

HANDBOOK ON CAREER GUIDANCE FOR REFUGEES



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Qualifications Agency



COMMISSARIAT
FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



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1. INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is intended for persons who have been granted international protection (asylum or subsidiary protection) or temporary protection, as well as asylum seekers in the Republic of Serbia.

The aim of the Handbook is to provide useful information on the following questions:

- where to take your diploma so that your qualifications acquired abroad are recognized,
- what if you don't have a diploma with you,
- how to enroll in school or college,
- where you can learn the Serbian language,
- how and where to retrain for occupations that are in demand in Serbia,
- how to find employment,
- who to turn to for support and advice on these topics?

Explore the strengths of your educational and business opportunities and create a career plan for your development with the digital guide of the Qualifications Agency.



2. RIGHTS OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS

If you have been granted international protection (asylum or subsidiary protection), temporary protection, or you are in the process of asylum, you have the right to free primary and secondary education in the Republic of Serbia. A person who has been granted the right to asylum has the right to higher education under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Serbia.

In addition, you have the right to residence, and identity document issued in the Republic of Serbia, freedom of movement, as well as the right to work, free choice of employment (type of work and employer) and the right to information and free legal aid.



3. HOW CAN YOUR SCHOOL DOCUMENT BE RECOGNIZED IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA?

Recognition of a foreign school document is a procedure by which the qualification you obtained abroad is equated with a corresponding, valid public document in the Republic of Serbia. **Recognition of foreign primary and secondary school documents and professional recognition of higher education documents** in the Republic of Serbia is carried out by the **Qualifications Agency**, that is the ENIC/NARIC center within the Agency.

If you have at least one relevant school document, the Qualifications Agency, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, will enable all the necessary checks and will try to ensure the conditions for recognition, so that you can be integrated into the education system of the Republic of Serbia as quickly as possible or gain the right to employment.

- **Basic information, instructions for starting the recognition procedure and instructions on paying the fee can be found on the website of the Qualifications Agency** [GO TO THE WEBSITE](#)
- Persons who have been granted international protection (asylum or subsidiary protection) or temporary protection, as well as asylum seekers in the Republic of Serbia, **may be exempted from paying the fee** upon request, based on the decision of the director of the Qualifications Agency.
- The request for recognition of foreign school documents can be submitted electronically in Serbian and English language.



[Qualifications Agency, 51, Majke Jevrosime Street, Belgrade](#)

3.1. Recognition of foreign primary and secondary school documents

By receiving the recognition of a foreign primary and secondary school **certificate, you gain the right to continue your education or to get a job.**

The method of enrolling in education institution and the student support plan is prescribed by the Professional Instructions for Inclusion of Refugee/Asylum Seeker Children in the Education System adopted by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia.

Students who **have proof** of previously acquired education with them are enrolled in the appropriate grade in accordance with their age and previously acquired level of education, after recognition of the foreign school document by the Qualifications Agency.

For students who **don't have proof** of previously acquired education (and in the case of incomplete school documentation), the possibility of enrolling in institutions of the education system is provided based on a previous knowledge check in schools.

In the process of recognizing **primary and secondary education documents**, the entire education or certain grades completed abroad are recognized.

For **shorter periods of schooling** (one semester or shorter), it is not possible to recognize a foreign school document through this procedure. In that case, the previously completed grade is recognized.

3.2. Recognition of higher education diplomas

- **For the purpose of continuing education (academic recognition)**, the procedure is carried out at accredited higher education institutions – universities in the Republic of Serbia.



You may find useful the [Guide to Accredited Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs in the Republic of Serbia](#)

- **For the purpose of employment (professional recognition)** the procedure is carried out by the ENIC/NARIC center within the Qualifications Agency.

3.3. What if you don't have a diploma with you?

If you don't have school documentation, you can contact the Qualifications Agency, which, depending on your level of education, will inform you about the possibilities and refer you to the competent institution.

More information
about EQPR, access to
the platform and the
application form can be
found on the Council of
Europe portal
[GO TO THE PORTAL](#)

In order to improve refugees' access to education and employment, the Republic of Serbia joined the Council of Europe's EQPR project (European Qualifications Passport for Refugees) in 2021, which enables refugees to access education and employment in the Republic of Serbia, even if they did not bring the school documentation about previously obtained education with them.

