EN

Commissioner General for
Refugees and Stateless Persons

You have been granted subsidiary protection in Belgium

Your rights and obligations

COLOPHON

This brochure and all language versions are available on the website of the CGRS:

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Publisher

Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS)

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Introduction

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) has granted you subsidiary protection status. This gives you many rights but your status also involves some obligations.

You will surely be asking yourself questions about your future as a 'protected person' in Belgium. You will find answers on the following pages. On the following pages, you will find a wealth of information that hopefully will answer your questions. If you have any doubts, please do not hesitate to contact the services mentioned below.

This brochure contains basic information. It is impossible to cover every detail and nuance. If you encounter difficulties in exercising your rights and fulfilling your obligations, please do not hesitate to contact a lawyer, a legal service or one of the services listed in the appendix to this brochure. You can also contact your municipality for questions regarding the acquisition of Belgian nationality and identity documents, or the Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW/CPAS) in your municipality for questions regarding social issues (integration…) or replacement income. The Immigration Office can provide you with information on visas, residence permits and family reunification.

The services of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons are also at your disposal to answer your questions where possible.

I hope you integrate into Belgian society as smoothly as possible.

Sophie Van Balberghe
Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons.

1 Residence in Belgium

1.1 Residence permit

You have received a decision from the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons granting you subsidiary protection status. Initially, this status enables you to reside in Belgium for a limited period of time. You must take the decision granting subsidiary protection status to the local council of your place of residence. The municipality of your place of residence will register you in the register of foreign nationals. You will receive an identity document in the form of an electronic A-card. This is a proof of registration in the register of foreign nationals - temporary stay.

The electronic A-card is valid for one year and can be renewed twice for a period of two years by the municipality, without prior instruction from the Immigration Office. The application to renew the A-card must be submitted to the municipality of the applicant's main place of residence 30 to 45 days before the card's expiry date.

After five years, counting from the submission of the application for international protection (or the issue of annex 25 or 26), which led to the granting of subsidiary protection status, the person enjoying subsidiary protection is entitled to stay in Belgium for an unlimited period of time. To do so, he must submit an application for a B-card (unlimited stay) to the municipality of the main place of residence. The issue of a B-card always requires prior instruction from the Immigration Office.

If your identity document is lost or stolen, you must report this to the police.

1.2 Respecting Belgian law

Belgian law will apply to most aspects of your life in Belgium. However, certain laws of your country of origin (laws of the country of which you have the nationality) remain in force, particularly those concerning your "personal status" (majority, conditions for the validity of a marriage contracted in Belgium).

1.3 Voluntary renunciation of subsidiary protection status

You can renounce your subsidiary protection status at any time. This means that the Immigration Office can end your right of residence.

Procedure

You must present yourself in person at the CGRS Helpdesk for Recognized Refugees and Stateless Persons. The Helpdesk is accessible by appointment only.

You can make an appointment:

- by **e-mail**: cgrefugees@ibz.fgov.be
- by **post** (CGRS - Helpdesk for Recognized Refugees and Stateless Persons, rue Ernest Blerot 39, 1070 Brussels);
- by **telephone** at 02 205 53 07 (every working day from 9 am to 12 noon and from 1 pm to 4 pm);
- You present yourself with your identity card.
- You sign a declaration in which you renounce your status. You will receive a 'certificate of renunciation of status'.
- You then present this certificate at the municipality.

Consequences: at the request of the Immigration Office, the municipality can withdraw your residence card or refuse to renew it.

You can travel to your country of origin using your national passport.

1.4 Cessation or revocation of subsidiary protection status

If the validity of your subsidiary protection status has to be reconsidered as a result of new elements or facts, the CGRS will examine if it can end or revoke your status.

The CGRS can also re-assess the validity of your protection status at the request of the Minister or his representative.

1.4.1 The CGRS ends subsidiary protection status

A cessation decision ends the status that was granted when protection is no longer necessary as a result of a change in the circumstances that led to recognition of the status (for example in case of important and lasting changes in your country of origin).

In this case, the CGRS can invite you for a personal interview. During this interview, you will have the possibility to explain all the reasons for the preservation of your status. The CGRS can also ask you to state in writing the reasons for the preservation of your status.

