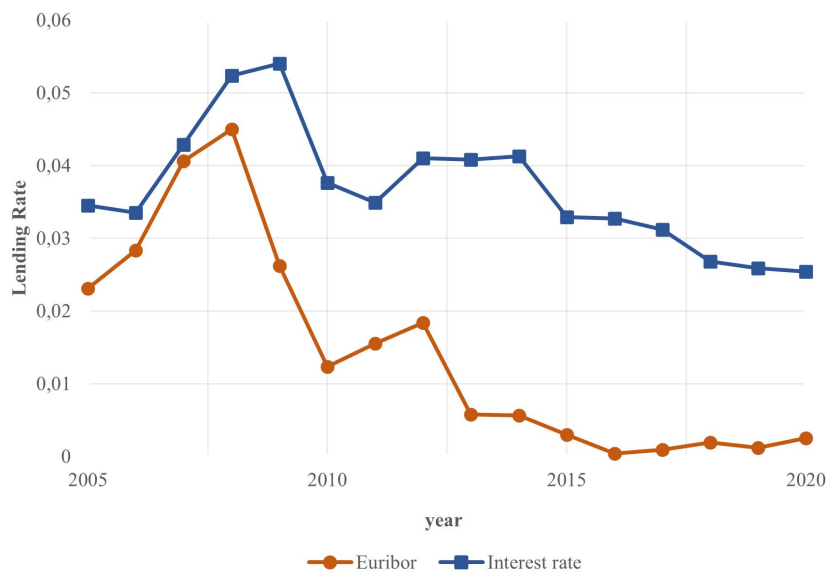


Source: Sweden's Central Bank (Riksbank)

In Spain, the monetary policy is the responsibility of the European Central Bank, whose main objective is to keep inflation below 2%. Figure 4 shows the variations in interest rates, as we can see, they follow the same trend as in Sweden. The lowering of interest rates to deal with the 2008 crisis did not have a major impact in Spain due to the bursting of the real estate bubble and its effects on the banking system. It did benefit those who already had a mortgage contracted years ago as the reference rate for mortgage loans (EURIBOR) decreased. However, for new homeowners, the interest rate remained at around 4% during this period. It has only started to fall since 2015, once the crisis is over.



Figure 4: Lending Interest Rate, Spain



Source: Financial and Monetary Statistics. National Statistics Office and Spanish National Central Bank

The 2008 crisis resulted in a dramatic increase of evictions in Spain. The Figure 5 shows the high numbers of evictions for the period 2014-2020 in Spain and in Valencian Community. Although the numbers have considerably decrease, the number of evictions remain very high.



Figure 5: Dwellings with begun foreclosure according to dwelling status, Spain and Valencian Community

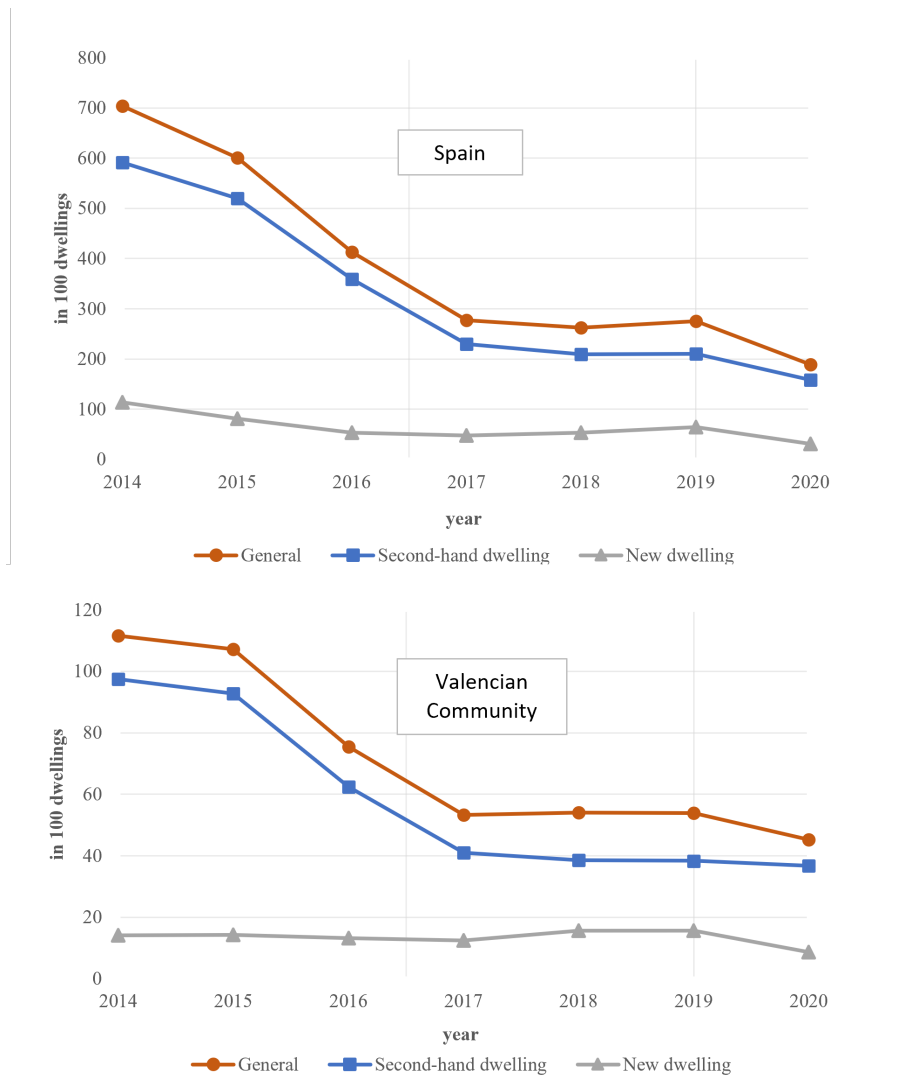
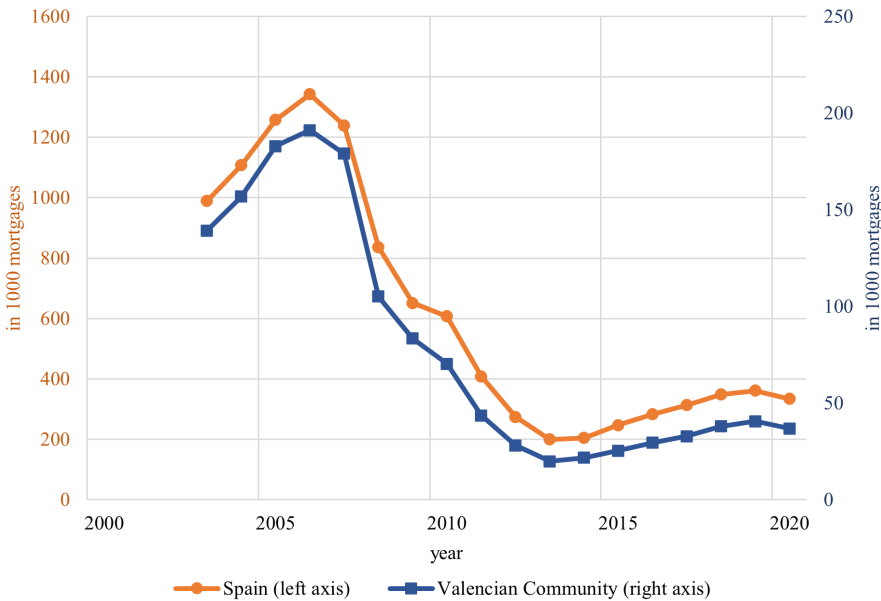


Figure 6 shows the sharp reduction in the number of mortgages taken out for the purchase of a home. From the highs of 2005-2006 to the lows of 2013-2014, there was an 85% drop in financing, both in Spain and in the Valencian Community. The combination of the lack of financing and the high number of unsold homes has led to a change in the forms of housing tenure and a drop in purchase prices.