Within the framework of international protection provided to refugees by the Republic of Serbia, respecting the right to work as a basic human right and striving to enable them access to the labor market, the Qualifications Agency

(ENIC/NARIC center) strives to overcome challenges in integration – language and cultural barriers, lack of documents and recognition of refugees' qualifications. The European Passport of Qualifications for Refugees is a practical solution for the most effective integration of refugees into the community as it provides a methodology for assessing the qualifications of refugees, even when they cannot be fully documented, thus supporting their further education or employment. The Qualifications Agency has prepared a draft of the necessary procedures for EQPR, which should be regulated through legal amendments.

3.4. Frequently asked questions

- **Is Serbian citizenship necessary for the procedure of recognition of foreign school documents?**

No, the recognition procedure is the same for everyone, regardless of citizenship.

- **Do you have to come to Belgrade and personally submit the application and documentation for the recognition of school documents to the Qualifications Agency?**

It is not necessary to come and submit the request and documentation in person, an online application form is available on the website of the Qualifications Agency.

- **In case when the applicant is another person, instead of the diploma holder, is authorization required for application submission?**

The applicant can be another natural person or legal entity, with documentation confirming this status. It does not have to be an official authorization notarized.

- **Is it necessary to be an asylum seeker for the process of recognition of school documents in order to continue education or get employment?**

It is not necessary, the request for recognition can be submitted by all forcibly displaced persons who have received protection in the Republic of Serbia, as well as other foreigners, not only asylum seekers.

- **Can refugees be exempted from paying the fee?**

They may be exempted from payment, at the decision of the director of the Qualifications Agency, in accordance with the relevant documentation that they need to submit. If exemption from the payment of the fee is requested, it is necessary to submit documentation confirming that the applicant has been granted international protection (asylum or subsidiary protection) or that he/she has been granted temporary protection or that he/she is an asylum seeker in the Republic of Serbia. Each request is considered separately.

— **Is the knowledge of the Serbian language at a certain level necessary for continuing education or for employment in the Republic of Serbia?**

It would be desirable for candidates to master the Serbian language as soon as possible for easier and faster integration into the community, schools and workplaces, but the national legislation does not prescribe knowledge of the Serbian language for continuing education or employment. The employer may require knowledge of the language as a special requirement, especially in the field of medicine.

— **Is a decision on the recognition of foreign school documents necessary for continuing education and employment in the Republic of Serbia?**

It is a mandatory procedure for continuing education (an alternative is to verify knowledge in schools), as well as in most cases for the purpose of employment.

— **Is it possible to recognize non-formal and/or informal education (knowledge and skills acquired outside the formal education system – primary, secondary and higher education)?**

The Qualifications Agency (ENIC/NARIC center) recognizes only formal education, and it is up to employers to decide whether to hire candidates who have mastered training programs and courses abroad for the performance of certain jobs, based on certificates confirming this.

— **How do I apply electronically?**

Electronic forms are available on the website of the Qualifications Agency.

- [APPLICATION](#) for recognition of primary education
- [APPLICATION](#) for recognition of secondary education
- [APPLICATION](#) for recognition of higher education

— **How much is the recognition fee?**

Persons who have been granted international protection (asylum or subsidiary protection) or temporary protection, as well as asylum seekers in the Republic of Serbia, may be exempted from paying the fee upon request, based on the decision of the director of the Qualifications Agency.

Information about fees

For primary school documents:

- [Payment in Serbian Dinars](#)
- [Foreign Currency payment](#)

For secondary school documents:

- [Payment in Serbian Dinars](#)
- [Foreign Currency payment](#)

For higher education documents:

- [Payment in Serbian Dinars](#)
- [Foreign Currency payment](#)

— **How can I get confirmation that the recognition procedure is in progress, for the purpose of employment, admission to college, secondary or primary school?**

After successfully completing the electronic application, a confirmation that the application has been accepted and the recognition process has started is automatically sent to the e-mail address specified in the application. If the application and documentation are submitted in person at the office of the Qualifications Agency, which is enabled for procedure of recognition of primary and secondary school documents, the certificate is issued at the counter immediately after submitting the application.

— **What is the legal deadline for the decision to be drafted?**

- 60 days from the duly submitted request;
- 8 days if the higher education institution that issued the degree is on the Shanghai list, the US News and World Report or the Times World University Ranking list.

