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## **CZECH REPUBLIC: REFUGEE ROW**

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EuroNews (23 February 2018)

Prague is facing an EU legal suit for refusing to accept asylum seekers under the bloc's system to relieve other member states hit most by immigration

There are more than 2,500 beneficiaries of international protection in the Czech Republic.

Euronews visited the Zastavka centre, the first reception point for asylum seekers in a country in which illegal migration is a hot topic

"In our centre, refugees mostly come from the former Soviet Republics, mostly from Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan," explained Josef Sekerka from the Czech Interior Ministry.

"There are not many people from the Middle East. Sometimes we have refugees from Vietnam and Africa but they don't account for even a third of the people we are hosting."

The central and eastern European Visegrad Group countries - Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic - have rejected the quota system proposed by the EU after massive migrant arrivals in 2015.

However, Czech humanitarian activists do make a distinction.

"We recently presented a study -a comparison of the integration policies of these four countries, showing that the Czech Republic is the only one which has a systematic long term approach to integration," said Adela Jureckova of the 'People in Need' NGO.

'People in Need' say refugees are a resource.

"180,000 people are missing in the labour market and refugees could also, or foreigners in general, come to the Czech Republic, so that companies can grow," Jureckova added.

The EU last year opened a legal case against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland over their reluctance to take in migrants, as part of the bloc's system to take pressure off other member countries hit most by immigration.