Figure 6: Number Mortgages constituted. Dwellings, Spain and Valencian Community

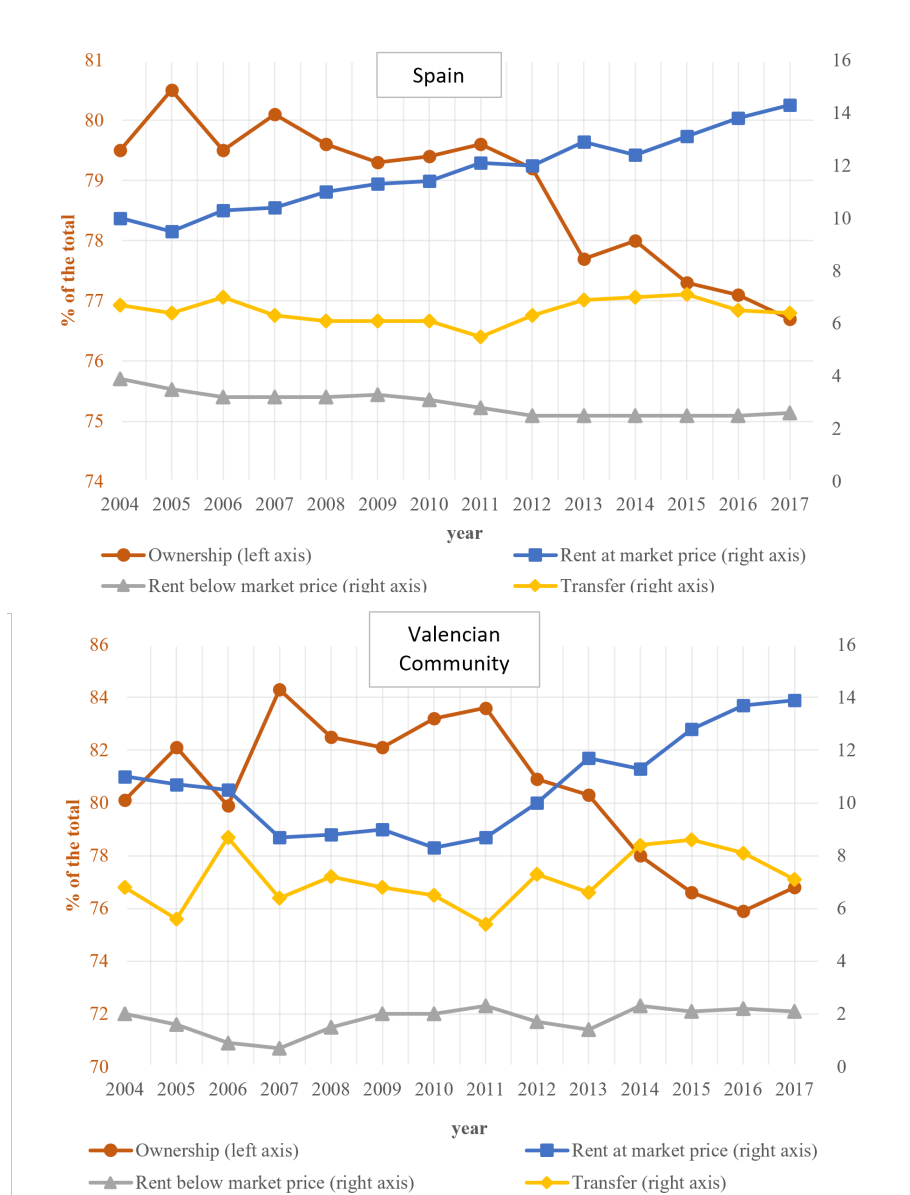


Source: Financial and Monetary Statistics. National Statistics Office

In Spain, there are 4 forms of access to housing, as can be seen in Figure 7. The most common is home ownership, currently 77% of dwellings are owned. Renting housing at market price is around 15%; in recent years there has been a growing trend compared to the option to buy. 2.6% of rents are regulated by an old law from 1964 which in practice allows tenants to stay indefinitely at below-market prices. The remaining 6% are dwellings received by inheritance or donation. In the Valencian Community, tenancy rates behave in the same way as in the rest of Spain.



Figure 7: Percentage Households by tenure regime of the dwelling, Spain and Valencian Community

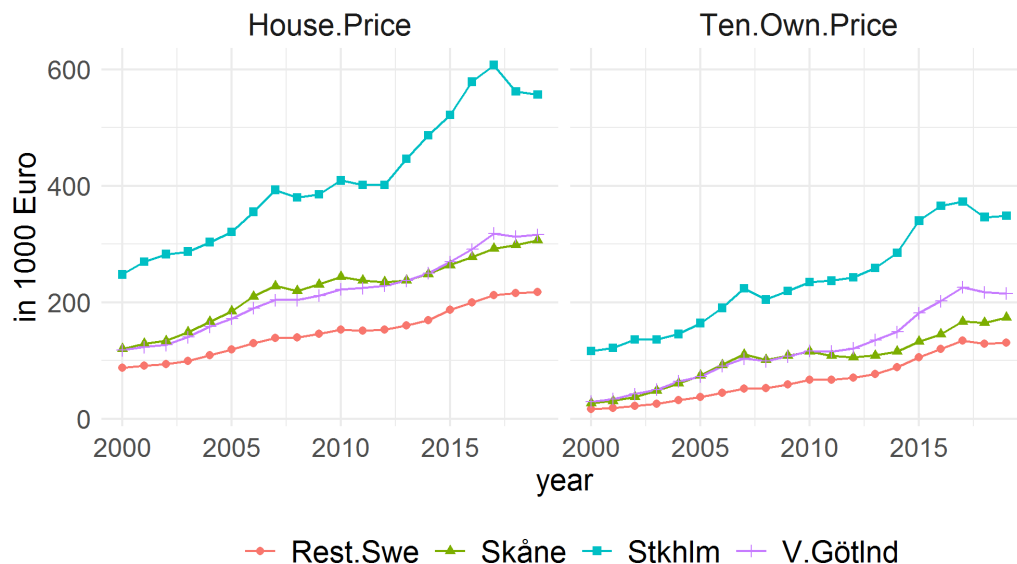


Source: Life Conditions Survey. National Statistics Office



Figure 8 depicts the trends in housing prices, including both owned houses and tenant-owned dwelling. There are substantial regional differences, namely the price level is the highest in Stockholm region, followed by Vast Gotland and Skane, where the second and the third largest city (Goteborg and Malmo) are located. It is also noteworthy that prices tend to increase faster in Stockholm region, compared to other regions, especially after 2013. This steeper trend increase appears to correlate with the low interest environment since 2013.

Figure 8: Prices of Housing and Tenant-Owned Dwelling, Sweden



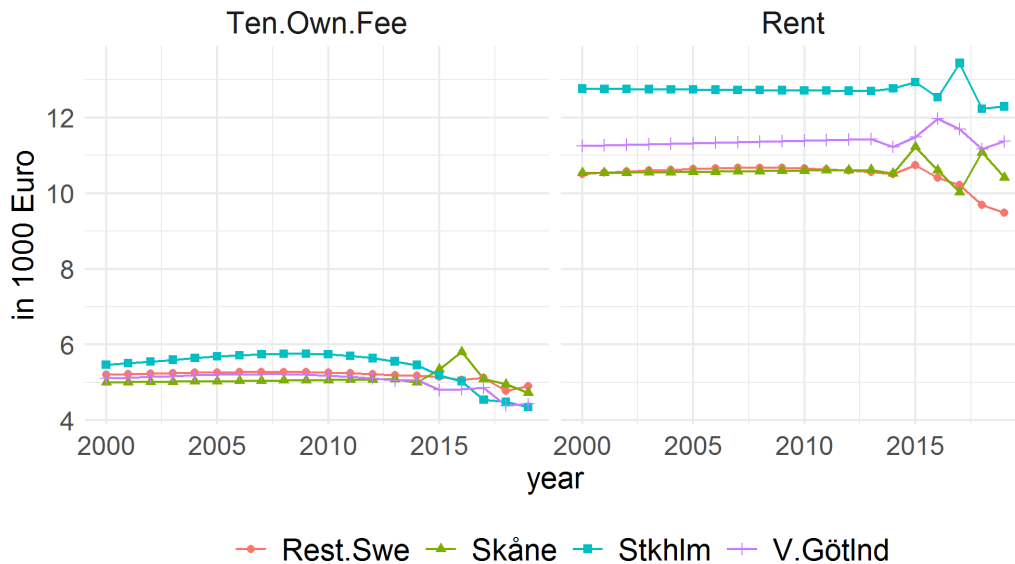
Source: Statistics Sweden.

As mentioned above, tenant-owned dwelling (mostly apartments) presents a hybrid version of owned and rental housing, for which tenants not only buy the housing unit at the market price, they also pay a monthly fee to the tenant association. This fee however is typically lower than rent. Figure 9 shows the difference between tenant-owned dwelling fees and rents. In general, rents are about twice as much



as tenant-owned dwelling fees. Moreover, while there is little regional variation in tenant-owned fees, rents are substantially higher in Stockholm and Vast Gotland region (where the second largest city - Goteborg - is located).

