Forms of protection - Latvia

Overview

Content updated and validated on: 22/08/2025

Relevant EU legislation

Latvia is bound by the recast Qualification Directive (Standards Qualification Regulation) and has transposed its provisions in the Asylum Law | Patvēruma likums.

National legislation

Refugee status	Sections 37-39 of the Asylum Law.
Subsidiary protection	Sections 40-42 of the Asylum Law
Temporary protection	Section 61 of the Asylum Law.
National forms of protection	There are no national forms of protection provided under Latvian law.

Competent authority and stakeholders

Refugee status	The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) | PIlsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
Subsidiary protection	The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) | PIlsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
Temporary protection	The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) | PIlsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
National forms of protection	N/a

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Renewal and withdrawal of international protection and national forms of protection

Refugee status

Legal provisions

The legal provisions relating to review, renewal and withdrawal of refugee status are defined in Chapter X of the Asylum Law.

Residence permit timeframes

According to the Section 52(1), a refugee is issued a permanent residence permit. In accordance with Section 22(2) of the Immigration Law, a permanent residence permit is registered once every 5 years.

Renewal of the status

There is no renewal procedure of the refugee status as such defined in the national legislation.

The provision of Articles 11, 12 and 14 of the Qualification Directive is transposed in the Asylum Law as grounds for withdrawal (loss and revocation) of the refugee status.

Review of the status

There is no review procedure of the refugee status as such defined in the national legislation.

The provision of Articles 11, 12 and 14 of the Qualification Directive is transposed in the Asylum Law as grounds for withdrawal (loss and revocation) of the refugee status.

Withdrawal of the status

According to the Section 59 of the Asylum Law, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs takes action if there are circumstances that may lead to the withdrawal of international protection. The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs requests that the beneficiary of international protection provides written information within 1 month, explaining why their protection should not be

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revoked or why they should not lose international protection, or an interview is held to provide such information.

Grounds for withdrawal of the status

The conditions for the revocation of refugee status are outlined in Section 56 of the Asylum Law. Item 1 states that refugee status is revoked if the conditions of Section 45 of the Asylum Law (grounds for exclusion) apply, namely:

1. The person is receiving protection or aid from other structures of the United Nations, except the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. If such protection or aid is suspended for any reason, and if the status thereof has not been specifically determined in resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the provisions of this Law shall apply;
2. The competent authorities of the Republic of Latvia have acknowledged that the person has rights and obligations applicable to Latvian citizens, or rights and obligations equivalent thereto;
3. The person has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in international law;
4. Prior to arrival in the Republic of Latvia, the person has committed a non-political crime that, under Latvian law, should be recognized as a particularly serious crime;
5. The person has performed activities aimed against the objectives and principles of the United Nations;
6. There is reason to believe that the person poses a threat to national security;
7. The person, who has been recognized as guilty of committing a particularly serious crime by a court judgment of the Republic of Latvia, poses a threat to the society of Latvia.

Item 2 specifies that refugee status is revoked if the individual has provided false information or failed to provide information that played a crucial role in granting refugee status, including the use of falsified documents.

Under Section 55 of the Asylum Law, a person loses their refugee status if any of the following conditions apply:

1. The individual has voluntarily re-accepted the protection of their country of citizenship;
2. The individual has voluntarily re-acquired citizenship after previously losing it;

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3. The individual has acquired the citizenship of Latvia or another country and enjoys the protection of that new country of citizenship;
4. The individual has returned to the country they left due to fear of persecution;
5. The circumstances that led to their recognition as a refugee no longer exist, and they can no longer refuse the protection of their country of citizenship;
6. The individual can return to their former country of permanent residence as a stateless person because the circumstances that led to their refugee status no longer exist.

According to Section 59(3), (5) and (6) of the Asylum Law, a person may appeal the decision to the District Administrative Court within 1 month from the day it enters into effect. The District Administrative Court makes a decision within 1 month from the day of receipt of the application and notifies the person of its decision. The decision of the District Administrative Court is final and may not be appealed. During the examination of the application, the person retains their international protection status.

Under Section 59(4), if a beneficiary of international protection wishes to receive state-provided legal aid to appeal a decision by an official authorised by the head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs to revoke or deny international protection, they submit an application to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs to request state-provided legal aid and an application on their income. After assessing the applications, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, without delay and no later than the following working day, sends a request to the institution responsible for providing state-provided legal aid and appends a copy of the decision to be appealed. A sample form for the application requesting state-provided legal aid and the income application for the beneficiary of international protection are determined by the Cabinet.

