Forms of protection - Croatia

Overview

Content updated and validated on: 4/12/2025

Relevant EU legislation

Croatia is bound by the recast Qualification Directive (Standards Qualification Regulation) has transposed their provisions through the Law on International and Temporary Protection (LITP) | Zakon o međunarodnoj i privremenoj zaštiti.

National legislation

Refugee status	Article 20 of the LITP. The refugee status refers to a refugee within the meaning of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 under which asylum is granted.
Subsidiary protection	Article 21 of the LITP.
Temporary protection	Article 78 of the LITP.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

National forms of protection	Information is currently not available Temporary residence under humanitarian grounds is regulated by the Aliens Act (Official Gazette no. 130/2011, 74/2013) . According to Article 65, temporary residence under humanitarian grounds is granted to a foreigner in the following cases: • if he/she, as a victim of human trafficking has accepted a programme of assistance and protection; • if he/she is a minor who was abandoned, or who was a victim of organised crime, or who, for some other reasons, remained without parental protection, guardianship or remained unaccompanied; • to a foreigner who, before submitting an application, held refugee status for at least 10 years, or who has been included in the programme of reconstruction, return and housing care of refugees originating from Croatia, which must be proved by a certificate of the competent state body for refugees; • if he cooperates with the competent bodies and his participation is essential in the criminal procedure being conducted against the employer who employed him illegally; • under serious justified grounds of humanitarian nature. The foreigner must meet the following conditions: • justifies the purpose of temporary residence; • holds a valid travel document (only in case of extension); • his/her entry and residence in Croatia is not prohibited; does not pose a danger to public order, national security or public health. An application for temporary residence must be submitted to the competent Diplomatic Mission or Consular Office of the Republic of Croatia (in case of visa required).

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Competent authority and stakeholders

Refugee status	Directorate for Immigration, Citizenship and Administrative Affairs, Service for International Protection | Uprava za Imigraciju, državljanstvo i upravne Poslove, Služba za međunarodnu zaštitu
Subsidiary protection	Directorate for Immigration, Citizenship and Administrative Affairs, Service for International Protection | Uprava za Imigraciju, državljanstvo i upravne Poslove, Služba za međunarodnu zaštitu
Temporary protection	Directorate for Immigration, Citizenship and Administrative Affairs, Service for International Protection | Uprava za Imigraciju, državljanstvo i upravne Poslove, Služba za međunarodnu zaštitu
National forms of protection	n/a

Renewal and withdrawal of international protection and national forms of protection

Refugee status

Legal provisions relating to review, renewal and withdrawal of subsidiary protection: Article 75 of the LITP.

Length of the first and subsequent residence permits: 5 years.

Review of the status: Information is currently not available

Renewal of the status: The renewal process is overseen by the Ministry of the Interior. The application for the issuance of a residence permit should be submitted by the beneficiary of international protection to the police administration or police station according to the place of residence. The first residence permit is provided free of charge for beneficiaries of international protection; however, for all subsequent renewals, a fee of 31.85 euros is required (as per Decision No. 98/16, 102/16 - correction, 155/22).

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Withdrawal of the status: A personal interview with the beneficiary of international protection is conducted in most cases during the withdrawal procedure.

Grounds for withdrawal of the status: According to Article 50 of the LITP, the Ministry of the Interior will initiate proceedings for the revocation of international protection ex officio when:

- Reasons for exclusion, as referred to in Articles 30 or 31 of the LITP, are established;
- It is determined that the status was granted based on incorrect or omitted facts, false representation of important facts and circumstances, or the use of unreliable documents or other materials that were decisive for the approval of international protection;
- The person to whom international protection was granted is found to pose a risk to national security or public order in the Republic of Croatia.

According to Article 49(1) of the LITP, asylum shall be ceased if:

- The refugee voluntarily accepts the protection of the country of which they are a national;
- The refugee acquires the citizenship of a country whose protection they may enjoy;
- The refugee voluntarily returns to and resides in the country they left, or in a country where they had resided due to fear of persecution;
- The circumstances in the refugee's country of origin, on the basis of which international protection was granted, cease to exist;
- The refugee voluntarily re-acquires the nationality of their country of origin, which they had previously lost.

Consequences of the withdrawal of the status:

After determining that circumstances warrant the cessation or revocation of international protection, the Ministry will inform the beneficiary of international protection in writing of the reasons for the decision and will allow them to make an oral statement about these circumstances for the record. Following this, the Ministry will issue a decision to either cease or revoke the granting of international protection. An appeal may not be lodged against the cessation or revocation decision; however, an appeal may be filed with the administrative court in accordance with Article 51 of the LITP within 8 days from the date of service of the decision.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Subsidiary protection status

Legal provisions relating to review, renewal and withdrawal of subsidiary protection: Article 75 of the LITP.