— **What if I do not have complete documentation at the time of application?**

In that case, you will receive a request for a supplement with a deadline for action. If you do not act within the prescribed deadline, the Agency will reject the submission.

If you have other queries or need additional information about the procedure for recognizing foreign school documents, you can contact the Qualifications Agency (ENIC/NARIC center) in the following ways:

- **by calling the number +381 11 7455 728**
(every working day from 12 to 14h)
- **by sending an email**
 - Head of the ENIC/NARIC center:
mirjana.poledica@azk.gov.rs
 - Coordinator for higher education:
milan.kovacevic@azk.gov.rs
 - Coordinator for primary and secondary education:
ivana.knezevic@azk.gov.rs



4. METHODS OF OBTAINING QUALIFICATIONS AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Qualifications in the Republic of Serbia can be acquired through formal and non-formal education, as well as through the process of recognition of previous learning.

In **formal education**, qualifications are acquired by completing primary, secondary or higher education at verified education institutions, i.e. accredited higher education institutions and study programs (primary and secondary schools, faculties, colleges), after which a corresponding public document (diploma) is issued.

Dual education is one of the models of teaching at the level of secondary vocational and higher education, where teaching is carried out in two places – in the classroom and in a real working environment (in the company, at the employer, that is, learning through work).

In **non-formal education**, qualifications and competences are obtained from Publicly recognized organizers of adult education activities (PROAEA), after which participants are issued a corresponding public document. In the Republic of Serbia, it is possible to acquire qualifications, competences or occupations for levels 1, 2, 3 and 5 of NQFS through non-formal education.

Adult education enables lifelong learning, i.e. the acquisition of competencies and qualifications needed for life-long personal and professional development, work and employment, as well as socially responsible behavior.

Non-formal education is implemented through the following activities:

- trainings that acquire competences, qualifications and trainings for work in the profession;
- trainings that improve knowledge, skills and abilities, for the sake of personal and professional development and socially responsible behavior;
- provision of career guidance and counseling services;
- recognition of prior learning (RPL), which in a special procedure evaluates knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through formal and non-formal education, life or work experience for levels 1 to 3 and 5 of NQFS, in accordance with the qualification standard.



СТУДЕНТСКА
СЛУЖБА

CERTIFICATE
OF GRADUATION
AWARD 2022





Information on accredited trainings and PROAEA can be found in the Sub-registry of PROAEA [**GO TO THE SUB-REGISTRY**](#)

Knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through informal learning can be recognized through the **procedure for recognition of prior learning (RPL)** in which the assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes is carried out and represents “Validation of non-formal and informal learning” in accordance with European recommendations, on the basis of which a corresponding public document can be issued.

Informal learning is any learning that acquires knowledge, skills and attitudes, and does not take place through formal and non-formal education but represents independent learning or learning through life and work experience.

Currently, only secondary schools have the possibility to carry out the RPL procedure.

