IMDi report examines implementation of restrictions on refugees' movement between municipalities

A report commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) and prepared by the research institute Fafo examines the implementation of restrictions on refugees' movements between municipalities. Although refugees generally have the same right as other residents to move, those who are not self-sufficient or require financial assistance may lose their entitlement to the Introduction Programme, associated benefits or social assistance if they move within the first 5 years after settlement.

The report finds that exceptions to these restrictions are rarely granted through agreements between municipalities, even when remaining in the original municipality may be burdensome or unsafe for the refugee. It also identifies significant differences between municipalities in how the provision allowing social assistance when refusal would be "manifestly unreasonable" is interpreted and applied. Overall, the possibilities for exceptions are unclear, unpredictable and appear arbitrary. The study draws on a survey of all Norwegian municipalities and interviews with representatives from 18 municipalities and five County Governor offices.

Source(s)

- Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) | Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet (23 October, 2026), Hvordan fungerer flyttebegrensninger for flyktninger i dag? [How do relocation restrictions for refugees work today?], https://www.imdi.no/aktuelt/nyheter/hvordan-fungerer-flyttebegrensninger-for-flykninger-i-dag/

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