Length of the first and subsequent residence permits: 3 years.

Review of the status: Information is currently not available.

Renewal of the status: The renewal process is overseen by the Ministry of the Interior. The application for the issuance of a residence permit should be submitted by the beneficiary of international protection to the police administration or police station according to the place of residence. The first residence permit is provided free of charge for beneficiaries of international protection; however, for all subsequent renewals, a fee of 31.85 euros is required (as per Decision No. 98/16, 102/16 - correction, 155/22).

Withdrawal of the status: A personal interview with the beneficiary is conducted in most cases during the withdrawal procedure.

Grounds for the withdrawal of the status: The grounds for revocation of subsidiary protection are the same as those for refugee status.

According to Article 49(2) of the LITP, subsidiary protection shall cease if the circumstances on the basis of which it was granted no longer exist, or if they change to such an extent that further protection is no longer necessary.

Consequences of the withdrawal of the status: same as for refugees.

National forms of protection

Legal provisions relating to the review, renewal and withdrawal of national forms of protection: Foreigners Act (Official Gazette no. 130/2011, 74/2013).

Length of the first and subsequent residence permits: N/a

Review of the status: N/a

Renewal of the status: N/a

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Withdrawal of the status: According to Article 85 of the Foreigners Act (Official Gazette no. 130/2011, 74/2013) temporary residence under humanitarian grounds terminates if:

- the victim lost the victim status;
- it is established that the victim is abusing his position;
- required by reasons of protecting public policy, national security and public.

An appeal may be filed against the decision of the police administration or police station.

Grounds for the withdrawal of the status: N/a

Consequences of the withdrawal of the status: N/a

Content of protection

Overview

Title V of the LITP details content of protection for refugee status and for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

Provision of information on the content of protection

Information is currently not available.

Residence permits

Refugees:

The authority responsible for delivering the residence permit is the police department or station, depending on the beneficiary's place of residence. The length of both the initial and subsequent residence permits is 5 years.

The application for the issuance of the residence permit shall be submitted to the competent police department or station, depending on the beneficiary's place of residence. It must be submitted by an individual who is older than 16 years of age. For a beneficiary of international protection who is younger than 16 years of age, the application shall be submitted by a legal representative or a special

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

guardian under the same conditions as a Croatian national. The first residence permit is provided free of charge for beneficiaries of international protection; however, for all subsequent renewals, a fee of 31.85 euros is required (as per Decision No. 98/16, 102/16 - correction, 155/22).

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

The authority responsible for delivering the residence permit is the police department or station, depending on the beneficiary's place of residence. The length of both the initial and subsequent residence permits is 3 years.

The procedure for delivering the residence permit (including timelines) is the same as for refugees.

Travel documents

Refugees:

The competent authority responsible for delivering the travel document is the police department or station, depending on the beneficiary's place of residence, with the prior approval of the Ministry. The validity period of the travel document is 5 years.

The application for the issuance of the travel document shall be submitted to the competent police department or station, depending on the beneficiary's place of residence. If the request is rejected, an administrative dispute may be initiated. The fee for issuing a travel document amounts to 42.47 euros (as per Decision No. 98/16, 102/16, correction 155/22).

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

The competent authority responsible for delivering the travel document is the police department or station, depending on the beneficiary's place of residence, with the prior approval of the Ministry. According to Article 75(6) of the LITP, read in conjunction with Article 6(3) and Article 8 of the Aliens Act, the validity period of the travel document is 2 years.

When subsidiary protection ends, the person is required to return the travel document to the competent police department or station within 30 days.

The procedure for delivering the travel document (including the necessity to pay any fees) is the same as for refugees.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Freedom of movement

Beneficiaries of international protection enjoy full freedom of movement. According to Article 64(4)(2) of the LITP, they are required to inform the authorities of any change in their residential address within 15 days of the change. Additionally, as per Article 64(4)(5) of the LITP, they must notify the authorities if they move out of Croatia or stay abroad continuously for 90 days or more within a period of 180 days, also within 15 days of either of these events occurring.

Access to employment and employment-related education

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

According to Article 68 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection have the right to work in Croatia without the need for a residence or work permit or a work registration certificate. Additionally, they are entitled to adult education related to employment, professional training, and the acquisition of practical work experience, under the same conditions as Croatian citizens.

