


I have received temporary protection and I am a student. May I receive assistance from the CPAS?



1. What is temporary protection?

Temporary protection is a status that allows a foreigner to stay in Belgium and not to be sent back to his/her country of origin.

For whom?	<p>For people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are fleeing a country outside the European Union in very large numbers; <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cannot return to their country of origin in a safe and sustainable way. <p>These people must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nationals of the fled country or family members of a national of that country; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a recognised stateless person; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• beneficiaries of an international protection (or equivalent) in the fled country.
When?	After a decision of the Council of the European Union* that states that a group of people needs to be protected.
For how long?	1 year , extendable twice for periods of 6 months. So in total: 1 year + 6 months + 6 months = 2 years maximum .
How to obtain it?	<p>Apply for a temporary protection certificate at the registration centre of the Immigration Office* (Office des étrangers - 40, Place Victor Horta, 1060, Brussels).</p> <p>For more information:</p> 

For example, you can receive temporary protection if:

- you had your main residence in **Ukraine** on 24 February 2022
- AND
- you are:
 - a Ukrainian citizen or a family member of a Ukrainian citizen;
 - a recognised stateless person;
 - a beneficiary of international protection in Ukraine.

Third-country nationals who were living in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 (for example, foreign students) are not entitled to temporary protection in Belgium.

Temporary protection status caused by the war in Ukraine can be extended **until 4 March 2024**.

Your family members are entitled to temporary protection, even if they do not meet themselves the conditions, for example because they were not living in Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Your family members are, for example:

- your partner (married or unmarried but in a stable relationship);
- your or your spouse's unmarried children under 18;
- your close parents who were living with you and were dependent on you when the war started.

2. I do not have temporary protection yet, may I receive assistance from the CPAS?

Yes.

The CPAS* (Public Center for Social Welfare) is responsible for social assistance* in Belgium, to enable everyone to live a dignified life. There is one CPAS per municipality (commune).

You can apply for **urgent medical aid*** to the CPAS ([see information sheet 3](#)). This means that the CPAS will pay for your medical expenses, if they are prescribed by a doctor. It is the only help you may receive.

This is true even if you are not yet registered with a health insurance fund ("mutuelle" [see question 10 below](#)).

You must ask this aid to the CPAS of the municipality where you are registered.

For this, you need a **certificate** of urgent medical aid from your doctor.

If you think that, as a foreigner, you are entitled to another status than temporary protection, [see information sheet 3](#) that explains foreigners' rights towards CPAS.

3. I have received temporary protection, am I entitled to assistance from the CPAS?

Yes.

You can apply to the CPAS for **social assistance**.

Social assistance can take several forms:

- an **income, equivalent to the integration income*** (i.e. a sum of money paid every month);
- **medical** aid;

For example: reimbursement of a doctor's consultation.

- **material** assistance;

For example: food parcels or clothing.

- complementary **financial** assistance;

For example: paying some bills or paying your rent deposit.

For example: if you were homeless and are moving into your own home, the CPAS can give you an **installation allowance**. This settling-in grant enables you to buy furniture, for example.

You can receive several forms of social assistance at the same time. For more information on social assistance, [see information sheet 2](#).

4. What conditions must I meet to receive social assistance?

You must meet the 'normal' conditions for social assistance.

To find out what these conditions are, [see information sheet 2](#).

5. How much am I entitled to?

This depends on **your needs**.

To determine your needs, the CPAS will look at:

- your resources (income, regular financial aid from your family, etc.);
- your personal situation.

The amount of social assistance is often **equivalent to the integration income** and is called **“ERIS”**.

There are 3 rates for the integration income (note that these amounts are often indexed; the amounts below are valid from 1 January 2023):

Rate	Cohabitant	Single person	Person who cohabits with at least one dependant
Full amount per month	809.42 EUR	1,214.13 EUR	1,640.83 EUR
Example of a concrete situation	You fulfil 2 conditions: - you live with other people; and - you all pay household expenses together (e.g. shopping). See information sheet 9.	You live alone in your flat	You have dependent children

Sometimes the amount of social assistance is **higher** than the full integration income. This is the case if the CPAS gives you other financial support in addition to the ERIS.

Sometimes the amount of social assistance is **lower** than the full integration income. This is the case if the CPAS considers that you already have some other resources to live on. In this case, your resources are deducted from the full integration income rate (full integration income rate – your resources = the amount you will receive).

How much am I entitled to if I am staying with someone who has substantial resources?

There are 2 questions to be distinguished:

⇒ **How much am I entitled to (which rate)?**

The amount you are entitled to varies depending on **whether or not you share household** expenses with your host.