Against a decision to end subsidiary protection status, an appeal with full jurisdiction can still be lodged with the Council for Alien Law Litigation. If a decision to end subsidiary protection status is taken, the Immigration Office can issue an order to leave the territory and end your right of residence.

1.4.2 The CGRS revokes subsidiary protection status

The CGRS decides to revoke subsidiary protection status when it should never have been granted:

- if you have to be excluded or should have been excluded from subsidiary protection status;
- if you represent a threat to society or national security;

- if the status has been granted on the basis of incorrect or false elements, forged or falsified documents;
- if your personal behaviour subsequently shows that you do not run any risk of suffering serious harm;
- If you have committed one or several crimes that do not fall within the specific exclusion clauses, and if these crimes are punishable by imprisonment if they had been committed in Belgium and you have left your country of origin only to escape punishment.

When a decision to revoke your status is being considered, the CGRS will invite you to a personal interview. During this interview, you will have the possibility to explain the reasons why your status should be preserved.

The CGRS can also ask you to submit the reasons for preserving your status in writing if a revocation is being considered because you have to be or should have been excluded from subsidiary protection.

Against a decision to revoke subsidiary protection status, an appeal with full jurisdiction can still be lodged with the Council for Alien Law Litigation.

When issuing an order to leave the territory, the Minister or his representative will take into account the nature and the strength of family ties, the duration of residence in Belgium, the existence of family ties or cultural or social ties with the country of origin.

1.5 Becoming a Belgian citizen

There are two procedures to obtain Belgian nationality: a declaration of nationality and naturalization. If you are granted Belgian nationality, you will lose your status as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection. You can apply for Belgian citizenship only when you have received indefinite leave to remain in Belgium.

1.5.1 Declaration of nationality

The conditions to become a Belgian citizen through a declaration of nationality are too comprehensive to be listed here. You can find the conditions on the website of the FPS Justice: https://justice.belgium.be/fr/themes_et_dossiers/personnes_et_familles/nationalite/devenir_belge/declaration_dacquisition.

You make a declaration of nationality before the registrar of your place of residence. The registrar will give you the necessary information about the documents you have to present to complete your file.

The CGRS does not issue birth certificates: please contact the embassy of your country or, if this is not possible, the Justice of the peace of your place of residence to obtain an 'act of notoriety' (acte de notoriété / akte van bekendheid).

1.5.2 Naturalization

Conditions

You have:

1. to be at least 18 years old;
2. to stay in Belgium legally;
3. to show 'exceptional merits' in science, sports or the sociocultural domain;
4. to prove that it is hardly possible for you to obtain Belgian nationality through a declaration of nationality.

More information can be obtained from the registrar of your place of residence.
The CGRS does not issue birth certificates. Please contact the embassy of your country or, if this is not possible, the justice of the peace of your place of residence to obtain an 'act of notoriety' (acte de notoriété / akte

van bekendheid).

More information on 'Naturalization' can be found on the website of the FPS Justice:

https://justice.belgium.be/fr/themes_et_dossiers/personnes_et_familles/nationalite/devenir_belge/naturalisation

2 Civil status documents

The office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons is not qualified to grant civil status documents (e.g. certificate of birth, marriage certificate) to persons enjoying subsidiary protection status. For this, you have to contact your embassy.

For some procedures (marriage, naturalization), an 'act of notoriety' can replace a birth certificate. You can request this act of notoriety from the justice of the peace of your residence.

3 Residence for family members

3.1 Your children

Your **children who arrived in Belgium together with you**, enjoy subsidiary protection status if you applied for asylum together with them. Children must be entered on the annex 25 or 26 you received from the Immigration Office when you applied for international protection.

Your children who were **born** in Belgium **after subsidiary protection status was granted** to you, must be registered by the municipality in the register of foreign nationals on presentation of their birth certificate. If you wish that your children born in Belgium after you were granted subsidiary protection status, also obtain this protection status, they must file their own application for international protection.

Children who arrived in Belgium after subsidiary protection status was granted to you, must be declared to the Immigration Office (IO). You must accompany your child to the Immigration Office building (open Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays, at 68 Rue Belliard, 1000 Brussels, at 8.30 am) to file an application for international protection on the child's behalf. It is important that you bring all documents relating to your child and your procedure.

