

A Regional MIPEx Assessment of FYROM, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



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INTRODUCTION

What is the Migrant Integration Policy Index?

Integration actors can struggle to find up-to-date, comprehensive research data and analysis on which to base policies, proposals for change and projects to achieve equality in their country. Instead they may find anecdotal, out-dated information and piecemeal statistics that are too disconnected from the real impact on people's lives to assist in formulating improvements.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a reference guide and a fully interactive tool to assess, compare and improve integration policy. It measures integration policies in 40 countries in Europe and North America in order to provide a view of integration policies across a broad range of differing environments. MIPEX was developed in these countries by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group (MPG). Using 148 policy indicators, MIPEX establishes the extent to which all residents are legally entitled to equal rights and responsibilities, as well as to any support that addresses their specific needs to make equal opportunities a reality.

Uses for policymaking

Policymakers and civil society obtain a quick reference guide to assess the impact of their policy changes and get an overall impression of their country's strengths and weaknesses. This allows governments to see the effects of their approach and policy changes. It

highlights policies that score well and possible areas for improvement. They can compare these strengths and weaknesses with other countries, either across their region, Europe and North America, or all the countries at once. They can find inspiration for policies and learn lessons from their objectives, implementation, and results. Since policies are one of the factors influencing integration, MIPEX can be used as a starting point to evaluate how policy changes can improve integration in practice. Its research findings can be complemented with further information from official statistics, budgets, project and scientific evaluations, government reporting, and evidence from NGOs, courts and migrants.

What are the highest standards used by MIPEX?

MIPEX demonstrates how countries can do better in creating the legal environment in which immigrants contribute to a country's well-being, where they have equal access to employment and education, live in security with their families, become active citizens and are protected against discrimination. For each of the 7 policy areas: labour market mobility, family reunion, education, political participation, long-term residence, access to nationality and anti-discrimination, MIPEX identifies the highest European and international standards aimed at achieving equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all residents. These standards establish a basic rule-of-law

approach, which has helped to improve policies in European Union and Council of Europe Member States. Where only minimum standards exist, policy recommendations are used from international research networks and civil society.

How does MIPEX obtain its scores?

The 148 policy indicators have been designed to benchmark current laws and policies against the highest standards through consultations with top comparative researchers as well as international and European institutions. A policy indicator is a question relating to a specific policy component of one of the 7 policy areas. For each answer, there are 3 options. The maximum of 3 points is awarded when policies meet the highest standards for equal treatment. A score of 2 is given when policies lie halfway to the highest standards, and a score of 1 is given when they are furthest from the highest standards. Where a country has no policies on a specific indicator, it is given a default value of 1.

Within each of the 7 policy areas, the indicator scores are averaged together to give one of 4 dimension scores which examine the same aspect of policy. The 4 dimension scores are then averaged together to give the policy area score for each of the 7 policy areas per country which, averaged together one more time, lead to the overall scores for each country. In order to make rankings and comparisons, the initial 1-3 scale is converted into a 0-100 scale for dimensions and policy areas, where 100% is the top score.

MIPEX key legend (0-100)

0 Critically unfavourable for integration

1-20 Unfavourable

21-40 Slightly unfavourable

41-59 Halfway favourable

60-79 Slightly favourable

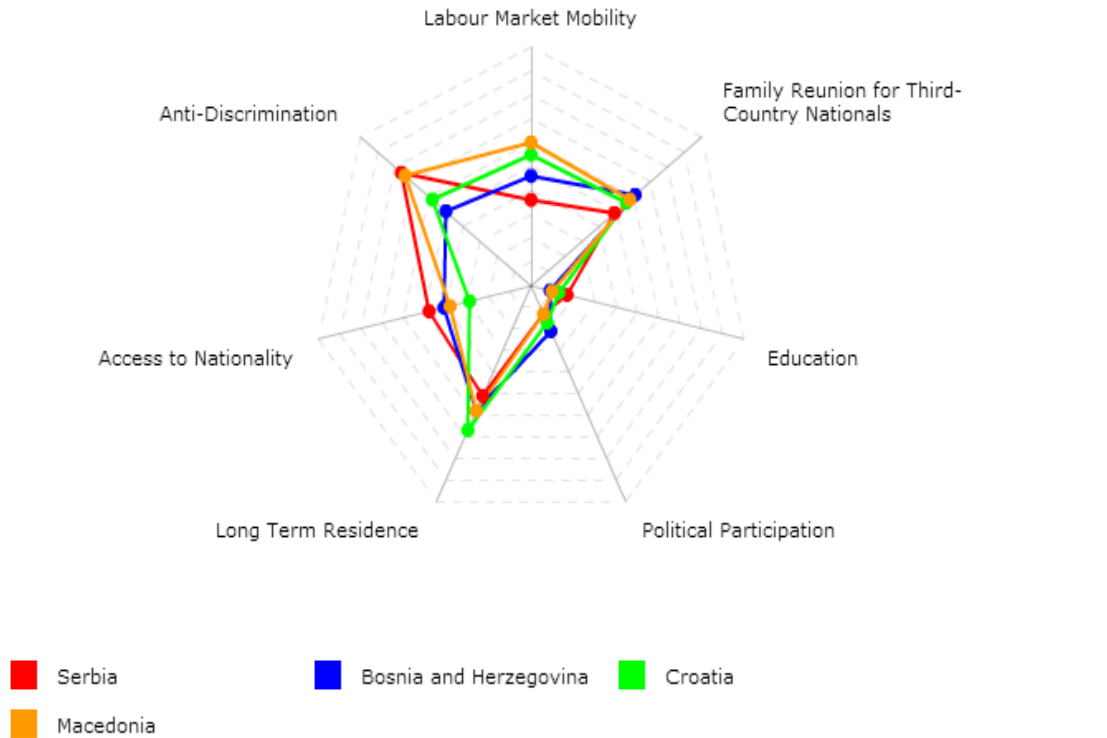
80-100 Favourable for integration

Who gathered the data?

