



HELIOS
Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection

PROJECT REGULATIONS HANDBOOK



Funded by the
Asylum, Migration and
Integration Fund of the
European Union



SEPTEMBER 2021

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HELIOS IS A PILOT INTEGRATION PROJECT THAT AIMS TO SUPPORT **BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION** (REFUGEES AND BENEFICIARIES OF SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION) TO **INTEGRATE IN THE GREEK SOCIETY**. THE PROJECT OFFERS SERVICES PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING, INCLUDING RENTAL SUBSIDIES, INTEGRATION COURSES, EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION MONITORING.

HELIOS is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its Partners with the support of the Greek Government and is funded by the Directorate-General of the European Commission for Migration and Home Affairs.

PROJECT DURATION: 1 JUNE 2019 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2021¹.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to enroll in the HELIOS project, beneficiaries must meet **ALL** the following criteria:

1. **LEGAL STATUS**
Having received an official notification of the Greek Asylum Service's decision granting international protection status (refugee status and subsidiary protection)²
2. **RECOGNITION DATE**
 - a. Recognized after 1/1/2018,
 - b. Recognized in 2017, with official extension of the accommodation entitlement in the official accommodation schemes of the Greek Reception System ending in October 2019 and onwards.
3. **RESIDENCE AT THE TIME OF NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION GRANTING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS**
 - a. Official registration in one of the accommodation schemes of the Greek Reception System (Open Accommodation Centers, RICs, FILOXENIA Hotels, ESTIA apartments)
 - b. In shelters or available protective housing programs supported by Authorities or NGOs (e.g. for LGBTQI+ cases, SGBV survivors, victims of trafficking)

The eligibility of cases not fulfilling the abovementioned criteria is examined *ad hoc* upon referral or upon direct communication with HELIOS staff or/and through any of the HELIOS communication channels.

ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll in HELIOS, beneficiaries must sign the *Declaration of Participation* in the HELIOS project, which states that they understand and accept the rights and obligations resulting from their enrollment in the project. The signature of the *Declaration of Participation* initiates the enrollment of beneficiaries in the project.

All adult members of each household need to sign the *Declaration of Participation*. In the framework of the HELIOS project, households are understood as follows:

- Adults (18 years of age and above) living alone;
- Any members of a nuclear family living together. A nuclear family consists of (a) parent(s) and the dependent underaged children, all living together; second-degree relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and others are not considered part of a nuclear family. In case of a nuclear family with adult dependents, the latter are to be enrolled in HELIOS separately and as one distinct household; this further includes their spouse and children, if applicable.

Beneficiaries eligible to be enrolled in the HELIOS project are invited to attend information sessions where they have the opportunity to learn more about the project and, should they wish to enroll in it, sign the *Declaration of Participation*. The information sessions

¹The continuation of the service provision beyond 30 September 2021 is subject to funding continuation.

²Relatives of beneficiaries of international protection who have been relocated to Greece through family reunification procedures or who have been granted ισόχρονη άδεια διαμονής are eligible to enroll and benefit from the HELIOS project, as long as the member(s) of the family holder(s) of international protection as granted by Greece agree(s) to enroll in the project.

take place on a regular basis in all Open Accommodation Centers, RICs, in the Integration Learning Centers (ILCs) that are operating in the framework of HELIOS and in additional locations that are communicated to the beneficiaries by HELIOS staff upon need.

IMPORTANT! DEADLINE OF ENROLLMENT: Beneficiaries notified of the decision granting them international protection until 31/12/2019 can enroll in the project **no later than 31/12/2020**. Beneficiaries notified of the decision granting them international protection after 01/01/2020 can enroll in the project within **12 months counting from the notification** of their recognition – and subject to the duration of the project. For example, for a beneficiary notified of recognition on 11 February 2020, the enrollment deadline is set at 11 February 2021.

CAN I SIGN THE DECLARATION OF PARTICIPATION AND THEN DECIDE TO RETREAT FROM HELIOS?

Yes, signing the Declaration of Participation does not bind you to do anything but solely ensures that you will be in a position to benefit from the HELIOS services. However, in order to benefit from these services, you need to comply with the HELIOS regulations as described below.