Figure 9: Housing Fees and Rents, Sweden



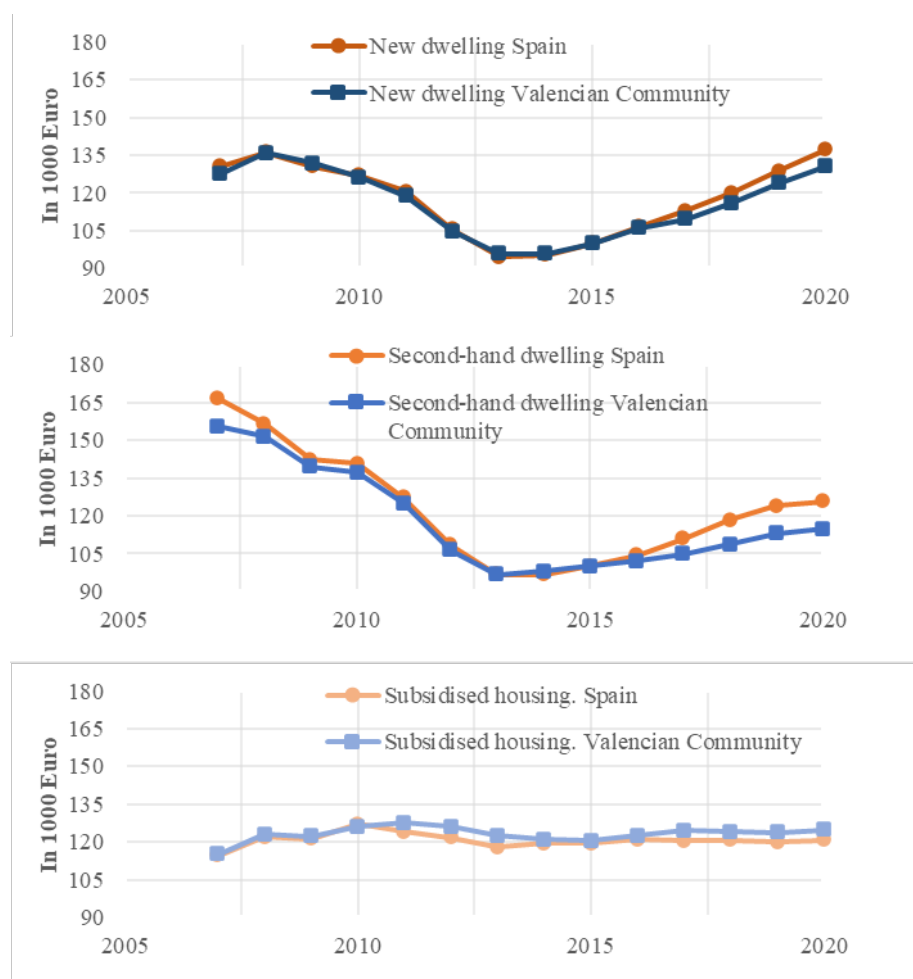
Source: Statistics Sweden

In Spain, as can be seen in Figure 10, the purchase price of a house is not always related to its age. New housing tends to be built on the outskirts of cities, where the urban fabric is not very consolidated. Therefore, second-hand housing in city centres can even exceed the price of new construction. It should be borne in mind that in most large cities there are neighbourhoods where low-quality housing is concentrated. This housing was accelerated in the 1970s to accommodate people moving to the big cities in search of jobs. Today they are still inhabited by their original owners and by newcomers from abroad because prices for sale and rent are relatively low.

Subsidised housing is promoted by public administrations with the aim of meeting the needs of people with fewer resources and in need of a home. The requirements to qualify for subsidised housing are linked to income. The price per square metre is regulated by law and is updated periodically; this price is more stable in the medium term. It is convenient to differentiate this type of protected or subsidised housing from public or social housing. In Spain, the stock of social housing is very small and clearly insufficient to meet the needs of the vulnerable population.



Figure 10: Prices of Housing in Spain & Valencian Community



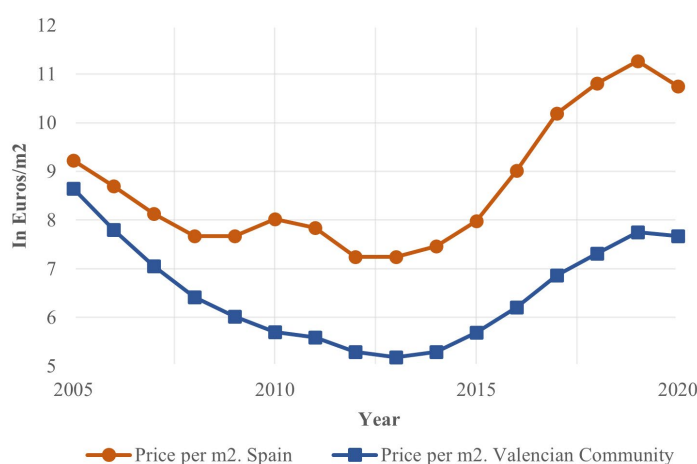
Source: Consumer price and housing indices. National Statistics Office and Appraised value of the house. Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda

Note: The average price of the property has been calculated by multiplying the price per m2 by the size stipulated for this type of property, which is 110 m2.

Finally, Figure 11 shows the evolution of rental prices per m2 in Spain and the Valencian Community. The trends have followed the same trajectory throughout the period studied. However, in Valencia they are approximately 30% lower. Renting is the main form of access to housing among young people and newcomers. It is very difficult to obtain financing in the absence of stable employment.



Figure 11: Price evolution of housing for rent in Spain & Valencian Community



Source: Report Price evolution of housing for sale in Spain. [www.idealista.com](http://www.idealista.com)

## 5 Immigrants' Income and Housing

In this section, the analysis only refers to Sweden, as such data is not available for the case analysis of Spain and Valencian Community. Unfortunately, we do not have enough information on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of immigrants to allow us to carry out a longitudinal analysis.

During the 2010s, the surge of asylum-related immigration in Europe has fuelled public and political concern about how well these newcomers will integrate into the host societies. This issue has emerged, at least partly, because the labour market integration of previously arrived refugees was not satisfactory (Qi et al., 2019, 2021). While the economic consequence of refugee immigration for Sweden has been recently assessed (Qi, 2021), little is known about how poor economic integration may affect refugees' housing.

This section analyzes immigrants' economic integration and housing affordability in Sweden. Specifically, we examine the extent to which their labor earnings are sufficient for owning or renting accommodations. Our analyses rely on the Swedish population registers 1968-2018, which contains detailed information about individuals' socio-economic and demographic characteristics, as well as the information on their housing. We select those who were first-time registered in Sweden during 2010-2018, and observe their initial conditions in terms of income and housing, as well as

how these conditions evolve over the years since migration.

In contrast with Sweden, the Spanish analysis on the access to housing for immigrants and for beneficiaries of international protection has some particularities. First, the problems of access to housing, experienced by an important sector of the Spanish population, enlarges the individuals and families suffering from housing-related exclusion and vulnerability. This makes more complicate the access to housing for immigrants and refugees. Second, a very small share of asylum seekers is accepted for the recognition of international protection compared to other countries. Consequently, most asylum seekers who are denied international protection become undocumented migrants. This issue is very important in the Spanish case, where the transition from asylum application to becoming undocumented migrants is particularly intense. A significant number of individuals have been falling into this administrative irregular situation in the period 2015-2020, while others have entered it by arriving as tourists or by entering the country illegally.

All this has contributed to an increase in the number of vulnerable individuals and the risk of social exclusion in Spain during the same period. Under these circumstances, it is very difficult for newcomers to find a job that provides them with a stable income or meet the minimum requirements to buy or rent decent housing. The latest CEAR (Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid) report states that housing prices in many cities are unaffordable for people who benefit from the benefits of the reception system and that sometimes the only housing option they find is in neighbourhoods with a high index of marginalization.

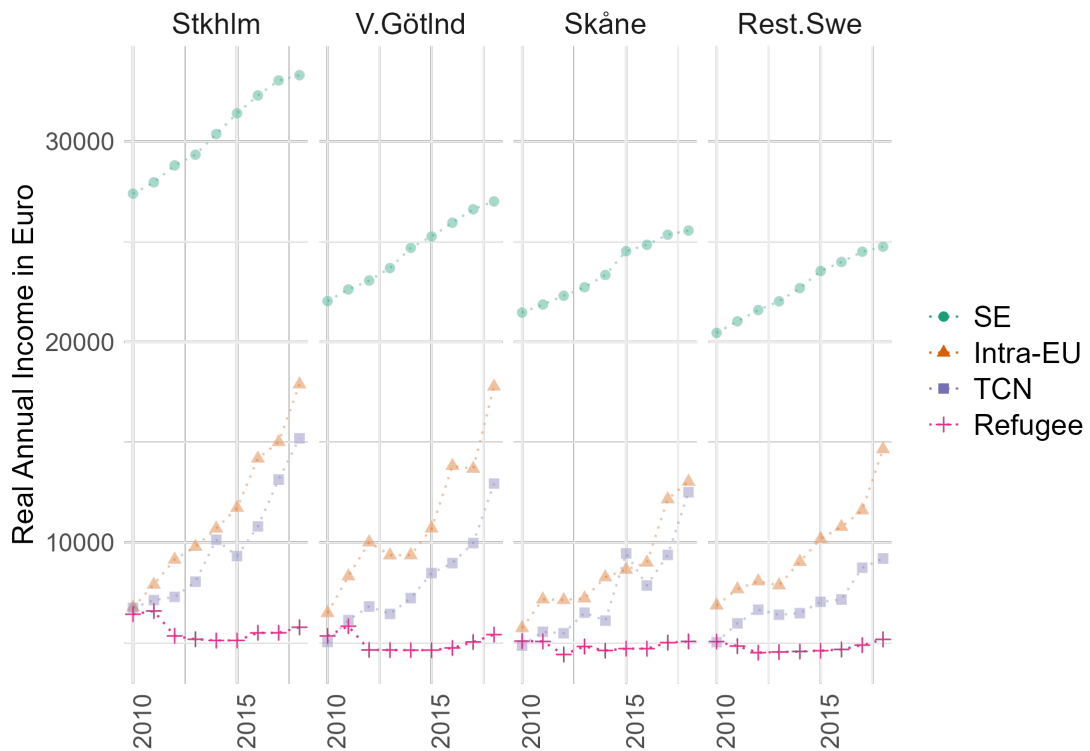
Finally, since the phenomenon is very recent in our country, there is still no public register with information on the trajectories of asylum seekers or refugees. In this project, thanks to the collaboration of the Ministry of Universal Health and Public Health (government of the Valencian Community), we reconstruct for the first time the trajectories of people who some were asylum seekers in the period 2017-2020 and who currently reside in the Valencian Community.