3.2 Family reunification

Since you enjoy subsidiary protection in Belgium, certain close family members can obtain a right of residence in Belgium through the family reunification procedure.

If these close family members do not live in Belgium, they can request a visa for the purpose of family reunification from the Belgian diplomatic mission or consular post in the country where they are currently living. If they are already in Belgium, they have to start the family reunification procedure at the municipality where they reside. The Immigration Office will process the request.

From 18 August 2025, new rules will apply to the family reunification procedure. Among other things, this will affect the people you are permitted to bring to Belgium as a person enjoying subsidiary protection.

However, you will still be subject to the old legislation if:

- you were granted subsidiary protection status before 18 August 2025;
- you file your application before 18 August 2027.

For persons enjoying subsidiary protection, there are differences regarding the persons you can bring to Belgium through family reunification, **depending on the date of the decision**.

Granting of subsidiary protection before 18 August 2025

If you are an adult (aged 18 or over):

- your husband or wife (You must be married before filing your application for recognition as a person enjoying international protection in Belgium.);
- your minor children (= children under 18 years of age);
- your disabled adult children.

If you are an unaccompanied minor:

- your parents;
- your minor brothers and sisters, and disabled adult brothers and sisters, provided they are travelling with your parents.

Granting of subsidiary protection from 18 August 2025

If you are an adult (aged 18 or over)

- your husband or wife (You must be married before filing your application for recognition as a person enjoying international protection in Belgium.) According to the new legislation, you must both be 21 years old.
- your minor children (= children under 18 years of age);
- your disabled adult children.

Family reunification can only be requested two years after subsidiary protection has been granted. Unless you only wish to bring your minor children to Belgium.

If you are an unaccompanied minor:

- no longer entitled to family reunification.

Your husband, wife, registered partner, your children or the children of your husband, wife or partner must not represent a threat to public health, public order or national security and must come to live with you in Belgium.

Moreover, several requirements regarding accommodation, health insurance and sufficient, stable and regular means of existence have to be met. These requirements vary according to the family member for whom family reunification is requested and the moment at which it is requested.

It is recommendable to contact a lawyer to start the family reunification procedure. Certain organizations (such as Restoring Family Links of the Red Cross/Croix-Rouge or the Adviescentrum Migratie of the CAW) can also give you information on the family reunification procedure. You can also obtain information from the Immigration Office and from your municipality.

The members of your family who are authorized to stay in Belgium as a result of family reunification, are granted a limited right of residence for a period of five years. After this period, unlimited residence will be granted, provided that your family members still meet the conditions for family reunification.

3.2.1 Restoring Family Links

The 'Restoring Family Links' service of the Red Cross can help you to trace family members you have lost contact with. This service is free. In addition, people enjoying international protection status in Belgium can also contact Restoring Family Links if they have any questions about the family reunification procedure.

Belgian Red Cross Flanders Restoring Family Links
Motstraat 40
2800 Mechelen
015 44 35 22
E-mail: rfl@rodekruis.be
https://www.rodekruis.be/wat-doen-we/hulp-wereldwijd/opsporen-van-vermiste-personen/

Croix-Rouge de Belgique - Service Rétablissement des Liens Familiaux

Boulevard Ernest Mélot 42

5000 Namur

081 77 16 48

E-mail : service.rlf@croix-rouge.be

https://liens-familiaux.croix-rouge.be/

Adviescentrum Migratie (ACM) van het Centrum Algemeen Welzijnswerk (ACW)

Sint-Jacobsmarkt 39

2000 Antwerpen

03 235 34 05

E-Mail: adviescentrum.migratie@cawantwerpen.be

https://www.caw.be/locaties/adviescentrum-migratie-acm/

3.3 Travelling abroad

You have the right to travel abroad, but if you return to your country of origin, you risk losing your subsidiary protection status.

During the first five years of your stay, you must mention every journey to your country of origin at the municipality where you live. This information is submitted to the Immigration Office.

When you travel abroad, you must always have a valid electronic foreigner's identity card and a passport with you. Please request the necessary visas at the embassies and consulates of the countries you want to travel to (even for European member states).