SERVICES OFFERED UNDER HELIOS

SUPPORT IN INDEPENDENT LIVING AND RENTAL SUBSIDIES

Beneficiaries of the HELIOS project receive information, assistance, and financial support aiming at supporting and promoting independent living. Specifically, HELIOS beneficiaries are offered assistance to find an apartment and enter into a lease agreement in their name directly with the apartment owner. This process is facilitated through:

- Specialized workshops and one-to-one sessions which provide information about the procedures and requirements for renting an apartment in Greece;
- Interpretation during apartment visits or translation of housing-related documents;
- Facilitation of contacts with apartment owners interested in renting their apartment;
- Matching with other beneficiaries interested in sharing an apartment;
- Transportation of beneficiaries and their belongings when moving to the newly-leased apartment.

The duration of each lease is a matter of agreement between the beneficiary and the apartment owner (e.g. the lease agreement can have a duration of one, two or three years or any duration agreed between the parties), yet only lease agreements with a duration of six (6) months and more will be accepted in the framework of the project. In addition, the duration of the lease agreement should cover all the period for which the beneficiary is entitled to receive HELIOS rental subsidies.

HELIOS beneficiaries have the possibility and are strongly encouraged to consider cohabitation so as to share the cost of the rent and all related expenses with friends or relatives. In order to receive rental subsidies, **an adult member of each household needs to electronically accept the lease agreement in the TaxisNet (ΑΑΔΕ) portal clearly stating his/her name.**

Beneficiaries who have received or are receiving rental subsidies from other projects cannot receive rental subsidies under HELIOS.

CAN I SHOW MY COPY OF THE DECLARATION OF PARTICIPATION TO THE APARTMENT OWNER TO FACILITATE THE AGREEMENT ON THE LEASE?

Yes, you are encouraged to show the apartment owner the signed Declaration of participation so that it is clear that you will be receiving financial support towards the rental costs of the apartment if he/she agrees to enter into a lease agreement with you.

Upon entering into a lease agreement in their name, beneficiaries receive rental subsidies which are paid on their personal Greek bank account. The amounts of the rental subsidies are provided according to the size of each household and consist of:

- A **contribution to start-up of independent living**, foreseen to contribute to the payment of the rental guarantee and the first settling-in expenses (e.g. purchase of household equipment, furniture).
- A **contribution to the rental costs**, paid on a monthly basis to contribute towards the costs of renting a house and the expenses associated to basic utility costs.

The initial disbursement consists of the contribution to start-up of independent living and the first monthly contribution to the rental costs, and is disbursed in two installments according to Table 1 below, where also the amounts of the contribution to the rental costs are presented.

Table 1

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	First installment of the initial disbursement (consists of partial amount of Contribution to Start-up of Independent Living)	Second installment of the initial disbursement (consists of remaining amount of Contribution to Start-up of Independent Living plus first month of Contribution to Rental Costs)	Contribution to Rental Costs provided after the initial disbursement (month 2 and onwards)
	Released upon submission of lease agreement and other documents (see below)	Released upon confirmation of exit from Reception System and proof of payment of the first rent	Released monthly upon proof of payment of rental costs
1	301 €	301 €	162 €
2	569,5 €	569,5 €	309 €
3	688 €	688 €	396 €
4 to 5	838 €	838 €	504 €
6+	1.060 €	1.060 €	630 €

Beneficiaries are entitled to a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 12 months of rental subsidies. The calculation of the subsidies is based on the date of notification of the decision granting international protection and the date of submission of the necessary documents³. In other words, the sooner a beneficiary submits all the necessary documents, the more months of rental subsidies he/she will receive⁴. Beneficiaries who submit the documentation after the sixth month from the date of notification will be entitled to six months of rental subsidies.

EXAMPLE: A household of 4 family members is notified of recognition on 1/03/2020. They submit to HELIOS staff the TaxisNet printout of a lease agreement on 1/04/2020, alongside the other relevant documentation, and receive in their IBAN account the first installment of the first disbursement for an amount of **838,00 €** while they are still residing in the Reception System. After receiving this amount in their account, they need to leave immediately the Reception System, if they wish making use of the HELIOS transportation services, and move to their newly-leased apartment. When departing from their previous accommodation, the household must ensure to request an Exit Certificate from the relevant actor (e.g. Site Manager, ESTIA Partner) and share it with HELIOS Staff. When sharing the Exit Certificate with HELIOS Staff, the household should also include in the submission package a bank receipt proving the transaction/credit to the landlord's IBAN account for the first monthly rent. Upon receiving the Exit Certificate and the proof of payment just mentioned, HELIOS will disburse to the households' IBAN account the second installment of the initial disbursement, for an amount of **838,00 €**, which includes the remaining amount of the *contribution to start-up of independent living* and the first monthly rental subsidy. From that moment on, the household will submit to HELIOS once a month a proof of payment for the monthly rent, and HELIOS will disburse to them monthly the amount of **504,00 €**, provided that their requirements in terms of attendance to the integration courses are met. In total, they will receive 11 months of monthly rental subsidies, and taking into consideration that the first monthly rental subsidy is included in the second installment of the initial disbursement, the household will receive a total of **6.716,00 €** throughout the duration of their HELIOS entitlement.