Unlike indexes based on expert opinion, MIPEX is based on public laws, policies and research. In every country, independent experts in migration law, education and anti-discrimination, filled out the score for each indicator based on the country's publically available documents as of 1 November 2013. All scores were then peer-reviewed by a second expert.

The Migration Policy Group moderated any discrepancies and checked the completed questionnaires for consistency across strands and countries over time. Migration Policy Group wrote up this country report based on its official scoring and analysis of the questionnaire results, following the established MIPEX procedure. Comparisons are made with the average practices in most MIPEX countries and EU Member States. Special attention was paid to the EU's 'new' Member States and new immigration countries, particularly their recent progress in establishing basic procedures and statuses in this field.

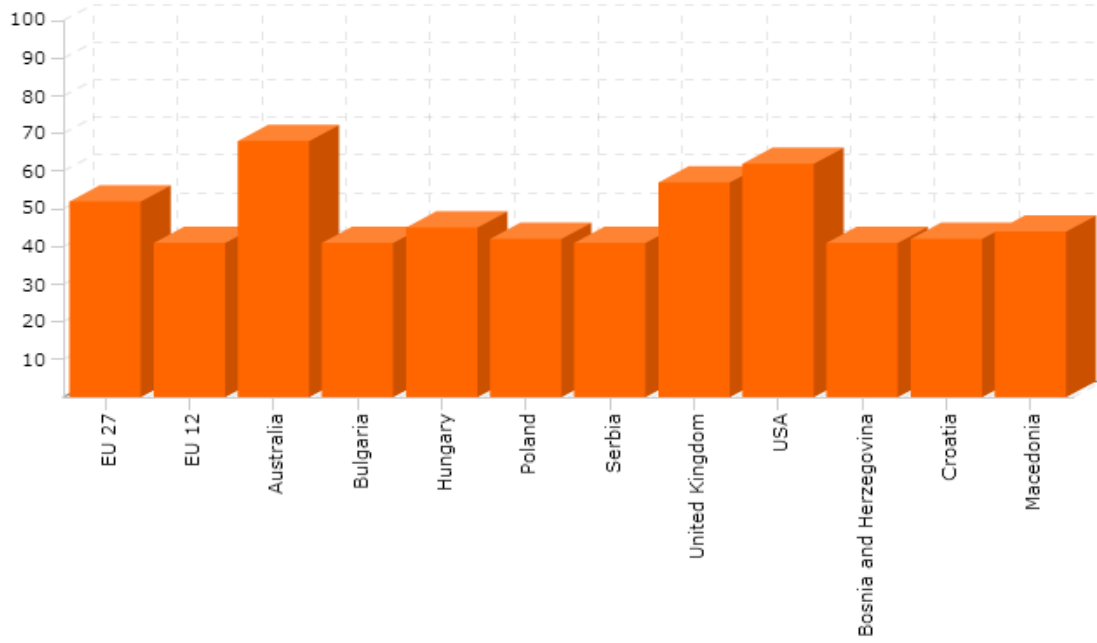
OVERVIEW



Integration policies in Croatia, FYROM, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are barely halfway favourable for societal integration, scoring below the European average and alongside other 'new' immigration countries in MIPEX, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic. Newcomers in these countries will face slightly more obstacles than opportunities to participate in society. These countries are at different stages of their EU accession, with Croatia as the newest Member State. Interestingly, the policies that could contribute the most to integration are EU law-driven - anti-

discrimination legislation in the case of Serbia and FYROM, family reunion policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and long-term residence in Croatia. Despite these improvements, the conditions in law are undermined by authorities' rather discretionary procedures in all four countries, a problem across Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to the negative impact of this uncertainty on integration, newcomers critically lack many basic citizenship, education and political opportunities that are becoming best practice across Europe.