If you do not have or cannot obtain a passport, you can request a special travel document for aliens at the municipality where you are registered in the population register. A special travel document will be issued on condition that your identity and nationality are established and you

submit a certificate of impossibility to obtain a national passport or travel document. You can request this certificate of impossibility at the CGRS by e-mail (CGRA-CGVS.Sub-Protection@ibz.be) or by letter (CGRA, Ernest Blerotstraat 39, 1070 Brussel). This certificate may not be older than 1 month. The CGRS only issues this certificate when the authorities in your country of origin are directly responsible for the established risk of suffering serious harm. The CGRS does not issue this certificate when subsidiary protection status has been granted to you as a result of the general security situation in your country of origin. This is the case if the decision granting this protection status refers to article 48/4, § 2, c of the Aliens Act.

A certificate of impossibility is not necessary if you belong to one of the categories of foreign nationals whom the FPS Foreign Affairs considers to be unable to obtain a national passport or travel documents. Tibetans and persons of Palestinian origin do not have to submit such a certificate, for more information: https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/belgians-abroad/belgian-passport/travel-pass-refugees-stateless-persons-or-foreign-nationals.

3.3.1 Long stay abroad and return to Belgium

If you leave Belgium for a maximum period of three months, you do not have any special obligations. If you have a valid residence permit upon leaving Belgium, you do not lose your right of residence.

Even if the validity of your residence permit expires during your absence, you will not lose your right of residence. In order to avoid problems, you should request an early renewal at the municipality.

If you intend to stay abroad for a longer period, you keep the right to return to Belgium for a period of one year after leaving.

In this case, you have to respect some administrative obligations:

Before you leave, you inform the municipality of your intention to leave Belgium and to return. If necessary, you apply to have your residence permit renewed, so that you have a valid foreigner's identity card upon returning.

After your return to Belgium, you have to present yourself within fifteen days at the municipality with your valid residence permit.

If you respect these obligations, the municipality will re-enter you in the municipal register.

4 Working

4.1 EMPLOYEE WITH A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

You do not need a permit or work permit to work as a (salaried) employee.

4.2 SELF-EMPLOYED

If you want to work as a self-employed person (trader, agent for a company), you need a "carte professionnelle" (professional card) for as long as you have limited residence (electronic A card). Once you are entitled to unlimited residence (electronic B card), you are exempt from obtaining a professional card.

This professional card will be provided by the business authorization department of the SPF Economie (Federal Public Service Economy). You should apply to the administration in the municipality where you live.

You can obtain information about your rights and obligations in relation to your work (health insurance, child benefit, etc.) from a social services department, the CPAS/OCMW [Public Social Welfare Centre] in your municipality or from a trade union.

These organizations can also provide information about "income support" (unemployment benefit, etc.) if you are out of work.

4.3 LOOKING FOR WORK

You can register with an employment agency. An employment agency can help you:

- find work that matches your skills;
- find a training course or traineeship;
- take Dutch or French courses to help you find a job;
- draft your CV and letter of motivation, or help you prepare for a job interview;
- search for vacancies that match your experience or interests.

Each region has a separate employment agency:

VDAB in Flanders
T 0800 30 700
https://www.vdab.be/contact

ACTIRIS in Brussels
T 0800 35 123
https://www.actiris.brussels/nl/burgers/contact/

FOREM in Wallonia
T 0800 93 947
https://www.leforem.be/contact/index.html

ARBEITSAMT in the German-speaking Community
T 080 27 02 00
https://adg.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-5407/

5 Education

5.1 School for children

Every child in Belgium can attend school, regardless of his/her nationality or residency status. In Belgium, all children between the ages of 5 and 18 are required to attend school. Non-Belgian children between the ages of 3 and 5 may attend school starting on their first day in Belgium. Children between the ages of 5 and 18 must be enrolled in a school no later than 2 months after their registration with the municipality. Children between the ages of 5 and 18 must be enrolled in a school no later than 2 months after their registration with the municipality.