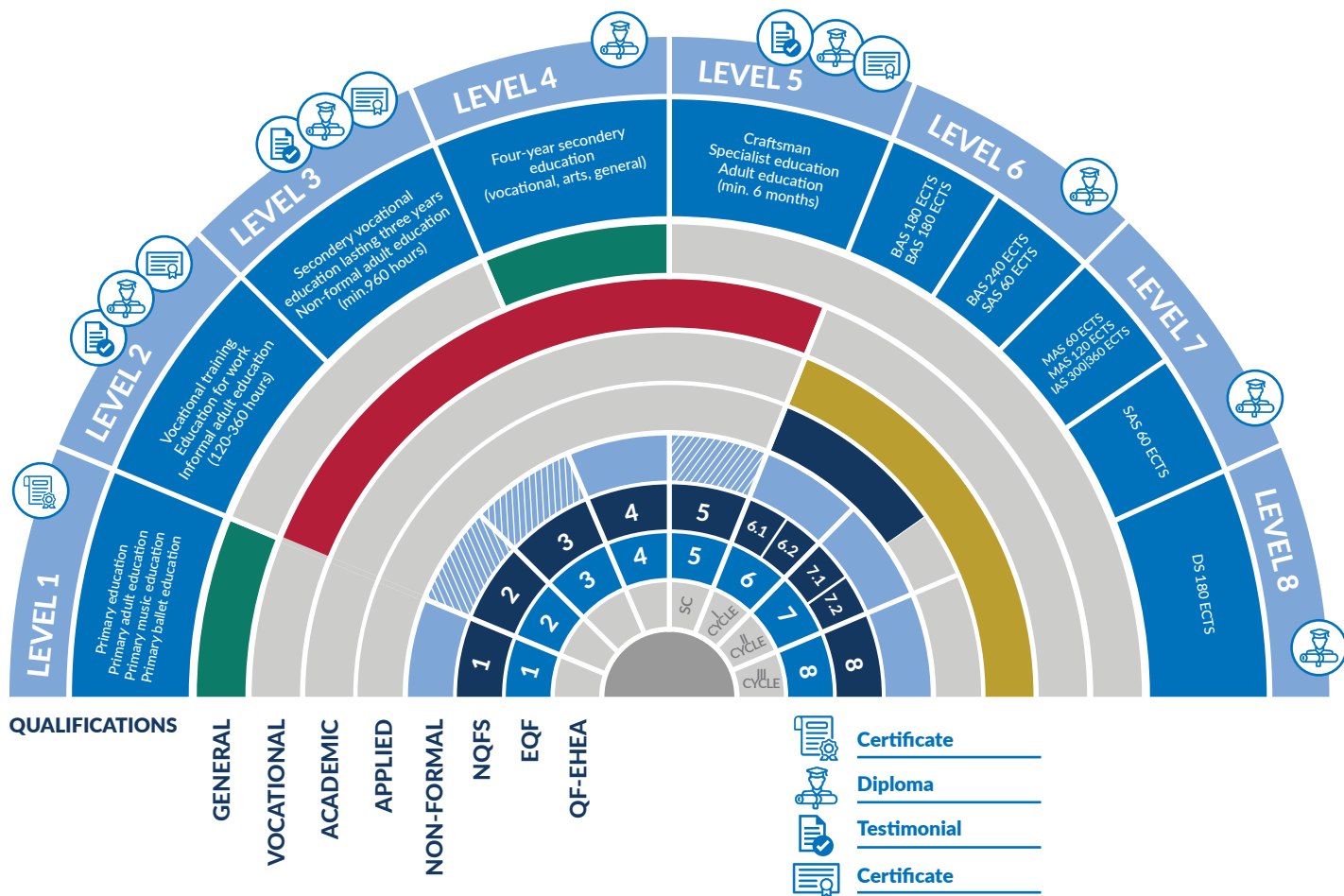
National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia

The National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia (NQFS) is a system that regulates qualifications in the Republic of Serbia. NQFS is a framework in which all qualifications in the Republic of Serbia that can be acquired through formal and non-formal education, as well as through the process of recognition of prior learning, are listed, classified by level and described.

Based on the complexity of the learning outcomes, qualifications in NQFS are classified into eight levels and two sub-levels.

The NQFS is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework, which facilitates recognition, enables comparability and recognition of qualifications obtained in the Republic of Serbia with qualifications obtained in other countries.

QUALIFICATIONS IN NQFS



LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- **NQFS level 1** is acquired by completing primary education, primary education for adults, primary music education, or primary ballet education;
- **NQFS level 2** is acquired through vocational training, lasting up to one year, education for work lasting up to two years, i.e. non-formal adult education lasting 120-360 hours of training and through the process of recognition of prior learning. The condition for obtaining this level is a previously acquired NQFS level 1 (*examples of qualifications: Graphic Manipulator, Packer, Flooring Installer Assistant, Assistant Plumber*);
- **NQFS level 3** is acquired by completing a three-year secondary vocational education, i.e. through non-formal adult education lasting at least 960 hours of training and through the process of recognition of prior learning. The condition for obtaining this level is previously acquired NQFS level 1 (*examples of qualifications: Carpenter, Trader, Electrician, Locksmith-Welder, Industrial Mechanic, Baker, Butcher, Fashion Tailor*);
- **NQFS level 4** is acquired by completing secondary education lasting four years (vocational, artistic, i.e. grammar school). The requirement for obtaining this level is previously acquired NQFS level 1 (*examples of qualifications: Economic Technician, Culinary Technician, Art Technician, Chemical Laboratory Technician, Pharmaceutical Technician, Electrotechnician for Computers, Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Machine Technician*);
- **NQFS level 5** is acquired by completing master craftsman or specialist education in the duration of two years, i.e. 1 year with previously acquired NQFS level 3, i.e. NQFS level 4. In the non-formal adult education, it is acquired by completing a training program lasting at least six months, with the previously acquired NQFS level 4 through the process of recognition of prior learning. The condition for obtaining this level through a master craftsman or specialist education is at least two years of work experience (*examples of qualifications: Business Secretary, Elevator Fitter, Industrial Mechatronics Technician - Specialist*);