Overall Score (with Education)

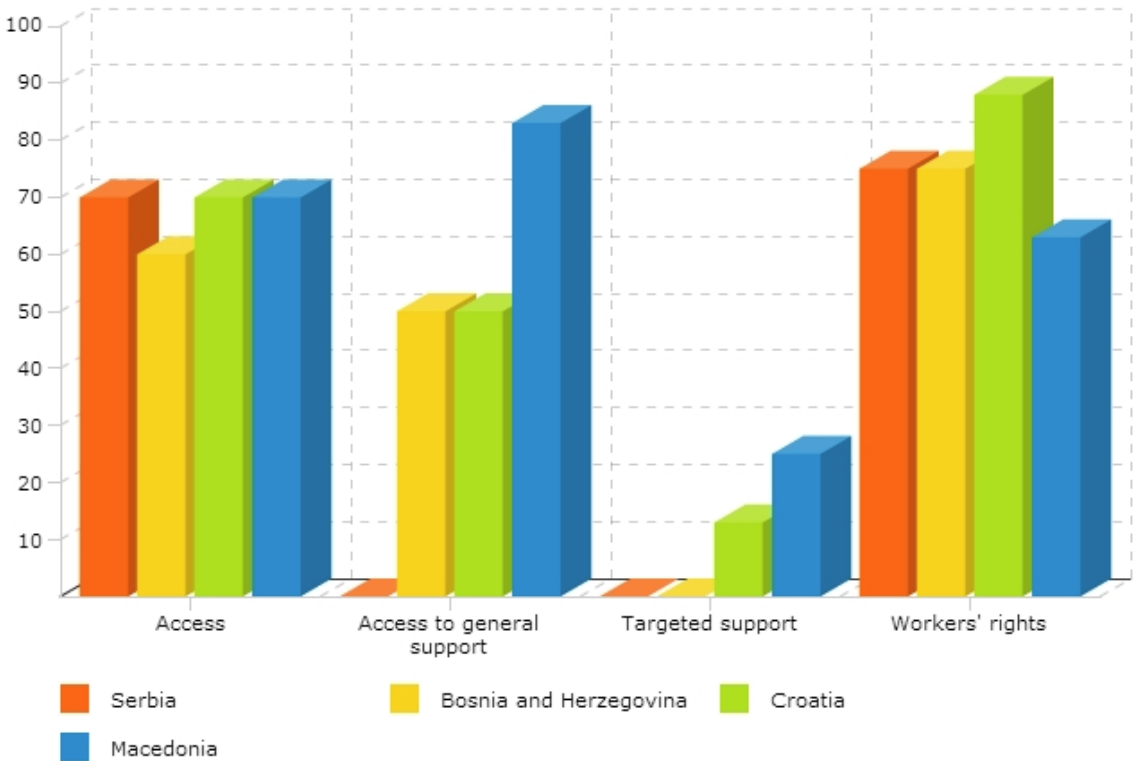


LABOUR MARKET MOBILITY

As in most MIPEX countries, long-term residents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM and Croatia enjoy equal social and economic rights in general, reflecting the EU legal standards for long-term residence. Family members in these countries are also entitled to rights in line with the requirements of the EU acquis.

Serbian legislation does not reflect these EU legal standards, even though the country is a candidate for EU membership. Although long-term residents in Serbia obtain equal access to employment, they have some of the weakest rights in Serbia compared to most

MIPEX countries. They do not have equal access to social security and health care, unless their country of origin has signed international agreements. Under EU law, long-term residents must enjoy equal rights to employment, education and vocational training, study grants, unemployment benefits, social security, and access to goods and services available to the public, including housing. Moreover, family migrants in Serbia obtain only temporary permits with limited socio-economic rights, a situation which is very rare among MIPEX countries. Under the Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification, non-EU family members are entitled to equal access to education, employment and vocational training.

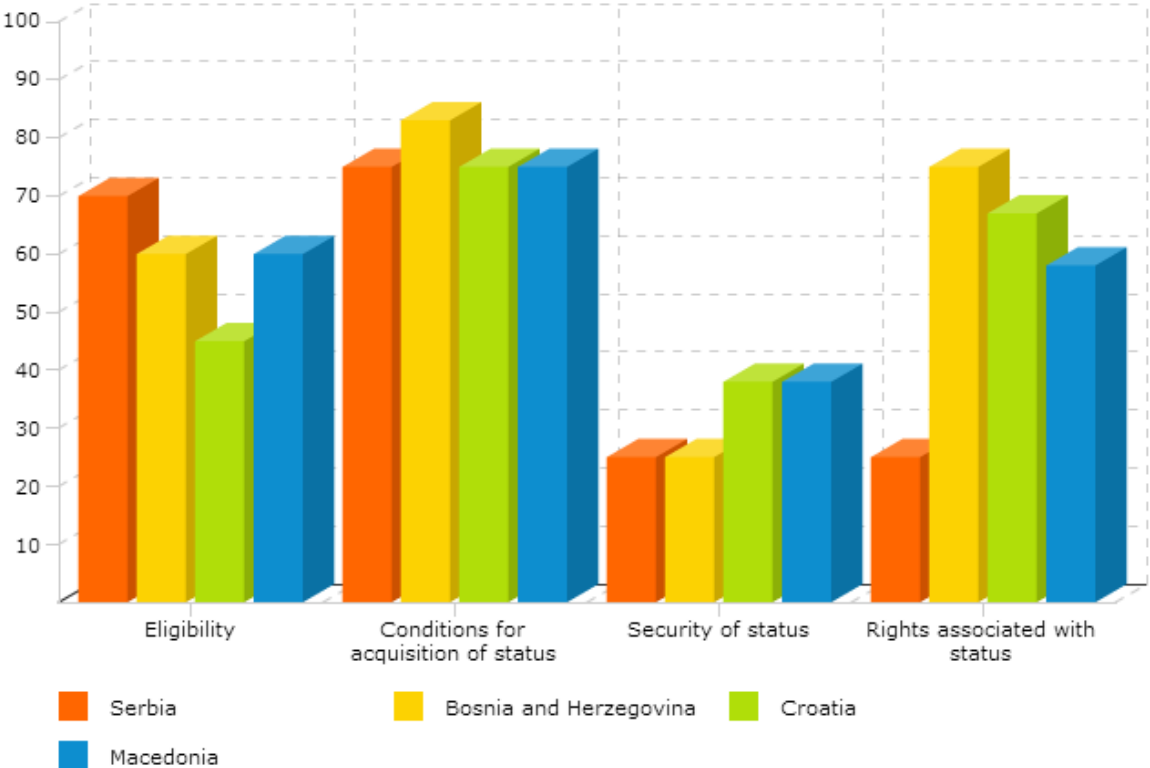


In all four Balkan countries assessed with MIPEX, some categories of temporary migrant workers do not have immediate access to employment and the right to change jobs and sectors, and thus cannot fully contribute to the economy of their respective country. In contrast, many new immigration countries in MIPEX, such as Italy, Portugal, Spain, are increasingly opening equal access to the labour market to all legal temporary residents, granting newcomers nearly equal opportunities to change jobs and careers.

In Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, temporary migrants cannot benefit from public employment services, adult education, or vocational training on an equal footing with nationals and long-term residents. Moreover, hardly any targeted support is available for them in these countries. As a result, temporary migrant workers could spend years trapped in a job below their qualifications, and their skills and ambitions would go to waste.

General and targeted support for migrant workers is already more favourable than average in several new immigration destinations, including Portugal, Spain, Estonia and Romania. Immigrants in Portugal, for instance, can learn how to use their rights in cases of exploitation through the Legal Aid for Immigrants Office of the National Immigrant Support Centre. They benefit from many targeted measures included in the National Plan for Immigrant Integration and delivered mainly by the High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI). The Plan gives special attention to vulnerable groups such as immigrant youth, promoting equal opportunities through equal access to work and training. It also recognises the potential of migrant women as entrepreneurs. Another positive example from Central Europe could be found in Estonia. Its programmes help all Estonian residents, especially youth, find jobs or training, get their qualifications recognised, improve their language skills for their profession and meet other professionals in their field. Its integration strategy's target is to reduce any differences in employment and income for Estonia's residents, whatever their nationality.

FAMILY REUNION



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Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification has had an impact on the family reunion policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Croatia and Serbia. Sponsors in all four countries can apply for their spouse and minor children, following the Directive’s minimum standards.

As in many Central European countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Croatia and Serbia create few legal obstacles for non-EU citizens to apply for family reunion, but maintain very discretionary procedures with many grounds for authorities to reject their application or withdraw their permit. Procedures that lack explicit rules give discretion to the administration and pose a

risk of abuse, contrary to the rule of law principles. Furthermore, applicants are never fully prepared as they do not know what they will be asked during a procedure and can never feel secure in their status. EU law limits authorities’ discretion and the number of vague grounds for refusal or withdrawal of a permit. Authorities need to consider the family’s personal circumstances, the solidity of the sponsor’s family relationship, the duration of residence and existing links with the country of origin, which is not the case in the four Balkan countries (see for instance PL, CA, IT, ES).

Immigrants in these countries have limited access to autonomous residence permits in case of widowhood, divorce or violence, and in Serbia they are not even entitled to an independent status, which is not in conformity with EU standards. Austria and the Netherlands for instance, provide entitlements in cases of death, divorce, separation and violence, while several other countries (e.g. FR, PT, ES, SE, NO, US) are introducing a clearer automatic right to autonomous residence for all families after a few years.

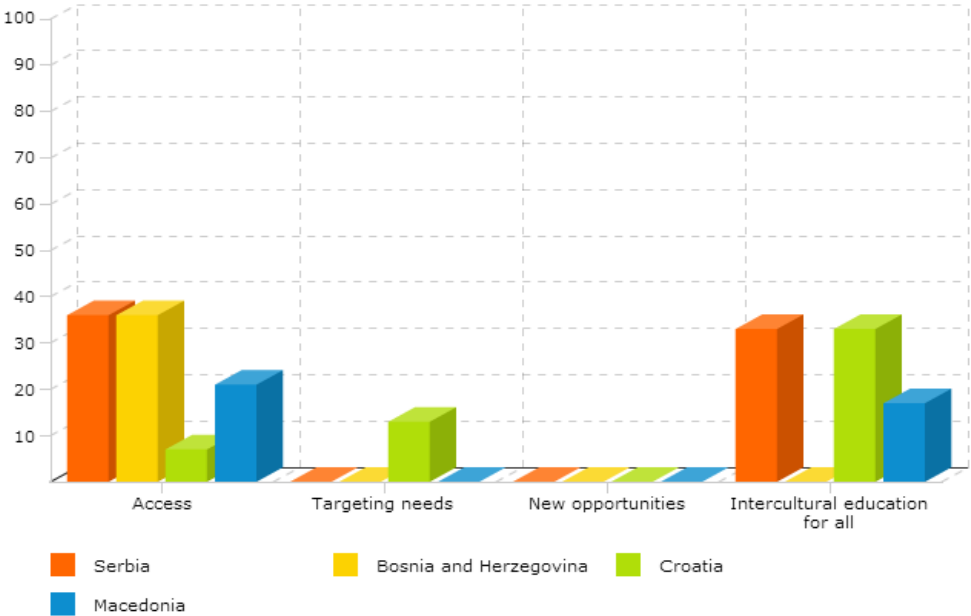
Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Croatia and Serbia apply restrictive definitions of a family and applicants are not able to reunite with their registered or co-habiting partners, unlike in half of the MIPEX countries. Migrants who are kept apart from their families have few prospects to integrate in the community where they live. Therefore, several new countries of immigration, such as Slovenia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic, broadened the definition of a family in their laws, recognising registered partnerships. In Slovenia registered or co-habiting partners can reunite regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

EDUCATION

All children in Serbia, irrespective of their legal status, enjoy equal access to all levels of the school system, as in half of the MIPEX countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina provide access for all children to only pre-primary and compulsory-age education, while Croatia and FYROM have only liberalised access to compulsory-age education.

Beyond legal access to the school system, the four Balkan countries provide hardly any

integration measures for the specific needs of immigrant children, unlike in most new immigration countries in Southern and Central Europe. Only migrant children in Croatia can benefit from official language support in primary and secondary education. In the rest of the countries, newcomer children have access only to general support measures available for nationals – e.g. assessment of prior education in Bosnia and Herzegovina or measures available for disadvantaged children in Serbia.



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Schools in most Balkan countries are not prepared to meet the needs and opportunities that immigrant students bring, and do not encourage their contribution to

society. In these countries, even though intercultural education is an official policy aim, it is largely absent from the curriculum and school life. If there is any government

support for cultural diversity promotion, it depends on ad hoc funding, and immigrant integration is mainly done through initiatives of NGOs and international organisations.

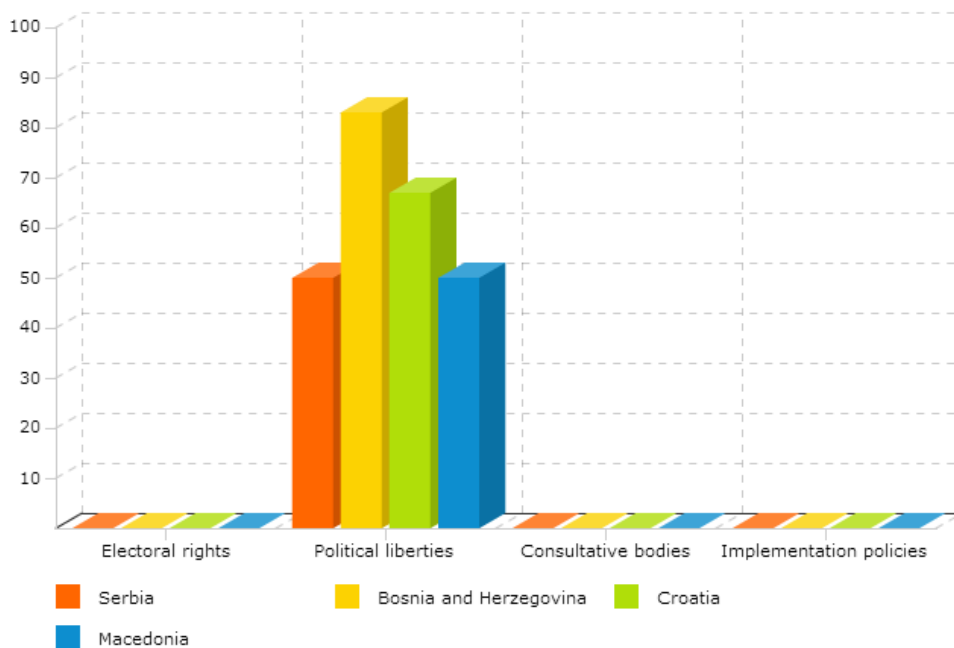
The lack of integration measures to meet the specific needs of migrant children could have severe consequences for their life as adults. Due to the lack of language support in most of these Balkan countries, they can never properly learn the language of the host society. If teachers are not trained, are not from diverse backgrounds themselves or do not have any resources at their school, they cannot reach out to parents with different languages and backgrounds, and are not equipped to handle diversity in their school. Immigrant children from these Balkan countries can easily end up in under-performing schools and at the lowest educational level. They are at risk of dropping out of school and, as early school leavers are less likely to find a job, they are at greater risk of social exclusion.

Most MIPEX countries, including some Central European countries, provide additional tuition for immigrant pupils to master the official language of the country, additional funding or teachers for schools with immigrant pupils, and teacher trainings on immigrants' needs and intercultural education. Most other countries also support the teaching of immigrant languages and cultures during the school day. Estonia for instance, provides all newcomer pupils with compulsory, continuous, and standardised support to learn Estonian, as well as their own language and culture. Similarly, in Czech law, language courses should be needs-based, professionally taught and regularly evaluated, while mother tongue and culture classes should be available. Czech teachers can integrate multicultural education into their curriculum through state-supported pedagogical materials and teacher trainings, like the much-used information portal (<http://www.czechkid.cz>). Slovakia also recently introduced 'multicultural education' into its curriculum, as well as intercultural education trainings for qualifying and working teachers.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Democratic participation of migrants favours integration and the earlier migrants are given the opportunity for democratic participation, the more likely they are to participate and integrate.¹ The 1992 Council of Europe “Convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at the local level” (ETS No. 144) is the only European legal standard that is directly relevant for the

political participation of non-EU immigrants.² They are guaranteed equal rights to media and political association, some sort of consultative body elected or appointed by their own communities, and local passive voting rights after maximum 5 years’ residence. All four Balkan countries have not ratified the Convention yet.



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Political participation is an area of weakness for integration policy in all four Balkan

countries and most new countries of immigration. If foreigners do not naturalise,

¹ See Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1618 (2008), State of democracy in Europe. Measures to improve the democratic participation of migrants, available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta08/ERES1618.htm>

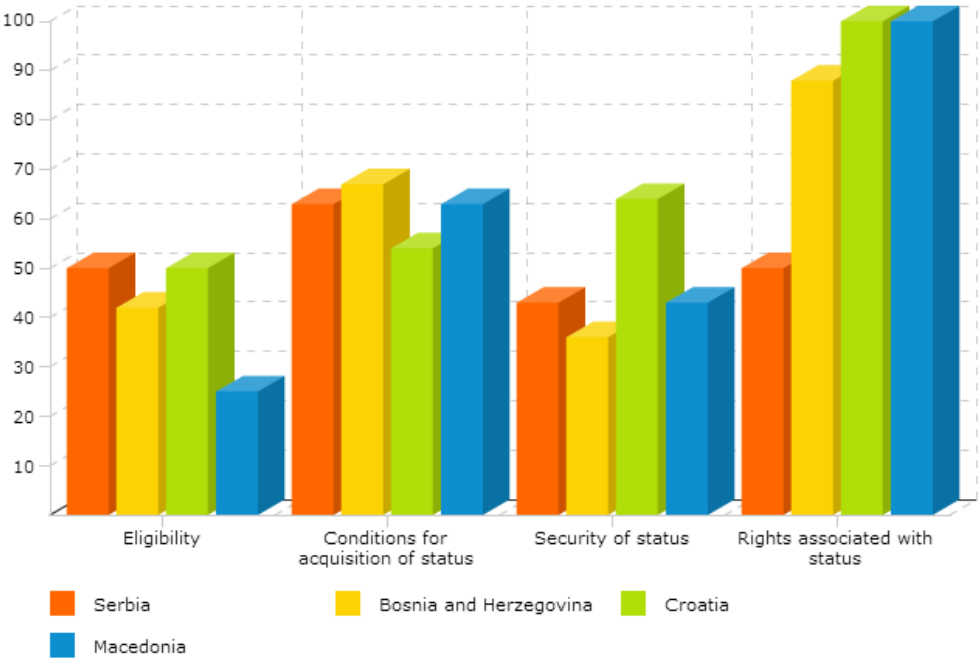
² Voting rights for immigrants: Next Stop, Berlin?, available at <http://www.mipex.eu/blog/voting-rights-for-immigrants-next-stop-berlin>

they are largely excluded from opportunities to participate in public life in these countries. Non-EU nationals are denied the right to vote and stand in elections in all four countries. Except for in Bosnia and Herzegovina, non-EU nationals cannot join political parties, unlike in most countries of immigration, including the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia. Moreover, they cannot benefit from any form of structured consultation with foreigners on integration policies, even on the basis of pilot projects, as in Greece and the Baltic States.

There are many examples of good practices from the new countries of immigration in Central and Southern Europe, which have granted long-term residents the right to vote in local elections (Czech Republic in 2001, Estonia and Slovenia in 2002) and to stand as

candidates in local elections (Lithuania in 2002 and Slovakia in 2003). Most countries have used the new European Integration Fund to support associations working on integration. Local and national authorities have started a dialogue and consultation with associations of foreign residents. Examples range from Portugal and Spain to Ireland, Greece, Estonia, Latvia, and Poland. For instance, the Spanish Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants has an independent chair and issues opinions or reports on any drafts affecting social integration. The Forum has the right to prepare reports, plans, programs on request or own initiative, and to formulate its own proposals and recommendations. Members from immigrant-run associations participate extensively in the preparation and discussion of reports and resolutions, and secure much government consensus around their recommendations.

LONG-TERM RESIDENCE



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EU Member States agreed and implemented the EC long-term residence directive (2003/109/EC), with the common objective that the integration of long-term residents will promote economic and social cohesion. In line with the Directive, most legal immigrants are eligible to apply after 5 years for equal opportunities to integrate in economic and social life in Croatia and Serbia.

This is not the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where students are excluded from the possibility to apply for this status, as well as in FYROM, where the temporary permits of students, researchers and humanitarian migrants are not considered for the 5-year residence requirement.

As in the case of family reunion procedures, applicants who meet the legal conditions in these countries can still be rejected and can lose their residence permit on several grounds due to state discretion that is common in the region. They also have few protections against expulsion. Therefore, migrants in all four Balkan countries do not enjoy the security of status that is afforded by the Directive.

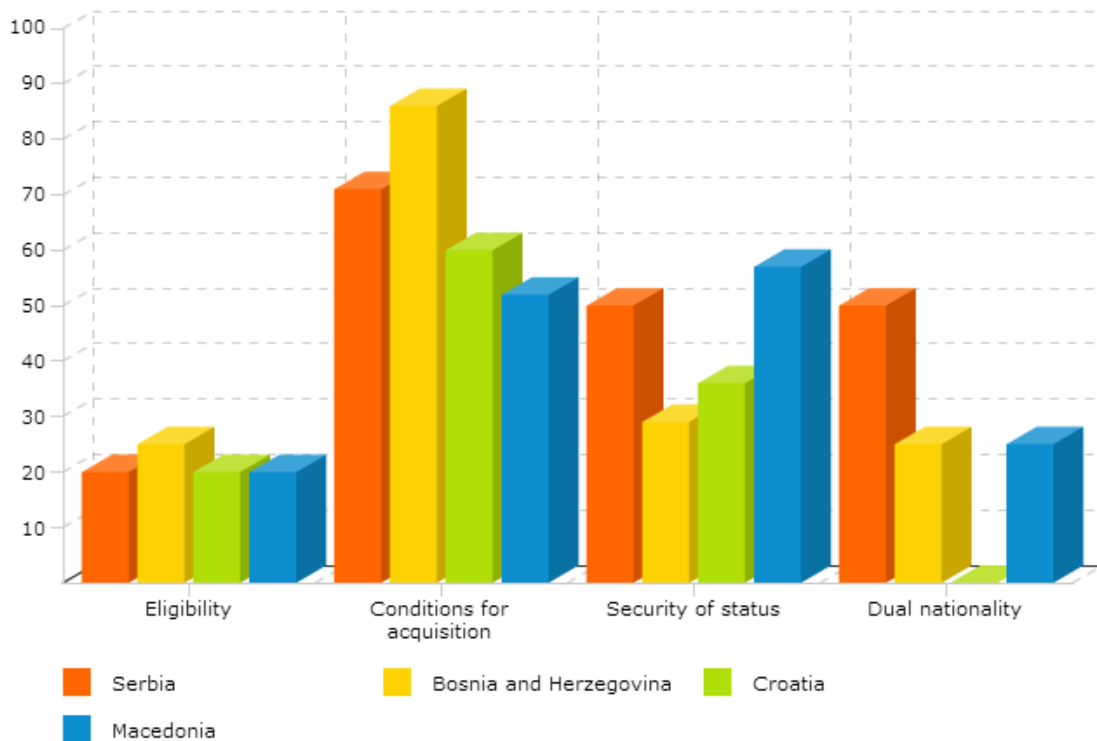
Applicants in Bosnia and Herzegovina need to meet a vague language requirement, and those in Croatia an additional integration requirement, as part of discretionary procedures, without any available support.

The 2009 CZ language test for long-term residence is an example for a good practise in terms of integration requirements, aimed to ensure equal and reasonable conditions. With an attainable level (A1), free support and professional examiners, this model creates conditions for applicants to succeed, rather than creating more bureaucratic obstacles.

Since the adoption of the Directive, several new immigration countries introduced the

entitlement to long-term residence for most temporary residents. For example, Spain opened equal chances for former students trained for its labour market to settle there. Portugal's 2007 law opened long-term residence to nearly all categories of legal residents and protects from deportation anyone born in the country, living there since childhood, or raising their children there. Minors cannot be expelled in Slovenia (see stronger legal protections in Australia and several Western European countries).

ACCESS TO NATIONALITY



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The Council of Europe 1997 Convention on Nationality n.166 provides the only legal standards on national citizenship in Europe. Even though it is designed more to address loss of citizenship than acquisition, its provisions limiting administrative discretion, stateless, and grounds for withdrawal would still slightly improve security of citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe.³ However, the Convention would have no effect on eligibility, conditions, or dual nationality. All four Balkan countries have not ratified it yet.

In the four Balkan countries immigrants face long and discretionary paths to citizenship, including the renunciation of their previous citizenship. As part of the naturalisation procedure, foreigners in FYROM need to meet vague language and economic requirements. For example, they prove their knowledge of the Macedonian language by filling in a questionnaire, assessed on criteria which are not publicly available. Applicants for Croatian citizenship have to pass some of the highest language (B1) and discretionary integration

³ Access to nationality: Are we walking away from the EU Stockholm Programme?, available at: <http://www.mipex.eu/blog/access-to-nationality->

[are-we-walking-away-from-the-eu-stockholm-programme](#)

requirements in Europe, and a “good character” condition. All these discretionary provisions make it really hard for the applicants to succeed. Research has shown that the application and decision-making procedure can affect the rate of citizenship acquisitions as much as the legal conditions.⁴

Many of the applicants for naturalisation in these four countries are forced to give up their original nationality, contrary to the trend in the majority of MIPEX countries. Furthermore, immigrants’ children are not automatically entitled to nationality at birth, as they would be in the majority of MIPEX countries.

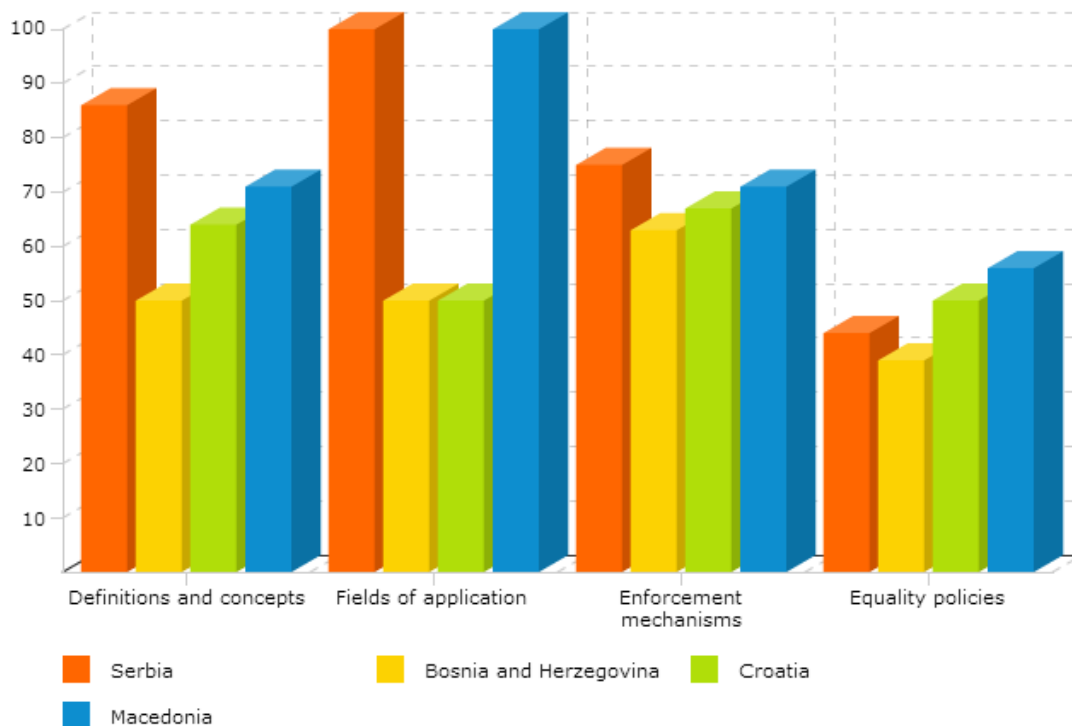
Dual nationality and some form of birthright citizenship are becoming the norm in most established countries of immigration across Europe. Newcomers in 18 of the countries assessed according to MIPEX III are entitled to dual nationality, among which France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada and the United States. More and more countries in last decades are reforming their legislation to embrace dual nationality, e.g. Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg, Italy, Switzerland and more recently Czech Republic and Poland.⁵ In 2006 Portugal’s Parliament approved a coherent approach to reform access to nationality, which can serve as a model for new reforming countries. Favourable conditions once reserved for people from Portuguese speaking countries were opened to all residents speaking basic Portuguese. Liberalisation in this regard is planned also in Denmark.

⁴ For example, see Access to Citizenship and its Impact on Immigrant Integration (ACIT). European Summary and Standards, available at: [http://eudo-](http://eudo-citizenship.eu/images/acit/acit_report_eu%20level%20summary.pdf)

[citizenship.eu/images/acit/acit_report_eu%20level%20summary.pdf](http://eudo-citizenship.eu/images/acit/acit_report_eu%20level%20summary.pdf)

⁵ For more, see <http://eudo-citizenship.eu>

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION



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Since passage of landmark EU legislation (Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC), great progress has been made in all European MIPEX countries, especially Central European and new immigration countries. Positively, in line with the EU directive, victims of discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Croatia and Serbia can benefit from NGO assistance, shifts in the burden of proof, alternative dispute resolution procedures and wide-ranging sanctions to prevent, discourage or correct discrimination.

Serbia and FYROM have enacted broad anti-discrimination laws, protecting people against most forms of discrimination in all areas of public life. Croatia's and Bosnia and

Herzegovina's anti-discrimination legal frameworks contain some of the EU law basics but lack specific additional provisions that would make protection for foreigners against discrimination even more effective. For example, people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are not protected against nationality (citizenship) discrimination and racial profiling, unlike in half of the MIPEX countries. However, people in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have weaker protections for multiple discrimination.

Unlike Serbia and FYROM, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have established equality bodies with rather weak powers. The equality

bodies in both countries can give legal advice to victims, investigate the facts of a case, instigate proceedings in their own name, but cannot make binding decisions and enforce findings, unlike equality bodies in Bulgaria and Hungary.

As in many European countries, the major weaknesses in implementation concern the equality policies. The governments of the four Balkan countries could do more to promote equality through social and civil society dialogue, equality duties, and compliance monitoring (see PT, ES, UK, and Nordics).

There are many good practices in the new countries of immigration, that now have strong and independent equality bodies. Romania's National Council on Combating Discrimination is an independent administrative body with a jurisdictional mandate. Hungary's Equal Treatment Authority also has legal standing to intervene on behalf of the complainant, while instigating its own procedures against certain public bodies. In the policymaking process, Bulgaria's Protection against Discrimination Commission can submit binding recommendations to the parliament and government to prepare bills and abolish discriminatory laws.