



Extended Inter-ministerial Committee on Integration (Ministerial and civil society representatives)

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2023, 14:00 - 15:00

Face-to face meeting

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Presentation of the UNHCR report « *Consultations relatives à certains aspects du processus d'intégration des personnes bénéficiaires de la protection internationale (BPI) au Luxembourg : l'apprentissage des langues, l'emploi et le logement* » (Consultations on certain aspects of the integration process for beneficiaries of international protection (BPI) in Luxembourg: language learning, employment and housing).
3. News related to intercultural living together
4. Various

Present :

Ministerial representatives and representatives of civil society: Ms Anita Helpiquet (CLAE), Ms Lena Hartz (ASTI), Mr Sérgio Ferreira (ASTI), Ms Nonna Sehovic (Caritas), Mr Marc Josse (Luxembourg Red Cross), Ms Véronique de Ryckere (UNHCR), Ms Carine Rustom (UNHCR), Ms Stéphanie Rapin (UNHCR consul-tante), Mr Driss Moussaïd (ONA), Mr Jean-Claude Milmeister (MESR), Ms Joëlle Gilles (MJ), Ms Elisabeth Reisen (MENEJ), Ms Nadine Erpelding (MC), Mr Christopher Witry (MEGA), Mr Ben Max (MDIG), Ms Cathrin Nordmo (MLOG), Mr Laurent Solazzi (MECO), Mr Alain Bliss (MAEE)

MIFA: Ms Anne Daems, Mr Christian Bintener, Ms Conny Heuertz, Ms Gesa Schulte, Ms Anna Kirsch

Excused:

Mr Munir Ramdedovic (CNE), Ms Anne-Catherine Lorrang (MFP), Ms Aurélie Spigarelli (MFP), Ms Mariza Guerreiro Victoria (MINT), Mr Laurent Peusch (ADEM), Ms Stéphanie Voll (MSAN), Mr Claude Tremont (MTEESS), Mr Marc Konsbruck (MIFA)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Anne Daems, who **took over responsibility** for the Department of Integration from Jacques Brosius on 1st July 2023, welcomed all the participants and thanked them for attending.

The extended inter-ministerial committee dealt with the subjects on the agenda.

2. Presentation of the report "*Consultations relatives à certains aspects du processus d'intégration des personnes bénéficiaires de la protection internationale (BPI) au Luxembourg: l'apprentissage des langues, l'emploi et le logement*" (Consultations on certain aspects of the integration process for beneficiaries of international protection (BPI) in Luxembourg: language learning, employment and housing) by Ms Stéphanie Rapin for the UNHCR



Anne Daems introduced Véronique de Ryckere, Head of UNHCR's Protection Unit in Belgium and Luxembourg, Carine Rustom, Protection Associate and Stéphanie Rapin, Consultant.

Véronique de Ryckere opened the presentation by thanking those who had contributed to the study [« Consultations relatives à certains aspects du processus d'intégration des personnes bénéficiaires de la protection internationale \(BPI\) au Luxembourg: l'apprentissage des langues, l'emploi et le logement »](#). The main objective of this study was to **hear the voices of people benefiting from international protection in order to better understand their experience in Luxembourg**.

Stéphanie Rapin, the consultant hired to carry out the study, then presented the **methodology** used. Following a **review of existing literature**, between 2021 and 2022, interviews were conducted with **39 BPI or former BPI people** (now Luxembourgish nationals). Participants were aged between 20 and 50 years, and came from Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea and Iraq, among others. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were informed in advance of the conditions of participation and the processing of the data collected. **Interviews** were also conducted **with representatives of the state and associations** active in the field of integration of BPI people.

The study highlights the fact that **BPI people consider three dimensions of integration: economic, legal and cultural**. Many of the interviewees stressed the significance of both knowing the country's laws and culture, enabling them to live like everyone else and enjoy equal rights. Many expressed their **gratitude** towards people who accompany them on their integration journey. At the same time, there is sometimes **a feeling of being instrumentalized** by the various players involved.