- **NQFS level 6.1** is acquired by completing bachelor academic studies (hereinafter: BAS) of at least 180 ECTS, i.e. bachelor applied studies (hereinafter: BAS) of 180 ECTS. The requirement for acquisition of this level is the previously acquired NQFS level 4 and completed general, vocational or artistic Matura exam, i.e. completed the two-year state Matura program and passed the general Matura exam, in accordance with the laws regulating secondary education and higher education (*examples of qualifications: Applied Physiotherapist, Applied Designer, Manager*)
- **NQFS level 6.2** is acquired by completing the BAS of at least 240 ECTS, i.e. specialist applied studies of at least 60 ECTS. The requirement for acquisition of this level is the previous acquired NQFS level 4 and completed general, vocational or artistic Matura exam, i.e. completed the two-year state Matura program and passed the general Matura exam, in accordance with the law regulating secondary education and higher education, i.e. Level 6.1 (BAS of 180 ECTS) (*examples of qualifications: Graduate Electrotechnical and Computing Engineer, Graduate Psychologist, Graduate Engineer of Organisational Sciences, Graduate Economist, Graduate Lawyer*)
- **NQFS level 7.1** is obtained by completing integrated academic studies of 300 to 360 ECTS, master academic studies (hereinafter: MAS) of at least 60 ECTS, with previously completed BAS of 240 ESPB, MAS of at least 120 ECTS (with previously completed BAS with the scope of 180 ECTS), i.e. the master of applied studies of at least 120 ECTS (with the previously completed BAS of 180 ECTS), (*examples of qualifications: Master Architectural Engineer, Master Mechanical Engineer, Master Manager*)
- **NQFS level 7.2** is acquired by completing specialized academic studies of at least 60 ECTS (with previously acquired MAS), (*examples of qualifications: Specialist in Political Science for International Affairs*);
- **NQFS level 8** is acquired by completing doctoral studies of 180 ECTS (with previously completed integrated academic or master academic studies), (*examples of qualifications: Doctor of Science - Philosophy, Doctor of Sciences - Environmental Protection Engineering*).

5. TRY THE DIGITAL CAREER SELF-GUIDANCE TOOL

Are you thinking about which school, college, or training to enter? Do you want to start your career or are you looking to change its course? What talents do you have, what knowledge and skills can you acquire, and what kinds of jobs can you do?

Career Guidance and Counseling can help you find answers to these questions.

Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) means the process, services and activities aimed at supporting an individual, of any age and in any part of his/her life, to make decisions regarding education, training and occupation and to manage his/her career. Career guidance and counseling services are provided in accordance with the CGC Standards, and in accordance with the regulations, these services are provided by the Publicly recognized organizers of adult education activities (PROAEA), primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, as well as the National Employment Service.

[A career self-guidance tool](#) can help you manage your career. This tool contains questionnaires that allow you to get a clearer picture of your competences, interests and other characteristics, to set a goal and make a decision about future education and employment, and to think about additional opportunities in your career.



You have available two online questionnaires

[My Education – My Choice](#) and
[Traits as work competencies.](#)
[LAUNCH THE QUESTIONNAIRES](#)

6. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

6.1. Serbian language lessons

If you were granted **asylum** in Serbia and you are not enrolled in regular education, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia (SCRM) can provide you with 300 free Serbian language lessons.

In case you perform jobs that require higher education, in addition to the abovementioned 300 hours, SCRM provide an additional 100 free-of-charge lessons of the Serbian language (not mandatory). If you are enrolled in regular education, SCRM provides an additional 140 free lessons of the Serbian language.

SCRM provides all types of assistance and support within a period of one year after the Decision on granting asylum or subsidiary protection became final. Your legal representative in the asylum procedure or you, personally, can submit a request for classes to SCRM.