Beneficiaries notified of their recognition after **01/01/2020** have a timeframe of **12 months** starting from their notification date to submit the necessary documents, while for beneficiaries notified of their recognition until **31/12/2019** the deadline to submit the necessary documents is set at **30/04/2021**. Should beneficiaries fail to meet these deadlines, their entitlement to receive rental subsidies ceases.

In order to receive the first installment of the initial disbursement of the HELIOS rental subsidies, beneficiaries must meet **ALL** the following preconditions:

1. Be enrolled in HELIOS by having signed the *Declaration of Participation*;
2. Provide HELIOS staff with:
 - a. Proof of the *Taxisnet* submission of rental contract in the **TaxisNet (AAΔE)** portal, **accepted** by all parties – lease agreements with a duration of less than six (6) months will not be accepted, nor will lease agreements with initiation date of more than 2 months prior to the beneficiary's enrollment in HELIOS;
 - b. For each of the household members, a document proving their status as beneficiaries of international protection – namely the Asylum Seeker's Card stamped with "*Pending Issuance of Residence Permit*", or the Greek Residence Permit;

³ In case the starting date of the lease agreement is after the submission date of the documentation, then the starting date of the lease agreement will be used instead of the submission date of the documentation for the calculation of the entitlement to the subsidies.

⁴ Example: if a beneficiary provides HELIOS staff with the necessary documents two (2) months after the notification of the decision granting international protection, he/she will receive ten (10) months of rental subsidies.

- c. A document presenting the details of the personal Greek bank account of the beneficiary to which the rental subsidies will be transferred – this must clearly indicate the IBAN number and the name of the adult member of the family on whose name the lease agreement is contracted. The rental subsidy **cannot** be transferred to the card where beneficiaries receive the ESTIA cash assistance for basic needs;
- d. A banking printout verifying the landlord’s IBAN account.

IMPORTANT: AS SOON AS BENEFICIARIES RECEIVE THE FIRST INSTALLMENT OF THE INITIAL DISBURSEMENT OF THE RENTAL SUBSIDIES, THEY MUST IMMEDIATELY LEAVE THEIR PREVIOUS ACCOMMODATION PLACE AND TRANSFER TO THE APARTMENT IDENTIFIED UNDER HELIOS, OTHERWISE ALL HELIOS SERVICES WILL BE DISCONTINUED AND THE BENEFICIARY WILL BE DE-REGISTERED FROM THE PROJECT WITH NO RIGHT TO RE-ENROLL.

The **second installment** of the initial disbursement of the HELIOS rental subsidies is released upon:

1. Confirmation of timely exit from Reception accommodation (Exit Certificate issued from the competent actor and submitted by the beneficiary to HELIOS staff/helpline);
2. Successful verification of the household’s presence in their newly leased apartment;
3. Submission of a bank receipt proving the transaction/credit to the landlord’s IBAN account for the first monthly rent.

In order to receive each monthly disbursement, beneficiaries must:

1. Provide **on a monthly basis** HELIOS staff with proofs that payment for the monthly rent was executed to the declared IBAN of the landlord. Documents that will be accepted as proofs of payment are:
 - a. certified confirmation of bank transaction printed upon the beneficiary’s request from an officer at a banking branch clearly indicating rental contractual details (beneficiary’s name, name of landlord, contract number),
 - b. electronic payment confirmation printed by the beneficiary, clearly indicating rental contractual details (beneficiary name, name of landlord, contract number) in the “notes” field of the online transaction.
2. Provide **on a monthly basis** an updated TaxisNet printout of the active lease contract.
3. Attend regularly the mandatory integration courses without exceeding the limit of permitted absences, if requested;

Should beneficiaries fail to timely provide HELIOS staff with proofs of payment for the monthly rent and the other relevant documentation, they automatically lose the entitlement to receive rental subsidies from that moment onwards.

IMPORTANT: PAYMENTS TO THE LANDLORDS IN CASH ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

IOM maintains the right to conduct monitoring visits to the rented apartments and to stop disbursing rental subsidies at any stage of the duration of the beneficiaries’ entitlement to project support in case internal monitoring requirements are not met.

PROVISION OF INTEGRATION COURSES

In the framework of the HELIOS project, integration courses are offered in Integration Learning Centers (ILCs) operating across mainland Greece and Crete island. Each course cycle consists of 360 teaching hours for a period of approximately **six (6) months**, during which beneficiaries attend three (3) hours of classes per day, five (5) days a week. The integration courses are available to all beneficiaries enrolled in HELIOS and of at least 16 years of age, and they are mandatory for beneficiaries receiving rental subsidies.

In order for each household to organize their schedule and childcare according to their needs, the Integration Learning Centers offer courses in up to three (3) shifts of classes per day and have a Recreational Space for Children (RSC) to host children aged 2 to 6/7 years old while the parents attend the courses.

Specifically, the integration courses consist of the following Modules:

- **Greek Language Module:** For a total of 280 hours, beneficiaries are exposed to the basics of the Greek language by experienced educators without the presence of interpreters. The classes are established taking into consideration the literacy level of the beneficiaries.
- **Soft Skills Module:** For a total of 80 hours, beneficiaries attend courses related to Cultural Orientation, Life Skills and Job Readiness by experienced teachers alongside cultural mediators. Outdoor activities are also carried out (e.g. visits to museums) as part of the courses, so as for beneficiaries to have the opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills. In particular, this Module consists of the following components:
 - Cultural Orientation: Notions concerning Greek culture, history, tradition and contemporary customs;
 - Life Skills: Classes dedicated to improving the communication and collaboration with others; personal and social responsibility; practical matters necessary for the beneficiaries' everyday life in Greece (e.g. how to use public transport, how to open a bank account, which public service to refer to for any needed matter);
 - Job Readiness: Information on job search from different sources, such as the Manpower and Employment Agency (OAED), the Internet, through networking or in the newspaper; practical matters on preparing for a job application (e.g. drafting a resume, attending a job interview); soft skills on oral communication, problem-solving, teamwork and interpersonal skills.

WILL I RECEIVE A CERTIFICATION OF MY GREEK LANGUAGE LEVEL WHEN I COMPLETE THE COURSE?

Based on your performance, your teachers will assess the competences you have acquired and, if these match the needed examination requirements, he/she will refer you for the official exam for the Greek language certifications. The exam fees will be covered by the project.

In order to enroll in the integration courses, beneficiaries must meet **ALL** the following preconditions:

1. Be enrolled in HELIOS by having signed the *Declaration of Participation*;
2. Be above 16 years of age.

The attendance to the courses is **mandatory** for all beneficiaries receiving rental subsidies. The integration courses are offered either in person or remotely through an e-learning platform. Attendance to the integration courses can be optional for beneficiaries belonging to one of the following categories:

1. Women in a state of pregnancy over 7 months and mothers up to 6 months postnatal;
2. Beneficiaries with disabilities or incurable/serious disease;
3. Beneficiaries over 65 years old;
4. Beneficiaries attending a formal education program (e.g. public school, university).

Beneficiaries of the below categories are exempted from the mandatory in-person courses **but are obliged to participate in the mandatory e-learning courses** from distance via the e-learning platform:

1. Beneficiaries having identified through the HELIOS project an apartment whose location prevents access to the integration courses (e.g. the time of travel needed to reach the Integration Learning Center is more than 1 hour and/or there is no public transport);
2. Beneficiaries that have part-time employment commitments and are unable to attend courses in person at the ILCs;

IMPORTANT: Beneficiaries receiving rental subsidies need to present themselves in the Integration Learning Centers so as to enroll in the integration courses **within 10 working days** the latest, counting from the day when the second installment of the first disbursement was received. Should beneficiaries not comply with this requirement, they are **automatically excluded from all the benefits of the HELIOS project**.

Upon beneficiaries presenting themselves at an Integration Learning Center, they are requested to undertake a placement test to define the class level they are to be enrolled in and receive specific information about the available classes.

Beneficiaries are entitled to *a set of absences* throughout the implementation of the integration courses. Specifically, beneficiaries can abstain from courses for a total of **72 hours** all throughout the duration of 6 months. Details related thereto are clearly presented in the Students' Handbook, which beneficiaries receive upon enrollment to the Integration Courses.

Beneficiaries exceeding the threshold of 72 absences due to exceptional reasons (e.g. hospitalization) have to re-enroll in the integration courses in order to continue enjoying the benefits of the HELIOS project. In this case, HELIOS staff will determine the conditions of the re-enrollment (e.g. if beneficiaries need to start anew the integration course or if they can be enrolled in classes already running).

WHAT HAPPENS IF I EXCEED THE NUMBER OF ABSENCES?

Beneficiaries exceeding the threshold of overall absences (72 hours throughout the duration of the courses) will be excluded from the benefits of the HELIOS project. In the case of families, the family member(s) who exceeded the set threshold are excluded from the benefits of the project and the amount of rental subsidies for the family will be reduced by the amounts corresponding to the number of members who have exceeded the limit of absences.

JOB COUNSELLING SESSIONS AND OTHER EMPLOYABILITY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Beneficiaries enrolled in the HELIOS project have the opportunity to benefit from employability support in order to become familiar with the Greek labor market and job research modalities and, in parallel, acquire increased awareness of their professional profile. In this framework, HELIOS beneficiaries are offered five (5) individual job counselling sessions of a duration of one (1) hour each with job counsellors who help them develop a career plan by assessing their interests and abilities and by guiding them through resources on career information and job search. Upon need, beneficiaries are also informed on the possibilities available to them so as to widen their educational profile.

The individual job counselling sessions take place in person in the Integration Learning Centers or remotely and are mandatory in order to benefit from further employability-related activities. As a matter of fact, beneficiaries with relevant education and/or experience have the opportunity to access official certifications (e.g. professional driving licenses, ECDL certifications, foreign language certifications) in order to increase their employment potential. Any costs related to the official certifications and to any other documentation needed for employability purposes (e.g. official translation of documents, urgent medical exams) are covered by the HELIOS project upon assessment of HELIOS staff. The eligibility of each beneficiary is assessed in the job counselling sessions, the attendance of which is a prerequisite in order to have access to this service.

WILL HELIOS STAFF FIND ME A JOB?

No. Nevertheless, HELIOS staff will offer support to facilitate your integration into the labor market and help you explore your opportunities in looking for a job in Greece.

In order to benefit from employability-related activities, beneficiaries must be enrolled in HELIOS by having signed the *Declaration of Participation*.

INTEGRATION MONITORING

HELIOS beneficiaries are assisted by dedicated Integration Monitoring teams consisting of social scientists and interpreters who are responsible to monitor their integration progress and support them with any integration-related needs. Throughout this process, beneficiaries are supported to develop links with the host community, become acquainted with public services and bureaucratic procedures and ultimately be in a position to confidently navigate through the Greek public service providers upon their graduation from the project.

Specifically, the Integration Monitoring teams focus on assessing the beneficiaries' inclusion within the host community by providing advice on bureaucratic obligations and services offered at local level. Integration monitoring activities refer also to the progress made by the beneficiaries in relation to the services offered by the HELIOS project, including the integration courses and the potential and ability of beneficiaries for independent living. Any protection-related issue identified by the Integration Monitoring teams is referred to the relevant local service providers.

WILL THE INTEGRATION MONITORING TEAMS ACCOMPANY ME TO THE GREEK PUBLIC SERVICES?

No. Nevertheless, the teams will provide any needed advice and support about your bureaucratic obligations with the Greek public services.

Meetings with the beneficiaries take place in-person in the Integration Learning Centers or remotely depending on their needs as assessed by HELIOS staff in order to ensure systematic assessments. During these meetings, the beneficiaries have the possibility to discuss about any challenges they face in relation to their integration process and to provide feedback on the HELIOS project activities.

EXPULSION FROM HELIOS SERVICES

Should serious security incident(s) be caused by any of the beneficiaries, the procedure for the expulsion of the latter from **ALL** project services will be immediately initiated. HELIOS staff is dedicated to providing project services to the beneficiaries enrolled in HELIOS, and a two-way collaboration is required in this regard for the efforts of both parties to produce fruitful results.

CONTACT US!

For further questions on the HELIOS project, do not hesitate to contact us:

❖ Via e-mail at iom_helios_info@iom.int.

❖ WhatsApp/Telegram **helpline**, from 9am – 3pm, Monday to Friday:

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