Consequences of the withdrawal of the status

According to Section 60(1), (2) and (3) of the Asylum Law, a person who has lost refugee status or the protection has been revoked must leave Latvia within 2 months from the day the decision enters into effect, if they have no other legal grounds for residing in Latvia.

If refugee status has been revoked on the grounds of a threat to national security or a particularly serious crime or the individual has not left Latvia within the set time limit, the head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs issues a removal order within 1 working day.

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The individual may appeal the removal order to the District Administrative Court within 10 working days, without suspending the effect of the removal order.

Subsidiary protection status

Legal provisions

The legal provisions relating to review, renewal and withdrawal of subsidiary protection status are defined in Chapter X of the Asylum Law.

Length of the first and subsequent residence permits

According to the Section 52(2), a temporary residence permit is initially valid for 1 year.

Subsequent permits are valid for two years.

Review of the status

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs is competent for the review of the status. According to the Section 52(2) of the Asylum Law, if a person submits an application to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs for the extension of the time period of residence 1 month prior to expiry of the time period and any of the conditions for subsidiary protection still exist, an official authorised by the head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs takes a decision within 1 month to issue a temporary residence permit.

According to the Section 52(3), an application to the District Administrative Court regarding the above-mentioned decision may be submitted to the court within 10 working days from the day when the decision is notified. The District Administrative Court examines the matter within 1 month, its decision is final and not subject to an appeal. During the examination, the person retains alternative status.

Personal interview and state ensured legal aid is not foreseen.

Renewal of the status

There is no renewal procedure of the subsidiary protection status as such defined in the national legislation. The provision of Articles 16, 17 and 19 of the Qualification Directive is transposed in the Asylum Law as grounds for withdrawal (loss and revocation) of the subsidiary protection status.

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Withdrawal of the status

According to Section 59 of the Asylum Law, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs takes action if there are circumstances that may lead to the withdrawal of international protection. The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs requests that the beneficiary of international protection provides written information within 1 month, explaining why their protection should not be revoked or why they should not lose international protection, or an interview is held to provide the information.

Grounds for the withdrawal of the status

The conditions for the revocation of subsidiary protection are outlined in Section 58 of the Asylum Law. Item 1 states that subsidiary protection is revoked if the conditions of Section 46(1) of the Asylum Law (grounds for exclusion) apply, namely:

1. The person has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in international documents;
2. The person has committed a crime which, in accordance with the law of the Republic of Latvia, is recognized as a serious or particularly serious crime;
3. The person has engaged in activities that are aimed against the objectives and principles of the United Nations Organization;
4. There is reason to believe that the person poses a threat to national security or public order and safety;
5. Prior to arriving in the Republic of Latvia, the person has committed a crime for which deprivation of liberty would be applied if it had been committed in the Republic of Latvia, and has left their country of origin solely to avoid punishment for this crime.

Item 2 specifies that subsidiary protection shall be revoked if the individual has provided false information or has failed to provide information that played a crucial role in granting subsidiary protection, including the use of falsified documents.

According to Section 57 of the Asylum Law, a person loses subsidiary protection if the circumstances that led to its granting no longer exist or have changed to such an extent that the individual no longer requires the protection of Latvia.

Consequences of the withdrawal of the status

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According to Section 60(1), (2) and (3) of the Asylum Law, a person who has lost subsidiary protection status or the protection has been revoked must leave Latvia within 2 months from the day the decision enters into effect, if they have no other legal grounds for residing in Latvia.

If subsidiary protection is revoked on the grounds of exclusion criteria or the individual has not left Latvia within the set time limit, the head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs issues a removal order within 1 working day.

The individual may appeal the removal order to the District Administrative Court within 10 working days, without suspending the effect of the removal order.

National forms of protection

Legal provisions relating to the review, renewal and withdrawal of national forms of protection

N/a

Length of the first and subsequent residence permits

N/a

Review of the status

N/a

Renewal of the status

N/a

Withdrawal of the status

N/a

Grounds for the withdrawal of the status

N/a

Consequences of the withdrawal of the status

N/a

Content of protection

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Overview

The legal provision detailing content of protection for refugee status is defined in Chapter IX of the Asylum Law.

The legal provision detailing content of protection for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection is defined in Chapter IX of the Asylum Law.

Provision of information on the content of protection

Under Section 50(1) of the Asylum Law, after granting international protection to an individual, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs provides information on their rights and obligations related to the granted status, in a language that they understand or are reasonably presumed to understand.