In the eyes of the BPI people, the **reception process** is very important for integration. Many people report having encountered difficulties during this process, **citing long waiting times, work bans** and so on. The tools developed to facilitate the process are not well known. **Very few people know about the CAI (contrat d'accueil et d'intégration)**, and those who do, fail to grasp its complete range of possibilities and benefits. Little feedback was given on the **accompanied integration pathway (PIA Parcours d'intégration accompagné)**, but there are **some indications that it is not appropriate in terms of content** and not systematically translated.

BPI people point out that the **communication problems associated with language proficiency** amplify the problems they face in their day-to-day lives, including making the most of their skills on the job market. Free access to **language courses and practice** is a positive point, but there is a lack of intensive course offers and not enough use of translation services. Moreover, the learning **methods on offer are considered insufficiently adapted to the needs** of BPI people. In addition, learning can be problematic due to difficult access to childcare services and the distances involved for people living at refugee housing structures. The study's **recommendations** in this area include:

- Expand translation services for integration-related matters
- Focus on individual support for language learning
- Enhance the range of language learning methods available



- Enable and encourage everyone to take part in language courses, for example by facilitating free access to suitable childcare

When asked about their **integration into the job market**, study participants express frustration at the fact that they are unable to work during the first few months of applying for protection. **Language requirements** are the main barrier to employment, as well as **limited access to the services provided by ADEM**. Moreover, **access to regulated professions remains problematic**. Often, experience is required in Europe, but International Protection Seekers (DPI demandeurs de protection internationale) are denied the right to an internship. Many BPIs complain about a lack of knowledge and guidance concerning the Luxembourgish job market and would like ADEM and ONIS to do more to help them. Faced with the difficulty of finding a job, some people consider entrepreneurship. However, **access to a business bank account remains complicated**. A number of people are also considering going back to school but are often unable to do so for financial or linguistic reasons. The study's **recommendations** in this area include:

- Facilitate access to the job market as early as possible, and making temporary work permits more accessible and flexible
- Grant DPI people permission to undertake professional internships
- Give all BPI access to all ADEM services
- Get clearer guidelines from the Central Bank regarding BPI's access to business bank accounts
- Extend the study [Le racisme et les discriminations ethno-raciales au Luxembourg](#) (racism and ethno-racial discrimination in Luxembourg) in relation to the BPIs

When it comes to **housing**, BPI people are confronted with the extreme complexity of the real estate situation in Luxembourg. In the **absence of affordable solutions**, many BPI people find it extremely difficult to move out of refugee housing structures. Administrative barriers to temporary solutions (e.g. housing provided by local authorities) are high, and once secured, they are often too short-lived. Support for BPI people is uneven across refugee housing structures and individual situations. Single-parent families face particular challenges in finding suitable accommodation. This situation is exacerbated by **stereotypes and a lack of awareness among real estate professionals of the specific situation of BPI people**. The study's **recommendations** in this area include:

- Strengthen social support in housing structures for the search for accommodation
- Ensure that the same services are available to all BPI people
- Continue and extend the duration of social rental agreement contracts
- Explore with the private sector the possibility of combining housing and work offers
- Include the BPI in the scope of the study on racism and racial discrimination

Véronique de Ryckere concluded the UNHCR presentation with a summary of the main recommendations arising from the study: **Improved coordination in guiding and supporting BPI, tailored to the needs of each individual, with a particular focus on language acquisition and the involvement of BPI in the planning and implementation of the services offered to them.**



Sylvain Besch (CEFIS) asked **where the study participants were housed**. Stéphanie Rapin replied that, at the time of the study, they were either living in refugee housing structures, in private housing or in properties under social rental management.

Nadine Erpelding (MC) wanted to know **whether people with special needs also participated** in the study. The answer to this question was negative.

Jean-Claude Milmeister (MESR) asked **what criteria were used to select BPI people to take part** in the study. Stéphanie Rapin (UNHCR) replied that UNHCR had worked with associations active in the field to identify people interested in taking part in the study. There were no criteria for participation based on level of education.

Anita Helpiquet (CLAE) wanted to know why the sample of study participants contained only four nationalities. Stéphanie Rapin replied that it contained more, but that the groups were so small that anonymity could be compromised if they were mentioned.

Sérgio Ferreira (ASTI) welcomed the fact that the study presented confirmed some of the points that the *Lëtzebuenger Flüchtlingsrot* (LFR) and associations in the field had been raising for many years.