5.1.1 Language of the school: Dutch, French or German

If children have no or insufficient knowledge of Dutch or French, they are entitled to adapted lessons at school: reception classes or 'OKAN' classes (reception classes for non-native speakers). If they have sufficient knowledge of the language, they will move on to a regular class. If you live in Flanders, your children will attend a school where they will be taught in Dutch. If you live in Wallonia, your children will be taught in French. If you live in Brussels, your children can attend school in either Dutch or French. If you live in one of the East Cantons (Malmedy, Eupen and Sankt-Vith), your children will be taught in German.

5.1.2 School costs

School is free from nursery school up to the age of 18. However, you will have to pay for some additional costs, such as meals and school trips. If you have difficulty paying these costs, you can apply for a school allowance.

In Belgium, schools are organized by age group.

5.1.3 Pre-school education (2.5 to 5 years)

Children under the age of 5 are not required to attend kindergarten. Most children attend kindergarten anyway because it helps them learn to speak the language well. They also learn to do crafts, draw, play together… School is the best place for your child to learn the language. On 1 September of the year that your child turns 5, your child must go to kindergarten. If your child attends a Dutch-speaking school and does not yet speak Dutch well by the age of 6, the school may decide to send your child to kindergarten for an additional year instead of primary school.

5.1.4 Primary education (6 to 11 years)

You must register your child when he or she first attends primary school or changes schools. You are free to choose which school your child goes to. Your child must meet the learning targets each year in order to go to the next year.

The subjects in primary education are:

- mathematics;
- reading and writing;
- social orientation (geography, biology, traffic education...);
- physical education, including swimming.

5.1.5 Secondary education (ages 12 to 18)

After primary school, your child will move on to secondary education. You will need to re-enroll your child as this is a new school. You are free to choose which secondary school your child attends.

Secondary education also comprises 6 years. In secondary school, young people are being prepared to continue their studies (higher education) or to learn a profession.

There are different types of secondary education:

- general secondary education (aso): prepares young people for higher

education

- artistic secondary education (kso): prepares young people for a profession in the art world (dance, theatre, painting, music…)
- technical secondary education (tso): prepares young people for higher education in technical or economic fields or for a technical profession such as electrician, woodworker or cook

Vocational secondary education (bso): teaches young people a profession with a view to employment.

5.1.6 Special education

Some children cannot attend a regular school:

- They have learning difficulties.
- They have difficulty behaving appropriately.
- They have a disability (visual, motor, intellectual, hearing).

These children can attend a school that better suits their needs. To enroll a child in a special education school, admission is required from:

- the Student Guidance Centre (CLB) in Flanders;
- les Centres psycho-médico-social (PMS) in Wallonia.

5.1.7 Higher education

Once you have obtained a secondary education diploma, you can continue your studies at a college or university. Higher education grants diplomas that prepare you for the job market: teacher, nurse, accountant…

Admission requirements for higher education

- You obtained a secondary education diploma in Belgium: you can enrol directly in the school.
- You have a secondary or higher education diploma from another country:

- Apply for admission to the school before enrolling.
- You have proof of sufficient proficiency in the language of instruction (Dutch, French, or English)

For medicine, dentistry or certain engineering programs, you must first pass an entrance exam.

5.1.8 Preparatory year for foreign-speaking students

Some colleges or universities offer a preparatory year for non-native speakers.

The preparatory year includes:

- Dutch/French for non-native speakers;
- study skills;
- study guidance;
- English, mathematics and research;
- some other courses you can choose.

5.1.9 Costs

- As a beneficiary of subsidiary protection, you can apply for a study grant to help cover part of your studies. You also pay a lower enrollment fee than other students.
- If you are a beneficiary of subsidiary protection and under 25 years of age, you can apply for child allowance. This is a small amount provided to all young people while they are studying.

Higher education involves 4 types of courses:

- HBO5 courses: short, practice-oriented courses
- Professional bachelor's degree: practical course lasting 2 to 3 years;
- Academic bachelor's and master's degrees: courses that only grant access to work after completing the master's degree. These courses are less practice-oriented and more knowledge-oriented.

- Doctorate: a specialized course following the master's degree. Scientific research is the main activity.

5.2 Diploma recognition

5.2.1 Having your diploma recognized in Flanders

Do you have a foreign diploma? NARIC Flanders recognizes foreign diplomas for people who wish to work or study in Flanders.

To continue your studies in Flanders or Brussels, contact a university or college directly.

5.2.2 How can you have your diploma recognized?

You can choose between two different procedures:

1. **Level recognition:** NARIC assesses the level of your foreign diploma.
    - to find out which Flemish educational level your foreign diploma is comparable to (e.g. secondary education, higher vocational education, bachelor's or master's degree);
    - To apply for a specific job;
    - There is no corresponding higher education course in Flanders.
    - If you do not (or no longer) have the study program of your course.
2. **Specific recognition:** NARIC determines the specific Flemish diploma to which your foreign diploma is equivalent.
    - If you wish to practise a regulated profession in Belgium (e.g. doctor, nurse, architect, accountant…). To gain access to a regulated profession, you must also apply for professional recognition from another authority.
    - If you wish to use a protected title, such as industrial

engineer, commercial engineer, civil engineer, doctor, dentist, pharmacist, architect, midwife or social worker.

- If recognition with a specific study certificate is necessary to practise a specific job.
- If you apply for recognition of a doctoral degree.

5.2.3 Which documents?

The documents you need to submit to NARIC, depend on the procedure. A specific recognition requires more documents than a level recognition. If your documents are not in Dutch, French, English or German, you must also include a translation.

5.2.4 Costs?

Applying for equivalence of your diploma is free for anyone who, at the time of the application:

- is an applicant for international protection;
- is a recognized refugee or has been granted subsidiary protection;
- receives an increased allowance and can prove this with a certificate from the health insurance fund;
- receives a living wage from the CPAS/OCMW or social assistance equivalent to a living wage;
- has an integration contract that is less than three years old;
- is a jobseeker and is sent by VDAB or ACTIRIS.

Agentschap voor Hoger Onderwijs, Volwassenenonderwijs, Kwalificaties en Studietoelagen - Dossierbehandeling NARIC
Consciencegebouw
Koning Albert II Laan 15, 1210 Sint-Joost-ten-Node
T 1700
https://www.vlaanderen.be/ahovoks/dienstverlening/naric-vlaanderen

5.2.5 Having your diploma recognized in Wallonia or Brussels

Having your diploma recognized

If you have obtained a diploma abroad and you want to work in Wallonia or Brussels, you can have your diploma recognized. What do you have to do? You have to apply for recognition of equivalence of your diploma with the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

A recognition of equivalence is a document that allows you to prove the value of your foreign diploma in Belgium.

- You can choose between two procedures:
- level recognition: this involves checking which level of education in Belgium (bachelor, master or another level) your foreign diploma corresponds to.
- specific recognition: this involves checking whether the content of your education abroad is equivalent to the same education in Belgium.

An application for level recognition of a diploma costs between 150 and 200 euros. Foreign nationals who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, do not have to pay for the costs the procedure.

Before starting the procedure, we advise you to contact the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. (http://www.equivalences.cfwb.be/).

The procedure can be complicated. You can also seek assistance from the regional integration centre (in Wallonia) or from the "Ciré" association in Brussels.

CIRÉ (Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Étrangers)
80-82, rue du Vivier
1050 Brussels
T 02 629 77 10

E-mail: cire@cire.be

www.cire.be

You will find an overview of the regional integration centres in Wallonia by clicking on the following link: https://actionsociale.wallonie.be/home/thematiques/integration-des-personnes-d-origines-etrangeres/centre-regional-d-integration.html

6 Social security and social assistance

6.1 Social assistance from the CPAS/OCMW

If you have been granted subsidiary protection status and do not yet have an income to rent a house and provide for yourself, you can ask for help from the CPAS/OCMW.

6.2 Who is eligible for social assistance from the CPAS/OCMW?

To receive social assistance from the CPAS/OCMW, you must meet certain conditions:

- You are legally residing in Belgium (recognized refugee, subsidiary protection, etc.).
- You have insufficient means of subsistence. The CPAS/OCMW will assess your situation and income.
- You have a place of residence in Belgium.

The CPAS/OCMW can also impose other conditions: willingness to work, first applying for other benefits to which you are entitled…

Which assistance does the CPAS/OCMW provide?

The CPAS/OCMW will assess what assistance is most suitable for you.

