

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION SYSTEM IN CROATIA

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

What are my rights as an applicant for international protection?

- right to accommodation in a reception centre, including:
 - i) food and clothing provided in kind;
 - ii) reimbursement of public transport costs for the purposes of the procedure for granting international protection;
 - iii) financial assistance, **except if**:
 - a) you are employed and receive sufficient income to ensure an adequate standard of living;
 - b) you have funds or funds are otherwise provided.
- right of residence in the Republic of Croatia;
- right to have the procedure conducted in a language you understand;
- right to be informed about your rights, obligations, the procedure for granting international protection and the right to legal advice;
- right to appropriate material conditions of reception;
- right to healthcare;
- right to primary and secondary education;
- right to free legal aid before the administrative court of first instance;
- right to freedom of religion;
- right to work: if no decision has been taken within nine months of the date of submission of the application without any fault on your part;
- appointment of guardians for minors and legally incapacitated persons in the procedure.

What are my essential obligations as an applicant for international protection?

- to undergo identity check and establishment;
- to undergo medical examination;
- to respect the house rules of the reception centre;
- to remain on the territory of the Republic of Croatia for the duration of the procedure for granting international protection;
- to notify the Ministry about any change of address within two days of the date the change took place;
- to comply with the Ministry's instructions and measures on restrictions to freedom of movement;
- to appear at the interview upon the invitation by the Ministry and cooperate throughout the procedure for granting international protection;
- to respect the Constitution, laws and other regulations of the Republic of Croatia;
- to cooperate with the competent national authorities of the Republic of Croatia and act in accordance with their measures and instructions;

How long does the right of residence in the Republic of Croatia last for applicants for international protection?

The right of residence in the Republic of Croatia extends from the date of expression of the intent to apply for international protection until the end of the proceedings.

Can I move freely while awaiting a decision regarding my application for international protection?

By exercising your right to reside in the Republic of Croatia, you are granted freedom of movement on the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia, unless it is restricted due to:

1. an assessment of facts and circumstances of your application which cannot be established without the restriction and if it has been assessed that you might run away;
2. checking and establishing your identity and citizenship;
3. protection of national security and public order of the Republic of Croatia;
4. doubts that the intention has been expressed to prevent the implementation of forced removal.

The restriction may not exceed three months and shall exceptionally be extended for a further three months.

I have been granted international protection. What are my rights and obligations?

As a person who has been granted asylum or subsidiary protection, you have the **right** to:

- work (residence and work permit or work registration certificate not required);
- accommodation;
- healthcare;
- education;
- freedom of religion;
- free legal aid;
- recognition of foreign qualifications under the same conditions as Croatian citizens;
- social welfare;
- access to integration facilities;
- family reunification;
- property ownership pursuant to the 1951 Convention;
- acquisition of Croatian citizenship in accordance with the Croatian Citizenship Act.

Persons granted asylum or subsidiary protection **are required** to:

- declare place of residence within 15 days;
- have a residence permit on them at all times and show it to legally authorised persons;
- follow a course in Croatian language, history and culture;
- respect the Constitution, laws and other regulations of the Republic of Croatia.

For how long is granted international protection valid?

The granted asylum or subsidiary protection do not have a period of validity, the law prescribes when they cease or get annulled. It ceases by law if you acquire Croatian citizenship.

Asylum may cease if:

1. you accept protection of the country of your citizenship;
2. you acquire the citizenship of a country where you can obtain protection;

3. you voluntarily return to the country you left for fear of persecution;
4. the circumstances in your country of origin on the basis of which you were granted international protection cease to exist;
5. you voluntarily acquire the citizenship of the country of origin which you have lost.

Subsidiary protection may cease if the circumstances on the basis of which it was granted cease to exist or if they change to the extent that such protection has been deemed unnecessary.

What documents do I need and to which I am entitled?

Residence permit

A residence permit is an identity document that proves your identity, validates your status and regulates your residence in Croatia. It also serves to exercise the right to healthcare.

You apply for a residence permit at the police administration/station according to your place of residence by submitting a form and:

1. a photo sized 3 x 3.5 cm (cheeks, chin and forehead must be visible);
2. certificate of protection granted (in case of first application);
3. applicant card.

It is issued for the period of:

- a) 5 years if you were granted asylum;
- b) 3 years if you were granted subsidiary protection.

For persons under the age of 16, a legal representative or guardian shall submit the application.

The first issue of the permit is free of charge and the subsequent ones cost HRK 240.

Travel document

You apply for a travel document at the police administration/station according to your place of residence, by submitting a form and a photo sized 3 x 3.5 cm (cheeks, chin and forehead must be visible).

It is issued for the period of 5 years if you were granted asylum.

If you were granted subsidiary protection, you are entitled to a special travel document for third-country nationals valid for up to two years.

The issue of both travel documents costs HRK 320.

In the event you change your personal data or residence address, or if your residence permit or travel document expires, gets lost, damaged or stolen, you must contact the police station of your place of residence as soon as possible and apply for a new residence permit or travel document.

When will I not be issued with a travel document?

Your application for a travel document will be rejected if:

- you are avoiding the enforcement of a judgment in criminal proceedings;
- you are avoiding settling what you own due to the marital or parent-child relationship (for example, alimony), a tax liability or other property liability established by law;
- this is required by reasons of national security or the protection of public order.

I changed the address of my residence. Does this affect my residence permit?

If you change your residence address, you need to cancel your old address and register your new address within 15 days and ask for a new residence permit following the rules for issuing a residence permit.

I am leaving Croatia for a certain period of time. How does this affect my rights?

If you leave Croatia for more than six months, you must inform the Ministry of the Interior.

Otherwise, if you emigrate or stay abroad for a continuous period of more than six months, you may lose your right of residence.

If you use the right to accommodation, you must inform the competent authority of your departure (e.g. a social welfare centre). The duration of the right to accommodation and access to integration facilities is not interrupted during your stay abroad.

How and for how long do I exercise the right to accommodation?

When you are granted asylum or subsidiary protection, you have the right to accommodation if you do not have the funds or assets to cover accommodation costs on your own. You need to submit an application to the social welfare centre competent according to your place of residence.

If you are found to have sufficient funds or assets, you may be required to participate in the payment of accommodation costs.

The right to accommodation lasts for two years from the day you were served the decision granting you international protection. It may be revoked if you do not reside at the registered address for more than 30 days without justified reasons.

Is my school certificate/diploma valid in Croatia and can I translate it?

As a person granted international protection, you are entitled to have your foreign qualifications recognised under the same conditions as Croatian citizens. Translation procedures are handled by the Ministry of Science and Education, which you can contact either in person or via e-mail at amif@mzo.hr. The documents received will be translated into Croatian by a court interpreter. After translation, for the purposes of further education or employment your qualifications have to be formally recognised. Translation costs will be covered if you do not have sufficient funds.

My diploma/certificate has been lost/destroyed. What can I do?

If, for duly justified reasons, you are unable to provide the necessary documentation proving your qualification, an assessment of your previously acquired competences will be carried out in accordance with the rules governing regulated professions and the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. Your application for recognition of your foreign professional qualification cannot be rejected on the grounds that you have no official documents proving your qualification.

The following institutions are responsible for the recognition of primary and secondary qualifications and periods of this education for the purpose of employment or further education:

1. [Education and Teacher Training Agency](#) (for general and art programmes)
2. [Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education](#) (for vocational programmes)

The following institutions are responsible for the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education and periods of study:

1. [universities, polytechnics and colleges](#) (academic recognition and recognition of study periods in order to continue education in Croatia)
2. [National ENIC/NARIC Office of the Agency for Science and Higher Education](#) (for the purposes of employment in Croatia (professional recognition))