The Croatian Employment Service (CES) is responsible for implementing measures related to the employment of foreigners, with a particular focus on refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection. According to the Law on the Labor Market, refugees, foreigners under subsidiary protection, and their family members may apply to the CES.

Access to education

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

According to Article 70 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to primary, secondary, and higher education under the same conditions as Croatian citizens, in accordance with special regulations. They also have the right to adult education on the same terms as Croatian citizens.

Croatian schools are obligated to organize preparatory Croatian language classes of no fewer than 70 lessons for refugee children and children with insufficient Croatian language proficiency, as well as supplementary lessons in various school subjects. Additionally, they must enable these children to attend some regular

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

school classes in parallel.

For all individuals granted international protection, inclusion in the Croatian language course is provided under the framework of the Programme for Learning the Croatian Language, History, and Culture for Refugees and Foreign Nationals Under Subsidiary Protection, with the goal of their integration into Croatian society (as per Decision No. 154/2014). The program lasts 280 hours and is conducted in two levels: 70 hours for the first level and 210 hours for the second level.

Lessons in Croatian language, history, and culture for vulnerable groups of beneficiaries of international protection who are not included in the educational system are organized in open universities, primary schools, and other institutions authorized to provide primary education for adults.

Access to procedures for recognition of qualifications and validation of skills

Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

According to Article 70 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to the recognition of foreign educational qualifications under the same conditions as Croatian citizens. If they are unable to provide the necessary documentation proving their foreign qualifications for justified reasons, an assessment of previously acquired competences will be carried out. This assessment will be conducted by the competent authorities in accordance with the regulations governing regulated professions and the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. A decision rejecting an application for recognition of foreign professional qualifications cannot be based solely on the absence of official documents proving the qualification. If a beneficiary of international protection lacks sufficient financial means, the translation of foreign documents for the purpose of recognition of foreign educational qualifications will be funded from the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia, through the Ministry responsible for education.

Social security and social assistance

Refugees:

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

According to Article 73 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection have the right to social welfare in accordance with the regulations governing social welfare for Croatian citizens.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

Conditions to access social security and social assistance are the same as for refugees

Healthcare

According to Article 69 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to healthcare in accordance with the regulations governing health insurance and health protection for foreigners in Croatia. The health care costs for these individuals are covered by the State Budget of Croatia, through the Ministry responsible for health affairs.

Healthcare is provided to all persons granted international protection to the same extent as an insured person under compulsory health insurance. The costs of health care for beneficiaries of international protection are covered by the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia through the ministry responsible for health affairs. If a beneficiary of international protection is already covered by compulsory health insurance or health care through another means (e.g., if employed), the state budget will not cover health care costs. The competent police administration or police station is required to inform the ministry in charge of health about the acquisition of international protection status by an individual.

Access to accommodation

Refugees:

According to Article 67 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection have the right to accommodation if they lack the means or assets to provide for their maintenance. This right extends for a maximum of 2 years from the date of service of the decision granting international protection. The procedure for recognizing the right to accommodation begins with submitting an application to the competent regional office of the Croatian Institute for Social Work, based on the individual’s place of residence. The regional office will then decide on the application. If the regional office determines that an asylee/refugee or a foreigner

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

under subsidiary protection has sufficient funds to contribute to accommodation costs, it will issue a decision recognizing their right to accommodation, with the requirement to contribute to the costs, as per the relevant regulations. If, at any point, the regional office later determines that the individual has the financial means to pay for accommodation, it may revoke the accommodation entitlement.

Exceptionally, at the request of an asylum seeker or a person under subsidiary protection, and with the prior consent of the Ministry responsible for housing, the competent regional office of the Croatian Institute for Social Welfare may, by decision, allow the asylum seeker or person under subsidiary protection to temporarily use a housing unit owned by the Republic of Croatia (after the expiration of two years from the date of delivery of the decision granting international protection) for a maximum of an additional two years, while continuing to contribute to housing costs according to the decision of the regional office or by paying a protected rent for the housing area.

Under Article 67a of the LITP, the ministry responsible for housing care provides accommodation to beneficiaries of international protection in housing units owned by the Republic of Croatia or leased by the ministry from third parties. The ministry enters into a lease or sublease agreement with the beneficiaries for a maximum period of two years from the enforceability of the international protection decision. The agreement specifies the rights and obligations of both parties. The ministry is responsible for taking possession of the housing unit and ensuring that the necessary accommodation costs, including finding, adapting, furnishing, maintaining, and settling overheads, are covered through the state budget allocated for housing care.