Some examples of assistance provided by the CPAS/OCMW:

- financial assistance (a monthly living wage or a top-up if you earn less than the living wage);
- housing or assistance in searching for housing;
- installation bonus (assistance with the purchase of furniture and household goods);
- assistance in paying for medical care;
- assistance in finding work;
- assistance in paying off debts (debt mediation);
- psychosocial assistance.

If you need social assistance, go to the CPAS/OCMW of the municipality where you live.

7 Health care

7.1 Health insurance

Health insurance

In Belgium, it is compulsory to take out health insurance. If you are ill, the health insurance fund covers a large part of the medical expenses. If you are unable to work due to illness or an accident, you will receive financial compensation to replace your wages.

As a beneficiary of subsidiary protection, you must join a recognized health insurance fund of your choice. If you do not want to join a health insurance fund, you can join the 'Agency for health and disability insurance' (HZIV/CAAMI) for free.

What does a health insurance fund do for you?

A health insurance fund

- covers the costs of medical care;

- provides financial support if you are unable to work due to illness or an accident;
- provides financial support during your maternity leave (after giving birth);
- organizes home care services (support for children and elderly people);
- lends medical equipment for home care.

How much does health insurance cost?

If you join, you must pay a fixed annual contribution (between 80 and 110 euros). Health insurance is free for children or other dependants.

Which health insurance funds are there?

Christian health fund, Liberal health fund, Socialist health fund, Independent health fund, Neutral health fund. On the website of the RIZIV (National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance) you will find an overview of all health insurance funds: https://www.riziv.fgov.be/nl/professionals/andere-professionals/ziekenfondsen/contacteer-de-ziekenfondsen

7.2 Children's health

The health of your baby or toddler

Belgium has a free service that monitors the health of all children under the age of 3. You can also ask questions about your pregnancy, your child's development and upbringing.

You can bring your child (aged between 0 months and 3 years) for a free consultation at the Kind & Gezin offices (Flanders and Brussels) or ONE offices (Wallonia and Brussels). These agencies will also provide support if you are pregnant.

Kind & Gezin

T 078 150 100

https://www.kindengezin.be/nl/contact

Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance (ONE)

T 02 542 12 11

https://www.one.be/public/contact/

What happens during a consultation?

- Volunteers will measure and weigh your child.
- A doctor or nurse will examine your baby.
- In the first few weeks after birth, nurses will check whether your baby's hearing is good.
- Between 12 and 24 months, doctors or nurses will check whether your baby's eyesight is good.
- Your baby will receive the necessary vaccinations.
- You can ask questions about nutrition, education, safety and health.

Is your child sick?

If your child is sick, you must go to a doctor and not to a health centre.

8 Housing

Looking for a home

Once you have been granted subsidiary protection status, you have two months to find your own housing. After that, you must leave the reception centre or the housing provided by the OCMW/CPAS.

If you still have not found a housing after 2 months, Fedasil can extend this period to a maximum of 4 months.

Please make sure your documents are in order

Before you start looking for your own place to live, make sure all your

documents are in order.

- electronic identity card (A);
- bank account and bank card;
- health insurance.

You need these documents to enter into a lease agreement.

How much rent can you afford?

Spend about one third of your income on rent. Make sure not to spend more than half of your income on rent!

Looking for a house

You can look for a house

- on the private market: through an real estate agency or through friends, acquaintances or volunteers who will help you find one.
- on the social housing market: a Social Rental Agency (SVK) or the Social Housing Corporation (SHM) offer houses to people in need of a home.

To rent social housing, you must apply to a housing corporation. If you meet the requirements regarding residence, age, resources, income and property ownership, the housing corporation will register you. Here is an overview of social housing companies in Flanders: https://www.vlaanderen.be/wonen-in-vlaanderen/zoek-een-woonmaatschappij?order_identifier=desc

During your visit, check whether the home is in good condition. Is the space large enough? Are there any damp patches? Are there utilities for water, heating, and electricity? Is the home a safe place for your family?

The landlord and you (the tenant) must sign a rental contract. The landlord asks a one-off rent guarantee from the tenant. The rent guarantee varies between 1 and 3 months' rent. You can ask the CPAS/OCMW to advance the rent guarantee, but you will have to pay this

amount back later.