Situations	Consequences
<p>You are living with someone but you do not share household expenses with that person.</p> <p>For example: you each do your own laundry, you buy your food separately, etc.</p>	<p>You are entitled to ERIS at the single-person rate.</p>
<p>You are living with someone and you share household expenses with that person.</p> <p>For example: you do your laundry together, you buy food together, etc.</p>	<p>You are entitled to ERIS at the cohabitant rate.</p>

⇒ **Which resources are taken into account to check whether I have sufficient resources?**

The CPAS takes into account:

- your resources;
- your partner's resources;
- possibly the resources of your parents and your adult children (but the CPAS is not obliged to take them into account).

In order to assess the amount of your personal resources, the CPAS can **never look at the income of a person who is not a member of your family** even if they are accommodating you.

If the person who is accommodating you is not a member of your family, the income of that person **does not have any impact** on your right to social assistance.

What happens if someone pays my rent or lets me occupy their home for free?

It depends on the case:

Situations	Consequences
The person does not live with you but pays the rent for your home.	The CPAS must take this rent into account when calculating your income. This reduces the amount of the CPAS's support.
The person owns a home and lets you occupy it free of charge .	The CPAS may take this into account in its calculation of your resources. However, the CPAS is not obliged to do so. If the CPAS does take this into account, it must be based on the rent that would normally have been charged for this accommodation.

6. How does the CPAS decide whether I am entitled to assistance?

To decide whether you are entitled to assistance, the CPAS carries out a **social investigation*** (see [information sheets 2 and 13](#)) to determine:

- **your residence*** (the CPAS checks that you live at the address you have given to the municipality);
- **your resources**;
- **your personal situation** (any difficulties you may have, the people who live with you, etc.);
- the **type of assistance** that is most appropriate for you.

If you have been granted temporary protection, the CPAS will carry out a **lighter investigation**. This is in any case true for the **first few months** after your application for social assistance. Thereafter, the CPAS can carry out a "normal" investigation (see [question 5 of information sheet 2 and information sheet 13](#)).

For example, at the beginning, the CPAS will not ask you for:

- your cadastral income;
- your medical insurance in your country of origin.

The CPAS may ask you to sign a **sworn statement**. With this declaration you acknowledge that you do not have sufficient resources.

7. If I receive assistance from the CPAS, is there a risk for my residence permit?

No.

Temporary protection gives you the right to stay for at least one year ([see question 1 above](#)). An application for social assistance has no impact on this right.

8. I am a student and I have temporary protection. Which CPAS can help me?

You must ask help from the CPAS of the **municipality** where you are **registered in the foreigners register**.

If you are **not yet registered** in the foreigners register, you must apply to the CPAS of the **municipality** where you have your **usual and effective residence**.

If you move during your studies, your **first CPAS** is still responsible. The SPP Social Integration* has confirmed that the specific rules for students apply to students who have temporary protection. For more information on these specific rules, [see information sheet 11](#).

9. What happens if I have signed an agreement with the person who hosts me?

The person who is accommodating you may ask you to sign a **precarious occupation agreement***.

This agreement may require you to **contribute to the costs of the accommodation**.

The **costs of accommodation** include:

- consumption of water, gas, electricity and other charges;
- the rental and cost of meters;
- connection fees;
- taxes on the occupied premises, excluding property tax.

Food costs are not accommodation costs.

The CPAS **cannot** determine the cost of accommodation itself. It is the person who accommodates you who must determine this cost.

However, the CPAS can act as a **mediator** and can monitor any abuses by the person who is accommodating you.

The amount specified in the agreement is **not a rent**. It is a contribution to the extra costs that your host has in connection with your accommodation.

For example: your host may ask you to pay 20% of the social assistance you receive.

10. What should I do while I am receiving social assistance?

When you apply for help from the CPAS, if you qualify for social assistance, the CPAS gives you an allowance.

The CPAS then asks you to do certain things:

- register with a health insurance fund;
- apply for your child benefit;
- inform the CPAS of any changes in your situation (moving house, change in household composition, new job, etc.).

The CPAS must help you with these procedures.

Legal references



Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC and having the effect of introducing temporary protection



Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof



Act of 26 May 2002 on the right to social integration



Act of 15 December 1980 on access to the territory, residence, establishment and expulsion of foreigners



Act of 8 July 1976 on the organisation of public social action centres (CPAS)



Act of 2 April 1965 on the assumption of responsibility for assistance granted by the CPAS



Royal Decree of 1 December 2013 on the minimum conditions of the social investigation established in accordance with article 9*bis* of the act of 2 April 1965 on the assumption of responsibility for assistance granted by the CPAS



Circular of the SPP Social Integration of 2 June 2022 on the act of 18 May 2022 promoting the integration of the beneficiaries of temporary protection.

Useful links



Brochure on social assistance and beneficiaries of temporary protection



Sworn statement



FAQ on social assistance and beneficiaries of temporary protection



Information on obtaining temporary protection



Information guide for accommodation providers wishing to host a beneficiary of temporary protection

Model of precarious occupation agreement:

Ukrainian version:



French version:

