## Refugee Policy in Romania

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Submitted: 13 Apr 2023; Accepted: 18 Apr 2023; Published: 10 May 2023

Citation: Abuelfutooh Sayed Balsam. (2023). Refugee Policy in Romania. Political Science International, 1(2), 11-16.

#### **Abstract**

Romania is currently facing a high influx in the number of Asylum seekers and refugees, but significantly minimized

Knowledge available on the policy framework and care arrangements for the Refugees in Romania over the integration policy confined the people displayed the need for international protection. This particular scientific paper addresses the Romanian Refugee policy while illustrating the gaps and cores of this policy in the political dimension utilizing scholarly literature

# Index terms—refugees, third country nationals (TCNs), asylum, the national agency for refugees (NAR) Introduction

In the recent years of Globalization, the characterization and interest of the social and political agendas inclined towards the excessive flow of migrants, the development of brand-new migration routes along with mass transit movements and new phases in migratory trajectories, this subsequent development in this domain developed the needs of higher research and knowledge development over the dynamics of migration, refugees, relocations and resettlement [1]. In this particular domain, Refugees, unauthorized immigrants and asylum seekers were referred to as community threats by [2] on the grounds of becoming an upheaval-causing societal factor.

However, due to the EU's Acquis on the asylum, the member states consequently needed to support and protect the refugees. Still, during the Refugee Crisis of 2015-2016, Europe reconstructed the legislative cores and developed more strict legal policies that empowered more delegated authority followed by stringent border control rules [3]. Additionally, highlighted that on the grounds of multilateral accords, the regions like Libya and Turkey shared the refugee hosting cause, as Turkey welcomed Syrian Refugees with services like camps and medical facilities [4]. Extending more towards it, highlighted that it was significantly evident from the "European Agenda and Migration" 2015, which critically objectified the migration via short and long-term objectives [5]. Europe displayed compassion on behalf of the other states, including Romania, but it was evident by the clause that; "each Member State deciding how many refugees it can take, it falls within the category of voluntary quotas". On this occasion, Romania was willing to incorporate 1785 migrants but also highlighted the difficulties in incorporating these refugees. Since then, it developed as the primary debate, argument or issue in the Political Dynamics of Romania. Furthermore added that the Refugee Policy in the region of Romania is very significant because it critically played a crucial role in determining the strategies and policies for handling the refugees within the national borders [6]. Besides this, the rights and laws for the refugees and the relationship of Romania with other nations also majorly rely on the core of the Refugee Policy. Hence these scientific papers utilized the channel of Secondary studies and, in the light of credible sources, enlighten the policy framework and political dynamics of the Romanian Refugee Policy.

#### Manuscript

**Romania and refugees:** Romania is categorized as a country of emigration, under which the number of departures was more than the number of arrivals and primarily the presence of foreign visitors confined to the major cities. However, in the current dynamics, there was an increase in the arrivals of third-country nationals (TCNs) recorded between 2013 and 2020. Based on data fetched from "Non-national population by a group of citizenship, 1 January 2021", 83,783 TCNs and 60,489 EU citizens lived in Romania [7]. Additionally, the data of "The National Authority for Citizenship" displayed that 76,564 applications for Romanian Citizenship were granted approvals in 2020, under which 3,573 applications were submitted via the online procedure for foreigners. Still, a significant number of applications, 73,000, were processed via the "re-acquiring Romanian citizenship programme" that was majorly opened for Ukrainians and Moldovans of the Romanian Belt [8]. These data and figures showcased the new trend of refugees and migration that arose in the region of Romania.

Romania has a long history of receiving refugees, dating back to World War II. During the war, Romania provided refuge to thousands of Jews and other individuals fleeing persecution and genocide in Nazi-occupied territories. In the years that followed, Romania became a destination for refugees fleeing Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, many Hungarians, Czechs, and Poles fled to Romania to escape persecution and political repression in their home countries.

During the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, Romania again became a destination for refugees. Many people from neighboring countries such as Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia fled to Romania to escape the violence and instability of the conflict.

In recent years, Romania has faced an influx of refugees and migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Many of these individuals are seeking to reach Western Europe, but are often stopped at the Romanian border. Despite this, Romania has continued to provide support to refugees and has implemented policies and programs to help them integrate into Romanian society.

One of the biggest challenges facing refugees in Romania is access to education. Many refugees have limited or interrupted schooling due to the conflicts and displacement that they have experienced. Romania has implemented programs to provide access to education for refugee children and young adults, but more support is needed to ensure that all refugees have access to quality education.

Another challenge facing refugees in Romania is access to healthcare. Many refugees have complex health needs due to the trauma they have experienced, as well as the poor living conditions in refugee camps. Romania has implemented policies to ensure that refugees have access to healthcare, but there is still room for improvement in terms of the quality and accessibility of healthcare services.

Despite these challenges, Romania has made significant progress in supporting refugees and ensuring that they have access to the resources and services they need to rebuild their lives. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all refugees in Romania are able to live with dignity and security. In recent years, Romania has implemented policies to improve the integration of refugees into Romanian society. These policies include measures to improve access to employment and housing, as well as language and cultural training for refugees.

Access to employment is one of the most important factors for successful integration, but refugees in Romania face significant barriers to finding work. Many refugees have limited work experience, and may face discrimination or language barriers that make it difficult to find employment. Romania has implemented programs to provide vocational training and support for refugees looking for work, but more needs to be done to ensure that all refugees have access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Access to affordable housing is also a significant challenge for refugees in Romania. Many refugees are housed in temporary accommodations, such as refugee camps or hostels, which can be overcrowded and lack basic amenities. Romania has implemented policies to provide more permanent housing options for

refugees, but more support is needed to ensure that all refugees have access to safe and affordable housing.

Language and cultural training is also an important component of successful integration. Romania has implemented programs to provide refugees with language and cultural training, but more support is needed to ensure that all refugees have access to these resources.

While Romania has made progress in supporting refugees, there are still significant challenges facing refugees in the country. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of a comprehensive national strategy for refugee integration. Without a national strategy, efforts to support refugees are often fragmented and uncoordinated. Romania has made some progress in this area, but more needs to be done to develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for refugee integration.

Another challenge facing refugees in Romania is the lack of access to legal support. Many refugees have complex legal needs, such as obtaining residency permits or navigating the asylum process. Romania has implemented policies to provide legal support for refugees, but more resources are needed to ensure that all refugees have access to legal support.

Romania has a long history of receiving refugees and has implemented policies to support refugees in recent years. However, there are still significant challenges facing refugees in the country, including access to education, healthcare, employment, housing, language and cultural training, and legal support. Romania needs to continue to invest in policies and programs to support refugees and develop a comprehensive national strategy for refugee integration to ensure that all refugees in the country have access to the resources and services they need to rebuild their lives.

## Immigration policy and evaluation

Romania does not possess any specific integration policy for the Refugees under which the integration was achieved via immigration strategy. The policy framework of "National Strategy for Immigration for the period 2015-2018" was adopted recently and approved by the 780/2015 government division. However, in the current dynamics, the "National Strategy for Immigration for 2021 - 2025", followed by its subsequent action plan, is currently under public and political review [9]. Additionally, on Evolutionary grounds, the "Government Decision 572/2008 of 28 May 2008" served as the foundation of the Biannual Evaluation of the implementation of Immigration policy followed by its action plan. This Evaluation helped construct an evaluation report that was critically based on monitoring refugee activities, statistical data by credible authorities, and conclusively, the evolutionary trend of Migration in Romania [10]. In this particular domain, the international "Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)" highlighted that, like the Eastern and Central European Countries, the refugees in Romania enjoyed the core fundamental rights. Still, there was a significant difference in the equal opportunities for the migrants because the policy framework was not favorable for them in a more significant picture. Additionally, the Romanian region incorporated the integration

via the immigration strategy, successfully classifying the region as "Equal" but on paper only. The 49-100 on MIPEX 2020 indicated the average score across the other regions that were part of this study [11]. Thus it was pretty significant that on the integration level, Romania lacked a dedicated integration policy for the refugees, and the immigration policy served as the foundation of refugees' integration that restricted the overall equal opportunities for the refugees in Romania.

Romania has implemented policies and programs to support refugees, but the country faces significant challenges in providing adequate resources and services for refugees. In this article, we will examine the refugee immigration and evaluation policies in Romania, and explore the challenges facing refugees in the country. Immigration Policies

Romania is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. As such, the country has an obligation to provide protection to refugees and to ensure that they are not returned to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened. Romania has implemented policies to support refugees, including providing access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Romania has also implemented policies to control immigration and to ensure that refugees are properly registered and screened. The country has established a National Agency for Refugee and Migration, which is responsible for managing the asylum process and providing support to refugees.

All asylum seekers in Romania are required to register with the National Agency for Refugee and Migration. As part of the registration process, asylum seekers are screened for security and health concerns. The registration process can take several months, during which time asylum seekers may be housed in temporary accommodations such as refugee camps or hostels.

## **Evaluation policies**

Once registered, asylum seekers undergo an evaluation process to determine their eligibility for refugee status. The evaluation process can take up to six months, during which time asylum seekers may not be allowed to work or leave the country.

As part of the evaluation process, asylum seekers are interviewed by officials from the National Agency for Refugee and Migration. The officials ask questions about the asylum seeker's background, including their reasons for leaving their home country and their experiences during their journey to Romania. Asylum seekers are also required to undergo medical and psychological evaluations. These evaluations are used to identify any health or mental health issues that the asylum seeker may have, as well as any evidence of torture or trauma.

## Challenges facing refugees

Despite the policies and programs implemented by Romania, refugees in the country face significant challenges in accessing resources and services. One of the biggest challenges facing refugees in Romania is access to education. Many refugees have

limited or interrupted schooling due to the conflicts and displacement that they have experienced. Romania has implemented programs to provide access to education for refugee children and young adults, but more support is needed to ensure that all refugees have access to quality education.

Access to healthcare is also a significant challenge for refugees in Romania. Many refugees have complex health needs due to the trauma they have experienced, as well as the poor living conditions in refugee camps. Romania has implemented policies to ensure that refugees have access to healthcare, but there is still room for improvement in terms of the quality and accessibility of healthcare services.

Another challenge facing refugees in Romania is access to employment. Many refugees have limited work experience, and may face discrimination or language barriers that make it difficult to find employment. Romania has implemented programs to provide vocational training and support for refugees looking for work, but more needs to be done to ensure that all refugees have access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Romania has implemented policies and programs to support refugees, but the country faces significant challenges in providing adequate resources and services for refugees. The registration and evaluation process can be lengthy, and refugees often face significant barriers in accessing education, healthcare, and employment. Romania needs to continue to invest in policies and programs to support refugees and develop a comprehensive national strategy for refugee integration to ensure that all refugees in the country have access to the resources and services they need to rebuild their lives.

## National agency for refugees (NAR)

In the region of Romania, all of the refugees and asylum seekers were handled and fell under the responsibilities of "The National Agency for Refugees" (NAR), which appeared as the national body and critical constituent of Romanian Refugee Policy confined over adequate management of asylum seekers and refugees. The body of NAR is also responsible for the examination and registration of asylum applications, followed by identification verification and the provision of accommodation and support to them [12]. It was highlighted by that in Romania, the refugees possessed the right to education and work, freedom of movement, along with access to public and private healthcare services [13]. Additionally, under the cores of the refugee policy, the government provided excessive support to the refugees that tended to settle in Romanian Society.

The National Agency for Refugees (NAR) plays a crucial role in managing the asylum process and supporting refugees in Romania. The agency is responsible for implementing national policies and programs that ensure the protection of refugees and the respect of their fundamental human rights.

The importance of the National Agency for Refugees can be seen in several key areas:

Asylum Process Management: The NAR is responsible for managing the asylum process in Romania. This includes registering asylum seekers, conducting evaluations to determine refugee status, and providing support to refugees during their integration into Romanian society. The NAR's role in managing the asylum process is essential for ensuring that refugees receive the protection and support they need.

Legal Framework: The NAR is responsible for implementing national and international legal frameworks related to refugee protection. This includes the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as other national and international laws related to refugee protection. The NAR's work in this area is essential for ensuring that Romania complies with its legal obligations related to refugee protection.

Integration: The NAR plays a key role in supporting refugees during their integration into Romanian society. This includes providing access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, as well as social and cultural integration programs. The NAR's work in this area is essential for ensuring that refugees are able to rebuild their lives in Romania and contribute to the country's social and economic development.

Advocacy and Awareness: The NAR is responsible for raising awareness about the situation of refugees in Romania and advocating for their rights and needs. The NAR's advocacy and awareness-raising activities are essential for ensuring that refugees receive the support and protection they need, and for promoting public understanding and support for refugee protection.

Coordination: The NAR works closely with other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations to ensure the effective coordination of refugee protection and support activities. The NAR's coordination role is essential for ensuring that refugees receive the support they need from a range of actors, and for avoiding duplication of efforts and resources.

Moreover illustrated that Refugee Integration and Policy development in the best possible interest of refugees established the fabricated reputation of Romania on the global forum while, on the other hand, the long-term benefits, including; "substantial tax revenue, stimulate the economy, raise productivity, improve local worker wages, boost innovation, and often generate international trade" subjected to the adequate management of the Refugees [14].

However, on the contrary grounds developed an argument that despite the presence of a dedicated public body for Refugees, the condition around the refugees in Romania is still very challenging because the country possesses a significantly minimized recognition rate for asylum seekers along with overcrowded accommodation centres with no adequate facilities on practical grounds [15].

Extending more towards the same argument established that some of the refugees reported extreme xenophobia and dis-

crimination in Romania; hence this critically made the fact evident that holistically the Romanian Asylum or Refugees Policy aligned with the EU standards, but there was plenty of room available for the improvement, especially on the practical implementation of these policy frameworks [16].

Overall, the National Agency for Refugees plays a crucial role in ensuring the protection and support of refugees in Romania. The agency's work is essential for ensuring that Romania complies with its legal obligations related to refugee protection, and for supporting refugees during their integration into Romanian society. The NAR's work also raises awareness about the situation of refugees in Romania, advocates for their rights and needs, and coordinates the activities of a range of actors involved in refugee protection and support. Without the NAR's work, refugees in Romania would face significant challenges in accessing the protection and support they need to rebuild their lives

### Linkage between european and romanian refugee policy

In the region of Romania, the national refugee policy stressed Asylum, which is categorized as the legal protection that empowers foreigners to live in the borders of Romania because of being unable to travel in their home country because of different regions. The Romanian Refugee policy is significantly inclined to cater to refugees' fear of precautions, serious human rights violations, and armed conflicts [17].

Romania, as a member of the European Union, is committed to implementing EU policies and regulations related to refugees. The EU has a common asylum system that aims to ensure that asylum seekers receive equal treatment and protection throughout the EU. The EU also has a number of policies and programs in place to support the integration of refugees into EU member states, including Romania.

One of the key EU policies related to refugees is the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), which aims to harmonize asylum procedures and standards across the EU. The CEAS includes a number of key regulations and directives, such as the Dublin Regulation, which sets out the criteria for determining which EU member state is responsible for examining an asylum application, and the Qualification Directive, which establishes common criteria for determining refugee status.

Romania, as an EU member state, is required to implement the CEAS and ensure that its asylum procedures and standards are in line with EU regulations. This includes providing access to a fair and efficient asylum process, ensuring that refugees are treated with dignity and respect, and providing access to support and services to help refugees integrate into Romanian society.

In addition to implementing the CEAS, Romania also participates in a number of EU programs and initiatives related to refugee protection and integration. For example, the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) provides funding to member states for a range of activities related to asylum, migration, and integration, including the provision of reception and integration services for refugees. Romania has received funding

from the AMIF to support its efforts to integrate refugees into Romanian society.

Romania also participates in the EU's resettlement program, which aims to provide safe and legal pathways for refugees to enter the EU. The program involves resettling refugees from countries outside the EU who are in need ofinternational protection. Romania has committed to resettling a certain number of refugees each year as part of the EU's resettlement program.

In contrast, the Refugee Policy of Europe also supported Asylum. Still, it possessed specific different cores because, per their refugee policy, "the Asylum seeker must apply legally in the country where he/she first entered Europe", and the Asylum could only be provided to the population that demanded protection from the European Government [18]. On exploring the core association between Romanian and European Refugee Policy established that Article 15 is the standard linkage, as this article states that "as the Convention Refugee possessed the legal right to stay on the national soil while receiving all the necessary documents while having education and all of the required support" and this particular article included in the cores of Romanian Law on the Status of Refugees alongside with key integration in European Refugee Policy [19]. Thus the association and commonalities significantly proved the compliance and alignment of Romanian refugee policy with the European Refugee policy.

The relationship between Romania and the EU's refugee policies is not without its challenges. Romania is one of the EU member states that has been criticized for its treatment of refugees and its implementation of EU policies related to asylum and migration. For example, in 2019, the European Commission initiated infringement procedures against Romania over its failure to comply with EU asylum law, including its failure to provide adequate reception conditions for asylum seekers.

One of the key challenges facing Romania is the relatively low number of refugees that it has resettled compared to other EU member states. Romania has committed to resettling 1,942 refugees under the EU's resettlement program between 2020 and 2022, which is a relatively small number compared to other EU member states. This has led to criticism that Romania is not doing enough to support refugees and that it is failing to meet its obligations under EU law.

Another challenge facing Romania is the relatively low number of asylum applications that it receives compared to other EU member states. In 2020, Romania received just over 1,000 asylum applications, which is a small number compared to countries like Germany, which received over 122,000 asylum applications in the same year. Some have argued that Romania should do more to encourage asylum seekers to apply for protection in Romania, rather than seeking to travel to other EU member states.

Despite these challenges, Romania remains committed to implementing EU policies and regulations related to refugees. The National Agency for Refugees plays a key role in ensuring that Romania's asylum process is in line with EU regulations, and the

country continues to participate in EU programs and initiatives related to refugee protection and integration.

#### Political debates over the refugee policy

There were excessive political debates in the region of Romania's Refugee Policy. Some political entities in Romania established that the country needed to choose the refugees very carefully, especially about the recent terrorist-based activities in Europe. Only those allowed possessed religious, cultural and social similarities to the national population [20]. However, the other experts, including developed the counter-argument that this type of approach would proliferate the discriminatory aspects that are already present in the refugee integration within Romania and the fear of terrorism primarily exaggerated for the political benefits under the public realm as a significantly higher number of refugees continuously entering in the European Territory without any correlative increase in the terrorist attacks. Along with that, some of the political segments in Romania criticized the approach the standpoint that equating the integration of refugees with minimized initial welcome facilities reflected the lacking of a comprehensive governance structure in the domain of refugee policy because the simple offering of relocation without any management and plan only reflected the abstract vision, developing the overall question marks over the welcoming nature of society. Hence, these political comments and complex political fiasco made the overall process of Refugee policy implementation even more complex [21], [22].

#### Author's acknowledgements

This work was co-funded by the European Social Fund, through Operational Programme Human Capital 2014-2020, project number POCU/993/6/13/153322, project title "Educational and training support for PhD students and young researchers in preparation for insertion in the labor market"

## **Summary**

The Refugee Policy in the Romanian area is critical because it significantly impacted the strategies and policies for resettling refugees inside of national boundaries. The statistics and data illustrated the new migration and refugee pattern in the Romanian region. The immigration policy served as the cornerstone of the refugees' integration, limiting the general equality of opportunity for the refugees in Romania. This was primarily due to the lack of a dedicated integration policy for the refugees in Romania. Although the Romanian Asylum or Refugees Policy was generally in line with EU standards, there was still space for improvement, as demonstrated by the National Agency for Refugees' (NAR) critical presence. Furthermore, Article 15 demonstrated how Romanian immigrant policy complied with and aligned with European Refugee policy. A complex political crisis that transformed the general process of implementing refugee policy became more challenging due to some political inconsistencies.

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