## 5.1 Initial Condition

Figure 12 depicts the labor income of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. In general, the initial income of those arrived during 2010-2018 is noticeably lower than the native-born Swedes. And this native-immigrant income gap is the greatest in Stockholm region, which is largely because the region has the highest level of income per capita in Sweden.

Figure 12: Immigrants' Initial Income in Sweden



Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers

While it has been widely documented that refugees in Sweden tend to earn much less than other types of immigrant – for example labour migrants (Irastorza and Bevelander, 2017), much less is known about how this income difference evolved overtime. Figure 12 reveals a striking divergence between refugees and non-refugee immigrants in Sweden. During 2010-2018, while the income of refugees upon arrival is persistently low, that of immigrants from the EU and other third countries exhibits a notable improvements.

The persistent low level of refugees' initial income raises an important question concerning the extent to which they can afford a shelter. Figure 14 shows the price to income ratio, which normalizes the housing price relative to annual labor earnings. As shown in Figure 8 housing price in Stockholm region is the highest in Sweden. An obvious consequence is that the region also has the highest price to income ratio. And this ratio is particularly high for refugees. In 2010, the price for a villa in Stockholm is equivalent to 60 years of annual earnings for an average refugee upon arrival, and the corresponding figure increased to over 90 years in 2019. Although tenant owned property (mainly for apartments) is cheaper, it would still require 60 years of annual earnings for an average refugee arrived in 2018. These increases in price to income ratio essentially implies that home ownership has become increasingly impossible for newly arrived refugees, which is largely due to their low initial income coupled with a sharp rise in housing prices.

Figure 13: Housing Price Relative to Immigrants' Initial Income in Sweden



Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers. Housing prices are based on aggregated data from Statistics Sweden.

It is important to note that the dashed line in Figure 13 approximately represents a borrowing constraint. In Sweden, individuals, in general, can take a housing loan from

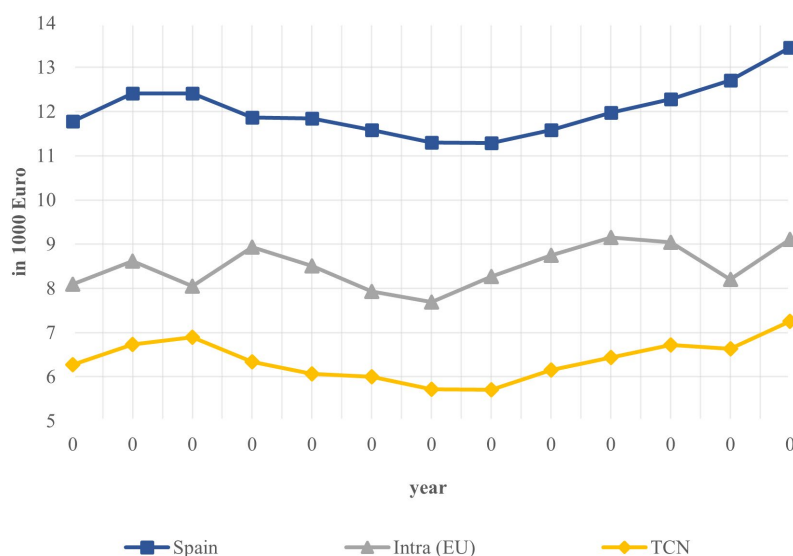


the bank up to roughly 5 years of annual labor earnings. The differences between the price to income ratio and the borrowing constraint suggest that the majority of the population in the metropolitan regions can barely afford houses, unless they have enough savings to make a large down payment. Affordability for tenant owned apartments is higher, an average Swede is able to buy with the borrowing limit (except in Stockholm region). However, this is not the case for newly arrived immigrants, for whom, the price-income ratio still exceeds the borrowing limit to a large extent.

In this section we present information on Spain, on the one hand, Figure 14, which shows the evolution of average income according to country of birth and, on the other hand, the relationship between the price of a subsidised house whose price is regulated by the government and average income.

Figure 14 compares the labour income of people born in Spain with those born in the European Union and the rest of the world. The average earnings calculated for each year do not differentiate between newcomers and those with more seniority. There is an income gap of about 50% between people born in Spain and those born in the rest of the world. EU citizens have 66% of the income earned by Spaniards.

Figure 14: Annual income per person according to country of birth (year prior to interview), Spain



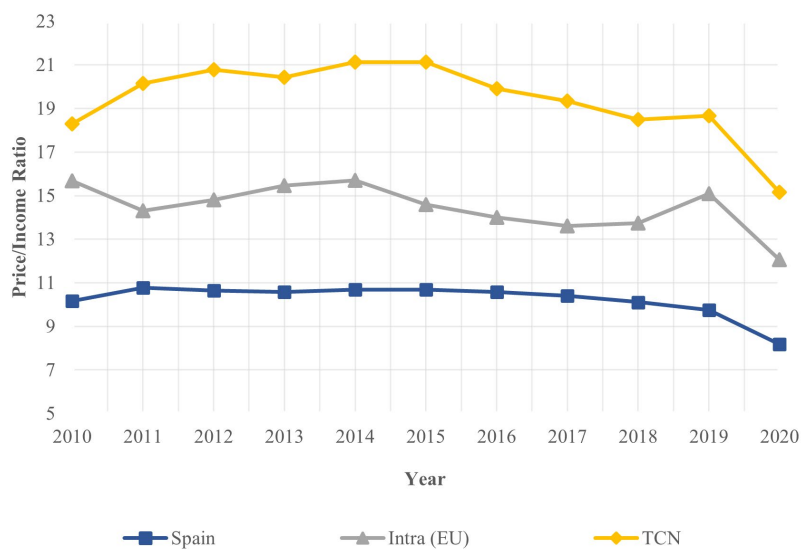
Source: Life Conditions Survey. National Statistics Office

Note: UK-born population is included in the foreign (European Union) category.



Next, in Figure 15, we will calculate the ratio between the average purchase price of a typical house and the annual income that people receive according to their country of birth. In this way, we will find out how many years of salary are needed to be able to pay the price of a house. An immigrant born outside the European Union would take between a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 20 years to be able to afford a house. In the case of EU citizens, between 13 and 15 years. A person born in Spain between 9 and 11 years

Figure 15: Housing Price Relative to Immigrants', Spain



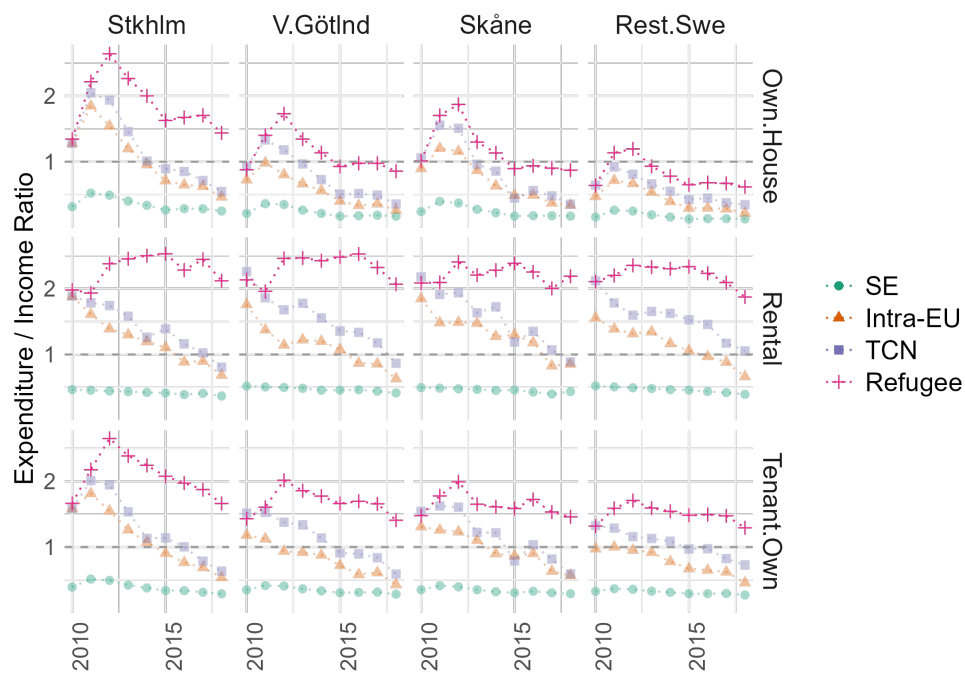
Source: Own elaboration with data on income per person from the Survey of Living Conditions and the prices of social housing from the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda

Note: The average price of the property has been calculated by multiplying the price per m2 by the size stipulated for this type of property, which is 110 m2



Another indicator for measuring housing affordability is the ratio of housing expenditure to income. Housing expenditure encompasses rents, interest payments, and fees (only applicable to tenant owned apartments). If this ratio exceeds one, it means that an individual's income is not enough to cover the expenses in a given year. Figure 16 illustrates the housing expenditure relative to immigrants' initial income. While owning a house or a tenant-owned apartment incurs less annual expenses, compared to rental, they are the least accessible option for newly arrived immigrants, due to the high price-to-income ratio as shown in Figure 13. Most strikingly, rental is an unaffordable option for newly arrived immigrants too, the rent-to-income ratio is generally above one, suggesting that rental housing will cost more than what an immigrant earns upon arrival. The situation is the worst for refugees; the annual rent is equivalent to two years of their annual earnings.