If you are an asylum seeker or a person with temporary protection, UNHCR can provide you with free Serbian language lessons, based on the available funds.

6.2. Trainings

Do you want to continue working in your profession in Serbia, or are you open to learning something completely new? In any case, training and retraining can help you find a job faster. UNHCR can help you acquire new knowledge and skills for free through the training of your choice. Programs and training providers are accredited. After successfully completing the training, you will receive a certificate recognized by employers.

For consultations and information about training, you can contact the Crisis Response and Policy Center (CRPC), UNHCR's partner organization, at info@crpc.rs or write to srbbelvd@unhcr.org

6.3. DAFI Refugee Scholarship Program

If you are under 28, you have learned the Serbian language and are determined to continue your education at a college or university in Serbia, there is a possibility of a scholarship that covers the costs of education and includes a certain monthly allowance for your living expenses.

It is the [DAFI scholarship](#) (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative). The number of scholarships is limited and depends on available funds. For information, contact the UNHCR Serbia Office at srbbedafi@unhcr.org

6.4. Employment in the Republic of Serbia

If you have been granted asylum, subsidiary or temporary protection, you can legally work in Serbia with your ID card, issued by the Asylum Office in Serbia. If you are an asylum seeker, you have the right to start working six months after submitting your asylum application, with an ID card and status certificate issued by the Asylum Office.

For better access to the labor market, it is useful to register with the National Employment Service (NES) in the municipality where you live. If you have been granted asylum or subsidiary protection, the SCRM integration service will present you with employment opportunities.

Also, UNHCR has made numerous contacts with different types of employers and can inform you about employment opportunities and open positions. You can check the [list of employers and positions](#) that are most frequently requested. Additionally, you can look at job ads on the [Infostud](#) portal, which is a member of the network [#ForRefugees](#).

There are different types of employment and employment contracts in Serbia that define the obligations of the employer and the employee: based on an employment relationship (for a fixed or indefinite period of time), or outside of an employment relationship (e.g. temporary-occasional, seasonal jobs up to 120 days of work).

Employment is based on the employment contract, which the employer should hand over to you. Before signing, read this document and make sure it contains everything you agreed with your employer, including working hours, salary, paid vacation, etc.

Work without a contract, or informal work, is not legal.

We recommend that you never engage in informal work because, among other things, you may experience exploitation, discrimination or not receive your salary.

A workweek in Serbia means 40 hours of work per week, 8 hours of work daily. Any overtime should be paid. It is important to be at work at the agreed time every working day. If you get sick, you need to inform your employer as soon as possible.

It is also important to know that for certain types of jobs you need to have a sanitary permit (e.g. food preparation) or pass a health examination for occupations with increased risk (e.g. construction) or get a work license (e.g. health sector).



7. USEFUL CONTACTS AND LINKS

Qualifications Agency Republic of Serbia	Majke Jevrosime 51, 11000 Beograd Tel: (+381 11) 3345 740 E-mail: agencija@azk.gov.rs Web: azk.gov.rs
Commissariat for Refugees and Migration Republic of Serbia	Narodnih heroja 4, 11070 Novi Beograd Tel: (+381 64) 838 25 35 E-mail: integracija@kirs.gov.rs Web: https://kirs.gov.rs/eng
The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)	Bulevar Zorana Đinđića 64, 11070 Novi Beograd Tel: (+381 11) 4155 427 E-mail: srbbe@unhcr.org Web: unhcr.org/rs/en
Ministry of Education Republic of Serbia	Nemanjina 22-26, 11000 Beograd Tel: (+381 11) 3613 734 Web: prosveta.gov.rs
Office for Dual Education and National Qualifications Framework Republic of Serbia	Nemanjina 22-26, 11000 Beograd E-mail: kancelarija@dualnok.gov.rs Web: https://dualnok.gov.rs/en/about/
Crisis Response and Policy Centre	Orfelinova 33, 11030 Beograd Tel: (+381 60) 0991634 E-mail: office@crpc.rs Web: crpc.rs
Registry of the National Qualifications Framework, Republic of Serbia	Web: noks.azk.gov.rs/en.html
Infostud job search portal	E-mail: kontakt@infostud-poslovi.com Web: poslovi.infostud.com