Marc Josse (CRL) confirmed the impression conveyed by the UNHCR report that state and voluntary support for BPI people is fragmented, and stressed **the importance of a coordinating body** that could design global integration policies. In addition, Marc Josse agreed that personalized support for professional orientation is important, and wondered whether it would be possible to do this already with DPI people. For UNHCR, **career guidance should be provided as early as possible**. Indeed, a recent study carried out by the World Bank in Switzerland highlights the negative effects of late integration. Maintaining the autonomy of DPIs is beneficial, even if they return to their country of origin.

Nonna Sehovic (Caritas) asked **whether similar studies had been carried out in other countries**. She confirmed that many BPI people want to set up a business but are quickly confronted with the fact that they do not know the procedures. It would be interesting to know whether other countries have good practices regarding entrepreneurship. Stéphanie Rapin said she was not aware of any studies on entrepreneurship but offered to look into the matter.

Alain Bliss (MAEE) wished to **put the ADEM statistics on the professional integration of BPT people into perspective**, as these figures only represent the rate of people registered with ADEM, and not those who have found employment on their own.

Sylvain Besch (CEFIS) noted that over the last 5 years, many people have received a BPI status and can now be joined by their families. **It would be interesting to carry out a quantitative study** (complementary to the one presented today, which is entirely qualitative), to see how the situation of BPI beneficiaries evolves while living in Luxembourg. One **could also extend the study to include people receiving temporary protection** (bénéficiaires de protection temporaire BPT).



3. News on intercultural living together

Anne Daems reported on the latest news from the Department of Integration:

- On May 9, 2023, the Department of Integration and the General Secretariat of the MAEE launched a **call for projects as part of the implementation of the European Asylum, Migration and Inclusion Fund (AMIF)**. The deadline for project applications was September 8. Since then, projects have been analysed, and those shortlisted will be presented to a selection committee in coming weeks. The projects selected will be carried out between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2025.
- On May 4 and July 24, 2023, **the first municipalities were officially presented with their personalized "Citizen's Guide"**. A total of **16 guides have been finalized** to date, with a **further 10 in the pipeline**. The Ministry proceeded in alphabetical order, and by expression of interest.
- On September 25, 2024, the Ministry for the Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region organized an **information morning for newly elected municipal officials** and municipal employees to present the Ministry's various areas of work. The content presented at this information session was shared with communes via [circulaire n°2023-126](#).
- Concerning the establishment of a **National Action Plan against racism and racial discrimination (NAP Antiracism)**, consultations have taken place/will take place in 3 main areas, namely education, housing and work. The NAP Antiracism is currently being drafted and will most likely include the following areas of action: **education; employment and work; housing; communication and awareness-raising; statistics, monitoring and evaluation**. The outline of the NAP Antiracism will be presented to this committee in December.
- As part of the **National Housing Week from October 5 to 8**, the Integration Department will be coordinating a **stand with the slogan "Housing without Racism"**. The stand will be curated in turn by the following organizations: Centre pour l'égalité de traitement (CET); Mieterschutz Lëtzebuerg asbl; One People asbl; Lëtz Rise Up asbl; PADEM; ALDIC.
- With a view to the **European elections in June 2024**, the **« je peux voter » campaign** – launched for the communal elections – is currently being adapted and will be relaunched in early 2024. The deadline for non-Luxembourg European residents to register will be in April. With the campaign, the **multiplier training offered by CEFIS** will also be relaunched in early 2024.

Ben Max (MDIG) informed the committee of the publication in May 2023 of the study [Inclusion numérique. Identification des facteurs à l'origine de la fracture numérique](#) (Digital Inclusion. Identifying the factors behind the digital divide). The study, commissioned by the Ministry for Digitization, was carried out by the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER).

Sérgio Ferreira (ASTI) asked whether, given the replacement of this committee by the **Conseil Supérieur du vivre-ensemble interculturel** with the entry into force of the new [loi relative au vivre-ensemble interculturel](#) (law on intercultural living together) on January 1, 2024, this was the committee's last meeting. Anne Daems (MIFA) replied that the next meeting of the committee is scheduled for the end of the year.



4. Various

No other topics were discussed at this extended committee meeting.