Figure 16: Housing Expenditure Relative to Immigrants' Initial Income in Sweden

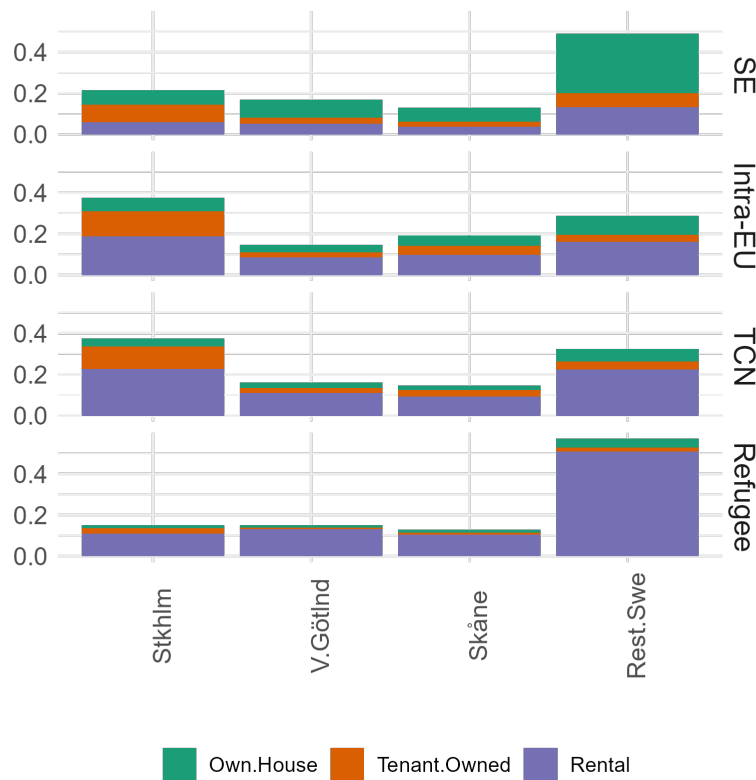


Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers. Housing expenditures are based on aggregated data from Statistics Sweden.



Figure 17 depicts where and how newly arrived immigrants live. In general, intra-EU and third country nationals (TCN) immigrants tend to exhibit a similar pattern of location-type choices, though EU migrants tend to have a slightly higher share of homeowners. Refugees and their families tend to initially locate in regions that are distant from the three largest metropolitan areas. While this location choice is similar to where the native-born Swedes live, a salient difference is that refugees predominantly live in rental housing, whereas the majority Swedes live in their owned houses.

Figure 17: Initial Location-Type Choices, Sweden



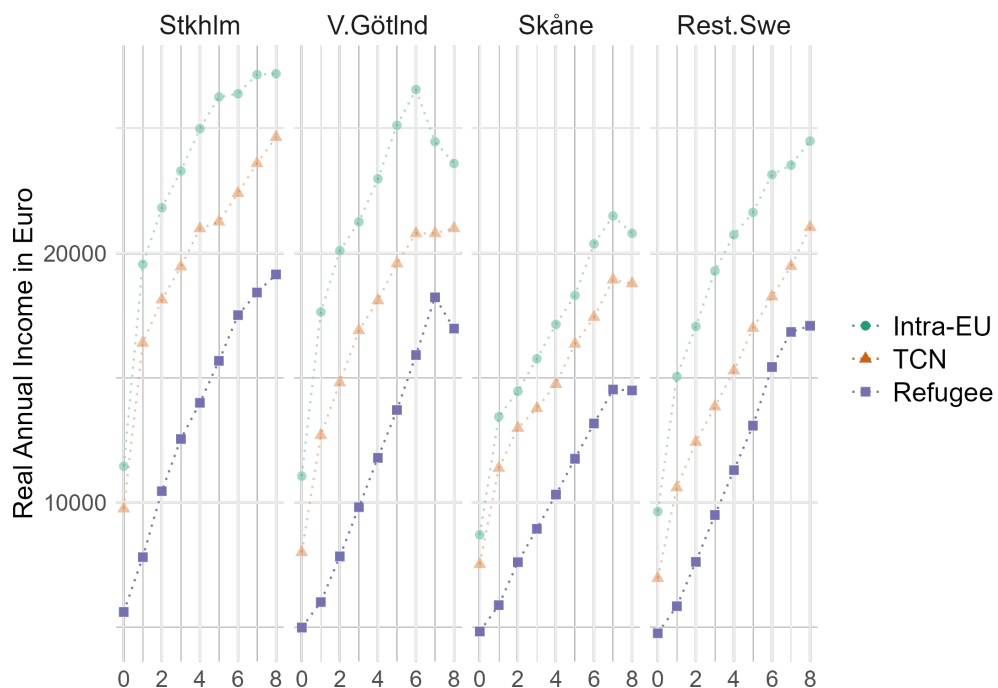
Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.



## 5.2 Trajectories over Years Since Migration

As shown in Figure 11 immigrants in Sweden tend to earn less upon arrival, compared to the native-born Swedes. However, this situation is improving overtime; as can be seen from Figure 18, labor income grows in a parallel fashion across different immigrant categories. This earnings growth pattern is congruent with what economic assimilation model predicts, namely once immigrants have acquired skills that are specific to the host country, their earnings will start to grow (Chiswick, 1978; Duleep and Regets, 1999). Nevertheless, despite of growth, recent evidence suggests that immigrants' earnings never catch up with that of the natives; the income level of older immigrants who arrived in Sweden decades ago is still lower (Qi, 2016; Qi et al., 2019). A pressing issue therefore emerges concerning how this persistent income gap may affect immigrants' integration into the housing market.

Figure 18: Immigrants' Earning Growth in Sweden

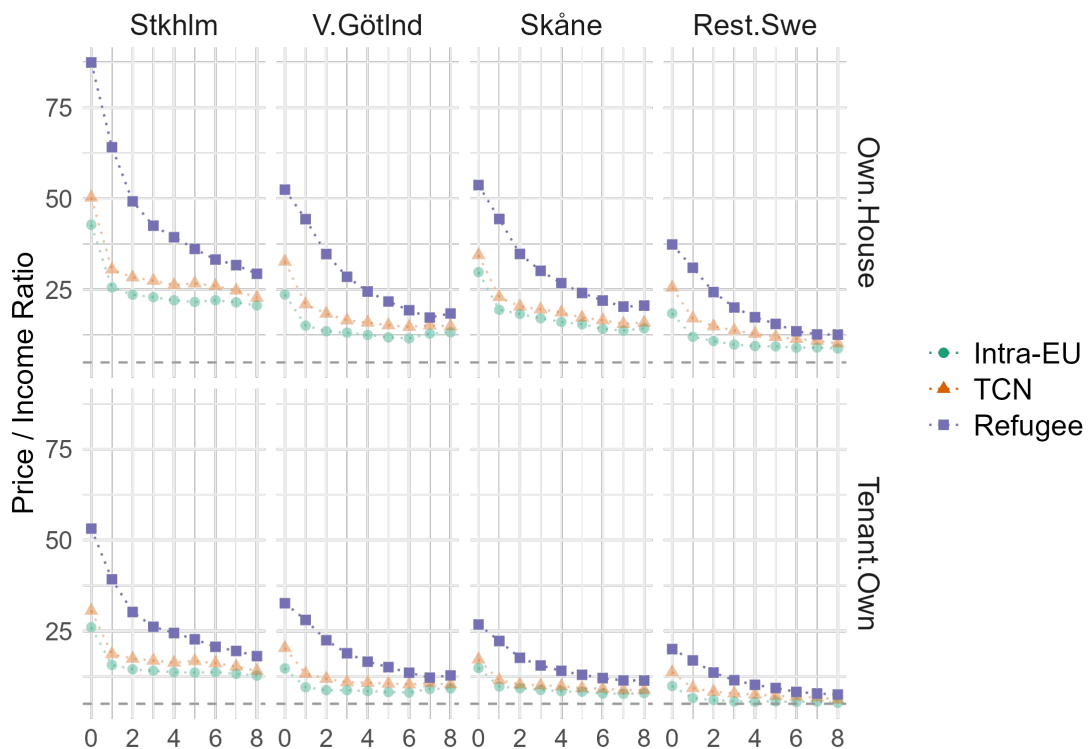


Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.

As discussed earlier, newly arrived immigrants in Sweden are far less affordable to

housing, compared to the native-born population. Specifically, from Figure 13, it is evident that the price for all immigrants far exceeds the borrowing limit set by the Swedish banks (5 years of annual earning), while that for the native-born Swedes is much closer to or even under what they can borrow. Over the years since migration, however, immigrants' housing affordability tend to improve. As shown in Figure 19, the price/income ratio is declining overtime. These improvements are largely due to the growth in earnings depicted in Figure 18.

Figure 19: Housing Price Relative to Immigrants' Earning Growth in Sweden



Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.

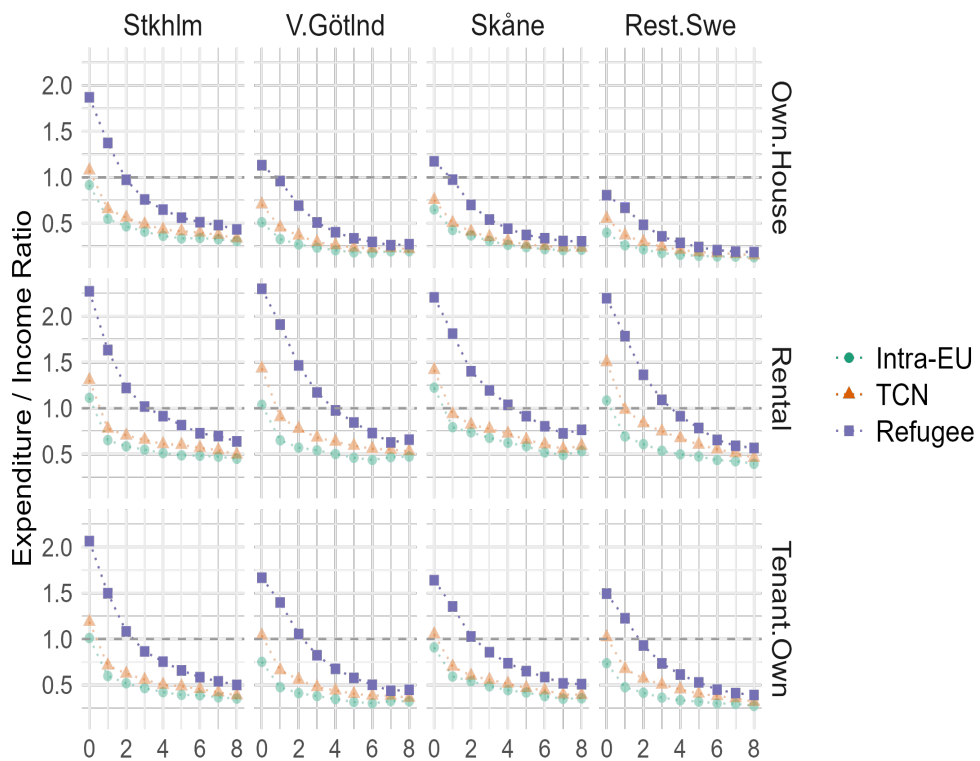
Despite of growing earnings and hence purchasing power, a pressing issue is that, in general, the price still exceeds immigrants' borrowing limit after eight years since migration. The only exception is the tenant-owned apartments in non-metropolitan areas, for which the price/income ratio is relatively low. A more striking pattern is that the time needed to own a tenant-owned apartment differs across immigrant



categories. As the bottom-right panel in Figure 19 shows, for intra-EU immigrants, it takes about a year since migration to afford a tenant-owned apartment in non-metropolitan areas, whereas the time needed for refugees is about seven years.

On top of purchasing price, home ownership in Sweden also incurs expenses on mortgage interest payments as well as fees (in case buying tenant-owned property). Figure 20 illustrates how these expenses relative to immigrants' income evolve over time. In general, the expenditure/income ratio associated with home ownership declines sharply. Even for refugees, after about 1-3 years since migration, their annual income will suffice for the interest payments and for the fees incurred from tenant-owned property.

Figure 20: Housing Expenditure Relative to Immigrants' Earning Growth in Sweden



Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.

Relating the expenditure/income ratio to the price/income ratio in Figure 19, it can be argued that the major obstacles for immigrants' home ownership in Sweden are the high



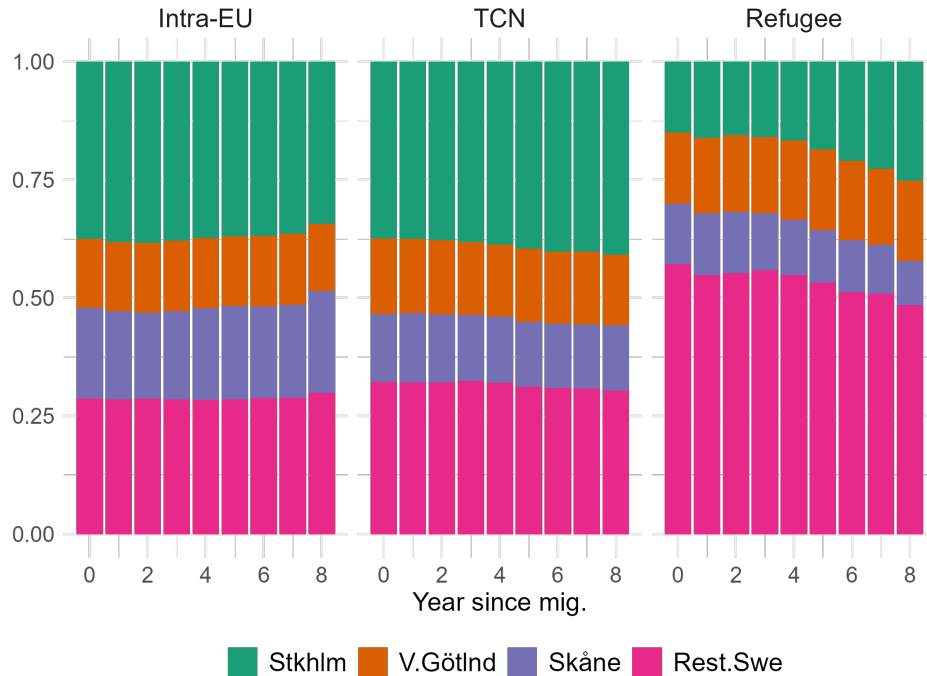
purchasing price, as well as the borrowing constraint due to low income. These obstacles are particularly profound for refugees, as it would take about seven years since migration to afford a tenant-owned property in non-metropolitan areas. Such a lengthy period implies that rental is a more feasible housing option. However, as shown in the middle panels in Figure 20, even rental is expensive for refugees during their initial stay in Sweden, as the rent exceeds their income for about 3-5 years after arrival, depending on the region. This implies that the supply of and accessibility to rental housing are vital elements for preparing and planning the reception and settlement of newly arrived asylum-related immigrants.

The regional variation in price/income ration, as shown in Figure 19, may suggest that non-metropolitan areas would be preferred locations, as the cost of housing is the lowest. However, Figure 23 reveals a somewhat contrasting pattern for non-refugee immigrants' location choice, namely they tend to choose the regions where the three largest cities are, and nearly 40% of them choose the region of Stockholm. Overtime, the percentage share of intra-EU immigrants living in Stockholm exhibits a slight decline, while that of third country nationals increased noticeably. Nevertheless, compared to the refugee population, the locations among intra-EU and TCN immigrants are relatively stable.

As shown in Figure 17 refugees' initial living locations are mostly in non-metropolitan regions, which is very similar to the geographic distribution of the native-born Swedes. However, overtime, there is a discernible shift. Refugees and their reunited families tend to move towards regions where the three largest cities are, particularly to Stockholm, while the percentage share who remain in non-metropolitan regions shrinks. This moving pattern implies a positive response to housing price, namely the high living cost in terms of real estate price in Stockholm region (see Figure 19) tend to attract refugees.