Each decision regarding granting refugee or subsidiary protection status contains information about rights and obligation. Information and support can also be received orally from the social mentor.

Section 50 (2) of the Asylum Law states that a minor who has been granted refugee or alternative status is provided with opportunities for acquiring education in the official language in a State or local government educational institution.

Residence permits

Refugees

The authority responsible for delivering the residence permit is the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. The first permanent residence permit is valid for 5 years, and the subsequent ones are also valid for 5 years. To register a permanent residence permit, a person must submit an application, copy of a valid travel document and a document confirming payment of the state fee to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs at least 30 days before the permanent residence permit expires.

Beneficiaries of international protection are exempt from the state fee for the issuance of a residence permit when receiving these documents for the first time.

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Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 731 on State Fee for Migration Services (26 November 2024) | *Ministru kabineta 2024.gada 26.novembra noteikumi Nr.731 noteikumi "Noteikumi par valsts nodevu par migrācijas pakalpojumiem"* determines the state fee for the examination of the documents submitted for registration of the permanent residence permit.

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 133 on State Fee for Issuance of Personal Identification Documents (21 February 2012) | *Ministru kabineta 2012.gada 21.februāra noteikumu Nr.133 "Noteikumi par valsts nodevu par personu apliecinošu dokumentu izsniegšanu"* determines the state fee for the issuance of a permanent residence permit card.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

The authority responsible for delivering the residence permit is the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. The temporary residence permit is initially valid for 1 year, and subsequent permits are valid for 2 years.

To extend stay in Latvia, a beneficiary of subsidiary protection must apply to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs 1 month before the expiry of the residence permit, submitting an application to extend their residence period.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are exempt from paying the state fee when a residence permit is issued for the first time.

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 731 on State Fee for Migration Services (26 November 2024) | *Ministru kabineta 2024.gada 26.novembra noteikumi Nr.731 noteikumi "Noteikumi par valsts nodevu par migrācijas pakalpojumiem"* determines the state fee for the examination of the documents submitted for repeated temporary residence permit.

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 133 on State Fee for Issuance of Personal Identification Documents (21 February 2012) | *Ministru kabineta 2012.gada 21.februāra noteikumu Nr.133 "Noteikumi par valsts nodevu par personu apliecinošu dokumentu izsniegšanu"* determines the state fee for the issuance of temporary residence permit card.

Travel documents

Refugees

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The authority responsible for delivering the travel document is the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. The validity of a travel document depends on the holder's age:

- Under 5 years old: Valid for 2 years or for the duration of travel but not exceeding 5 years.
- 5 years old and above: Valid for 5 years.

Beneficiaries of international protection are exempt from the state fee for the issuance of a travel document when receiving these documents for the first time.

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 133 on State Fee for Issuance of Personal Identification Documents (21 February 2012) | *Ministru kabineta 2012.gada 21.februāra noteikumu Nr.133 „Noteikumi par valsts nodevu par personu apliecinošu dokumentu izsniegšanu”* determines the state fee for the issuance of travel document.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

The authority responsible for delivering the travel document is the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. The validity of a travel document depends on the holder's age:

- Under 5 years old: Valid for 2 years or for the duration of travel but not exceeding 5 years.
- 5 years old and above: Valid for 5 years.

Beneficiaries of international protection are exempt from the state fee for the issuance of a travel document when receiving these documents for the first time.

Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 133 on State Fee for Issuance of Personal Identification Documents (21 February 2012) | *Ministru kabineta 2012.gada 21.februāra noteikumu Nr.133 "Noteikumi par valsts nodevu par personu apliecinošu dokumentu izsniegšanu”* determines the state fee for the issuance of travel document.

Freedom of movement

Beneficiaries of international protection have freedom of movement within Latvia. The refugee’s travel document is valid in all countries except the country of origin.

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There is no specific legislation ensuring the freedom of movement within the country. However, Section 4 (1) of the Immigration Law sets out the rules for enter and stay in the Republic of Latvia.

Access to employment and employment-related education

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

Access to the labour market is unrestricted. Support is provided by the State Employment Agency (SEA), including mentorship, work-related guidance, language courses and vocational education.

Employers must inform the SEA of available vacancies when they want to hire refugees or persons with alternative status.

Vacancies for refugees or people with an alternative status can be submitted by:

- Contacting the staff of the project "Integration of Refugees and Persons with Alternative Status into the Latvian Labour Market": tel. 25704510, e-mail: integracija@nva.gov.lv
- in person, electronically or by phone (contact details of the SEA branches are available under “Contacts”).

A specialised consultant from the project “Integration of Refugees and Persons with Alternative Status into the Latvian Labour Market” will contact the employer to gather detailed information about the vacancy and to propose the most suitable candidate.

Then, the specialised consultant, together with the potential employee and, if required, an interpreter, will visit the employer for an interview and to become acquainted with the workplace.

If necessary, the SEA provides an interpreter to facilitate communication with the worker on the day the employment contract is signed and on the first day of work.

When employing refugees or persons with alternative status, the provisions of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 733 (7 July 2009) and Section 6 of the State Language Law must be observed.

In private companies, a national language certificate is not required if the employee’s duties do not affect legitimate public interests (such as public

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security, health, consumer and labour rights, workplace safety, or administrative supervision).

To support integration, the SEA provides refugees and persons with alternative status with 120 hours of Latvian language courses per level, across all six levels of state language proficiency. After completing the first level, learners can already communicate in basic Latvian. Upon completion, participants may take the national proficiency exam at the National Centre for Educational Content.

Access to education

Access to education and vocational training are granted on the same level as for nationals for both minors and adults. According to Section 50(2) of the Asylum Law, a minor who has been granted international protection is provided with the opportunity to acquire education in the official language at a state or local government educational institution.

Access to procedures for recognition of qualifications and validation of skills

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

Depending on the purpose, in Latvia there are two types of recognition of qualifications and foreign diplomas:

- Academic recognition of foreign qualifications - to continue education or work on non-regulated profession;
- Professional recognition of foreign qualifications - to work in a regulated profession.

Social security and social assistance

Refugees

If a beneficiary of international protection does not have sufficient resources, they have the right to receive one-time financial support and benefits to cover the cost of living. The conditions are specified in Section 53 of the Asylum Law. To receive the one-off support or the benefit, the beneficiary must open a personal account at any credit institution in Latvia or the Latvian Postal Office.

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One-off support and benefits for a minor are transferred to their legal representative.

The one-off support is provided by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and amounts to EUR 278 for an adult and EUR 194 for a minor, with EUR 278 allocated to one spouse and EUR 194 to the other if they are married (Regulations on One-Time Financial Support and Allowance to Cover Subsistence Costs for a Refugee and a Person Acquired Alternative Status). The beneficiary must submit an application to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs within 1 month from the date the decision to grant international protection is made to receive the one-off support.

The benefit to cover the cost of living is provided by the State Social Insurance Agency and amounts to EUR 139 for an adult, EUR 139 for the first family member and EUR 97 for each additional family member, and EUR 97 for an unaccompanied minor. To receive the benefit, the beneficiary must submit an application to the State Social Insurance Agency within 12 months from being granted refugee or subsidiary protection status.

In the application for both the one-off support and the benefit, the beneficiary must confirm that their financial means do not exceed the minimum monthly salary established in Latvia for each person for whom the support or benefit is requested.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

If a beneficiary of international protection does not have sufficient resources, they have the right to receive a one-time financial support and a benefit to cover the cost of living. The conditions are specified in Section 53 of the Asylum Law. To receive the one-off support or the benefit, the beneficiary must open a personal account at any credit institution in Latvia or the Latvian Postal Office. One-off support and benefits for a minor are transferred to their legal representative.

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made to receive the one-off support.

The benefit to cover the cost of living is provided by the State Social Insurance Agency and amounts to EUR 139 for an adult, EUR 139 for the first family member and EUR 97 for each additional family member, and EUR 97 for an unaccompanied minor. To receive the benefit, the beneficiary must submit an application to the State Social Insurance Agency within 12 months from being granted refugee or subsidiary protection status.

In the application for both the one-off support and the benefit, the beneficiary must confirm that their financial means do not exceed the minimum monthly salary established in Latvia for each person for whom the support or benefit is requested.

Healthcare

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

Beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to state-funded healthcare services. To access these services, individuals must be registered in the National Health Service's Services Register by submitting an application to the National Health Service.

According to the Health Care Financing Law, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to the State Paid Medical Assistance Minimum, which includes:

- emergency medical assistance;
- birth assistance;
- healthcare services provided by general practitioners (including diagnostic examinations and medical treatment), and the medicinal products and medical devices prescribed by a general practitioner and intended for the outpatient medical treatment of the diseases referred to in Clause 4;
- healthcare services related to the medical treatment of diseases which have a significant influence on public health indicators or endanger public health (including mental diseases, tuberculosis), and the medicinal products and medical devices intended for the outpatient medical treatment of these diseases.