Websites to look for housing

https://www.immoweb.be

https://www.zimmo.be

https://immovlan.be

https://www.realo.be

https://www.immoscoop.be

https://www.2dehands.be/cp/1032/immo/

9 Integration

9.1 Integration course

Integration classes

Would you like to feel at home in Belgium and get to know our country better? Take social orientation and language classes in the region where you live. Whether you are new to Belgium or have been living here for a while, you can follow an integration program in your own language or in a language you understand.

For whom?

- for all foreign nationals legally residing in Belgium;
- recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

What will you learn?

An integration programme consists of:

- a course on living in Belgium (work, housing, education, your rights and obligations);
- assistance in finding work or training;
- information on sports, culture and leisure.

Sign up for integration classes in your region

Integration in Flanders

Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering

https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/nl/contact/contactpunten

Integration in Wallonia

https://actionsociale.wallonie.be/home/thematiques/integration-des-personnes-d-origines-etrangeres/centre-regional-d-integration.html

Integration in Brussels

https://bewelcome.brussels

Integration in Antwerp

https://www.atlas-antwerpen.be/nl

Integration in Ghent

https://www.amal.gent/

Integration in the German-speaking Community

https://info-integration.be/integrationsparcours/

In addition, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection can also turn to Caritas International for support with administrative procedures and their integration process. Their target group consists mainly of vulnerable refugees, who are assisted in their transition to independence.

Caritas International
Liefdadidgheidstraat 43
1210 Brussel
T 02 229 36 11
https://www.caritasinternational.be/nl/contact/

9.2 Language courses

To work, study and socialize in Belgium, you need to learn the language. In Belgium, you can take a course in Dutch or French, tailored to the needs of newly arrived, non-native speakers.

In Belgium, people speak French or Dutch, depending on where they live. In a small part of the country (province of Liège) people speak German.

All children under the age of 18 learn Dutch, French or German at school. Adults can enrol in a language course.

You can enrol in Dutch language courses in Flanders by making an appointment with the **Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering**: https://integratie-inburgering.be/nederlands-leren

You can enrol in Dutch language courses in Brussels by contacting the Huis van het Nederlands: https://www.huisnederlandsbrussel.be/info/leren/cursus

You can enrol in a French language course in **Brussels or Wallonia** by contacting CIRÉ

https://www.cire.be/nos-activites/ecole-de-francais/

or **Bruxelles Formation**

https://www.bruxellesformation.brussels/nous-contacter/

For French language courses in Wallonia, please contact the regional integration centres

https://actionsociale.wallonie.be/home/thematiques/integration-des-personnes-d-origines-etrangeres/centre-regional-d-integration.html

10 Specific rights for UAMs

Where an unaccompanied foreign minor (UAM) is granted subsidiary

protection status, guardianship continues until the minor reaches the age of 18.

According to the Guardianship Act, an unaccompanied foreign minor loses his/her status as a UAM upon reaching the age of majority, and the guardian's mission ceases to exist. The guardian will therefore no longer represent the young person in legal and administrative proceedings. However, the guardian and the young person often remain in contact and the guardian continues to support the young person(s).

In the event of a conflict with your guardian, please contact the Guardianship Service first. In the event of a serious conflict, the justice of the peace will intervene.

The justice of the peace can only relieve the guardian of his duties if he fails to fulfil his duties or in the event of serious disagreements with the minor.

The parents of an unaccompanied foreign minor can join the minor if their relationship with the minor can be proved. Further information on the procedure can be found in section 3.2, Family Reunification.

Unaccompanied foreign minors enjoying subsidiary protection status are entitled to financial social assistance. Please contact the OCMW/CPAS in your area of residence for further information. If you enjoy subsidiary protection status and are over 16 years of age, you can apply for assisted living. Once you have turned 18 and hold a residence permit, you are permitted to live independently. Discuss the options with your (former) guardian and/or support worker.

Service Fédéral Public – service des tutelles
Boulevard de Waterloo 115
1000 Brussels
T 0 78 15 43 24
e-mail: tutelles@just.fgov.be
https://justice.belgium.be/fr/servicedestutelles

Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS)

www.cgvs.be

www.asyluminbelgium.be

Rue Ernest Blerot, 39
1070 BRUSSELS
Belgium