Under Article 67b, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to accommodation in the Reception Centre for up to 60 days, provided they submit an application for accommodation within 8 days of registering their residence. If the application is missed for justified reasons, they may request restitutio in integrum within 8 days of the reason for missing the deadline, but this must be done within 3 months from the expiration of the deadline. If an individual stays in the Reception Centre for more than 8 days without notifying the Ministry, they will lose the right to accommodation. However, if they inform the Ministry of their absence, their room will be reserved for a maximum of 15 days. Additionally, individuals who have sufficient funds for maintenance are entitled to accommodation in the Reception Centre for up to 30 days from the delivery of the decision granting international protection.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

The conditions and restrictions to access accommodation as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection are the same as for refugees.

The type of accommodation facilities available to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are the same as for refugees.

Access to integration measures

Refugees:

Under Article 74 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are obliged to attend a course on Croatian language, history, and culture to facilitate their integration into Croatian society. If they fail to comply with this obligation, they will be required to reimburse the costs of the course to the ministry responsible for education.

According to Article 76(2) of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to integration assistance for a maximum of 3 years from the date the asylum decision is issued. Integration assistance activities are carried out by the Ministry of the Interior, either directly or through a selected partner organization, and include:

- Development of an integration plan tailored to the individual's specific needs, knowledge, abilities, and skills
- Providing support to implement the developed plan
- Monitoring the execution of the plan

The right to 3 years of integration assistance begins on the day the decision granting international protection is delivered and it is not extended due to absence from the Republic of Croatia.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

Under Article 74 of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are obliged to attend a course on Croatian language, history, and culture to facilitate their integration into Croatian society. If they fail to comply with this obligation, they will be required to reimburse the costs of the course to the ministry responsible for education.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

According to Article 76(2) of the LITP, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to integration assistance for a maximum of 3 years from the date the asylum decision is issued. Integration assistance activities are carried out by the Ministry of the Interior, either directly or through a selected partner organization, and include:

- Development of an integration plan tailored to the individual's specific needs, knowledge, abilities, and skills
- Providing support to implement the developed plan
- Monitoring the execution of the plan

The right to 3 years of integration assistance begins on the day the decision granting international protection is delivered and it is not extended due to absence from the Republic of Croatia.

Family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection

Refugees:

The right to family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection is enshrined in Article 66 of the LITP, as well as by the Aliens Act.

According to the legislation, there is no waiting period before a beneficiary can apply for family reunification, no maximum time limit for applying, and no minimum income requirement.

According to Article 4(18) of the LITP, family members are:

- The spouse or unmarried partner according to the regulations of the Republic of Croatia, as well as persons who are in a union that, according to the regulations of the Republic of Croatia, can be considered a life partnership or informal life partnership.
- The minor child of the spouse or unmarried partner; their minor adopted child; the minor child and minor adopted child of a married, unmarried, or life partner who exercises parental care of the child.
- An adult unmarried child of a beneficiary of international protection who, due to their state of health, is unable to take care of their own needs.
- The parent or other legal representative of a minor.
- A first-degree relative in a direct ascending bloodline with whom the beneficiary of international protection has lived in a common household, if it

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

is established that the relative is dependent on the care of the beneficiary.

The family reunification procedure shall be initiated at the competent Diplomatic Mission or Consular Office of the Republic of Croatia, by submitting an application for a temporary residence permit. The application may also be submitted via email or regular mail, but the person must appear in person at the Mission once the procedure is completed to apply for a visa to enter Croatia. If the application for a temporary residence permit is approved, the family member must then submit an application for a visa. Upon arrival in the Republic of Croatia, the family member submits an application for a residence permit at the competent police administration or police station. The application should include a photo, a copy of the valid travel document (which will be certified by an official after inspecting the original), and proof justifying the purpose of the stay.

Family members of beneficiaries of international protection must fulfil the following requirements:

- Justification of the purpose of temporary residence;
- A valid travel document;
- Entry and residence in the Republic of Croatia must not be prohibited and must not pose a danger to public order, national security, or public health.

However, they are not required to have sufficient means of supporting themselves or health insurance, as is prescribed for other foreigners applying for temporary residence.

According to the Aliens Act, Article 52, a family member is granted a temporary residence permit valid for up to 1 year. The validity of the travel document should be at least three months longer than the duration of the temporary residence permit. In the case of reunification with a child, the child is granted the same status as the parent.

More details on the family reunification procedure can be found in the leaflet Family Reunification in Croatia - Information for Persons with Approved International Protection, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR and the Croatian Legal Center.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection:

Same as for refugees

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2026. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.