Access to accommodation

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Refugees

After getting the refugee status, the beneficiary must begin an independent life. To receive social support, including in case of housing issues, the beneficiary must contact the social services of the municipality where they have their registered place of residence.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

After getting subsidiary protection status, the beneficiary must begin an independent life. To receive social support, including in case of housing issues, the beneficiary must contact the social services of the municipality where they have their registered place of residence.

Access to integration measures

Refugees

It is not compulsory. Kindly find more information on integration in Latvia here.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

It is not compulsory. Kindly find more information on integration in Latvia here.

Family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection

Refugees

According to Section 54(1) of the Asylum Law, a beneficiary of international protection has the right to family reunification.

Eligible family members are:

- The spouse of a beneficiary of international protection;
- The minor child of a beneficiary of international protection;
- The parent(s) or another adult responsible for a minor refugee or individual granted subsidiary protection who is unmarried, provided that the family relationship existed in the country of origin.

The procedure for the family reunification of a beneficiary of international protection person is defined in the “Rules for residence permits”. Restrictions

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regarding timeframes have not been foreseen under national law.

To initiate a family reunification procedure, a beneficiary of international protection must submit an invitation application for the receipt of a residence permit. Meanwhile, the relatives living abroad must apply to the diplomatic or consular representative office of Latvia and submit the required documents for the residence permit request. All family members wishing to reunite should be listed in the invitation.

If an unaccompanied minor who has been granted international protection wishes to reunite with their mother or father, and the opinion of the Orphan's Court has been received that it is in the minor’s best interests, their legal representative must submit the invitation.

To submit the invitation, the individual must:

- Present a personal identification document. If the invitation is for a spouse, the inviter must submit a copy of their personal identification document while presenting the original.
- Provide contact information, such as a telephone number or email address, to facilitate communication.
- Provide details about the family member: full name in Latin alphabet (as in the travel document), country of affiliation, gender, date of birth, place of birth, residence address abroad, intended place of residence in Latvia, and the purpose and duration of stay in Latvia.
- Pay the state fee.

An official from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs decides on the invitation's approval within 2 working days. If additional verification is required, the official will notify the inviter, and a decision will be made within 10 working days.

Documents to be submitted to the embassy are:

- A valid travel document;
- A completed residence permit application form;
- A recent photograph;
- A document proving payment of the state fee or a copy of it;
- Copies of documents certifying family relations.

Documents issued abroad must be legalised or certified in accordance with the Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 on the Abolition of the Requirement of

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Legalization of Foreign Public Documents, unless international agreements binding on Latvia stipulate otherwise.

If a family member of a beneficiary of international protection cannot submit the necessary documents and provides a valid reason in writing, the relevant authority may accept the documents required for family reunification without the missing document. The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs decides on issuing a residence permit after examining the submitted documents, conducting an interview and verifying other relevant information within 30 days.

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs issues or sends the decision to the family member if the documents were submitted to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. If the documents were submitted to the Embassy of Latvia, the decision will be sent to both the embassy indicated by the family member and the embassy where the documents were submitted. The decision will also be issued or sent to the inviter.

Based on a decision to issue a residence permit to the family members of a beneficiary of international protection, the diplomatic or consular representative of Latvia will issue a one-time, long-term visa with a validity period of up to 30 days. A transfer document will be used for the transfer of family members with temporary protection from another EU Member State to Latvia

The inviter or family member who does not require an invitation letter to apply for a residence permit may appeal the decision refusing to issue or register a residence permit within 30 days of the decision’s entry into force to the Head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. The aforementioned persons may also appeal the decision of the Head of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs regarding the refusal to issue or register a residence permit or its annulment to the court in accordance with the law.

Reunified family members’ rights (in particular, length of first and subsequent residence permits, access to integration programmes/measures)

After entering Latvia, the foreigner must visit the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs in person within the legal stay period to receive the residence permit. The family member will be issued a permanent residence permit. If a family member applies for international protection after arrival, their application will be processed according to the regular procedures in the Asylum Law. While the case is under review, the applicant retains the rights of a family member of a beneficiary. If international or subsidiary protection is granted, their status will

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change to that of a person with international or subsidiary protection.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

According to Section 54(1) of the Asylum Law, a beneficiary of international protection has the right to family reunification. A person granted subsidiary protection may exercise this right if they have resided in Latvia for at least 2 years after acquiring the status.

The eligible family members, the procedures to follow and the reunified family members' rights are the same as for refugees.

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