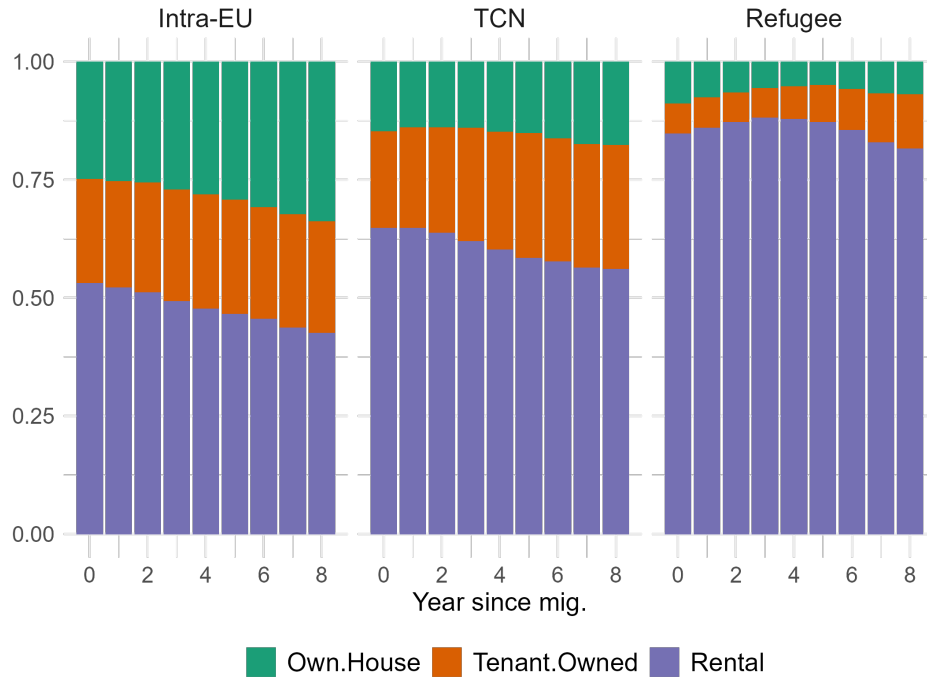
Figure 21: Housing Location Trajectories, Sweden



Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.

Refugees' growing mobility could partly attribute to the type of housing that they tend to live in. As shown in Figure 22 while intra-EU and TCN migrants become homeowners (for both houses and tenant-owned dwelling), refugees tend to remain as renters. This implies that refugees are relatively more mobile, because the transaction costs of moving between rentals are low and/or high mobility people might self-select to be renters (Hamnett, 1991; South and Deane, 1993; Lundborg and Skedinger, 1999).

Figure 22: Housing Type Trajectories, Sweden

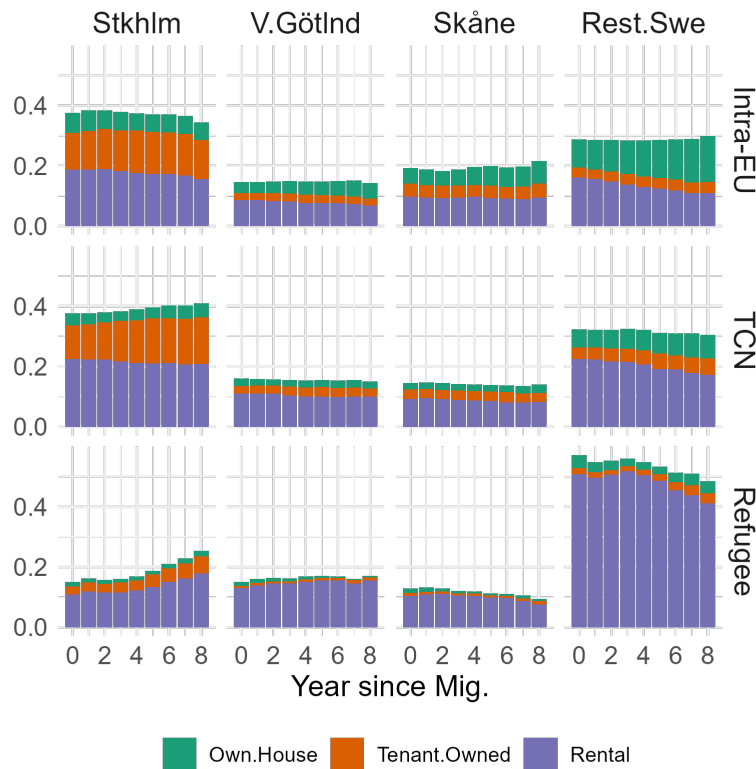


Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.

The renter-mobility nexus becomes even more evident in Figure 23. Specifically, EU and TCN migrants tend to have a low geographical mobility, but a high upward mobility from renter to homeowner. In contrast, refugees tend to have a high regional mobility, but maintain a renter status. Most strikingly, refugees tend to relocate towards more expensive Stockholm region, rather than moving between non-metropolitan regions.



Figure 23: Housing Location-Type Trajectories, Sweden



Source: Authors' calculations using Swedish population registers.

Refugees' mobility towards Stockholm region warrants a discussion about why. A plausible explanation could be that Stockholm offer better labor market opportunities. As shown in Figure 12 and Figure 18 the average income is noticeably higher in Stockholm, which could create an economic incentive for refugees to move towards there.

Moreover, our analysis of the regional differences in housing expenditure may offer an additional explanation. As shown in Figure 20, unlike the housing price to income ratio, the rental/income ratio has little regional variation. This implies that, for renters, there is little marginal cost of living between non-metropolitan regions and Stockholm. Hence, for refugees who are predominantly renters, the benefit of moving towards Stockholm is likely to outweigh the marginal cost of living.

The data on asylum seekers trajectories is only available for the Valencian Community. The longitudinal information comes from the cross-referencing of two data extractions from the Population Information System (SIP, Acronyms in Catalan and Spanish), a first one, as of 31 May 2021 and another one, with a series of conditions, between 1/01/2017 and 31/05/2021.

The SIP is the corporate administrative register of the Regional Ministry of Health that collects and updates data on the identification, location, allocation of health resources (area, zone, centre, and doctor) and entitlement to health benefits of people residing in the Valencian Community or displaced persons accessing the Public Health System.

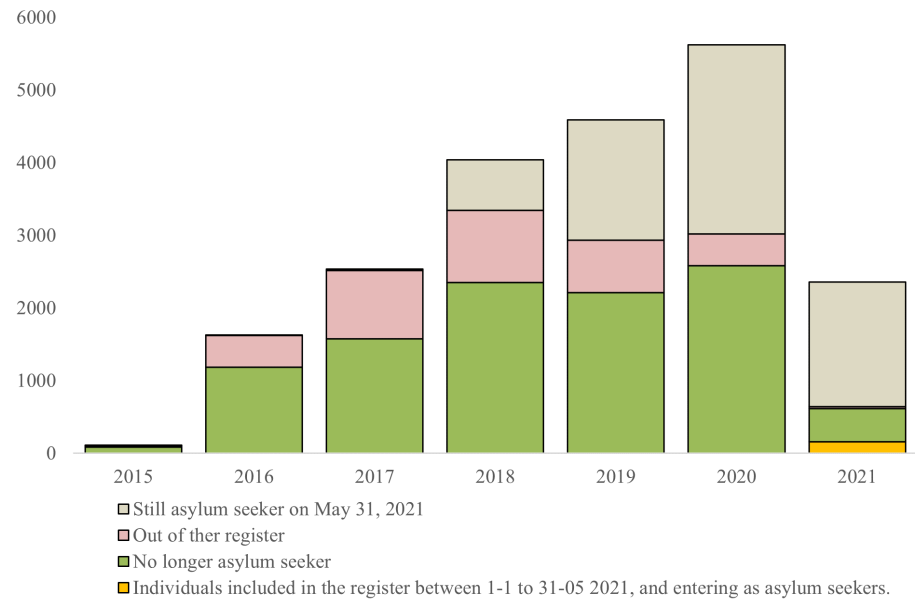
The information in the SIP is mainly updated by operators who connect online to the application from primary and specialised care centres. It is also updated by means of computer cross-referencing with databases from institutions that provide data of interest related to insurance.

In the following figure we can observe the destination or status of the users according to the moment in which they were accredited as asylum seekers. Most of those who started the process between 2015 and 2017 changed their status. However, one third of them disappeared from the registry (change of region or country, expiration of status or other reasons). As of 2018, one can observe users who changed their status, around 50% and those who are still awaiting a resolution or have been removed from the register.

The maximum period for resolving applications for international protection is six months, in accordance with the provisions of Law 12/2009, of 30 October, regulating the right to asylum and subsidiary protection and Law 30/1992, of 26 November, on the Legal Regime of the Public Administrations and Common Administrative Procedure. However, there have been cases taking longer to be resolved. This may happen when there is an incident with the documentation or an appeal has been lodged. In other cases, it is possible that the current status has not been already registered in the database.



Figure 24: Destination or status of users according to the moment in which they were accredited as asylum seeker, Valencian Community

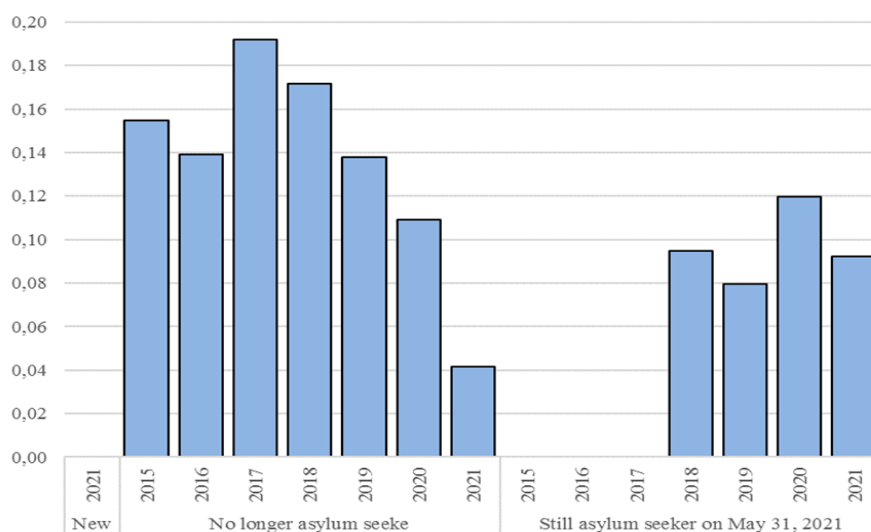


Source: Prepared by the authors based on status indicators from the Population Information System (SIP) of the Ministry of Universal Health and Public Health (government of the Valencian Community). N= 20.875



The new figure presents information on the change of place of residence. Between 5% and 20% of the users who ceased to be asylum seekers have changed their address. The higher the seniority, the higher the probability. People who are awaiting the resolution of their file have a mobility rate of about 10%.

Figure 25: Changes of address (housing) during the period depending on destination or status, Valencian Community

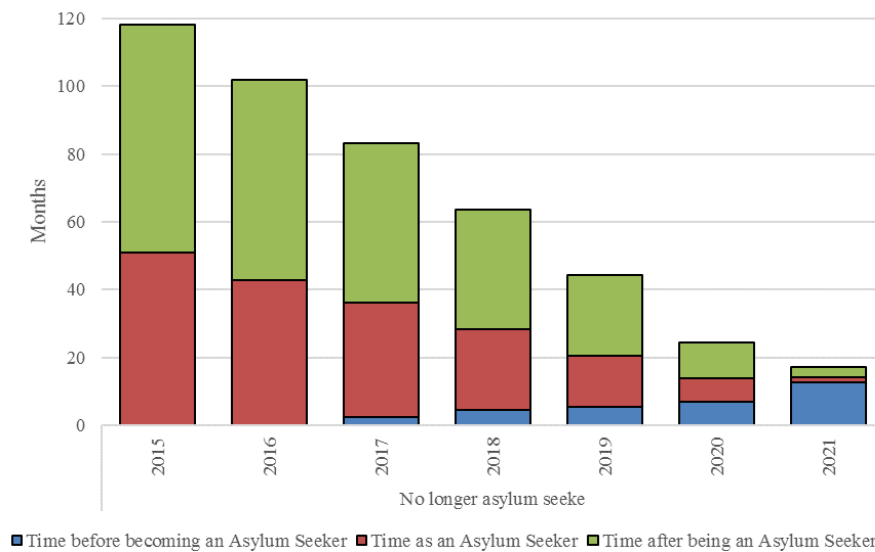


Source: Prepared by the authors based on georeferencing indicators from the Population Information System (SIP) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 17.477

In the following figure, we analyze the time elapsed in months (the tenth fraction of the length of the year in sunny days: 365.2425) between one state and another of the persons who ceased to be asylum seekers and who as of May 31 reside in the Valencian Community. Specifically, the time prior to the asylum application, the time of processing and the time after the end of the processing. People who were directly accredited as applicants in 2015, remained 51 months on average in that status, in the following years, the durations have been reduced. As of 2017, applicants appear to have been previously registered in another state.



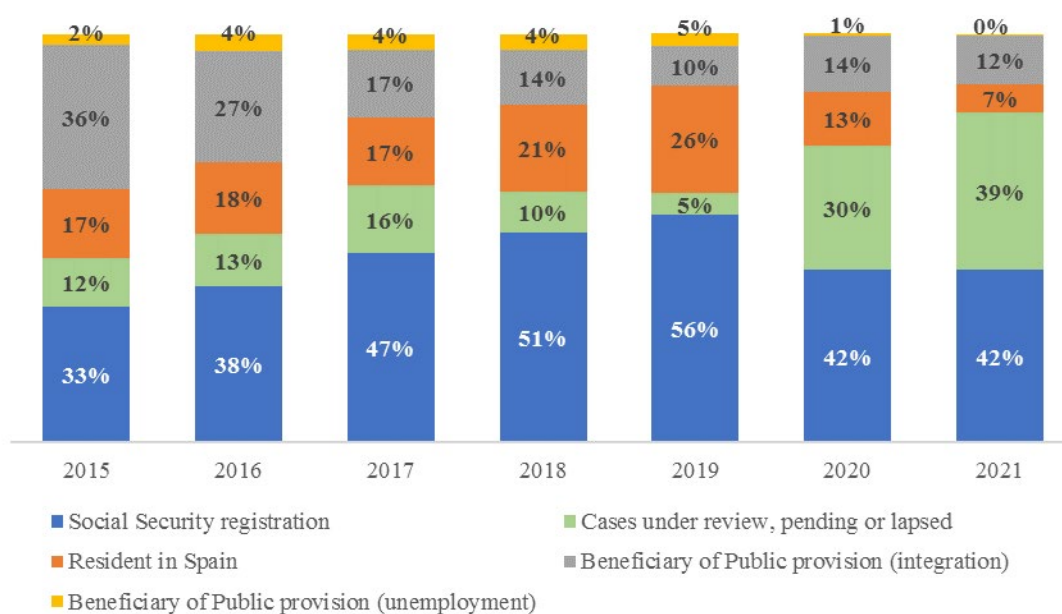
Figure 26: Average number of months the asylum seeker has stayed in one state or the other. Valencian Community



Source: Prepared by the authors based on date comparison registered from the Population Information System (SIP) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 10.448

Finally, we present the figure with the percentages in the accreditation modality. This variable provides us with information on the origin of the right to health care. Between 33% and 56% were registered with the Social Security, in this case, the users are recognised as contributors. It is worth noting that in the last two years, between 30% and 40% of users are in the process of processing their files. If we look at the history, they will probably be resolved with the recognition of a solidarity benefit or they will be transferred to a generic status (resident in Spain), in which they have health coverage but do not meet the requirements for a solidarity benefit. A small percentage between 1% and 5% receive unemployment benefit.

Figure 27: Last known destination of former asylum seekers who are currently in the system, Valencian Community



Source: Prepared by the authors based on date comparison registered from the Population Information System (SIP) of the Department of Health of the Government of the Valencian Community. N= 10448

Note: The “Residents in Spain” The right to health protection and health care is enjoyed by all persons with Spanish nationality and foreigners who are resident in Spain. all persons with Spanish nationality and foreigners who have established their residence in Spanish territory. This modality, then, would attend to those situations that are in limbo because they are neither holders nor beneficiaries of a third party.



## 6 Summary and Discussion

This report investigated access to housing for immigrants and refugees in two contexts: Sweden and Spain with a special focus on Valencian Community.

For Sweden this report has analyzed immigrants' integration in the labor and housing market. Specifically, we analyzed housing price and expenditure relative to immigrants' labor earnings. We also analyzed how the location and type of housing change over the years since migration. Below, we highlight our key findings and discuss their implications.

Our analyses based on the Swedish population registers, coupled with macro economic data, suggest that home ownership is generally difficult for immigrants in Sweden, due to a high price/income ratio. Particularly upon arrival, this high ratio is way above the borrowing limit set by the Swedish banks (approximately five times annual labor earnings). Although immigrants' purchasing power of home increases over the years since migration (along with rising labor earnings), the majority can only afford to buy tenant-owned properties in non-metropolitan regions.

The challenge of owning home is particularly daunting for asylum-related immigrants, which is largely due to their low level of labor income; it would take about seven years since refugee's migration to afford a tenant-owned property in non-metropolitan areas. As a result, the majority of refugees stay in rental housing for an extensive period after arrival. Being a renter also implies that refugees are relatively mobile, as the transaction costs of moving between rentals are low and/or high mobility people might self-select to be renters. Hence, our analyses revealed a notable shift in refugee's housing location: they tend to relocate from non-metropolitan regions towards Stockholm region.

Refugee's tendency of moving towards Stockholm region may be associated with two factors: 1) better labor market opportunities, and 2) little marginal increase of rent from non-metropolitan regions to Stockholm. As they are predominantly renters, the benefit of moving towards Stockholm outweighs the marginal cost of living.



For the Valencian Community in the Spanish context, on the other, our analyses are based on the data of the Spanish Statistics Institute and the Valencian Community population register (SIP). This data have allowed us to compare the recent history of both countries with respect to macroeconomic and social indicators. The effects of economic policies to overcome the 2008 financial crisis were different in the two countries. In Spain, the crisis lasted until 2014. During this period, buying a home was very difficult due to the lack of financing and employment. Selling prices experienced a drop in prices of around 30%. Renting became one of the most common ways of accessing housing.

The social effects were devastating, with thousands of vulnerable families losing their homes as they were unable to meet their mortgage payments. This situation makes access to housing more complicated for immigrants and refugees. The immigrant population Until 2015 the migratory flow from abroad was reduced, from this year onwards, applications for international protection began to be significant, currently there are more than 100,000 applications. However, a high percentage of asylum applications that are submitted are mostly rejected, causing people to fall into administrative irregularity. This is one of the main reasons why access to housing and employment is difficult. According to our estimates, between 33% and 56% of people who were asylum seekers between 2015 and 2019 have found a job.



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